Report: Iranian diplomat held in Belgium on terror charges warned of retaliation

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-iranian-diplomat-held-in-belgium-on-terror-charges-warned-of-retaliation/>

An Iranian diplomat who is being held in Belgium on suspicion of planning an attack warned authorities that a guilty verdict in his case could lead to retaliation, according to a report Friday.

Assadollah Assadi is set to stand trial in November for his alleged involvement in a 2018 plot to bomb an Iranian opposition rally in France.

According to [Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-plot-france/iranian-diplomat-warned-of-retaliation-over-belgian-bomb-plot-trial-document-idUSKBN26U280), minutes by Belgian police from a March interview shows Assadi said, “we (Belgium) do not realize what is going to happen, in the event of an unfavorable verdict.”

He further said armed groups throughout the Middle East were following his case and “watching from the sidelines to see if Belgium would support them or not.”

Assadi said his comments were his own, and not based on discussions with Iranian officials.

A spokesman for Belgian prosecution said, “Such threats can occur, but we always take the necessary security measures.”

Meanwhile, Assadi’s lawyer denied he had made any threats.

“It is absolutely not a threat of retaliation and if it’s understood that way it’s a misinterpretation,” he told Reuters. “He will explain the sense of his remarks to the court.”

Iran has denied French accusations that Assadi was involved in a 2018 plot targeting an annual gathering of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) on June 30 just outside Paris.

The suspected plan to target a gathering of the NCRI organized by dissident group The People’s Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK) in a Paris suburb came to light a few days after the event was held.

[Hebrew media reported](https://www.timesofisrael.com/mossad-thwarted-iranian-plot-to-bomb-opposition-rally-in-france-report/) at the time that the plot was thwarted by Israel’s Mossad spy agency.

Six people were arrested in Belgium, France and Germany, two of whom were later released.

German prosecutors said Assadi, believed to be an intelligence agent, ordered a couple to attack the rally and had handed them the explosives at a June meeting in Luxembourg.

Tehran has dismissed the alleged bomb plot as a “sinister false flag ploy” designed to discredit Iran.

The rally in the Paris suburb of Villepinte was attended by several allies of US President Donald Trump, including former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and former House speaker Newt Gingrich, both of whom urged regime change in Iran.

The MEK, formed in the 1960s to overthrow the shah of Iran, fought the rise of the mullahs in Tehran following the 1979 Islamic revolution.

It earned itself a listing as a “terrorist organization” by the US State Department in 1997 and was only removed from terror watchlists by the European Union in 2008 and by Washington in 2012.