Israel Foils Palestinian Prisoner Plot to Kidnap Soldier

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The Israeli defense establishment on Saturday foiled a plot concocted by a [Fatah](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/TAG-fatah-1.5599057) officer in an Israeli jail, to engineer the abduction of a soldier who could subsequently be exchanged for his own release, said a Prison Services source on Monday.

The putative abduction was the brainchild of Mohammed Naifa, a Fatah official sentenced to 13 life terms for murdering 13 Israelis, said Yuval Biton, the deputy prisons commissioner, speaking at a counter-terrorism conference at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. Prisoners in that situation might try to orchestrate a kidnapping in order to gain their own freedom because there isn’t any alternative way to get out, Biton said.

Information about Naifa’s plan came to light on Saturday, following which special forces took steps to thwart it, Biton said.

Biton said the case just goes to show that the security prisoners persist in attempts to hurt Israel and conduct terror attacks, and to plan abductions.

“The prisoners are a microcosm of Palestinian society,” he said: “Religious organizations versus secular Gaza organizations versus the residents of the West Bank, city-dwellers versus those in refugee camps and villages. Each of those groups lives in tension and seething hatred. There is an internal Palestinian rift that serves our interests. We are right in the seams and cracks between the organizations and our role is to widen the rifts. What unites the Palestinian people is a joint enemy.”

Naifa, held at the Gilboa Prison, is one of the highest ranking Fatah figures in Israeli custody. He was arrested in November 2002, during the Second Intifada, and convicted of plotting – and sending people to perpetrate - the [terrorist attack on Kibbutz Metzer](https://www.haaretz.com/1.5117367), in which a mother and two children were killed; and an attack on the Moshav Hermesh, in which three Israeli women died.