



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 3, 2018

France Blames Iran for Foiled Bomb Plot Near Paris, Freezes Iranian Assets

Issuing a rare joint statement on October 2, France's interior, foreign, and economy ministers accused Iran's intelligence ministry of being behind a foiled plot to bomb an exiled Iranian opposition group in a Paris suburb.

The French government announced that same day that it was freezing assets belonging to two suspected Iranian intelligence operatives, along with other assets belonging to Iran's ministry of intelligence and security.

The French government's action was made in response to an alleged plot to bomb a meeting of the People's Mujahedeen of Iran (MEK) in the Paris suburb of Villepinte three months ago.

"This extremely serious act envisaged on our territory could not go without a response," France's interior, foreign, and economy ministers said in the joint statement quoted by the Paris-based AFP news agency. "In taking this decision, France underlines its determination to fight against terrorism in all its forms, particularly on its own territory."

A French diplomatic source told AFP that the security forces had concluded that "the head of operations at the (Iranian) intelligence ministry ordered it."

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi told AFP in an interview that Tehran rejected the French complaint "completely and forcefully," but said the door for discussion was open. "If there is a misunderstanding ... about a thing that does not exist, be it a conspiracy by others or a mistake, we can sit down and talk about it," he said on October 2.

Last July, after French and Belgian authorities said that a Belgian couple of Iranian origin had been arrested in Belgium on suspicion of planning the Villepinte attack, Iran's foreign ministry dismissed accusations that Iran was behind the plot and said it was the MEK, itself, that was behind the "scenario."

"Based on the information available, the individuals arrested in Belgium are among the ... notorious and operational elements" of the MEK, the ministry said on its website.

"Relevant Iranian authorities are prepared to offer the necessary cooperation by presenting the required documents and evidence to shed light on the real dimensions of this pre-planned scenario orchestrated by the terrorist group," it said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who was in Europe with Iran's President Hassan Rouhani when the plot was uncovered, said the foiled Villepinte attack was a "false flag ploy" to harm Iran, and he offered his country's help in investigating the matter.



Image: Screenshot of [website of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran](#)



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