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Failed suicide bomber 'acted out of revenge'

FROM RANA SABBAGH-GARGOUR IN AMMAN

THE Iraqi woman who accompanied her husband on a suicide bombing in Jordan last week was apparently seeking to avenge three close relatives who were killed by American forces in Iraq over the past year.

Jordanian officials investigating the Amman attacks said that Sajida Mubarak al-Rishawi lost two brothers and a brother-in-law during US military operations against insurgents in the Iraqi province of Anbar, which borders Jordan.

Her brother-in-law, Nidal Arabiyat, 29, a Jordanian who was a chief bombmaker for Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the insurgent leader, was killed in Ramadi, the provincial capital, in 2004. Her two brothers, including Thamer Atrissi al-Rishawi, the right-hand man to al-Zarqawi, died in a big military offensive in Fallujah.

A Jordanian intelligence officer said: "The woman terrorist comes from a family of al-Qaeda diehards, and the successive deaths of her relatives have made her heartless."

The Jordanian security services, which have extensive experience in interrogating militants in Jordan, have so far found it impossible to get her to talk.

A source involved in the interrogation said: "She is strong-willed and hardly speaks. She often plays dumb or is evasive, and she has so far shown no sign of any regret over the tragedy and killings that she and her husband caused at the Radisson SAS Hotel." At least 23 people, all wedding guests, were killed at the party, including the groom's father and father-in-law.

The source said: "Her education is limited. She knows little about the holy Koran and the various fatwas [Islamic edicts]. She has been brainwashed and believes that her mission in life is to wage a war against all infidels, including Muslims who do not practise Islam according to al-Qaeda interpretations, as well as Shias, their avowed enemies."

Investigations into the coordinated bombings against the three hotels last Wednesday, which left 57 people dead and more than a hundred injured, have determined that al-Qaeda in Iraq planned the operation "from A to Z". The plot was executed by Iraqis, and no Jordanian was involved at any stage, the source said.

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