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## **KYRGYZSTAN DETAINS FOUR SUSPECTS ALLEGEDLY PLOTTING TERRORIST ATTACKS**

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Times of Central Asia (29 June 2017)

Authorities in Kyrgyzstan say they have detained four members of a suspected terrorist cell that was allegedly planning attacks in the country, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported.

The Kyrgyz State Committee for National Security said on June 28 that the four Kyrgyz citizens □ aged between 21 and 34 □ were plotting a series of terrorist attacks with improvised explosive devices and firearms in Kyrgyzstan's border areas.

The Committee said their cell was affiliated to an international terrorist organization, without providing further details.

The head of Kyrgyzstan's Defense Council, Temir Jumakadyrov, said on June 27 that authorities have prevented at least 17 terrorist attacks in the country last year.

Officials in Kyrgyzstan say hundreds of Kyrgyz citizens have joined extremist groups in Iraq and Syria such as the Islamic State in recent years.

In the meantime, a Kyrgyz court on June 27 sentenced three persons to 10 to 18 years of imprisonment for alleged involvement in an attack against the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek last year.

All three pleaded not guilty to charges of helping organize and finance the attack.

On August 30, 2016, three Kyrgyz nationals were injured after a suicide bomber rammed his car into the Chinese Embassy compound and detonated an explosive device inside the vehicle.

According to investigators, the bombing was ordered by Sirojiddin Mukhtarov, also known as Abu Saloh, a native of the southern Kyrgyz region of Osh.

He is believed to be fighting against government forces in Syria alongside ethnic Uyghurs affiliated with the Al-Nusra Front extremist group.