TUNISIA: FIVE MORE ISLAMIST TERRORISTS IN JAIL BREAK

Posted on November 1, 2023

The prison break comes just weeks the terror attack in Brussels by a Tunisian who escaped prison in 2011.

Category: NEWS
Tunisia is on edge after five high-profile Islamist prisoners escaped from a jail just outside the capital Tunis Tuesday, leading to senior intelligence officials already being sacked by the beleaguered Saied government.

The jailbreak comes just weeks after a failed asylum seeker who himself broke out from a Tunisian prison in 2011 shot dead two Swedish football fans in Brussels. Relations between Europe and the North African state have become increasingly strained amid a migrant and economic crisis.

The Tunisian Interior Ministry released the details of the five men, known to be key figures in Islamism both within Tunisia and around West Africa. They escaped from the maximum security Mornaguia jail.

The majority of the convicts were serving life sentences in relation to the assassinations of Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi, two progressive politicians, in 2013. The escaped prisoners were affiliated with Ansar al-Sharia, a Libyan offshoot of Al-Qaeda, according to local media reports.

Lawyers and activists have raised suspicions about how the men were able to evade detection. One former government advisor suggested a connection between the escapes and a conspiracy against the Tunisian government. The government has been criticised for failing to rally to support the Palestinian cause after Israel launched attacks following the October 7th Hamas attack on Israeli civilians that killed over 1,400 people.

In the aftermath of the security failures, Tunisian authorities have fired multiple officials as well as the prison’s warden. The prison is known as being the toughest in the country with prisoners kept in solitary rooms most of the day behind a minimum of seven locked doors.
Bordered by the civil-war-ridden Libya to the east, Tunisia has been beset by a variety of economic and political crises since the Arab Spring of 2011 which toppled longtime dictator Ben Ali.

The transition to democracy has faltered as the country turned to authoritarianism under Kais Saied. The country is also in the process of signing an agreement with the EU to help manage border security amid a surge of African refugees and ethnic violence.