
Fatah Cancels Yasser Arafat Death Anniversary Ceremony

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"We were informed by the security and political wings of Hamas that they were unable to guarantee the safety of the festival," Gaza-based Fatah spokesman Fayez Abu Eita said on Sunday, adding, "Faced with the danger posed to the public, we were obliged to announce its cancellation."

The decision was made after a series of explosions targeted cars and houses belonging to senior members of the Fatah movement on Friday. There were no reports of casualties following the attacks.

"Gaza security services asked the workers who were fixing the stage at al-Katiba square in Gaza City to stop working and leave," said Zakariyya al-Agha, a senior Fatah leader, in a statement. The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas also confirmed the cancellation of the ceremony "due to serious tension amidst the public, and the exchange of accusations after the suspicious explosions in Gaza, as well as other logistic difficulties."

Arafat died on November 11, 2004 at the age of 75 in a Paris military hospital. The analysis at the time was that he had a rare blood disorder. According to an October 2013 issue of British journal The Lancet, Arafat was poisoned with the radioactive element polonium 210.

In July 2012, experts at Lausanne University, Switzerland, said they had evidence Arafat might have been poisoned with polonium. The investigation into Arafat's mysterious death led to the exhumation of his body in November 2012 for further testing.

The decision to exhume Arafat's body was made after French prosecutors opened a murder probe into his death in August 2012 following the discovery of high levels of polonium on his personal belongings.

Edited by Ivan Martínez
