

Austria Arrests Chechen in Belgian NATO Plot

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VIENNA — Austrian police have detained a Chechen refugee wanted in Belgium on suspicion of planning an Islamist militant attack on NATO targets, Austrian authorities said Saturday.

The suspect, who lives with his family in Austria, slipped through the dragnet when police in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands swooped in on suspected plotters last month, Interior Ministry spokesman Rudolf Gollia said.

The man, whom Gollia declined to identify, was taken into custody Dec. 1 when he arrived at Vienna airport from abroad. He remained under arrest pending an expected request from Belgium for his extradition.

"Belgian authorities suspect a group of Chechen extremists, who were seeking to set up a religious state in northern Chechnya, planned to attack NATO facilities in Belgium," Gollia said.

Police in the three other countries arrested about 10 people in the case on Nov. 23. Belgian

prosecutors said at the time that the Belgian, Dutch, Moroccan and Russian nationals held were suspected of links to a group which had been active on an Islamist web site called Ansar al Mujahideen.

They said investigators were also seeking evidence of recruitment and financing of the Chechen militant organization Caucasus Emirate.

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