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Deported Hamas activist vows to keep fighting for Palestinians

1 NEW YORK (JTA) -- Shortly after his arrival in Jordan this week, Hamas leader Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook said his organization would no longer target Israeli civilians for terrorist attacks.

2 At the same time, he vowed to resume his own struggle against what he termed Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

3 "I have a long way to go in serving my people and helping them achieve their hopes and aspirations," he was quoted as saying.

4 If the Palestinians cannot win their rights through peace, he added, "we don't have any option except to fight for our future."

5 Marzook made the comments at a news conference in Amman on Tuesday, one day after it was announced that the United States had deported him.

6 He had been detained in a New York jail since July 1995 after being suspected of being a terrorist.

7 In an unusual deal, Jordan agreed to accept Marzook as a humanitarian gesture, after Israel dropped its request to have him extradited.

8 Marzook, who gave up his U.S. residency under the deal, said he believed that Israel decided it had no evidence to support its charges that he helped orchestrate terrorist attacks that killed 47 people. The Hamas military wing has claimed credit for the series of attacks.

9 Marzook has said he was only a political leader and fund-raiser for the group, and that his detention was politically motivated.

10 Israel apparently dropped the request for fear that putting him on trial would inflame tensions in the region and spur Palestinian violence.

11 An Israeli official said the deportation to Jordan "seemed one of the most convenient" ways to resolve the case.

12 "We trust that King Hussein will know how to contain Abu Marzook's activities," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

13 There has been speculation that the United States' decision to deport him to Jordan came with certain

conditions.

But Marzook said he "categorically rejected" conditions such "as abandoning political activities and condemning the actions that are carried out by my Palestinian brethren" against Israel.

Marzook had been a U.S. resident for 15 years when he was detained at a New York airport because his name was on a list of suspected terrorists.

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