

Houthis condemned for failing to protect journalists

Author:

Wed, 2020-11-04 02:27

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's Journalists Syndicate has condemned a death threat made against a veteran journalist based in Houthi-held Sanaa, calling upon the Iran-backed group to protect him and to find those behind the threat.

The syndicate said the threat against Abdul Bari Taher must be investigated.

"The Houthi group, the de facto authority in Sanaa, holds full responsibility for these actions, and should protect him, investigate this crime and punish the perpetrators." Taher was targeted because of his "brave stands and opinions," the syndicate added.

Taher, who was born in the western province of Hodeidah in 1941, was a founding member of the syndicate in the 1970s and has been in charge of several government and private newspapers during the last five decades.

He is currently a columnist for local and regional newspapers. In Oct. 2018, the Houthis briefly held him along with 19 other journalists for participating in an "unauthorized" event in Sanaa.

Yemeni politicians and activists demanded the Houthis quickly identify the people who threatened to kill Taher and also those who have killed several popular politicians in Sanaa in the last five years.

"Whoever threatens Abdul Bari Taher is in fact threatening every free Yemeni who does not belong to the Houthi group," Mustapha Noman, a former minister and diplomat, tweeted.

Hundreds of Yemeni journalists, activists and opposition figures have been forced to flee to government-controlled areas or seek exile due to the group's harsh crackdown in the last six years.

The group has put them on trial in absentia, confiscated their houses and froze their bank accounts even after they had left.

Outspoken journalists and writers who remain in Sanaa are harassed by the Houthis.

In April the Houthis abducted Khaled Al-Ruwaishan, a former Yemeni culture minister and an outspoken writer, who criticized the group's handling of flash floods that hit Sanaa and other areas in northern Yemen.

That same month a Houthi-run court sentenced four journalists to death after convicting them of contacting the group's enemies. The four journalists were among a group of 10 journalists who were abducted from a hotel in Sanaa in 2015.

In a report issued on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists – Nov. 2 – the syndicate said that 44 Yemeni journalists had been killed and hundreds of others had been detained since 2010.

Yemen's Information Minister Muammar Al-Aryani urged international rights groups to pressure the Houthis to cease their harassment of journalists and free those being held in their prisons.

"We remember with deep pain our fellow journalists in Houthi prisons, who were sentenced to death for their political opinions. The Houthis refused to release in (the latest) prisoner swap deal (so) as to exploit their and their families' suffering for political pressure and blackmail," the minister tweeted on Tuesday.



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Hadi: Implementing Riyadh accord key to defeating Houthis
Arab coalition seizes huge drugs shipment in Yemen heading to Houthis

Lebanon decides not to charge Ghosn over Israel trip

Author:

Wed, 2020-11-04 02:23

BEIRUT: Lebanon's prosecutor general decided Tuesday not to charge fugitive ex-auto tycoon Carlos Ghosn for visiting Israel in 2008 because the statute of limitations has expired, a judicial source said.

Three lawyers filed a motion in January calling for the 66-year-old businessman to be prosecuted over his trip to the Jewish state as Renault-Nissan chairman.

Lebanon is technically still at war with Israel and forbids its citizens from traveling there.

"Prosecutor general Ghassan Oueidat decided ... not to prosecute Ghosn for the crimes attributed to him of entering the enemy country and dealing with it economically," the source told AFP.

"A statute of limitations of ten years had passed since the alleged crime," the source added.

Ghosn on Jan. 8 apologized to the Lebanese people for having visited Israel to sign a deal to produce electric vehicles, saying he traveled on business for Renault on a French passport.

He also holds Lebanese and Brazilian nationalities.

The ex-Nissan chief was arrested in Japan in November 2018 on financial misconduct charges and spent 130 days in detention, before he jumped bail and smuggled himself out of the country late last year.

Ghosn appeared at a press conference in Lebanon on Jan. 8, denying all charges and claiming he was a victim of a plot by Nissan and Japanese officials.

Japan has called on Ghosn to return to the Asian country to be tried, while Lebanon has asked Japan to hand over his file on financial misconduct charges.

He and his wife Carole are to take part in a documentary and mini-series about his life, the first of which started shooting in Beirut in September.

Separately, the US Justice Department on Friday urged a federal judge to swiftly reject a last-minute bid by two Massachusetts men to avoid being extradited to Japan to face charges that they helped Ghosn flee the country.

The lawyers for the two men have said they will ask the State Department and White House to reconsider their extradition.



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Carlos Ghosn brings executive training to troubled Lebanon 'Make yourself invaluable': Carlos Ghosn offers executive training in troubled Lebanon

[Why Lebanese-Armenians feel the pull of the Nagorno-Karabakh war](#)

Wed, 2020-11-04 01:53

BEIRUT: Kevork Hadjian was a much loved opera singer, famous for his mesmerizing voice and the allure he lent to patriotic Armenian anthems. Born and raised in southern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, the ethnic Armenian lived for a time in Kuwait before moving to Yerevan, Armenia's capital, with his family in 2004.

An ardent patriot, Hadjian held a special place in his heart for Artsakh, the ancient Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh. He fought there briefly in 2016 in what became known as the Four-Day War.

So when Azerbaijan targeted the breakaway region's capital Stepanakert on

Sept. 27, the singer again volunteered to fight for its independence. Just over a week later, on Oct. 6, he was killed on the front line. He was 49.

Hadjian is among the more recognizable casualties of the recent fighting. Their deaths have become something of a rallying cry for young Armenian-Lebanese tempted to follow in their footsteps.

Lebanon is home to a significant Armenian diaspora, descendants of the 1.5 million ethnic Armenians who escaped the genocide 100 years ago – a crime that Turkey to this day refuses to acknowledge.

But the passage of time has failed to quiet Armenian nationalist fervor, stoked anew by the war in the South Caucasus. “Armenians have already seen genocide,” Ishkhan Y, a Lebanon-born Armenian, told Arab News in Beirut. “This is history repeating itself in Artsakh. As Armenians of the diaspora, we are very concerned and upset by what is going on in Artsakh.”



Lebanon is home to a significant Armenian diaspora. (AFP)

Whispers around Beirut and social-media chatter tell of ethnic Armenians who have left Lebanon to join the war, like many others in the wider diaspora. In Bourj Hammoud, the Armenian district of Beirut, many walls are graffitied with slogans criticizing both Turkey and Azerbaijan.

The same is happening in Hadjian's birthplace in the Bekaa Valley, where villagers say young men are leaving for Nagorno-Karabakh. “There were no calls from the Armenian government or from a political party for them to go,” one villager, who did not want to be named, told Arab News. “They left

because they felt it was their duty to go and fight.”

Fighting erupted in late September between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians in the contested territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, reigniting the decades-old dispute. Turkey is widely accused of encouraging Azerbaijan to launch the latest offensive, and has sent weapons and funding to support Baku’s war effort.

Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous region with a population of around 150,000, is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but is claimed and governed by the ethnic Armenians who live there. A diplomatic solution to end the dispute has evaded the warring parties since the 1994 ceasefire.

As the former Soviet republics accuse one another of launching unprovoked attacks, towns and villages have since been indiscriminately shelled, some with banned cluster munitions, according to the rights watchdog Amnesty International. Entire buildings have been reduced to rubble, forcing thousands of civilians from their homes.

Two ceasefire deals have failed to hold – the first brokered by Russia on Oct. 10 and another by the US on Oct. 18. Mike Pompeo, the US secretary of state, held separate meetings with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Washington on Oct. 22, taking over from Moscow’s earlier attempts at establishing a dialogue.

According to a statement from the Armenian Ministry of Defense on Oct. 27, Azerbaijani forces shelled Armenian border guards near the country’s southeast frontier with Iran, expanding the conflict into Armenia proper.

THE CONFLICT IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH



Presenting Baku's side of the conflict in an oped in Arab News on Oct.2, Ramil Imranov, an Azerbaijani diplomat, wrote: "Armenia keeps trying to legalize the consequences of the war and raise the international prestige of the separatist regime established by Armenia in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. By constantly violating the cease-fire achieved in 1994, Armenia tries to consolidate the existing status-quo."

A member of the Armenian diaspora, who asked to remain anonymous, said: "Like all Armenians, we as Lebanese-Armenians believe the only solution in the end is a peaceful solution." But for many Armenians, the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is about more than the territory itself: It is part of a wider assault on the essence of Armenian identity.

"Whether it is Turkey or Azerbaijan, both states have a tradition of historical revisionism towards Armenians," he said. "Turkey does so with the Armenian genocide and Azerbaijan has done so regarding the history of

Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“Since the 1960s, Azerbaijani authorities have relayed a revisionist history of the Armenian people, claiming that everything related to Armenian history on Azerbaijani land is actually related to the Caucasian Albanians,” he said.

“The same historical revisionism extends to the Azeris’ idea of Armenia and its territories, all of which they believe belong to Azerbaijan. Azeris deny our rightful place in history.”

Many Armenians claim Ankara has a neo-Ottoman agenda and is working hand in glove with Azerbaijan to exterminate them, pointing to the televised remarks in July by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan: “We will continue to fulfill the mission our grandfathers have carried out for centuries in the Caucasus.”

Armenian-Lebanese artist Manuella Guiragossian, whose grandmother survived the genocide, believes Turkish government policies are infused with anti-Armenian sentiments.

“If you can imagine what they did to my grandparents during the genocide, you can also imagine what they will do to an entire Armenian population today,” she said. “Turkey’s objective is to do what they did during the Ottoman Empire and take more land and unite Azerbaijan and Turkey and totally remove Armenia from the map.”



Ankara and Baku have both denied accusations that mercenaries from Turkish-controlled parts of Syria and Libya are involved in the conflict, but reports of Syrian casualties of the Nagorno-Karabakh war are trickling in from multiple sources.

Some members of the Armenians diaspora want the international community to take the Nagorno-Karabakh situation far more seriously. American socialite

Kim Kardashian West, who is of Armenian descent, has donated \$1 million to the California-based Armenia Fund to support the humanitarian effort.

“Even if the whole planet does not support the Armenians, you have a massive number of Armenians rising up all over the world right now, from Los Angeles to Boston and London and Paris,” said Guiragossian.

For Armenian-Lebanese like Ishkhan, the only way to stop the fighting is through international pressure. “Peace and safety can only be guaranteed through the recognition of a free, independent Artsakh by the international community,” he said.

“Armenians have to be able to live freely, safely and securely. Children must be able to go to school, mothers should not cry over their lost sons and husbands because of an insane war, supported by Turkey’s ambitions, financial means and military technology and fueled by their allies.”

Until then, many young Lebanon-born Armenians rightly or wrongly are convinced their best option is to follow the example of volunteers like Hadjian.

“We have no choice but to fight for our land and our country,” said Ishkhan. “We must win this war.”

Twitter: @rebeccaaproctor



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Renewed fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh threatens US-backed truce Putin tells Erdogan of concern about Mid-East fighters in Nagorno-Karabakh

[UAE announces 1,008 new cases of COVID-19 and six more deaths](#)

Author:

Wed, 2020-11-04 00:49

DUBAI: Private schools in Abu Dhabi will reopen to students in January, authorities in the emirate announced on Tuesday. It came as the UAE confirmed 1,008 new cases of COVID-19 and six deaths related to the disease.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention said the total number of cases has reached 136,149, and the death toll stands at 503. A further 1,466 people recovered during the previous 24 hours, bringing the total number of recoveries to 133,490.

Dr. Omar Al-Hammadi, the official spokesman for the government, said that the number of daily confirmed coronavirus cases fell by 15 percent between Oct. 28 and Nov. 3. The rate of recovery has fallen by nine percent, he added, and 21 people died during the past week.

It is possible to be reinfected by the same virus after recovery or after vaccination, the body develops antibodies whose validity varies from disease to disease, some of which last for life and some last for a specified period after vaccination or infection. [#CommitToWin](#)

– NCEMA UAE (@NCEMAUAE) [November 3, 2020](#)

Al-Hammadi also said that it is possible to be reinfected by the same virus even after a patient has recovered or after they have received their vaccination, depending on the individual.

In a message posted on Twitter, the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority said: “This week’s mortality rate is 0.4%, the lowest globally compared to the EU (at) 2.6% and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) at 2.4% and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD) at 3.0%.”

805,579 tests were conducted nationwide from October 28 to November 3, the number of tests increased by 3% compared to last week and confirmed cases decreased to 15% for the same period. [#CommitToWin](#)

– NCEMA UAE (@NCEMAUAE) [November 3, 2020](#)

The announcement that private schools in Abu Dhabi will reopen was made by the Abu Dhabi Emergency Crisis and Disasters Committee for the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the Department of Education and Knowledge. "The Department of Education will coordinate with private schools and support them in implementing the necessary preventive and precautionary measures to maintain the health and safety of students and staff," officials said.

The Abu Dhabi Emergency Crisis and Disasters Committee for Covid-19 Pandemic and the Department of Education and Knowledge (@ADEK_tweet) have agreed that private schools in #AbuDhabi will welcome all students back to classrooms from January. pic.twitter.com/X4gwHoRQnD

– مكتب أبوظبي الإعلامي (@admediaoffice) [November 3, 2020](#)

In Sharjah, the government has approved a second stimulus package of incentives, worth 512 million dirhams (\$140 million), to support public and private-sector businesses and the self-employed, help boost the business sector and mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic. Kuwait announced 787 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total to 128,080. The death toll in the country has reached 789, after three new fatalities were confirmed.

تعلن [#وزارة_الصحة](#) عن تأكيد إصابة 787 حالة جديدة، وتسجيل 694 حالة شفاء، و 3 حالات وفاة جديدة بـ [#فيروس_كورونا_المستجد](#) COVID-19 ، ليصبح إجمالي عدد الحالات 128,080 حالة pic.twitter.com/aGxrVjyb1p

– وزارة الصحة – الكويت (@KUWAIT_MOH) [November 3, 2020](#)

Oman's Health Ministry reported 376 new cases and eight deaths, bringing the totals to 116,528 and 1,264 respectively.

[#Statement](#) No. 218
November 3, 2020 pic.twitter.com/aALSvd2AST

– وزارة الصحة – عُمان (@OmaniMOH) [November 3, 2020](#)

In Bahrain, two deaths was reported, bringing the death toll to 324, while 230 new infected cases were confirmed.

Out of 10036 COVID-19 tests carried out on 3 November 2020, 230 new cases have been detected among 64 expatriate workers, 158 new cases are contacts of active cases, and 8 are travel related. There were 362 recoveries from [#COVID19](#), increasing total recoveries to 79680

pic.twitter.com/6jTEjcRExE

– مملكة البحرين | وزارة الصحة (@MOH_Bahrain) [November 3, 2020](#)



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UAE Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed receives trial coronavirus vaccine Saudi Arabia announces 19 more COVID-19 deaths

[**Hadi: Implementing Riyadh accord key**](#)

to defeating Houthis

Author:

Tue, 2020-11-03 01:10

AL-MUKALLA: Implementing the Riyadh Agreement was the key to overthrowing the Houthis, foiling Iran's designs in Yemen, and building an efficient federal system in the country, the Yemeni president said on the anniversary of the historic accord.

Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi was speaking during a meeting with his advisers where he updated them about ongoing discussions between different parties over the formation of a new government.

"Our meeting today comes on the eve of the first anniversary of the signing of the Riyadh Agreement, which we continue to perceive as a way for restoring the state, uniting efforts, and ending the Houthi coup," he said.

Signed in November last year, the Riyadh Agreement was designed to defuse hostilities between the internationally recognized government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in the liberated southern provinces and refocus efforts on fighting the Houthis and reviving state institutions. The deal called for both sides to pull their forces out of Aden and Abyan and redeploy them to reinforce military fighting the Houthis.

Despite naming a new governor and security chief for Aden, the formation of a new government that would include the STC has been slow as some parties have opposed the distribution of ministries.

In Riyadh, Hadi on Sunday repeated his support for Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed, Yemen's prime minister-designate, in his effort to announce a new government. Official media said that Hadi told Saeed that his government should live up to the aspirations of Yemenis and work on addressing the worsening humanitarian crisis caused by Houthi military activities throughout the country.

Several government and STC sources last week told Arab News that the prime minister was close to finalizing his government, but on Monday sources in Riyadh revealed that an announcement had been delayed due to some parties, mainly the General People's Congress and Islah party, that were unhappy with their portfolio of ministries, refusing to name their ministers.

The congress and Islah, two major parties that have dominated the political establishment in Yemen for ages, are demanding better representation in the new Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Arab coalition forces in the central province of Marib, Maj. Gen. Yusef Al-Shahrani, on Sunday pledged continued military support to Yemeni army forces and allied tribesmen battling against the Iran-backed Houthis.

During a field trip with Yemeni army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Sagheer bin Aziz, Al-Shahrani said the coalition would carry on backing the armed forces of Yemen until the Houthis had been defeated and the entire country had been brought back under state control.

Bin Aziz said Yemen's forces appreciated the coalition's support, and he vowed to push ahead with military operations until the Houthis had been driven out of areas under their control.

In the densely populated city of Taiz, residents said on Monday that sporadic

shelling by the Houthis wounded several civilians, forced students to flee schools, and damaged properties in the eastern part of the city. For five years, the Houthis, who control the outskirts of Taiz, have imposed a siege on the city and have heavily shelled downtown residential areas in a bid to force government forces to surrender.



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