

Jordanian boy suffers horrific injuries in revenge attack

Author:

Thu, 2020-10-15 01:14

AMMAN: A 16-year-old Jordanian boy has lost both of his hands and an eye in a revenge attack by a criminal gang that targeted his father in the industrial city of Zarqa in Jordan.

A video of the victim has gone viral, causing public outrage. King Abdullah II has taken a personal interest in the case and requested that the boy be treated at the King Hussein Medical Center. He also called on police to pursue the perpetrators.

Queen Rania has also tweeted about the case. "How do we replace for you what the criminals took away? How do we reunite your mother's heart and those of your family? How do we protect our children from those who are not being deterred? This is a heinous crime. Our hearts are with you. I add my voice for the perpetrators facing the most severe punishment," she said.

Amer Sartawi, spokesman of the Jordanian police, told Arab News that the attacker and five members of his gang were apprehended and will be tried in the state security court. "A special unit worked on the case and was able to arrest the lead attacker and five of his cohorts. Two pieces of weapons and sharp objects that were used in the crime were confiscated. Further investigation will determine if there are other accomplices," he said.

Mahmmoud Zawahreh, director of Naya Community Center in Zarqa, told Arab News that the filming and distribution of the video was as ugly as the crime itself. "This crime reflects a moral low of humanity and a sign of the increase of the culture of violence in recent years in our society."

Zawahreh, a youth activist, said that while financial losses can be replenished, moral losses will be long-lasting. "We are suffering from a moral loss that will not be easily replaced. We need to have a thorough study of how to deter such morally reprehensible crimes in the future."

Jordan's police force also arrested a person charged with filming and distributing the video of the victim's injuries.

He is being held in violation of Article 11 of the Cybercrime law, which prohibits violating the privacy of children.

Taghrid Doghmi, director of the Wae'e Center for Human Rights Training, told Arab News that the usual punishment in civil courts for kidnapping and causing permanent harm is a 10 year prison sentence. Public anger expressed on social media has led to calls for capital punishment and life imprisonment for the attackers.

Sartawi said that the state security court will charge the accused with

terrorizing the public. He added that, if convicted, the penalty for the charged crimes will be a lifetime in jail for the perpetrators. The lead criminal has 172 prior convictions, police said.

Doghmi supported the arrest of the person who took the video, saying that the distribution of the clip is a clear crime according to Jordanian law. "Even if the victim or his family agreed to the filming, this is still a crime because of the age of the victim."

Muath Momani, director of Lawyers Without Borders, told Arab News that the entire penal code must be revised. "We must think long and hard about how to deal with cases like this with a mix of direct incarceration and social rehabilitation taken into consideration, to ensure that such crimes are not repeated."



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Jordan to unveil over 100 testing sites in heightened COVID-19 efforts

Yemen separatist council urged to honor military commitments under Riyadh Agreement

Author:

Thu, 2020-10-15 01:09

AL-MUKALLA: The Yemeni government has urged the pro-independence Southern Transitional Council (STC) to immediately put into place security and military arrangements approved under the Riyadh Agreement to help smooth the way toward forming a new administration.

Ahmed Obeid Bin Daghr, a senior adviser to the Yemeni president and himself a former president of the country, said on Tuesday that the internationally recognized government had honored its political commitments under the agreement by naming a new governor and security chief for Aden.

But he signaled that the new government could not be named until the STC had implemented its security and military commitments, such as withdrawing forces from Aden and Abyan.

"We hope that military measures will follow in Abyan and security in Aden to ensure the return of the president, parliament, and the government to the temporary capital of Aden," Bin Daghr said in a tweet, pointing out the significance of the Riyadh Agreement in bringing together Yemenis in their mutual battle against the Iran-backed Houthis.

The Yemeni official thanked Saudi Arabia for bridging differences between the two groups and helping them overcome difficulties in the implementation process of the agreement.

In Aden, STC leaders had previously denied repeated government accusations that they were delaying withdrawals, claiming that some government military units involved in fighting in Abyan had not returned to their bases in the central city of Marib.

During a meeting on Saturday with the Saudi military committee monitoring the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement in Aden, Ahmed Saeed bin Breik, the STC's acting president, said the council had submitted proposals for accelerating the fulfilment of the Riyadh Agreement, disengagement of forces, and repositioning troops.

At the same meeting, Ahmed Lamli, Aden's new governor and the STC's secretary-general, said that he had ordered the removal of military and security checkpoints from streets in Aden and was working on restoring vital services.

Under the Riyadh Agreement, designed to defuse tensions between the government and STC in southern Yemen, the council will be included in a new

government in exchange for pulling out of Aden and Abyan and allowing the government to return to Aden.

Fighting between the two sides broke out in May when government forces pushed toward Aden in a move aimed at expelling separatists from the strategic city.

In June, the Saudi-led coalition deployed military officers to monitor a truce in Abyan and the withdrawal of arms and weapons from Aden.

Meanwhile, fighting raged on Wednesday in different areas of the western city of Hodeidah where the Iran-backed Houthis have been pushing to drive government forces out of liberated parts of the city and the districts of Hays and Al-Durihimi.

The Joint Forces, an umbrella term for three major military units in the country's western coast, said dozens of Houthis, including three field military leaders, were killed in fierce clashes on Tuesday and Wednesday and government forces had foiled Houthi attempts to advance in the province. In southern Taiz, official news agency SABA reported on Tuesday that government troops had made limited gains in the city.



Main category:

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Yemen PM says 'great progress' in Riyadh Agreement implementation process
Yemeni government, STC discuss coalition under Riyadh Agreement

Palestinian Authority's financial crisis 'could come to end next month'

Author:

Thu, 2020-10-15 00:55

GAZA CITY: A union leader has urged striking West Bank teachers to “be patient with the government” amid assurances that the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) ongoing financial crisis could soon be resolved.

Secretary-General of the Teachers Union Saed Erzikat has warned that worker representatives would “not be able to protect any teacher” taking part in unauthorized industrial action from the prospect of arrest.

Teachers from a number of schools in Hebron and the West Bank have been staging protests after having only received part of their monthly salaries since May.

PA finances have been hard hit as a result of its fractious relationship with Israel and the US over what it describes as “plans to liquidate the Palestinian cause.”

Five months ago, the PA found itself unable to meet its monthly financial obligations, most notably the payment of wages, after it stopped receiving tax revenues on goods entering Palestinian territories, collected by Israel on its behalf. The taxes are estimated to make up more than 60 percent of the PA’s income.

A number of teachers were arrested after taking part in strikes, which union officials have distanced themselves from.

Erzikat said that the union was in constant contact with the PA on the issue of salary payments adding that the financial crisis would come to an end next month. But the official warned that the union would “not be able to protect any teacher, and all teachers must abide by the attendance at their schools.”

However, so-called United Teachers’ Movement protesters described the union as a “government front that does not care about teachers.”

Teacher and activist Khaled Shabita, who was one of those arrested, said teachers had a right to peacefully strike and it was wrong of the PA to question their “patriotism” for taking part in industrial action.

“We want a free country, and we want a decent life. Employees face a difficult choice. Do they not have the right to live in dignity, just as much as having the right to fight for the freedom of their country from occupation?” he told Arab News.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Ishtayeh, previously told public servants, “do you want a homeland or money?”

Education affairs writer, Ismail Muslimani, said workers, including teachers, had the right to strike. “The scene has become complicated and the scale of the tragedy is great, and the employee is not obliged to pay the price of failed policies,” he added.

International mediation efforts are reportedly underway to get a resumption of tax income for the PA. The authority’s monthly salary bill is about 550 million Israeli shekels (\$162 million) for about 136,000 employees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Average monthly government expenditure would normally be expected to top 1.1 billion shekels.

Economist Ayman Abu Aisha said: “If the Palestinian Authority succeeds in obtaining an Arab loan, then it will not need the tax revenues that are collected by Israel, but if it does not succeed, then the option of receiving the revenues will be its last resort to solve its financial crisis.”



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UNRWA appreciates Saudi Arabia’s support for Palestinian refugees ‘No collapse’ of Palestinian Authority says minister despite strong UN warning

UN urges Libyans to prioritize national interest in November talks

Author:

Wed, 2020-10-14 00:57

CARTHAGE, Tunisia: The UN's Libya envoy on Monday urged rival parties to place the national interest before political ambitions when they meet for talks next month aimed at ending a decade of bloodshed.

The North African country is dominated by armed groups, riven by local conflicts and divided between two bitterly opposed administrations: A United Nations-recognized unity government based in Tripoli and its eastern-based rival backed by strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Neighbouring Tunisia is set to host talks in early November including representatives of civil society, tribesmen, political leaders, and members of bodies representing both administrations.

"What we want to see in terms of participation is people who are not there for their own political aspirations, but for their country," said UN envoy Stephanie Williams on Monday, after meeting Tunisian President Kais Saied.

Asked whether Haftar or unity government chief Fayez Al-Sarraj would be present, she said participants would be able to take part on the condition "that they remove themselves from consideration in high government positions."

This included membership of the key Presidential Council, the prime minister's job and ministerial posts, she told AFP.

The talks are intended to prepare for national elections, she added.

Tunisia's Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi called for "a dialogue between Libyans that could lead to a political solution to the crisis."

Saied spoke on Monday with his Algerian counterpart Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who saluted the renewed dialogue and said that Algeria, another neighbor of Libya, was "always at Tunisia's side."

Tebboune also spoke of a visit to Tunisia after the Nov. 1 referendum on constitutional reform in Algeria.

The Algerian president's office confirmed that the two men had spoken via telephone.

"The President of the Republic, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, received a telephone call on the part of his counterpart Kais Saied, and they reviewed bilateral relations and his planned visit to Tunisia," it said in a statement.

Tebboune “welcomed Tunisia’s organization of inter-Libyan dialogue under the auspices of the UN,” the statement said.

A previous agreement between rival Libyan sides, signed in Morocco in 2015, created a unity government that was never recognized by Haftar.

In April 2019 he launched an offensive to seize Tripoli, but was pushed back after over a year of fighting.

Since his forces were driven from western Libya, the rival sides have resumed talks on specific themes: Institutions, military and political affairs.

The Tunis talks will begin on Oct. 26 by videoconference, before continuing face-to-face in early November.



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UN, Germany host summit to capitalize on glimmers of hope for peace in Libya
Italy, Morocco hold talks on Libya

Sudan's premier sacks provincial governor after protests

Author:

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CAIRO: Sudan's prime minister on Tuesday sacked the governor of an eastern province, less than three months after his appointment, the state-run news agency reported.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok's decision to fire Saleh Ammar, newly appointed governor of Kassala province, came amid sporadic protests against his appointment – protests that at times have turned deadly.

Ammar was named governor of Kassala in July, when Hamdok appointed civilian governors for the country's 18 provinces. The move was seen at the time as a key step forward in Sudan's transition to democracy.

But the protesters, who opposed his appointment on tribal grounds, barred Ammar from entering Kassala, so he remained in the capital, Khartoum. The protests escalated in August, when at least five people were killed and over three dozen were wounded.

Sudan is on a fragile path to democracy after a popular uprising led the military to overthrow former autocratic President Omar Bashir in April 2019. A military-civilian government now rules the country, with elections possible in late 2022.

Ammar had claimed, without offering evidence, that supporters of Bashir were behind the protests. The prime minister did not immediately name a replacement for Ammar.

Later Tuesday, Ammar's sacking triggered new protests in Kassala. Footage circulated online showing protesters blocking roads and setting tires ablaze. No casualties were reported.

The Beni Amer tribe, from which Ammar hails, rejected his dismissal.

Several activists also criticized the sacking, warning of widespread chaos in eastern Sudan amid tribal tensions. Award-winning novelist Hamour Zyada said the decision showed the transitional government's weakness in fighting those who opposed Ammar's appointment.

Elsewhere in Sudan, more than 4,500 people in South Darfur province have been displaced in the past week by ongoing clashes between factions of a rebel group boycotting a recent peace deal between the transitional government and a rebel alliance, according to the UN migration agency.

The fighting between factions of the Sudan Liberation Army–Abdel-Wahid Nour erupted earlier this month in the Sharg al-Jabal area, the International Organization for Migration said.

The transitional government and the Sudan Revolutionary Front, a coalition of several armed groups, signed a peace deal earlier this month, capping torturous talks that had been underway in South Sudan's capital, Juba, since late last year.

Abdel-Wahid's group rejects the transitional government and has not taken part in the talks. It criticized the deal, saying it was "not different from" other previous deals that did not end the wars.

Sudan's largest single rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Movement-North, led by Abdel-Aziz Al-Hilu, was involved in the talks but has yet to reach a deal with the government.



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Inflation in Sudan hits record 212 percent Sudanese migrant reaches UK after fateful journey