

# Pressure mounts for removal of Lebanese information minister over Gulf row

Author:

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BEIRUT: Pressure is mounting on Lebanese leaders to remove a Cabinet minister whose comments on the war in Yemen have triggered a diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia, even as the minister at the center of the crisis said that resigning from the government was not an option.

The Kingdom, the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain have recalled their ambassadors from Lebanon, while also instructing Lebanon's envoys to leave. The UAE has banned its citizens from traveling to Lebanon.

The decisions follow remarks that Information Minister George Kordahi gave in an interview that was recorded before his appointment, saying the Iran-backed Houthis were defending themselves and that the war in Yemen should stop, with a video of the interview emerging last week.

In a televised speech on Sunday, amid the deepening crisis, Kordahi addressed those who had been urging him to quit. "Resigning from the government is not an option," he said.

Lebanon has been calling US and French officials, asking them to intervene and help them find a way out of the crisis caused by his comments, which go against the country's official position on the Yemen conflict.

King Salman called Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday to express his appreciation for the measures that Kuwait had taken on Kordahi's statements, reflecting the solidarity of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, according to Saudi Arabia's embassy in Lebanon.

Al-Sabah said that "the measures of his country reflect the unity of GCC countries and the depth of relations among their peoples," the embassy added.

King Salman also called King Hamad of Bahrain and "expressed his gratitude for the measures Bahrain has taken regarding the statements, reflecting Saudi-Bahraini solidarity and unity of the GCC countries."

He reiterated "the depth of relations between the two brotherly countries and the solidarity among GCC countries."

Lebanon's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Fawzi Kabbara, announced on Sunday that he had returned to Beirut.

He said that "restoring Lebanese-Saudi ties would be possible if Lebanon agrees to the conditions."

Lebanon's Maronite Patriarch Bechara Al-Rahi in his Sunday sermon called for "decisive action," suggesting that he wanted Kordahi to resign.

He said: "We are hoping that President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Najib Mikati and everyone else involved in the case will take decisive action to save Lebanese relations with the Gulf. The most important achievement that political forces can make is not to be dragged into the game of states, especially during this critical phase in the region."

He also said Lebanon had opted for "partnership" to establish peace, moderation and neutrality, and the state of law that was protected by a "just and fair" judiciary.

"The crisis between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia in particular, and the Gulf countries in general, has multiple and accumulating causes and harms the interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese," he warned.

Mikati is in Glasgow for the COP26.

According to sources, he is expected to hold "several international and Arab meetings on Monday and Tuesday to discuss the current crisis between Lebanon and Gulf countries" on the sidelines of the summit.

The Lebanese-Saudi Business Council condemned Kordahi's statements as well as those from former Minister Charbel Wehbe and other officials they said had harmed the country's relations with its Arab neighbors, "especially ones who have stood beside us during the difficult times – mainly Saudi Arabia."

It urged that the necessary measures be taken to remove Kordahi who, it said, had caused "an unprecedented rift" with Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, because of "irresponsible statements over which he did not bother to apologize or resign" to maintain Lebanon's relations with Gulf countries and protect national interests.

"Things should go back to the way they were and Lebanon should be brought back to its Arab and Gulf environment to protect the diaspora in Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries, and the interests of farmers, industrialists, exporters, traders, contractors and those who need today, more than ever before, to protect their interests against absurdity and deterioration," it said.

The Saudi ambassador to Lebanon, Walid Bukhari, quoted Gebran Khalil Gebran on Sunday in a tweet: "A sinner would not commit a sin without a hidden will. Gebran Khalil Gebran uttered those words, and they were heard by the whole world. He is the master of words." He left Lebanon on Saturday.

Former MP Mustafa Alloush, who is vice president of the Future Movement, said the situation would have been different had Kordahi resigned two days after what had happened. "But today, I am certain that harming Lebanon's relations with Saudi Arabia was intentional. Hezbollah is continuing its project by increasing hostility with Arab states," he told Arab News.

"But the whole case has to do with a long history of anti-Saudi statements and positions by Kordahi, former minister Wehbe and MP Gebran Bassil, along

with the lack of addressing the Captagon-smuggling issue from Lebanon into the Kingdom, and Hezbollah's continuing insults to Saudi Arabia and threats to its security.

"Whether Kordahi resigns now or not, this is no longer relevant. The Lebanese government has become a hostage and the proof is that the positions of Mikati and the Lebanese Foreign Ministry were not decisive nor firm. Mikati had to be firm and order the removal of Kordahi and threaten to dissolve the government."

The Foreign Ministry reiterated in a statement on Sunday that Lebanon's "great concern (was) to have the best relations with its Gulf and Arab brothers."

The ministry also referenced the position of Oman's Foreign Ministry calling on everyone to "show restraint, avoid escalation and address the dispute through dialogue and understanding to preserve the supreme interests of states and peoples and maintain stability, security and cooperation, on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs."

A committee formed at Mikati's request to resolve the Kordahi crisis has so far failed to find a solution. It recommended waiting on the results of the international calls being made.



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Saudi foreign minister: Hezbollah dominance of political system is Lebanon's real problem  
UAE calls on citizens in Lebanon to return as soon as possible

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## [Coalition says 218 Houthis killed in airstrikes around Marib city](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-01 00:58

ADEN: The Arab military coalition in Yemen said on Sunday that more than 218 Houthis were killed in airstrikes around Marib city, the internationally recognized government's last northern bastion.

"Twenty-four military vehicles were destroyed" and more than 218 Houthis were killed in strikes in the past 72 hours in two districts, according to the coalition.

In recent weeks, fighting has intensified around the city of Marib in the province of the same name.

The coalition has said it has killed some 2,000 Houthis around the city in almost daily strikes since Oct. 11.

The latest bombing was carried out in Al-Jawba, about 50 km south of Marib, and Al-Kassara, 30 km to the northwest.

The Houthis began a major push to seize Marib in February and, after a lull, renewed their offensive since September.

The airstrikes took place as at least 12 civilians, including children, were killed in a car bomb blast near the airport of Aden on Saturday.

"Twelve civilians were killed in an explosion" in the vicinity of Aden airport and "there are also serious injuries," said an official.

Another security official confirmed the toll.

A spokesman from the Southern Transitional Council – part of Yemen's government – said the blast was caused by a car bomb explosion.

"A car bomb was detonated, killing a number of our peaceful citizens, including children, and wounding a number of other civilians," STC spokesman Ali Al-Kathiri said in a statement.

The explosion comes almost three weeks after six people were killed in a car-

bomb attack that targeted Aden's governor, who survived.

AFP footage on Saturday showed people pulling out a body from a vehicle that had been completely destroyed, as firefighters put out flames nearby.

No one has yet claimed responsibility for Saturday's blast, which is the deadliest in the area since December last year, when an attack targeting Cabinet members ripped through Aden's airport.

At least 26 people, including three members of the International Committee of the Red Cross, were killed and scores were wounded when explosions rocked the airport at the time, as ministers disembarked from an aircraft.

All Cabinet members were reported to be unharmed, in what some ministers charged was a Houthi attack.

Also on Saturday, three children were killed and three more were critically wounded in a neighborhood of Yemen's third city Taz, by mortar fire.

"The Houthi militia targeted the Al-Kamp neighborhood with ... shells, which led to the death of three children," the Saba news agency said.

One of the wounded children has had his legs amputated and all three "are in a critical condition," it added.

A security official said that the three children killed were brothers.

A doctor at Taz hospital confirmed the report to AFP, and said the toll could rise.

Taz is a city of 600,000 people in the southwest of Yemen.



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Arab coalition says 95 Houthis killed in strikes on Juba and Al-Kasarah  
More than 85 Houthis killed near Yemen's Marib: Arab coalition

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## [Sudanese anti-coup protesters barricade streets](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-01 00:55

KHARTOUM: Sudanese anti-coup protesters on Sunday manned barricades in Khartoum a day after a deadly crackdown on mass rallies, as a defiant civil disobedience campaign against the military takeover entered its seventh day.

Tens of thousands turned out across the country for Saturday's demonstrations, marching against the army's Oct. 25 intervention, when Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan dissolved the government, declared a state of emergency and detained Sudan's civilian leadership.

The move sparked a chorus of international condemnation and punitive aid cuts, with world powers demanding a swift return to civilian rule and calls for the military to show “restraint” against protesters.

Volker Perthes, UN Special Representative to Sudan, said on Sunday he had met with detained Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who is under armed guard by the ruling military junta.

“He (Hamdok) remains well but under house arrest,” Perthes said.

“We discussed options for mediation and the way forward for Sudan. I will continue these efforts with other Sudanese stakeholders.”

At least three people were shot dead and more than 100 people wounded during Saturday’s demonstrations, according to medics, who reported those killed had bullet wounds in their head, chest or stomach.

Police forces denied the killings, or using live bullets.

At least a dozen people have been killed since protests began, according to medics treating the wounded, but a senior US official has said they estimate that 20 to 30 people have died.

“No, no, to military rule,” protesters carrying Sudanese flags chanted as they marched around the capital and other cities, as forces fired tear gas to break them up.

More than 100 people were also wounded on Saturday, some suffering breathing difficulties from tear gas, the independent Central Committee of Sudan’s Doctors said.

Sudan had been ruled since August 2019 by a joint civilian-military council as part of the now derailed transition to full civilian rule.

US President Joe Biden has called the coup a “grave setback”, while the African Union has suspended Sudan’s membership for the “unconstitutional” takeover.

The World Bank and the US froze aid, a move that will hit hard in a country already mired in a dire economic crisis.

But Burhan – who became de facto leader after former President Omar Bashir was ousted and jailed in 2019 following huge youth-led protests – has insisted the military takeover was “not a coup.”

Instead, Burhan says he wants to “rectify the course of the Sudanese transition.”

Demonstrations on Saturday rocked many cities across Sudan, including in the eastern states of Gedaref and Kassala, as well as in North Kordofan and White Nile, witnesses and AFP correspondents said.

As night fell Saturday, many protests in Khartoum and the capital's twin city of Omdurman thinned out.

But on Sunday morning protesters were back on the streets, again using rocks and tires to block roads.

Shops remain largely shut in Khartoum, where many government employees are refusing to work as part of a nationwide protest campaign.

Soldiers from the army and the much-feared paramilitary Rapid Support Forces were seen on many streets in Khartoum and Omdurman.

Security forces have set up random checkpoints on the streets, frisking passers-by and randomly searching cars.

Phone lines, which were largely down on Saturday, were back apart from intermittent disruptions.

But internet access has been cut off since the army's takeover.

Sudan has enjoyed only rare democratic interludes since independence in 1956 and spent decades riven by civil war.

Burhan was a general under Bashir's three decades of rule, and analysts said the coup aimed to maintain the army's traditional control over the northeast African country.



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UN chief to Sudan army: Reverse coup, take heed of protests  
Tens of thousands protest Sudan's coup, 3 protesters killed

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## Middle East will get to net zero on its terms with realistic targets

Mon, 2021-11-01 00:04

LONDON: Leaders of the Middle East emphasized their commitment to step up investment in renewables when they met in Riyadh earlier this week.

But the real message that came out of the inaugural Middle East Green Initiative is that the transition to a net-zero future must be gradual and must not damage regional economic growth.

The economies of the Gulf states, of course, rely heavily on oil income. But it wasn't just the heads of oil-producing countries making the case for realism as the world seeks to combat global warming.

Larry Fink, the billionaire chairman of US investment giant BlackRock expressed the same view. Fink was one of several high-profile financial and political figures who made the trip to Riyadh to attend MGI, a list that included the US climate czar John Kerry, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, and HSBC UK boss Noel Quinn.

While Fink predicted that the next thousand "unicorns" – startups valued at over \$1 billion – will be sustainable companies, he also confirmed BlackRock, the world's largest fund manager, had no plans to divest from hydrocarbons. Fink said: "We're supportive of hydrocarbon companies, and believe they will be part of the solution of the green revolution of new green technology."

This was echoed in comments made at MGI by Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman. Prince Abdulaziz said: "We are working on technologies to ensure we extend the duration of use of hydrocarbons albeit in a way that would let it be mitigated and therefore not contribute to any additional emissions."

He reiterated that Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, supplying 10 percent of global demand, was "not moving away" from oil and gas but "diversifying" to broaden the Kingdom's energy base and the wider economy.

### **FASTFACT**

**Saudi Arabia will reach net zero emissions by 2060, a target the Kingdom insists is more realistic than the global benchmark of 2050 because many of the new technologies required for the energy transformation won't be fully effective before 2040 at least.**

Prince Abdulaziz added: "We are the holders of the cheapest solar kWh, the cheapest when it comes to wind, and we believe we will continue to be competitive. We believe we will continue to produce hydrogen, and again, we will be the cheapest producer of hydrogen." Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Ali Allawi, whose country is the sixth-largest oil producer, also called for the transition to be carried out in a "gradual manner." He added the West needed to do more to transfer knowledge and technology to developing countries to help them reach emissions goals.

During the summit, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman reiterated his pledge that Saudi Arabia will reach net zero emissions by 2060, a target the Kingdom insists is more realistic than the global benchmark of 2050 because many of the new technologies required for the energy transformation won't be fully effective before 2040 at least.

Bahrain has also pledged to reach net-zero by the same date, while the UAE has said it will do so by 2050 – at the same time as it also plans to expand its oil production capacity 25 percent by 2030.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also announced the Kingdom will invest \$1 billion in climate change initiatives as part of a regional \$10.4 billion fund to reduce Middle East carbon emissions. Saudi Arabia also announced plans to establish a regional carbon capture and storage center, a regional early storm warning center, a regional cloud seeding program, and a hub for climate change.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom's own Saudi Green Initiative program will involve a range of separate investments, totaling around \$190 billion by 2030, which will include carbon capture, direct air capture – a technology capable of pulling the greenhouse gas out of the air – and hydrogen.

Saudi Arabia also plans to plant 450 million trees in a bid to reduce almost 300 million tons of carbon emissions a year.

Commenting on MGI, the UN's Amina Mohammed said the summit offered a strategic vision to transition regional economies away from unsustainable development, to a model "fit for the challenges of the 21st century."

She said: "It will not only help reduce emissions from the oil and gas industry in the region but will also create new carbon sinks and help restore and protect vast swaths of land through afforestation."



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COP26 may mark a turning point in historyGlasgow students quids in as COP26 comes to town

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## [Daughter of Edward Said remembers her 'best friend' on his 86th birth anniversary](#)

Sun, 2021-10-31 21:28

DUBAI: The world will always remember Edward Said as a man of letters with a wide range of interests.

Born to Palestinian parents in British-ruled Jerusalem in the 1930s, he became an internationally recognized author, critic, professor, public

thinker, gifted pianist, founding figure of postcolonial studies and lifelong proponent of the Palestinian cause.

However, in the eyes of his only daughter, the actress, playwright and author of "Looking for Palestine," Najla Said, he was simply "Daddy."

Her earliest memory of her father shows just how attached she was to him from a very young age.



Young girl Najla and her "best friend" dad. (Supplied)

"I remember being about two or three years old and I had a bloody nose. My mother told me to lie down and hold my nose, but I remember when my dad came home from work, I jumped up, shouting 'Daddy!' and ran toward him while blood was running down my nose," she told Arab News in a video interview. "I was so excited that he was home. I loved him very, very much."

Najla Said grew up in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where she faced a personal identity crisis as an Arab-American, feeling like an outsider at a posh all-girls school that she said lacked diversity.

"I was never around people like me and it was very confusing," she said. "My friends were all blonde, they had tiny little bones, and they all seemed to know each other from their summer houses. I spent a lot of my childhood in Lebanon, going back and forth before I started school, and I came from this enormous, wonderful family that I loved but as soon as I went to school, I realized that somehow I was different."

The older she got, the more prominent her father became in the public eye, which she found embarrassing at the time.

"A lot of people have said to me, 'How could you have grown up with this person and been ashamed of being Palestinian?' But that's the whole point, because I think people don't realize that before the last 20 or so years, people in America from other countries would be very uncomfortable revealing their ethnic identity, because the whole idea was to be American and assimilate."

Today, as an adult woman, she views her father differently.

Said's magnum opus, "Orientalism," presented his perspective of how the West had degradingly perceived the East, or "the Orient," in everything from literary texts to popular representation.

Though it was published in 1978, it remains highly relevant and is required reading for college students in many countries.

Said's speeches were so captivating that, as one close friend said, "when he spoke, the whole room was just spellbound, not daring to say a word."

"After 9/11, in the last couple of years of his life, I was really proud to be his daughter. I was old enough to understand," Najla Said told Arab News.

As his fame grew, so too did the aggression of his critics, she recalls. His life was in danger, subject to death threats, and his office at Columbia University, where he taught for four decades, was once set ablaze.

Said describes her father as "ahead of his time."

"I think he was saying things people weren't ready to hear."

She believes he paved the way for people to openly assert their multi-layered identity. "When I went to college in the early 1990s, when the political correctness movement was just beginning, everyone was saying, 'I'm African-American, I'm Asian-American.' He gets the credit for 'Asian-American' because he was the one who said, 'oriental' is not a good word."

Najla and Edward are alike in several ways: Like him, she is passionate, temperamental and expressive in her writing. She cherishes some of the moments she shared with her father, including rubbing shoulders with literary

giants.

Attending a UNESCO committee in Paris together in 1993, they met the Italian philosopher Umberto Eco and the Colombian novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

“My dad was parading me around on his arm and Gabriel Garcia Marquez came up to me and asked me, in French, which of his books I’d read, and I said, ‘None of them.’ Marquez said, ‘I can’t believe that girl said that to me,’ and he took me by the arm, saying: ‘I like her!’ My dad felt so proud of me.”

To Najla, her father was a gentleman, a man who loved to puff away on his pipe and listen to Wagner. He collected pens and ties, and his tweed suits were tailored in Savile Row, in London. He was conversational and loyal, but did not mince his words.

Edward Said befriended the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and disagreed with Yasser Arafat. On air, he challenged television journalists such as Charlie Rose and Tim Sebastian over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He did not like pop music, nor the Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, who he said sounded like she was wailing.

His passion for classical music led him to work with his friend, the veteran Israeli-Argentinian conductor Daniel Barenboim, to establish in 1999 the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, made up mostly of Arab and Israeli musicians. “He even said, at the end of his life, that the greatest thing he ever did was that orchestra,” said Najla.

She said her father encouraged her pursuit of the arts and was supportive when she struggled with anorexia, heartbreaks and self-doubt. “I was in college and I had shown him a draft of my senior thesis and said, ‘I’m so dumb’.” In a handwritten note, he responded: “There are a lot of things you are, Naj. Dumb isn’t one of them.”

Najla Said remembers her dad as sweet and loving and a man who always made time for his family. “The only place I ever felt safe was with my mother (Mariam), father and brother (Wadie). It was like us against the world. The idea of ‘home’ is: My family is home,” she said.

To this day, she finds her father’s fame surreal. “I’m still surprised by how many people know who he is,” she said. “I went back to one of my college reunions at Princeton, which is a very white, preppy school, and the kid, a typical American boy, who checked me in said, “What’s your last name?’ and I replied, ‘Said,’ and he goes, ‘Oh, like Edward!’”

He changed how the world approached representation. In 2015, a fashion exhibit entitled ‘China: Through the Looking Glass’ was put on at the Metropolitan Museum, and on the wall at the beginning they flashed up his name. “The people at the museum were like, ‘We have to be careful of how we present,’” she recalled. “I never thought I’d see my dad on the wall of a fashion exhibition.”

The fact that her father remains alive in the hearts of so many has been a source of comfort for Said. “I feel like I’m not alone. If I’m in an

unfamiliar place and someone knows who he is, I feel, 'OK, I'm safe here,' because someone knows who I am and they're OK with that."

Najla was only 17 when Said was diagnosed with leukemia in the early 1990s, a battle he fought until his death in 2003, six months after the US invasion of Iraq.

"He used to joke that he 'took off' as soon as we invaded Iraq," she said. "He was like, 'Ah! I'm done. No one's listening to me. I've got to go.'"

As the disease began to take its toll on Said's health, he lost weight and his voice became hoarse, his daughter recalled, but "he still had this fire in him."

Nearly 20 years after his death, Edward Said continues to be an inspiration for marginalized peoples the world over. "What he was saying was basic and universal, and ultimately about humanity," she said.

Said would have turned 86 on Nov. 1. He loved birthdays and an ideal gift for him was clothing.

On a day that is heavy with emotions for the family, Najla Said has a wish. "At the end of the day, losing a parent is hard," she said. "I miss him so much, it's hard to even explain. I was definitely a daddy's girl and he was my best friend. So, I would say: 'Please come back. This is nonsense.'"

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• *Twitter: @aRTprojectdxb*







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Refugee who keeps the memory of Palestine alive  
Palestinians in Saudi Arabia reflect on home as 51st Naksa is marked