

# Tunisia's exiled Ben Ali can return if sick: PM

Author:

AFP

ID:

1568375816035876400

Fri, 2019-09-13 11:53

TUNIS: Tunisia's prime minister said exiled former autocrat Zine el Abidine Ben Ali would be allowed to return home if he was critically ill as reported by his lawyer.

"I will give my green light for his return. It's a humanitarian case. If he's ill as rumored, he can return to his country like any other Tunisian," Youssef Chahed said late Thursday on Hannibal TV.

"If he wants to return to be buried here, I give my green light," added Chahed, who is also a candidate in Tunisia's presidential election on Sunday. Ben Ali's lawyer, Mounir ben Salha, said hours earlier that Tunisia's leader who was ousted in a 2011 revolt when he fled to Saudi Arabia following two decades of iron-fisted rule, was "in critical condition."

"He's not dead but the condition of his health is bad. He has left hospital and is being treated at home. His condition is stable," the lawyer said on Oxygene FM radio.

Tunisian courts have condemned Ben Ali, 83, in absentia to several prison sentences, including life terms, for abuse of power, graft and involuntary homicide.



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Arrests, intimidation and influence in play as Tunisia faces election on Sunday  
Tunisian women absent from presidential campaign

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## Palestinian Israa Ghrayeb's death was 'murder': prosecutor

Author:

AFP

ID:

1568313393059892700

Thu, 2019-09-12 17:37

JERUSALEM: A Palestinian woman who died in suspicious circumstances, sparking claims she was the victim of an "honor killing," had been beaten to death, the West Bank's chief prosecutor said Thursday.

Attorney General Akram Al-Khatib said three members of 21-year-old Israa Ghrayeb's family had been charged with her murder, which sparked a wave of anger online and protests for women's rights outside the office of prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh.

The family has previously insisted Ghrayeb, from Beit Sahour near Bethlehem in the southern West Bank, had a stroke before her death in a nearby hospital on August 22.

Khatib said in a statement that she had died after suffering "severe respiratory failure" due to complications from multiple injuries caused by "torture and abuse."

He told journalists in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah that claims by one of the accused that Ghrayeb had fallen from a balcony was a fabrication intended to "mislead the investigation."

Ghrayeb was admitted to hospital in early August following an earlier round of domestic violence that caused multiple injuries, he said, adding that the police had not been informed at the time.

Local media have published unconfirmed reports that she was killed by her family after posting on social media a picture with a potential suitor – despite the family having agreed to their meeting.

Shortly after her death, the hashtag "We are all Israa Ghrayeb" trended on Palestinian social media, along with accusations of an honor crime.

Demonstrators rallied in Ramallah amid demands that the government enact a draft 2004 law which was intended to protect women from domestic violence but has remained under consideration for years.

The Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling, a Palestinian NGO documenting abuses in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said there were 23 cases of what it called femicide in 2018, and 18 so far in 2019.

The term is defined as the killing of women because they are female, though

it can also include suicide in cases of bullying.



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[Palestine](#)

Palestinian women demand legal protection after suspected 'honor killing'  
Palestinian dies of wounds from Gaza-Israel border clashes

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## [Explosion on a road in southeast Turkey kills 4, wounds 13](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1568313277339887800

Thu, 2019-09-12 18:06

ANKARA: Turkish officials say Kurdish rebels have detonated an improvised explosive device on a road in southeast Turkey, killing four people and



wounding 13 others.

The local governor's office said the explosion Thursday on a road near the town of Kulp hit a vehicle carrying villagers who were returning home after gathering wood. The private DHA news agency said the explosion caused the driver to lose control and the vehicle veered into a ditch.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has waged a more than three-decade old insurgency in Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast region. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since it started in 1984.

The group is considered a terror organization by Turkey and its Western allies.



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Turkey summons Lebanese ambassador over flag defacing

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## [UN renews Libya mission, pledges to support a ceasefire](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1568306699769367000

Thu, 2019-09-12 16:04

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council on Thursday unanimously adopted a resolution renewing its mission in Libya for another year and pledging to support struggling efforts to build a ceasefire in the war-torn country. Libya has been mired in chaos since an uprising toppled and killed dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 2011, when the United Nations mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was established.

The Security Council said it asked the UN Secretary-General "to assess the steps required to reach a lasting ceasefire (and) the possible role of UNSMIL in providing scalable ceasefire support."

The pledge of support was requested by UN envoy to Libya Ghassan Salame, who has pushed for a restart of the political process since Khalifa Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army launched an offensive in April to conquer the capital, Tripoli.

Haftar's forces are fighting those of the Government of National Accord (GNA), which is led by Fayed al-Sarraj and is recognized by the UN.

While Sarraj is backed by Turkey and Qatar, Haftar enjoys varying levels of support from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Russia, and France.

Last week, Salame warned that without action by the Security Council, Libya's conflict would escalate if outside patrons step up support for the warring sides.

But General Ahmed al-Mesmari, spokesman for Haftar's forces, on Saturday ruled out any political negotiations.

"The time of going back to dialogue is over," said al-Mesmari, speaking in the UAE. "The military solution is the best solution to spread security and reimpose the law."

Since April, fighting between pro-GNA and pro-Haftar forces has killed at least 1,093 people and wounded 5,752, while some 120,000 others have been displaced, according to the World Health Organization.



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UN envoy on Libya warns conflict could trigger chaos

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## [US rejects UN suggestion its Syria air strikes could constitute 'war crimes'](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1568302097738938900

Thu, 2019-09-12 15:26

GENEVA: Washington's top envoy for Syria rejected Thursday an allegation put forward in a UN report that some US-led air strikes in the conflict-torn country could possibly be categorized as indiscriminate attacks, amounting to "war crimes."

James Jeffrey, the US special representative on Syria, dismissed findings

published in a UN report on Wednesday suggesting that the US-led coalition had with a number of air strikes in the country “failed to employ the necessary precautions to discriminate adequately between military objectives and civilians.”

The UN Commission of Inquiry, which has been investigating human rights violations in Syria’s drawn-out war for the past eight years, pointed to a series of air strikes carried out by the coalition in January in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, including one that killed 16 civilians.

“The Commission finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that international coalition forces may not have directed their attacks at a specific military objective, or failed to do so with the necessary precaution,” the report said.

“Launching indiscriminate attacks that result in death or injury to civilians amounts to a war crime in cases in which such attacks are conducted recklessly,” stressed the Commission, which has also suggested in previous reports that US-led strikes in Syria could amount to war crimes.

The Commission has also repeatedly accused the Syrian government and its main backer Russia, as well as other actors in the conflict of a wide range of war crimes.

“We take extreme care in every military operation,” Jeffrey told journalists in Geneva when asked about the report.

“We do not accept the findings of that particular body,” he said.

Jeffrey was in Geneva Wednesday for consultations with the UN envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen.

Pedersen, a seasoned Norwegian diplomat who took over the job in January, is trying to help create a committee to draft a post-war constitution for Syria. His predecessor, Staffan de Mistura, stepped down after his four years in the post ended with a year-long abortive push to form the constitutional committee.

But Pedersen, who has been consulting extensively with the various Syrian actors, as well as with countries with influence in the conflict, voiced optimism that the constitutional committee could soon see the light of day. Following his meeting with representatives from Britain, Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United States Thursday, he told journalists he was “confident that we are moving forward.

“Hopefully I can have positive news on this in the very near future.”

Numerous rounds of UN-led peace talks have failed to end a war that has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with the repression of anti-government protests.



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