

Libyan PM defends top diplomat after suspension

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Sun, 2021-11-07 18:47

TRIPOLI: Libya's Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah on Sunday came to the defense of his foreign minister, Najla El-Mangoush, a day after the country's presidential council said it had suspended her.

Dbeibah's office argued that the council, formed this year, doesn't have the authority to suspend ministers and instructed El-Mangoush to continue her duties, reiterating its "appreciation" of her work.

The dispute highlights the power struggles within the fragile administration which – after a decade of war and turmoil following the 2011 ouster of dictator Muammar Qaddafi – is supposed to steer the country toward elections. Dbeibah said in a statement that "the nomination, dismissal, suspension or indictment of a member of the executive branch... fall under the exclusive powers of the prime minister."

The presidential council, headed by Mohamad Al-Manfi, on Saturday said it had suspended El-Mangoush from her duties and barred her from travel, days before a major international conference in Paris.

In the absence of further details on the allegations against El-Mangoush, Libyan media connected her suspension with a BBC interview in which she had suggested that Tripoli is ready to coordinate with the US over the extradition of suspects in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

The council said Saturday it had opened an inquiry into alleged "administrative breaches" by El-Mangoush, spokeswoman Najla Weheba told the Libya Panorama television channel.

Dbeibah's government called on Libya's different institutions to "respect procedure" and "avoid conflicts of interest," saying they should not obstruct the government's work at such a "critical" phase.

The presidential council, headed by Mohamed Al-Manfi, was formed in February, consisting of three members representing the three regions of Libya. It was set up as part of a UN-sponsored political process, alongside the new government under Dbeibah, to pave the way for presidential and legislative elections in December.

Analysts said Saturday's move to suspend El-Mangoush reflect growing tensions between Dbeibah and Manfi ahead of the polls.

"Last night the growing rift between #Libya's President Manfi and PM Dbeibah flared up, as the President jumped on – a pretty flimsy – excuse to try and suspend FM Mangoush," tweeted Tarek Megerisi, a senior policy fellow at the European Council.

Parliament recently announced that legislative polls would be postponed to January amid simmering tensions that threaten to derail the political process, which seeks to put an end to the conflict between Libya's rival factions.

But on Sunday Libya's electoral commission said that candidates for presidential and legislative polls slated for December 24 can start registering Monday.

The move to suspend El-Mangoush comes ahead of a conference on Libya in Paris next week, expected to be attended by world leaders.

According to the BBC, El-Mangoush alluded to one of Qaddafi's top bomb-makers, Abu Agila Mohammad Masud, who is jailed in Libya and wanted in the US over the Lockerbie bombing.

A total of 270 people were killed in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet as it was flying over the Scottish town of Lockerbie.

Libya expert Emadeddin Badi, an analyst at the Geneva-based Global initiative, linked the move to suspend El-Mangoush to her comments to the BBC.

"The US position is key; therefore the current fallout is also covertly about currying favor with the Biden administration, and who will take credit," he told AFP.

El-Mangoush has denied specifically mentioning Masud, according to a statement from her ministry, and said that "these questions are the responsibility of the prosecution."



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Libya FM suspended days before international conference
Libyan premier to run for president as election turmoil grows

Houthi court sentences abducted Yemeni model to five years in prison

Sun, 2021-11-07 21:22

AL-MUKALLA: A Houthi-controlled court in Yemen sentenced an abducted model and her friend to five years in prison on Sunday, the model's lawyer told Arab News.

The West Sanaa Court charged Entesar Al-Hammadi and her friend with committing indecent acts.

Two other women, who were abducted from a Sanaa flat and were later accused of being prostitutes, received prison sentences of three years and one year each from the same court.

Al-Hammadi and her colleague were on their way to a film set on Feb. 20 when armed Houthis abducted them and forcibly disappeared them for several weeks.

The Houthis, under local and international pressure, said they had arrested a group of women in Sanaa, including Al-Hammadi, who were involved in prostitution, drug dealing, and committing un-Islamic acts.

"This is a purely political verdict," her lawyer Khaled Mohammed Al-Kamal said. "How could the two women who were snatched from the street get longer terms than the two women who were abducted from the flat?"

Local and international rights groups have said the militia subjected the women to unfair trials, physically and psychologically tortured them, and put Al-Hammadi into solitary confinement.

The Houthis banned local journalists and Al-Kamal from covering the case or talking to international media after it attracted global attention.

She went on hunger strike and even tried to kill herself in protest against the harsh treatment and lengthy detention she was enduring.

Al-Kamal said he would appeal against the court's judgment in the hope of getting a shorter sentence.

He called her innocent and said she had not committed a crime.

He added the Houthis had punished her in defiance of the international rights groups and Western envoys, including the former British ambassador to Yemen Michael Aron, who had demanded they release her.

Critics of the Houthis said the abductions were part of the militia's continuing moral crackdown on artists, singers, and liberal women.

They have abducted several singers for performing at weddings in Houthi-controlled areas.



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Yemen government troops foil Houthi attacks outside Marib province
Over 130 Houthis killed in Arab coalition strikes on areas near Marib

[Iraqi PM unhurt after failed assassination attempt at his residence](#)

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Sun, 2021-11-07 02:45

RIYADH: Iraq's prime minister was not hurt after an assassination attempt using a drone at his residence early Sunday.

Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi tweeted that he was fine after the

incident, which injured more than five others.

Al-Kadhimi, who has been moved to a secure location, called for calm and restraint for the sake of Iraq, and backed security forces to ensure the safety of the nation and uphold the law.

Security forces were dealing with the aftermath of the attack, which involved a single drone, according to Al Arabiya, who also broadcast clips of what sounded like gunfire from Baghdad.

The home of the prime minister is inside the city's heavily fortified Green Zone.

Al-Kadhimi on Friday ordered the formation of a committee to investigate clashes between Iraqi security forces and supporters of parties that are disputing the results of a general election in October.

One protester was killed and around 100 injured after hundreds of pro-Iran Hashed Al-Shaabi supporters rallied in Baghdad near the Green Zone throwing projectiles and blocking access before being dispersed by security forces.

Pro-Iran groups said that live rounds were used against protesters, but the health ministry denied the claims.

Voters turned their backs on the previously powerful Fatah Alliance, reducing their number of seats in parliament from 48 to no more than 14.

The alliance comprises candidates from Hashed Al-Shaabi, who finished second in the last elections in 2018 in what was viewed as evidence of Tehran's growing influence.

That triggered a backlash in October 2019, when hundreds of thousands of Iraqis took to the streets in "Tishreen" protests against corruption, unemployment and foreign influence. Security forces and the Hashed Al-Shaabi militia killed about 600 in a violent crackdown.



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One killed dozens injured as Iraq police clash with pro-Iran protestersBaghdad deaths, injuries to be investigated amid election dispute

[Turkey's pro-Kurdish HDP says banning case should be thrown out](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-11-07 02:04

ISTANBUL: An indictment which aims to ban Turkey's Democratic Peoples' Party, known as HDP, was prepared for political reasons and should be thrown out, an HDP official said on Saturday, a day after it submitted an initial defense to Turkey's top court.

Turkey's Constitutional Court accepted the indictment against the pro-Kurdish HDP in June.

The measure calls for the party to be shut down over alleged ties to militants.

But the HDP denies any such ties and describes the case as a “political operation.”

The case, brought by prosecutors at the Court of Cassation, follows a years-long crackdown on the HDP, in which thousands of its members have been tried on mainly terrorism-related charges.

The party submitted its initial defense to the Constitutional Court on Friday.

Umit Dede, a deputy chair of the HDP, told reporters on Saturday the initial defense did not address each allegation individually but sought to highlight procedural issues.

“This case was prepared as a result of the pressure put on the chief prosecutors of the Court of Cassation by the ruling party and its partners. Therefore, in our defense we presented this matter to the attention of the Constitutional Court with evidence,” Dede said.

The party will address allegations individually after the prosecutor submits his analysis to the court, but the case should be thrown out before that, Dede said.

Turkey has a long history of shutting down political parties, including pro-Kurdish ones.

Critics say its judiciary is subject to political influence, a claim denied by the ruling AK Party and its nationalist MHP allies.

Court of Cassation chief prosecutor Bekir Sahin said in the indictment that the HDP acts together with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group, and aims to break the unity of the state.

The HDP is Turkey’s third-largest party, with 55 seats in the 600-member parliament.

The PKK is designated a terrorist group by Turkey, the US and EU.

It has fought an insurgency since 1984 in which more than 40,000 people have been killed.



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Turkey pact fuels fears of drone use in Ethiopia's spiraling civil war
Iraqi Kurdish city, women gain power without parity

[Pro-Iran protesters stage fresh Baghdad demonstration after deadly clash](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-11-07 02:00

BAGHDAD: Hundreds of supporters of pro-Iranian factions staged a fresh demonstration on Saturday in the Iraqi capital over last month's election results, a day after at least one protester was killed in a clash with police.

The demonstrations come while Iraq's numerous political parties negotiate to form coalitions and name a new prime minister after the Oct. 10 elections. Preliminary results saw the Conquest (Fatah) Alliance, the political arm of the pro-Iran multiparty Hashd Al-Shaabi paramilitary network, suffer a substantial decline in its parliamentary seats.

The group's supporters have denounced the outcome as "fraud" and Iraqi political analyst Ihsan Al-Shamari said the pro-Hashd protests are aimed at strengthening its negotiating position during the coalition bargaining process.

In a calm atmosphere a day after deadly tensions, Hashd supporters gathered at one of the four entrances to the high-security Green Zone, which is home to government buildings and the US Embassy.

The protesters had brought in tents and sanitary facilities, in a sign of a possible repeat of a sit-in that began on Oct. 19.

Others burned a portrait of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, whom they called a "criminal."

On Friday, there were clashes with police when hundreds of Hashd supporters rallied near the Green Zone to vent their fury over the election result. Demonstrators threw projectiles and blocked access to the Green Zone before they were pushed back by police who fired in the air, a security source said. Another security source said a protester died in hospital of his wounds, while the Health Ministry reported 125 injuries, most of them from the security forces.

A leader of the Hezbollah Brigades, one of Hashd's most powerful factions, said on Friday that two demonstrators were killed.

On Saturday, mourners in the city of Najaf carried two coffins of Hashd supporters they said died in the Baghdad clashes.

According to preliminary tallies, the Conquest won around 15 of the 329 seats in parliament, down from 48 it held previously, which made it the second-largest bloc.

The big winner this time, with more than 70 seats according to the initial count, was the movement of Moqtada Sadr, a preacher who campaigned as a nationalist and critic of Iran.

Final election results are expected within weeks.



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