

Hamas slammed for honoring Houthi aid to Palestine

Tue, 2021-06-08 18:41

ALEXANDRIA: Yemeni human rights activists, journalists and politicians have strongly criticized Hamas for honoring the Iran-backed Houthi militia shortly after fighters launched a ballistic missile and explosive-laden drone that killed 21 civilians in the central Yemeni city of Marib.

Mouath Abu Shemala, a Hamas figure based in Houthi-held Sanaa, met on Sunday with high-profile Houthi official Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi and presented him with a Hamas plaque in recognition of the group's latest fundraising campaign for the Palestinian militant organization.

Houthi media reported that Abu Shemala thanked the Houthi movement for responding to Palestinian appeals for assistance during the latest Israeli bombardment of Gaza.

The meeting sparked outrage in the country.

Yemenis slammed Hamas for honoring the Houthi movement, which is responsible for the killing of thousands of people in the country and the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Shouqi Al-Qadhi, a member of the Yemeni parliament, said on Twitter that he was "shocked" by the Hamas decision, demanding that it issue an "official clarification" or Yemenis would "sever ties."

He added: "We are waiting for a full clarification from Hamas about its shocking stance. Does this person (Abu Shemala) officially represent it?"

Hamadan Al-Alyae, a Yemeni journalist, accused Hamas of "betraying" Yemenis by honoring Houthi militants, who oversaw the deadly missile and drone strike on Marib.

"We waited for Hamas to issue a statement denouncing the Houthi crime of burning children in Marib. Instead, the representative of the movement went to honor one of the leaders of the gang that committed the heinous crime," he said.

Many Yemenis have long accused Houthis of exploiting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories to recruit new fighters, pushing them to fight government forces in Yemen.

Hesham Al-Zaiady, a Yemeni news anchor, said senior Houthis view the Hamas move as recognition of their advocacy for Palestine, and will use it in Yemen to recruit more fighters.

He added: "Do you know, after this picture, how many fighters the Houthis will mobilize to fight their Yemeni brothers in Marib, Taiz and Al-Dhale,

with the justification of liberating Jerusalem?”

Amer Al-Saudi, a poet, described Hamas’ honoring of the Houthis as a “wound,” adding that it could cause a decline in support among some Yemenis, who have long supported the movement by donating funds, and naming their children and schools after its leaders.

“Other Yemenis will not forget this wound and this vile reward of their killers,” Al-Saudi said.



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UN accused of silence over Houthi aid theft
UN silence on Houthi aid truck attacks in Yemen ‘unacceptable’

[Longest serving Jordanian prisoner in](#)

Israel arrives home: officials

Author:

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Tue, 2021-06-08 18:55

AMMAN: The longest serving Jordanian prisoner in an Israeli jail arrived home on Tuesday, Jordanian officials said.

He completed a 20-year sentence for planting a bomb on an Israeli bus that injured more than a dozen people.

Abdullah Abu Jaber, 44, was arrested after the explosive device went off on the bus in Tel Aviv in December 2000. He was one of thousands of Jordanians who found casual work in Israel after the two countries normalized ties with a peace treaty in 1994.

Abu Jaber, who was among 22 political prisoners held in Israeli jails, headed to his parents' home in the teeming Baqaa Palestinian refugee camp near the Jordanian capital Amman, witnesses said.

Separately, foreign ministry officials said Israel had dropped charges against two Jordanians who were arrested last month for allegedly crossing the border carrying knives. The authorities had put them on trial shortly after their detention.

Jordan, which has the longest border with Israel, is a close Western ally. Last month it saw large protests against Israel's military campaign in Gaza and its crackdown on Palestinian worshippers and protesters in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque.

Political ties between the two countries have been strained over Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, and the Jordanian government has faced growing public pressure to scrap the unpopular peace treaty.

Most of Jordan's 10 million citizens are of Palestinian origin. They or their parents were expelled or fled to Jordan in the fighting that accompanied the creation of Israel in 1948.

They have close family ties with their kin on the other side of the Jordan River in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, both captured by Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.



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Jordanian parliament expels MP Osama Al-Ajarmeh for inciting riots
Jordanians march to border in solidarity with Palestinians

[Jordan's King Abdullah issues decree to end parliamentary session](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-06-07 22:21

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II on Monday ended the current session of parliament, with experts saying the decision was not linked to recent clashes sparked by an MP.

A royal decree was issued, proroguing the non-ordinary session as of

Thursday, June 10.

Clashes took place at the weekend between supporters of MP Osama Al-Ajarmeh and police in Amman's Naour suburb.

Al-Ajarmeh was expelled from the lower house on Sunday after he was accused of igniting the riots.

Four police officers were wounded in the clashes.

Naour, a stronghold of the Ajarmeh tribe, was quiet on Monday, with no violence reported.

The lower house held a brief emergency session on Sunday during which a majority of MPs voted in favor of expelling Al-Ajarmeh.

The MP appeared in a number of recent videos insulting King Abdullah II, state institutions and threatening to establish a "radical Jordanian right wing" of tribes and ex-army figures to "purify Amman of the liberal elite" whom he accused of being behind the country's woes.

Of the 130-member lower chamber, 108 MPs voted in favor of expelling Al-Ajarmeh.

Parliamentary experts said the royal decree to prorogue the 19th parliament was merely a procedural constitutional requirement that happened to coincide with the upheaval.

"Under the constitution, the parliament's session should not last for more than six months," Majed Al-Amir, a parliamentary journalist, said. He added that the legislature began the non-ordinary session on Dec. 10 so the six-month deadline fell on June 10.

The remarks were echoed by political commentator Khaled Qudah, who described the king's decision to prorogue parliament as a "routine procedure and a constitutional requirement."



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Jordanian parliament expels MP Osama Al-Ajarmeh for inciting riots
Jordanian security personnel injured in clashes with tribal supporters of MP

[Houthi-run court starts trial of abducted Yemeni model](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-06-07 21:58

ALEXANDRIA: A Houthi-run court in Sanaa has started the trial of a Yemeni model who was abducted by the Iran-backed militia.

Entesar Al-Hammadi was seized by the Houthis on Feb. 20 along with two other women. Their capture and imprisonment has triggered local and international condemnation.

Legal activist Abdul Wahab Qatran said the court had refused to give her lawyer the case documents, including the charges against her.

Her lawyer, Khaled Mohammed Al-Kamal, declined requests from Arab News to

comment on the trial, citing the court's ban on media coverage of the case.

The Houthis have not officially commented on the case or the charges, but rebel-affiliated media outlets reported that she was taken due to information about her involvement in a drug and prostitution ring.

Local and international right groups said the rebels forced Al-Hammadi into confessing and that the abduction was part of a Houthi crackdown on liberal voices that challenged the group's radical views.

Al-Hammadi had boasted about her dream of becoming an international model and posted images of her in traditional Yemeni dress.

Angered by intense media coverage of the abduction, the Houthis dismissed a prosecutor who ordered Al-Hammadi's release after questioning her, threw the model into solitary confinement and verbally and physically abused her.

They also stepped up their intimidation and harassment of local activists, lawyers, and judges who demanded the women be freed.

Last week the Houthis fired Al-Kamal from his job at the Capital Secretariat, a compound hosting government offices, where he has been working for 20 years to force him to drop the case. Al-Kamal said on social media that his boss told him he was suspended, without giving an explanation.

Qatran and Ahmed Hashed, a member of the Houthi-controlled parliament and an outspoken critic of the militia, have reported receiving death threats.

Yemeni human rights activists have accused the Houthis of using judicial bodies in areas under their control to decriminalize their abduction of activists, artists and critics of the group.

Huda Al-Sarari, a lawyer and the director of the Defense Organization for Rights and Freedoms, has been following the model's case since the outset. She said the Houthis' measures against the model showed that she would not be released soon.

"In light of the repression, the confiscation of rights and freedoms, and the use of the judiciary to legitimize their crimes, it is difficult for the Houthi authorities to release victims with the current local pressure mechanisms," she told Arab News.

She urged international women's organizations to cooperate with their Yemeni counterparts for more aggressive campaigns to ensure the abducted women were released.

The militia did not adhere to international human rights laws, she added, calling for the international community to impose more sanctions on Houthis who abducted and abused Yemenis.

"Unfortunately, delays in securing the release of the model are not due to the weakness of the advocacy. The Houthi authority is not subject to any pressure and is intransigent in these matters. They are first and foremost a

militia that does not respect international agreements, resolutions or advocacy mechanisms.”



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Who is Entesar Al-Hammadi, the Yemeni model kidnapped by the Houthis? Houthis sought to recruit me as spy, abducted Yemeni model says from prison

[Turkey agrees to secure Kabul airport if conditions are met](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-06-07 21:46

ANKARA: Turkey on Monday pledged to provide security cover at Kabul airport if a number of key conditions were met.

After weeks of uncertainty over whether Ankara would pull its troops from Hamid Karzai International Airport in the Afghan capital, Turkish Defense

Minister Hulusi Akar said the military would stay if its allies committed to certain political, financial, and logistical support.

Turkey's decision about taking over security responsibility at the airport has been the subject of intense talks with Washington and was also discussed during the recent NATO defense ministers' meeting.

Several countries had considered closing their embassies in Afghanistan if the city airport was not secured.

Following last year's February agreement in Doha between the Taliban and the US government, the withdrawal of all American troops from Afghanistan had been due to be completed by May 1. But the deadline was later extended, a decision that angered the group.

US soldiers are now expected to be out of Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, New York terror attacks.

Akar said that Turkey, which had about 500 soldiers in the country as part of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission (RSM), was now awaiting a response from allies to its requests.

"We are aiming at restoring peace in Afghanistan. We have a historical brotherhood. We want to be able to stay in Afghanistan as long as the Afghan people want our assistance," he added.

Hamid Karzai international in Kabul is the primary airport of the country and also serves as a large military base but Afghan authorities do not have the capacity to provide full security at the site where air traffic control has been operated by NATO military staff since 2002.

The airport's security was important not only for military flights but also for supporting international organizations and NGOs distributing humanitarian aid.

Magdalena Kirchner, director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation office in Kabul, told Arab News that the complete withdrawal of foreign forces could theoretically increase the risk of retaliatory attacks against a Turkish residual force.

"But I think the higher risk would be the absence of critical enablers currently provided by US forces should there be a dramatic decline in the overall security situation or if the airport itself should come under attack," she said.

Maintaining a presence at the airport was seen as crucial to ongoing international travel and support reaching the country and because the handover of airfields and airports to the Afghan authorities required more time, capacities, and resources than anticipated, she added.

The much-anticipated Istanbul conference on Afghan peace, due to have taken place in April, has been postponed after the Taliban made a late decision not to attend. The group expected the upcoming conference to be short with an

agenda not touching upon decision-making on critical issues.

Regarding the prerequisites of continued Turkish presence in Afghanistan, Kirchner noted that negotiations may hinge around increasing the amount of a reported \$130 million deal with NATO.

“Politically, maintaining at least a formal NATO umbrella would be an option preferred by Turkey over a unilateral military engagement and lastly, especially between the US and Turkey, logistical discussions over critical enablers and force protection capabilities might continue,” she said.

Last December, the Turkish parliament approved a motion to extend the deployment of Turkish troops in Afghanistan for 18 months as part of NATO’s support mission in the war-torn country. This year marks the 100th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Turkey and Afghanistan.



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Airstrike by Turkey hits school playground in northern Iraq