

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

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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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[Israa Ghrayeb](#)

[Palestine](#)

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

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

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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

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

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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

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

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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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'Russian' bombardment threatens Syrian cease-fire
Hungary to appoint Syria diplomat in thawing of ties

[Sudanese on the streets, call for new judicial appointments](#)

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Thu, 2019-09-12 14:57

CAIRO: Thousands of Sudanese rallied in the capital Khartoum on Thursday in the largest protest since the country's transitional government was announced, demanding the chief of the judiciary and general prosecutor be removed because of alleged ties to ousted autocratic former president Omar Al-Bashir.

Sudan's Forces for the Declaration of Freedom and Change, the umbrella coalition representing different pro-democracy parties and groups, called for

a "million-man march" to pressure the joint civilian-military Sovereign Council – formed last month as part of a power-sharing deal between protesters and the generals – to appoint judges known for their competence as well as political impartiality.

The generals had previously dismissed nominations put forward by pro-democracy protesters for Sudan's two top judicial posts.

"Judicial and legal reforms should be a top priority during the transitional period; however, we have seen inaction on the part of sovereign council to appoint a new head of the judiciary and a new general prosecutor," Ahmed Rabie, a leader of the Sudanese Professionals' Association, said. The group has spearheaded protests since Al-Bashir was still in power.

The Sovereign Council, comprised of five military members and six civilians, is expected to rule the country along with a cabinet and a legislative body for a little more than three years. Last week, prime minister Abdalla Hamdok, a longtime economist, announced the make-up of his cabinet after several weeks of deliberations.

The announcement of transitional state institutions came following pressure from the United States and its Arab allies amid growing concerns the political crisis could ignite a civil war.

"The Sudanese revolution does not only aim at changing a president or bringing in new ministers but it aims at restructuring the Sudanese state," said Rabie. "Hence, it is illogical to have officials belonging to the ancient regime on top of the state's civil and judicial apparatuses."

Both incumbent judiciary chief and public prosecutor were appointed by the military council, which took over the helm of state after ousting Al-Bashir in April. Under the terms of the power-sharing deal, the military council was dissolved and replaced by the Sovereign Council.

"This rally is an important step toward the restructuring of the judicial system so that we can embark on a period of transitional justice where leaders of the old regime as well as those responsible for the massacre of protesters after Bashir's ouster could be prosecuted," said Rasha Awad, editor of the online Sudanese newspaper Altaghyeer.

The power-sharing agreement capped several months of negotiations and tension between the generals and protester movement. In early June, talks were suspended after a deadly military clampdown on the protesters' main sit-in in the capital left more than a hundred killed. The attack had remained a thorny issue even after both parties resumed talks.

In Thursday's rallies, protesters waving Sudanese flags chanted: "The people want the martyr to be avenged," in reference to those killed during the crackdown. They also raised banners reading: "The appointment of new judiciary chief and public prosecutor is a revolutionary demand."

Awad noted that the generals had previously dismissed nominations put forward by pro-democracy protesters for the nation's two top judicial posts.

"These rallies are basically addressing the military members inside the sovereign council because those members do not share the same views as Sudanese revolutionaries," she said.





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Sudan's ruling council, rebel leaders agree on peace talks roadmap
Sudan's new leader to visit South Sudan