

# Brother of 2017 Ariana Grande concert bomber extradited from Libya to Britain

Author:

Reuters

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Wed, 2019-07-17 12:40

LONDON: Libya on Wednesday extradited to Britain the brother of a suicide bomber who attacked an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester in May 2017 and killed 22 people, officials said.

Salman Abedi's brother Hashem, who was arrested in Libya days after the bombing, was handed over to British officials and then flown to Britain where he was arrested for murder, Greater Manchester Police said in a statement. "He has today been successfully extradited for offences relating to the Manchester Arena attack," it said.

Statement from [@CCIanHopkins](#) regarding Manchester Arena attack of 22nd May 2017 [pic.twitter.com/wLY0eXgj97](https://pic.twitter.com/wLY0eXgj97)

– Greater Manchester Police (@gmpolice) [July 17, 2019](#)

Asked about the arrest, British Prime Minister Theresa May said it was "an important moment in the investigation.

"I hope it is a welcome step for the loved ones of all the victims," she said, condemning the "appalling" and "senseless" attack.

Manchester police said Abedi was also being arrested for attempted murder and "conspiracy to cause an explosion likely to endanger life".

He is expected to appear in a London court on Thursday.

A spokesman for the Libyan force which had held him earlier told AFP that Abedi was "in the plane headed for Britain".

Ahmed Ben Salem of the Special Deterrence Force (Radaa), an armed group which serves as the capital's police, said he was being extradited in line with a decision of the Libyan judiciary following a request from Britain.

According to Radaa, the brother has allegedly acknowledged that he was in Britain as the attack was being prepared and was "fully aware of the details".

Statement from [@CCIanHopkins](https://twitter.com/CCIanHopkins) [pic.twitter.com/1A4r7LTvKP](https://pic.twitter.com/1A4r7LTvKP)

– Greater Manchester Police (@gmpolice) [July 17, 2019](#)

His father was also detained in Libya but released a few weeks later. Salman Abedi carried out the bloodiest terror attack in Britain in more than a decade when he detonated a suicide bomb after a concert by Grande, leaving many children among the dead.

Libya's internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), which is based in Tripoli, said in April that Hashem Abedi's case was being determined by the North African country's courts.

Libya has been mired in chaos since the ouster and killing of dictator Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising 2011.

Thanks to the Libyan authorities for their close cooperation on the successful extradition of Hashem Abedi. The Manchester attack was horrific; whoever is found responsible for this great evil must face justice. It is right that Abedi will now face criminal proceedings in the UK

– Jeremy Hunt (@Jeremy\_Hunt) [July 17, 2019](#)

The Abedi family, originally from Libya, had fled to Britain during the dictatorship, but the brothers returned to the country along with their father when the uprising began in 2011.

There has been a surge in fighting since military strongman General Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on Tripoli, seat of the GNA, on April 4.



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Libya planning to extradite Manchester bomber's brother UK seeks arrest of Manchester bomber's brother, asks Libya to extradite him

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## [Turkey clears RSF representative of 'terror propaganda'](#)

Author:

AFP

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Wed, 2019-07-17 10:47

ISTANBUL: The Turkey representative for Reporters Without Borders (RSF) was acquitted on Wednesday of the charge of making "terror propaganda" for Kurdish militants, in a case which triggered international alarm over press freedom in the country.

With dozens of journalists behind bars and on trial, activists claim the climate for the media has deteriorated under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Supporters erupted into applause after RSF representative Erol Onderoglu, rights activist Sebnem Korur Fincanci and journalist Ahmet Nesin were acquitted by an Istanbul court.

They were accused of making "terror propaganda" on behalf of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) after guest-editing the pro-Kurdish Turkish newspaper Ozgur Gundem, as well as "condoning crime" and "inciting crime." The three risked 14 years in jail in the trial which began in November 2016. Ozgur Gundem had invited guest editors to take control of the paper in a campaign of solidarity as it faced pressure from the Turkish authorities. The newspaper was raided and permanently shut down in August 2016, accused of links with the PKK which has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984.

The three campaigners were detained for a short period in 2016, and can now apply for financial compensation for time spent in jail.

The acquittals are in stark contrast with the harsh verdicts handed down by Turkish courts to critical journalists in recent years, the most controversial of which was the case against opposition daily Cumhuriyet whose former staff have been sentenced to jail.

"I warmly thank all those who supported us during the trial," Onderoglu, who will return to Istanbul next week, said via text message.

But he added: "The fight continues for all our colleagues unjustly on trial or imprisoned."

RSF said on Twitter it was "deeply relieved" by the acquittals but called for another trial due to begin against Onderoglu later this year to be scrapped. Onderoglu faces the same accusation of making "terror propaganda" after supporting academics who signed a petition calling for peace and the end of security operations against militants in the Kurdish-majority southeast. "Three years of absurd proceedings was already a form of unjust punishment. AND a new trial against Erol will start on 7 November. These charges must be dropped!" RSF said.

Only Fincanci attended the hearing while Onderoglu and Nesin were abroad. Fincanci told AFP she was "very surprised" by the acquittal.



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## [UK to send third warship HMS Duncan to Gulf](#)

Author:

AFP

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1563309213652138000

Tue, 2019-07-16 17:55

LONDON: Britain will send a third Royal Navy warship to the Gulf, the defense ministry announced Tuesday, while insisting that it did not “reflect an escalation” of tensions with Iran in the region.

Britain has already sent the HMS Duncan, an air defense destroyer, to cover for frigate HMS Montrose while it undergoes maintenance in nearby Bahrain,

and will also send frigate HMS Kent "later this year."

Reports said it would head to the Gulf in mid-September.

HMS Montrose last week warned off three Iranian gunboats that UK officials said were trying to "impede" the progress of a British supertanker through the Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf.

The defense ministry said the HMS Kent would be "taking over" from HMS Duncan, but added that an "occasional overlap of ships when one deployment begins and another ends... is not uncommon," suggesting that all three could be in the region at some point.

The ministry said the deployments were "long-planned" to ensure "an unbroken presence" in the crucial waterway and "do not reflect an escalation in the UK posture in the region."

Iranian officials have denied last Wednesday's incident in the Strait of Hormuz ever happened.

The British government has in any case raised the alert level for ships traveling through Iranian waters to three on a three-point scale, indicating a "critical" threat.

HMS Duncan is an air defense destroyer that carries a set of heavy Harpoon anti-ship missiles and has a company and crew in excess of 280.

Tensions have been escalating in the region for weeks, with US President Donald Trump last month calling off at the last minute an air strike on Iran over its downing of a US spy drone.

The Strait of Hormuz episode occurred a week after UK Royal Marines helped the Gibraltar authorities detain an Iranian tanker that US officials believe was trying to deliver oil to Syria in violation of separate sets of EU and US sanctions.

Iran has bristled at the arrest and issued a series of increasingly ominous warnings to both the United States and Britain about its right to take unspecified actions in reprisal.

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt sought to ease tensions on Monday by saying the tanker would be released if Tehran guaranteed it was not heading to Syria.



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## [Could foreign Daesh suspects be tried in northeast Syria?](#)

Author:

Tue, 2019-07-16 22:25

QAMISHLI: Months after the territorial defeat of Daesh, Syria's Kurds are pushing for an international tribunal to try alleged militants detained in their region.

The Kurds run an autonomous administration in the northeast of Syria, but it is not recognized by Damascus or the international community.

This brings complications for the legal footing of any justice mechanism on the Kurds' territory, and the international cooperation required to establish one.

With Western nations largely reluctant to repatriate their nationals or judge them at home, could foreign Daesh suspects be put on trial in northeast Syria?

After years of fighting Daesh, Syria's Kurds hold around 1,000 foreign men in jail, as well as some 12,000 non-Syrian women and children in overcrowded camps.

Almost four months after Kurdish-led forces backed by the US-led coalition seized Daesh's last scrap of land in eastern Syria, few have been repatriated.

The Kurdish authorities say they are seriously exploring how to set up an international tribunal, and invited foreign experts to discuss the idea at a conference it hosted early this month.

"We will work to set up this tribunal here," the region's top foreign affairs official Abdelkarim Omar told AFP afterwards.

"The topic of discussion now is how we will set up this tribunal and what form it will take," he said.

Daesh in 2014 declared a "caliphate" in large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq, implementing its brutal rule on millions in an area the size of the UK.

The militants stand accused of a string of crimes including mass killings and rape, and a UN probe is investigating alleged war crimes.

Mahmoud Patel, a South African international law expert invited to the July conference, said any court should include input from victims and survivors.

It should be "established in the region where the offenses happened so that the people themselves can be part of that process," he said, preferably in northeast Syria because the Kurds do not have the death penalty.

In Iraq, hundreds of people including foreigners have been condemned to death or life in prison.

In recent months, a Baghdad court has handed death sentences to 11 Frenchmen transferred from Syria to Iraq in speedy trials denounced by human rights groups.

Omar, the foreign affairs official, said he hoped for an international tribunal to try suspects "according to local laws after developing them to agree with international law."

The Kurdish region has judges and courts, including one already trying Syrian Daesh suspects, but needs logistical and legal assistance, he said.

A tribunal would have "local judges and foreign judges, as well as international lawyers" to defend the accused, he said.

Nabil Boudi, a French lawyer representing four Frenchmen and several families held in Syria, said the Kurdish authorities seemed determined.

"They're already starting to collect evidence," he said after attending the conference.



“All the people who were detained and jailed had their own phone” and data can be retrieved from them, said the lawyer, who was however unable to see those he represents.

Boudi called for “a serious investigation by an independent examining magistrate ... that should take time and be far less expeditious than in Baghdad.”

Stephen Rapp, prosecutor in the trial of Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, said the most realistic option to try foreigners in northeast Syria would be a Kurdish court.

It could have “international assistance conditioned on compliance with international law,” he said, including advice from a non-governmental organization specialized in working with non-state actors.



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Syria Kurds host conference on Daesh detainees

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# Palestinian refugees protest Lebanese Labor Ministry restrictions

Author:

Tue, 2019-07-16 21:35

BEIRUT: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon expressed their anger on Tuesday at the decision of the Lebanese Ministry of Labor to classify Palestinian labor similarly to illegal Syrian labor.

The refugees carried out a general strike and protests across 12 camps.

The protests, under the slogan "Day of Anger," paralyzed movement in the camps. Protesters closed the entrances with burning tyres. All Palestinian political forces and popular committees took part in the protests.

The speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, received a letter from the head of the Palestinian National Council, Salim Zanon, calling on him to "address the negative effects of the decision of the Lebanese Ministry of Labor."

Zanon said that Palestinians would support "Lebanon and its stability, as well as our determination to struggle together for the return of the Palestinian refugees, who have been graciously hosted by Lebanon for 71 years, and all refugees to their land and homes from which they were displaced by terrorism and the Israeli killing machine."

Zanon added that the decision of the Ministry of Labor has "caused great damage to human and civil rights and closed the doors of life for the Palestinian refugees."

A source in the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC) said: "The protests are an expression of the deteriorating social and living conditions experienced by Palestinians in Lebanon. The decision of the Ministry of Labor inspired these protests."

The source added: "The census conducted by the Lebanese state in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority in 2017 showed that the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has reached 174,000 and the Palestinian labor force doesn't exceed 40,000 workers. But if we repeat the census this year, we'll find that there's a decline in the labor force because of the quest to migrate, even if illegally, and to move to a third country in search of a better life."

The Lebanese Parliament introduced amendments to laws 128 and 129 on labor and social security in 2010, which excludes "exclusively Palestinian refugee workers, who are duly registered in the records of the Ministry of the Interior, from the terms of reciprocity and work permit issued by the Ministry of Labor."

The LPDC source said: "The amendment needed implementation decrees from the

Council of Ministers, signed by the president, the prime minister and the minister of labor, but they've not been issued for nine years."

The Palestinian labor force is present in fragile sectors such as construction and small crafts, but more problems arise among Palestinians who graduate from Lebanese universities and cannot work in their specialties because of trade union limitations. The source said that the Order of Nurses in Lebanon is the only union that allows Palestinians to work in their sector.

Alongside the protests, a meeting was held between various Palestinian factions at the headquarters of the LPDC with representatives of the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers. The Palestinian side called for "ending the measures of the Ministry of Labor regarding Palestinian refugees and not linking Palestinian labor in Lebanon with foreign labor."

Ghassan Ayoub, a Palestinian member of the LPDC, said that the ministry's actions "have a political impact. The Palestinian refugee isn't a guest who has remained in Lebanon because he liked the hospitality. He's a forced refugee who was born in Lebanon and lives on his territory. He isn't a foreign expatriate who came to work in Lebanon. This must be taken into account in the enforcement of the Ministry of Labor's procedures."

Ayoub said the situation demanded "the application of the spirit of the law and not the text of the law. There are many complications in the law in terms of obtaining a work permit and conditions for establishing a business. They're impossible conditions for the Palestinians."

As for the implications of applying the ministry's procedures to the refugees in Lebanon, Ayoub said: "Ninety percent of professions are forbidden to Palestinians, which means that they're entitled to work in only a few sectors, namely portering and digging, which are arduous. That means you're telling the Palestinians 'you have 10 percent of the air to breathe.' What do you want from the Palestinians? Where should they go? What are the alternatives?"

Palestinian refugees are not entitled to work in 72 professions in Lebanon, and are not permitted access to social security. One of the contradictions of the law is that Palestinians have the right to purchase a taxi but are forbidden to work in it. Moreover, Palestinians are only allowed to fish after obtaining a special permit.

"The plan of the ministry to combat illegal foreign labor force isn't aimed at the Palestinians and has nothing to do with conspiracy theories," Lebanese Labor Minister Kamil Abu Sulaiman said.

"There's a labor law in Lebanon. We approved a plan a month and a half ago to implement the law and gave a grace period of one month before we began inspections. The law applies to everyone and law enforcement can't be fragmented."

Abu Sulaiman added: "The Palestinian reaction is incomprehensible and

meaningless.”

He received a call from Ashraf Dabbour, the Palestinian ambassador to Lebanon, and said he informed the diplomat of the ministry’s readiness to facilitate the affairs of the Palestinians.

In an open letter, Dabbour called on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to avoid being “dragged into what does not serve our just cause. Our goal in the stage of our forced presence in Lebanon is to have a decent life until our return to our homeland, supported by our Lebanese brothers.”

The LPDC said that the Ministry of Labor “ignores the special case of the Palestinian refugees under the amendment of laws 128 and 129 and treats them as foreign workers.”

The LPDC added: “The Palestinian refugees can’t return to their country, and everything that they produce inside Lebanon remains in it, which strengthens the economic cycle of the country, whether it comes from small entrepreneurs or the hard work of laborers and craftsmen.

“Lebanon also benefits from the funds flowing through the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East’s \$80 million budget. They also gain from the efforts of international organizations in Palestinian camps, as well as what Palestinian refugees send to their refugee families in Lebanon, which is estimated at several hundred million dollars.”

Fathi Abu Al-Ardat, secretary in Lebanon of Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization, said: “The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are guests in this country and we respect its sovereignty, but we also respect the decent living of Palestinians in the camps.”



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