

House arrest for Jewish minors held over killing of Palestinian

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Thu, 2019-01-10 13:30

JERUSALEM: Israeli authorities on Thursday released to house arrest four of five Jewish minors held on suspicion of involvement in a fatal stone-throwing attack on a Palestinian woman, lawyers and officials said.

The arrests on December 30 were in connection with the killing of Aisha Rabi, who died after stones were thrown at the car she was traveling in with her family in the occupied West Bank on October 12.

Authorities did not confirm their detention until Sunday due to a gag order on details of the case while the investigation continued.

The remand of the fifth suspect has been extended by another six days, Israel's domestic security agency Shin Bet said.

The lawyers representing the minors argued that their release proved they were innocent.

"These youths, who had absolutely nothing to do with the event, should not have been arrested," said attorney Adi Kedar of Honenu, a right-wing legal aid organization, vowing to work to have the fifth suspect released.

The Shin Bet, which on Sunday announced an unspecified number of arrests for "serious terrorist offenses, including murder," rejected claims the youths were mistreated during their investigation.

The five, students at the Pri Haaretz religious seminary in the Rechelim settlement in the West Bank, were arrested "after intelligence efforts connecting them to the death of Rabi," a mother of nine, the Shin Bet said Thursday.

The Shin Bet noted the four were released after it was decided "the investigation could continue while they were under house arrest and other limiting conditions."

It also warned of "ongoing efforts" to obstruct the course of the investigation, "including by disseminating information about the probe while slandering the Shin Bet."

The fatal stoning took place near Rechelim, close to Rabi's village of Bidiya in the Israeli-occupied northern West Bank.

Rabi was struck on the head in the attack and died later at a hospital in the city of Nablus. Her husband, who was driving the car at the time, escaped with minor injuries.

Palestinian witnesses and security sources cited by official Palestinian news agency Wafa said the stones were thrown by Israeli settlers.

Israeli investigations into "Jewish terrorism" – as such cases are often referred to by Israeli media – are highly sensitive.

Israeli authorities have been accused by rights activists of dragging their feet in such cases in comparison to investigations into Palestinian attacks, while far-right Israelis say suspects have undergone coercion and torture.



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Israel arrests Jewish students over Palestinian woman's death
Gaza cafe owner offers fish pedicures to improve business

[Archaeologists restore ancient Palmyra artefacts in Damascus museum](#)

Author:

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Thu, 2019-01-10 13:41

DAMASCUS: In the National Museum of Damascus, archaeologist Muntajab Youssef works on an ancient stone bust from Palmyra, one of hundreds of artefacts his team is painstakingly restoring after they were damaged by Daesh. Centuries-old statues and sculptures were wrecked by the extremists when they twice seized control of the old city in central Syria during the country's

war, which will go into its ninth year in March.

The 1,800-year-old bust of a bejewelled and richly clothed woman, The Beauty of Palmyra, was damaged during the first offensive on the city by Daesh fighters in 2015.

After Syrian government forces took back the city with Russian military support in March 2016, the bust, alongside other damaged ancient monuments, was taken to Damascus and archived in boxes. When restoration work on it began last year, Youssef said it was in pieces.

“The hands and face were lost completely, also parts of the dress and there are areas that are weaker,” Youssef, who has been working on the bust for two months, said.

Youssef is one of 12 archaeologists working on the arduous restoration job, which first began with the of moving the damaged pieces to Damascus.

Mamoun Abdulkarim, the former Head of Syrian Antiquities, said that in some cases broken artefacts were transported in empty ammunition boxes provided by the Syrian army in Palmyra.

How many artefacts there are in total is difficult to say, given the state they were found in.

The lack of documentation for the artefacts also adds to the restoration challenge.

“A big part of the documentation in the Palmyra museum, was damaged with the antiquities and computers,” archaeologist Raed Abbas said. “A statue needs pictures ... in order to be rebuilt.”







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[International community should push Houthis to implement Sweden agreement: Yemen FM](#)

Thu, 2019-01-10 15:15

Yemen's foreign Minister Khalid Al-Yamani called on the international community to push the Houthis militia to implement the UN peace agreement.

"The Houthis have yet accepted to withdraw from the Hodeidah and its ports," Al-Yamani said during a joint press conference with the Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Amman.

The Houthi militia had agreed to withdraw from Hodeidah and hand over the

port to the United Nations after UN-sponsored peace talks in Sweden concluded on Dec. 18, 2018.

However late last month, the UN cast doubt on the claims by the Houthis to have withdrawn from the port of Hodeidah, saying such steps can only be credible if all other parties can verify them.

The Jordanian foreign minister also stressed the need to implement the Sweden agreement to end the crisis.

“We support all efforts to resolve the Yemen crisis and end the suffering of the Yemeni people,” Safadi said.



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Yemeni army liberates strategic mountain range in Dalih province
Saudi Arabia's KSR relief signs six agreements to boost aid to Yemen

Lebanese security forces arrest three Syrians with links to Daesh in Middle East, Europe

Wed, 2019-01-09 23:15

BEIRUT: Lebanese security forces have arrested three Syrians believed to have links to Daesh terror groups across the Middle East and Europe.

The Lebanese General Directorate of General Security said on Wednesday that investigations were ongoing and more arrests were expected.

One of the detainees had been plotting a bombing campaign against Lebanese military and civilian targets, while also producing videos on how to make explosives.

The announcement coincided with a speech by the Lebanese President Michel Aoun, in which he expressed concerns about the economic and security pressures being placed on Lebanon by the number of Syrian refugees in the country.

Speaking at a meeting of diplomats at the presidential palace on Wednesday, Aoun said keeping Syrian refugees in Lebanon was “harmful to our country at all levels.”

He said the war against terrorism was now a global one which had caused huge displacements of populations in countries throughout the Middle East.

Aoun said: “Lebanon is one of the countries that have borne the burden of neighboring wars and the flow of Syrian refugees into it.” He added that while Lebanon had been successful in tackling terrorism on its own soil, the refugee crisis continued to “weigh heavily” on economic, security, social, educational and health aspects of the country.

He said Lebanon’s infrastructure and limited resources “are unable to sustain this population increase,” and he urged the international community to take urgent steps to help resolve the refugee situation. Peace in the region, he added, would only come by recognizing the rights of others, however difficult and costly that may be.

Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio to Lebanon, stressed the need for international diplomatic and economic support for Lebanon to tackle its internal and external challenges, including the Syrian refugee crisis. The Papal envoy added: “In the context of the ever-evolving geopolitical reality, we hope that Lebanon will remain stable and able to benefit from its pioneering role in the region, drawing on its rich history and experience over the last 75 years of its existence as a republic.”

Meanwhile, Lebanese security forces said the three detained Syrians, born in 2000, 1968 and 1997, had been arrested for belonging to “a terrorist organization.”

One of the detainees was said to have confessed allegiance to Daesh through a Syrian group religious leader in the Lebanese town of Aarsal. The statement said the detainees had revealed that groups supporting the terrorist organization had been set up through social networking sites to attract recruits. One of those arrested had been recruited to form a terror cell to operate within Lebanese territory and was associated with a Daesh Iraqi

commander and other commanders in Syria, Palestine, Turkey and Europe. “They published video recordings on how to prepare explosives and manufacture lethal poisons from materials available in local markets,” the statement said. “He (the detainee) bought some of these materials with the knowledge of his father, the third detainee, and he conducted more than one experiment to make explosives in order to assassinate a person from Aرسال and to carry out operations against Lebanese army bases and patrols in the town. The material was seized inside his (the detainee’s) house in Aرسال.”



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Lebanon’s winter storm freezes refugees in flooded camps
Syrian refugees in Lebanon drop below one million

[‘I need a blanket’: Lebanon winter storm batters refugee tents](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Wed, 2019-01-09 16:11

BEIRUT: At a makeshift camp in the Lebanese town of Aarsal, refugees are burning their clothes trying to ward off the harsh cold as storms flood their tents.

"We have no fuel at all. People are tearing up clothes, burning plastic, whatever they can find to get warm," Abdallah Mokdeh said in the border town. "This is the worst we've seen in years."

Since 2011, more than a million Syrians have fled the war at home to Lebanon, where aid agencies say most live in severe poverty. Tens of thousands are in Aarsal near the hills at the border with Syria.

"The roads are blocked. We called an ambulance and it did not come," said Mokdeh, a refugee who acts as a caretaker for the rows of tents pitched closely together on a patch of earth.

Floods ruined mattresses and destroyed tents, forcing some people to move in with their neighbors. Many were sick or elderly. Some tents already housed three families, he said.

"The snow, the cold have no mercy."

Mahmoud Hakouk, a 60-year-old Syrian man at the same site, has struggled to stay dry. "I need a blanket," he said, shivering. "I swear to God I don't have enough to buy bread."

The UN refugee agency said high winds, rain and snow had "heavily impacted" more than 150 informal settlements, including some that were fully flooded or collapsed. A child was reported missing, it said on Wednesday.

The heavy storm inundated hundreds of tented settlements across Lebanon and left youngsters stranded in freezing temperatures, charity Save the Children said.

"It's miserable here, we have tents that collapsed because of the intense wind," said Radwan Raad, standing in the snow at another ramshackle camp in Aarsal.

Many of the camp's residents did not receive UN aid and could not afford food every day, he added.

Helem Amer, 85, wrapped herself in a blanket in her flimsy shelter at that camp. "I can't get up on my own, there's no fuel, nothing, nobody to help."





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