

Lebanese activist shown shoving energy minister turns himself in

Tue, 2022-04-26 22:23

BEIRUT: A Lebanese activist who was filmed attacking the country's energy minister in Beirut has handed himself over to police.

A video of renowned protester Elie Haykal went viral on Sunday, causing social media uproar. The clip shows Haykal provoking and pushing minister Walid Fayyad outside a diner in the Lebanese capital.

Haykal, who is affiliated with the Christian political party Lebanese Forces, shoved Fayyad, a close ally of the Free Patriotic Movement party of President Michel Aoun.

The video garnered some support from social media users, but was mostly met with criticism, especially because Fayyad is believed to be one of the only politicians in Lebanon who travels without bodyguards or any security entourage.

#WATCH: Renowned activist Elie Haykal confronting and pushing Lebanese energy minister Walid Fayyad outside a diner place in Beirut on Sunday <https://t.co/gAKe2N8xMT>
pic.twitter.com/dlgqonR5K1

– Arab News (@arabnews) [April 26, 2022](#)

Following Tuesday's Cabinet meeting, Lebanon's information minister Ziad Al-Makary said fellow ministers condemned the assault and demanded legal action

against the perpetrator.

"My client surrendered himself today," Haykal's lawyer Ralph Tannous told Arab News on Tuesday evening. "He surrendered himself to Zouk Mosbeh police station and will be transferred to Achrafieh police station for interrogation since the minister has complained in his personal capacity," the lawyer added.

Tannous told Arab News that his client was subpoenaed on Monday but did not receive a notice because he was away from home.

When asked about the nature of the crime, Tannous said that his client, if charged, will be tried before the misdemeanours court, but added that he had not ruled out the possibility of obtaining a waiver from the minister, with whom they are trying to contact.

In the 34-second video, the energy minister is seen chatting with demonstrators outside the restaurant before Haykal, who was behind Fayyad, grabbed his right shoulder, turned him around and then addressed him.

He said: "Today I have to deliver to you a message from all the Lebanese people. I want to deliver to you a clear message, so that you wake up and understand."

He then shoved Fayyad, who stumbled backwards on to a metal partition.

A Twitter user criticized Haykal's actions, posting: "The minister of energy has annoyed me with his behavior, and I disagree with his performance, but hitting him in that way is completely unacceptable."

Another user described Haykal as "debauched and uneducated" but added that she had no confidence that Fayyad could solve Lebanon's power crisis.

"Violence will not solve the electricity crisis or any of our crises. I am frustrated like the rest, but I personally cannot condone what happened," another tweet said.



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[Walid Fayyad](#)

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Protests held in Beirut against draft capital control law
Anger in Beirut's southern suburbs over increased thefts and shootings

[France condemns life sentence for Turkey's Kavalá](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1650981237168335100

Tue, 2022-04-26 16:56

PARIS: France on Tuesday condemned the life sentence handed by a Turkish court to leading civil society activist Osman Kavalá, saying his detention violated Turkey's international obligations.

"France strongly condemns the life sentence," the foreign ministry said, calling for Kavalá's "immediate release" and the dropping of all charges against him.

He had been detained for more than four-and a-half years "in violation of Turkey's international obligations," the French ministry added.

France's statement echoes similar statements by Germany and the United States expressing dismay at the verdict issued by the Istanbul court on Monday.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) had in December 2019 ordered Turkey to release Kavalá, but he has always remained behind bars.

In February, the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe (COE), of which the ECHR is part, launched infringement proceedings against Turkey for only the second time in its history.

In a first step of the proceedings, the case has now been referred back to the ECHR to rule if Turkey has failed to fulfil its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights.

The proceedings could see Turkey suspended or – in the most severe sanction – even expelled from the COE. ECHR are rulings are binding for all COE member states.

The Istanbul court sentenced Kavalá to life in prison on charges of trying to topple the government that have been rubbished by his supporters. It also jailed seven other defendants for 18 years each.

The president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Tiny Kox, said he was "deeply disappointed" by the verdict by the Turkish court.

“The fact that he spent almost five years in pre-trial detention and has now been sentenced to life in prison as a result of legal proceedings that were found to be in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, is shocking,” he said.

“Mr Kavala should be released without any further delay,” Kox said.



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Turkish court jails Erdogan critic Kavala for life
Turkish philanthropist Kavala gives final defense in protest trial

[Trade picks up in Hebron during Ramadan until tensions resume](#)

Mon, 2022-04-25 23:00

HEBRON: In the Old City of Hebron there is jubilation and relief as closed

shops lifted their shutters to welcome customers.

Abu Hatem Al-Jibreni is happy that the residents of Hebron can now go shopping in the narrow streets of the market.

“Ramadan has many benefits, in addition to the good deeds from God . . . it has increased the movement of purchases in the streets of the Old City, which is benefitting all parties,” 87-year-old Al-Jibreni told Arab News.

Residents of the Old City of Hebron have suffered losses and harassment at the hands of the Israelis as their shops have been closed and streets blocked.

FASTFACT

Residents of the Old City of Hebron have suffered losses and harassment at the hands of the Israelis as their shops have been closed and streets blocked.

Al-Jibreni has been selling a variety of products at low prices compared to modern city shops at his father’s shop since childhood. “We have been suffering for many years. Many shops closed their doors due to Israeli restrictions and the lack of customers in the market,” he said.

The city’s residents feel comfortable seeing customers in the market alleys, and the month of Ramadan has made them feel “life is back.”

“I am very happy to see people here, regardless of buying and selling, every year during Ramadan the old town comes to life again,” said Muhammad Al-Fakhouri, 32, a resident of the Old City.

He added: “I feel sorry that throughout the year no one from outside the residents of the Old City come, but during Ramadan the scene is completely different, as if life is reborn during the month, especially in early days.”

The Palestinians describe the Israeli actions in the Old City as apartheid. Many streets are completely reserved for settlers, and Palestinians are prohibited from using them. Other streets are allowed for Palestinians to walk in, but they are not allowed to drive, and other streets are allowed for Palestinians to drive but they are not allowed to get out.

There are houses in the old town whose residents are prevented from using the doors of their homes, so they have turned their windows into doors or opened new doors for their homes, while others are unable to solve the problems of accessing their homes so walk on the roofs of neighboring houses to enter and exit.

There are neighborhoods that a Palestinian cannot enter unless he is a resident and therefore no one is allowed to visit, while other neighborhoods can only be entered through gates and physical checkpoints.

The Norwegian Refugee Council estimated in 2019 that the total direct and indirect losses resulting from the closure of shops under military orders were estimated at \$485 million during the past 25 years of closure – the equivalent of \$1.6 million a month incurred in the Old City.

The city of Hebron, especially in the Old City area, also witnessed tension in the wake of the events in Jerusalem during the past few days, which weakened commercial movement again in the Old City market.

“Customer numbers at the beginning of Ramadan were increasing, but with the recent tension the movement of people decreased here . . . we were hoping that calm (peace) would continue during the month (Ramadan) for recovery of trade, but unfortunately this did not last,” Abu Rami Sidar, 44, told Arab News.

The owner of a sweets shop, Sidar, believes that the month of Ramadan every year is a chance for all sides to benefit from buying from the Old City.

“Our prices here are lower than anywhere else in light of the high prices in Ramadan . . . here it does not increase, but rather decreases to encourage everyone to buy from and visit the Old City,” he said.



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Palestinians feeling the pinch as prices soar

[Arab nations slam Israel at UN Security Council after weekend of violence](#)

Mon, 2022-04-25 22:37

LONDON: Arab nations criticized Israel during a heated meeting of the UN Security Council on Monday that focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Representatives of several Arab states spoke out against the actions of Israeli forces against Palestinians, especially violence over the weekend in East Jerusalem and at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Israel criticized the UNSC for ignoring the activities of Palestinian terror groups and the rising threat from Iran.

Tor Wennesland, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said 23 Palestinians – including three women and four children – were killed in clashes with Israeli forces, and 541 had been injured by police and settlers.

Twelve Israelis – including two women – and three foreign nationals had been killed by Palestinians, and 82 had been injured.

Riyad Mansour, Palestine's permanent observer to the UN, said Israel had "resorted to its favorite justification – security" for the violence carried out by its forces.

"It is the one-size-fits-all justification: Security to justify illegal occupation, security to justify forcible displacement, security to justify inhumane blockade, security to justify killing children on their way to school, security to justify bombing entire neighborhoods, security to justify attacking our people, our land and our holy sites," he added.

"They labeled our worshippers 'terrorists' – the distortions are endless, offensive and dangerous."

Gilad Erden, Israel's ambassador to the UN, said Israel found itself in the midst of a "terror wave" of attacks.

He criticized the UNSC for failing to raise the issue of Iran, its activities in Lebanon and its nuclear program, which he labeled "a true threat to regional security."

Hezbollah "has multiplied its arsenal in Lebanon tenfold," he said, adding

that it “represents only one tentacle of terror belonging to an even more menacing threat: Iran.

“Hezbollah is one of six terror proxy armies that Iran funds and arms, and Iran, as the world’s number-one state sponsor of terror, uses these armies to spread death and chaos across the region.”

Erden said: “As we speak, advanced Iranian centrifuges continue to spin. The ayatollahs’ regime is now mere weeks away from enriching enough uranium for a nuclear bomb.

“How is it possible that the body tasked with global security does not dedicate the majority of this debate on the Middle East to the Iranian nuclear threat?”

He added: “Try to imagine what the Middle East will look like when Iran’s terror proxies can operate under a nuclear umbrella.

“How much bolder will the Houthis’ attacks on international trade routes and civilian infrastructure get once they have nuclear backing?”

Other nations, however, criticized Israel for its actions against the Palestinians in recent days. Algeria reminded the UNSC that the session came just days before the 74th anniversary of the dispossession of the Palestinian people when Israel was created in 1948, “a people whose only fault was the rejection of an occupation of its land, and calling for the right to self-determination.”

Jordan, Turkey, Morocco, Lebanon and the UAE also criticized Israel, calling on it to de-escalate the situation.

The UAE called the moment “a critical juncture” and condemned “the repeated incursions by Israeli forces into Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the assault carried out by settlers in the courtyards of Al-Haram Al-Sharif.”

Richard Mills Jr., deputy US ambassador to the UN, warned that the situation in Gaza had also become desperate and required international assistance.

“In Gaza, the need for humanitarian relief, reconstruction and recovery remains acute,” he said. “We encourage all member states to provide concrete assistance, including financial contributions ... to help meet the needs of ordinary Palestinians.”



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Arab leaders urge Israel not to undermine 2-state solution UAE FM calls for calming Al-Aqsa situation during call with Israeli counterpart

[Yemen's Houthi militia announces release of crew of Emirati ship Rwabee](#)

Mon, 2022-04-25 21:02

RIYADH: The Houthi militia in Yemen announced the release of the crew of an Emirati vessel called Rwabee, the group's spokesman said on Monday. Yemen's Houthis say the Emirati cargo vessel that they seized in the Red Sea in January had been carrying military hardware, but the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen says the ship had been carrying medical equipment.



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Houthis gather more forces outside Yemen's Marib city King Salman, crown prince congratulate Rashad Al-Alimi on Yemen leadership council swearing-in