

# Jailed British-Iranian man begins hunger strike

Sat, 2022-01-22 21:13

LONDON: A British-Iranian dual national imprisoned in Iran will begin a hunger strike on Sunday in support of an American former hostage of Tehran who is staging his own hunger strike outside the nuclear talks in Vienna.

Anoosheh Ashoori is staging the strike in solidarity with Barry Rosen, 77, who, as then-press attache at the US Embassy in Tehran, was held hostage for 444 days between 1979 and 1981.

Ashoori was arrested in August 2017 and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for espionage. He is now jailed in Evin prison in Tehran.

His wife Sherry said: "We are extremely concerned for his health as he approaches his 68th birthday, but having failed to see any progress in the UK Foreign Office's efforts to secure his release, and no sign of the welfare of hostages held by Iran currently being a priority of Western governments, he will begin his hunger strike."

Rosen says hostages should be released as part of a new nuclear deal, and has also been joined on hunger strike by Lebanese US resident Nizar Zakka, who was detained by Iran between 2015 and 2019.

Rosen told The Guardian: "I am receiving heart-rending messages from Iranians, and I am absolutely humbled that Anoosheh is doing this in support of me.

"I support him completely in return and I urge him to be careful and look after himself. I am starting to feel tired and weak, but I am determined to continue.

"I am here to call on the Americans and the Europeans to make the release of the hostages a condition of any agreement to renew the Iran nuclear deal.

"This has been going on for 40 years, and people are being thrown in jail with no evidence. There has to be an agreement that this will end."

Rosen said he is concerned that Western countries are not taking Iran's hostage-taking strategy seriously. "It is like herding cats. Each country seems to deal with its dual national hostages on its own," he added.

"There is no sense of commonality, so they leave Iran to pick each country off. Something is missing here. The Iranians seem to be dividing and ruling.

"I decided to do this (campaign) two weeks ago. I am just an individual, and thought I might be a lone eagle, but it feels like a movement might be starting."



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Daughter of British-Iranian political prisoner sends plea to UK PM

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## [UAE stops drone flying for owners, practitioners and enthusiasts:](#) [Interior Ministry](#)

Sat, 2022-01-22 21:16

ABU DHABI: The UAE has grounded most private drones and light sports aircraft used for recreational purposes for a month starting Saturday, the Interior Ministry said, following a deadly attack this week by Yemen's Houthis.

While the Interior Ministry did not refer directly to the attack in imposing the ban, it said the decision came after finding misuse of permits granted to those who practice these sports.

“MOI (Ministry of Interior) is currently stopping all flying operations for owners, practitioners and enthusiasts of drones, including drones and light sports aircrafts,” it said in a statement.

وزارة الداخلية تصدر بياناً تحذيرياً لهواة وممارسي وملاك الطائرات بدون طيار

MOI stops drone flying operations for owners, practitioners and enthusiasts#تحذير #Warning [pic.twitter.com/YGTjjC4Zlm](https://pic.twitter.com/YGTjjC4Zlm)

– وزارة الداخلية (@moiuae) [January 22, 2022](#)

Exceptions might be granted by the permit authorities for businesses using drones for filming, the ministry said.

The UAE said the Iran-backed Houthi militia used cruise missiles and ballistic missiles alongside drones in the attack on Monday that killed three civilians.

The Houthi attack hit a fuel depot of state oil firm ADNOC in Musaffah and a construction site near Abu Dhabi airport, the UAE confirmed while adding it intercepted part of the attack.



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## [Lebanon to start virtual talks with IMF next week](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

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Sat, 2022-01-22 20:22

BEIRUT: Lebanese officials will start talks with the International Monetary Fund on Monday, an official government source told Reuters.

An IMF spokesperson also told Reuters on Saturday that a team will start virtual talks with Lebanese authorities next week.

The Lebanese government has said it hopes to reach an initial agreement with the fund for financial support between January and February. Lebanon is in the grip of an unprecedented financial crisis and an IMF deal is widely seen as the only way for it to secure aid.

The fund said in December it was assessing a \$69 billion figure announced by Lebanese officials for losses in the country's financial sector.

Disagreements in Lebanon over the size of the losses and how they should be distributed torpedoed IMF talks in 2020. The central bank, banks and political elite rejected figures set out in a government plan that was endorsed by the IMF at the time.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati said in September that the financial recovery plan to be drawn up by his cabinet will include a fair distribution of losses suffered by the financial system, but the cabinet hasn't convened since October.

It will convene again on Monday to discuss the 2022 budget, but no clear details have been released about the recovery plan.

The Lebanese financial system collapsed in 2019 because of decades of corruption and waste in the state and the unsustainable way it was financed. The trigger was slowing inflows of hard currency into the banking system, which lent heavily to the government.

Several reforms the IMF would likely seek, including cutting subsidies and unifying the numerous exchange rates in Lebanon's chaotic cash economy, are already becoming realities as hard currency dries up, political sources say.



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Lebanon's PM to meet Kuwaiti foreign minister in Beirut  
Lebanon's 2022 draft budget forecasts 20.8% deficit amid financial crisis

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## Lebanese elections: Former PM Hariri in key meetings

Author:

Sat, 2022-01-22 01:31

BEIRUT: Just four people have submitted their candidacies for Lebanon's parliamentary elections planned for May since the nomination process opened on Jan. 10.

The next house of representatives will elect a new president in October, five months after the parliamentary elections.

Some 250,000 Lebanese expats have registered abroad to vote in the upcoming elections to choose 128 MPs.

Only one-third of them registered for the previous elections, reflecting enthusiasm for change.

Zeina Helou, an expert in local affairs, told Arab News that those who submitted their candidacies belonged to the opposition.

Helou said there was a delay in the process because opposition figures had been questioning the possibility of parliamentary elections going ahead.

There were further delays due to the electoral law requiring candidates to join electoral lists to qualify as a contestant.

### **FASTFACT**

**The parliamentary elections are expected to be heated as the Lebanese people are motivated for political upheaval in a system accused of corruption.**

Candidates are also required to deposit LBP30 million (\$19,800), which is far higher than the LBP8 million deposit for previous parliamentary elections.

Helou said that things might take shape when registration of the candidates' lists begins, with the deadline set between Mar. 16 and April 4.

Amid the low candidacy numbers, the ruling political forces were still studying the possibility of maintaining their electoral allies, with several alliances broken up as a result of the political crisis.

The mystery surrounding the position of former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who returned to Beirut on Thursday morning, has increased their frustration. He left Lebanon last June following his refusal to form a government.

Hariri met with the members of his bloc, with reports indicating that he will

not nominate himself for the upcoming elections, leaving his bloc's MPs the choice to participate or not.

Former MP and Vice-President of the Future Movement Mustapha Allouch told Arab News: "So far, we haven't been informed of Hariri's decision and all the other matters affiliated to that decision."

Allouch said Hariri was holding several meetings and the picture might be clearer next week.

The political rumor mill has suggested that Hariri's political allies, led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Leader of the Progressive Socialist Party Walid Jumblatt, will seek to convince him to run for elections or to let the Future Movement participate, as their absence will leave a void on the Sunni scene.

There are mounting fears regarding Sunni representation as influential figures are reluctant to run for elections. Former Prime Minister Tammam Salam announced on Thursday that he was unwilling to run for parliament. Nazih Njeim, a member of the Future Movement, revealed that a number of the party's MPs will not run for elections if Hariri does not put himself forward.

He said: "When the Sunni component is not doing well, this reflects badly on the country."

Public affairs expert Dr. Walid Fakhreddin said: "Hariri's decision not to run for elections seems to be settled, knowing that he partly bears responsibility for the collapse of the country and specifically for the settlement that brought about Michel Aoun as the president."

He added that other political forces in power were also hit at the core.

"The Free Patriotic Movement is destroyed at the grassroots level, and at the internal level, there will be fights between rivals of the same party on the same seat. The Progressive Socialist Party will re-nominate its deputies."

He said: "We can also say while the popularity of Hezbollah and the Amal Movement was affected in some districts, it is no longer impossible to break it in other districts."

"We will witness a confrontation between the ruling class and the opposition. The ruling parties will fight each other, and the opposition may have more than a list in a few districts."



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Jordan to sign deal to supply Lebanon with electricity: energy minister

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## [Sudanese judges, US denounce deadly crackdowns on protests](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-01-22 01:28

KHARTOUM: Sudanese head of judiciary and judges condemned violence against anti-military protesters in a rare public statement, while the US said it would consider unspecified steps against those holding up efforts to resolve Sudan's political crisis.

At least 72 civilians have died and more than 2,000 have been injured as security forces have cracked down on frequent demonstrations since a military takeover on Oct. 25, according to medics aligned with the protest movement. Angered by the killing of seven civilians earlier this week, protesters took



to the streets once more on Thursday in eastern Khartoum and other locations across Sudan.

Military leaders have said that the right to peaceful protest is protected and have commissioned investigations into the bloodshed.

The violence has deepened the deadlock between pro-democracy groups and the military leadership.

In a statement, Sudan's ruling council affirmed the need for national dialogue, a technocratic Cabinet, and adjustments to a transitional constitutional document negotiated after the ousting of former leader Omar Bashir in a 2019 uprising.

The document formed the basis for a power-sharing arrangement between the military and civilians that was halted by the coup.

## **BACKGROUND**

**Military leaders have said that the right to peaceful protest is protected and have commissioned investigations into the bloodshed.**

After a failed bid by former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok to salvage some civilian control following the coup, the UN has been trying to facilitate dialogue between opposing factions.

Late on Thursday, military leader Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan announced the appointment of 15 Cabinet ministers, most of whom had been promoted to acting roles by Hamdok.

No prime minister or defense or interior ministers were named.

The coup drew condemnation from Western powers that largely froze badly needed economic assistance to Sudan.

That assistance would only be restarted if violence ended and a civilian-led government was restored, visiting US Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Molly Phee and newly appointed special envoy David Satterfield said.

Condemning the use of force on protesters, they "made clear the United States will consider measures to hold accountable those responsible for failure to move forward" with a political transition and an end to violence, a US statement said.

A statement from 55 Sudanese judges to the judiciary chief said military leaders had "violated agreements and covenants since the Oct. 25 coup, as they have carried out the most heinous violations against defenseless protesters."

They called for an end to the violence and a criminal investigation.

In response, the head of the judiciary said in a statement that the ruling sovereign council must do the utmost to prevent violations.

"We in the judiciary affirm that we will not hesitate to take the measures we have at hand to protect the lives and constitutional rights of citizens," the statement said.

Separately, more than 100 prosecutors announced they would stop work from Thursday to call for security forces to cease violations and lift a state of emergency. They said prosecutors had been unable to carry out their legal duty to accompany police to protests and determine the acceptable use of force.

It is unusual for Sudan's judges and prosecutors to make public statements about the conduct of the security forces.

Asked for comment, acting Information Ministry Minister Nasreldin Ahmed noted that Gen. Al-Burhan had ordered an investigation into protester deaths on Monday and a probe was underway.

Protesters in the capital could be seen pulling up paving and barricading a main road and several side streets.

One, a student named Taysir, said they were doing so to protect themselves from security forces.

She dismissed Gen. Al-Burhan's moves to appoint a caretaker Cabinet.

"He doesn't want to give up, but we don't want to give up either," said another protester, who gave her name as Muzan.



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Sudan military chief announces ministerial appointments as anti-coup protests continue  
US won't resume assistance to Sudan without civilian government