

# Jordan's military prosecutor seeks highest punishment for sedition accused

Thu, 2021-07-01 20:12

AMMAN: Jordan's military State Security Court (SSC) prosecutor on Thursday asked the court to inflict the highest punishment on Bassem Awadallah and Sharif Hassan bin Zaid over their alleged involvement in a high-profile sedition case.

Awadallah, a former chief of the Jordanian Royal Court, and bin Zaid, a distant royal family member, are standing trial at the SSC on charges of plotting to undermine the regime and the country's security and stability.

The two men were arrested on April 3 along with 15 other people suspected of involvement in the case, which also involved Prince Hamzah, a half-brother of Jordan's King Abdullah.

Jordanian authorities said that Awadallah, bin Zaid and Prince Hamzah were attempting to destabilize Jordan in collaboration with "foreign entities."

Prince Hamzah's case has been settled within the Hashemite family on directives from King Abdullah.

The Jordanian Royal Court published a letter signed by Prince Hamzah in which he vowed allegiance to the monarch and confirmed that he would act "always for His Majesty and his crown prince to help and support."

The charge sheet against Awadallah and bin Zaid said the two defendants were long-time friends because of the nature of their work and connection to Prince Hamzeh.

Prince Hamzeh was seeking to become the ruler of Jordan and "took advantage of certain incidents, including the COVID-19 pandemic, to create chaos and frustration in the country," the charge sheet added

Their strategy included attacks and criticisms of King Abdullah "with the hope of gaining popular support."

Awadallah and bin Zaid pleaded not guilty during their opening trial earlier this month. Both suspects presented written statements to the SSC on Sunday.

The SSC prosecution sheet also included a charge against bin Zaid of possessing illegal narcotics (hashish).

During Thursday's fifth closed-door session, the defense team asked the SSC for time to prepare their closing arguments, according to the state-run news agency Petra.

The SSC, which looks into cases related to terrorism and state security, set next Tuesday as the date for the trial.

Awadallah's lawyer, Mohammad Afif, was quoted by government-owned Al-Mamlakah TV on Wednesday as saying that the defense team has requested that princes Hamzah, Hashemite and Ali be summoned as witnesses along with Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi.

Afif, a former SSC president, did not elaborate, but sources familiar with the case told Arab News that the SSC turned down the request.

According to lawyers, the two defendants could receive prison terms of three to 20 years if convicted on charges of incitement and sedition.



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Defense in trial on Jordan's destabilization plot will ask court to bring Prince Hamza to testify Prince Hamzah 'in my care' at his palace: Jordan King Abdullah II

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# Fighting outside Marib simmers as Houthis take heavy casualties

Author:

Thu, 2021-07-01 19:22

ALEXANDRIA: Fighting on major battlefields outside Yemen's central city of Marib died down on Thursday as Iran-backed Houthis halted their assaults after suffering heavy casualties and losing military equipment, two local military officials told Arab News.

It follows Yemen's appeal to the US to increase military support and training for the country's coast guard so it can rein in the smuggling of Iranian weapons to the Houthis.

Over the past five days, "unprecedented" fighting between the Yemeni government forces and the Houthis broke out in several contested areas outside Marib. The rebels renewed attacks on government forces in a bid to make gains on the ground that would put them closer to the strategic city.

Yemeni army officials said dozens of rebel forces and government troops were killed in the fighting as the Houthis also suffered heavy casualties. The rebels were forced to retreat after facing stiff resistance and heavy aerial bombardment from Arab coalition warplanes.

"There is a cautious calm on the battlefields (on Thursday) after the Houthi suffered heavy losses during their last attack," an army military official said on the condition of anonymity.

Thousands of combatants and civilians have been killed in fighting and missile strikes in the Marib province since February when the Houthis resumed a major offensive to seize control of the government's last bastion in northern Yemen.

Another military official said the Yemeni army received information on Thursday that the Houthis were regrouping outside Marib and have called for military reinforcements from Sanaa and other areas in northern Yemen.

"The national army is aware of regrouping of fighters and will defeat them," the official said, preferring anonymity.

Yemen has demanded the US increase its military support to the coast guard forces to help disrupt the flow of Iranian weapons and experts to the Houthis that fueled the latest conflict.

On Wednesday, Yemeni Vice President Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmar met with Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the commander of US Naval Forces Central Command and the US 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces, to discuss the fighting. Al-Ahmar urged the US to train, arm, and share intelligence with the Yemeni Coast Guard, which is trying to thwart a smuggling surge of weapons from Iran to the Houthis through the country's long coastline.

Al-Ahmar thanked the American and the Arab coalition navies for seizing several arms shipments from Iran to the Houthis, adding that his country's coast guard would not be able to confront the smuggling of arms and drugs on their own, the official news agency SABA reported.

"The vice president stresses the importance of the US and international support for efforts to combat terrorism and smuggling in our country and the region," SABA said.

"Yemen looks forward to more support and training for the coast guard forces so they can play a bigger role in combating Iranian arms smuggling and limiting activities threatening maritime security."

The smuggling of weapons, drugs, and migrants has increased since early 2015 when the Yemeni maritime forces crumbled as the Houthis expanded rapidly across the country.

Shortly after intervening militarily in Yemen, in support of the internationally recognized government in March 2015, the Arab coalition regrouped the forces at military bases inside and outside of Yemen. After the forces received military training, they were deployed across the country's coastline on the Red Sea and Arab Sea.



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Houthi offensive in Marib is exacerbating Yemen's humanitarian crisis: US State Dept. Three dead as Houthi missiles hit Marib

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## [Israel welcomes German leader as ally against antisemitism](#)

Author:

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Thu, 2021-07-01 19:07

JERUSALEM: Israel's president warmly welcomed his German counterpart on Thursday, praising him as an ally in combatting antisemitism. Reuven Rivlin said that Germany has been Israel's "strong partner in the uncompromising fight against antisemitism" and has stood with Israel against "the forces of terror who seek to wipe us off the map."

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also met with Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Jerusalem. The prime minister's office said in a statement that the two discussed Iran's nuclear program, and that Bennett restated Israel's determination to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Steinmeier was expected to reiterate Germany's strong support for Israel.

Nazi Germany and its collaborators murdered 6 million European Jews in the Holocaust. Germany's postwar leaders have repeatedly apologized for the Nazi atrocities and it has paid hundreds of millions of dollars in reparations to Jewish victims. Israel and Germany have developed close ties in recent years. During a solemn visit to Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, Steinmeier said the "unspeakable suffering" caused in Germany's name "fills us with pain and shame."

"We will keep the memory of this alive for the sake of those who were murdered and for the sake of future generations," he said.

Germany launched a new initiative with the United States last week to stem an alarming rise in antisemitism and Holocaust denial around the world.

The US-Germany Holocaust Dialogue seeks to reverse the trend, which gained traction during the coronavirus pandemic amid a surge in political populism across Europe and the US. The dialogue creates a way to develop educational and messaging tools to teach youth and others about the crimes of the Nazis and their collaborators.



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Lapid, on UAE trip, opens first Israeli embassy in Gulf

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## [Tripoli on brink of disaster as power outage fuels unrest in Lebanon](#)

Author:

Wed, 2021-06-30 21:27

BEIRUT: The security and social situation deteriorated on Wednesday in Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, where more than half of the population lives in poverty and the city has been left without electricity.

To make things worse, a child on oxygen support died after his machine stopped working and generators were turned off due to the acute shortage of diesel.

"People are angry. They took to the streets, some carrying weapons, and started closing down the shops by force," an eyewitness told Arab News.

Tripoli's mayor Riyad Yamaq said on television that "the situation in the city is out of control."

The Lebanese Army patrolled the streets but stones and chairs were thrown at the soldiers, leading them to respond by firing their weapons into the air.

After calm was partially returned, the protesters moved to the Kadisha Electricity Company located in Tripoli's Al-Bahsas area.

They stormed the building and forced its employees to supply some regions with electricity.

Mustafa Alloush, vice-president of the Future Movement, who is from Tripoli and practices medicine there, said: "What was expected has started from Tripoli and the social explosion has begun from this city. More will come if nobody intervenes immediately to halt the collapse."

As the army regained control in Tripoli, the Lebanese Parliament held a session at the UNESCO Palace in Beirut. The area was heavily guarded. This infuriated people who took to social media to insult the Lebanese lawmakers and authorities they blamed for causing the collapse.

The MPs, who were sweating because the air conditioners were not functioning due to the power cut, approved the controversial ration card in the absence of a government capable of making such decisions. In response, the MPs of the Lebanese Forces parliamentary bloc left the hall to express their objection.

The card targets the neediest individuals without determining their final number. However, the number could reach up to 700,000 people, keeping in mind that the World Bank had estimated that more than 50 percent of the Lebanese people are now living in poverty.

During the session, the head of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) Gebran Bassil accused "security apparatus, MPs and politicians of being involved in the cross-border smuggling network and operations."

MP Michel Moussa of the Development and Liberation bloc said the ration card "will be financed from some aid and existing loans that have not been used yet. We are keen not to finance it from the depositors' funds that are frozen in the banks."

The Syndicate of Hospitals in Lebanon said in a statement that "a number of hospitals have used the stock of diesel they had, while the rest have quantities that are not enough to cover the next 24 hours."

In Beirut, a violent knife fight broke out in front of a gas station near Dar Al-Fatwa. The army intervened to stop it.

An explosion of a diesel tank in the town of Al-Khyara in West Bekaa killed a man in his thirties.

In other developments, the Federation of Syndicates of Banks Employees in Lebanon expressed its concern after people launched a call on social media to storm bank branches starting Thursday to protest their inability to access frozen deposits.

It consequently threatened to close the banks if any bank was attacked.

Taxi drivers refused to abide by the decisions of their syndicates as some raised the fare to LBP8,000 (\$0.45) instead of LBP4,000 due to the increase in the fuel price that followed the partial lifting of subsidies.

Meanwhile, Bassil took to Twitter to relaunch the provocation campaign against the Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri, calling on him to “decide whether he wants to form a government or step down.”



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Economic crisis, severe shortages make Lebanon 'unlivable'  
Lebanon's struggling army offers tourists helicopter rides to boost revenue

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# [Iraqi military: Bomb explodes in Baghdad suburb, wounding 15](#)

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Wed, 2021-06-30 21:19

BAGHDAD: Iraqi security officials say an explosion struck a busy market in Baghdad on Wednesday, wounding at least nine people.

The Iraqi military confirmed the explosion without providing details.

The blast was heard in a market in Sadr City, a suburban district of the capital. The military did not elaborate on casualties or the extent of the damage.

Two security officials said at least nine people were wounded in the blast. They spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

It was the second time this year an explosion targeted a market in the densely populated neighborhood. In April, at least four people were killed in a car bomb attack in Sadr City. That explosion was caused by an explosive device attached to a parked car at the market.

It was not immediately clear what caused Wednesday's explosion. Large bomb attacks, once an almost daily occurrence in Baghdad, have slowed in recent years since the Daesh group was defeated in 2017.



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Car bomb blast kills four, injures 20 in Baghdad's Sadr City Two rockets target Baghdad airport base housing US troops