

Archbishop Musa al-Hajj Detained and Interrogated by Lebanese Military Court

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 20, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Maronite community of Lebanon is in an uproar today after the Military Court's Government Commissioner, Judge Fadi Akiki, ordered the arrest and interrogation of Archbishop Musa al-Hajj, the Archbishop of Haifa and the Holy Land, and the Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem, the Palestinian Territories and the Hashemite Kingdom. It is reported that he was interrogated for 8 hours on the flimsy excuse that he may have helped some Lebanese struggling under their collapsing economy obtain some relief from relatives who had fled the country.



Archbishop Musa al-Hajj

Lebanese sources believe this is an attempt to pressure Patriarch al-Rahi to change his position in favor of UN resolution 1559 regarding the disarming of all militias and liberating Lebanon from all foreign meddling, specifically from the domination of the Iranian proxy, Hezbollah.

The [American Mideast Coalition for Democracy](#) is very concerned about the use of Lebanese military courts against civilians. This military court has issued many other arrest warrants against those opposing the terrorist organization Hezbollah, even against American citizens, in an apparent effort to stifle their activism and freedom of speech. This abuse of power has been going on for some time but has escalated recently.

In 1994, the military court summoned Dr. Samir Geagea (head of a political party in Lebanon) to appear as a witness. He was imprisoned for eleven years. Similarly, in September 2019, the late Amer Fakhoury went to visit his family in Lebanon. Mr. Fakhoury, an American citizen, was asked by the military court to appear before it as part of an investigation and then he was arrested and jailed by the Lebanese military until March of 2020. According to his family, he was injected with chemical products while detained by Lebanese authorities. After efforts by the White House, with the help of Senators Cruz and Shaheen, Mr. Fakhoury was released, but died of cancer shortly after his return to the United States. There is also the case of Ms. Hanin Ghaddar, an American

citizen of Lebanese ancestry and an outspoken critic of Hezbollah. Ms. Ghaddar was sentenced to six months in prison in absentia on January 10, 2018, for comments she made in a conference held in the United States in 2014.

On October 27 and 28, 2021, in coordination with the [World Council of the Cedars Revolution](#), AMCD sponsored a delegation to Washington D.C. These meetings were to express the delegation's concern over the involvement of Hezbollah in the civil and legal affairs of people living in Lebanon. Specifically, the delegation expressed its concern that military support provided to Lebanon by the United States should be conditioned upon it being used by the military free from the influence of Hezbollah. The delegation requested that Congress find ways to encourage the Lebanese Army to create "safe zones" that are not under the control or influence of Hezbollah. The delegation was also concerned about the Lebanese military courts increasingly being involved in civil matters.

This attempt to intimidate critics of Hezbollah should be roundly condemned by the US government and any future aid to Lebanon should be withheld until the Lebanese government ceases this outrageous practice of using military courts to harass, intimidate, jail and torture the opponents of Hezbollah.

As Mr. David Schenker a former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, testified July 29, 2021, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee: "The Biden administration should likewise condition assistance on the LAF ending its obscene practice of employing military tribunals to target Hezbollah critics at home and abroad."

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