

Beirut Bombing Investigation Stand Off Royles Lebanon Cabinet

Beirut: Judges and top politicians investigating a disastrous Beirut harbor explosion trying to question the devastated Lebanese cabinet on Tuesday after two investigations were interrupted in less than three weeks on Tuesday. Conflict between.

Judge Tarek Bitar tried to ask some of Lebanon's most powerful people on suspicion of knowing the stored chemicals involved in the August 4, 2020 explosion, but what to avoid. The investigation faced obstacles, if not.

Vital has been accused of investigating his political prejudices and is under great pressure from the group that launched a slander campaign against him. Hezbollah, the leader of the Iran-backed and heavily armed Shiite political movement, said on Monday that he wanted to eliminate Vital from the case.

On Tuesday, the investigation was shelved again based on another complaint condemning Bitar's prejudice.

The impasse spilled over to a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, with two sources directly aware of the issue, primarily Hezbollah and Shiite Amal movement ministers calling for the expulsion of Vital in a heated and decisive debate. I told Reuters.

The cabinet will meet again on Wednesday to discuss the investigation, a former finance minister, who issued an arrest warrant for Vital, said in an interview with Lebanese parent Iran's Armaya Dean TV.

The warrant of Ali Hassan Haril, a senior member of Amal and an ally of Hezbollah, was the second warrant issued to the former minister and was a major cause of heightened tensions on Tuesday.

Mr Karil said the warrant was considered illegal and he would not pay attention to it. He said Vital was politically influenced, adding that “the legal path followed in this study is pushing the country towards a civil war.”

“All options for political escalation are open,” Karil said when asked by Al Mayadeen if some ministers would resign if Vital wasn’t dismissed. ..

The harbor explosion, one of the largest non-nuclear explosions on record, killed more than 200 people and destroyed the band of Beirut, the capital.

High-ranking officials from the entire political spectrum refused to appear for interrogation, and arrest warrants seemed unlikely to be executed.

Hezbollah threatened and threatened Lebanon’s judiciary, accusing him of “terrorism and illegal activity threatening Lebanon’s security, stability and sovereignty,” said Ned Price, a spokesperson for the US State Department.

Mr Price said the United States believes Hezbollah “is more interested in his own interests and his patron, Iran, than in the best interests of the Lebanese people.”

He added that US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland will visit Beirut on Wednesday for further “important” bilateral talks with Lebanese authorities.

Political obstacles

Bitar wanted to cross-examine senior politicians on suspicion of negligence because he was in a position that would have been in a position to know about ammonium nitrate, which had not been safely stored in the port for years. rice field.

A meeting of the Supreme Defense Council in Lebanon, chaired by President Michel Aoun, rejected the permission requested by the judge to pursue National Security Secretary Tony Sullivan on Tuesday, official sources said.

The investigation was first suspended in late September based on Bitar's impartiality complaints. The court dismissed the complaint for procedural reasons, allowing Bitar to resume the investigation.

He is the second judge to lead the investigation. Faddy Sawan was removed from the case in February after a similar complaint was filed by a politician who is currently challenging Vital.

"The judicial system wants to work for the first time, but suffers under political pressure and intervention," said Paul Morcos, a lawyer and professor of international law.

Karil was one of two politicians who challenged his impartiality and filed a legal complaint against Vital.

Another politician was Gazi Zeiter, a former Minister of Public Works, an ally of Hezbollah, who was scheduled to be cross-examined Wednesday.

Hezbollah leader Saeed Hassan Nasrara, when he called for his replacement in a television speech on Monday, said he was prejudiced and political, the most severe criticism of Vital to date. Was expressed.

Nasrara said a few weeks after being told that Hezbollah official Wafik Safa had warned Vital to exclude him from the investigation, according to journalists and judicial sources.

(Written by Maha El Dahan, edited by Tom Perry, Giles Elgood, Bernadette Baum, Mark Heinrich)

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