

## **Assad ordered killing of Muslim cleric to instigate civil war in Lebanon: leaked files**

**By AL ARABIYA**

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Leaked documents obtained by Al Arabiya disclose important information about Assad's plan to start a civil war in Lebanon.

In recent months, Northern Lebanon has been the scene of deadly clashes. The violence in Lebanon left dozens killed and left a shadow of insecurity hanging over the inhabitants of the northern coastal city of Tripoli and its surroundings.

But what may have first appeared to be impulsive sectarian hostilities between inhabitants of the same region, now seems more likely to have been a premeditated strategy by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to instigate a conflict in Lebanon.

Revelations based on newly-leaked and highly-classified Syrian security documents, obtained by Al Arabiya, unveil the Syrian regime's plan to destabilize Lebanon's security through "eliminating" relevant figures.

The confidential files were acquired by Al Arabiya with the assistance of members of the Syrian opposition who refused to elaborate on how they got hold of the documents.

Al Arabiya says that it has verified and authenticated hundreds of these documents and that it is has decided to disclose the ones with substantial news value and political relevance.

### **Turmoil 'impossible to calm down'**

A leaked file revealing the strategy of the Syrian regime to create chaos in neighboring Lebanon. (Al Arabiya Exclusive)

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In a document dated April 5, Major General Bassam Merhej, Director of the Presidential Security Office, writes to Brigadier General Hassan Abdel Rahman, Chief of the Syrian Special Operations Unit in Foreign Intelligence; the orders were clear: creating disorder in Lebanon.

Merhej orders Abdel Rahman to meet with "friends" in Lebanon but without informing them "in any way" of the details of the operation.

The General also requests sending a high-level commander to Lebanon in order to supervise the mission.

In the same document, Merhej gave two orders to kill:

First, "discreetly" eliminating all personalities named on a separate list provided by the 'monitoring division' (the list wasn't attached to the document).

Second, he requests Abdel Rahman to eliminate "figures renowned for their religious-sectarian affiliations;" stating that the goal is to "create turmoil in Lebanon that would be impossible to calm down."

At the end of the month of May, Tripoli and its neighboring villages witnessed deadly sectarian clashes and violent riots in reaction to the killing of a Muslim cleric, allegedly by the Lebanese army.

Army troops shot dead a Sunni cleric, when his convoy reportedly failed to stop at a checkpoint in North Lebanon.

A fellow passenger in the car of the cleric, Ahmad Abdel Wahed, a figure known for his support of the anti-regime uprising in neighboring Syria, was also killed.

Sheikh Abdel Wahed was born in al-Bireh and was vocally opposed to the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

### **Mission '8/23'**

A written order to Brigadier Chawki Makhoulf to go to Lebanon and accomplish the mission. (Al Arabiya Exclusive)

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During this time, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Miqati appealed for calm in the wake of the cleric's killing, as the army said it "deplored the regrettable incident that took place near a checkpoint" and that it had opened an investigation.

In a second leaked top secret document obtained by Al Arabiya, Hassan Abdel Rahman sends a written order to Brigadier Chawki Makhoulf, for the latter to go to Lebanon and to accomplish a mission he referred to as "8/23."

Abdel Rahman's file was sent on May 12. A week later, Sheikh Abdel Wahed was killed.

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