

Lebanon sentences late Hezbollah member to life

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BEIRUT: The Military Court sentenced a late Hezbollah member with hard labor and life in prison for attempting to assassinate Telecoms Minister Butros Harb in 2013.

The court, headed by Brig. Gen. Khalil Ibrahim, issued the sentence in absentia after the suspect, Mahmoud Hayek, never showed up to the trial.

The tribunal said Hayek, a member of Hezbollah's security apparatus, is convicted of an assassination attempt on Harb by planting a bomb in the elevator of the building housing the lawmaker's office and trying to detonate it.

The assassination attempt failed due to reasons outside of the attacker's control.

The detonators were found on top of the elevator after Harb's bodyguards grew suspicious of a man standing outside the building. But the man, suspected to be Hayek, took off after the bodyguards moved to detain him.

Earlier this week, Hezbollah announced that Hayek had been killed in Syria where the group is fighting alongside regime troops against opposition fighters.

For the court to end the trial, authorities must present documentation and proof to the tribunal that Hayek was in fact killed in Syria.

Despite repeated calls by Harb for Hezbollah to hand over the suspect, the party never turned Hayek in, denying any involvement in the assassination attempt on the minister.