

Al-Mustaqbal's publisher files criminal complaint over hacking

BEIRUT: Al-Mustaqbal's publishing company filed a criminal complaint with the general prosecutor's office over the recent hacking of the newspaper's website that revealed the names of alleged witnesses for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

"The United Arab Company for Journalism ... filed a criminal complaint Wednesday at the [general] prosecutor's office in Beirut over the crime of hacking of Al-Mustaqbal newspaper's website, and exposing the names of alleged witnesses," a statement by the Future Movement said.

It added that the aim of the hacking, as well as the publishing of names, was to "weaken the authority of the court" and undermine its administrative performance prior to the start of the trials.

Al-Mustaqbal newspaper's website was hacked Tuesday and its front page was replaced with a list of names under the title "Secret witnesses in the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (Group #1)."

The hackers also directed visitors to a website called "Journalists for the Truth," where a list of the alleged names of witnesses were published as well as instructions given to the them by the court.

On Wednesday, the STL said the list of names was inaccurate and described it as an attempt to intimidate the witnesses.

This is not the first time the identities of the alleged witnesses were published.

Earlier this year, Al-Akhbar published what it said was the names of witnesses involved in the

trial against four Hezbollah members indicted by the STL, in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

The local daily, which has been critical of the tribunal since its establishment in 2007, has said it had received the names from a leak from within the tribunal.

Al-Mustaqbal's lawyer, Fouad Shbeqlo, said the newspaper will cooperate with investigators to expose the identity of the hackers.

"We will provide investigators with everything that will help uncover the truth behind the work of the hackers, whether the location was inside or outside Lebanon, with the purpose of paralyzing and exposing them as well as holding them accountable for their criminal and legal responsibilities," the statement quoted Shbeqlo as saying.

He added that the publication of the list was aimed at intimidating the witnesses in court whose work is set to begin next month.

Shbeqlo said he hoped that the STL would "put an end to tampering with civil peace in Lebanon."

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