



STL Spokesman: Leaks of Identities of Witnesses Jeopardizes their Lives, International Justice

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The spokesman of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon Marten Youssef criticized on Sunday the recent leaks of the identities of the witnesses linked to the upcoming trial, reported Voice of Lebanon radio (93.3).

He told the radio that the STL is accustomed to criticism, but any leaks put the lives of the witnesses in danger and jeopardize international justice.

He wondered at how a newspaper could put the lives of witnesses in danger.

He stressed that the STL should demonstrate to the Lebanese people that it takes the leaks very seriously and it will take action against the development after an investigation in the matter is conducted.

Asked if the STL proceedings can be postponed over the leaks, he said that leaks could postpone the proceedings of any trial and not necessarily the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

Youssef warned that the leaks of the identities of the witnesses can be labeled as intimidation, noting that the judges at the STL had stipulated that their identities remain confidential.

In addition, he remarked that not all media leaks, past and present, can necessarily be labeled as leaks, explaining that investigations will verify if they can be considered as so.

Al-Akhbar newspaper published on Tuesday a list of names of some of the witnesses linked to the STL trials, which are set to kick off in March.

Faced with the criticism over the leaks, al-Akhbar said on Saturday: “The investigation in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri is a public affair.”

“Media leaks had distinguished the various phases of the investigation over the past few years, making it possible for anyone to become informed of the court proceedings without having to wait for the trial itself,” it added.

Moreover, it said that it was not the first media outlet to attempt to release the names of witnesses and other issues linked to the tribunal, saying that a number of politicians and officials had “volunteered” to provide details to other outlets.