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Druze Sheikh purportedly assaulted by Hezbollah member

News of a Druze cleric being attacked by an alleged Hezbollah member in Aley's Shoueifat circulated Saturday on the social networking website Facebook.

"After the assault on Sheikhs Monther and Abdel Khaleq, Hezbollah's radical militia attacked Sheikh [Nadim] Haidar... Is it a coincidence or a planned [assault]?" the caption below a picture posted on the PSP Videos (Progressive Socialist Party) Facebook page read.

The caption also urged the Druze to "take up arms, for the hour [of confrontation] is undoubtedly coming."

PSP official Jalal al-Jurdi confirmed this incident in an interview with NOW, but stressed nevertheless that "the dispute was not political, but rather a personal quarrel."

He also denied that the cleric is affiliated with any political party, but said that "his brother is a PSP member."

Jurdi explained that the dispute erupted between the Druze Sheikh and a young man riding a motorcycle on the Shoueifat-Sidon road, after which the youngster started "swearing at the Sheikh."

"The man then pulled out a knife and stabbed the Sheikh twice," the PSP official continued, underscoring however that "no gunfire

was reported at the incident.”

Jurdi said that the assaulter’s identity could not be revealed, but claimed that “it is known that he is a Dahiyeh hoodlum.”

“Forensics were unable to lift the prints off the knife because many had touched it... and security forces along with the army confiscated the motorcycle which turned out to be unregistered.”

However, a source close to Lebanese Democratic Party leader MP Talal Arslan denied to NOW that the man in question assaulted the Druze Sheikh.

“It would be unfair to the youngster to say that the Sheikh was beaten,” the source told the site.

“The guy was carrying a knife with which he was able to touch the Sheikh, but [the latter] only suffered superficial scratches, not a stab [wound].”

He elaborated that the man kept on insulting the cleric and attempting to attack him “because he was highly drugged, but when the people saw that the dispute was with a Sheikh, everyone beat up the young man.”

He also asserted that the alleged attacker could not be identified, and that “no one was able to identify where he was from.”

“There is no information about whether the guy was indeed from Dahiyeh.”

The source added that leaders of the LDP and the PSP requested that the incident be kept low-key.

The LDP’s media office released a statement later in the day underscoring that “neither Hezbollah, nor the Amal Movement” were responsible for the incident.

This article is a translation of the original Arabic