
IRAQ EDUCATION MINISTER RESIGNS AFTER IS BROTHER CLAIMS

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Less than a week into the job, Iraq's Education Minister Shaima al-Hayali has resigned her post following claims that her brother was a member of the Islamic State group.

The former minister announced on social media that she had resigned following allegations that her brother, Laith al-Hayali, was a senior official in IS.

Others on social media claimed that her nephew was a suicide bomber for the banned jihadi group.

Hayali, an academic from Mosul - which was an IS stronghold from 2014 until its fall to government forces last year - was appointed as education minister on Monday.

She was the only woman in Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's cabinet and was backed by a Sunni parliamentary coalition.

It was claimed that Laith lost his job as the director of Nineveh province's water department in 2012 and then regained his post when he joined IS in 2014.

The group swept through northern and western Iraq - and large parts of Syria - in the summer of 2014 forcing Iraqi forces to flee south and launching a wave of mass killings against religious, ethnic minorities and suspected opponents.

Laith al-Hayali is believed to have appeared in an IS propaganda video, condemning US coalition airstrikes on bridges in Mosul when Washington and its allies aided Kurdish and Iraqi government forces in their fight-back against the group.

Hayali said her brother was "forced" to make the statement under duress, according to Kurdistan 24, and risked his life if he declined.

She also said that her brother only served in a civil role when IS took control of Mosul and was not involved in "carrying arms or helping them (IS) kill any Iraqi".

"My brother's condition is like that of tens of thousands of cases, where people were forced to remain in their jobs under the authority of an occupying power," she said.

"As defined by international law, and no one who has been subjected to this power against his will can be punished solely for having to stay [under their control]," Hayali added.

She resigned her post and said the decision is "now in the hands of Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi..."

once he is sure of any relation linking me with the terrorist organisation".

On social media, opponents claimed that Laith was a leading IS figure and that two of his sons carried out suicide operations against Iraqi government forces and fled to Turkey using a false passport.

The New Arab cannot independently verify these claims and has approached Hayali for comment.

A number of former Iraqi minister are being investigated for graft, with the government failing to provide basic services to many Iraqis.

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/12/30/iraq-education-minister-resigns-after-is-brother-claims>

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