

Gadhafi died the way he lived, in crude brutality: Sadr family lawyer

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BEIRUT: The family of Imam Musa Sadr has had a “conflictual” reaction to the killing of ousted Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi, the lawyer of the Sadr family told The Daily Star Friday.

“The main cause of the families’ suffering [for] over 33 years [died] the way he lived, in crude brutality,” said Chibli Mallat, a visiting professor at Harvard Law School and the lawyer for the Sadr family and the families of Sadr’s two companions, Sheikh Mohammad Yaacoub and journalist Abbas Badreddine.

Mallat said the family had a “strong emotional” reaction to the news, albeit one that was “conflictually charged.”

“That is a form of justice, with a small ‘j.’ But Justice with capital ‘J’ would have been better served with Gadhafi in the accused box, like [Egypt’s deposed President Hosni] Mubarak and [former Yugoslav President Slobodan] Milosevic.”

Sadr, Yaacoub and Badreddine went missing on Aug. 31, 1978, during an official visit to Libya at the invitation of Gadhafi.

Gadhafi, who was killed Thursday by opposition fighters in the Libyan city of Sirte, was indicted by Lebanon’s judiciary in 2008 over Sadr’s disappearance.

Sadr championed coexistence and sought to alleviate the socioeconomic hardship of Lebanese who suffered from political and other types of marginalization.

“Gadhafi’s death no doubt deprives us of an important contributor to the crime. But this changes little to the continued and redoubled effort of the families to see other participants in the disappearance questioned before a court of law,” Mallat added.

Asked about comments this week by a Libyan opposition military commander, who said Sadr was buried at a farm south of Tripoli, Mallat said they resembled many conflicting reports that have emerged over Sadr’s fate. “That’s why the only serious forum for the truth, and hopefully the liberation of the imam and his companions, is a court of law, be it domestic or international,” Mallat added.

Separately, a Judicial Council magistrate told The Daily Star that despite Gadhafi’s demise, the council would still convene on Nov. 18, when it’s expected to issue a guilty verdict and death sentence against Gadhafi in the disappearance of Sadr and his companions.

“The council requires official documents from [Libyan] official authorities confirming Gadhafi’s death in order to drop state charges against him,” he said. “In the event these documents are not available before the verdict date, he will be convicted as if he is alive.”

The judge said that Gadhafi’s aides, who are all alive, will be convicted during the session as well. After the verdict is announced, the judge continued, Lebanon will send a copy of it to Libya’s new government demanding the convicted men be handed over to Lebanese authorities.