**'Assad wants Hariri tribunal closed'**

Report: Syria tells Saudi king UN tribunal threatens stability.

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Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad told Saudi King Abdullah during their meeting in Damascus Friday that the UN tribunal investigating the 2005 assassination of Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri must be closed to protect Lebanon's stability, AFP cited from a report in Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar on Saturday.

Assad made clear to Abdullah - a key supporter of the faction of Sa'ad Hariri, son of the former premier and current prime minister - that Syria would find any attempt to hold Hizbullah accountable for the elder Hariri's death as unacceptable.

The UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon is reportedly set to announce that Mustafa Badr al-Din, a senior Hizbullah operative and close relative of the former Hizbullah terror chief Imad Mughniyeh, is the main suspect in the Hariri assassination.

According to an Israel TV report on Thursday night, Hariri’s son, the current Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, asked the tribunal to postpone releasing Din’s name, because of the potentially incendiary implications for Lebanon of such an announcement.

Din, the cousin and brother- in-law of Mughniyeh, who was killed in a car bomb in Damascus in February 2008, was also reportedly responsible for planning the attempted assassination of the ruler of Kuwait in 1985, among other operations.

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizbullah, said last week that members of his group would be among those indicted by the tribunal, which he dismissed as an “Israeli plot.”

Many in Lebanon have worried that if the tribunal implicates Hizbullah, it could lead to another round of clashes between Lebanon’s Shi’ite and Sunni communities, like the bloody conflict that convulsed Beirut in 2008.