



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

All the talk about reform and fighting corruption was received by the Lebanese people as the big joke that it really is. They remembered very well the inauguration speech of the President of Taef when he declared his commitment to erect a state of law and institutions, and promised to cut off the hands of thieves no matter who they are, etc...

This was five years ago and the Lebanese heard the good news and first believed it. But no sooner had these words been uttered that disappointment set in, and the state of laws became a state of outlaws, and the state of institutions became Ali Baba's cave of thieves and the hideout for the professional Mafia, and the hands of thieves slated for punishment were digging deeper into the wallets of the Lebanese people for that last penny to steal!

All the successive regimes have claimed as theirs the slogan of fighting corruption, and promised administrative reform, and all their attempts failed. And at every attempt, corruption would bend a little to the storm then return with vengeance... And when the Taef era came, and along with it the worst team in the history of Lebanon, corruption became even more systematic and systemic, reaching all the way from the top of the state down to the very bottom of the food chain, and reform became almost impossible.

For these reasons, the Lebanese people given up on this lie that is transmitted from one presidential term to another. They lost all hope with anything called reform and reformists, especially since corruption cannot cleanse itself and administrative reform is linked to political reform which, in turn, depends on the practice of genuine democracy. And the fundamental condition that underlies genuine democratic life is freedom. And now that freedom has gone by the wayside, there is nowhere to go from here.

The question remains: How do we get out of this hellish cycle? The answer is the determined and continuous pursuit of two fundamental objectives:

1. Bring freedom back to Lebanon after removing every trace, residue, and effect of the Syrian-Arab-Iranian occupation.
2. Return democratic life to its vital breathing space, then hold clean elections based on new and modern laws that open the doors to Parliament for all decent and honorable candidates. These would then close them in the face of the corrupt cronies, highway robbers, and big money bullies who were bulldozed into Parliament by the existing laws and fake 99.99% elections imported by the Syrian occupation and its Intelligence apparatus.

After achieving these two objectives and bringing a decent and honorable elite to power, only then can reform and fighting corruption become reachable ideals. Until then, all this talk will remain the empty hot air of false promises destined for cheap local consumption.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,
August 22, 2003