



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

As the by-elections called for by the Taef regime in the Aley-Baabda electoral district get underway, the following clarifications need to be made in order to clear any ambiguity, confusion, or misinterpretation:

From the moment the infamous Taef Agreement was born and after a careful scrutiny of its contents, it became immediately clear that it had all the accoutrements of a trap aiming at undermining the foundations of the Lebanese State and jeopardizing its very existence and its identity as a nation. And since that day, we called for rejecting it, for bringing it down, and for boycotting its people and all its ramifications. We remain to this day steadfast in our commitment to these objectives, recognizing the transitional government of General Michel Aoun as the sole legitimate and constitutional government.

And since participation in any elections that are held under the auspices of the Taef regime implies a *de facto* recognition – direct or indirect – of that regime and the political institutions it spawned;

And since elections under occupation are rejected in principle, in form, and in substance, because they confer upon the occupation a legitimacy for its existence, and gives the false impression that democratic life is alive and well in Lebanon;

And with conditions for democracy non-existent, freedoms muffled, and elections merely in form and supervised by the Syrian occupation that determines their outcome by ignoring the votes in the ballot box, much as happened in previous election charades, especially the by-elections of the North Metn District last year;

And since participating in the elections strengthens the Taef regime instead of weakening it, and provides a cover for the Syrian occupation instead of exposing it to international public opinion;

And taking the position that entering into the elections process is akin to subscribing to the logic of Taef and distracts us from the central problem;

And from the standpoint of rejecting a duality in our position, as we have always done, and the impossibility of siding with and against an issue at the same time;

And considering that membership of the opposition candidate in the current Parliament, should it happen, will not change anything to the existing balance of forces, but will rather confer on this parliament the kind of legitimacy it does not possess and will also indicate membership in the existing structure;

And because a comprehensive boycott would, if maintained as was done in 1992, lead to an undermining of the Taef regime and perhaps even to its demise, and accelerate the process of ending the occupation;

In consideration of all the above, we have decided to boycott the upcoming by-elections and all other elections called for by the collaborationist regime and its handler the Syrian occupation. We call on all our party members and supporters to desist from any participation or involvement in the old new-and-improved deception in any form whatsoever, neither by nominating or fielding candidates, nor by voting or providing support to any candidates. Anyone found in violation of this decision will subject themselves to administrative penalty measures stipulated in the bylaws.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,
August 29, 2003