



In response to the referral of the Party's leaders before a Criminal Court, the Guardians of the Cedars Party – a Lebanese National Movement – issued the following communiqué:

While the Palestinian organizations continue to import weapons and men from Syria to the camps and elsewhere in Lebanon, build military bases across our land, violate the sovereignty of the country and threaten its existence, and refuse to surrender their weapons in defiance of the Lebanese people and the international community;

And at a time when fundamentalist organizations display their might in the streets of Beirut on Jerusalem Day, publicly refusing to recognize resolution 1559 and the implementation of its articles, thus exposing the country to various regional and international dangers;

The Lebanese government has nothing better to do than bully the Guardians of the Cedars Party by persisting in detaining its three leaders and referring them to the Criminal Court on the charge of "incitement to murder".

There is no point reiterating that everyone knows, both outside and inside Lebanon, that this charge is a fabrication and a lie, and the detention of the party's leaders is taking place for purely political reasons. At the press conference that was held by the three leaders of the party last September 14, not one word was uttered that was inciting to violence and murder.

The Lebanese government has committed three errors at once in this matter:

First, when it thought it would be easy to bully the party, miscalculating the party's standing in Lebanon and worldwide.

Second, when it violated the human rights principles of the freedom of speech and expression, especially at this critical juncture when Lebanon is under international custody and the government's performance is under intense scrutiny by the world.

Third, when it ordered the arrest of the party's leaders on political grounds, thus committing with this action the crime of denying freedom without a solid legal justification.

Its greatest error was to believe that this matter would easily go through, and that we would accept to be scapegoats or a bargaining chip. What the government did not see was that it has opened on itself a door that will not easily close, and that we will pursue it and prosecute it before international and Lebanese instances at the right time and appropriate manner.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz
November 1, 2005