



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

That 72% of the voters refrained from voting in Beirut last Sunday confirms the disgust of the Lebanese people at the electoral farce that is ongoing in their country and which is far removed from a proper democratic process. Electoral lists that are made up and offered to the voters, instead of genuine ballot boxes, are being used to fill Parliament with new MPs, which seriously undermines the will of the Lebanese voters and distorts the democratic process.

This is not to attack anyone. The fact is that those who win unopposed or with only 28% of voter participation do not represent the people and do not reflect the people's will.

We also wonder at the excessive praise with which the international community is hailing those elections under a distorted democracy, unless of course the international community is overjoyed by the recent re-integration of Lebanon into the club of democratic nations and its ability at holding elections, even if only in form, and without foreign oversight. If indeed the world is viewing Lebanon under that narrow lens, then it is mistaken, for we wish to remind the world that the democratic process has always been an established practice in Lebanese traditional politics, dating back to its inventors, the Phoenicians, who practiced it thousands of years ago in Lebanon and then exported it to the Greeks and on to the Romans and from them to Europe and the American continent. Which is why it saddens the Lebanese people to see this democratic process so denatured on the very soil that gave it birth and, adding insult to injury, listen to the world praise this denaturation.

It is absolutely necessary that the international observers who are supervising the elections and who have praised the fairness and integrity of the process understand that the fraud did not take place at the ballot box but long before election day. That is, since the elections results were sealed before the voting actually begins because the electoral lists, or "bulldozers" as they call them, have truncated the will of the people. Merely having one's name listed on one such electoral list guarantees access to Parliament, irrespective of the will of the people. The people cannot vote for individual candidates on a list. They vote wholesale for the entire list or they do not vote at all.

This is not democracy!

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz  
June 3, 2005