



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Many thanks to His Beatitude the Maronite Patriarch for his generous reference to the members of the South Lebanon Army who reside in Israel, and for his demand that their just cause be resolved so they can return to their country.

Yes, indeed. Theirs is a just cause, as stated by the Patriarch. It is in fact the most just of causes, if not the only just cause that remains unresolved in Lebanon. For the record, it is important to point to some of the facts that are missing from the minds of the Lebanese people because of omission, ignorance and fear.

1- The South Lebanon Army was founded in 1976 under the name of the Free Lebanon Army by Major Saad Haddad by official orders from the Lebanese Army Command in Yarzeh in a service warrant issued by the Ministry of Defense. The objective in creating the Free Lebanon Army was to gather the military who had fled their barracks after the latter fell to the Palestinian organizations and their allies, and to re-organize them for the defense of the border villages and towns.

2- Those military personnel constituted the nucleus of Lebanese resistance in the South, having being joined by the inhabitants of the region to fight fierce battles against the Palestinian gangs and their allies and ward off an invasion of their region.

3- The Lebanese Army Command continued to pay the salaries of those military from 1976 through 2000, the year of the withdrawal from the South. Whenever the roads between Beirut and Marjeyun were cut off, the salaries would be ferried by boat through Israel by one of the Command officers.

4- The alliance of the South Lebanon Army – and before it, the Free Lebanon Army – with Israel was the only alternative available to it after all avenues – geographic, military, political, economic, social, and medical – were closed by the Palestinian gangs, mercenaries, fundamentalist groups, and terrorist groups of all kinds and brands.

5- The South Lebanon Army is the last to have put down its weapons in facing the Syrian-Iranian occupation and its local appendages. Thanks to its many sacrifices, and hundreds of dead and handicapped that it offered on the altar of Lebanon, it was able to keep the border region as a free Lebanese region for more than a quarter of a century and prevented its fall to the Syrian-Iranian occupation.

6- The unlawful rulings and sentences, as well as the groundless attacks, against the South Lebanon Army began the day that Syria completed its control of all official Lebanese institutions, hijacked the Lebanese decision-making, and ordered the justice system to criminalize the South Lebanon Army members who stood as the last bastion or resistance against its complete takeover of Lebanon.

The day when Lebanese politics returns to its authenticity and all the truths are uncovered, the honorable Lebanese will give back to the members of the South Lebanon Army all the respect and appreciation they deserve.

To His Beatitude the Patriarch, once again, Many Thanks!

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz
July 8, 2005