



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

Political circles have renewed their talk about the return to Lebanon of the South Lebanon Army now in forced residence in Israel, but under condition that they first be indicted first before a Military Court to look into their judicial case.

We have it said before that the return of these citizens should not only be unconditional, but that it should also be accompanied with a semblance of dignity and rehabilitation, particularly that they have been wronged twice. The first time was when the Lebanese State abandoned them since 1975 through 2000, leaving them to confront their fate alone; and the second was when the Hebrew State abandoned them, forcing them to be displaced out of their land after they had defended it and sacrificed everything for it for the duration of a quarter century.

The manner with which this file is being handled at present will not convince these citizens to return to their homeland, especially with the political situation being as it is in Lebanon and the State persisting in considering them as second class citizens.

If the insistence on prosecuting them stems from the matter of their dealing with Israel, then the following facts should be recalled:

1 – This dealing with Israel was imposed by the circumstances of a fait accompli and the principle of self-defense. It was a choice that had no alternative, as everyone knows, and it was a choice that was made at the time with the knowledge and sponsorship of the Lebanese State, if not its encouragement.

2 – This dealing was never ever directed against Lebanon, but to the contrary it served Lebanon's interests. This stands in contrast to those who dealt with Syria, covered its occupation and sold Lebanon for 30 silvers in exchange of securing their own personal gains. And by the way, we ask: Why isn't anyone raising the point of referring these people to justice on charges of grand treason and undermining national sovereignty and amassing vast sums of money at the expense of the country's national interest and the public treasury??

3 – The court rulings that have been issued against members of the South Lebanon army were also issued during the time of Syrian tutelage and upon the instigation of the Syrian occupation. Therefore, those rulings are null and void and must be thrown out after the eviction of the Syrian occupation.

4 – We are not disclosing a secret when we say that all the parties of the Lebanese Front dealt with Israel during the Palestinian-Syrian war on Lebanon, without exception, in addition to several Lebanese leaders of all sects. Some among those leaders are today in Parliament or are represented in the government or are at the Dialogue Conference table!!! Therefore, why this selective approach to this question? And why aren't all the war files opened, or alternatively, closed?

It is time that the Lebanese State relinquishes the double standard in segregating the Lebanese into the children of the wife and the children of the slave. Instead, when will the State begin applying the law and justice equally onto everyone? For unless it does that, this open wound will continue to fester until further notice.

Finally, we must remember today as the 31 st anniversary of the founding of the party. We reaffirm the principles on which it stood and which we proclaimed as the most suitable for the rise of Lebanon from its deadly coma and the building of a new State that meets the aspirations of our new generation. We therefore call on all our partisans in Lebanon and the Diaspora, as well as all our supporters and friends, to remain firmly attached to those higher principles and to continue the struggle for their achievement in loyalty to our comrade martyrs and the aspirations of our great people.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

April 13, 2006