



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué

We said it many times that the Lebanese people have reached the point of despair and disgust, and today we say that they have transcended that point and are now living in a state of misery they never experienced before. Not during the Syrian occupation, and not even during the Ottoman occupation when famine killed more than a third of the population of Mount Lebanon.

In the face of these dangerous divisions that have split the country and the people, and even the homes, in two parts; in this culture of mutual insulting that has now sunk to its basest levels; in the absence of a sound patriotic sensibility; and with the total lack of concordance between the parties to the conflict, in the street and around the dialogue table, nothing suggests an immediate détente. There is no glimmer of hope on the horizon that could be a harbinger of good things. Rather, everything warns of the worst yet to come, of deteriorating conditions in all spheres, and of an impending flare-up of a social crisis against the fake stability that prevails in the country right now.

If, as the government says, yesterday's demonstration was at face value to make demands, but was political in substance, then let the government make sure that people can put bread on their tables, pay their children's schooling, pay for their medicines – particularly the poor and the low income families, reduce the tax burden off the back of the citizens, and combat corruption that does not need a dialogue table. Only then will the government pull the rug from under the feet of the demonstrators and deny them any reason to demonstrate. Otherwise, let the government expect more demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, and let chaos rule and potentially get out of control.

Some people think that the problem is in the multiplicity of sects and religions. Yet the reality is that this multiplicity is a source of spiritual wealth for the country. Others say that the problem is in the diversity of political parties and movements, when the reality is that political diversity is a reflection of healthy and live societies. Indeed, the reality is that the problem lies within the political establishment that monopolizes the country and that has an abysmal unethical record, irrespective of the affiliation of its members to this or that sect or religion or party. There are many politicians in Lebanon but there are no statesmen, and there lies the real problem.

Until then, may God help the Lebanese people.

Lebanon , at your service

Abu Arz

May 12, 2006