



The Guardians of the Cedars Party issued the following communiqué:

The weapons of the so-called "Party of God" have become the central problem around which the general crisis in the country is now revolving. It is the same old-new problem that everyone avoids tackling directly out of fear of a confrontation with the Party. As a result, the people in the political establishment resort to equivocation, self-deceit and semantics to avoid making a public and clear demand for the removal of these weapons.

It is obvious that the existence of these weapons was the primary reason for the eruption of the latest Israeli war on Lebanon. Because of the weapons, the ceasefire has mutated into a fragile truce that could explode at any moment. Because of the weapons, the European countries are hesitating in bolstering the UNIFIL forces operating in the south and the donor countries are dragging their feet in sending promised financial assistance for the reconstruction. Because of the weapons too, the Lebanese have refrained from rebuilding their destroyed homes before making sure that the war fuse has been permanently extinguished and that they are now safe from another round of violence and destruction. Not to mention the air, sea and land siege, itself linked to the issue of Hezbollah's weapons, since Israel won't lift the siege before airports, harbors and crossing points are controlled by the UN forces, who in turn won't deploy if Hezbollah refuses to disarm.

And so we are back to square one, that is to the situation prior to July 12 and to the vicious cycle. Particularly since the overnment's positions continue to be evasive and the world is not ready to solve the Hezbollah problem on behalf of Lebanon, given that the weapons of Hezbollah are fundamentally a Lebanese domestic problem and its solution is the responsibility of the Lebanese government and no other.

Therefore it is time for this government to make up its mind quickly, to depend on itself and not only on the international community, to invest itself of a great deal of courage and boldness, and to seek an urgent and permanent solution to this chronic problem. Otherwise, the crisis will remain in limbo until further notice and the situation subject to all sorts of threats. The United Nations will continue issuing resolutions on paper until the cows come home, yet still without any effective implementation on the ground.

Similarly, the leaders of the Party of God should wise up and do some soul searching. They should learn the lessons of this harsh war and agree to engage

themselves in the logic of one state and one army. They should not be lured by an illusory victory that is rebuked by the real facts on the ground. They should understand that time is no longer on their side for two reasons: First, the people have turned against them in large numbers, and that's critical; second, the logic of the State will ultimately win over the logic of the mini-state, and the logic of the army will win over the logic of the militia, even if it takes time. So what are you waiting for?

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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