



The Guardians of the Cedars Party issued the following weekly communiqué:

The prevailing impression in Lebanon is that the upcoming elections will not change anything to the existing political equilibrium, regardless of whether the loyalists or the opposition win the parliamentary majority, in contrast to what some are saying that the elections are decisive and critical, and that the future of Lebanon hangs in the balance.

If the loyalists win, the opposition will return to its usual policy of obstruction, and vice-versa. Which means that the situation will remain as is in both scenarios, and Parliament will replicate itself with some minor changes in the secondary faces that have no bearing on the overall political process. As for the whales of Lebanese politics, they are staying put in their positions, while the suffering of the Lebanese people will continue, government is paralyzed and the machinery of the state is for all practical purposes indefinitely broken down.

Which is why we find that, contrary to the ruckus raised about these elections, most segments of the Lebanese people are unenthusiastic about them, except perhaps for curiosity, personal spite, or blind allegiance. There is no glimmer of hope that those elections will move the country from the deep malaise in which it lives to the place of wellbeing to which it yearns.

The charade of putting together the electoral lists, with the financial and political blackmail that accompanies the process, steers the elections away from their true democratic course, since the candidates' concern becomes focused on pleasing the bosses of the lists instead of pleasing the people, as a means of reaching the parliamentary club. So much so, that a large number of those candidates have already become *de facto* Members of Parliament even before the voting begins, simply by joining the prominent political lists under the shade of the big political bosses and not by winning the ballot boxes. This strips them of the attribute of representation of the people and impugns the democratic attribute and the integrity of the elections.

The question now is: What do the local and international commissions charged with monitoring the elections think about this open bazaar? Are they ready or capable of exposing the blackmail that the list bosses impose on the candidates? And how will they accomplish that? What if there is tampering with the registry records and the voter's lists of some known districts that have accustomed us to resurrecting the dead for Election Day? And are these commissions qualified to expose this kind of election fraud that is unique to Lebanon? And, finally, what of the tightly sealed security zones that no one, including the state authorities, can enter?

What the Lebanese fear is that those commissions become false witnesses who merely address the superficial in these elections, thus ultimately providing an international legitimacy cover for elections whose lawfulness and integrity are deeply troubling.

Therefore, based on the preceding, we ask our committed members and supporters to boycott these elections so that we are not on record of having participated in elections that

are likely to be suspect at best, and of having re-generated this failed political class that has brought the country to where it stands today.

As for those regions where there are new and promising names, such as Mr. Walid Maalouf and others like him, we recommend that they be given full support despite the fact that their chances of winning are poor, not because they were unlucky in not being able to join the big bosses' lists or because they are not wealthy enough to allow them to win.

We reiterate that Lebanon will enjoy true democratic life only when it breaks the grip that the ruling political Mafias have on it.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz  
May 22, 2009