

## Lebanese Druze Leader Walid Jumblatt Slams Syria, Iran, Hizbullah in Iran TV Interview

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Following are excerpts from an interview, in English, with Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, which aired on Press TV on January 1, 2008.

To view MEMRI TV's webpage on Walid Jumblatt, visit: <http://www.memritv.org/subject/en/377.htm>.

"My Father Was Also a Victim of the Same Butcher, Hafez Al-Assad"

Interviewer: "You always blame Syria for the killing, but yet, there is no hard evidence. Can we just continue... You keep on accusing, accusing, accusing, without hard evidence."

Walid Jumblatt: "To start with, you are forgetting that my father was also a victim of the same butcher, [the late Syrian president] Hafez Al-Assad, and that so many prominent writers, politicians, and clerics in Lebanon were killed by Hafez Al-Assad - René Moawad, Mufti [Hassan] Khaled, Salim Al-Lawzi, of course Kamal Jumblatt, and so many others. So the Syrian regime has a record of assassinations outside and inside Syria.

"But at the time, we were obliged to be allies of the Syrians, because Lebanon was divided. That's it. When Lebanon reconciled, when there were no more reasons of civil war, when peace was established, when we thought we could implement the state of Lebanon all over the country - all over Lebanese territory - well, the Syrians decided to say 'no,' and forced the Lebanese parliament, or part of it - because we were a minority at that time, 29 members of parliament out of 128...

"We said 'no' to the Syrian will to renew the mandate of [former Lebanese president Emil] Lahoud, and from that time on, the other series of killings. Marwan Hamadeh nearly escaped death [sic]. Al-Hariri was killed. Samir Qassir, a prominent critic of the Ba'th regime, was killed. George Hawi, a prominent politician and head of the resistance, was killed. The latest one was Antoine Ghanem. Not to say, General Francois Hajj, who might have also been targeted by the Syrians."

Interviewer: "So you just... If you were actually... You said your father was killed by the Syrians."

Walid Jumblatt: "Yes."

Interviewer: "Great, you are a leader... If you don't have the courage to say 'the Syrians have killed my dad,' how could you be a leader at the time?"

"I Had to Make a Pact With the Devil"

Walid Jumblatt: "I said that, but I said..."

Interviewer: "You said: 'I kept silent for almost 20 years. 25 years. I didn't have the courage...' If you didn't have the courage, how can you lead your party? How can you be a leader in Lebanon?"

Walid Jumblatt: "Well it happened that I had to protect my community and my party, and Arabism in Lebanon, against the Israeli ambitions in Lebanon. So I decided I had to fix a pact with the devil. I had to shake hands with the one who killed my father, Hafez Al-Assad."

Interviewer: "So it was just lies with Syria?"

Walid Jumblatt: "Yes."

Interviewer: "You were not a real ally to Syria?"

Walid Jumblatt: "I was not a real ally to Syria, no."

Interviewer: "So you were lying..."

Walid Jumblatt: "I was an ally to my cause."

Interviewer: "You were lying to the Syrians?"

Walid Jumblatt: "Yes, of course. Because I could not be..."

Interviewer: "So you were not working for Lebanon. You were just working for your own community."

Walid Jumblatt: "I was working for the sake of Arabism in Lebanon, against Israeli ambitions and the partition of Lebanon." [...]

"I Could Not Cope, the Whole of My Life, With a Bunch of Murderers Called the Syrian Regime"

Interviewer: "I just can't believe what you said. This is the first time, actually, [that] you said 'I deceived the Syrians.' This is the first time. Can you say it again? You deceived the Syrians."

Walid Jumblatt: "I could not cope, the whole of my life, with a bunch of murderers called the Syrian regime. I had to be practical and realistic because I needed weapons and facilities, because also I got weapons from the Soviet Union. It's no secret. I do care about the independence of my country. I don't want foreign bodies controlling my country. I don't want foreign interference in my country. I don't want either the Iranians or the Syrians occupying my country."

Interviewer: "But the American interference is welcome."

Walid Jumblatt: "I don't think you have GIs on Lebanese soil, and we will refuse any military intervention from the Americans. There is a slight difference. Weapons are coming..."

Interviewer: "Yes, there's a slight difference when we don't see Iranian officials coming to Lebanon, and calling on the March 14 allies to go and vote for a president, but we see [aide to U.S. Secretary of State] David Walsh coming to Lebanon, and calling on you to go and vote for a president, even with the half plus one, without consensus, and you are ready to accept that, just because you are a part of the U.S. project."

Walid Jumblatt: "Why are you shouting?"

Interviewer: "Oh, sorry."

Walid Jumblatt: "Please, be cool."

Interviewer: "Fine, but I'm just asking..."

Walid Jumblatt: "There's a party which is receiving weapons, ammunition, and money from Syria and Tehran. They are imposing their will."

Interviewer: "For the sake of what?"

Walid Jumblatt: "For the sake of what? They are paralyzing the economy."

Interviewer: "How?"

Walid Jumblatt: "They go downtown. Do the Iranian authorities or the Syrian authorities allow mass demonstrations downtown, paralyzing downtown? I don't think so."

Interviewer: "But you're paralyzing the whole country."

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm not..."

Interviewer: "You're controlling..."

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm stuck in my home. I'm just paralyzed in my own home, waiting for another car bomb fixed by the Syrians, the allies of Hizbullah."

[...]

Walid Jumblatt: "You are very, very nervous. Why? You have to be very cool."

Interviewer: "I'm not nervous, I'm enthusiastic."

Walid Jumblatt: "Let us be cool, okay? Let's face things as they are, okay?"

Interviewer: "Okay."

"I Have Not Seen, Anywhere in the World, an Opposition with Rockets and Guns, Declaring War Whenever They Want, and Kidnapping Soldiers Whenever They Want"

Walid Jumblatt: "It's not a normal opposition. I haven't seen anywhere in the world an opposition with rockets and guns, declaring war whenever they want, and kidnapping soldiers whenever they want. I never saw that. I don't think this kind of opposition exists in Tehran. I don't think this kind of opposition exists in France or the States. It's a party [that is] hugely armed, weaponized, and they are deciding the fate of the country. I refuse to say this is a normal opposition. It's not.

[...]

"Syria [has] never accepted that Lebanon is an independent entity. Never. From the start, from 1920, Syria never acknowledged that Lebanon does exist."

[...]

Interviewer: "You're not going to give [the opposition] veto power, because you are scared you might lose your popularity..."

"I'm Accusing Hizbullah of Facilitating or Ignoring Syrian Car Bombs and Killings"

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm not going to give up the veto power for a military group, for Hizbullah. No. Okay? Is that clear? They can take it by force, over our dead bodies, but I will not give up veto power for the sake of Hizbullah, their allies, and the Syrian regime. I think I'm clear."

Interviewer: "You are clear, but you are ready to cooperate with the Americans, but you don't cooperate with your fellow citizens."

Walid Jumblatt: "These are a little bit different from my fellow citizens. When my fellow citizens do accept the rule of democracy, without weapons or car bombs - then we can speak."

Interviewer: "So you are accusing Hizbullah of being behind these assassinations and car bombs."

Walid Jumblatt: "I have said it before - it's not a secret - and I will say it again. Yes, I'm accusing Hizbullah of facilitating or ignoring Syrian car bombs and killings.

[...]

"I'm not the one who blocked downtown, and I'm not the one who closed the parliament. We went several times to parliament."

Interviewer: "This is not a big deal. It's only some tens in the heart of the city, protesting against this government, and they have the right to do so. Why do you give yourself every right to do whatever you want, the way you want, and you don't give them the right?"

Walid Jumblatt: "They have the right to bring weapons and money to their militia, and they have the right to destroy my economy and my city, and their city? You say that is opposition? These are savage people, not an opposition."

Interviewer: "You're such a poor man, to that extent?"

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm not a poor man. I'm sorry, I'm not a poor man. I'm here, I'm saying the truth, and I've always defied the state of Hizbullah. Once they accept the state of Lebanon - welcome.

Interviewer: "Constitutionally, you own the solution. The solution is in your hands. You can easily place the key in the door, and open the door. You can easily do that."

"I'm Not Going to Make Concessions for Someone who is Fixing a Gun on My Head"

Walid Jumblatt: "I will not surrender to their will to have veto power on every major and minor decision in the government."

Interviewer: "So you are afraid of being defeated?"

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm not going to accept surrender. That's it. If they want to defeat me, they just have to kill two more ministers, and they will defeat me. But it's not going to be a victory for them to have bloody hands, to have another murder on their hands."

Interviewer: "But it's not a matter of defeat. It's a matter of concessions. We should make concessions for the sake of the country."

Walid Jumblatt: "I'm not going to give concessions to someone who is fixing a gun on my head. Okay? I'm here. I don't have guns. He's fixing a gun, a rocket on my head. He can kill me, but..."

Interviewer: "So he's aiming the gun at your head?"

Walid Jumblatt: "At the heads of the free Lebanese, yes, and I'm not going to give him the satisfaction of surrendering."