

## Junblatt's electoral calculations different from those of his allies

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“Junblatt: difficult stage requires efforts from all political forces...”

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 On September 13, the pro-government An-Nahar daily carried the following report by Radwan Akl: “Every word that has been uttered by the head of the Democratic Gathering, Deputy Walid Junblatt, especially during his recent sessions, has become the object of debates and analyses within the March 14 forces before the March 8 forces. Junblatt's recent positions have emerged at a time when the different parties are heading to the presidential palace on Tuesday to partake in the dialogue that is sponsored by President Michel Suleiman.

“The man will certainly address the defense strategy whose implications will undoubtedly be crucial at the level of the coming parliamentary elections, considering that the issue of Hezbollah's arms and the future of these arms is continuously being tackled by the majority, and especially the forces which are against the head of the Change and Reform bloc, Deputy Michel Aoun... In less than two days, Junblatt criticized the statements of Deputy Muhammad Kabbara who said that “Tripoli is the capital of the Sunnis”, and did not spare Deputy Ghinwa Jalloul. However, his visitors are stating he assured he will not break his alliance with the head of the Future Bloc, Deputy Saad al-Hariri, and the March 14 forces...

“His visitors also quoted him as saying that the votes of the Sunnis and the Druze in Baabda were equal to those of the Shi'is, adding: “I do not know how strong my Christian allies are in it”. He continued according to his visitors by saying: “The battle will be purely Christian. I can not help them in Zgharta and the battle in Jezzine is settled in advance. My battle will be in Chouf and Aley”. In this regard, it seems that Junblatt has blocked the way before the return of Lebanese Forces Deputy George Adwan in the Chouf, and will replace him with the head of the Liberal Nationalists Party, Dori Chamoun...

“On the other hand, the security issue remained a main concern for Junblatt, especially following the assassination of the leader in the Lebanese Democratic Party, Saleh al-Aridi. A figure who spoke to Junblatt after the assassination said he did not exclude the Israeli factor from the Baysour crime. He stated: “The country is more exposed than ever”, and issued instructions to his deputies and the cadres in his party to be highly cautious... He also said: “Our problem resides with some in the hard-line Lebanese lobby in America, which asked us to conduct the presidential elections in the Marina (in Dbayeh) under the protection of the American fleet”&hellip;

“He then called for the introduction of new cultural cadres into the party to revive the memory and corroborate the national and Arab principles [at the level of the Palestinian cause in particular]. Junblatt is thus conveying this culture and relating the situation in Lebanon and the region to his cadres and is explaining them to his son Timor, who is partaking in some occasions, knowing he is pursuing his political sciences studies in France. When asked about Timor in one of his sessions, Junblatt stated: “Political sciences in Paris are different from those in Mount Lebanon.” - An-Nahar, Lebanon

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 On September 15, the weekly paper affiliated to the Progressive Socialist Party Al-Anbaa carried a statement delivered by party's leader, Deputy Walid Junblatt. The following is the transcript of the statement posted by psp.org.lb: “As the national dialogue conference is about to be launched with the sponsorship of the president of the republic, a call must be addressed to all the political sides to head to dialogue with a collective will to accept the opinion of others and engage in calm, scientific and objective discussions far from tensions and mudslinging. A chance must be given to meeting the ambitions and expectations of the Lebanese people, at the level of consecrating civil peace and national unity.

“The difficult stage that Lebanon is going through requires all the political forces to rise up to the level of responsibility and show the highest degrees of openness to block the way before dormant strife and allow the discussion of a national defense strategy in the face of the Israeli enemy. This strategy would be based on several main elements, the most prominent of which being: Benefitting from the combat abilities of the resistance, allowing the state to be the sole centralized reference at the level of war and peace decisions, and consecrating the truce agreement, which freezes the state of war with Israel without establishing peace...

“On the other hand, the government must enhance preemptive security measures following the assassination of Sheikh Saleh al-Aridi. This could be secured through the unification of the security decision and the establishment of a central operations room headed by the president of the republic or his delegate, to follow up on all the security developments that might emerge... Security is above all considerations and above all narrow political tensions.” - psp.org, Lebanon [Click here for source](#)