

More than 200,000 Attend LF Martyrs Mass in a strong show of force for the Cedars Revolution

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Head of the Lebanese Forces Executive Council Dr. Samir Geagea Following a Memorial Mass for the "Lebanese Resistance Martyrs";

Head of the Lebanese Forces Executive Council Samir Geagea addressed Lebanese Forces supporters following a memorial mass for the "Lebanese Resistance Martyrs"; on Sunday in Fouad Chehab Stadium in Jounieh.

The annual event commemorates Lebanese Forces supporters who were killed both during and after the 15 year civil war. Sunday's event was attended by numerous politicians including Nadim Gemayel, the son of assassinated President Bashir Gemayel, Kataeb leader Amin Gemayel, MP Marwan Hamadeh and MP Akram Chayeb.

Geagea began his address saying, "Martyrdom does not hurt the martyrs and their families, but what hurts are the attempts to deny or exploit their martyrdom for personal interest." He added that the Lebanese Forces was proud of its martyrs, and would not surrender to misleading information and unfair accusations.

"A lie can kill a person but it cannot kill the truth, and our truth will remain," he said, adding that the Lebanese Forces's "martyrs" are actually those of all Lebanon.

"We had to defend the country's sovereignty, freedom and public safety, because no one was there," he said, adding that those who died had been described by some parties as criminals and thieves.

Geagea said the Lebanese Forces was the first party that responded to the call for peace.

"If we resisted they call us criminals, and if we forged peace they call us colluders," he said, before he called for the "victory" of the truth against lies and misleading information.

"I fully apologize for any mistakes committed when we carried out our national duties during the war," Geagea said, adding that he asked for forgiveness from God and for those they had hurt.

"I call upon those who are exploiting our mistakes to stop, because only God can judge us," he added.

"I know that the people of Lebanon are looking forward to unity and reconciliation. We aim to unite but over what?" he asked. "United over Hezbollah's weapons, at the expense of the Lebanese state, until the Liberation of Palestine and the resolution of the Middle East peace process?"

"Over calling for an investigation into the Army Command sending a helicopter into a Hezbollah region? Over bringing Syrian authority back into Lebanon? Over fighting American imperialism in the Middle East and the world, until victory? Over the practice of camping in Beirut in order to bring about change and reform?" Geagea asked.

"Are the Christians of the March 8 alliance ready to unite, or did they replace the slogan of 'Lebanon is always right' with 'Hezbollah and Syria are always right'?" he continued, asking if there could be anything more divisive among the Christian community than attacking Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir.

"The parliamentary elections will be a turning point that will define Lebanon's destiny," said Geagea.

"I call on the Christians who are against the Lebanese Forces, and especially against me, to think about Lebanon's interests and to overcome all personal interests, because we can only save Lebanon with unity among the people and among Christians in particular," he added.

He said that the March 14 alliance and the Cedar Revolution represented Lebanon's true resistance, adding that they would take steps to liberate all of Lebanon's occupied territories, including Shebaa Farms and Kfar Shouba Hills. Geagea said he wanted the state to be powerful and for all weapons to be restricted to legitimate military institutions.

Geagea called for the Special Tribunal into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri to proceed, for judicial reforms and economic development.

He added that combating Israel required an agreement between all Arab countries in order to establish a successful defense strategy.

“The Palestinian cause is not one party’s cause, but it concerns all Arabs” he said.

Geagea added that the Lebanese defense strategy was almost defined by the Doha Agreement and the ministerial statement.

“Some parties insist on keeping their weapons because they claim that the state was still not powerful and capable. We believe that as long as there are weapons in the hands of a Lebanese party, there will be not powerful state,” he said.

“We are going through a new phase with President Michel Sleiman, and we should abandon all personal interest and support the state authorities,” he added.

“I will not forget to mention our most significant martyr, Sheikh Bachir Gemayel, and all the martyrs. I promise you that we will complete, through peace and politics, what you started during the war and the resistance,” he concluded.

<http://www.lebanese-forces.com/ar/artde.asp?newsid=20140>

LF Martyrs Mass - Sunday September 21, 2008-1
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Tens of Thousands Attended the Lebanese Forces Memorial Mass

An-Nahar newspaper said Monday that tens of thousands attended the Lebanese Forces' annual memorial mass held at the Fouad Shehab stadium in Jounieh in remembrance of "Lebanese Resistance Martyrs."

The mass was seen as an opportunity by both the Lebanese Forces and the March 14 alliance to solidify their alliance and their popular base ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

However, As-Safir newspaper said LF leader Samir Geagea's speech was tantamount to closing the door to reconciliation with the Marada Movement and its leader Suleiman Franjieh.

A delegation from the Maronite League representing all parties has visited Franjieh at his residence in Bnashii to set the stage for the reconciliation between the two parties pending the return of President Michel Suleiman from his U.S. visit.

The delegation relayed "positive" stances from Franjieh after the meeting.

Suleiman, on his way to New York on Sunday, telephoned Geagea and sent a wreath, while Premier Fouad Saniora and the army commander sent representatives to the mass.

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri didn't send a representative and members of his parliamentary bloc didn't attend the mass.

However, Progressive Socialist Party and al-Mustaqbal Movement MPs and partisans participated in large numbers in the Jounieh mass.

MPs Marwan Hamadeh, Akram Shehayeb, Nehme Toeme and Abdullah Farhat represented the PSP at the rally, while MP Mustapha Alloush, Atef Majdalani represented al-Mustaqbal Movement. Also present were March 14 MPs Boutros Harb, Naila Mouawad, Solange Gemayel, Elias Atallah, and Phalange party leader Amin Gemayel.

Archbishop Roland Abou Jawdeh presided over the mass.

Abou Jaudeh called in his ceremony for "substantial and comprehensive reconciliation and forgiveness."

Beirut, 22 Sep 08, 10:13

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&DF58ADF2AFFA567FC22574CD0041F8A5>

Geagea Apologizes for War Wounds, Criticizes Hizbullah-Aoun for Wounding the State

Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea on Sunday apologized to the Lebanese people for unjustified wounds inflicted during the civil war and criticized the Hizbullah-led March 8 alliance for blocking state rise.

Geagea, in an address during a memorial mass in remembrance of "Lebanese Resistance Martyrs" said: "We all long for intra-Christian unity because it is the intro to Lebanon's unity."

"But should we unite to support armed Hizbullah at the state expense? Or should we unite to back calls for investigating with the Army Command for dispatching a military helicopter to Sujud where Capt. Samer Hanna was martyred?" Geagea asked in reference to Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun.

He accused Christian factions of the Hizbullah-led March 8 alliance of "dropping the slogan of my nation is always right and replacing it with a slogan that says Syria and Hizbullah are always right."

"The real patriotic civil revolution is the Cedar revolution. The Cedar revolution and the March 14 movement are the real collective resistance," Geagea added as the crowd applauded and chanted slogans in support of the "independent, sovereign Lebanon."

He emphasized on the need to "defend the whole of Lebanon, the dream of (the late president-elect) Bashir (Gemayel) within marked borders and under the leadership of the Lebanese state to which decision-making and weapons are restricted."

Geagea explained that the "cause of Palestine is a Palestinian cause in the first place and an Arab cause. Let us not lose Palestine again in a partnership between Arab and Islamic influences."

Geagea was apparently referring to attempts by Iran to lead Hizbullah and Islamist Palestinian factions against the Arab peace plan.

Geagea said the defense strategy is "outlined by the Doha Accord" and criticized Hizbullah and its allies for insisting on maintaining weapons.

"How can the state be capable while you step on its head and foot and block its decision-making?" Geagea asked the Hizbullah-led alliance.

He pledged persisting "political resistance" to achieve goals of the March 14 movement and Cedar revolution.

Beirut, 21 Sep 08, 17:05

<http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/NewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&DF58ADF2AFFA567FC22574CD0041F8A5>