

"Geagea: Al Matn merely being a sporting battle; we are the winners"

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On July 31, the website of the March 14 group 14march.org reported on the speech delivered by the leader of the Lebanese Forces addressing a mass of the Lebanese Forces' cadres: "The leader of the Lebanese Forces Samir Geagea met with a gathering of the Lebanese Forces' cadres in the context of preparing for the electoral battle in Al Matn. He gave a speech which he began by recalling "their attempts to save Al Matn region an electoral battle". Geagea reiterated the pronouncement that "the battle is a sporting [one] since we are confident about ourselves; and merely having a sporting battle, then we will win..."

"Geagea criticized "some of those talking and feeling proud that their popular base is 60, 65, and 70%" saying they have their watches off by two years and a couple of months. He warned them that they should be conscious since "we are not in June 2005, but rather in July 2007, and we are only 5 days away from Sunday. Then [on Sunday], we will make sure the date we are in." Geagea did not neglect denouncing "those who recall from time to time the logic of the militias, while they are fulfilling this logic daily", describing it as an irony.

"He asked: "Who are the militias? Are they those calling continuously for the uprising of the State to which the weapons should be restricted? Or are they those who demand leaving the weapons outside the scope of the State? Or are they those who have been pitching the tents for 10 months in downtown Beirut? Or are they those who forcefully tried to block the roads on December 23, and prevented people from going to their work?..."

"He pointed out that "some are leading the battle under the slogan of marginalizing the Christians and restoring their rights". He asked: "Does pitching the tents in Beirut and immobilizing the commercial market foil the marginalizing of the Christians and restoring their right? Does the alliance with Najah Wakim, Zaher Al Khatib, Khaled Hadadah, Ali Qansu, and "am Wahhab "with my respect to them- halt the marginalizing of the Christians and restoring their rights?" He accused the previous authority dominated by Syria of marginalizing the Christians…

"He added: "Does providing Hezbollah with the adequate cover to continue its military and security activities halt the margining of the Christians? Or does it entail increasing this margining?" In reference to the July war he said: "Was it a prelude to getting rid of the marginalizing of the Christians and did it restore their rights? Or was it a prelude towards further despair, frustration on all levels to the extent that the Lebanese citizen does not express any faith in his homeland, while the Christian citizen is no longer intending to stay in the country, and thus further emmigration."

"He asked: "Does the proposal of conducting popular presidential elections (referendum) lead to reinforcing the position of the Christians or does it marginalize them completely at the level of their only post in the State? Does preparing for boycotting the presidential elections and immobilizing it lead to eliminating the marginalization of the Christians or it rather does it entail the loss of the first Christian post in the State?..."

"He insisted that "concrete facts do not require a promotion or slogans, we who are working hard and seriously to uphold Lebanon and restore the balance of the State and to halt the marginalizing of the Christians." He called upon others "to return to their conscience and see things clearly", noting that it is easy to disagree in politics, but it is unacceptable to accuse each other with false charges."

"In the end, Geagea asked: "Is there still any doubt how will the Matn people vote this Sunday? Indeed, they will all repeat as we all say: Here I am Gebran, here I am George, here I am Samir, and here I am Pierre Amin Gemeyal." - Website, Middle East
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