

"Special Tribunal for Lebanon and Credibility"

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It is strongly believed that the UN body, its General Assembly, and the international tribunals that fall under the UN umbrella and jurisdiction could all be in the hot seat, exposed to a very serious jeopardy and are up in the air with a questionable and blemished credibility.

This dim image of the UN and its judicial institutions could become a shocking reality if Hezbollah, the armed jihadist terrorist organization backed by Iran and Syria, succeeds in imposing its criminal threats and will on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) either by totally abolishing its mission or by forcing its judges to make certain detrimental concessions in a bid not to indict any of its (Hezbollah) men in the Beirut 2005 assassination attack that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, 22 other Lebanese nationals and injured many others.

It is worth mentioning that the Hariri crime took place when Syria was still occupying Lebanon with an iron fist and nothing in the magnitude of such a devastating incident could have happened without its direct involvement or at least its full approval. Meanwhile, it is strongly believed that Syria was responsible for numerous political assassinations that were committed after the Hariri's attack. Furthermore, no assassination or assassination attempt since 1976 has been solved because Syria was concurrently the occupier and the killer.

The following is a list of outspoken and active anti-Syrian politicians, MPs and intellectuals that were targeted and murdered in Lebanon since 2005 in the most bloody political assassinations:

February 14, 2005: Rafiq Hariri, PM;
June 2, 2005: Samir Qassir, journalist;
June 21, 2005: George Hawi, politician;
December 12, 2005: Gibran Tueni, MP & journalist;
May 26, 2006: 2006: Pierre Gemayel, MP;
June 13, 2007: Walid Eido, MP;
September 19, 2007: Antoine Ghanem, MP;
January 25, 2008: Wissam Eid, computer engineer.

The investigation of Hariri's fatal terrorist attack has been going actively since 2007 after the government of Lebanon requested the UN on 13 December 2005 to establish the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) under chapter seven to try all those behind the attack. The tribunal was established in pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1664 (2006), and 1757 (2007) and implemented on 10 June 2007. Since then millions of dollars have been spent to cover the tribunal's budget of which Lebanon carries 47%.

Syria was and is still the main suspect and is politically blamed for the crime by the majority of the Lebanese people and the Arab countries based on its criminal notorious record. Other prominent suspects are Syria's militant armed tools in Lebanon, Hezbollah, numerous armed Palestinian militias, and a number of pro-Syrian and pro-Iranian armed groups. But no formal charge or indictment has yet been made. All Lebanese were impatiently waiting for the STL to indict the assassins and name those who masterminded, planned and financed the attack.

Many Syrian high ranking army, secret service, and police officers, as well as scores of Hezbollah men were interrogated by the STL investigators in Lebanon and Syria. Meanwhile, numerous Syrian officers who were considered main suspects by the STL either committed suicide or were assassinated, a well known method the Syrian regime has of getting rid of its opponents or those who are in any way a threat to the ruling Assad family.

The STL was expected to indict those charged with the attack before the end of this year, and while actually no one besides the prosecutor's tribunal knew the names of the suspects, Hezbollah's General Secretary Hassan Nasrallah suddenly became loud, threatening, and insisted that the tribunal was politically motivated and an Israeli and American tool set up and fabricated to blemish the reputation of his group and unlawfully target his resistance. In three lengthy, fiery, detrimental, defiant, belligerent and very dangerous speeches, (15, 22 & 25 July, 2010) he called on PM Saad Hariri, the Lebanese government and Saudi Arabia to lobby for aborting the tribunal, or otherwise his group would replicate its bloody May 2008 Beirut and Mount Lebanon invasions. He and his leadership boldly made their threats and publicly promised much worse and widespread invasions and possibly a coup in case any of their men were indicted.

On July 29/10, spokeswoman for the STL, Fatima Issawi, rejected charges by Hezbollah that its work is politically motivated and said: "The experience of other international tribunals has shown that the results of the work of such institutions speak for themselves and contradict the unsubstantiated allegations of hostile interference and we are

convinced that this will also happen in the case of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. She confirmed that the Office of the Prosecutor would issue an indictment when it is ready, and that legally the Lebanese government has an obligation to respond to the tribunal's requests. Issawi stressed the fact that the absence of an accused would not prevent the tribunal from conducting proceedings and examining evidence against those who may be indicted and that the final results of STL's work, rather than unfounded allegations or speculation, can be the only basis for assessing its effectiveness.

On July 30 the Saudi king, the Syrian president and the Qatari prince made urgent visits to Lebanon and held talks with its leadership in a bid to avert and contain Hezbollah's threats, but Syria's sneaky actual stance and role is not clear due to the fact that Syria is still a main suspect in the Hariri crime while its strategic alliance with Iran is still very strong in spite of the extensive Arabic, American and European appeasing and cajoling overtures towards its President Al Assad.

On Saturday 31 July/10, the Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, a well known low standard Syrian-Iranian media trumpet and dulcimer, quoted Syrian President Bashar Al Assad to have told the Saudi king and the Lebanese president during their tripartite Summit conference in the presidential Baabda Palace on Friday 30 July/10: "The international tribunal's work should come to an end. We in Syria feel the tribunal's investigation has become a heavy diplomatic burden on Lebanon and its stability. In addition, Syria's experience with the tribunal so far indicates that there are no encouraging bodies to support the continuation of the tribunal's work or prevent its politicization." According to the same source Al Assad warned that any ruling that would implicate Hezbollah might destabilize Lebanon and that his country would stand by the Shiite organization, Hezbollah, in any case, and considered that any blow to Hezbollah a line that should not be crossed. The daily also reported that Assad told the Saudi king the international tribunal has already nearly brought destruction on Lebanon and the region in the past. "Today, this attempt is being repeated with Hezbollah, which is being accused of assassinating Rafiq Hariri. This means Lebanon may once again be subject to destruction, and therefore, clear outlines should be determined to put this matter to rest." The Syrian president reportedly stressed to his Saudi guest that he supports Hezbollah's stance. "The resistance in Lebanon will not be satisfied with the international tribunal, since the tribunal will accuse it of the assassination. If there is insistence to move forward with the international tribunal, the resistance will rise against it, since it strives to harm it. We consider the resistance a red line and we will let no harm come to it," he said. Regarding Hezbollah, the Syrian president said, "It will not agree to the principal decision to implicate it and will not accept any such agreements. The international tribunal must seek the real killer."

According to the report, the Saudi king mainly listened to Assad and did not express any objection or reservations to what he heard. King Abdullah is a patron of Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri, Rafiq Hariri's son. The paper reported that the two leaders tried to find a solution to the matter, in a way that would prevent an explosion in Lebanon, particularly after the Syrian president stressed that Hezbollah "will not remain silent if it is accused by the tribunal, and will do everything in its power to rise against it." It remained unclear what the two leaders agreed on.

It is strongly believed that Syria is covertly dictating Nasrallah's threatening rhetoric against the STL, the moderate Arab countries, the Lebanese people and their government. Syria as previously is using Hezbollah to scare the Lebanese mosaic ethnic communities, the Muslim Sunnis and the Christians in particular, and accordingly force them to call its army again to enter Lebanon, contain Hezbollah and stop him from taking over the country and toppling its democratic, multicultural and co-existence regime. Syria is playing this bloody and evil game and betting on this scary scenario in a bid to re-occupy Lebanon.

In conclusion, the Free World and Arab countries are required to stand tall with no fear or hesitation. They should strongly support the STL with all their available resources, including the use of force if and when needed; refuse any kind of concessions or compromises that Syria or Saudi Arabia suggests; not succumb to Hezbollah's threats and terrorism; not fall prey to the sneaky Syrian plot; and most importantly not commit their previous fatal mistake of giving Syria the green light to re-occupy Lebanon.

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