

What did Mikati promise Hezbollah and Syria?

Contributed by Administrator
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The big question in Lebanon right now is what did Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati promise Syria and Hezbollah in return for his nomination to lead the new government .

As part of the parliament consultations over cabinet formation , Mikati met today with the Future Movement parliamentary bloc which is headed by former PM Fouad Siniora.

The Future Movement MPs asked Mikati to clarify his stance on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) and the illegal weapons (Weapons outside the control of the Lebanese army) , Siniora said on Thursday after the bloc met with Mikati for consultations on cabinet formation.

Siniora, said his bloc has asked Mikati to make a public commitment that his cabinet will not sever Lebanon's ties with the STL, withdraw its judges, or ask that the tribunal's work to be suspended.

The bloc has asked that these commitments be made part of the cabinet's Ministerial Statement, and that Mikati also should agree that they cannot be placed on the cabinet's agenda for modification.

The bloc also requested a timetable for the gathering of "weapons aimed at the people, [not] those aimed toward Israel, especially now that Hezbollah and its allies have violated the Doha Agreement."

Siniora also said they have asked for a "commitment to the national dialogue's decisions, especially the removal of Palestinian weapons present outside the refugee camps."

The bloc attended the consultation to affirm its commitment to the constitution, even though Mikati's appointment has violated the "spirit of the National Charter," Siniora said.

Amal MP rejects questions

Amal MP Ali Hassan Khalil said on Thursday:"The questions directed by the Future bloc to Prime Minister-designate Najib is aimed at paralyzing his efforts to form a new cabinet and cannot be asked of him"

Khalil said in a press conference at parliament that outgoing PM Saad Hariri should be asked about what he agreed to in the Saudi-Syrian initiative.

Khalil added : "Does the Future bloc's demand for disarmament include the weapons that injured people on Tuesday , or the Molotov cocktails that were thrown at houses," he said, in a reference to Tuesday's protests by supporters of Hariri, some of which turned violent.

Mikati said on Tuesday following his appointment that he will seek to form a cabinet with the Future Movement and its allies.

He also said that the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) is a reality and cannot be abolished.

"Matters of disputes can only be resolved through dialogue." He said

Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah also admitted last week that STL cannot be abolished but reportedly demanded that Mikati should adopt a 5 point plan before nominating him as the country's PM.

The five point plan calls for:

- 1- Withdrawing the cooperation protocol between Lebanon and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) .
- 2- Withdrawing the Lebanese judges from the STL
- 3- Halting the funding of the tribunal

4- Referring the false witnesses file to the Lebanese judiciary council

5- Bolstering Lebanese-Syrian ties

Mikati was a staunch ally of Hariri during the 2009 parliamentary elections. His change of position has puzzled some Sunnis.

Mikati dodged a question on the 5-point plan issue on Monday, but observers believe that Hezbollah would not have supported Mikati's election without a guarantee that he would discredit the tribunal.

In interview with AFP on Tuesday Mikati said he confirmed that he was nominated by Hezbollah only to protect the resistance,(in reference to Hezbollah.)

“My nomination by Hezbollah does not make me committed to any political stance other than protecting the Resistance.” Mikati said

Mikati, backed by Hezbollah and its March 8 allies , was appointed Tuesday by president Michel Suleiman as PM-designate to form and head the next cabinet , giving Hezbollah and its allies increased leverage in the country and provoking widespread protests.

Hezbollah brought down Hariri's government on January 12 over the Special Tribunal for Lebanon's (STL) indictment which is widely expected to implicate Hezbollah members in the assassination of former PM Rafik Hariri in 2005 .

According to analysts the issue in Lebanon is not who is Mikati as much as how did Mikati get nominated and by whom …..and for this reason the time has come for Mikati to disclose to the Lebanese people his real agenda before he can expect the March 14 blocs to join his cabinet if he really wants a national unity government. AFP