

Clinton Accuses Hizbullah of 'Hijacking' Democracy

Contributed by Naharnet
Wednesday, 16 February 2011

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton accused Hizbullah of hijacking Lebanon's democracy and stressed that only the Lebanese state should have monopoly on military power.

"There are many ways that a democracy can be hijacked," Clinton told al-Arabiya Arab TV network in an interview aired Monday.

"Having armed militias within a democratic state should not be permitted. And this has been a consistent American position that the state should be the guarantor of the integrity and authority of the state, and should have a monopoly on military power," she said.

"The situation unfortunately in Lebanon has developed so that there is this counterforce for the state in Hizbullah," Clinton told her interviewer.

The Lebanese "deserve to have their democracy respected and their voices heard, and not have one element of their society using the threat of force and the potential of violence to try to achieve political ends," she said.

Clinton reiterated support for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, saying ex-Premier Rafik Hariri's assassins should be brought to justice.

"We do not believe that it is in Lebanon's interest to avoid accountability for those who murdered not only Prime Minister Hariri but 22 other innocent people," she said in another interview with al-Hurra TV station.

She added that the U.S. hoped Premier-designate Najib Miqati's government will recognize the need for the tribunal's work to continue.

Beirut, 15 Feb 11, 08:09