

March 14 Supporters Stream to Beirut for Show of Force Against Hizbullah's Arms

Contributed by Naharnet
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March 14 supporters gathered at Beirut's Martyrs Square on Sunday to attend a rally aimed at sending a message to the Hizbullah-led alliance about the people's rejection of the party's weapons.

An Nahar daily said that scores of people camped at the square after midnight to guarantee a close place near the podium from where March 14 leaders, headed by Caretaker Premier Saad Hariri, will address the crowds.

Convoys could be seen across the country heading to the capital, blaring songs and displaying pictures in support of slain ex-Premier Rafik Hariri.

The March 14 leadership has asked demonstrators to carry the Lebanese flag only in hopes for a show of force, six years to the day after the 'Cedar Revolution' protest which the alliance said was the prototype for "peaceful, democratic" change in the Arab world.

Hariri visited the square on Saturday night to inspect preparations for the rally.

His Future News channel has repeatedly aired a short video in which a Hizbullah member climbs a pole, takes down a Lebanese flag and replaces it with the party's yellow standard.

Another clip shows gunmen opening fire on Lebanese troops with the tagline: "We want no army in Lebanon but the Lebanese army."

Red billboards urging supporters of the Hariri camp to head downtown on Sunday lined highways across the capital, bearing slogans such as "NO to assassinations," "NO to oppression" and "NO to the rule of arms."

Another billboard, which no party has yet claimed responsibility for, has surfaced in the capital, reading: "Israel too wants to topple arms."

The rally will be held amid a heavy deployment of soldiers and security forces in Beirut neighborhoods and at its entrances to guarantee that the event would be free from violence.(Naharnet-AFP)

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