

Saad Hariri

Contributed by Administrator
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On July 12, former Prime Minister Saad Hariri spoke to MTV from Paris in his first public appearance since March:

Live Video - [[Here](#)]

"Good evening, hopefully the next interview will be in Beirut. I shall return to Beirut soon. I chose to be absent [from Beirut] and let [March 8] form the new government and the Ministerial Statement. There [have been] threats [against me] since 2005. I was absent from Beirut [not because I was threatened], but willingly. The Future Movement and the March 14 coalition are strong. Every time March 14 proves that it is there. We have struggled for independence, for achieving the truth. We won [the 2009] parliamentary elections although the use of arms changed the results of elections afterward.

There are people who tell me that they want me to be back as a target, but there are also people who do not want me to be back in Beirut. I will come back to Lebanon when I see that I need to be back, and hopefully it will not take too long. I decided to speak in order to put an end to the distortions taking place regarding all matters. If [Hezbollah chief] Sayyed Hassan [Nasrallah] holds 300 press conferences, he will not change anything about the Special Tribunal for Lebanon's (STL) indictment. If [I was still the country's premier], [my] cabinet would have made efforts to search for the four suspects indicted by the tribunal. Some are [accusing] us of provoking the international community. We are not. The press conferences held by [March 8] parties are the ones that incite the international community.

[The cabinet] might or might not cooperate with the international community, but in the end, Lebanon will pay the price. The STL is there and no one can bring it down. Sometimes [March 8] parties voice commitments to international resolutions and other times they don't. What shall we believe? Nasrallah stood behind the four indicted men. Why? Those are individuals [charged by the STL]. There is no stability without justice. Let [Hezbollah] put itself in our shoes. Don't they have martyrs? Don't they consider [Hezbollah slain official] Imad Mugniyah to be their martyr? Where is the truth behind his killing?

For the first time in Lebanon a tribunal is being established to try the murderers of politicians. Who is threatening stability? The indictment has been released. Did instability occur in the country? What happened? Neither Saad Hariri nor anyone in the Future Movement or March 14 is allowed to accuse a certain sect in the killing [of Rafik Hariri]. I want to ask you a question, why did the March 8 ministers resign [from my cabinet in January 2011]? Didn't they do so because of the [issue of the] witnesses who gave unreliable testimonies [to the international commission investigating Rafik Hariri's 2005 assassination?]

I supported Saudi-Syrian talks to end disputes in Lebanon truthfully and for the sake of Lebanon. I do not want to rule. I am very relieved that I am not taking part in it. I wanted reconciliation. Those who want to rule are the parties who did everything [to force the collapse of my cabinet], not me. We want a mechanism to disarm [non-state] parties, including those of the Palestinian factions.

If there is nothing there to serve Lebanon, then I do not want to rule. I wanted to build a state, not a statelet, like what the current cabinet is doing. I knew deep inside that some parties in Lebanon were maneuvering [to foil Saudi & Syrian talks] and bring down March 14. When I negotiated, I was bearing something that was bigger than I am, and I never knew that this will break my back. I knew I was losing political and in popularity.

Nasrallah is the one who rejected the Saudi-Syrian talks. Rafik Hariri stood by the [1989] Taif Agreement. What we have is our truthful word and honesty. We offered our hand to cooperate with the others. The main problem in the country is [the use of non-state] arms. I engaged in serious dialogue [with March 8 parties], but next time I will do it on camera and in public so that they won't accuse me of selling my father's blood. Arms have become Hezbollah's problem and our problem with Hezbollah. Within March 14, we will not remain silent [about the arms issue]. I will never be separated from my allies in March 14.

Let us implement the Taif Accord. All I am saying is that throughout the past six years, despite our disagreements with parties, which happen in a democracy, the use of arms [has allowed some parties] to impose their will on others. We reject the logic of power-use. They either order us to abide by their will or they label us as traitors and Israelis. The Future Movement is the only movement that is not sectarian. I defy anyone in the March 8 parties that is like that. For us, the killers of [Rafik Hariri] are murderers, and not a sect.

We will go all the way toward uncovering the truth, there will not be any bargain. We are not armed, [the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb] are not armed either. It seems that we are supposed to apologize for Rafik Hariri, Pierre Gemayel or Gebran Tueni being assassinated.

Today is the anniversary of [the beginning of the 2006] July War. We all know that [Israel] killed [Lebanese] in that war and we condemn it, but who killed our martyrs? We want to know. In any trial in the world, the accused are either proven guilty or innocent. Should we abolish the tribunal and [forget] about our martyrs just because we have doubt?

I want you to see past international tribunals. There have always been leaks, this is the media's role; but eventually, one will prove if the accused has committed the crime or not.

[Asked if he is ready to meet with Nasrallah]: I am not against dialogue, but I want to have witnesses to be there next time I meet him so that [nothing is made up] about what we talked about.

[Asked why he sourly received PM Najib Mikati after the latter was nominated as premier]: The most important thing for me is honesty. I do not have a personal problem with Mikati, but today the current cabinet is that of Hezbollah and [it carries out] the project [of the party], and Mikati is the head of the government. When we allied with Mikati in Tripoli [during the 2009 parliamentary elections], did we ally on the basis that we want the truth [in Rafik Hariri's murder] 'in principal'?

The decision to bring down Saad Hariri from the premiership was made by two people: Nasrallah and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Mikati is only serving as a tool. I want to ask [Minister of Finance] Mohammad Safadi, [who backed Mikati], what did March 14 do to you? Is Mikati's vow to commit to the STL written down [clearly] in his government's Ministerial Statement?

I see that the current cabinet is that of Hezbollah. [I] am part of March 14. We are all one, and thus [March 8] saw that [I] made compromises and went to Syria and Iran... and picked the moment when it would be the easiest to bring down [my] cabinet.

[Progressive Socialist Party leader] MP Walid Jumblatt is not part of Hezbollah, he is a leader, and I respect him even if I disagree with him politically. [On March 13] I accused Mikati and Safadi of being responsible for the betrayal of the Lebanese people. Iran and Syria benefited from the formation of the new cabinet.

[Asked about March 14's plans to deal with the cabinet]: We are a democratic opposition seeking to bring down the cabinet democratically. We can take to the streets in protests. We will negotiate with the allies [in March 14]. But I want to reassure the Lebanese that we will not burn tires or close the [Beirut] airport road. However, no one should think that March 14 will not keep track [of the cabinet's performance]. I respect President Michel Sleiman and I have good relations with him, although I think his tenure should have been served better because he had a promising oath. We support any economic plan that benefits the country. The March 14 parties have projects for Lebanon. I did not see [anything] in the new cabinet's Ministerial Statement.

March 14 parties and the Future Movement might have made mistakes out of their beliefs [that rival parties] act in good will. Many say that March 14 should not have made concessions, but I am against these statements. There is a project to take the country and abolish its independence.

I do not think that the cabinet will remain until 2013 [the date of the next parliamentary elections]. March 14 is a strong opposition, and I believe it can bring down the cabinet.

We are not afraid. [March 8] can be politically malicious. The problem is about how Lebanon will survive. [March 8] said in a Ministerial Statement clause that they will change the course of the economy. Do they think they can be smart? The era of communism is over.

[Asked about national dialogue]: We have no problem [to resume it] but if anyone comes to ask us to bargain on the STL, we will not attend [dialogue sessions]. I don't know about my March 14 allies, but I will not be there if that's the case. The next rounds of national dialogue will be different [if they are resumed]. The weapons that are pointed at their people will no longer serve [the armed] party. We have to have special relations with the Syrian government [under the framework] of respect for the independence and sovereignty of both countries.

[Asked about the Syrian uprising]: As an Arab citizen, I cannot not have a reaction toward what is going on. What is happening is unjust. The Syrian people are expressing their views. You cannot accuse them of sabotaging the country. The Syrian people know better about what is going on. On the humanitarian level, I see that there is oppression taking place [against the Syrian people]. The Future Movement is fully compassionate toward the Syrian people. There are crimes being committed in Syria; All I am saying is that we cannot not be compassionate with the Syrian people. How many people were killed so far in Syria? All those [reportedly] killed are terrorists? I, who am calling for justice in

Rafik Hariri's murder, cannot turn away from what is going on in Syria.

No one expected for [such revolts] to take place in the region. I am not worried about the changes that will occur in the Arab world. I tell Assad that no one is bigger than their country and that the Syrian people are the base of Syria. I tell Sleiman that he made a presidential oath and we would have hope he would carry on with it. I tell Speaker Nabih Berri that we want him as a partner in the country and not a partner in hiding the suspects [in Rafik Hariri's murder]. I tell Jumblatt that I respect him. Some in March 14 might see that Jumblatt has made harsh statements against us. I disagree with Jumblatt on that... The rhetoric used between us and Jumblatt was never tense. Jumblatt took a position based on his fear of sectarian strife in the country, but we tell him as Sunnis that there won't be strife in Lebanon.

I would have wished that [Free Patriotic Movement leader] MP Michel Aoun took part in the first ranks of March 14, but unfortunately he chose to be in the secondary ranks of Hezbollah. I tell [Kataeb Party] leader Amin Gemayel that the blood of martyrs will not go away for nothing. [His slain son] Pierre and [his other son MP] Sami are my brothers. I tell [LF] leader Samir Geagea that we will continue our path together. [Geagea] does not make mistakes and sticks to his word. His obsession is to preserve Lebanon's sovereignty.

I tell the March 14 supporters that we are part of the project to preserve Lebanon's independence. We tell them: The day you feel you are frustrated, be sure that there is tomorrow and there is a day after tomorrow. Be sure that there is a future for Lebanon. There will be a Lebanon of Pierre Gemayel and Gebran Tueini. We will continue this path to make Lebanon the democratic jewel of the Arab world. I am worried about the issue of the STL's funding. I tell Nasrallah to [echo] Rafik Hariri and say that no one is bigger than Lebanon. To see Lebanon and not anything greater than it. All the Lebanese are resistant. I hope Sayyed Hassan [Nasrallah] would be a bit modest.

I tell Rafik Hariri that the truth has begun to surface. The family is fine and we are fine. He will see that Lebanon will become the way he wanted it to be. There is no way we will give up on the blood of Rafik Hariri. I tell March 14 that we sacrificed a lot. And it is forbidden to not be optimistic. I tell the Lebanese people all over the country that we do not have anyone but each other. We will be able to build a state if we agree together and not by resorting to the strongest party.

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