

Declaring dependence

Contributed by Dailystar
Sunday, 23 November 2014

For seven decades, Lebanon has celebrated a national holiday – Independence – to honor something that has never actually existed.

Since the establishment of post-Mandate Lebanon, foreign powers have held sway over the state as well as many of the country’s politicians and political parties.

The constitution itself was drafted during the heyday of the French Mandate, while its most recent version, in 1990, emerged after the intervention of regional powers, blessed by the outside world. In addition to foreign input into the drafting of these documents, the implementation of the constitution has been subject to the influence and whims of foreign powers. Time after time, constitutionally mandated deadlines to hold elections are ignored, because this or that foreign power is said to favor such a move.

The foreign meddling in Lebanon’s politics, as most people are aware, isn’t limited to decisions “at the top” – it can extend far down into the political system.

This year, politicians are expressing their sorrow that 2014 won’t see a national celebration of Independence, but these are hollow sentiments. The true sorrow should be felt over the empty celebrations of the past – the military parades, releasing of balloons and making of speeches that took place, but did not equal independence.

The sorrow that should be expressed should be for the Lebanese people, who have been asked to believe in their country’s independence while those who hold office and claim to represent the popular will have done little to achieve a break with the past.

The more the Lebanese look beyond their borders for the latest “green light” to do something, the more they are pushing back the date of the country’s true independence.

The Daily Star

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Daily Star on November 22, 2014, on page 7.