

Moussa Leaves Beirut as No Solution Looms

Contributed by Administrator
Saturday, 23 June 2007
Last Updated Saturday, 23 June 2007

Arab League Chief Amr Moussa has admitted that he had failed in a bid to bring Lebanon's feuding camps to the negotiating table to end more than seven months of political impasse.

"Some ideas and suggestions proposed today hindered the possibility of reaching an official understanding" between the parliamentary majority and the Hizbullah-led opposition, Moussa told reporters Friday in Beirut.

Heading a delegation representing Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, Moussa said however that progress had been made toward a dialogue, with a view to the formation of a unity government and presidential elections in September.

He said he was ready to resume the mediation mission "if things progress."

An Nahar daily reported Friday that Moussa said "cooperation was very good" from the pro-government March 14 coalition while he hinted that the opposition did not adopt a favorable reaction to his mediation.

The newspaper said that Moussa informed members of the opposition that the Arab League and the delegation's four member-states were not prepared "to hand over Lebanon's will to non-Lebanese."

"The Arab League or the Arabs will not back off from their interest and role in Lebanon…the Arabs have a responsibility toward Lebanon and Lebanon is an Arab responsibility," Moussa said.

Parliament's majority leader Saad Hariri told An Nahar that the March 14 camp had agreed on two separate written documents that mediators proposed.

"We received the first proposal after a meeting the Arab delegation held with Speaker Nabih Berri," Hariri said, adding that the March 14 coalition complied with it.

"But the March 8 forces backed off from it within 24 hours," he said.

The pro-government camp also agreed on a second document that was offered after a meeting between Moussa and Hizbullah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

"We spent more than ten hours waiting for the final answer," Hariri said, but the opposition again backed off.

Telecommunications Minister Marwan Hamadeh also accused the anti-government camp of thwarting attempts to find a solution to the country's ongoing political crisis.

"It seems that they want us to go back to 1976 when the Syrian regime distanced an Arab solution for Lebanon" to rule the country alone.

The opposition first wants a government of national unity, but the majority insists that the priority is to secure the border with Syria, which it accuses of trying to destabilize Lebanon.

Another majority demand is that the opposition not place obstacles to the election of a new president, scheduled for September.(Naharnet-AFP)

Beirut, 23 Jun 07, 08:04