

# Mouawad for Arab-International Help to Protect Lebanon's New President from Syrian Death Threat

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Interview with MP Naila Mouawad, who called for Arab and international protection for the forthcoming Lebanese president against alleged death threats by Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime

Mouawad for Arab-International Help to Protect Lebanon's New President from Syrian Death Threat  
By Dalia Nehme

MP Naila Mouawad called for Arab and international protection for the forthcoming Lebanese president against alleged death threats by Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime.

Mouawad, in an interview with Naharnet, said the "Syrian regime &hellip; could carry out a desperate operation to kill the forthcoming president."

"Now we have to elect a new president and we, alone, cannot protect this process and we ask the Arab and international communities to protect, first, our right in electing the president and, then, protect the outcome of this election," Mouawad said.

"We cannot set a (confrontation) plan without positive response from the Arab and international communities to our determination and will," she added.

In answering a question as to what would be done if the Hizbullah-led opposition escalated tension and resorted to violence in response to the election by March 14 MPs of a president with simple majority, Mouawad said:

"The Army commander has stressed that his troops would not remain in their barracks in case of riots. It is only normal for the Army to protect the constitution and constitutional institutions.

"Also if we were faced by riots there will be a need to close the borders with Syria, which we cannot do on our own, Pressure is being exerted on the Syrian regime to protect our right in electing a president and after electing a president."

She stressed that "Iran should come under pressure too because the only force on the ground capable of instigating more that riots is Hizbullah."

Mouawad said Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun "has decided to give up his ambition to be elected president &hellip; We welcome this approach."

"We had differences with Aoun on political issues, but with Hizbullah we differ on the question of Lebanon's sovereignty," She declared.

She accused Hizbullah of "placing the interests of Iran and Syria on top of Lebanon's interests. As for electing a new president, they haven't even signaled that they are undergoing consultations with any side on this issue."

The Assad regime, according to Mouawad, "does not want to recognize Lebanon as a sovereign and independent state. They refuse to demarcate the joint borders and to establish diplomatic ties. They also reject the international court."

"The Syrian Regime, now, wants to have a say in naming the new president or they will block elections."

Mouawad expressed the belief that the international tribunal that would try suspects in the 2005 killing of ex-Premier Rafik Hariri and related crimes, would "eventually deal with ex-President Rene Mouawad's assassination" in 1989.

She blamed her husband's assassination on "Syrian intelligence officers" who were in charge of Lebanon for over 15 years before Damascus was obliged to pull her army out in April 2005 following the Hariri assassination.

Mouawad specifically named a Syrian intelligence officer who goes by the name of Jamaa for playing a role in her husband's assassination, noting that has also been accused of taking part in the Hariri crime.

Asked whether she thought consensus could be reached on a presidential candidate, Mouawad, said: "We need to achieve consensus on Lebanon, the Lebanon we want, consensus on the Taif accord, on topics adopted during the national dialogue process, on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701, on the international tribunal, on demarcation of the borders with Syria and on disarming Palestinians based outside refugee camps and on reactivating the 1949 armistice accord with Israel."

"let us achieve consensus on these issues first," she concluded.

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