

# Lebanon is Being Prepared for Sedition as a Front in the Syrian War

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Global Research, June 26, 2013

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 24 June 2013

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA, THE WAR ON LEBANON](#)

*The flames of division and fighting in Syria are being fanned into Lebanon. The US and its allies could be working with their Lebanese partners and proxies to ignite and internal conflict. The small Arab republic is politically divided and is in a governmental state of limbo. There is also a growing vacuum within the country's security apparatus and military.*

Order is kept by a caretaker government run by Najib Mikati, the caretaker prime minister, while a government-in-information to be run by Tammam Salam, the prime minister-designate of Lebanon since April 6, 2013, is waiting to spring to life. The US-supported March 14 Alliance has insisted that Tammam Salam create a technocratic government that will be politically unaligned, whereas Hezbollah and its allies have demanded that they hold at least one-third of the cabinet seats as a means of ensuring that they can have a veto and the ability to dissolve the Tammam Salam's cabinet if it ends up serving the Hariri-led March 14 Alliance and their foreign backers.

The governmental limbo is hurting the country's security. The leadership of the Lebanese military is faced with vacancies due to retirements. New military leaders cannot be appointed, because Salam's cabinet has not been formed and Mikati's caretaker government lacks legal authority to make appointments.

## **Growing Internal Violence in Lebanon**

The increasing number of Syrian refugees is putting pressure on Lebanon's infrastructure. Some of the Lebanese are also concerned that it will change the country's demographics. Fighting has broken out between Hezbollah's allies and supporters and its smaller rivals in Tripoli (Trablos) and Sidon (Saida). The Arab Democratic Party, which is Alawite, has been fighting incessantly with takfiri gunmen in Tripoli. The followers of Ahmed Al-Assir, another takfiri ally of Hariri, in Sidon have been embroiled in a battle with Hezbollah's supporters and itching to fight Hezbollah and its Sunni Muslim allies in Tripoli.

The seeds of chaos are being planted across the country as the violence in Syria is spilling over into tiny Lebanon. A blast has been heard near the Christian town of Kahaleh. Unknown gunmen around Aarsal have been blocking the roads from Labweh and Syria to Baalbek, which Lebanese officials have said is aimed at igniting internal fighting. The Lebanese military had to move in to end fighting between residents of the villages of Aarsal and Labweh. Rockets are also being launched against civilians from Syria and from inside Lebanon.

The rocket strikes have been occurring on nearly a daily basis. They have been launched by anti-government forces in Syria against the Lebanese town of Hermel, which is a Hezbollah stronghold and near Qusayr, wounding and killing civilians. The ambush and murder of a group of Lebanese Shiites with a Turkish companion near Arsal has also led to sectarian tensions. Afterwards one man from Arsal was killed near the outskirts of Hermel. Lebanese officials have said that the stoking of tensions is intended at igniting Shiite-Sunni fighting in Lebanon. People in Hermel have accused residents of Arsal of being involved in the rocket attacks on Hermel. It appears that there are individuals or groups in Arsal that are coordinating with the anti-government forces inside Syria. This is why the Syrian military has repeatedly pursued anti-government groups near Arsal and opened fire on them inside Lebanese territory.

### **The Extension of the Lebanese Parliament's Terms and Internal Protests**

Both the rival political camps led by Hezbollah and the Hariri family have agreed to extend the term of the Lebanese Parliament for seventeen months on the basis that the security situation. Despite the official reasons, both sides agreed to do this because of their interests. Hezbollah does not want to run an electoral campaign while it is fighting in Syria and the Hariri-led March 14 Alliance is afraid that it will lose parliamentary seats because of its declining support in Lebanon, in particular amongst the Christians.

The Hariri camps support for the takfiris inside Syria and in Lebanon and its opposition to the Orthodox Proposal, which stipulated that each community in Lebanon should vote directly for its own parliamentarians, has angered most Lebanese Christians. The Orthodox Proposal would take away the Christian seats in the Lebanese Parliament that the Hariri camp's Future Party controls.

Protests have igniting across the country too. Roads have been blocked in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and on the route to the Lebanese border crossing of Masnaa, which sits on the Syrian border. This has led to clashes between the Lebanese military and protesters. The protests in Beirut have been against the unconstitutional extending of the Lebanese Parliament's term. In Bekaa the protests have been about the wave of violence that is based on the support different communities are giving to the two sides in Syria. Both sides Lebanon are believed to have sent several thousand fighters each to fight inside Syria.

### **The Game Plan in Lebanon: Force Hezbollah to Fight in Lebanon?**

There is a deliberate effort to ignite fighting in Lebanon. Foreign journalist are now streaming into the country and seeking permission from Hezbollah to visit the areas attacked by the anti-government forces in Syria and the families of Hezbollah fighters that died in Syria. Intelligence agencies are most probably monitoring the events in Bekaa and involved in efforts to exacerbate the situation inside Lebanon. Lebanese military stations are also being sporadically attacked.

As part of a strategy the Syrian conflict is deliberately being brought into Lebanon. Two days after the Lebanese Shiites and Turkish national were killed near Arsal, a group of gunmen tried to kidnap a man from Baalbek. Locals saved the man and it turned out that the gunmen were a group of Syrians and one Lebanese man affiliated to the so-called Free Syrian Army.

The aim of a strategy that seeks to ignite Lebanon with fighting is aimed at forcing

Hezbollah to withdraw from Syria and turn inward into its home turf. This is why the takfiri militants in Lebanon are being aroused and sectarian fighting between Sunnis and Shiites is intentionally being instigated. The weakening of the state and the erosion of its institutions is adding to the problem and may also serve this project...

***Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya*** is currently reporting out of Lebanon

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An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of *The Globalization of NATO* (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book *The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa*. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.

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