

Message to the People of Lebanon

Speech of Lebanese Opposition Leader

By [General Michel Aoun](#)

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Speech of MP Michel Aoun, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement and former Commander of the Lebanese Military, to the mass rallies in Beirut, Lebanon.
Sunday December 10, 2006

O great people of Lebanon!
O greatest people of the world!

We meet today in the greatest popular rally ever to pursue our mission for change and to bring about a new government that knows the principles of ruling a country and the true meaning of democracy; one that understands the needs the Lebanese people that should be met so that internal security and peace can be achieved: these principles are security, prosperity and freedom. But we have started to lose these principles under the current government.

When I returned to Lebanon on May 7th, 2005, I told you that we were about to face a three-faceted crisis that will try to prevent us from carrying out the change we seek to achieve.

One aspect of this crisis is composed by the remains of feudal politics that constitute an element of political stagnation and continues to weaken society and to drain the resources of the Lebanese people.

The second aspect is sectarian fanaticism: every time we shake the current situation to make it shift towards the better, sectarian fanaticism arises. This is an element of self destruction that only yields disasters. It also creates stagnation that paralyzes all fields of life, and in times of excitement, it becomes an element of destabilization.

The third element is political money that has entrenched corruption in the structure of the state.

Today, these three elements are all gathered against us. And they are creating civil strife: feudal politics, sectarian fanaticism and corruption money. They are encouraged by foreign parties to create civil strife.

We are today at the last phase of our struggle before we consolidate our independence, freedom, and sovereignty because the government has proven to be a failure at all levels. They (those in power) have failed to isolate the Lebanese people from one another and we are here today to represent unity and we are leading this struggle together. They have

failed even with the help of foreign interference; they have failed in the war and in the pauperization of the Lebanese people, and in displacing the Lebanese people. And today we stand strong and we will not let internal strife win us over.

Today at this last phase, I can congratulate you, and despite what it seems, this stage has come close to its end. It is enough to win the battle against civil strife and everything will change. I promise you that you will not gain the guaranteeing third, i.e. the third plus one, but you'll have the entire power and you'll give the guaranteeing third to whoever is afraid and has concerns.

Why do they fear the term "change"? Why are they afraid of reform? Those who are in power since 15 years have been producing debts for Lebanon and are draining the resources of the state and of the Lebanese people.

How do you expect them to give up on their positions and accept that others replace them and prove that Lebanon, despite its economic situation, is able to rise again even without the resources that are available.

Why are they afraid of reform? It's because they are corrupt and corruption has proliferated in all aspects of the state and has become like a metastatic cancer that has spread to all the bodies of the state. Why are they corrupt and how is this proven? They refuse to hear the term financial auditing. The financial auditing will expose all the vices of the government starting 1992 in each department and in each ministry and in each project where squandering and embezzlement of public funds have proliferated. Of course, this is a golden goose they will not kill. And they cannot refuse to be replaced because their records are filled with corruption.

They claim they are the majority, but they have stolen the majority and as such they cannot continue to rule and build a new state. The state cannot be built except on noble standards and clear commitment to laws and to the Constitution, while they are sacrificing the laws and violating the constitution.

What we want today is for them to understand that their era is gone and the request for participation in the government with them was the last thing we would ask for and actually accept.

For 18 months, we have been talking to them in a moderate tone asking them for participation, but from now on, it will be very difficult for us to accept the participation while awaiting a new government to be produced by new legislative elections.

In a few days we might close this phase and after that we will not accept less than new elections that will produce respectable constitutional institutions that truly represent the will of the people and that are not engendered by a law issued by Ghazi Canaan. The latter created a fake majority. The regime generated by this law has destroyed the Lebanese Constitution.

In the few coming days, we expect to change the status quo we're in. And this must be the last big rally we'll call for because in the next one there will be no room for all the protesters. And the barbed wire will no longer protect the Grand Serail because people will move there naturally and without any instigation.

We are seeking peaceful means only because we are committed to them. But other means are also legitimate: we have seen what happened in Serbia as the world applauded and no one considered actions of the people illegal back then as they marched on the government. And we have also seen what happened in Ukraine when protesters marched on the Parliament and this was not considered as illegitimate. In the United States, the Declaration of Independence gives the people the right to topple their government if the latter does not meet their demands.

All these actions become legitimate when the rulers start committing crime after crime and refuse to step down, and find refuge in illegitimate actions. Legitimate actions are for rulers who respect the legitimacy of the people not those who violate it.

This state that produced nothing but debts should not stay one more hour. Every family today has two electricity bills to pay, one for the electricity power plant and one for the generator electricity, and two water bills, one for the state and the one of the private water tank; these households have double expenses. All this is due to the manipulation of services and prices and to the squandering of public funds and thus these service institutions cannot be straightened because they are plagued with corruption.

There is also a direct responsibility laid on the shoulders of the government and in which the government has largely failed: security.

They used to blame all security issues on the remains of the “security state” under Syrian occupation. What is their excuse today? Which remains are now in control of the country?

Ten days ago, a horrendous crime occurred when Minister of Industry Pierre Gemayel was cold-bloodedly murdered and now they have stopped talking about it as if the murder never happened. One year ago, the late Gebran Tueni was assassinated and today was the commemoration of his death, as if no murder has happened. What is the government’s responsibility towards these assassinations, or the responsibility of the interior ministry or that of the state as a whole? What is the responsibility of the international investigations? Are these assassinations just to be exploited in politics and incite fear to people?

The government is using these assassinations to exploit them in politics and to accuse the opponents and the Lebanese, and to continuously frighten them and frighten us also as politicians so that we make our own security. That is why we are deprived from moving freely around the country.

The latest crime was crystal clear. Why are they concealing its facts from the public? What are they waiting for? What is the responsibility of the minister of interior? In any other country in the world, the government would have resigned, regardless of the issue of the participation.

The government proved to be a failure in all its endeavors ever since it took power. None of the 15 assassinations was unveiled. We are demanding the formation of a tribunal (international tribunal for the Hariri assassination)- an agreed upon issue- and we do not yet have any suspect. And we are creating problems because of it.

We want to know: what did the government do from 18 months until now except talk about the tribunal? Enough of evading responsibility!! No one cares to answer our concerns. We will accept no more maneuvering: I ask the government to reveal its achievements in the last 18 months. And I tell them: your achievement record is blank, so are you political and

security records. As for your economy record, it is disastrous!!!

Thus your resignation has become a necessity, even regardless of participation; you do not have the right to remain in power.

If no solution is reached within a few days from now, we will declare our refusal of this government and we will demand the formation of an interim government to hold early legislative elections to serve as a basis for the foundation of our democratic institutions and the future rule of law that will build Lebanon.

Long live Lebanon.

General (Ret.) Michel Aoun is Spokesman for the Lebanese opposition leader of both the Free Patriotic Movement (Tayyar Al-Watani Al-Horr) and the Reform and Change Bloc (Aoun Alliance) of Lebanese political parties.

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