

Sarkozy gives Syria an ultimatum over Lebanon

Sarkozy warns of "confrontations" and threatens Lebanese National Opposition and Syria

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, December 19, 2007

[Naharnet](#) 19 December 2007

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

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French President Nicolas Sarkozy has warned of "confrontations" if Lebanese presidential elections were not held on Saturday, giving Syria a "last chance" to comply with his demands.

Al-Hayat daily said Wednesday that Sarkozy told Arab reporters in Paris he has held three telephone conversations with Syrian President Bashar Assad to push him into facilitating the election of a Lebanese head of state.

Sarkozy said he was "from now on" waiting for "deeds" and not just "words and promises."

The French president also announced that he has asked Assad to "use his influence for the election of a president in Lebanon" and stressed the "importance of delaying discussion of the formation of a cabinet until after the elections."

Sarkozy said he warned Assad that he will have to reveal details about the obstruction of the parliamentary session scheduled for Saturday if the legislature failed to meet again.

"The last chance is Saturday. If there was no election, I will reveal my analysis to what has happened," Sarkozy told Assad, warning that "confrontations could erupt again and two (competing) governments could be formed."

Fears are already running high that failure to meet Saturday's deadline could spur the formation of two governments, a grim reminder of the end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war when two competing administrations battled it out.

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