

November 18, 2024

A Call from the Lebanese Diaspora: Berri's Negotiations: A Coup Against the Constitution!

On the eve of US envoy Amos Hochstein's expected visit to Beirut to continue the ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hezbollah, we—representatives and members of several Lebanese expatriate organizations—must raise the alarm that the Speaker of Parliament's negotiations on behalf of the Lebanese people is setting a dangerous precedent.

We express deep concern over Mr. Nabih Berri's negotiations regarding a ceasefire in Lebanon's name. He has unilaterally assumed the roles of the Presidency, the cabinet, the parliament, and the diverse spectrum of the Lebanese people and their political parties. We see these negotiations as lacking constitutional legitimacy and representing a blatant breach of the Lebanese National Pact.

We believe Mr. Berri's claim to represent Lebanon in these negotiations, based on alleged authorization from Hezbollah, constitutes a coup against the constitution and law, directly threatening the National Pact, the country's unity, and its stability. Negotiating on behalf of the Lebanese state is the exclusive prerogative of the government and the Presidency. Any negotiations conducted outside this framework, based on instructions from an external entity provided to Mr. Berri, are null and void and do not bind the Lebanese state.

We believe that Mr. Berri is negotiating with the Israelis as the head of the Amal Movement, an ally of Hezbollah, not as Speaker of Parliament. If he were negotiating on behalf of Parliament, he would have, at minimum, convened a formal parliamentary session to discuss the terms of the negotiations and Lebanon's position, which must reflect the collective stance of the Lebanese people.

We call on all opposition political parties and the Lebanese people to confront these unconstitutional practices and work to stop them, preserving Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. We demand respect for the constitution and laws, and adherence to the country's legitimate institutions. We urge the US Administration to refrain from negotiating with Mr. Berri, and we call upon Washington, the international community, and the Arab League to closely review this matter to prevent any agreements reached outside the framework of Lebanon's constitutional institutions from being challenged.

Our demand today is the formation of a parliamentary committee representing the Lebanese national parties to negotiate with Mr. Hochstein, with the participation of Speaker Berri and the caretaker Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, given the unfeasibility of electing a president at this stage.

*Signatories:

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