

Paper of Common Understanding Between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement

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1- Dialogue

National dialogue is the only avenue to find solutions to Lebanon's crises on stable and firm bases that are a reflection of a unifying consensual will. The following conditions must be obtained to ensure its success:

A- The participation of parties that have a political, popular and national standing with a round table as a venue.

B- Transparency, openness, and placing the interests of the nation above any other interest, through the reliance on self-driven will and a free and committed Lebanese decision-making.

C- Include all national issues that require general consensus.

2- Consensual Democracy

Consensual democracy remains the fundamental basis for governance in Lebanon because it is the effective embodiment of the spirit of the Constitution and of the essence of the pact of shared coexistence. From this standpoint, any approach for dealing with national issues according to a majority- minority formula depends on historic and social conditions for practicing effective democracy in which the citizen becomes a self-standing value.

3- The Electoral Law

The reform of political life in Lebanon requires the adoption of a modern electoral law -where proportional representation may be one of its effective means- that guarantees accurate and just popular representation and contributes to the accomplishment of the following objectives:

1- Activate and develop the role of political parties in achieving civil society.

2- Limit the influence of political money and sectarian fanaticisms.

3- Make available equal opportunities for using the various means of the media.

4- Ensure the required means to enable the Lebanese expatriates to exercise their voting rights.

We ask the Government and Parliament to commit to the shortest possible deadline to enact the required electoral law.

4- Building the State

Building a modern state that has the trust of its citizens and is able to meet their needs and aspirations, and provide them with the sense of security and safety as to their present and future, requires that the state should be erected on strong and solid foundations that make it impervious to destabilization and periodic crises whenever it is faced by difficult challenges and changing circumstances. This requires the following:

A- Adopt the standards of justice, equality, parity, merit and integrity.

B- An equitable and impartial judiciary is the essential condition for creating a state of rights, laws and institutions based on:

1- The complete independence of the judiciary and the selection of judges with recognized competence in order to activate the work of all courts.

2- The respect for the actions of the constitutional institutions while keeping them away from political polarization; ensure the continuity of their work and prevent their blockage (the Judicial Council and the Constitutional Council).

What happened in the Constitutional Council is an example of such blockage, when the legal challenges of parliamentary elections submitted to it have not yet been acted upon.

C- Eradicate corruption from its roots, because temporary and partial solutions are no longer sufficient. They have in fact become an exercise in bluff that the beneficiaries of corruption at all levels carry out to perpetuate their theft of the resources of the state and its citizens. This requires:

1- Activating the institutions and boards of financial and administrative control and inspection, while ensuring their strict separation from the executive power to guarantee that their work is not politicized.

2- Conducting a complete survey of the cases of corruption, in preparation for opening judicial investigations that would lead to the prosecution of those responsible for corruption, and to the

return of embezzled public funds.

3- Legislating the required laws that contribute to combating all aspects of corruption and calling upon the government to sign the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

4- Working toward a comprehensive administrative reform that ensures that the right person is assigned to the right position, particularly those whose merit, competence and integrity are recognized. This can be accomplished by empowering the Civil Service Council to assume its full prerogatives.

5- Setting deadlines for actions on these issues because the factor of time has become critical. This matter requires fast and judicious solutions which would use the time factor to their advantage instead of the corrupt using it to theirs.

5- The Missing During the War

To turn the page of the past and achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation, all the outstanding files of the war must be closed. The file of the missing in the war requires a stance of responsibility to end this anomalous situation and put the parents' minds at ease. The parents cannot be asked to forgive without respecting their rights to know the fate of their children. This is why we ask all parties involved in the war for their full cooperation to uncover the fate of the missing and the locations of the mass graves.

6- The Lebanese in Israel

Whereas both sides are convinced that the presence of Lebanese citizens in their homeland is better than their presence in enemy territory, a resolution of the question of the Lebanese residing in Israel requires a speedy action to ensure their return to their country while taking into consideration all the political, security and livelihood circumstances surrounding the matter. On this basis, we call upon them to promptly return to their country in the spirit of the call by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah following the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and the speech delivered by General Michel Aoun at the first session of Parliament.

7- The Security Question

First, Political Assassinations:

Any form of political assassination is condemned and rejected because of its violation of basic human rights and of the most important foundations of the existence of Lebanon represented by difference and diversity, and of the essence of democracy and its practice. Therefore, to the extent that we condemn the assassination of Former Prime Minister martyr Rafiq Hariri and all assassinations and assassination attempts that preceded and followed it, leading to the assassination of MP Gebran Tueni, we emphasize the importance of moving forward with the investigation according to the officially approved mechanisms in order to uncover the truth. This is an issue that cannot be subjected to any compromise because it is a required condition to achieve justice and serve it against the criminals, as well as to bring an end to the cycle of murder and bombings. For this reason, it is an obligation to keep these issues away from any attempts at political exploitation, which would harm their essence, and the essence of justice that must remain above any political conflicts or disagreements.

Second, Security Reforms:

A reform of the Security Services is an inseparable part of the broader reform process of state institutions and their rebuilding on sound and solid bases. Given the delicate position that the Security Services occupy in protecting and defending a stable security environment in the country against any breaches or threats, the process of building those Services must be given special attention. Therefore, the government is urged to assume its full responsibilities as follows:

A- Put in place an integrated security plan based on the centralization of security decisions and on a clear definition of enemy versus friend, the determination of security threats, including the issue of terrorism as well as the security breaches that must be dealt with.

B- Dissociate the Security Services from any political considerations and clientelism, for their full loyalty should be to the nation.

C- Assign the responsibility of the Services to personalities with recognized competence and integrity.

D- Security measures must not be in conflict with the basic freedoms guaranteed by the

Constitution, most of all the freedom of expression and political action, which do not threaten security and public stability.

E- Constitute a parliamentary Intelligence Committee that would oversee the reform and building processes of the Security Services.

8- Lebanese-Syrian Relations

The establishment of balanced and sound Lebanese-Syrian relations requires a review of the past experience while drawing the necessary conclusions and lessons in order to avoid the accumulated mistakes, blemishes, and breaches. This is in order to pave the way to build these relations on clear bases on parity and the full and mutual respect for the sovereignty and independence of both states, on the grounds of rejecting the return to any form of foreign tutelage. Therefore, it is necessary:

A- That the Lebanese government take all legal measures and procedures pertaining to the assertion of the Lebanese identity of the Shebaa Farms and present these to the United Nations, now that the Syrian state has declared the Shebaa Farms to be fully Lebanese.

B- To demarcate the borders between Lebanon and Syria away from the tensions that could block this operation which both Lebanon and Syria have had a long-standing need to achieve through a mutual agreement.

C- To ask the Syrian state to fully cooperate with the Lebanese state to uncover the fate of the Lebanese detainees in Syrian prisons without the provocation, tension, and negativity that would hinder a positive settlement of this file.

D- Establish diplomatic relations between the two countries and provide appropriate conditions for them, thus transferring them from a relation between individuals and groups to a relation between institutions in order to secure their permanence and stability.

9- Lebanese-Palestinian Relations

Addressing the Palestinian file requires a comprehensive approach that asserts, on the one hand, the respect by the Palestinians of the authority of the Lebanese state and their compliance with its laws and, on the other hand, the reaffirmation of solidarity with their cause and the recovery of their rights, in accordance with the following rules:

A- The social condition of the Palestinians requires a strong attention to improve their living conditions and secure a decent standard for a dignified human life on the basis of bilateral cooperation and the human rights charter, in addition to facilitating their movement inside and outside Lebanese territory.

B- The Right of Return of the Palestinians is a fundamental and permanent right, and the rejection of the settling of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is an issue that has the consensus of the Lebanese people and cannot be conceded under any circumstances.

C- Define the relationship between the Lebanese state and the Palestinians in a single institutional Palestinian framework that would be a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in Lebanon in a manner conducive to proper coordination and cooperation.

D- The issue of putting an end to Palestinian weapons outside the camps and controlling the security situation inside them should be dealt with as part of a serious, responsible and close dialogue between the Lebanese government and the Palestinians, leading to the exercise of the state's authority and laws over the entire Lebanese territory.

10- The Protection of Lebanon and the Preservation of its Independence and Sovereignty

Protecting Lebanon and preserving its independence and sovereignty is a national public responsibility and duty, guaranteed by international treaties and the Human Rights Charter, particularly in confronting any threats or dangers from any source.

Therefore, carrying arms is not an objective in itself. Rather, it is an honorable and sacred means exercised by any group whose land is occupied, similar in this way to the methods of political resistance.

In this context, Hezbollah's weapons should be addressed as part of a comprehensive approach that falls within two bounds:

The first bound is the reliance on justifications which meet national consensus, and which would constitute a source of strength for Lebanon and the Lebanese people for keeping the weapons, and the other bound is the definition of objective conditions that would lead to a cessation of the reasons and justifications for keeping those weapons.

And since Israel occupies the Shebaa Farms, imprisons Lebanese resistance members and threatens Lebanon, the Lebanese people should assume their responsibilities and share the

burden of protecting Lebanon, safeguarding its existence and security, and protecting its independence and sovereignty by:

- 1- Liberating the Shebaa Farms from Israeli occupation.
- 2- Liberating the Lebanese prisoners from Israeli prisons.
- 3- Protecting Lebanon from Israeli threats through a national dialogue leading to the formulation of a national defense strategy over which the Lebanese agree to and subscribe to by assuming its burdens and benefiting from its outcomes.

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