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POST-TAËF LEBANESE GOVERNMENTS

**“SOVEREIGN MINISTRIES”
EXCLUSIVE
FOR ZU'AMA AND SECTS**

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Editorial

Powerful Zu'ama in a Powerless State

By Jawad Nadim Adra

Since its independence in 1943, Lebanon continues to face successive crises varying in severity depending on the triggers, the stakes and the regional and international contexts. These crises range from the appointment of civil servants, to parliamentary elections, to squabbling over ministerial portfolios, to governmental and presidential vacancies, to extension or appointment of parliaments as well as to bloody battles that unfolded either intermittently across different regions and periods of time or incessantly as was the case during Lebanon's 15-year Civil War.

All this has translated into a squandering of public funds, wastage of resources, brain-drain, pollution, unemployment, accumulated public debt, growing disparity between the rich and the poor and an absolute collapse in healthcare, education and all other public services. Apparently, the sectarian Zu'ama and we, the people, have failed or rather intentionally opted not to build a state. Talking about a fair and equitable electoral law is in fact nothing but empty rhetoric. If the results of 100 out of 128 parliamentary seats can be known in advance according to 1960s Law, then why not conduct the elections for the remaining 28 seats only?

Any electoral law must be designed to empower state-building and foster citizenship; otherwise Lebanon will forever remain at a serious crossroads. In the seventies, the Lebanese heard about the "Protection of Palestinian Rifle", "Injustice", Isolation of Phalanges Party" (introduced by the leftist National Movement), "Fear", "Eternal Lebanon", as well as about "Strangers" (introduced by the rightist Lebanese Front to refer to the Palestinians). Thus, the Lebanese Zu'ama intentionally lead a Civil War into which the Lebanese citizens were forced.

We hear much today about the "Isolation" or "Blockade of Shia'a", "Hezbollah's Weapons", "Christian Unity", "Sunnis' Dignity", and "Hegemony Over the Christian Decision". Hence, the question that arises is: Do the Zu'ama realize what they are doing?

Powerful leaders build a powerful state. However, this power must be based on citizenship rather than sects and clans. A true leader is one who does not fear his own people nor does he hesitate to give up parliamentary or ministerial seats in order to preserve their rights. This cannot be realized without adopting a proportional non-sectarian electoral law on the grounds that voting in the parliamentary and municipal elections shall be done in the place of residence rather than that of birth. Perhaps Lebanon's leaders will admit tomorrow that they are just like us, i.e. ordinary citizens in a powerful state.