

Ali denies Hezbollah involvement in Syria crisis

BEIRUT: Syrian Ambassador Ali Abdel-Karim Ali denied Monday Hezbollah was involved in the crisis in his country and said some Lebanese living there face a threat by rebel groups.

“Attempts to spread the claim that the Lebanese resistance is aiding [the regime] are refutable,” Ali told reporters after meeting Foreign Affairs Minister Adnan Mansour.

Three Hezbollah members and 12 rebels were killed in battles in the Syrian town of Qusayr where a majority of Shiite Lebanese live, a Lebanese security source told The Daily Star Sunday.

The town, located 5 kilometers away from Lebanon’s northeast border with its neighbor, witnessed similar fighting last year where a Hezbollah commander was killed.

“[Hezbollah Secretary-General] Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah has spoken about this on previous occasions of people with dual Syrian-Lebanese nationality and so Lebanese on Syrian soil are concerned in facing the militants who are attacking them,” Ali said.

“Other than that, it's all talk. Whoever is spreading such things should have the least bit of credibility and respect to ethical standards in dealing with such a matter,” the envoy added.

Last year, Nasrallah said that a Hezbollah commander by the name of Ali Hussein Nassif was killed in a Syrian border area inhabited by Lebanese that was frequently the target of bombardment by Syrian rebels.

Although there are an estimated 30,000 Lebanese Shiites who live in a cluster of 20 Syrian villages near the border with Lebanon, many have fled to the eastern cities of Hermel and Baalbek and Beirut because of the violence.

The Syrian envoy also said that events on the border with Lebanon “violate relations” between the two countries, adding that the Lebanese Army was in control of most border crossings.

“What is happening on the Syrian-Lebanese border is really a regular occurrence and the media disseminates what the Lebanese Army and authorities are doing to catch the mobs and gunmen as well as stop arms smuggling,” he said.

“This harms Lebanon and is a violation of the sisterly relations between the two countries,” he added.

Copyrights 2011, The Daily Star - All Rights Reserved

18/02/2013

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2013/Feb-18/206908-ali-denies-hezbollah-involvement-in-syria-crisis.ashx>