

Mansour Delays Sending Complaint to Ali Pending Validation of 'Some Facts on the Ground'

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Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour said Tuesday he is taking his time to hand a letter of complaint to the Syrian envoy over Syria's violation of Lebanon's border because he is trying to first verify "some facts on the ground."

On Monday, President Michel Suleiman condemned a recent infiltration by Syrian troops into Lebanon's eastern border region of al-Qaa and the shelling of several border towns, asking Mansour to hand Syrian Ambassador Ali Abdul Karim Ali a letter of complaint.

A Syrian force formed of 30 troops on Sunday infiltrated 500 meters into Lebanon's eastern border region of Masharii al-Qaa and opened sporadic fire among the residents of the area.

In an interview with al-Manar television, Mansour stressed that Lebanon's ties with Syria "will not be severed, neither now nor in the future," noting that "the Syrian ambassador did not attack President Suleiman at all."

"According to the available information, five Lebanese men were killed inside Syrian territory, that's why we're studying some facts on the ground ahead of handing Ambassador Ali the president's letter of complaint," Mansour added.

Meanwhile, ministerial sources told LBCI television that they expect a heated debate in cabinet over the letter of complaint "because the decision was not approved by the government and was not coordinated with the premier."

Ali on Monday criticized the Lebanese complaint, saying "Syria must complain because its posts are being attacked from Lebanon."