

Miqati Hits Back, Says Syria Letter to Ban 'Inflames Disputes'

by Naharnet Newsdesk 18 May 2012, 19:11

Prime Minister Najib Miqati on Friday hit back at Syria over a letter sent by its permanent U.N. envoy Bashar al-Jaafari to U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon about the presence of alleged anti-Syria “terrorists” in Lebanon.

Miqati stressed that “the Lebanese government is fully performing its duty as to combating any type of terror operations, and in monitoring the Lebanese border, controlling the security situation and addressing any security gaps.”

The premier noted that “violations are also occurring from the Syrian side of the border, as everyone knows the nature of the intersecting border between the two countries and how difficult it is to control the vast border area between them.”

“Therefore, we consider the remarks voiced by the Syrian envoy as an inflammation of the disputes, at a time we are seeking through the relevant diplomatic and security channels to bridge differences and tackle problems calmly, carefully and in a manner that would preserve the good relations between the two countries and peoples,” Miqati added.

Some Lebanese areas near the Lebanese-Syrian border “have become an incubator for terrorist elements from the al-Qaida and the Muslim Brotherhood organizations who are tampering with the security of Syria and its citizens,” Jaafari said in his letter to Ban.

These elements “are seeking to undermine the six-point plan of U.N. Special Envoy to Syria Kofi Annan,” said the letter.

The letter claims that “arms depots” have been created in Lebanon’s border areas, noting that the alleged weapons are being shipped “by sea or on planes belonging to certain countries, which are shipping arms to Lebanon with the aim of smuggling them into Syria.”

The letter mentioned some incidents “confirming that terrorist groups in Syria are being supplied with arms and that terrorists are being smuggled across the Lebanese-Syrian border,” noting that “the offices of some charitable societies supervised by Salafist groups and the Mustaqbal Movement in Lebanese border areas ... have been turned into places for receiving and harboring terrorist elements from the al-Qaida and the Muslim Brotherhood organizations.”

The letter added that wounded opposition fighters “are being treated under fake names in hospitals and dispensaries affiliated with those groups and finance by countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar.”

The letter also claims that “50 terrorists are stationed in the town of al-Qalamoun in Tripoli under the command of Khaled al-Tanak, Khaled Hamza and Zakariya Ghaleb al-Khouli.”

The letter said the alleged terrorists “possess IDs carrying the stamp of the U.N. that they use to go through Lebanese army checkpoints.”

Jaafari added in his letter that Colonel Riad al-Asaad, chief of the rebel Free Syrian Army, had “recently arrived in Lebanon to prepare for creating a Syrian buffer zone within Lebanese territory.”

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