

Hariri Urges End to 'Incitement' against Arsal, Calls on Residents to Cooperate with Army

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Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri urged on Monday the residents of the Bekaa town of Arsal to cooperate with the Lebanese army for “justice to take its course”, demanding an “end to incitement at the expense of the martyrs”.

"We condemn all attempts taking advantage of the martyrs and of the incident for political gains," Hariri said in a released statement.

He stressed that the the people of Arsal are “under the authority of the state and its judicial bodies”.

"Anyone trying to say otherwise is seeking strife among the Lebanese," the former PM remarked.

Hariri said that President Michel Suleiman's role is “essential for justice to take its course and to preserve the military institution's image”.

He expressed: “The legal system is the only route through which justice in the case of the martyrs can be reached”.

The army arrested several residents of Arsal on Saturday a day after two soldiers were killed when gunmen ambushed a military patrol, the National News Agency reported.

An army communique had said Friday that a patrol was ambushed by Arsal gunmen as it was hunting a man wanted for several terrorist acts.

The clashes that ensued left an officer with the rank of captain, Pierre Bashaalani, and Sergeant Ibrahim Zahraman dead, and several military personnel wounded.