



Syria Pulled Its Army But Left Us Its Secret Services and Friends, Says Cardinal

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Beirut (AsiaNews) --- Syria might have pulled its army out of Lebanon, but it has left its secret services. It has "friends" in the country and anyone can draw his own conclusions from that, said Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir who answered US reporters' questions in Chicago yesterday about developments following last year's assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Syria's withdrawal under international pressure.

The cardinal, who is in the United States on a visit to local Maronite communities, reiterated his views about Hezbollah, namely that when some movements are armed and others are not, there is "a situation of inequality that is contrary to the constitution".

Even so the patriarch said once again that he was convinced that "a just peace for the Palestinians" is the key to unlocking the whole Middle Eastern situation.

In his stay in Chicago, Cardinal Sfeir presented the conclusions of the Maronite Synod that was recently held in Bkerke, Lebanon, insofar as it touched on the diaspora, Christian-Muslim dialogue and the role of the Church in society.

In his views, the Church must be the "conscience of society" and must take courageous stances against political authorities and economic elites when they seem corrupt.

What is more, the dialogue with the Islamic world is at the heart of the Christian presence in the East. Similarly, the fate of Christians in Lebanon is tied to that of the entire Middle East.

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