

# **Lebanon**

Position Paper  
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## **Background and Premises:**

Lebanon is a very divided and factious country, which consist of many different ethnic groups; Muslims (Shi'ite as well as Sunni), Christians, Druses, Palestinians and others. Since the civil war which took place over the years 1975 - 1989, there was no rest for the country and its people, although various efforts and measurements had been taken in order to balance the rival forces in Lebanon by governmental separation of authorities and positions.

On top of that, the conflict with Israel since the 1982 war, up until its withdrawal on May 2000, together with the deep Syrian constant involvement, contributed their share and weakened the central ruling and encouraged the uprising of militant opposition's forces, which also found their support with the Lebanese general public.

Nowadays, in the year of 2009, it seems Lebanon is split into two main powers:

"March 14th force" - anti-Syrian flow in Lebanon, which wishes to establish a solid moderate Arabic regime, alongside the western world.

"March 8th force" - pro-Syrian flow in Lebanon;

In its heart the Hezbollah (Lebanon's Shiite militant organization), aspires to base Lebanon as an Islamic country, Anti-western, anti-Israeli, throughout militant resistance.

In this context, Hezbollah acts as the front for the long arm of Shi'ite Iran, trying to use the country mechanism in order to strengthen its position and present itself as 'Lebanese protector'.

Official negotiations will be lead by the President and the Prime-minister, as a compromise for the internal government's dynamics, in parallel with the Hezbollah representative and Parliament chairman, each with his separate agenda and interests.

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### **Towards the API:**

Three key elements for Lebanon within the Arab Peace Initiative:

1. Paragraph 2a; including complete retreat from occupied land in southern Lebanon.
2. Paragraph 2b; Just solution for refugees' issue, according to 194 UN resolution.
3. Paragraph 4; Deferral of Palestinians' resettlement which contradicts specific Arabic hostess country.

API implementation as a comprehensive solution for the Israeli-Arabic conflict is a tremendous opportunity for Lebanon's realization of its interests.

Lebanon can end the Israeli threat over its southern territories and skies; also it can conclude the refugees issue within western assistance and mutual agreements; last, internal stabilization is expected in the Lebanese country as well as economic growth supported by international aid.

Lebanon's aspiration is to communicate not only with Israel, but with Syria and Saudi-Arabia along with other parties, in order to achieve full cooperation to the benefit of all as a win set.

Lebanon's part within the API is not an eminent one. Much depends on Syria towards talks or negotiations with Israel, since both countries tied most of their positions together historically and principally. Lebanon territorial demands around 'Sheba farms' are not considered acute with comparison to Syrian's. While at the same time, Lebanon should expect solid Saudi guarantees followed by European and American sponsorships in order to ensure agreement's execution.

Lebanese negotiation abilities are in a way a "hostage" of the internal gaps within. As it was proven in Beirut summit 2002, two different delegations represent two sets of interests which stand opposite to one another, making it almost impossible to reach an agreement.

Official Lebanon will continue to act primarily for the economic growth, tourism development, internal stability and absolute legitimate sovereignty of the Lebanese state.