

Syria's position on the Palestine Liberation Organization in its dispute with Lebanon (1972-1977)

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Abstracts

Syrian reactions to the PLO in its conflict with Lebanon varied, initially standing with the PLO in 1975, and standing against when the Syrian army supported the Maronite fighters, but by 1977 a kind of calm prevailed between the Syrian government and the PLO after the Likud Party came to power in Israel, which increased the possibility of dragging Syria into a war with it. Syria's position on the Palestine Liberation Organization in its dispute with Lebanon 1972-1977. Before addressing the Syrian positions towards the Palestine Liberation Organization in its differences with the Lebanese state and its clashes, it was initially a supporter of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization, but it was a little hesitant, which led to early clashes with the organization until it rejected the military presence on its territory, but the Palestinian presence increased, especially after the displacement in 1948 and Lebanon was one of the first countries to receive refugees.

Keywords: Syrian-PLO Relations, Lebanese Civil War, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon.

Introduction

The number of Palestinians there increased after the 1967 war(1)., and the Palestinians realized that there was no peaceful solution to their issue with the Zionist occupation other than military confrontation through resistance.(2). There was opposition to the armed presence of the fedayeen from some Lebanese, and Syria worked to help the fedayeen by establishing military bases in their areas of presence.(3), and support the armed struggle began military actions launched from Lebanon towards "Israel", which provoked the anger of the Zionist entity towards Lebanon, which led to caution and fear of some Lebanese political groups of the infiltration of the Israeli threat to their country, and there was a supporter of the Palestinian guerrilla action in Lebanon, and opposed to it and rejected their presence and military operations emanating from Lebanon (4) which led to the division of the Lebanese street and responded "Israel" military strikes directed to Lebanon on December 28, 1968 was able to destroy Several aircraft attacked Beirut airport.(5).

Syrian President Nouredine Atassi affirmed Syria's readiness to provide aid and assistance to the Lebanese Republic through a telephone conversation with Lebanese President Charles Helou on December 29, 1968, and expressed his condemnation of the treacherous crime committed by the Israeli aggression at Beirut airport.(6).

In 1969, large demonstrations came out in support of the armed presence, violent confrontations occurred between the Lebanese army on the one hand and the Palestinian fedayeen and their supporters from the Lebanese groups on the other hand, as an unknown group attacked the office of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Beirut on October 12, 1969, which led to a response by the organization by expelling Lebanese security men from Palestinian camps (7), and as a result an agreement was held Cairo, November 3, 1969 through Egyptian mediation (8).

After the events of Black September 1970 in Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization headed towards Lebanon in huge numbers, and in the same month Suleiman Frangieh(9) was elected President of the Lebanese Republic and witnessed an expansion of the Palestinian guerrilla action against Israel.(10).

On November 16, 1970, the corrective movement led by Lieutenant General Hafez al-Assad (11)came to the presidency of the authority in Syria and Hafez al-Assad was elected President of the Republic on March 12, 1971.(12)

However, this transfer of power did not affect the relationship with either Fatah or the Palestine Liberation Organization.(13).

Israeli attacks escalated at the beginning of 1972 on southern Lebanon, on January 11 of the same year, some Lebanese MPs raised the incident of Israeli attacks, and called on the government to take measures against it, and under the pressure of the Lebanese authorities, the organization agreed to reduce its armed operations to prevent Israel from using the activity of the fedayeen as a justification to achieve its ambitions in southern Lebanon, and as a result, the organization withdrew from some areas adjacent to the Israeli border, and this is what motivated Israel to move forward in its military attacks on Lebanon. Under the pretext of pursuing the organization's activity, on February 25, 1972, it attacked some areas of the south for three consecutive days, then withdrew to dissolve the Lebanese army in the areas of aggression, which constitutes an obstacle to the organization's return to the areas of contact with Israel, which prompted the organization to resume its commando military operations (14).

On March 7, 1972, the Lebanese Parliament discussed these repercussions and their relationship to the Palestinian armed presence in the south, and this is what gives justification to "Israel" in its military operations, as MP Semaan Douaihy confirmed what it says: "As long as Israel warns ... It wants to occupy Lebanon... We alone pay the blood tax," while MP Shafiq al-Wazzan(15) expressed his resentment of the repercussions of these attacks by saying: "The blood tax was paid by the Arabs, and it was paid by the fedayeen ... Then you want us to do the job of eliminating the fedayeen and beating them as they did in the past in other countries. We reject that"(16), a clear reference to what the Jordanian Government did when it directed its gun fire at the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the Arab Socialist Baath Party and from the auditorium of the University of Damascus on April 7, 1972, President Hafez al-Assad stressed that the Palestinian resistance represents one of the prominent features of the mobilization in the Arab world, and it constitutes an integral part of the Arab revolution and this part must have all opportunities for growth and continuity in order to play its role in the victory of this revolution, and stressed that the Syrian country, which sponsored and supported the resistance, seeks the unity of its factions and will remain its main refuge and will continue to help it. The forces of the Palestinian revolution must grow and strengthen and that their support is a necessity of the Arab struggle, and on this basis will be dealing and solidarity with the factions of the Palestinian revolution.

This support for guerrilla organizations was discussed in the Syrian-Kuwaiti talks, which took place on April 21, 1972, when the two sides expressed their support for the effort to unite the ranks of the resistance and increase its capacity and effectiveness.(17)

Abdul Rahman Khleifawi added(18). The Syrian Prime Minister at a ceremony held on the occasion of the presentation of the World Peace Medal to the Palestinian resistance movement in the Gaza Strip on June 18, 1972 that the Palestinian resistance is a fully integrated part of the Arab resistance and Arab steadfastness in its various means and forms, and that coordination between the Palestinian resistance and the Arab armies reflects the unity of the Palestinian cause and the need to unify and coordinate capabilities.(19),

To increase the pressure on the resistance, and push it to settle, Israel has carried out a continuous war of attrition on the villages of southern Lebanon to push things to the point of collision between the brothers of the Lebanese army and the fedayeen, and in the best conditions was the agreement between the Lebanese and the Palestinians not to cancel the Cairo Agreement in 1969 (20), but to evacuate the border villages from the elements of the resistance, but the operation carried out by the Black September organization (21), represented by the detention of an Israeli sports team in the city of Munich, at the Olympic Games in West Germany, on 5 September 1972 Then they were liquidated, after the German police tried to rescue them and kill the fedayeen, this is what prompted Israel to launch a large, brutal and large-scale attack on camps and villages in Lebanon and Syria, on the 8th of the same month, and launched another attack on southern Lebanon, on the 17-16 of the same month as well... These attacks have increased tensions between the Government of Lebanon and the Palestinians.(22).

On October 29, 1972, the national leadership of the Arab Socialist Baath Party addressed a memorandum to the parties and progressive forces, friendly mass organizations and liberation movements in the world, in which it reviewed that the Palestinian resistance movement constitutes a basic faction of the Arab national liberation movement and that the resistance guerrillas cannot be terrorists, but real fighters and revolutionaries fighting for a just humanitarian cause, and that the Syrian country is directly threatened as it is the strategic depth of the Palestinian revolution and all national liberation movements in the region.(23).

Many factors have combined to push Lebanon into civil war, and the most prominent of these factors is the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the factions under its banner, and as a result, renewed Lebanese political

conflicts between the Palestine Liberation Organization and its allies (Islamic left forces) on the one hand, and the forces of the Maronite right (25) on the other hand (26), especially since the Cairo Agreements of 1969 and Melkart 1973 (27) contributed to deepening the differences between them (28).

On 9 January 1973, President Hafez al-Assad sent new instructions to the PLO containing (28):

1. Transferring fedayeen bases to areas 5-15 km from the ceasefire line.
2. Evacuate all border villages of any armed Palestinian presence and put an end to all political activities with the residents of those villages.
3. Withdraw all commando gatherings (5) km behind the Syrian military centers.
4. Affirming a previous decision prohibiting any guerrilla action against the Zionist entity without the approval of the Syrian Army Command.

On the tenth anniversary of the revolution of the eighth of March President Hafez al-Assad confirmed on March 8, 1973 his support for the Palestinian revolution and support in all circumstances, whatever the sacrifices, believing that it is part of the Arab revolution and that the struggle of the Palestinian revolution factions is part of the struggle of the Arab people and that it constitutes an essential element that has a role in the strategy of the Arab struggle (29), and Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud al-Ayoubi stated in March 1973 that Syria welcomes any Lebanese who wishes to seek refuge in Syria following the Israeli aggressions (30).

Tensions between the Lebanese authorities and the organization have increased due to the continuous Israeli attacks on Lebanese sovereignty, especially after Operation Al-Fardan (31).

Carried out by the Israeli special forces in the heart of the capital Beirut on April 10, 1973, which killed three leaders of the organization, as a result of which the Lebanese government submitted its resignation. (32).

In May 1973, a crisis occurred inside Lebanon following the Israeli offensive launched by Israeli special forces with internal assistance, which escalated the dispute between the organization and the Lebanese authorities increasingly into an overt conflict that led to armed clashes between the Lebanese army and the Palestinian resistance forces, especially around Palestinian camps.

On the second of May, Lebanese aircraft were used for the first time to bomb Palestinian camps near Beirut, and as a result, the Lebanese street came out to denounce the Lebanese authorities and accuse them of failing to protect citizens, especially since security in Beirut is Lebanese security, with the absence of a Palestinian gunman, which led to an increase in the gap in the internal dispute in Lebanon (33).

In response to what happened in the Lebanese arena, Yasser Arafat sent on May 9 of the same year a letter to Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, in which he praised the position of the Syrian country towards the Palestinian revolution, explaining that Syria was a starting point for the Palestinian revolution and keen to protect the revolution and the Palestinian people for liberation (34) During the visit of Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to the United Kingdom, he asked it to

put economic pressure on the "Israeli" government, especially economic sanctions, the most important of which is oil (35).

The acceleration of recent events in this way led to the organization being placed in the category of clashes with the Lebanese security forces when the Lebanese army decided to enter the area of the new road, as the organization's offices are located, and imposed a security cordon on it that ended with the arrest of many of its members, and this prompted the organization to put all considerations at stake to carry out the military confrontation against the Lebanese army, the Lebanese army responded to these attacks using army aviation to strike the organization's armed organizations in the confrontation areas and ended The events with the Lebanese and Palestinian parties reaching what is known as the Melcart Agreement.(36),

The Syrian side took the side of pressure on the Lebanese government in response to what happened, as Syria renewed its position in support of Palestinian organizations, and the Syrian Ministry of Interior issued a decision stipulating the closure of the Syrian-Lebanese border to Lebanese exports to Arab countries, preventing Lebanese citizens from entering its territory, allowing the sending of reinforcements from Syria; and announcing that it would not lift the blockade until a solution was reached that ends the crisis, all of which led to the signing of the Melkart Agreement on May 17, 1973. Relative to the Melkart Hotel in central Beirut, which aimed to regulate the Palestinian civil and military presence .(37), this agreement included many items, the most important of which were: freezing operations against Israel, respecting the laws of the Lebanese state, and refraining from carrying weapons in residential neighborhoods.(38).

= In the same context, Syrian support for the Palestinian resistance continued, at the opening of the sessions of the new Syrian People's Assembly on June 9, 1973, the Syrian President reviewed Syria's efforts to stand by the Palestinian resistance and provide the necessary support and support for it while it is exposed to it, and also stressed the Syrian initiative to settle the crisis between the Lebanese government and the Palestinian resistance based on concern for the interest and safety of Lebanon and the Palestinian resistance and its existence.(39).

As soon as 1975 accelerated, the pace of preparation for the Lebanese civil war accelerated, the aim of which was to open a battlefield against the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon.(40). Sheikh Pierre Gemayel(41) for sending inflammatory messages against the Palestinian people, and has announced the presence of heavy weapons among the Palestinian fedayeen in the camps in large numbers and types (42),

And to the President of the Lebanese Republic, Suleiman Frangieh, and then the demonstration of fishermen in Sidon, during which the security forces killed the Nasserist leader, MP Maarouf Saad February 26, 1975, which inflamed popular tension, and the incident of Ain al-Rummaneh promised the first spark that triggered the civil war in Lebanon This incident that occurred between the Lebanese Phalange Party and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (43), On April 13, 1975, the conflict between the two parties erupted, after gunmen from the "Phalange" opened fire on a passenger bus passing through the locality of Ain al-Rummaneh coming from the Tariq al-Jadid neighborhood in Beirut (44), on its way to the Tal al-Zaatar camp.(45).

Many people were killed and wounded between the two sides.(46). Carrying Palestinians and Lebanese returning from a commemoration of the Deir Yassin massacre, 26 were killed and 29

passengers were injured, while two battalions were killed. This incident marked the beginning of the Lebanese civil war, portraying this war as against the Palestinian presence.(47).

The Syrian regime has expressed its growing concern since the beginning of the civil war in Lebanon, and has strived to find a solution to the crisis based on its convictions that it is the most affected by what is happening in Lebanon, by virtue of the historical ties between them, and by virtue of what it called national reconciliation, so that Lebanon does not fall prey to "Israel" or be divided, especially after it realized the growing tendency of Christians towards favoring the idea of partition. A country that can only settle sectarian differences and tensions between its religious communities by dividing it into sectarian geographical areas becomes a dangerous model and an example that cannot be emulated, as well as Israel's declaration that one of its goals in the region is to reach the sources of Lebanese waters (48), On this basis, the Syrian government was particularly concerned that part of the Lebanese state would turn into a Christian state allied to Israel, while the other part controlled by Muslims and Palestinians would turn into a state with a revolutionary dynamic that could drag Syria into conflict with Israel.(49), This conviction was the main motivation for mediation between the rival groups in Lebanon, during which Syria stated that it would remain an external arbitrator, in the sense that reaching an agreement between the conflicting parties would be in everyone's interest.(50).

Syria was keen to exert more efforts to restore normalcy in Lebanon following the Ain al-Rummaneh incident, and Syrian mediation was launched from three axes that seem satisfactory to all parties:

1. Ensuring Syria's security to confront Israel requires Lebanon to be stable and strong.
2. The use of force among Lebanese society will inevitably divide Lebanon into rival groups.
3. Cooperation with a Christian Lebanon can only be done by Syria or by Arab countries.(51).

Syria aimed to resolve the crisis in a way that prevents Israel from occupying Lebanon, taking advantage of the difficult situation in Lebanon (52), The Lebanese war since 1975 took the form of intermittent rounds, there were Jordanian-Syrian attempts to extinguish the fire raging in Lebanon, resulting in the "Syrian initiative" Syrian mediation came officially on May 24, 1975 after the collapse of the political and security situation in Lebanon, which made the Syrian regime hasten to send a Syrian delegation headed by its Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam to Lebanon to meet with Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh, and handed him a letter from Syrian President Hafez al-Assad expressing his concern In the face of the political and security events in Lebanon at a time when the sounds of shells, rockets and bombs were heard in the Republican Palace, and from inside the palace, Khaddam made a phone call with Yasser Arafat to meet with him and advised him not to go to Beirut, because the security situation is very turbulent and unsafe and the danger is looming over everyone. The next day, May 25, Yasser Arafat met with the Syrian Foreign Minister and the Islamic Left Forces after the latter demanded the resignation of the Lebanese military government. The nomination of the new Prime Minister is up to the Lebanese themselves as stakeholders, and the Palestinian and Syrian parties have emphasized the unity of the leadership and its common destiny in the liberation of all Palestinian territories.(53).

The mediation came after the US failure to achieve a partial agreement between Egypt and Israel. In June, after renewed fighting in Lebanon, the Syrian-Jordanian Joint Coordination Committee was formed, which calmed things down in Lebanon in the summer of that year, until it flared up again in August of the same year, with renewed attacks on the Palestinian resistance. This round of war was more fierce and destructive than all that preceded it, as the Lebanese Christian right involved the Lebanese army in the war with the aim of liquidating the Palestinian resistance, and these attempts ended in failure when the forces of the Christian right were defeated in the battle of the hotels (54) in Beirut (55).

The National Commission held its first meeting on September 25, 1975 at the Presidential Palace under the chairmanship of Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami (56) and in the presence of Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam (57). Rashid Karami (58) believed that members of the Phalange Party could be interacted with, but the problem is Camille Chamoun (59) who used his militias with the Phalange Party militias against PLO fighters, and also discovered that the President of the Republic, Suleiman Frangieh, is the head of the political game, and that Suleiman Frangieh, Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel represent agreed roles. If the other Lebanese forces agree, their choice would be war or partition (60), as Lebanon witnessed during this period a real political crisis at the level of government. (61).

But subsequent developments proved that the solution is only an illusion and that reconciliation was a formality and did not touch the essence of hearts and the origins of intentions and sources of truth and honesty, soon the explosion came quickly, and ignited all fronts on the eighth of October 1975 and fell forty-four dead and one hundred and sixty-four wounded and the most serious incident fell shell in front of the headquarters of the independent Nasserist movement led by Ibrahim Koeilat (62), killing 20 people and wounding 46 others (63), as well as the same day saw the occurrence of fires in the most prominent markets of the commercial area, and the most dangerous face of the fire that it was accompanied by the descent of armed men in large numbers, some of whom paved the fire and the other took over the protection of those who were setting fires until the security forces, cooperating with patrols of the Palestinian armed struggle, were able to clean the area, and contributed to the Damascus firefighter, which sent twenty-one cars with about seventy-five firefighters who worked side by side with the Lebanese patrols to fight fires in Beirut (64).

President Hafez al-Assad has spoken in more than one speech about the events in Lebanon, indicating Syria's point of view in this war, its position on it and the reasons for its military intervention, and his speech was very frank in which he allowed the hidden and exposed the positions and role of some Palestinian factions, national parties and Kamal Jumblatt, and according to what President Assad explained, that Syria interpreted the events of Lebanon as the result of a colonial scheme aimed first to cover the Sinai Agreement. Implicating and striking the resistance, liquidating the camps and confusing Syria, secondly, dividing Lebanon, and thirdly, and that Syria's explicit and firm position is in favor of stopping the fighting and against those who insist on its continuation. (65)

On the political side, the Lebanese Palestinian National Command and the Joint Lebanese-Palestinian National Forces were formed on 24 October 1975, (66) which defeated the isolationist forces in many locations. (67).

This was followed by an agreement between the United States and the Syrian regime, with Soviet blessing, under which the Syrians committed themselves to work to impose security in Lebanon by curbing the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left, in preparation for a full settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.(68)

Damascus tried to extinguish the flames of the war that began in the spring of 1975 with the aim of ending it, which led to tension in Palestinian-Syrian relations and dragged into a confrontation between them, and the dispute between the two parties intensified, when Syria worked to extinguish the fire of the crisis, while the Palestinians supported the "Lebanese National Bloc", which saw in the civil war its opportunity(69) to achieve its ambitions to break the political domination of the "isolationists" (70) over Lebanon (71).

Rashid Solh (72) Prime Minister of Lebanon at the time tried to communicate with Yasser Arafat in order to reconcile between them and Yasser Arafat conveyed the situation that Israel is trying to drag Lebanon and the organization into (73), It is worth noting that the Palestinians remained silent, in the first months of the civil war, but the "isolationists" took control of the Dbayeh refugee camp on January 14, 1976 and imposed a siege on the camps of Tel al-Zaatar and Jisr al-Basha, in order to portray the war as between Palestinians and Lebanese, not a civil war (74).

The Palestinian factions responded by occupying Saadiyat and Damour on the 20th of the same month on the Beirut-Sidon road (75), and in this way the Palestinians were involved in that war, without their will, but they became the main force in it.(76).

At the time when units of the fedayeen entered Lebanon across the Syrian border, there were reactions from Christian forces, including the Phalange Party, Camille Chamoun stated on the twenty-first of January 1976: "The forces of the Syrian army have entered Lebanese territory from the northern and eastern axes of the Bekaa, and from the side of Akkar, which is equipped with heavy equipment, cannons and armored vehicles.(77).

Syria has justified the entry of these forces into Lebanon because they entered in response to distress requests, in order to save the Palestinian resistance and under the cover of the Arab deterrence forces (78) and to stand in the face of massacres and liquidations, because this is in the interest of all parties without exception(79). But Israel warned Syrian President Hafez al-Assad if he made a mistake when Syrian forces entered Lebanon and did not save the forces and were subjected to Israeli bombardment (80).

Despite this, Syria continued its political movement on the Lebanese crisis line, represented by sending a delegation headed by Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam(81), Major General Hikmat Shihabi and Minister of Defence Naji Jameel, who began his mission upon his arrival on the twenty-first of January 1976.

Syria intervened in the period from January 23 to March 11, 1976 to resolve the crisis, but the crisis continued and created new splits within Lebanese society and its institutions, including the army, Nayef Hawatmeh considered that the war has to do with the spawning of organizations and forces on the Lebanese scene, and their interference in Lebanese internal affairs, and their involvement in the political axes in Lebanon's internal conflicts, as well as the involvement of

some factions in the policy of regional axes and movement between one axis and another, which contributed to the formation of rival camps inside Lebanon.(82).

The Syrians descended with all their weight in order to achieve a political settlement in Lebanon, so they proposed what they called the "constitutional document" on February 14, 1976 and pledged to ensure the implementation of the agreements of "Cairo" and "Melkart" 1973, which did not like the Lebanese national movement, nor the Palestinians, as the two parties supported the "Arab Lebanese Army", which split under the leadership of Lieutenant Ahmed Al-Khatib from the Lebanese army;(83).

The conflict in Lebanon was not far from Arab and Western interventions, which are driven by various motives and motives, so the Syrian interest in it since its inception was due to the rule of neighborliness, interests and the assertion of influence, so it rushed to send high-level official delegations to Beirut that contacted the parties to the conflict, and made great efforts with all parties to cease fire and sit at the dialogue table. It also received at various times many Lebanese officials, politicians and party leaders from all political currents and trends, including delegations from the Lebanese front, and discussed with them the Lebanese problem, the ceasefire and national reconciliation.(84).

At the invitation of Syria, a Palestinian-Lebanese meeting was held on June 23, 1975, which included the delegation of the Organization represented by its President Yasser Arafat and the membership of Salah Khalaf with the Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh, which lasted four hours.(85).

Syrian President Hafez al-Assad explained that Syria provided the Palestinian resistance and national parties with large quantities of weapons and ammunition that exceed what the Phalange Party, the National Liberal Party and the Lebanese army have, yet their front collapsed and they were unable to stand on their feet, and they began to send cries and calls for help, and they said: Some neighborhoods fell and the Phalange gunmen are sweeping homes and everything is falling in front of them, and they appealed to President Assad to contact President Frangieh in order to stop the fighting; Syria found itself in front of two options: either to stand by and drop the resistance in Lebanon and be liquidated, or to intervene and save the resistance and risk the possibility of war with Israel and decided to intervene and did not heed the ultimatum given to it by Israel by the United States.(86).

The Syrian efforts faced many contradictions, most notably Kamal Jumblatt's insistence on isolating the Kataeb Party politically, and the adherence of the (Maronite right-wing forces) to a government in which everyone participates, which led to renewed armed clashes, the circle of battles expanded, political tension continued, and sporadic clashes began to take place between PLO fighters and its Lebanese allies against the Maronite militias, especially in the Chiyah front and Ain al-Rummaneh, then moved to the vicinity of Tripoli and Zgharta, and the security situation worsened after the spread of explosive device explosions in crowded areas. population.(87).

In this same context, Syria made a great effort to contain the clashes. President Hafez al-Assad stated that he summoned the leaders of the Palestinian resistance, headed by Yasser Arafat, to Damascus and asked them to write what they wanted from Lebanon. They wrote, but not

everything they wrote, and they demanded it was necessary to preserve the resistance and exercise its role in the struggle against the occupying enemy. However, the Lebanese government agreed to everything that was written, and despite that, the ceasefire was being violated. He also said that Yasser Arafat asked him to receive Kamal Jumblatt, and he received him after some hesitation due to the differences in the orientations and proposals of each of them. President al-Assad is against continuing the fighting and against a military solution, while Kamal Jumblatt is for continuing the fighting and a military solution. Kamal Jumblatt spoke during the meeting between him and President al-Assad about secularism and said that he wants a secular state. He said to President Assad: "A military solution is inevitable, for they have ruled us for one hundred and forty years...", which was met with rejection by President Assad, who responded to Jumblatt by saying, "Do not depend on our help, for we cannot walk with you on a path that we and you previously agreed upon, it is the path of conspiracy against them." The next day, President Assad summoned Yasser Arafat and some of his leaders and repeated what he had said to Jumblatt, and asked Arafat to appreciate the seriousness of these circumstances and the seriousness of continuing the fighting operations, especially the participation of Palestinian fighters in it. Arafat promised him to withdraw from the fighting, but he did not fulfill his promise (88). Contacts continued between Syria and the resistance, and on April 16, 1976, the following was agreed upon (89):

- Cease fighting and take a unified position against any front that resumes combat operations.
- Reform the Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese tripartite supreme military committee to achieve, implement and supervise the cessation of fighting.
- Resist partition in all its forms and any action or procedure that would undermine the unity of Lebanon, its land and people.
- Reject American solutions and plans in Lebanon.
- Adherence to the continuation of the Syrian initiative.
- Reject internationalization or the introduction of any international forces into Lebanon.
- Rejection of Arabizing the crisis in Lebanon.

Damascus escalated with the PLO, as it organized a propaganda campaign against the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the "Lebanese National Movement" (), as the Syrian government ordered a split in the Lebanese National Movement, leading to the emergence of the "Lebanese National Front" led by Kamal Shatila. On April 16, Arafat reached the "Damascus Agreement" which stipulated a ceasefire, but the agreement did not go beyond ink on paper, as it was not implemented on the ground, and the Palestinians were divided between their commitment to the "Lebanese National Movement", and their adherence to their base of departure in Lebanon(90), and the necessary and historical relationship with Syria, but they sided with the first choice for three reasons:

1. The euphoria of victory over the isolationists, and the eagerness to achieve it.
2. The fear that the expansion of direct Syrian intervention would lead to the loss of the organization's freedom of movement.

The Palestinian leadership's misjudgment of the situation, as it assumed, wrongly, that the Syrians would not enter into an armed confrontation with the Palestinians, but the confrontation occurred when huge military forces entered Lebanon from the Masnaa area, as the Syrian forces entered from northern Lebanon on May 21, 1976 (91), and major battles took place between them and the Palestinian guerrillas, and thus, the center of the conflict shifted to two external forces, the Syrians and the Palestinians (92).

On June 1, 1976, the Syrian army entered advanced positions of the revolutionary forces (93)

This strained the relationship between the factions of the Palestinian revolution, as Zuhair Mohsen accused Fatah of seeking to strain the relationship with Syria, and a Syrian official also accused Fatah of being involved in the events in Lebanon, and of working against Lebanese national unity. The relationship between Fatah and Al-Sa'iqa diverged, and Fatah and the Popular Front led by George Habash converged. The Syrian forces bombed the sites of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, and the Arab attempts and Palestinian appeals for help, and their desire to stop the Syrian advance to strike the resistance, did not succeed. The Arab Deterrent Forces entered to withdraw weapons from the Palestinian resistance, withdraw the militants, and implement the Cairo Agreement and its annexes (94). On June 6, 1976, the Palestinian centers loyal to Syria in Lebanon were raided, including leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and all parties entered into a crisis that began to expand. President Hafez al-Assad stopped the military attack, contenting himself with negotiations supported by limited military operations. The Syrian authorities agreed to what the Arab foreign ministers had concluded, within the framework of the Arab League in Cairo, regarding a ceasefire, but to no avail (95).

Syria's entry was under the pretext of stopping the massacres and preventing the division of Lebanon, a passage that was condemned by both the Lebanese National Movement and the Palestinian Resistance. Syria was counting on the resistance's inability to confront the Syrian army, and was also counting on the Saiqa and the Lebanese forces loyal to it to subjugate Fatah and pressure it to accept the Syrian conditions and cooperate with it. Therefore, the Palestinian Resistance and the Lebanese National Movement formed a joint central command to confront the Syrian forces, and attacked the Saiqa and its Lebanese allies, which prompted the Syrians to penetrate towards Beirut and Sidon to save their allies, but they failed in the face of the steadfastness of the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters, and Syria admitted the failure of its attack and was forced to go to the meeting of Arab foreign ministers on June 9 and 10, which was held in Cairo. The decisions of June 10 demanded the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon to be replaced by "Arab security forces" subject to the Arab League, and the Arab forces did not arrive in Lebanon until late June. But the Syrian forces continued their fight against the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese National Movement. Camille Chamoun, the Lebanese Minister of the Interior, pointed out that the People's Liberation Army forces were mostly from Syria, not Palestine, and that the military equipment and supplies were provided by Syria. In the session of the Council of Arab Foreign Ministers, which was held on July 12 and 13, 1976, the Arab countries confirmed their withdrawal from demanding that Syria withdraw from Lebanon (96).

The Syrians agreed to a Saudi proposal for a ceasefire, and Yasser Arafat flew on a Syrian helicopter to Damascus, and from there on another to Riyadh, where an Arab summit was held,

limited to the leadership of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Kuwait. The conference decided to cease fire and form an "Arab deterrent force" consisting of thirty thousand soldiers, subordinate to the President of the Lebanese Republic. The majority of those forces were subordinate to the Syrian army. Then an Arab summit in Cairo ratified the terms of the Riyadh Agreement (97). In late August 1976, the Syrian regime had presented arguments for not withdrawing its army from Lebanon, namely the division of Lebanon or the continuation of Syrian intervention to work to prevent this division. The Syrian forces confronted the joint national forces, and their choice was between confronting the Syrian military forces and being expelled from the mountain pocket, or withdrawing in favor of the Syrian army and its affiliated "Lebanese Arab Army Vanguard," giving the leadership of the Palestinian resistance a period of fifteen days, that is, until mid-September of the same year, to decide its position (98).

As a result, Syria increased the number of its military units in Lebanon to twelve thousand soldiers on June 7, 1976. These units arrived at the resort of Sofar on the Beirut-Damascus road. When Syrian reconnaissance armored vehicles entered the city of Sidon, a direct confrontation occurred between the Syrian forces and the Palestinian resistance and the national movement (99). As a result, the Syrian forces suffered heavy losses. There was a unit of Syrian tanks that did not expect to be met with resistance, but it fell into an ambush in which at least two tanks were destroyed and four others were seized. Some Syrian officers were also killed. At the same time, news spread that Syrian soldiers working on anti-aircraft guns in the Palestinian camps had been killed (100). These incidents angered President Hafez al-Assad and made him become more strict with the Palestinians. They also made him more and more involved in a deep conflict that he was keen to avoid. Syria responded to these incidents with violent and continuous shelling for long hours on the Palestinian camps in Sidon, West Beirut, and Tripoli, and with a tight siege from all sides (101).

In return, the Phalange Party continued to obtain weapons from "Israel", especially after the entry of Syrian forces into Lebanon. On the other hand, Zuhair Mohsen, head of the military department in the organization, made secret contacts in Damascus with the Syrian delegation that returned to Beirut on September 19, 1976 in an attempt to maintain the ceasefire, prevent the deterioration of the political and security situation in Lebanon, and find a way out of the crisis. Syria wanted its relationship with all parties to be balanced and good, and on this basis, Syria supported the organization, and at the same time was keen on Lebanon's security, especially after the resumption of fighting in Lebanon, and called on all warring parties to respect the ceasefire on September 20. Then, it formed the "National Dialogue Committee" on the 24th of the same month, whose role was to discuss the disputed Lebanese issues without addressing the presence of armed Palestinians in Lebanon (102). The Syrian regime was forced to reach an agreement with the Egyptian-Saudi axis, and thus obtained the support of the Soviet Union, which began to pressure the Palestinians and Lebanese to agree to the entry of the Syrian army into Lebanon. He asked the Palestinian resistance in his meetings on September 17 and 19, 1976, to withdraw its forces from their positions unconditionally, to be replaced by the Syrian army. However, Yasser Arafat announced that he would not be able to impose such a position on the resistance forces, and stipulated that the Arab League would supervise this withdrawal (103).

The Syrians were able to impose relative calm after they succeeded in absorbing the Palestinian leftist military momentum. On March 16, 1977, an unknown person assassinated the leader of the national movement and head of the Progressive Socialist Party, Kamal Jumblatt (104) at the Deir Dourin junction in the Chouf, which provoked various and sometimes contradictory reactions. As a result, a number of his supporters took revenge as a result of a sudden outburst of anger by killing Christians in several areas of the Chouf (105). Yasser Arafat stated at a graduation ceremony for a new batch of artillery personnel in Beirut that the transformations in Lebanon and he confirmed that the Palestinian state did not exist except through the Arabs (106).

The Syrian leadership had sought to contain the PLO, by adopting several main forms, including (107). It sought to bring about organizational changes within the framework of the PLO, especially its leadership cadres, which would give Syria greater influence in controlling it. This became clear before the Arab Summit in Riyadh, when it stipulated that Yasser Arafat would not participate. Syrian pressures emerged on more than one level, including: working to increase the membership of the Palestinian National Council for the thirteenth session in March 1977 in order to involve its supporters with the aim of weakening the Fatah movement; However, you could not achieve what you wanted (108).

Syria pressured the PLO to enter into a dialogue with Jordan, through Zuhair Mohsen, Secretary-General of the Saiqa Organization, and Khaled Al-Fahoum, President of the Palestinian National Council, in promoting the importance of this dialogue under many justifications, including: the importance of Jordan's role in the Arab-Israeli conflict as a confrontation state; and that dialogue with Jordan would put the organization in a better position to play a direct role in the affairs of the West Bank. Before heading to Geneva, President Assad met with Yasser Arafat and consulted with him on all issues. He came to Geneva with several cards in his hand in the Middle East game, including the Lebanon card, the Jordan card, and the Palestinians card. On the day of the meeting between Presidents Assad and Carter, Jordanian Minister of the Court Abdul Hamid Sharaf arrived in Geneva and met with President Assad for a full hour. He handed him a letter from King Hussein containing the results of his talks with President Carter in Washington on April 25, 1977. Before the meeting, President Assad spoke to the newspapers, saying, "You know that as a result of the contacts that took place between the Syrian Arab Republic and the United States of America, an agreement was reached on this meeting between President Jimmy Carter and me in Geneva today. This is our first personal meeting, and in a few minutes we will begin our talks in this hotel. We will naturally discuss the main topic that concerns everyone, which is the search for possibilities to move towards a just peace in the Middle East region. We will also discuss bilateral relations between our two countries. We in Syria wish to strengthen our relations with the United States on the basis of equality and respect and to work for the good of our two peoples and in a way that serves the cause of justice and peace in our region and in the world." (109).

In 1977, things began to return to normal in Lebanon, and Yasser Arafat, the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, praised the cohesion and belief in the Palestinian revolution and that all conspiracies had failed (110). Things began to stabilize between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Syria, especially after the far right in Israel, represented by the Likud (111), came to power in "Israel" in May 1977, which increased the possibility of dragging Syria into a

war with it, while the Palestine Liberation Organization feared an Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Under Syrian sponsorship, the "Chtaura Agreement" (112) was signed between the organization and the Lebanese government on July 25, 1977, which included a mechanism for implementing the "Cairo Agreement" and its annexes concluded between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Lebanese authorities and not between any other resistance faction (113).

Any breach by any faction will have repercussions on the PLO and its army, and the PLO must play a disciplinary role in this sensitive area (114).

Conclusion

Syria's position on the Palestine Liberation Organization during the events in Lebanon was one of support for the organization and its support by sending military units to Lebanon despite the opposition of some, but its policy towards the differences was characterized by contradiction and ambiguity and it had a major role in changing the course of events as it gave the Palestinian presence in Lebanon the right to enter with its army inside Lebanese territory, which made this intervention a subject of disagreement among some parties.

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- Suleiman Frangieh: (1910-1992) A Lebanese politician born on June 5, 1910 in the Lebanese city of Ehden. He completed his secondary education at the Fathers' School and was elected a representative in 1960. He then became Minister of the Interior in 1968 and President of the Republic in 1970. His rule witnessed the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. He died on July 23, 1992. For more, see: Wasan Sarawat Abbadi, Suleiman Frangieh and the Political Cycle in Lebanon 1970-1976, unpublished MA thesis, Institute of Arab History and Arab Heritage, 2012, p. 32.
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- Eid Jassim Salim Najm al-Dulaimi, previous source, p. 114.
- The Cairo Agreement of 1969 was an agreement signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization led by Yasser Arafat and the Lebanese Army led by General Emile Bustani, with the mediation of the Egyptian government. The most important provisions of the agreement were:
- Allowing Palestinians to work and move within Lebanon
 - Establishing local committees of Palestinians to secure the camps in coordination with Lebanese security
 - Allowing Palestinians to participate in armed operations against Israel from Lebanon
 - Lebanon's commitment to facilitate and secure the passage of Palestinian guerrillas across the border
 - Preventing Palestinian militants from interfering in Lebanese internal affairs. For more, see: Muhammad Abd al-Razzaq Aswad, Volume 4, Lebanon, Arab Encyclopedia House, p. 153; Dr. A. And, the Arab World File, Lebanon, Relations with the Palestinian Resistance (Cairo Accords), L - 2/1301.
- Black September Organization: A secret Palestinian guerrilla organization founded by Fatah in 1970, aiming to take revenge on all the figures who thwarted its political presence in Jordan. It carried out several operations in the Jordanian arena, such as the attempted assassination of Zaid al-Rifai in London in September 1971, and its name became prominent after the assassination of Wasfi al-Tal, the Jordanian Prime Minister, in November 1971. Among its most famous operations was the Munich operation in the summer of 1972, where the Zionist Olympic sports delegation was detained with the aim of exchanging prisoners with the Zionist entity. For more, see: Abdul Wahhab al-Kayali, Encyclopedia of Politics, Vol. 4, Beirut, Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing, 1990, p. 45.
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- Ensuring the protection of the Palestinian camps by the Palestinians themselves.
 - Allowing the Palestinians to work and move within Lebanon.
 - Lebanon's commitment to facilitate and secure the passage of Palestinian guerrillas across the border. For more, see the agency: <http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/Behoth/Siasia21/HarbLebnan/>
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- Pierre Gemayel: (1905-1984) was born in Mansoura, Egypt. He obtained a pharmacy degree in Beirut in 1936. He is the founder of the Lebanese Kataeb Party in 1936 and held four ministerial portfolios. He died in 1984. For more, see: Abdul Wahhab al-Kayali, Vol. 2, the previous source, p. 132.
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- Tel al-Zaatar: A Palestinian refugee camp located in the northeast of the capital Beirut, established in 1950. The area of the camp is about 10 km² and its population is 17,000 Palestinian refugees. For more information, see: Hani Mandis, *The Road to Tel al-Zaatar*, Palestinian Affairs Magazine, Issue 59, 1976, p. 20.
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Rabah Marza Khadir Al-Madhatti, the previous source, pp. 113-114.

The Battle of the Hotels: It was a tragic battle within the Lebanese Civil War at that time when Sheikh Pierre Gemayel was in a meeting with Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad in Damascus, which was considered the first meeting of its kind since the Ain Al-Rummaneh incident, which resulted in the exclusion of the Kataeb Party, and the massacre began after the kidnapping and killing of nearly 300 people on a sectarian basis in revenge for the killing of four young Christians, which led to strong reactions from the national movement and the resistance, and some leaders of the Palestinian organizations participated in the attack. On the hotel area in Beirut. The clashes expanded when the right-wing militias responded by closing off the eastern area of Beirut, making the situation difficult to control. The issue became an action and reaction when the resistance responded by attacking the Christian villages of Damour, Saadiyat and Jiyeh, which surrendered to the national forces. These villages became almost empty and their inhabitants were displaced to Jounieh. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad declared to a delegation from the Awareness Movement that Syria would not tolerate any Israeli invasion of Lebanon; that it would not leave Lebanon to face any unilateral foreign intervention, and that Syria was ready to listen to all Lebanese parties. For more see: *The Annual Book of the Palestinian Cause for the year 1975*, the previous source, p. 233; Fouad Matar, *The Fall of the Lebanese Empire*, Vol. 1, Beirut, Dar al-Qada'i, 1978, pp. 11-12.

Nicola Nasr, the previous source, p. 83.

Rashid Karami: (1921-1987) A Lebanese politician born in Tripoli in 1921. His father was a Mufti and a prominent political leader and a member of the Lebanese Parliament. He studied law in Cairo and graduated in 1947 and worked as a lawyer. He was elected as a representative for Tripoli in 1951, and continued his father's policy of opposing President Bechara El Khoury. He became Prime Minister in 1955. He participated in the 1958 uprising and formed the National Salvation Government during the presidency of Fouad Chehab. He then formed several governments that were dominated by Chehabist politics. He was assassinated in 1987. For details, see: Farouk Al-Briber, Rashid Karami and Al-Mustaqbal, *Journal of Arab and World History*, Beirut, Issues 103-104, May-June 1987, pp. 2-3; Abdul Wahab Al-Kayali, Vol. 2, previous source, p. 819.

Abdul Halim Khaddam: (1932-2020) A Syrian politician born in Baniyas in Tartous Governorate. He completed his primary and secondary education there, then obtained a law degree from Damascus University and worked as a lawyer. He joined the Arab Socialist Baath Party in the fifties, and worked as a member of the Baniyas-Tartous Branch Leadership, then Secretary of the People after March 8, 1963. He was chosen as a member of the Latakia Branch Leadership, and in 1964 he was appointed Governor of Damascus, then Minister of Economy in 1969, and in 1970 he was chosen as a member of the Regional Leadership and Minister of Foreign Affairs. For more, see: Abdul Wahhab Al-Kayali, Vol. 2, previous source, pp. 809-810; Dr. A. W., *The Arab World File*, Syria, Biographies and Translations, Abdul Halim Khaddam, p. 1/1905.

Rabah Marza Khadir Al-Madhatti, previous source, p. 121.

Camille Chamoun: (1900-1987) A Lebanese politician born in Beirut in 1900. He spent his early years as a member of a political group known as the Constitutional Bloc. In the late 1940s, he became one of its most prominent members. He opposed the rule of President Bechara El Khoury and organized a parliamentary opposition for that purpose. He was elected President of the Republic of Lebanon in 1952. He remained in power until the uprising of 1958 and died in 1987. For details, see: Camille Chamoun, *My Memoirs*, Vol. 1, Beirut, 1969, Ahmad Attiyat Allah, *The Political Dictionary*, Cairo, Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, 1968, 3rd ed., p. 984.

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Dr. K.W., *Palestinian News Agency Wafa*, File No. 247, Issue 56, Beirut, 7/8/1978, p. 14.

- Ibrahim Qleilat: (1939-1985) was born in Beirut in 1939, where he received his primary and secondary education. He later joined the Beirut Arab University and one of the French universities. He held the position of Vice President of the Central Political Council of the Lebanese National and Progressive Movement and Chairman of the Leadership Council of the Independent Nasserite Movement (Al-Murabitun). Ibrahim Qleilat was described as a nationalist with a Nasserist tendency, and Al-Murabitun, from his point of view, means the permanent presence of a person to defend the faith, thought and goal. See: Sami Dhibyan, *The Lebanese National Movement, Past, Present and Future from a Strategic Perspective*, Beirut, Dar Al-Masirah, 1977, pp. 232-238, Abdul Wahab Al-Kayali, Vol. 1, previous source, p. 19.
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- The Lebanese National Bloc: It is one of the Lebanese political parties and was established by its founder Emile Eddé in 1943. In 1946, President Emile Eddé transformed the parliamentary bloc into the National Bloc Party. In 1949, Raymond Eddé was elected leader of the bloc after the death of his father. The party opposed the entry of Syrian military forces into Lebanon in 1976, and entered the elections in 1979 and won three seats in the parliament. For more, see: Abdul Wahab Al-Kayali, Vol. 3, previous source, p. 101.
- Isolation in a regional framework means isolating Lebanon from its Arab and national surroundings. They are the ones who called for Lebanon to be considered an independent nation and objected to the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization on Lebanese soil. They appeared during the Lebanese civil war in 1975. For more, see: Dalal Al-Bizri, *Notebooks of the Lebanese Civil War*, Qatar, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, p. 49.
- Abdul Qader Yassin and others, the previous source, p. 158.
- Rashid Al-Solh: (1926-2014) A prominent Lebanese politician born in Beirut in 1926, he became Prime Minister of Lebanon in 1974 during the era of Lebanese President Suleiman Franjeh, and witnessed the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. For more, see: Abdul Wahhab Al-Kayali, Vol. 4, Beirut, Arab Institution for Studies and Publishing, 1990, p. 115.
- Palestine Liberation Organization, *Palestinian Diaries*, Volume 11, the previous source, p. 1.
- Abdul Qader Yassin and others, the previous source, p. 159.
- Salah Khalaf: (1933-1991) A Palestinian politician whose nom de guerre was Abu Iyad. He was born in the Palestinian city of Jaffa and completed his secondary education in Gaza after being forcibly removed from Jaffa and graduated from Dar Al-Ulum College in 1957, and in 1959 he moved to Kuwait to work as a teacher there, and his name became prominent as a member of the Central Committee of the Fatah Movement and then the head of the leadership of the special apparatuses of the Palestine Liberation Organization. For more, see: Abdul Wahhab Al-Kayali, Vol. 4, previous source, p. 231.
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- Naji Jamil: (1931-2014) A Syrian military and politician, born in 1931 in the Deir ez-Zor region. After completing his secondary education, he joined the Military College and graduated in the 1952-1954 session. He was then sent to England and obtained a degree in aeronautical engineering. He moved through the ranks from an engineer for squadron maintenance in the Air Force to commander of the Air

- Force and Air Defense. He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1978, but was later removed from all his military positions. See: Abdul Wahhab Al-Kayali, *Encyclopedia of Politics*, Vol. 4, p. 541.
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- Abdul Qader Yassin and others, the previous source, p. 160.
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- Hashem Othman, the previous source, p. 78.
- Rabah Marza Khudair Al-Madhatti, the previous source, p. 114.
- Hashem Othman, the previous source, p. 80.
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- Kamal Jumblatt: (1958-1977) A politician from a Druze family who was elected in 1943. He founded the Progressive Socialist Party in 1949 and led the national movement that included a group of parties in the face of the Lebanese Front during the civil war. For more, see: Akram Nour Al-Din Sateh, *History and Documents of the Second Half From the twentieth century*, Lebanon, Dar Al-Nafayes, p. 356.
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- Hashem Othman, the previous source, p. 81.
- Dr. K. And, the Iraqi News Agency, File No. 2/311, Palestine, Palestinian Affairs, 10/23/1977, p. 42.
- Likud: It is an Israeli party whose Likud government has its roots in the Liberal Movement led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. The party was formed by merging the Herut Party and the Liberal Party to lean more towards the liberal right. It came to power with the victory of Menachem Begin in 1977. For more, see: Issa Fadel Eifan Al-Shammari, *The Kach Organization 1968-2006: A Study of Zionist Terrorism*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Faculty of Arts, University of Mosul, 2006, p. 46.

Shtaura: It is one of the Lebanese villages in the Bekaa Governorate. There is a launching point for those coming to Syria. It is located halfway between Beirut and Damascus. For more, see: <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

BNA, F.O.C 93/1241, SYRIAN POLICIES ON ARAB/ISRAEL, 16 SEPTEMBER 1977, P:39.

D. K. W., Arab News Agency, File No. 303, Beirut, Palestinian Affairs, March 30, 1974, p. 1.