

2. **Hizbullah's 1996 Parliamentary Elections Program**⁵⁹

In His Name Be He Exalted

The Electoral Program of Hizbullah, 1996

And those who strive [*jahadu*] in our (cause), we will certainly guide them to our paths⁶⁰ for verily Allah is with those who do right.

(Holy Koran)

Faithful Lebanese

In persistence with our political course that is based on divine values,

In commitment to our vast cultural affiliation with all its diversity, richness and sublimation of human value, within a framework of integration and unity,

On the basis of our firm pledge of the Lebanese people's interests in liberating our land in the South and West *Bekaa*, of maintaining our security and right in a decent life and an honorable living besides their looking forward to a political society of more balance and justice, a society more capable of understanding the internal flaw points and confronting the foreign challenges and a more stable society,

We continue the unlimited course of giving, the giving of blood, the honesty of stand, the courageous word, and the political behavior that aims at changing instead of submitting to the status quo, overcomes balances instead of falling because of them and seeks a nation beyond sectarianism, a state with no monopolization or absorption, a state of development with no discrimination and participation with no exclusion or elimination.

In the light of a conscious reading of the magnitude of the perils and challenges that overwhelm the regional situation due to the policies of American hegemony and Zionist terrorism,

Out of the position of deep realization of the historic stage through which our country is passing,

Under the staggering production of a sound political life and the disappointing results of the state institutions' performance and their alleged attempts of development,

Before the regression of the state situation due to a combination of many factors surging out of the unbalanced nature of the Lebanese political system and the wrong practices by the authority men that led to deepening the status of corruption, favoritism and migration of qualifications, besides establishing the sectarian, confessional and regional divisions,

In the light of all that, and after four years, during which we had the honor of contribution in serving the Lebanese from the parliamentarian post, we run with you for the scheduled parliament elections with established responsibility and greater

insistence on shouldering the trust that our dear Lebanese people made us carry to complete the course of all the noble martyrs who died while defending our sacred soil and the dignity, freedom, future and welfare of our people, on top of whom the Master of the Islamic Resistance martyrs Sayyed Abbas Mussawi and Sheikh of its martyrs Sheikh Ragheb Harb (May Allah be pleased with them).

As it has always been, Hizbullah will continue to be, with greater drive and increasing responsibility, the party of Resistance and Liberation, the party of steadfastness and construction and the party of change to a better status, according to the following program:

1. *Resisting the occupation*

Through its liberating and striving course and its field and political achievement, the most distinguished of which were the steadfastness and victory in two large-scale wars, July 1993 and April 1996, the Islamic Resistance has affirmed its being the only option towards a dignified liberation with no conditions or prices that would⁶¹ damage the sovereignty, resources and right; it has also affirmed its being an element of unity and dignity for the Lebanese and a major guarantor for their security and their regional and international presence. Therefore, we confirm the following:

- We will work on the strong and efficient continuation of the Resistance until our occupied land is completely liberated and restored to the national sovereignty, until our people in the occupied strip are released and able to secure a free honorable decent living away from any direct or indirect presence of the usurping Zionists. We will also work on confronting the logic of the theatrical negotiations that seek to establish Israel's position at the expense of the people of the land.
- Protecting the Lebanese civilians will remain essential in the Resistance performance, due to its being a major objective and main role performed by the Resistance with wisdom, awareness and responsibility.
- We will seek with all carefulness that the Lebanese people with all its sects, categories and individuals, remain the Resistance's embracer and base from which it derives strength and presence. The sought-after liberation – Allah willing-will only be a gift to all the Lebanese and a major contribution in constructing a country with complete sovereignty and a state of consideration and estimation in the arena of regional and international conflict.
- We will continue seeking to achieve more effective state involvement in the operation of liberation and embracing the Resistance men, and the prisoners,

detainees and martyrs' families plus providing the steadfastness requirements through establishing and developing foundations for these ends, besides supporting any action that assists in fighting normalization and cultural invasion along with rejecting any form of reconciliation with the enemy.

2. *Achieving Equality and Establishing the Just State*

Achieving justice and equality among the Lebanese is considered one of the main bases for establishing a stable dignified and prosperous country in which all the Lebanese engage in the process of construction with drive and solidarity under equality of opportunities, equality of all, individuals, classes and areas, in rights and duties, whether political, economical or social. Consequently we will seek to continue working until we achieve:

- Abolishing political sectarianism that represents the center of the essential flaw in the formula of the Lebanese political system and its social structure, besides being what secretes most of the domestic instability features, the fertile soil for the disturbance that marks the authority institutions and the inter-confessional relations.
- A just and balanced electoral system that treats all the Lebanese even-handedly, allows for real representation, and leads towards developing the Lebanese political status through the approbation of Lebanon as one constituency with a proportional representation system.
- Establishing real political institutions that can not be summarized in individuals, nor emptied by the dominance of parties or groups, or employed to serve the "favorites" and "guys". The most dangerous thing that confronts the state and topples its logic is politicizing the administration and linking it to political loyalties away from the criteria of qualification and equality.
- Applying the principle of administration decentralization through a consistent and proportionate law that guarantees achieving administrative divisions capable of accomplishing efficient development in the various areas besides reviving the municipal and mayor councils to allow for real participation by the civil society in running its development and social affairs.

3. *At the Economical Level*

We will work on making the state adopt economical policies that give priority to achieving integral human development instead of being confined to imported economical policies that do not consider in their priorities the economical and social particularities discharged by the war and that led to increasing the rates of poverty, unemployment, and the evanescence of the middle class that is considered the scales of economical justice. Moreover, we will work on realizing justice in the distribution of taxes and charges among citizens according to their capabilities.⁶²

What is required is the rearrangement of development priorities and subsidizing the sectors of industry, agriculture, animal breeding and fishery, plus providing loans and production requirements, protection, and marketing, in addition to supporting all forms of craftsmanship.

The state's role in the economical operation must be based on a delicate harmonization between the necessity of activating the public sector, prosperity of its movement and investments, on one hand, and the necessity of not deserting the state's responsibilities towards the citizens and the public utilities, especially what concerns supporting the steadfastness of the areas confronting the Zionist occupation.

4. *At the Educational and Syndical [Syndicate] levels*

- The chronic demand of enhancing and reforming public schooling has not taken its implementation course seriously and effectively until today, therefore; it is vital to seek enhancing and developing public schooling, as schools, teachers and administrations. Furthermore, the development of the educational structure must be followed by the policy of reestablishing and modernizing the curriculums in harmony with the modern necessities, besides accomplishing the history book drafting on objective basis and working on increasing the interest in vocational education, taking into account the necessity of linking it to the Lebanese market needs.

Uplifting the Lebanese University is a vital demand that we will work on achieving through modernizing its curriculums, uniting the branches of the capital and the surrounding areas, enhancing the branches of the areas, reviving specialization scholarships and sponsoring top students and strengthening research methods to get out of the currently-adopted dictation method and allow for developing talents and qualifications.

Reinforcing the labor movement and the syndical frameworks is a civil and political must; that ought to be away from pressure, straitening and harassment that are being practiced by the authority at times of crises and critical phases. Moreover, justice to teachers and university professors in achieving their various demands, without procrastination and postponement is an urgent measure for the stability of these two sectors. Therefore, Hizbullah affirms its persistence on staying in the stand of supporting the syndical movement and supplying it with political, and popular support and power.

5. *At the Social and Health Levels*

- We affirm the importance of the role of the youth in constructing their country and the necessity of providing them with the essentials for strengthening their personalities and filling their times with constructive activities.
- The woman's role is based on her being the other half that raises and is effective in all the political, educational, social, cultural and economical life. Women must not be treated as supplements nor as commodities of advertisement.
- Enhancing and maintaining the unity of the family that is the cornerstone in building a good society and providing all the educational and social conditions to establish this direction.
- The completion of resolving the two issues of naturalization and the displaced so as those who have the right to the nationality obtain it and all the displaced return to their houses or villages in dignity, plus giving the displaced of the occupied strip a special priority attention and consideration.
- Completing the task of improving public hospital and health clinics with the required equipment, spreading these health centers all over the country especially in remote areas and the steadfast and resisting areas in the South and West *Bekaa*, in addition to making health security accessible to all the sectors of the Lebanese society.
- Developing the social welfare foundations, supporting the social care institutions, adopting old-age pension, and establishing institutes specialized in treating the various social problems and perversions.⁶³
- The necessity of reforming and developing prisons, establishing reformations for juvenile delinquents in all the Lebanese provinces.
- Activating the foundations and legislative laws that protect the public resources and the environment, adopting a forestry policy that would restore the balance to the Lebanese environment, protect it from the jeopardy of aridity,

maintain the water resources, set projects to be used in all the Lebanese areas and reclaim the lands in order to increase the arable areas.

- Making serious plans that secure a gradual resolution for the housing problem in Lebanon, plus considering this issue one of the great challenges that confront the Lebanese society and have negative social results at numerous levels.

6. *Safeguarding Public Freedoms*

- To work carefully and persistently on safeguarding public freedoms, i.e. the freedom of belief, freedom of syndical [syndicates] and political activity, freedom of practicing religious rituals and schooling, in addition to accomplishing the regulation of the media without abating the freedom of press, on one hand, but while preserving the maintenance of the identity, public ethics and morals on the other.

7. *Foreign Policy*

- Adherence to maintaining the Lebanese-Syrian relations, being the practical application of Lebanon's Arab affiliation and since these relations represent a major element of inaccessibility and fortification for Lebanon before the attempts of isolating it under the regional challenges. Furthermore, the previous years have proven that these relations comprise factors of stability for the uneasy Lebanese formula.
- To work on cementing the Lebanese stand in the face of the American pressure policies which are being practiced against Lebanon politically and economically, to reject the continuous American interference in its internal affairs and to deal with the American policy on the grounds of its being identical to and supportive for the positions of the Israeli enemy that occupies our land, kills our children and targets our villages with its incessant daily aggressions.
- The necessity of adopting serious policies and efficient plans to communicate with the Lebanese communities in the countries of expatriation; sponsoring the frameworks that organize those communities' existence; protecting them from attempts to expose them, weaken them or damage their economical presence (as has been the case in more than one African country); working effectively and persistently on rehabilitating the Lebanese expatriate existence

and precluding its being vulnerable and without political protection before the challenges and plots it confronts.

- To emphasize building normal and balanced relations with the Arab and Islamic countries and all the countries of the world on the basis of independence and strengthening the ties that assist in confronting the plots of the American arrogance and allow for honorable and constructive cooperation.

Dear Lebanese People,

From the position of representing the people, with all its implications of religious, national and ethical dimensions and responsibilities, and with our full realization of the magnitude of the complications and obstacles that our Lebanese society is experiencing and with our realization of the long time needed to achieve all what our people anticipates, Hizbullah confirms its candidates' observance and their doing their utmost to put into effect this electoral program that will formulate the framework for the political-legislative role of Hizbullah's parliamentary bloc.

Success is Granted by Allah

Hizbullah

Summer 1996⁶⁴