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News of the day with Nasser Kandil

Netanyahu's Password "Assad Is Playing With Fire" Turns to a Turkish-Backed Nusra War on Aleppo

Government and Army: Israeli Violations Persist, Berri Sets Presidential Election for January 9

Hardan: The Return, the Battlefield, the 'Army-People-Resistance' Triad, and Salute to Berri and Mikati

The political editor wrote:

Northern Syria witnessed intense warfare yesterday morning on the fronts of Idlib and Aleppo's countryside, as Jabhat al-Nusra launched an assault on Syrian Army positions under heavy Turkish artillery cover. The attack was a direct response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's inflammatory remarks, accusing Syria and its President Bashar al-Assad of "playing with fire". Netanyahu's statement came in opposition to Syria's ongoing support of resistance forces in Lebanon.

Hardly had the ceasefire on the Lebanese front taken effect when a full-scale war erupted, spearheaded by Abu Mohammad al-Jolani's brigades, effectively acting on behalf of Israel's Golani Brigade, which suffered painful defeats during the South Lebanon war. The resistance has always been the symbolic umbilical cord connecting South Lebanon to northern Syria. By

yesterday afternoon, the Syrian Army mobilised its special forces and armored units, launching a counteroffensive. By nightfall, with the support of Syrian and Russian airstrikes, the army regained several villages and towns seized earlier by Jabhat al-Nusra.

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, the popular return of residents to southern villages continued, despite escalating provocations from the occupying army. The Israeli military's erratic and hysterical actions reflected the desperation of its leadership, incapable of selling the narrative of victory or convincing settlers in the north to return to their homes. By contrast, the residents of Lebanon's southern villages returned unprompted, underscoring a quiet defiance.

Statements from the Lebanese Army and Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the Israeli violations as clear breaches of the ceasefire agreement, calling on stakeholders to intervene and put an end to these provocations.

On the political front parliament extended the service of all officers at the rank of brigadier general and above by one year, effectively prolonging the tenure of Army Commander General Joseph Aoun, whose previous extension was set to expire at the end of the year. Additionally, Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri scheduled a parliamentary session for January 9, 2025, to elect a new president. Berri expressed hope that the intervening period

would be used for consultations and dialogue to reach a consensus, ensuring the session's success in electing a president.

This announcement preceded Berri's meeting with French envoy Jean-Yves Le Drian, dispelling notions that the session's timing was a result of their discussions.

In a wide-ranging leadership meeting, leader of Syrian Social Nationalist Party, emphasised that the return of Lebanese citizens to their devastated homes symbolised the victory achieved by the resistance on the battlefield. This reaffirmed the steadfastness of the army, people, and resistance triad. He praised Speaker Nabih Berri for his adept leadership in securing a ceasefire agreement that thwarted the enemy's objectives while preserving national sovereignty. He also commended Prime Minister Najib Mikati for maintaining a unified national stance despite the intensity of war and external pressures, particularly for addressing the displacement crisis with determination.