

*Six years ago, plans were mounted to plunge Lebanon into a bloodshed, trying to kidnap this region and encumber it in political projects hidden behind religious masks.*

*On that day, the Lebanese army was subjected to a treacherous intrusion, and paid a heavy price, in an attempt to break down its prestige and intrude into Lebanese territories, with the intention of transferring the devastating war from Syria to Lebanon.*

*However, the Lebanese army quickly succeeded in regaining the initiative, and blocked attempts to trigger factional and sectarian wars in Lebanon.*

*The army was deeply wounded; nevertheless, it endured the pain, healed the wounds, waited three years and then, at that dawn, swooped down on its prey that had intruded into Lebanon's outskirts and tried to contaminate its national purity.*

*The army's operation was not a revenge for the martyrs who fell treacherously or in the confrontation. Each of them has decorated the country with the medal of his martyrdom and has given his life to defend all the Lebanese people. It was rather a professional military operation reflecting a comprehensive national decision to eradicate the sprawling cancer infiltrating into the outskirts of the country across the borders.*

*The Lebanese army does not need a certificate of appreciation for that specific operation, "Fajr al-Jouroud" (Dawn of the Outskirts) and does not need certificates of patriotism.*

*Hence, the army sends a message of hope of reinforced national belonging, without favour, poured out for a sacrifice without reckoning on any return whatsoever, in order to preserve national unity, safeguard civil peace, protect security stability, and impose the prestige of the state.*

*The army is a living example of the Lebanese people's aspirations for a homeland where they want to lead a safe and stable life, away from factional, sectarian and political alignments.*

*The Lebanese people, across all regions, want a real change that enables them to make the transition from the state of sects and confessional denominations to the unified state. They want a real change that would achieve a separation between political affiliation and state attachment, and eliminate political dependency as a mediator between the citizen and the state.*

*These areas suffer from chronic deprivation. The authorities offered these regions only a handful of seasonal projects that only had sedative effects.*

*The Bekaa and all regions are entitled to equal rights in the context of the balanced development set forth in the Taif Agreement. However, the reality is that balanced development remained nothing but flowery words praised by the political authority, so it may calm down the people's outburst.*

*Unfortunately, the state is currently exhausted. It does not have the ability to compensate for the chronic deprivation of regions dating back to the balanced development period.*

*Certainly, if the authority had a minimum level of economic vision, it would have secured the regions' development needs, and such development would have set a solid platform to start from today to address the financial, economic, social and livelihood crises.*

*Thus, the government has developed a plan for economic and financial recovery, based on the principle of advancing a real change in the pattern of the economy, by granting regions the opportunity to develop by creating economic jobs that would contribute to national economic recovery and secure self-promoted development by establishing institutions that would provide opportunities for youth employment in these areas.*

*Today, these outskirts are in need of Lebanese people's help to revitalize the region, just as they needed, years ago, the Lebanese Army's fighting heroes to be freed from criminals and vagabonds.*

*These outskirts are an expression of glory, not a symbol of smuggling over illegal crossings. Therefore, we will pursue efforts to stop the smuggling business by closing these crossings, which cause great damage to the state and benefit a handful of smugglers.*

*Lebanon's outskirts will remain hard to break, occupy and conspire against, for it is protected by the army whose tenacity, sacrifices and wise leadership grant us strength to confront the great many challenges we face.*

*Long live Lebanon!*