

July 1, 1958 Untitled report on the security situation in Beirut

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Summary:

Militant leaderships in Beirut are unified and receive ammunition, as the movement intensifies.

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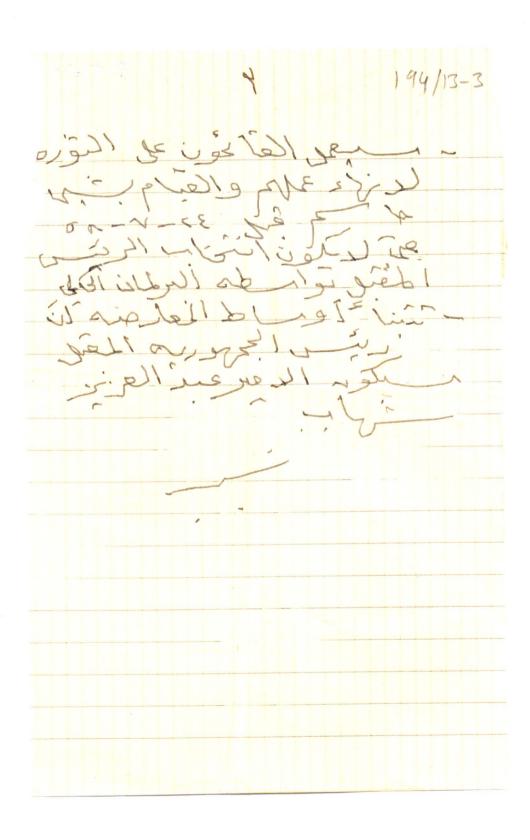
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About ten days ago the militant leaderships in Beirut were unified under a leader by the name of Abou Ali, which I believe to be a fictitious name, who came from abroad with between 50 and 75 other people who were distributed among Beirut's rebellious areas. The approximate number of rebels in Beirut's various areas is 800, including the armed citizens. I was surprised at Camille Chamoun's statement that estimated the number of armed militias in Basta alone at 800.

Sa'eb Salam still insists on being given mortar guns and I don't know whetherhis request will be fulfilled or not.

Beirut received a large amount of ammunition in the past ten days; as for weapons, only a small amount has managed to make it through due, as you well know, to the intensified searches.

The number of armed men in Basta is between 130 and 150 including local armed militia. Approximately the same figures apply to other closed areas.

Shooting without direct orders from the General Command in Beirut is now totally forbidden; rebels who fire their weapons without orders will be punished.

I still believe that the rebel force in Beirut is incapable of attacking the presidential palace.

The number of foreign-armed men in Sidon does not exceed 70.

Ninety per cent of Beirut and Sidon's rebels is Palestinian, most of whom are masked men from Syria.

The killing of Sidon's officer Fares (...) was planned and its main protagonist is a man called Fahmi, who shot the officer from the bathroom window of a hotel near al-Qachla. Rebel leaders intend to complete their work and carry out concrete actions before 24/7/1958, so that the election of the next president would not be held by the current Parliament.

Rebel circles predict that the next president of the republic will be Emir Abdel-'Aziz Chehab.