

Lebanese rivals reach deal to end crisis

Lebanese rivals have reached an agreement at dawn Wednesday to end the political crisis in Lebanon after five days of talks in Doha and a president is scheduled to be elected either Thursday or Friday, sources at the talks in Doha said.

Ali Hassan Khalil, a member of the opposition, confirmed to DPA 'that a solution has been reached and it will be announced at a press conference in Doha Wednesday'.

Khalil said that army commander Michel Suleiman will be elected at a parliament session by the end of this week.

There were no details of the deal but sources told DPA the agreement included the formation of the national unity government and the discussion of a new election law has been postponed until after the president is elected.

'At first the (Syria and Iran backed) opposition refused to put off discussion of the disputed electoral law, and insisted on getting a 'blocking minority' in a proposed unity government, but then they got the go ahead from their outside allies,' said Telecommunication Minister Marwan Hamadah and member of the majority, referring to Syria and Iran.

Lebanon has been engulfed in its worst political crisis since 2006. The parliament has failed 19 times to convene and elect a new president since pro-Syrian Emile Lahoud ended his term in 2007.

On Tuesday, Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Bin Abdullah al-Mahmoud said that the Arab ministerial committee made two proposals for Lebanon's ruling majority and the opposition to solve their political stand-off.

At a press conference, al-Mahmoud said that the Arab committee considers the two proposals as the 'ideal solution' to solve the crisis.

Al-Mahmoud did not divulge the contents of the proposals, saying he could not do so as long as the Lebanese factions had not agreed on them.

He said that one of the Lebanese factions, whom he did not identify, has demanded some time to examine the recommendations and decide on them.

Al-Mahmoud said that another press conference is scheduled to be held Wednesday for the Lebanese rivals to give their reply.

The Lebanese delegates - three from the government and three from the Hezbollah-led opposition - have been meeting in Doha since last Friday in a bid to resolve the political impasse and to ease the tensions running high after bloody sectarian fighting claimed 82 lives two weeks ago.

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