

Egypt worried about Iran influence on Lebanese Cabinet

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Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit has said he was worried about foreign meddling that was obstructing government formation in Lebanon

Abul Gheit told pan-Arab Asharq al-Awsat daily that difficulties facing PM-designate Saad Hariri are the result of "foreign influences that are preventing cabinet formation."

Asked if there was an Iranian influence, the minister said: "Maybe."

On Syria, Abul Gheit said: "We admit that Syria has a historic and strategic interest in Lebanon … We are seeking for the formation of a Lebanese government as soon as possible because some parties want to abort Lebanon's attempt to get a Security Council seat."

Those parties, according to the Egyptian official, are claiming that "Lebanon's weak government does not encourage Lebanon to get a seat in the Security Council."

He also denied that Egypt wasn't enthusiastic about Hariri taking the helm of the government. "This is not true," he said, adding, however, that the PM-designate should work hard to achieve his objective.

Turning to the issue of Egyptian-Syrian ties, the foreign minister told Asharq al-Awsat that there were differences over viewpoints. "But such differences do not undermine" such relations.

He finally said that Lebanon was one of the issues over which the two countries had differences.

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