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Beirut, February 15 (RHC)-- Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri says Lebanon has categorically dismissed Israel's plan to remain in five locations in the country's south beyond the next week's withdrawal deadline under a ceasefire deal.

Berri made the remarks on Thursday after the US administration indicated that it supports the Israeli occupation forces remaining in five strategic positions in southern Lebanon after the February 18 pull-out deadline.

Washington "informed me that the Israeli occupation will withdraw from villages it still occupies on February 18, but it will remain in five points," he told reporters, according to a statement released by his office. "I informed them in my name and on behalf of President General Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Judge Nawaf Salam of our absolute rejection" of the proposal, he added.

Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement opened a support front for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip after Israel unleashed a genocidal war on the besieged territory on October 7, 2023, launching numerous retaliatory attacks against targets in the occupied lands.

Israel was forced to accept the truce with Hezbollah on November 27, 2024, after suffering heavy losses on the battleground and failing to achieve its goals despite killing over 4,000 people in Lebanon.

The deal gave Israel until January 26 to pull out its forces from Lebanon's occupied areas, but the deadline was extended to February 18 after Israel refused to comply with the agreement.

Berri said: "If the Israeli occupation persists in South Lebanon, days will tell. The Lebanese state is responsible for that."

Earlier, Berri met with U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Lisa Johnson and U.S. Major General Jasper Jeffers. The top Lebanese parliamentarian said he had refused to discuss any extension to the deadline for Israel's withdrawal.

"It is the responsibility of the Americans to enforce the withdrawal, otherwise, they will have caused the greatest setback for the government," he emphasized. He also warned that the continuation of the Israeli occupation of Lebanese soil is "completely unacceptable" as Hezbollah is "fully committed" to the ceasefire.

Since the truce began, Israel has violated it by launching attacks on Lebanon that killed and injured several people.

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