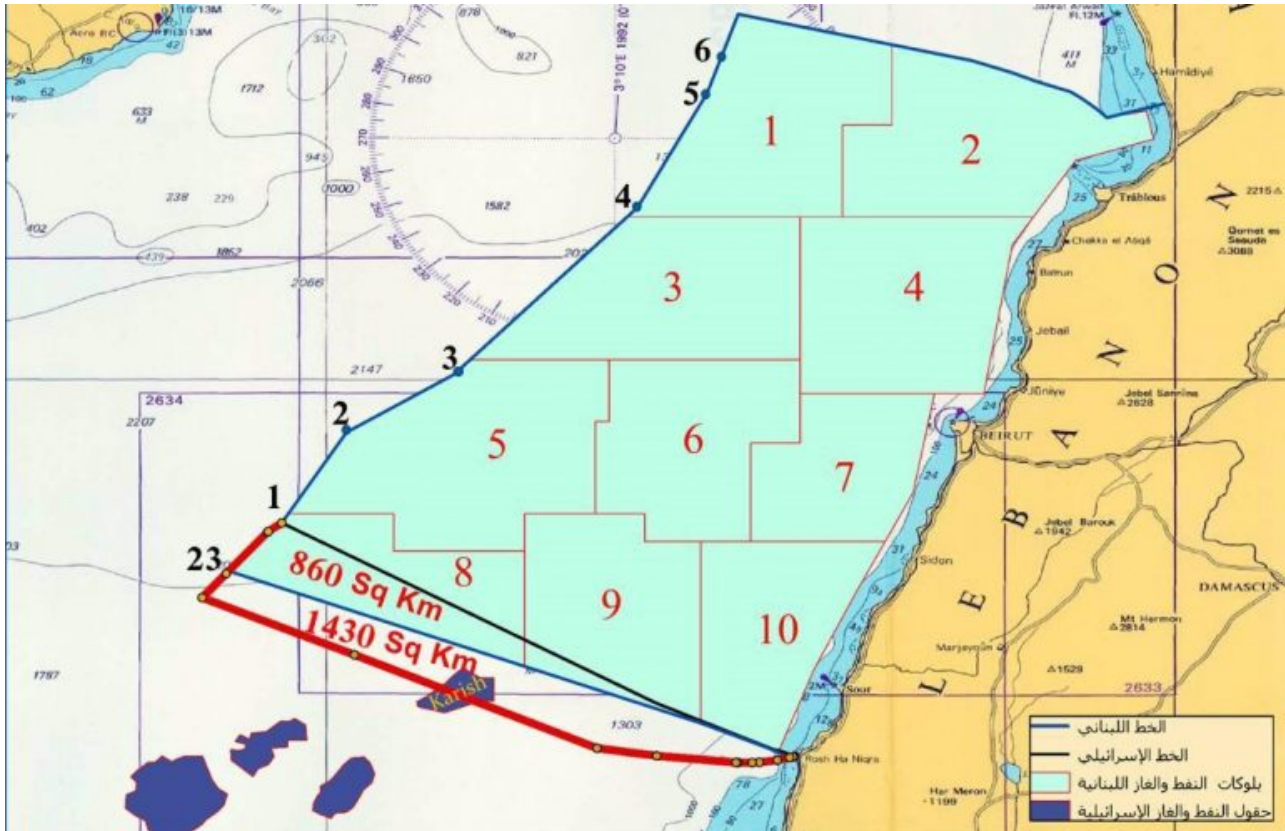
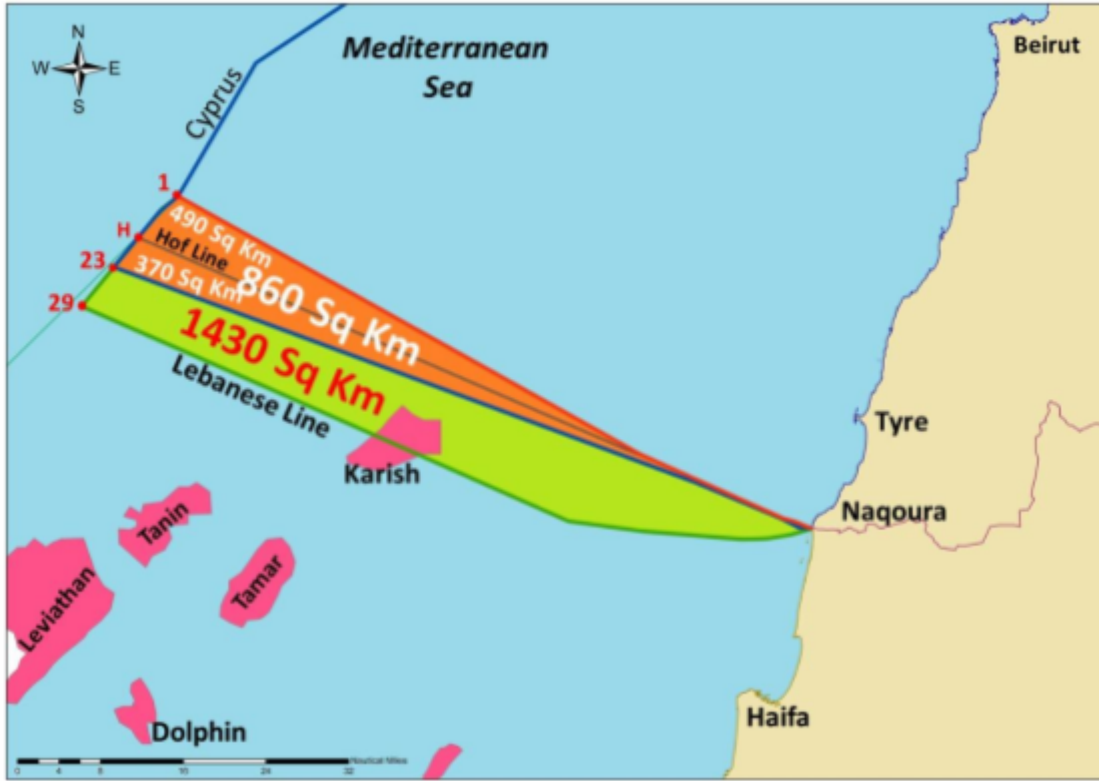


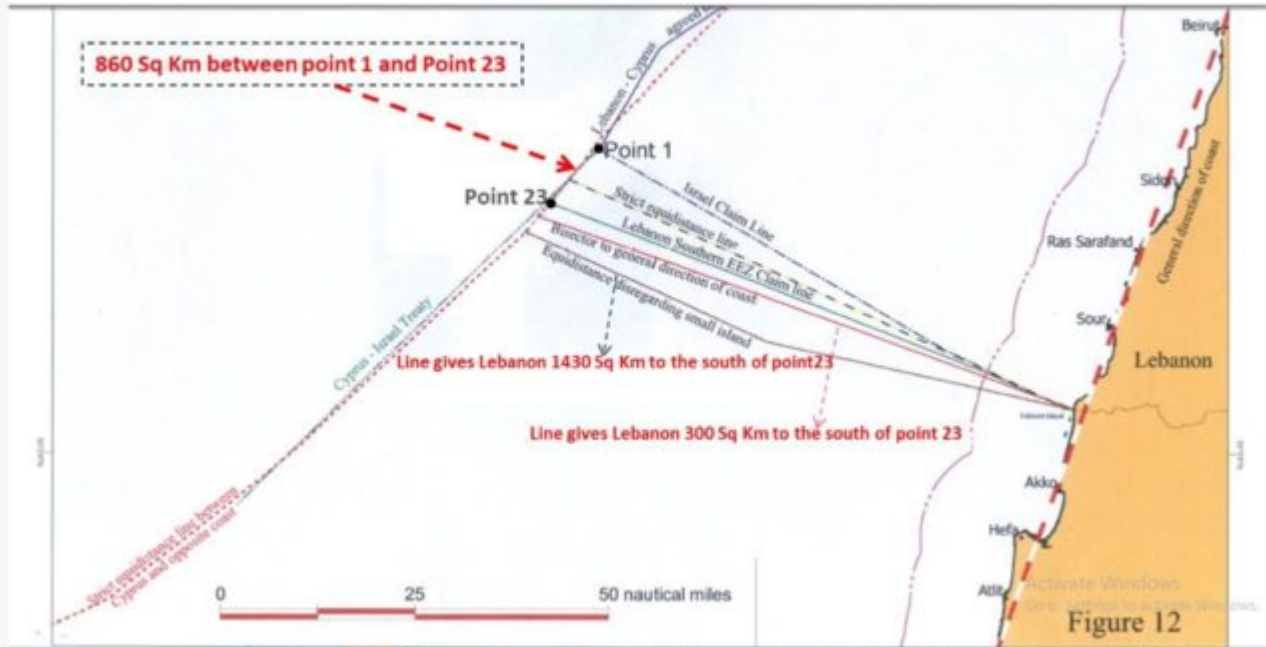
# الجيش اللبناني إمّا مفوضاً بالترسيم.. أو فليسحبوا تفويضهم



## الخطوط البحرية التي يتم التفاوض حولها



## UKHO Map presented by John Brown to Lebanese Government in 2011



Note: some Remarks has been added to the original Map for clarification

إستبشر اللبنانيون خيراً بإنتلاق المفاوضات الحدودية البحرية غير المباشرة مع العدو الإسرائيلي بوساطة أميركية وبرعاية الأمم المتحدة، كون المهمة سُلِّمت لجيشهم الوطني الذي يثقون به ويعتبرونه المؤسسة الأكثر قدرة على استعادة الحقوق الوطنية التي

. قد تساهم في انتشار لبنان من أزمته المالية الخانقة

خاص الوفد اللبناني الجولات الأربع بكفاءة عالية برغم النيران الصديقة التي تعرّض لها قبل انطلاق مهمته وبرغم تجريده من السلاح القانوني الأهم وهو تعديل المرسوم رقم 6433 تاريخ 1/10/2011 الذي يحدّد النقطة (23) كنقطة حدود ثلاثية في حين أن الوفد اللبناني انطلق من خط يعتمد النقطة (29) أي بزيادة 1430 كلم<sup>2</sup> عن الخط اللبناني المعلن بموجب المرسوم المذكور وبزيادة 2290 كلم<sup>2</sup> عن الخط المعلن من قبل العدو الإسرائيلي.

فوجيء وفد العدو الإسرائيلي بصلاية الوفد اللبناني ودفاعه المحكم المستند كلياً إلى القانون الدولي، ولما لم يجد نفسه قادراً على مواجهته بالقانون شنّ حملة إعلامية شعواء بقصد تشويه صورة لبنان وتقليب المجتمع الدولي عليه وبصورة خاصة الوسيط الأميركي.

لم تُعقد الجولة الخامسة التي كانت مقرّرة بتاريخ 2/12/2020 واستعيض عنها بجولة قام بها الوسيط الأميركي على بعض القيادات اللبنانية عرض خلالها العودة إلى التفاوض حول مساحة 860 كلم<sup>2</sup> لكن الجانب اللبناني أكّد رغبته بمتابعة المفاوضات على أساس القانون الدولي دون حصرها بمساحة معيّنّة.

في ظل عدم تحديد موعد جديد للجولة الخامسة، اعتُبرت المفاوضات بحكم المعلّقة، فاستفاد العدو الإسرائيلي من ذلك لإعادة تنظيم صفوفه من خلال تحصين فريقه التفاوض بعد أن فهم جيّداً موقف الوفد اللبناني، وأيضاً من خلال متابعة التحريض الدولي على لبنان.

نجح العدو الإسرائيلي في ذلك فأقدم السيد فريدريك هوف بنشر مقال له بتاريخ 4/12/2020 على موقع " نيوزلاين " شرح فيه بالتفصيل كيف وضع خطه في العام 2012 برضى الجانبين اللبناني والإسرائيلي وذكر إسمياً اللبنانيين الذين عملوا معه في تلك الفترة. طبعاً لم يكن هذا المقال بهذا التوقيت من باب الصدفة بل هدف منه تذكير اللبنانيين بأنهم سبق ووافقوا على المقترح الأميركي، وبالتالي دعم المزاعم الإسرائيلية القائلة بأن اللبنانيين غير ثابتين على رأي.

بعد فريدريك هوف، دخل وزير الخارجية الأميركي مايك بومبيو على الخط بتاريخ 22/12/2020 فدعا الجانبين للعودة إلى التفاوض على أساس الإدعاءات السابقة التي أودعوها الأمم المتّحدة، أي بمعنى آخر العودة إلى التفاوض ضمن مساحة 860 كلم<sup>2</sup>.

وجدت قيادة الجيش أن العدو الإسرائيلي يعتمد المماثلة والمراوغة فاقترحت تعديل المرسوم 6433 لتصبح النقطة الثلاثية هي النقطة (29) بدلاً من النقطة (23) وإيداع المرسوم الأمم المتحدة قبل بدء العدو الإسرائيلي استخراج النفط والغاز من حقل كاريش حيث من المتوقع بدء الإستخراج منه اعتباراً من شهر حزيران/ يونيو المقبل، وبالتالي إجباره للعودة إلى طاولة المفاوضات تحت ضغط عاملي الوقت والالتزامات المادية نظراً لارتباطه ببرنامج زمني مع شركتي شفرون ونوبل انيرجي، الأمر الذي قد يجبره على التنازل ويساعد الوفد اللبناني لتحقيق أقصى الممكن من الحقوق اللبنانية.

انتظرنا الردّ من العدو الإسرائيلي لكن للأسف برزت هجمة سياسية – إعلامية لبنانية، في سياق حملة بدأت بتاريخ 8/1/2020، يبدو أن مطلقها أخطأوا الهدف فبدل التصويب على العدو الإسرائيلي وجّهوا نيرانهم باتجاه الجيش اللبناني فشكّوا علناً بالخط اللبناني الجديد واعتبروه خطأً إيرانيّاً واتهموا الجيش اللبناني باختلاقه لخلق مزارع شيعا بحرية ولدفع العدو الإسرائيلي لإيصال خطّه إلى قبالة صيدا.

ذنب قيادة الجيش أنها تحلّت بالجرأة فانطلقت من الخط الجديد (النقطة 29) لقناعتها بقانونية هذا الخط برغم معرفتها المسبقة بأن المهمة ستكون أصعب بسبب الأخطاء السابقة التي ارتكبتها عن قصد أو غير قصد بعض الذين تعاقبوا على هذا الملف منذ العام 2006.

فالخط الذي انطلق منه الوفد اللبناني ليس جديداً بل هو نتيجة آراء ودراسات لبنانية وأجنبية وضعت بتصرف السلطات اللبنانية منذ العام 2011 ولكنها لم تأخذ بها لأسبابٍ ما تزال مجهولة حتى الآن ومطلوب من هذه السلطات شرحها للرأي العام اللبناني. أذكر من هذه الآراء والدراسات على سبيل المثال لا الحصر:

- مداخلات خلال جلسات لجنة الأشغال النيابية أثناء التحضير لإعداد القانون رقم 163 والمرسوم رقم 6433 قدّمها كل من وزير التربية الحالي القاضي طارق المجذوب (ممثل مجلس شوري الدولة حينها)، السفير جوني ابراهيم (ممثل وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين)، بالإضافة إلى محاضرة قدّمها الدكتور نبيل خليفة وجميعها تنادي بحق لبنان جنوب النقطة (23).
- دراسة قدمها مكتب الهيدروغرافيا البريطاني UKHO بتاريخ 17/8/2011 قبل يوم من إصدار القانون رقم 163 وقبل أسبوع من نشره في الجريدة الرسمية وقبل شهرين ونصف من إصدار

- المرسوم رقم 6433 يقترح فيها خيارين جنوب النقطة 23. (هل تم إخفاؤها عن النواب أم أنهم علموا بها وأهملوها؟).
- بحث أركان أعده العقيد الركن مازن بصبوص في العام 2013 عن الحدود البحرية بيّن فيه حق لبنان بمساحة 1430 كلم<sup>2</sup> جنوب النقطة 23).
- محاضرة ألقاها السيد نجيب مسيحي خلال مؤتمر أقامه مجلس النواب بتاريخ 18 و19/7/2019 أكد فيها على حق لبنان بمساحات إضافية جنوب النقطة 23.

كذلك فإن محاولات قيادة الجيش لتصحيح الخطأ ليست جديدة، فقد أرسلت مجموعة كتب إلى رئاسة الحكومة اللبنانية تقترح عليها تشكيل هيئة وطنية تعنى بموضوع الحدود البحرية وتلفت نظرها إلى وجود طرق أخرى تعتمد الحل المنصف وتعطي لبنان الحق بمساحات إضافية جنوب النقطة (23) دون الحصول على جواب سلباً كان أم إيجاباً. أكتفي بذكر ستة من هذه الكتب:

- كتاب رقم 1993 / غ ع / و تاريخ 18-6-2013: على أثر متابعة مؤتمر في لندن حول الحدود البحرية. تم اقتراح إنشاء هيئة وطنية لاجراء دراسات واعتماد الحل المنصف بالاستفادة من الطرق التي اعتُمدت في دول أخرى (كان جواب الحكومة أن هذا الأمر خارج صلاحياتها كونها حكومة تصريف أعمال).
- كتاب رقم 3488/ غ ع / و تاريخ 3-9-2014: تأكيد على الكتاب السابق (كان جواب الحكومة أن لا ضرورة لإنشاء هيئة وطنية).
- كتاب رقم 1801 / غ ع / و تاريخ 12-4-2019: شرح أنه يمكن للبنان تعيين حدوده وفقاً للقوانين والأعراف الدولية بشكل يعطيه الحق بمساحات إضافية جنوب الخط المعلن بموجب المرسوم 6433 بحيث يقع جزء من حقل كاريش ضمن المياه اللبنانية. وطلب إثارة الموضوع في المحافل الدولية لمنع إسرائيل من متابعة العمل في حقل كاريش (بدأت إسرائيل الحفر في حقل كاريش بتاريخ 27 شباط/ فبراير 2020).
- كتاب رقم 10884/ غ ع / و تاريخ 7/11/2019: اقتراح تشكيل لجنة وطنية للبدء بالتحضير للمفاوضات المستقبلية خاصة أن الوقت أصبح داهماً أمامنا في ظل قيام العدو الإسرائيلي بتطوير حقل كاريش.
- كتاب رقم 5918 / غ ع / و تاريخ 27/12/2019: تم فيه التأكيد على حق لبنان بمساحة 1430 كلم<sup>2</sup> إضافية وأرفق الكتاب بملف كامل أعدته مصلحة الهيدروغرافيا في الجيش اللبناني.

▪ كتاب رقم 780 / غ ع / و تاريخ 9-3-2020: تأكيد على الكتاب رقم 5918 واقترح التواصل مع المكتب البريطاني للحصول على المشورة نظراً لتوافر معطيات جديدة لمصلحة الهيدروغرافيا في الجيش اللبناني.

إن مهمة التفاوض هي مهمة وطنية بامتياز، والمحافظة على حقوقنا واجب وطني كونها ترتبط بمستقبل أولادنا وأحفادنا والتفريط بها خيانة وطنية. فأين المصلحة الوطنية باطلاق النار على الوفد اللبناني المفاوض وفي توقيت جاء استتباعاً لمواقف فريدريك هوف ومايك بومبيو؟ هل تعلمون أنكم بهجماتكم هذه تفتحون ثغرات في الجسم الدفاعي اللبناني قد يستغلها العدو الإسرائيلي للتسلل منها وتطويق الفريق اللبناني؟

تذكروا أنكم لاعبون ولستم متفرجين. البارحة رأيناكم تتصارعون على الصلاحيات فما بالكم اليوم تتراجعون أثناء تحمل المسؤولية؟ المطلوب منكم التحلي بالروح الوطنية العالية واتخاذ القرارات الجريئة؟ إذا كنتم غير مقتنعين بخط الجيش اللبناني قولوا ذلك صراحة، إتخذوا القرار الذي تريدونه، وزودوا الفريق المفاوض بقراراتكم.

أما إذا كنتم مقتنعين، فعليكم تحصين موقف الوفد المفاوض بتعديل المرسوم 6433. لا يمكنكم أن تطلبوا منه التفاوض على النقطة 29 والمرسوم رقم 6433 يحدّد النقطة 23. عدّلوا هذا المرسوم فوراً قبل أن يبدأ العدو الإسرائيلي بالاستخراج من حقل كاريش.

المطلوب تجنّب التجاذبات السياسية والمطلوب محاذرة الوقوع في الأزمة لا المساهمة في بلوغها أو الإنزلاق إليها. التخاذل في هذا الموضوع جريمة بحق الوطن، بادروا بالتاريخ لن يرحم المتخاذلين، وإلا فلتبادر السلطة السياسية إلى سحب تفويضها للقيادة العسكرية.

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## How Brexit talks overcame

# suspicion, resentment and fish



It was always likely to come down to fish, and even the final hours were occupied by cod and mackerel.

After nine months of bartering, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson could declare that his trade deal with the European Union was done, while the bloc got to keep close ties with one of the world's biggest economies.

Yet, while the outline was agreed around Wednesday lunchtime, it took a night to go through the legal text. Then, with the choreography already in place, last-minute haggling over fish stocks in the draft meant that an announcement didn't come until the afternoon of Christmas Eve. The situation became more frantic because of disagreements over how the figures had been calculated.

For about 200 officials agonizing over the minutiae, it was

time to finally emerge from the darkness. They spent more than 2,000 hours shut in rooms with little or no natural light as negotiators confronted each other in London and Brussels while Brexit was overshadowed by the human and economic cost of the coronavirus pandemic.

Some learned to respect their opposite numbers, others grew to resent them. At times, mutual suspicion and paranoia over listening devices made Brexit look like a chapter from the Cold War, all heightened by COVID-19 restrictions. Intimate chats in cafes were out; liaisons in parks were in. One British diplomat called it “Brexit noir.”

France’s blocking of the U.K.’s biggest port before Christmas was ostensibly to prevent a new strain of the coronavirus spreading to the continent. Yet there was also the sense in Paris that the chaos that halted thousands of trucks would demonstrate to the U.K. what was at stake. Officials said the two-day stoppage had focused the minds on what the EU’s chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, termed the “final push.”

For the negotiating teams, it was just another twist after spending the greater part of 2020 poring over air cargo, fingerprint data and – critically – 100 different fish species. One official described the process as like “pulling out eyelashes, one by one.”

They lived out of suitcases, working through two waves of infections that forced many into isolation. On occasions, tears were shed when they thought they were about to fail, even as recently as the morning of the deal. In the end, many were airlifted out of Brussels on a Royal Air Force plane to get home for Christmas.

This account of how the talks unfolded is based on conversations with officials with intimate knowledge of what went on. All of them asked not to be identified.

While the outcome brought celebration and relief as the final



deal took shape, it had looked very different on Dec. 10. In a third-floor conference room in the British government's building in Brussels, British lead negotiator David Frost told his team a deal looked almost impossible. Johnson was warning his country that failure looked likely.

The evening before, on Dec. 9, a dinner meeting on the 13th floor of the European Commission's Berlaymont headquarters in Brussels between Johnson and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hadn't gone to plan. After she warned him publicly to "keep distance" when they took their face masks off, they found themselves wrangling over the same points that had bogged down the negotiations since the start.

At one point, von der Leyen's aides showed Johnson a PowerPoint slide that the EU had published in February. It showed how close the U.K. is to Europe geographically and how much the two sides trade with each other, to explain why the EU insisted on fair competition rules in any deal.

But the U.K. had already dismissed the chart at the start of the year. To the people close to the negotiations, it felt like they were back at square one.

"We were numb," said one U.K. official after Frost briefed them the following morning. Another fought back tears. "We just wanted to know when we could go home and see our families," the official said.

As it looked like their efforts had come to nothing, the British negotiating team distracted themselves by challenging each other to come up with the best haiku. But the dinner at least had shown more clearly where the differences lay – helped in some small part by the menu of scallops and turbot – and Johnson and von der Leyen were now in charge.

Compromises were found on one of the longstanding sticking points: the level playing field for fair competition, or rules to ensure neither side held a post-Brexit advantage for

companies. The U.K. knew a deal was attainable if it backed down on some of its objections to the EU being able to impose tariffs if Britain does not follow the bloc's toughening of labor, social and environmental standards.

But the U.K. wanted something in return. The final days came down mainly to the fishing rights in British waters. Johnson and von der Leyen held further phone calls and, although officials said they still seemed to be talking across each other, on the ground the sides started to converge.

On Dec. 19, the prime minister was preparing to announce to the nation that he was taking drastic action to lock down London and ban Christmas gatherings because of a new highly virulent coronavirus strain. He also signaled to Frost that the time had come to do a deal.

As talks focused in on the issue of fishing rights, British negotiators were taken aback that the EU wasn't budging as much as they thought it would, and by the following night things looked bleak again.

In an attempt to get the deal over the line, Johnson and von der Leyen held two tense phone calls Monday. The Commission president said the EU, particularly France, wouldn't accept anything more than a 25% reduction in the amount of fish it could catch in British waters – and that this was the final offer.

Johnson had been pushing for 80%, though had just proposed 30%, a figure that might already be difficult to sell to his party in Parliament. Both sides were now feeling nervous about the prospects of a deal before Christmas, and when Johnson and von der Leyen spoke on Tuesday afternoon, they were still sticking to their guns.

That all changed on Tuesday night. After frantic phone calls between Brussels, Paris and Berlin, the EU came through with a new offer: Von der Leyen's Brexit adviser, Stephanie Riso,

called Frost and told him the bloc would drop its longstanding demand that it should be able to impose far-reaching tariffs on the U.K. should it restrict fish access in the future, a power known as cross-retaliation.

That was the final piece of the jigsaw. The U.K.'s top team sent urgent messages to their colleagues, some of whom were already back at their Brussels hotel packing their suitcases to go home for Christmas. They got down to work on fishing rights immediately and worked late Tuesday night.

By Wednesday, when Johnson and von der Leyen spoke again – four times that day – the outline of a deal was there. In return for the dropping of cross-retaliation, Johnson accepted a reduction of 25% on fishing, with a five-and-a-half-year transition period. That means that he can say that in June 2026, on the 10th anniversary of the EU referendum, the U.K. will have full control of its waters.

“This moment marks the end of a long voyage,” von der Leyen told a news conference in Brussels on Thursday. “At the end of such voyages, I normally feel joy. But today I feel satisfaction and relief. It’s time to leave Brexit behind.”

The most recent leg of that journey started in March, but made little progress until after the summer. The coronavirus pandemic derailed arrangements almost immediately.

Shortly after the first negotiating round, several members of the two teams, including Frost and Barnier, were laid low either because they tested positive or were displaying symptoms. They continued talks over videoconference, though couldn’t meet in person again until the end of June.

That meant negotiators couldn’t strike up a rapport. “There were no handshakes, no gentle pats on the back, no opportunity to chat things over informally over a drink,” said one EU official. “That’s how deals are normally done.”

Intimacy came in the form of web cameras into people's homes. One EU negotiator worked from a blood-red room with a bird cage, while a British official spoke from his shed in the English Midlands. Another from the U.K. sat in her kitchen between a bouquet of lilies and a set of knives. "It was perfect for her," one person involved in the talks joked.

There were technical problems with video technology, and both sides were worried about the security of discussing sensitive issues online. Officials found it difficult to work jointly on documents.

When they did resume face-to-face contact, the British side tried to win Barnier over. Over the summer, Frost wooed the Frenchman during private dinners at Carlton Gardens, an elegant 19th century London townhouse carefully chosen because of the emotions it might stir. The building served as the headquarters of the "Free France" government in exile during World War II led by Charles de Gaulle, Barnier's political hero – though also the French leader who vetoed Britain's membership of the EU's precursor.

Months went by in almost constant deadlock, though. Barnier told Frost that before going into a submarine you need to make sure the doors are firmly shut, in response to Frost's requests to intensify negotiations. As one negotiator put it: "There's only so many times you can tell each other exactly the same thing about fish without going slightly crazy."

The coronavirus weighed on the talks almost from the start. The revised train timetable under the English Channel meant there was only one shuttle to Brussels in the morning and one to London at night. Lockdowns closed bars and restaurants, and officials were forced to eat tepid dinners dropped off in paper bags alone in their hotel rooms for days on end.

In November, Barnier worked at home by candlelight after a power cut affected part of Brussels while he was in quarantine

after one of his team tested positive for COVID-19.

Indeed, darkness became a theme of the talks. In London, they took place in an underground conference center belonging to the U.K. government's business department dubbed "The Cave." In Brussels, meetings in the drab 1970s-style Borschette center took place from early morning to late at night. Starved of fresh air and exercise, negotiators started sharing vitamin D pills.

And with darkness came the sense of noir. During the first set of Brexit negotiations in 2018, the EU's trade supremo, Sabine Weyand, told attaches of her concern they were being bugged by the British secret service, something the U.K. flatly denied. Two years on, that paranoia persisted, an EU diplomat said. Johnson and his aides were asked to surrender their phones when they met von der Leyen for dinner.

Brussels officials in normal times might have allowed trusted journalists into their offices to view documents too sensitive to email. Now, they hid print-outs in the pages of the Le Soir newspaper as they sipped takeaway coffees on street corners.

While nervousness extended to both sides, key decision-making was taking place elsewhere anyway. Johnson exchanged text messages with French President Emmanuel Macron. Frost was in regular contact with Uwe Corsepius, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's top adviser.

For all the hours together, the two sides spent most of the time talking past each other. Even when Johnson and von der Leyen spoke again on the phone, officials said it sounded like they were talking from completely different positions.

The reasons for Brexit were something many on the EU side struggled to understand. While "sovereignty" became the U.K.'s mantra throughout the nine months, it was a running joke among the EU negotiators. Whenever Frost tweeted the word, they expected little to be achieved for the next few days.

In her speech Thursday, von der Leyen pointedly remarked that everyone should ask themselves what sovereignty actually means in the 21st century.

At various times, the talks were very close to collapse, not least when the British government threatened to break international law by unpicking part of the withdrawal agreement on leaving the EU. But the EU saw the move as just provocation. It was clear that, despite everything, both sides desperately wanted a deal.

Indeed, they always returned to the table. As it became closer to Christmas, and the end of the U.K.'s post-Brexit transition period, tensions increased. British officials said they observed cross words between Barnier and senior members of the EU team. Witnesses reported hearing shouting from the U.K. team's base in London.

Asked how they planned to celebrate the deal, one member of the British group already knew: "I'm going to sleep."

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**Qatar Airways allowed to reroute some flights through Saudi airspace**



Qatar Airways on Thursday said it had started rerouting flights through Saudi Arabian airspace.

“This evening, Qatar Airways began to reroute some flights through Saudi airspace,” Qatar’s national carrier tweeted, adding the first flight to use Saudi airspace was QR1365, which was scheduled to leave Doha for Johannesburg at 8.45pm.

Flight-tracking websites later showed QR1365’s flight path over Saudi Arabia on its way to the South African city.

This was the first scheduled Qatar Airways service to fly over Saudi Arabia since the start of the Gulf crisis in mid-2017.

Earlier this week, the Al-Ula Declaration was signed during the GCC Summit for the restoration of full relations between Qatar and the four nations – Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt – that had cut ties in 2017. This includes the reopening of borders and airspace.

Meanwhile, aviation analyst Alex Macheras told Gulf Times that

“this is the most significant development in more than three and a half years, as ‘NOTAMs’ (notices to flight crew issued by country aviation regulators) were updated by Saudi Arabia on Thursday, removing the airspace ban on Qatari-registered jets”.

“The removal of the ban was effective immediately, meaning just moments later a Qatar Airways A350 bound for South Africa became the first commercial airline flight in over three years to cross into Saudi airspace, reducing flight time and saving fuel,” he said. “The airspace of Saudi Arabia is now open to Qatar without restriction, and we should expect Qatar’s national airline, Qatar Airways, to resume flights to Saudi Arabia very soon.

“For now, flights that have been avoiding Saudi airspace for the duration of the blockade will now overfly the kingdom.”

Qatar Airways pilots will once again be communicating with Saudi’s air traffic controllers, and the airline will enjoy the fuel savings immediately – a win for the environment too, he noted.

“We’re expecting the ‘NOTAMs’ of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to also be updated in due course, following Saudi Arabia in removing their airspace bans on Qatar,” Macheras added.

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# China set to bail out Iraq with multibillion-dollar oil deal



Baghdad: Iraq is poised to sign a multibillion-dollar contract with China ZhenHua Oil Co., a bailout from Beijing for the cash-strapped government which will receive money upfront in exchange for long-term oil supplies.

The deal is the latest example of China, via state-controlled trading companies and banks, lending to struggling oil producers such as Angola, Venezuela and Ecuador, with repayment in the form of oil barrels rather than cash. This year's crash in oil prices has hammered Iraq's budget and the government has failed to pay teachers and civil servants on time.

The Iraqi agency in charge of petroleum exports, SOMO, picked ZhenHua after asking oil traders for bids, according to people familiar with the matter. Cabinet spokesman Hassan Nadhim said on Tuesday there had been “several offers” and they were being studied before Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi makes the final decision.

## **Upfront payment**

Under the terms of a letter SOMO sent last month, the winning bidder will buy 4 million barrels a month, or about 130,000 a day. They will pay upfront for one year of supply, which at current prices would bring in more than \$2 billion, according to Bloomberg calculations. The deal runs for five years – but the upfront payment is only for one year.

The deal attracted widespread interest among major oil traders, according to the people. The deadline for the tender was extended from late November to allow companies more time to bid.

ZhenHua Oil didn't reply to an email seeking comment that was sent to its headquarters in Beijing after normal business hours on Tuesday.

All major producers have taken a hit from oil's coronavirus-triggered plunge. But Iraq, where crude accounts for almost all government revenue, is in a worse position than most. Its economy will contract 12% this year, more than that of any other OPEC member under a production quota, according to International Monetary Fund forecasts.

Thousands of Iraqis have taken to the streets in recent months to protest about worsening living conditions. The government has struggled to fulfil its commitments to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which agreed at the height of the pandemic in April to cut output. Baghdad has pumped above its cap on several occasions, angering OPEC's de facto leader

Saudi Arabia.

## Rare deal

Energy-rich nations short on revenue have often relied on pre-payment deals to raise money, but Baghdad hasn't done so until now. The semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq has used similar contracts in the past, as have Chad and the Republic of Congo.

In a pre-payment deal, the oil buyer effectively becomes a lender to the country. The barrels are security for the loan.

Iraq's woes make it harder for the government to raise money more conventionally, such as through the bond market. The country's dollar yields average 7.5%, one of the highest levels for any sovereign. Goldman Sachs Group Inc. said this week that Iraq was among the most vulnerable bond issuers heading into 2021.

The pre-payment part of Iraq's contract is one of the largest in recent history, although less than the record \$10 billion that Russia's state-run Rosneft raised in 2013 from trading houses Vitol Group and Glencore Plc.

Besides its size, the Iraqi deal is rare because it allows the winner to ship crude to wherever it wishes for a year. Normally, Middle Eastern crude is sold with strict clauses preventing traders and refiners from re-selling the barrels to different regions.

The exclusion of that clause was probably seen as advantageous enough to compensate for the fact the pre-payment money is effectively interest-free for Iraq. A country usually pays a yield for the cash it receives upfront.

## **Revitalize China**

ZhenHua produces and trades oil. The company has played a large role in Beijing's so-called "going global" policy for energy. It has invested in oil concessions in the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan and Myanmar, and trades crude originating from the likes of Kuwait, Brazil and the Republic of Congo.

The company was founded in 2003 as a subsidiary of the largest Chinese state-owned defense contractor, known as Norinco. According to its website, ZhenHua trades about 1.3 million barrels a day of oil and finished products.

Other major Chinese traders include Unipecc, Chinaoil and Sinochem. Shrouded in relative secrecy in the past, these state companies are gaining prominence as China's oil consumption rises. It's set to soon overtake the U.S. as the world's largest crude importer.

ZhenHua, meaning "Revitalize China" in Mandarin, started a joint-venture with SOMO to market barrels into China in 2018, though it was later scrapped.

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## **Lebanon sets starting point for sea border negotiations with Israel**



BEIRUT (Reuters) – President Michel Aoun on Thursday specified Lebanon’s starting point for demarcating its sea border with Israel under U.S.-mediated talks, in the first public confirmation of a stance sources say increases the size of the disputed area.

Israel and Lebanon launched the negotiations last month with delegations from the long-time foes convening at a U.N. base to try to agree on the border that has held up hydrocarbon exploration in the potentially gas-rich area.

A presidency statement said Aoun instructed the Lebanese team that the demarcation line should start from the land point of Ras Naqoura as defined under a 1923 agreement and extend seaward in a trajectory that a security source said extends the disputed area to some 2,300 square km (888 sq miles) from around 860 sq km.

Israel’s energy minister, overseeing the talks with Lebanon, said Lebanon had now changed its position seven times and was contradicting its own assertions.

“Whoever wants prosperity in our region and seeks to safely develop natural resources must adhere to the principle of stability and settle the dispute along the lines that were submitted by Israel and Lebanon at the United Nations,” Yuval Steinitz said.

Any deviation, Steinitz said, would lead to a “dead end”.

Last month sources said the two sides presented contrasting maps for proposed borders. They said the Lebanese proposal extended farther south than the border Lebanon had years before presented to the United Nations and that of the Israeli team pushed the boundary farther north than Israel’s original position.

The talks, the culmination of three years of diplomacy by Washington, are due to resume in December.

Israel pumps gas from huge offshore fields but Lebanon, which has yet to find commercial gas reserves in its own waters, is desperate for cash from foreign donors as it faces the worst economic crisis since its 1975-1990 civil war.

Additional reporting by Ari Rabinovitch in Jerusalem; Writing by Ghaida Gbantous; Editing by Janet Lawrence

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**Athens responds to US State Department’s claim that Greek air space is only 6 nautical**

# miles



Regarding the report by the US State Department, which was forwarded to the US Congress on March 18 and in the framework of the provisions of the “Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act,” diplomatic sources pointed out that the borders of Greece’s territorial waters, as well as the maritime borders between Greece and Turkey, have been clearly defined for years on the basis of international law and are not in any dispute.

In particular, they stated in response to the State Department that regarding the Southeastern Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, the maritime borders have been defined by the Italy-Turkey Agreement signed in Ankara on 4 January 1932, as well as the minutes which was signed in Ankara on December 28, 1932.

Greece, as the successor state under the Treaty of Paris of 1947, gained sovereignty over the Dodecanese without any change in the maritime borders, as agreed between Italy and Turkey.

Regarding the sea borders in Thrace (up to the point of a distance of three nautical miles from the Evros Delta), they emphasise that these were defined by the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 and the Athens Protocol of 1926.

Finally, regarding the sea borders between the above two areas (from Thrace to Dodecanese), where the territorial waters of Greece and Turkey intersect, they pointed out that the sea borders follow the middle line between the Greek islands and islets and the opposite Turkish coasts.

The same diplomatic sources noted that Greece's external borders, including its territorial waters, are at the same time the external borders of the European Union.

The recently released State Department report states that Greece claims an airspace that extends up to 10 nautical miles and a territorial sea of up to 6 nautical miles, but that "under international law, a country's airspace coincides with its territorial sea."

"The US thus recognizes an airspace up to 6 nautical miles consistent with territorial sea. Greece and the US do not share a view on the extent of Greece's airspace," the report said.

The State Department report adds that although Athens currently claims up to a 6-nautical-mile territorial sea in the Aegean, "Greece and its neighbors have not agreed on boundary delimitation in those areas where their lawful maritime entitlements overlap."

"Lack of such delimitation means there is no clarity on the extent of Greece's territorial sea and corresponding airspace in these areas rendering any assessment of total violations not feasible," the report said.

The State Department report said Washington encourages Greece and Turkey "to resolve outstanding bilateral maritime boundary



issues peacefully and in accordance with international law.”

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# Mediterranean crisis calls for ‘civilized solution’, energy expert tells EU-Arab gathering



*‘Do we want the benefits of our own rightful shares more than we want to deny the same benefits to our neighbors?’*

ATHENS, Greece: The latest legal and technological tools can resolve rival claims in the Mediterranean without anyone firing a shot, a veteran of the region’s energy industry told a conference in Athens on Monday.

“We have both the legal mechanisms and the high-precision

mapping technologies to draw up fair and equitable boundaries at sea,” Roudi Baroudi said in a speech to the 5<sup>th</sup> European Union Arab World Summit. “That means that countries in the Mediterranean region can settle their differences amicably, setting aside the costly and ultimately self-defeating ways of war.”

Appearing via Zoom from Doha, Qatar, Baroudi said the region had a long history of spawning great civilizations, but that each of these had squandered their good fortune by making war on their neighbors.

Thanks to huge deposits of natural gas having been found beneath the Mediterranean, he noted, “the region faces another crossroads”, largely because “the vast majority of maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean remain unresolved.” With neighboring states laying claim to the same undersea real estate, Baroudi said the resulting “patchwork of claims and counter-claims” only served to hamper all parties by jeopardizing their respective offshore oil and gas activities.

With more than four decades in the business – including significant experience in both the public and private sectors – Baroudi has become a leading proponent of the East Med’s emergence as a major energy producer. Having long argued that safe and responsible exploitation of the resource in question would allow regional countries to make historic gains, both at home and abroad, his most recent interventions have focused on how to draw fair and equitable boundaries at sea. In fact, his book “Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward” is widely regarded as the most authoritative guide to the current situation.

Currently serving as CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha, Baroudi said all parties need to be honest with themselves by answering single question: “do we want the benefits of our own rightful shares more than we want to deny the same benefits to our neighbors?”

Those that want to focus on getting their share, he argued, need to put their faith in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

*Roudi Baroudi is CEO of Energy and Environment Holding, an independent consultancy based in Doha.*

*He also is the author of "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: the Way Forward", published earlier this year by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.*

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## **5th EU- Arab World Summit – Maritime Borders in the Mediterranean: the Cradle of Civilization Deserves a Civilized Solution**



**ROUDI BAROUDI**

CEO, Energy & Environment Holding

DELPHI  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM

المنتدى الاقتصادي  
Al-Hikmah Web-Arena

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**FOR TURKEY AND GREECE, SHARED  
TRAGEDY COULD SAVE LIVES IN  
THE LONG RUN**



By Roudi Baroudi

The deadly earthquake that struck Greece and Turkey on Friday has brought out the best in the two countries' leaders, who have exchanged not only condolences, but also offers of assistance.

Like other natural disasters, this one showed no regard for national borders. Most of the casualties and damage took place in the Turkish city of Izmir, but the epicenter was located beneath the seabed in Greek waters, and the two Greek youths who perished did so on the island of Samos, which lies less than 2 kilometers off the Turkish coast. Far from discriminating between the two neighbors, then, the quake was a (literally) jarring reminder that their fates are inextricably intertwined.

And yet, the mutual goodwill expressed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis owed most of its newsworthiness to the acrimony which has otherwise defined their relationship of late: most of their recent exchanges have involved accusations and even

thinly veiled threats over rival territorial claims at sea.

The dispute is not new, but in recent years its urgency has grown exponentially due to discoveries of enormous oil and (mostly) gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean. Far from eliciting offers to exchange resources and expertise – in a deepwater setting that will require massive upfront investment and world-class technical capabilities – the two sides have approached the matter as zero-sum game. Each is behaving as though any gains it achieves can only come by inflicting equal-size losses on the other, but given the realities of the dispute, nothing could be further from the truth.

Already, the mere fact of their having not progressed to negotiate a maritime border treaty – one allowing both parties to get on with the businesses of exploration and development in their respective zones, and perhaps in some joint areas as well – is costing a lot of money, and not just in terms of time lost to unnecessary delay. The absence of an agreement also means that whenever the Turks send their seismic research vessel, the Oruc Reis, to study the seabed in disputed waters, they also have to bear the cost of an armed escort. They may take solace in the fact that the Greeks are also paying heavily to monitor their activities, but there are no winners in such a contest. Both countries are only ensuring that whoever eventually finds, extracts, and sells the resources in question, the venture will have been less profitable than it should have been.

Similar obstacles apply to just about any scenario in which Athens and Ankara fail to delineate a mutually acceptable border and try to act unilaterally. Investors loath uncertainty, so any offshore blocks they auction off will fetch less money than they would if the dispute were settled. Underwriters are equally suspicious of oil and gas operations in potential war zones, which means that even if insurance can be obtained for ships, drilling rigs, and any other equipment, the price is likely to be exorbitant – and this is not to

mention the cost of liability coverage relating to life and limb, environmental consequences, etc.

Why would anyone opt for such a murky, risky, and uncertain venture when a much clearer, safer, and surer one is so close at hand? From any conventional business perspective, the far superior route is to negotiate a mutually beneficial solution that gives both parties the ability to make plans and implement them without fear of delay or interference.

A generation or two ago, there might have been an excuse for one or both countries to question the advisability of an early settlement, but not anymore: not when the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out clear standards for the fair and equitable resolution of maritime boundary disputes; not when satellite imagery and data processing technologies allow virtually all nation-states to obtain high-precision maps ahead of time; not when we have such an extensive background of previous cases and established precedent to indicate in advance what an eventual settlement will look like.

If they have not already done so, both countries can commission a company like Fugro to carry out a Law of the Sea study and, within a few weeks, know within a few centimeters where their maritime boundaries should lie. If there are compelling reasons to alter the legal or data inputs that produce these results, they can negotiate swaps and/or designate certain areas for joint management or even shared sovereignty. Whatever the solution, it will be better than the bellicose rhetoric and high-seas brinkmanship on which they have recently relied.

Right now the priority has to be on search and rescue, saving any lives that can still be saved, taking care of those made homeless by the quake, and determining the full extent of the damage caused by the quake. Nothing should delay this process.

Once the danger has passed and the vulnerable have been secured, however, Greece and Turkey should follow their own example in this post-quake period by moving to defuse tensions and start talking about how to resolve their differences quickly, practically, and peacefully. Why waste any more time, expend any more resources, or risk any more lives when a negotiated solution is so easily obtainable?

Roudi Baroudi, a four-decade veteran of the energy business and CEO of Doha-based Energy and Environment Holding, is the author of "Maritime Disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Way Forward", published by the Transatlantic Leadership Network and distributed by the Brookings Institution Press.



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**ترسيم الحدود البحرية ينطلق  
وبارودي لـ"النهار": الاجتهادات**



# الدولية تساعدنا للحصول على كامل الحقوق



يشهد مقر "اليونيفيل" في الناقورة اليوم إنطلاق الجلسة الافتتاحية للمفاوضات بين الجانبين اللبناني والاسرائيلي حول الحدود البحرية، والتي يستضيفها المنسق الخاص للأمم المتحدة في لبنان يان كوبيتش في حضور الوفدين اللبناني والاسرائيلي. كما يشارك في الجلسة مساعد وزير الخارجية الأميركي لشؤون الشرق الأدنى ديفيد شنكر على ان ينضم اليها ايضا السفير جون ديروشر، الذي سيكون الوسيط الأميركي لهذه المفاوضات.

بعد انتظار دام اكثر من عشر سنين، ينتظر ان تبدأ مفاوضات ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين لبنان واسرائيل. وهذا المشهد في حال كتبت له نهاية سعيدة سيستفيد منه لبنان في مجالات اقتصادية ووطنية مختلفة. ولن تكون المفاوضات سهلة بل يمكن وصفها بالصعبة والجادة، هذا ما يؤكد الخبير الدولي في شؤون النفط والغاز رودي بارودي في حديث لـ"النهار"، مشددا على "ضرورة التفاف الجميع حول الوفد اللبناني" الذي يضم العميد الركن الطيار بسام ياسين رئيسا، العقيد الركن البحري مازن بصيوص، عضو هيئة ادارة قطاع البترول وسام شباط، والخبير في القانون الدولي نجيب مسيحي الذي يعمل مع قيادة الجيش في المواضيع المتعلقة بالخرائط. المطلوب هو تأمين الدعم الكامل للجيش اللبناني في هذه المفاوضات، خصوصا ان التوصل الى اتفاق سيكون انتصارا لكل اللبنانيين كونه يؤدي حتما الى تسريع الاستفادة من الثروات النفطية والغازية الكامنة في عمق البحر، كما يسهل التفاوض مع الجانب القبرصي للتوصل إلى اتفاق نهائي معه أيضا.

ويعتبر بارودي ان "الجهود التي بذلها رئيس مجلس النواب نبيه بري طوال السنوات الماضية لوضع اطار صلب للمفاوضات هو جهد اساسي وله اثر ايجابي على لبنان، وبالتالي فإن اي جدل حول ما قام به الرئيس بري لن يساعد في المفاوضات بل على العكس سوف يحرم لبنان اوراقا رابحة هو بأمس" الحاجة اليها".

ويضيف ان "الحل السلمي سواء عبر المفاوضات المباشرة او غير المباشرة، كما هي الحال بين لبنان واسرائيل، للنزاعات الحدودية البحرية يساعد البلدان الساحلية على الاستفادة من الموارد البحرية"، لافتا إلى أن "أدوات الحل بسيطة ومتاحة بسهولة وهناك سوابق واجتهادات كثيرة تدل على ذلك". ويشير الى دور للولايات المتحدة الأميركية في هذا المجال، ويقول إنه "نظرا الى حال الحرب بين لبنان واسرائيل لعبت الادارة الاميركية دورا كبيرا طوال السنوات الماضية لوضع اطار ناجح ومفيد للبدء بالمفاوضات، خصوصا انها الدولة الوحيدة التي تستطيع ان تكون صلة وصل بين الطرفين"، مشددا على الدور الأساسي للأمم المتحدة، ومعتبرا أنه "في المسائل المشابهة تتبنى الحكومات المعنية بشكل كلي المبدأ الأساسي للأمم المتحدة والنظام الدولي برمته والذي تم العمل عليه منذ الحرب العالمية الثانية؛ أي الحل السلمي للنزاعات. بمجرد اقرار هذا المبدأ سيكون هناك مزيج منطقي من القانون والعلوم والتكنولوجيا يجعل ترسيم الحدود ولا سيما منها البحرية عملية بسيطة وسهلة يستفيد منها جميع الأطراف. فاتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار وتأثيرها المتزايد جعل من قواعدها ومعاييرها أساسا لجميع المفاوضات والاتفاقات البحرية، كما ان التقدم الذي أحرز أخيرا في مجال العلم والتكنولوجيا لا سيما مجال رسم الخرائط الدقيقة، وسع نطاق المبادئ التوجيهية لاتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار لايجاد تسوية للمنازعات التي تستند إليها". وفي هذا السياق، يؤكد بارودي انه "عند اتباع الدول الساحلية المبادئ والممارسات المنصوص عليها في اتفاقية الأمم المتحدة لقانون البحار، فعليها ان تلتزم أيضا قواعد وأنظمة محددة وان تستند إلى الجوانب العلمية والقانونية لتنفيذ هذه الإجراءات بموجب المبادئ التوجيهية الرسمية المحددة من قبل الأمم المتحدة".

### تفاصيل تقنية...

انطلاقا من هذا الواقع وبالعودة الى ترسيم الحدود البحرية بين لبنان واسرائيل، يلاحظ بارودي ان لبنان "اعتمد من اجل البدء بالترسيم 61 مترا في البحر بدءا من نقطة رأس الناقورة، بينما اعتمدت اسرائيل 37 مترا في البحر، فعلميا كلاهما خطأ في البدء بالترسيم من خط بحري offshore اذ عليهما اعتماد خط الناقورة البري (LT) الفاصل بين البلدين". وفي حال رفضت اسرائيل الاعتراف بحقوق لبنان فان الاجتهادات الدولية تعطي لبنان حقه الكامل، خصوصا اذا ما اعتمد الوفد المفاوض على النقاط الآتية:

القضايا المماثلة في التجارب السابقة التي ارتكزت على القانون

الدولي، وتؤكد ان لبنان سيُمنحُ معظم حقوقه، ومن القضايا التي اصدرت محكمة العدل الدولية أحكاما بها: قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية ميانمار ضد بنغلادش (12 آذار 2012).

قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية ليبيا ضد تونس (24 شباط 1982).  
قرار محكمة العدل الدولية في قضية نيكاراغوا ضد هندوراس (8 تشرين الاول 2007).

مما لا شك فيه ان هذه الاجتهادات تعطي الجيش اللبناني الحجة القانونية والحق الكامل للمطالبة بترسيم الحدود البحرية وفقا للمصالح والحقوق اللبنانية".

ومن المؤكد أن القرارات لا تقيم وزنا للجزر الصغيرة في أي معادلة، ولا تعتبر قادرة على دفع او ازاحة أي خط بحري واحد مقابل الخط الآخر وفقا لاجتهادات محكمة العدل الدولية، فكما هو واضح في الخريطة المرفقة، فإن الصخور والجزر الصغيرة لا تؤخذ في الاعتبار عند ترسيم الحدود، بحسب بارودي، وهذا ما اكده ايضا بيان لقيادة الجيش بان المفاوضات لن تعطي اهمية لهذه الصخور من اجل ترسيم الحدود. أما الخط المشترك الجانبي الذي لدى لبنان مع إسرائيل ويقارب 71 ميلا بحريا، فبمجرد أن ينتهي النزاع الحدودي البحري مع إسرائيل، سيتعزز تلقائياً موقف لبنان لناحية توقيع اتفاق نهائي لترسيم الحدود بين لبنان وقبرص والتي تبلغ حوالى 96 ميلا بحرياً، وبين لبنان وسوريا.

يؤكد بارودي في حديثه ان ترسيم الحدود اللبنانية "سيعزز فرص لبنان الاقتصادية، اذ ان الاكتشافات الأخيرة اكدت وجود كميات كبيرة من النفط والغاز، أما في حال عدم اعتماد الحل العادل والمنصف فسوف يؤدي ذلك ليس إلى إبطاء تنمية الموارد فحسب، بل سيزيد خطر وقوع حرب نحن في غنى عنها". وفي توضيحه لمنافع نجاح الترسيم واستغلال الثروات يقول: "ان الدول التي ستنتج الغاز ستعرف عائدات كبيرة من الإنتاج والصادرات، وحتى الدول غير المنتجة ستستفيد من استضافة مرافق المعالجة أو النقل، وفي أفضل السيناريوات، قد تنضم البلدان الأكثر حظاً إلى خطة إقليمية لتقاسم العائدات، وستسمح هذه التحسينات المالية باستثمارات طال انتظارها في التعليم والرعاية الصحية والنقل والبيئة والمياه النظيفة والحد من الفقر اضافة الى استقرار سياسي".

ويتمنى بارودي النجاح للوفد المفاوض وأن يعيد الى لبنان حقوقه المعترف بها دولياً، خصوصا ان الوضع الاقتصادي الضاغط على اللبنانيين قد يعرف تحولا ايجابيا في حال استطاع لبنان ترسيم حدوده واقناع شركات النفط العالمية بانه بات يؤمن بيئة آمنة لكي تتمكن من العمل واستكشاف ثرواته النفطية البحرية كما هي حال معظم الدول المجاورة.

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