



Statement on President Sleiman US Visit

Lebanese-American Organizations

Washington, DC, December 12, 2009

On the occasion of Lebanese President Michel Sleiman's visit to the United States to meet with President Barack Obama and top U.S. officials, Lebanese-American organizations wish to reaffirm their resolute belief that a sovereign and stable Lebanon must remain a pillar of the US strategy in the Middle East.

A free and independent Lebanon serves the national interests of the United States, and has positive ramifications for the:

- Resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict;
- Encouragement of moderation, and protection of minority rights in the Middle East;
- Promotion of religious co-existence and reinforcement of a culture of dialogue and tolerance; and
- Rejection of terrorism and extremism

The resolve of the Lebanese people to revitalize their democratic system, rebuild their civic institutions, reenergize their country's economy, and live in peace with their neighbors continues to be met with regional interferences and domestic impediments. In 2004 the United States made a strategic decision to use its political, diplomatic, and economic means in support of the Lebanese people's quest for sovereignty, helping put the country back on a determined yet delicate path towards renewal. However, the task is not complete. As Lebanese-Americans we call upon the United States to maintain the policies it has adopted to further the Lebanese recovery and regain Lebanon as a peaceful nation committed to its international obligations. To that end, President Obama and President Sleiman are urged to:

1. Ensure the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680 and 1701, which call for the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon as well as the cessation of military aid from any state to such groups;
2. Persuade the Syrian Government to cooperate fully with Lebanese and UN demands for the demarcation of the Syrian-Lebanese border, and ensure the monitoring of these joint borders to stop the flow of military material and personnel from Syria and Iran to Lebanese and Palestinian militias;
3. Urge the Israeli Government to comply with UNSCR 1701, complete its withdrawal from Lebanon, respect Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity; and revive the 1949 Armistice Agreement with Lebanon;
4. Assist in strengthening the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces to enable them to defend Lebanon's borders, counter foreign-supported militias, contain the threat of civil unrest, and combat terrorism in all its forms;
5. Help expedite the work of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon that would try the assassins of former PM Rafic Hariri and other Lebanese leaders;
6. Reject the permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since Lebanon's religious and demographic considerations exclude the viability of naturalizing these refugees;
7. Maintain current aid programs for democratic reforms and anti-corruption measures;
8. Engage, empower and assist vibrant elements of civil society in Lebanon who genuinely and unequivocally support the principles of freedom and democracy for Lebanon.



The Lebanese and American people have a long history of mutual respect, admiration, and a common reverence for the universal principles of freedom, individual rights and respect for diversity. Lebanese-Americans, who number over a million and are an integral part of the fabric of American society, are truly appreciative of America's support for Lebanon as expressed by the noble commitment and actions of successive US Administrations and the U.S. Congress for a sovereign and stable Lebanon.

Respectfully,

American Lebanese Alliance (ALA)
American Lebanese Coordination Council (ALCC)
Assembly for Lebanon (AFL)
Lebanese Information Center (LIC)
Lebanon Renaissance Foundation (LRF)
National Association of Lebanese Americans (NALA)