

## Statement by the Host Organizations of the Cedar Revolution Commemoration Event

Ten years ago, the Cedar Revolution liberated Lebanon from the occupation of the Assad forces and aimed to restore democracy and liberty in a country that, for decades, had been suffering from Syrian hegemony and brutality.

Lebanon, today, still faces existential threats from ISIS, Jabhat Al Nusra and Al-Qaeda affiliates and from Iran's agent, Hezbollah, threats exacerbated by the continuing war in neighboring Syria which has forced a huge numbers of refugees into Lebanon adding up to almost one third of the Lebanese population.

Our celebration this year also comes at a time when the Lebanese are suffering from a presidential void instigated by Iran through Hezbollah's Members of Parliament and their allies, in order to impose over the Lebanese a president subservient to Teheran. The advent of a new president who is committed to the principles of the Cedar Revolution would have an immeasurable effect on advancing Lebanon's quest for stability, freedom and democracy.

The Lebanese Americans maintain that the new president must be committed to:

- disarming Hezbollah and banning all weapons outside the control of the Lebanese armed and security forces;
- building state institutions;
- upholding international resolutions, specifically UNSCRs 1701 and 1559;
- controlling the Lebanese-Syrian border;
- sheltering Lebanon from Iran's and the Assad regime's transgressions, and
- creating an international status for Lebanon as a promoter of peace and an ally of the free world.

The Lebanese-Americans also take this opportunity to express their gratitude to the United States' invaluable support in affirming Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. The American government realizes that American national security is best served by a stable and secure Lebanon, free from foreign forces and unlawful militias.

The host organizations and the Lebanese-American grassroots they represent urge the US to:

- Continue its security assistance to the Lebanese Armed and Security Forces to achieve the purpose of expanding Lebanese state authority, taking control of borders and points of entry, weakening militias, and countering the nefarious actions of Iran and Assad;
- Adopt a policy toward Lebanon that curtails Iran's influence, strengthens US friends, the March 14 coalition, weakens the Hezbollahis, and penalizes their allies;
- Support the advent of a president not beholden in any way to Hezbollah, Iran, or Assad, and condemn the boycott of presidential elections by MPs allied with Hezbollah, and
- Provide the necessary funds to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis and support Lebanese host communities.

The Cedar Revolution goes on, and it needs the continued assertions of support from our administration and our congress. A clear US commitment will encourage Lebanese leaders, despite the intimidations and threats, to remain steadfast in their quest to rebuild an exemplary democracy in the region, which would serve as a necessary catalyst for the democratic evolution of neighboring nations and is essential for the stability of the Middle East.