

**DECLARATION #2: 3/3/05
TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IN LEBANON**

Fellow Lebanese,

Whereas in our previous DECLARATION OF SUPPORT 2-20-2005, we have called upon the Lebanese authorities to hold accountable all those in charge of security and peace in Lebanon when former PM Rafik Al-Hariri and his friends were massacred,

Whereas we have supported the Lebanese opposition movement in its demands to:

- Unveil the culprit(s) behind the assassination of former PM Al-Hariri and bring them to justice,*
- Withdraw Syrian army, security and intelligence from Lebanon,*
- Free the decision-making process in Lebanon from undue foreign interference, and*
- Hold free parliamentary elections,*

Whereas we strongly avowed that the above demands must be attained by strictly peaceful and civil means,

And in light of the resignation of the cabinet of PM Omar Karami,

We hereby amend our first declaration and affirm the following:

- 1) We salute our fellow citizens who have shown utmost civility in their demonstrations and protests and we call upon them to continue their peaceful march towards full independence and true democracy.
- 2) We salute the Lebanese Armed Forces who lived up to their Oath of protecting the constitutional rights of the Lebanese People to freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration.
- 3) We thank PM Omar Karami for gracefully proffering the resignation of his cabinet and we ask his interim government to hold accountable all ministers and government officials who were in charge of peace and internal security on February 14, 2005.
- 4) We demand a complete and immediate withdrawal of Syrian troops, their intelligence agents, and security forces from Lebanon BEFORE FORMULATING ANY ELECTIONS IN LEBANON. We also propose an expansion of the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon to cover the Lebanese-Syrian border, in light of the interview given by the Syrian President to the Italian newspaper "La Repubblica" (February 28, 2005), in which he openly declared the strategic interest of Syria in holding Lebanon hostage until Syria "gets peace".
- 6) We believe that a confessional system of government in Lebanon is a fundamental bar to building a modern democratic society with equal rights to all its citizens; therefore, we call upon all Lebanese to push for the abolition of this confessional system and to replace it with a merit-based system at all levels of government, starting with the selection and appointment of the next Prime Minister and cabinet, be it interim, transitional or lasting.
- 7) We aspire for an amendment of the Lebanese Constitution that embodies the wishes of the Lebanese People to live in peace, in a sovereign and democratic country that protects human rights, and in a modern and tolerant society that respects diversity and thrives on equal rights.