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Syrian Coalition's Letter to the Lebanese People

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Dear brothers and sisters in Lebanon,

A friendly salute from Syria, the country that revolted against tyranny, to the Lebanese people who have also suffered the Assad regime's injustice for more than 40 years.

This is our third letter to you; the first two letters were sent by the Syrian National Council on January 25, 2012 and February 14, 2012. In these letters we explained our basic views, stating:

1. The Syrian and Lebanese peoples have a shared past, present, and future. Democracy in Syria is the pillar of an independent Lebanon. Sovereignty and democracy both in Syria and Lebanon are the pillars of a national independent state in Palestine.
2. This correlation does not give Syria a mandate to control Lebanon as the Assad regime did under the slogan: "one people in two countries." On the contrary, it propels us to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and adopt a policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of another country. That is why we remain resolved to reconsider, in coordination with Lebanon's independent legitimate governments, whatever agreements and accords signed during the times of abhorrent trusteeship over Lebanon by the Assad regime. We will rebuild diplomatic ties between the two countries in accordance with the League of Arab States' charter and international law. We will also launch an investigation into the missing and detained Lebanese in Syria, so that justice is served.
3. Your success, nine years ago, of driving the Assad regime's army out of Lebanon dealt an unexpected massive blow to the arrogant regime. The Syrian people also smashed the walls of fear and intimidation and took to the streets bare-chested. Men, women, and children who are sacrificing their lives across Syria for the revolution do not need Lebanese territories included in the fighting. In fact, it was the Assad regime which tried to spread the fire, to buy more time. The Syrian people are determined to achieve victory at any cost. They realize backing down will be ten times worse than to continue the fight. We reiterate that we refuse to see Lebanon involved in the Assad regime's crisis. We are confident the Lebanese people support our just cause.
4. We aspire to a future Syria that is civil, democratic, and pluralistic. It is the Assad regime that invented "the issue of minorities" whether religious or ethnic. The Assad regime used those "minorities," including the Alawites, to remain in power. We, on the other hand, seek unity between all parts of the Syrian society; between Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians, Sunni, Christians, Alawites, Shia, and Druze, who will be equal citizens living side by side with dignity.

Dear Lebanese people of all backgrounds,

We reiterate our stand today. However, it is worth explaining the situation during the past few months; and mentioning some of the facts and developments:

1. Syria is not only a destroyed country; it is the theater of the crime of the century. The barbaric regime is using all kinds of weapons to kill civilians in cold blood. What shocks the conscience of every human being is that the whole world is watching but unfortunately remains silent.
2. Nearly 1.5 million Syrians have fled Syria to become refugees in Lebanon. The death spread by the Assad regime is the only reason why those people left Syria, and everyone who fails to acknowledge that is either being unjust or ignorant. We realize the immense pressure on Lebanon, as well as the demographic, economic, security, and social challenges caused by refugees. Unless there is an end to crimes in Syria, the number of refugees will continue to rise reaching soon half the number of the population in Lebanon. The Syrian refugees are only staying temporarily in Lebanon and they will come back to Syria as soon as the regime is removed. In this regard, the Syrian Coalition reaffirms the following:

The Arab world and the international community, in particular relief bodies and donor countries, should offer more assistance to Lebanon to provide services to refugees, and we call on those parties to do so.

It is the right of Lebanon to be a sovereign state, and it is Lebanon's duty to care for the refugees in accordance with the law. In this regard, we ask Lebanon not to hand over to the Assad regime refugees fleeing the brutality and death in Syria.

The Syrian Coalition is ready to work together with the Lebanese government and concerned civil society organizations to ease the burden on Lebanon and alleviate the suffering of Syrian refugees, which is a completely a non-political process.

3. It is completely unfair to call the revolution of our people "terrorism," and while the Assad regime claims to be fighting terrorist "takfiris," preserving peace and security, and protecting minorities, it is this very regime that is carrying out state terrorism, using barrel bombs and chemical weapons against the people in Syria. Around 250.000 have been killed, life

and civilization have been destroyed, and millions have become either refugees or IDPs. Our people are also suffering from Iran's state terrorism. Iran sends Basij forces and Hezbollah to kill Syrians. In addition to that, the collusion between terrorist groups affiliated with al Qaeda, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) and Syrian and Iranian intelligence has become clear as those groups only fight the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other military groups affiliated with it.

The Syrian Coalition has repeatedly said it considers Sunni takfiris and Shia takfiris two sides for one coin. In this regard, we would like to remind Shia fighters coming from Lebanon to fight alongside the regime that the mausoleum of Sayyida Zeinab has been in Syria for hundreds of years. The shrine of Shiite cleric Sayyid Muhsin al Ameen al Amli is also in Syria. Syria has opened its doors wide to Lebanese fleeing Israeli aggression in southern Lebanon in 1993, 1996, and 2006. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese also fled to Syria during the Lebanese civil war. We need the reason of the wise and the mercy of God to overcome the current catastrophe. Lebanon is at the forefront of the countries that can put an end to this appalling historic calamity in Syria. We condemn Hezbollah's involvement in Syria. However, we reject any and all acts of revenge on the Lebanese people, regardless of their affiliations.

4. Our revolution is for freedom, dignity, democracy, and a civil state. We seek everlasting peace and stability in Syria followed by permanent peace that would return to us the occupied Arab lands and achieve the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people.

Glory to the fallen heroes of Lebanon's independence

Glory to the fallen heroes of the Syrian Revolution

Victory is near



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