



## SHIELDS OF UNITED LEBANON, INC

(SOUL)

### CONSENSUS DOCUMENT BY LEBANESE AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS

- Assembly for Lebanon (AFL)
- Lebanese American Renaissance Partnership (LARP)
- Lebanese Information Center (LIC)
- Our New Lebanon (ONL)
- Shields of United Lebanon (SOUL)
- World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU)

**1. Lebanon's sovereignty is not negotiable.**

- a. Lebanon's sovereignty is threatened by the presence of armed militias in violation of national accords and international resolutions. The state does not have the authority over its own territory and does not control the decisions of war and peace. There cannot be a satisfactory solution to the Lebanon's crisis without restoring full sovereignty.
- b. While it is the responsibility of the Lebanese to take steps to protect its independence and sustainability, the international community has a responsibility to clearly state and support efforts to maintain Lebanon's independence, diversity, and openness. This can be done by a clear message that the corruption and mismanagement of the country is an obstacle both to financial assistance to the country as well as diplomatic cooperation.

**2. It is essential that the International Community support the Lebanese people as they reformulate a social contract to meet their needs.**

The international community should encourage the Lebanese people to collaborate in national dialogue on a common vision for a new Lebanon based on inclusive democracy with equal citizenry at its core and a Bill of Rights drafted to protect the political, economic, social, and judicial rights of all Lebanese citizens, and which reassures equality, inclusivity, and diversity while committing the Lebanese state to standards of honesty, consistency, transparency, and accountability in serving its people.

**3. A clear road forward for Lebanon's survival is essential.**

- a. The United States, in concert with the International Support Group and like-minded countries that support Lebanon, should maintain their collective position on the need for a reform government and continue to press Lebanon's leaders to take the steps that must be taken to receive desperately needed international assistance, including the penalties that will be enforced if reforms are not implemented in the near future.
- b. The government must take the necessary steps to hold free and fair elections at all levels, with additional penalties if elections are not held as scheduled without obstruction or interference.



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- c. The international community must insist on an adequate corps of election observers to monitor elections according to international standards.
4. **The Lebanese people must be the priority for the government.**
  - a. Any Lebanese government, whether fully empowered or a transitional government charged with free and fair elections, should make the humanitarian needs of the people THE priority for the country. This includes reframing the subsidies program to protect the most vulnerable, improvements to health, social, and educational services, and non-discriminatory allocation of reconstruction and support resources.
  - b. That government should also work with the international community to advance economic development at all levels; and begin the process of implementing standards of transparency, collaboration, consistency, and service in its operations and in dealing with the Lebanese people.
5. **Support for the LAF is critical to Lebanon's survival and sovereignty.**

The international community should maintain and coordinate support for the Lebanese Armed and Security Forces to strengthen their sustainability and operational readiness, and promote a strong sense of respect for the rights of the people.
6. **Independent investigations and audits are key to moving forward in building trust with the people.**

Countering corruption cannot begin too soon. The international community must use its judicial weight to insist on independent, transparent, and credible investigations into the Beirut Port explosion, pervasive corruption in public services, the flight of capital in the period before and after October 1, 2019, and forensic audits of the Central Bank and government agencies.