

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 20, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our support for the Lebanese people in the wake of the horrific explosion at the Port of Beirut that rocked the city on August 4, 2020, killing approximately 200 people and injuring thousands. We share our deepest condolences to the people of Lebanon who are already suffering from the effects of a collapsing economy and government, corruption, and the stranglehold of the Iranian-backed terrorist organization Hezbollah. With those thoughts in mind, we urge the administration to continue supporting the Lebanese people while ensuring no U.S. assistance benefits the deep-rooted corruption network inside Lebanon or Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that has killed more Americans than any other terrorist group before 9/11.

In recent months, the Lebanese people have taken to the streets to protest the chaos that Hezbollah and other corrupt entities have sown within their country. Hezbollah exploits significant problems plaguing Lebanon, including daily blackouts, fuel shortages, and a deep-seated government crisis. Moreover, while the Lebanese people are struggling, Hezbollah is expending resources to procure rockets and missiles to threaten Israel, sending fighters into Syria to support President Bashar al-Assad's regime, and building attack tunnels into Israel. In addition, according to the United States Treasury Department, Hezbollah uses Lebanon's ports and border crossings, including the Port of Beirut, to smuggle contraband such as illegal drugs and weapons.

Assistance to Lebanon must not enrich terrorist organizations or corrupt politicians. Hezbollah has historically abused Lebanese businesses, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and charities for their benefit. For example, Hezbollah manages numerous medical centers and is directly linked to Lebanese NGOs such as the Martyrs Foundation and Green Without Borders. To keep U.S. taxpayer dollars outside Hezbollah's grasp, future assistance must be directed with strict oversight and transparency through trusted, vetted NGOs verified to have no connection to the terror group or to corruption. Moreover, we encourage you to work with other international donors to support their adoption of similar standards to prevent Hezbollah from using this terrible tragedy to enrich itself with international assistance.

Thank you for your consideration as the United States continues to support the Lebanese people's recovery from this tragedy.

Sincerely,



Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

/s/
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

/s/
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/
Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s/
Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress

/s/
Gilbert R. Cisneros
Member of Congress

/s/
Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress

/s/
Austin Scott
Member of Congress

/s/
Don Bacon
Member of Congress

/s/
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

/s/
Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress

/s/
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

/s/
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

/s/
Scott Perry
Member of Congress

/s/
Jim Banks
Member of Congress

/s/
Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

/s/
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

/s/
Paul Cook
Member of Congress

/s/
Ken Buck
Member of Congress