

Future Movement of Ottawa Social Club Speech

Commemorating the 5th Anniversary of Mr. Hariri Assassination

Held at the Canadian Parliament Building on February 18th, 2010

Almost in every major Canadian city, there is an Organization Called the Future Movement; We all have the same vision and mission. We coordinate together and we share best practices. I would like to introduce the leaders of these Canadian organizations: Future Movement of:

Montreal: Bassem Derbass,

Toronto: Mr. Kahled El-Rahi,

Windsor: Mr. Ahmad Hussein,

Calgary: Mr. Fawzi Salem,

Edmonton: Mr. Omar Kaddah,

and myself, Marwan Osman for the Future Movement of Ottawa.

We would like to say a few words on behalf of all these leaders:

From Phoenicia to Mount Lebanon to modern Lebanon there has been a strong relationship between the people who left Lebanon and the ones that stayed. From the time that Phoenician sailors set sail for new frontiers throughout the Middle Ages, all the way to Modern Lebanon, strong ties remain between its people and their ancestral home. Throughout history, those who left never abandoned Lebanon and continued to be successful in business and other professions.

Approximately about 4M people live within the borders of Lebanon but globally, about 14M can point to Lebanon as their ancestral home. The entrepreneurial spirit of the

Lebanese people has been successfully exported across the globe but a strong sense of culture and belonging remains.

However, Lebanon went through difficult periods during the internal wars and invasions and hostilities that lasted 15 years from 1975 till 1990. This is when Mr. Rafic Hariri entered the political life and put the country back on the right course, allowing Lebanon to recover and prosper. His policies ensured that young people did not get burdened by the attitudes of the older generation which would have dragged a promising generation into violence. One of Hariri's initiatives was to send thousands of students abroad to obtain higher education which allowed them to become a vital resource for the country. Many of those students came to Canadian Universities and Colleges. He also initiated and completed many construction and social projects. He changed the face of Lebanon from a war torn country to a very modern and lively nation. For example, 2009 even 4 years after his assassination Lebanon witnessed the highest number of tourists ever seen before. This is a sign that Lebanon is now emerging into better times. We all look forward to the time when we see the Lebanese Government having full authority over all its territories. There are still internal problems that need attention and hopefully, they will be resolved by the Lebanese themselves. These problems should not be seen as an opportunity for the enemies of Lebanon to launch more wars and destruction. The Lebanese are looking forward for allies and friendly countries (Canada is one of them) to bring and support peaceful and positive initiatives to help Lebanon emerge into a brighter future.

As Lebanese-Canadians, we focus on our local communities and try to achieve higher standards in everything we do while maintaining our rich Lebanese heritage. We keep Mr. Hariri's vision alive by being good citizens, rejecting all forms of extremism, violence

and promoting education and good social values among all Canadians. We are very thankful to Canada for giving us all the rights and privileges and the opportunities to excel. One of the fundamental principles that make Canada the democratic and multicultural nation that it is now, is the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This Charter makes Canada unique and a dear country in which we have a lot of pride.

In closing: We would like to emphasize two points:

We hope that the International Court will find the murderers of Mr. Hariri and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law. And finally, our hope is that the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* will never be compromised in spite of all the challenges we are all facing with extremism and terrorism. Thank you!