

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL, TEXAS
CHAIRMAN

BRENDAN P. SHIELDS
STAFF DIRECTOR



GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK
RANKING MEMBER

SOPHIA A. LAFARGUE
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to express grave concern as Lebanon grapples with an all-consuming political and economic crisis that is devastating the country. Despite months of negotiation to try to appoint a president, Lebanon continues to be led by a caretaker government with limited authority to advance desperately needed reforms. The resulting political vacuum is exacerbating Lebanon's economic crisis, leading to hyperinflation and record levels of poverty across the country, as well as contributing to growing security concerns as Iran's terrorist proxy Hezbollah seeks to strengthen its grip over the country.

In the face of growing instability, Lebanon's political class must urgently overcome their differences and commit to advancing the interests of Lebanon's people. Parliament must break through months of intransigence to urgently elect a new president who is free from corruption and undue external influence. The path out of this crisis further requires a president committed to upholding the authority of the state, including the guarantees laid out in Lebanon's constitution, and advancing long overdue reforms, particularly the critical economic reforms mandated by the International Monetary Fund.

The United States and its European partners must reiterate with one voice the urgency of parliament to elect such a president and deliver these vital economic reforms. We also call on the Administration to use all available authorities, including additional targeted sanctions on specific individuals contributing to corruption and impeding progress in the country, to make clear to Lebanon's political class that the status quo is not acceptable. We also call on the Administration to continue pressing for full accountability for the August 2020 Beirut Port Blast and support independent, international investigatory efforts into egregious fraud and malfeasance by the

Governor of Lebanon's Central Bank. We must not allow Lebanon to be held hostage by those looking to advance their own selfish interests. We will continue to stand with the Lebanese people for an independent, sovereign, peaceful, and prosperous future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael T. McCaul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" at the beginning.

MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory MEEKS". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "G" at the beginning.

GREGORY MEEKS
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee