

DIMAN'S Declaration : constants and a joint mechanism of action (July 22, 2001)

The Maronite community, which played a fundamental role in building Lebanon, is going through a period of fear and anguish because of the unclearness of the future project concerning on the one hand, the role of Lebanon on the regional level in the turmoil of rapid changes in the region and on the other hand, its role on the internal level since the political climate is not yet based upon a constant formula nor on clear and real understanding acceptable to all the parties. Besides, on the external level, the Maronite community abroad is still suffering from the lack of a clear joint vision and from the absence of an organizing mechanism that would reinforce its capacity and efficiency.

Any action made towards the Maronite community and Lebanon should be based upon two main pillars: First, Lebanon needs the potentials of all its citizens throughout the world who constitute, wherever they live, a defense line to its righteous issues and are the messengers of its civilization.

Second, the efficiency of Maronite institutions abroad depends on organizing relations among them on the one hand, and between them and Lebanon on the other hand, starting from a constant principle which is the inseparability between the Maronite presence and the existence of Lebanon, for Maronites cannot be separated from Lebanon and Lebanon cannot be separated from Maronites.

The expansion of the Lebanese community around the world increased the need for organization and for helping the church assume its role and undertake its spiritual and social tasks in existing and new dioceses and parishes, in addition to safeguarding the National League that gathers Maronites together under the umbrella of the Maronite Syriac Church and the Patriarchy of Bkerky, the symbol of their unity, in order to preserve inherited values namely love of freedom, attachment to faith, testimony to the mission of the Christ in the land of mission and the tolerant openness to all divine religions and confessions starting from the principle of acceptance of the other. Maronite Leagues and Unions created abroad among Lebanese communities played and are still playing important roles in defending the specificities of this confession's members in order to prevent them from being melted into the societies they live within and thus losing their authentic Lebanese identity. Despite deficiencies among these leagues and unions, one cannot but recognize their achievements and constructive efforts in supporting Lebanese causes next to their brothers from the same doctrine in periods of hardships. This has created a general feeling that Lebanon has intercession under each and every sky and on every tribune in the world.

In line with the need to preserve the autonomy and specificity of each league and union according to the country they belong to, the delicate situation facing Lebanon and the Maronite community requires to unite efforts within one and unique world institutional framework gathering all Maronite Leagues and Unions in the five continents around a central program based on constants and principles. Such a unity constitutes an urgent need for defending the Lebanese national entity, its sovereignty, its freedom, and its independence, while preserving the efficiency of the Maronite presence and confirming Maronites entrenchment in their land by remaining bright and by preserving their heritage and unique

characteristics.

People gathered at the headquarters of the Maronite League in Lebanon, who believe in the above mentioned principles, who seek to unite the ranks, and who represent a number of Maronite institutions abroad are sending a message of unification within one organism on the following basis:

- We spiritually belong to Saint Maron who lived the Gospel in simplicity, loyalty, devotion, and heroism, and we belong to a Syriac Antioch civilization which interacted historically with the Arab civilization and which is radically related to the core of Lebanon and deeply implanted in it in terms of presence, donation, and values.
- We are committed to pursue the Maronite vocation that accompanied the Lebanese entity through all its phases and was at its origin especially since it became a state according to the modern concept of the state, so we would restore not only as individuals but also as a collectivity our pioneer role in this regard with our Lebanese fellows and in a spirit of openness and interaction with the environment we belong to.
- We seek to move back to the concept of the first Maronite Church, which means that the Maronite clergy and laymen are one harmonious and united community having as reference the Maronite Patriarchy, which is entrusted with the constants and the heritage.
- We seek to establish a practical plan executed by apostles and which basic objectives would be to survey the number of Maronite people throughout the world, to restore relations with them and to activate their capacities to serve their motherland and its citizens especially on the social, political, educational and economic levels.
- The right for Maronite people of Lebanese origins to regain their Lebanese nationality is one of the top priorities of this plan.
- We call upon Maronite Communities abroad to respect the laws, traditions and habits of the countries they live in, to work towards their development and progress while making efforts to revive the belonging to their motherland Lebanon.

It is up to the Maronite League in Lebanon to ensure cooperation and communication with all these institutions and between them, in addition to keeping up with approved projects and programs.