

Opening of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon

Contributed by State Dept.
Sunday, 01 March 2009

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Robert Wood
Acting Department Spokesman, Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
March 1, 2009

Today's opening of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon represents an important step toward justice in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. His death — along with the deaths of other Lebanese patriots — was an unsuccessful attempt to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty. The Lebanese people answered his assassination with the Cedar Revolution, leading to the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the most democratic Lebanese elections in decades.

The Tribunal is a clear signal that Lebanon's sovereignty is non-negotiable. Moreover, we hope it will help deter further violence and end a sad era of impunity. Too many Lebanese families have never seen justice for the murder of their loved ones.

We applaud the brave and tireless work of the UN International Independent Investigation Commission and Lebanese judicial authorities who have brought the investigation and Tribunal this far. We will continue to assist their efforts, and recently pledged another \$6 million, pending Congressional approval, towards the Tribunal's operations in addition to the \$14 million already contributed.

PRN: 2009/176

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/02/119896.htm>