

LEBANESE FREEDOM FIGHTER PASSES

Contributed by W. Thomas Smith, Jr.
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Kamal El Batal — Lebanon's national director of the World Council of the Cedars Revolution (WCCR) — passed away, Thursday, June 2.

Batal, an engineer by profession who has for years supported — and struggled — for freedom and democracy in his beloved Lebanon, —suffered a massive heart attack from which he could not be revived,— according to a statement issued today by the Washington, D.C.-based WCCR.

In recent weeks, Batal has been on a fact-finding mission, operating in Lebanon along the dangerous Syria-Lebanon border, gathering information and interviewing refugees streaming across the border escaping Syria's brutal military crackdown on its civilian population.

Over the past several years, Batal has worked tirelessly, demonstrated enormous leadership, often at great risk, in the various international efforts to break down the regionally dominating Iranian-Syrian-Hizballah axis.

Testifying before a U.S. congressional panel in Sept. 2008, Batal said, —Though some may believe that Syrian forces withdrew from Lebanon following UN Security Council Resolution 1559 (which calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon and the disarmament of all militias), the reality is that Syria's intelligence agents and special teams freely operate in Lebanon today. They facilitate, train, arm, control, and direct militias and their allies to serve the aims of the Syrian Regime.—

He added, —It is almost certain that the Syrian government masterminded and facilitated the majority of the assassinations in Lebanon — It is no coincidence that all armed groups today are allied to the Syrian regime.—

In its statement today, the WCCR said, —How fitting that Kamal's family name is Batal, —Hero— in Arabic, for that is how he lived his life by witnessing the truth and fearlessly fighting for justice.—

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Though I've never met Batal, we have spoken together several times either by email or phone, and I personally knew him to be — as his reputation was and will always be — one of the brightest, most intuitive and courageous men to have served in any capacity in the global war on terror.]

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