

## The US Embassy Condemns the Murder of Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem, and Other Victims

Contributed by US Embassy Lebanon  
Wednesday, 19 September 2007

The Embassy of the United States of America expresses its outrage at the murder of Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem. Antoine Ghanem was a courageous Member of Lebanon's Parliament who insisted on the constitutional right of Parliament to convene when Syria's allies locked Parliament's doors. He gave his vote of confidence to the Lebanese cabinet, continuing to support it when others tried to overthrow it. He joined the majority of Members of Parliament in demanding the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon designed to bring to justice political assassins such as those who have now taken his life. We are confident that he would have proudly fulfilled his constitutional obligation to participate in electing Lebanon's next president by attending the September 25 Parliamentary session. This crime is yet another obscene attack against Lebanon's democratic, constitutional institutions. This is only the latest in a long series of assassinations, threats, intimidation, and bombings over the past three years. It is not a coincidence that these attacks target those figures who have been working to secure Lebanon's independence from renewed Syrian hegemony. We note with concern that many Lebanese politicians allied with Syria have in fact warned that murder and violence would be the results of any effort to exercise genuine parliamentary democracy.

We hope that the shock of MP Ghanem's murder will persuade those Members of Parliament who were threatening to use a boycott of the presidential elections to honor the memory of their slain colleague by showing up for presidential elections as scheduled. By freely electing a president in accordance with Lebanon's established constitution, Lebanon's Parliament can honor the memory of Antoine Ghanem and the five other Members of Parliament who have been assassinated starting in February 2005. Such an election, conducted free of foreign interference, will also demonstrate to those who murder and maim that their methods will not kill Lebanon's democracy.

The United States, like other friends of Lebanon in the international community, remains firmly committed to supporting Lebanon's democracy and independence. As one of the UN Security Council Members that voted to approve the Special Tribunal for Lebanon when Lebanon's Parliament was denied the right to meet, the United States hopes that the perpetrators of this crime will quickly be brought to justice.

We express our deepest condolences to MP Ghanem's family, friends and colleagues. We extend our sympathy to the families of the other victims and wish those wounded the speediest recovery.

[http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/latest\\_embassy\\_news/press-releases/pr091907.html](http://lebanon.usembassy.gov/latest_embassy_news/press-releases/pr091907.html)