

Profile Rafik Hariri

Contributed by Administrator
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A Tribute to the Late Rafik Hariri

In Memory of Rafik Hariri, he rebuilt Beirut, at the time of his brutal Assassination Lebanon witnessed the birth of the Cedars Revolution
 {google}-1952456861565112179{/google}

Rafik Hariri Assassination Feb. 14, 2005 - How Brutal and Low can mankind reach!
 {youtube}g8YdZikIWMs{/youtube}

Lebanon Artists for Rafic Hariri - La Ma Kholsit il7kayi
 {youtube}_WlpiFLfLHM{/youtube}

Assi Al-Hillani - Beirut is crying
 {youtube}cIMjC_oJbS4{/youtube}
 From Times Online February 14, 2005 Profile: Rafik Hariri By Chris Johnston, Times Online

Rafik Hariri was the most important political figure in Lebanon since the end of the 15-year civil war that tore the country apart.

Born into a modest peasant family in the southern port city of Sidon in 1945, he became one of the region's wealthiest and most influential men.

Starting out as an accountant, Hariri studied commerce, before moving to Saudi Arabia and making his fortune in construction. He built crucial ties with the Saudi monarchy along the way and received Saudi citizenship in 1987.

He ran a commercial empire that spanned computers, banking, insurance, real estate and television and was the majority owner of Lebanon's Future Television. His close relations with Saudi Arabia's oil-rich leaders helped him in his efforts to rebuild Lebanon after the civil war.

Hariri, a Sunni Arab, was a central figure in securing the Al-Taif peace agreement that ended the conflict, which pitted the country's religious parties against one another. Israel backed the Christians while Syria supported both Sunnis and Shias.

He first became prime minister in October 1992, and set about restoring national confidence in the Lebanese economy and bolstering the country's burgeoning business community. In 1998, he lost his post after a squabble with the then Lebanese President, Elias Hrawi, over how to resolve the country's ailing economy.

Hariri was asked to form a new government in October 2000 after he won landslide majority in the general elections. After four years in power he resigned last October, in a row over the extent of Syria's involvement in Lebanon's internal politics.

He quit after the presidency of Emile Lahoud was artificially extended by three years, thanks to a Syrian-backed constitutional amendment that Hariri had opposed.

The extension was in defiance of UN Security Council resolution 1559 adopted on September 2, 2004, calling for a withdrawal of Syrian troops and for Lebanese presidential elections to be held. Although Hariri had publicly tried to avoid offending Damascus, his pro-Syrian opponents accused him of being the driving force behind the resolution.

Syria has some 15,000 troops in Lebanon and influences virtually all key political decisions. It was invited into the country to provide security during the war and has never released its grip.

After stepping down as Prime Minister last year, Hariri had kept himself largely on the sidelines. But in the eyes of many he remained the "silent opponent" to Lebanon's current pro-Syrian government.

His vast fortune, estimated at US\$4 billion (£2.1 billion), allowed him to maintain an independent political posture without defying Syria.

Members of Hariri's parliamentary bloc had also been taking part in opposition meetings, calling on Syria to extract its soldiers from Lebanon.

The politician is survived by his wife, Nazik Hariri, and six children.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article514418.ece>

----- From Times Online February 14, 2005
 Timeline: Lebanon under Hariri
 Key developments since Rafik Hariri became Prime Minister in 1992, two years after the end of the devastating 15-year civil war
 By Times Online and agencies

1992

October 31: Hariri takes office as Prime Minister

December 29: For the first time in nine years, Lebanese army regains control of southern Beirut, a stronghold of Hezbollah, a Shia Muslim militia backed by Syria and Iran

1993

May 20: Hariri reinforces his control of Lebanon's finances by naming close ally Riad Salame as head of the Central Bank of Lebanon

August 9: About 600 Lebanese troops deploy in the UN interim force-controlled zone in southern Lebanon, north of the Israeli-occupied zone, about 10 days after a massive Israeli military offensive into the country

November 2: Launch of Beirut city centre reconstruction plan, led by the Solidere construction company, of which Hariri is a main shareholder

1994

March 23: Cabinet dissolves Samir Geagea's Christian Lebanese Forces party

April 21: Geagea and 150 followers arrested over a church bombing north of Beirut that killed 10 worshippers in February

May 8-14: Hariri suspends government activity because of President Elias Hrawi's resistance to a cabinet reshuffle. Hariri resumes activity following talks with Syrian President Hafaz al-Assad in Damascus

December 1: Hariri says he will resign, apparently blaming a lack of cohesion in his cabinet. A week later he goes back to work after assurances from Damascus of greater cooperation from Shia leaders

1995

May 19: Hariri resigns, saying he needs a government of solidarity and forms a government of "the faithful" a week later

October 19: Parliament amends the constitution to extend Hrawi's mandate by three years

1996

April 26: Ceasefire agreement ends Israel's punitive "Grapes of Wrath" operation against guerrillas in southern Lebanon, which left 175 people dead, mostly civilians

November 7: Hariri forms his third government

December 16: Hariri receives promises of \$US3.2 million in aid over three years at a donors' conference in Washington

1997

May 29: Lebanese government admits to phone taps "for national security"

1998

October 15: General Emile Lahoud is elected president by parliament and succeeds Hrawi on November 24

November 30: Hariri refuses to form a new government following Lahoud's election

December 4: Veteran Sunni leader and economist Salim Hoss takes office as prime minister

2000

May 24: Israeli troops pull out of southern Lebanon, ending 22 years of occupation

October 26: Hariri becomes prime minister for the fourth time

2001

April 15: Israel carries out an air strike on a Syrian military radar station in Lebanon

June 14-18: Syria withdraws troops from Beirut and redeploys them eastward to the Bekaa Valley

2002

January 10: Lebanon and the European Union sign an association agreement

March 3: Syria's new president Bashir al-Assad visits Lebanon, the first such trip by a Syrian head of state in more than 25 years

March 27-28: Beirut hosts the 14th Arab League summit that adopts a comprehensive initiative offering peace with Israel in return for a pullout from occupied Arab territories

2003

April 16: Hariri resigns. A day later, he forms what is considered the most pro-Syrian government since the end of the civil war

2004

September 2: The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1559 calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon and respect for its sovereignty - an implicit criticism of Syria

September 3: Lebanese parliament bows to Syrian pressure and approves a controversial constitutional amendment giving Lahoud another three years in office

September 6: Four ministers quit the cabinet in protest at the constitutional amendment

October 20: Hariri resigns as prime minister

October 26: Prime minister designate Omar Karamah forms a new 30-member cabinet, with key posts going to pro-Syrian figures and with women entering government for the first time in Lebanon's history

2005

February 14: Hariri is killed in a massive blast in a seafront area of central Beirut

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article514414.ece>