

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

April 25, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to underscore our concerns with the political stalemate in Lebanon. It is alarming to see the use of Lebanon's presidential selection process as an obstacle to a capable and empowered government. These tactics will further freeze movement on necessary reforms, drive Lebanon closer to economic collapse, and undermine U.S. national security interests in both Lebanon and the broader region. We strongly urge your administration to clearly reinforce the urgent need for the formation of a Lebanese government that is committed to governing transparently and addressing the desperate needs of the Lebanese people, rather than enriching cronies or enabling bad actors like Hezbollah to further derail Lebanese democracy. Procedural games at the expense of meaningful reforms and good governance only serve to undermine Lebanese and regional stability.

Since we wrote to Secretaries Blinken and Yellen in December raising similar concerns, we were heartened by recent sanctions against Hassan Muhammad Daqqou and Noah Zeiter, two Lebanese associates of Hezbollah, for their role in trafficking Captagon on behalf of the Assad regime as well as those against the network of Hezbollah financier Nazem Said Ahmad. We were also pleased to see sanctions announced against Raymond and Teddy Rahme, affiliates of Hezbollah, for their role in selling tainted fuel in Lebanon. However, we remain discouraged by the ongoing political deadlock, engineered by Hezbollah and its allies, like Nabih Berri, to wear down the opposition to its preferred candidate at the expense of candidates with broader support who are more willing to tackle Lebanon's many challenges. Hezbollah remains more focused on enriching its criminal and terrorist enterprise than on addressing Lebanon's dire challenges.

As we wrote in December, we remain strong supporters of Lebanese sovereignty and institutions. There is still bipartisan support in Congress for the U.S.-Lebanon relationship and for core U.S. national interests in a stable, secure, and prosperous

Lebanon. However, that consensus is increasingly undermined by the current deadlock and refusal to address Lebanon's serious needs. We therefore urge you to work closely with our allies and partners in the region to support a legitimate democratic process and presidential candidates that, unlike previous presidents, will demonstrate the ability to serve and be accountable to the people of Lebanon.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
Chairman



James E. Risch  
Ranking Member