

Walid Maalouf's Political Platform **For the Parliamentary Seat of the Melkite-Catholic** **in the Shouf District**

After consultations with family, friends and supporters in Lebanon and the Lebanese Diasporas, Mr. Walid Maalouf has decided to run for the Parliamentary seat of the Melkite-Catholic in the Shouf district of Lebanon.

Walid Maalouf's objectives are:

- 1- Induce change in the Lebanese political system.
- 2- Serve the people of Lebanon and the Shouf district specifically with honesty and devotion for the people's interests.
- 3- Improve the standards of living for the Lebanese people based on his national economic platform.
- 4- Encourage the return and investment of the Lebanese Diaspora in Lebanon.
- 5- Reform Lebanon's public institutions and establish security and stability.
- 6- Mr. Maalouf's priority is to bring "bahbouha" and improve the standard of living for the people of Shouf and Ikleem based on his specific Shouf economic growth program.

Walid Maalouf's achievements:

In the last 30 years, Mr. Maalouf had Lebanon on the top of his agenda. The following are highlights of his achievements:

- 1- In 1983, Mr. Maalouf founded the Metrolina Phoenician Club in the State of North Carolina.
- 2- In 1987, he was the National Executive Director of the American Lebanese League.
- 3- In 1988, he was a founder and National Vice President of the National Alliance of Lebanese Americans.
- 4- In 1991, he testified before the United States Congress asking US lawmakers to help the cause of Lebanon's freedom.
- 5- In 2003, he initiated efforts through the US Mission at the United Nations for a Security Council Resolution to rid Lebanon from the Syrian occupation. On September 3, 2004 the UN Security council passed UNSCR 1559 with a majority of 9 votes without any veto.

- 6- In December 3, 2003, he confronted the Syrian permanent representative to the United Nations and from the rostrum of the 58th General Assembly, demanded Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon.
- 7- In 2004, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Lebanese American Coalition with hopes to unite all Lebanese American activists behind a free and democratic Lebanon.
- 8- From 2003 to 2009, Walid Maalouf was the constant voice for Lebanon's freedom and democracy within the American Administration.
- 9- In 2006 he established the Lebanese American Renaissance Partnership (LARP) which supported several non-profit organizations from all religious and geographical areas in Lebanon.

To achieve these objectives, Mr. Maalouf has committed himself to the following:

1. He will run as an independent candidate to pursue his political agenda in favor of the Lebanese people. He spelled out his reformer views and agenda in an Open Letter to the Lebanese People. To read the full text in English, French, Spanish and Arabic click on the following link: <http://www.walidmaalouf.com/Articles/open%20letter%20english.html>
2. Mr. Maalouf's disposition is to run as an independent in order to be influenced only by the constituents of the district he represents.
3. His aim is to win. But more importantly, to introduce new campaigning behaviors and ideas that would benefit only the Lebanese people.
4. He also aims for change, *complete and total change* in introducing a new era in the political lives of the Lebanese people.
5. Total transparency in all campaign contributions. Mr. Maalouf will have the names of all contributors and the amount of money contributed listed on his website. A monthly statement of expenditure will be released to all donors.
6. He will not seek any support, financial or otherwise, from any foreign country or power. His sole source of support will strictly be the Lebanese people, both resident and living abroad, who have the right to vote.

As Legislator:

1. Mr. Maalouf has a proven record in negotiations and consensus building.
2. He has a proven record in fund raising and building programs to benefit the Lebanese people.
3. He is a progressive thinker; his number one priority is serving the interest and future of Lebanon.

4. Mr. Maalouf brings a much-needed breeze of fresh air in Lebanese politics. He will work with all parties in the next parliament and engage them in his national political and economic programs so they will be implemented.
5. He has a strong and honest personality and he will definitely bring change to the parliament.
6. He has mastered a deep understanding of the international network of Lebanese and has a clear desire to serve the people without expecting anything in return.

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The following is Mr. Maalouf's national political and economic plan *in his own words* to save Lebanon, and his vision to make the Shouf and the Ikleem an economic hub and bring its residents the "bahbouha" they deserve.

National Political Platform:

The return of the Lebanese Diaspora: The Lebanese Diaspora has the potential to be a tremendous force in the rebirth of the country we all love. I will push to create new programs for the expatriates at three levels: political, social and economic, to engage them in helping me rebuild a new Lebanon.

The right of Lebanese emigrants to vote: I will not tire and I will not yield until a law is passed allowing Lebanese emigrants the right to vote in parliamentary elections at Lebanese embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions around the world.

The Change must come from YOU: Reject the political godfather mentality, "attazalum", cronyism, nepotism, and the hegemony and monopoly of traditionalist politicians over the political, economic and social lives of the Lebanese people.

Reform Lebanon's institutions and establish security and stability:

I assure you that I will work day in and day out to implement the following reforms:

In Parliament:

A) Establish in the constitution the principle of an electoral law based on the "one man one vote" and the individual electoral districts (128 deputies for 128 districts) respecting the general religious distribution that presently exists in the Lebanese constitution without a specific district for a specific religion. You thus create a "shadow Parliament" for the runner-ups in those 128 districts who will monitor

and hold the deputies accountable to their commitments and the programs they promised to deliver to their voters. This will ensure the election of more responsive representatives in the next parliamentary elections. It will also pave the way for the formation of a regular political life based on two political blocs or trans-regional and trans-confessional parties, such as (Kaissy/Yemeni, Doustouri/Watani, Nahj/Helfe).

B) Create a Senate (Per Article 22 of the Constitution) in Parliament to represent the religious communities of the nation, while the Deputes Chamber will represent the Lebanese people regardless of their religions. This bicameral structure will upgrade the legislative branch in Lebanon and ensure true representation of its citizens and religious communities. My recommendation for the Senate elections is that one third of all Senate seats are to be renewed every second year.

On the Presidency and the Council of Ministers: The old presidential protocol and other constitutional powers of the President must be reinstated in order to get rid of the troika and its divisiveness. The president must play a bigger role and must have greater authority in the political process in order for him/her to ensure balance between the different political factions. The Council of Ministers should be a unified body working as one team to serve the Lebanese people, and should no longer be the arena for political bickering and obstacles creation.

On the Judiciary: I will work to ensure the autonomy of the judiciary branch and consolidate the principle of the immovability of judges (Article 20 of the Constitution, original French text), by proposing legislation for the election – rather than appointment – of judges to the bench. Here is the base of the Separation of the three branches, allowing for “checks and balances”.

I will work to create an only one “Higher Council” at the helm of the Judiciary, elected periodically by the Judges, and a “Supreme Court” that will address the constitutionality of laws and major decisions faced by the nation. The responsibilities of those two bodies should be spelled out in the constitution.

Permanent control of the national borders: Stop the illegal flow of weapons, unlawful commerce, and individuals into the country in order to stem the ongoing destabilization of the country. I will work to keep Lebanon out of the regional conflicts that always take their tolls on the Lebanese population.

Transfer the Palestinian Camps from Lebanon: Lebanese and Palestinian officials and the international community must tackle as quickly as possible the issue of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. We recommend that an international body comprising all parties concerned be assigned the task of establishing a mechanism to re-settle – on a temporary basis and until a final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is reached – the Palestinian refugees

in other countries around the world that are willing and able to accommodate them under better living conditions than exist in Lebanon.

Conclusion of political reform: Today the Lebanese government presides over a "confederation" of confessional communities, which traditionally tend to establish their own irregular foreign alliances. This has been fatal during the last 33 years, as it attracted foreign intervention regionally and internationally. Lebanon must cut off these irregular alliances that continue to entangle it in the conflicts of the broader Middle East, particularly since some regional powers are not willing to loosen their grip over Lebanon. A buffer zone of trust must be created to transcend the last 35 years of instability. A new system of governance must be implemented in which religious affiliation is no longer the basis of the political organization of the country and the Lebanese can have a true dialogue about their future without any regional interference. I will work hard for the UN Security Council to grant Lebanon a territorial neutrality status which prevents other countries from using Lebanon's territory to wage wars against other countries and which makes the Lebanese authorities the sole entity legally entitled to bear arms.

National Economic Platform:

Improving economic well-being: The economic situation in Lebanon is one of the main obstacles for improving the standard of living in Lebanon and rebuilding the once thriving middle class, now decimated by 40 years of instability and insecurity. In order to improve the standard of living of the Lebanese people, I intend to draw upon the Lebanese Diaspora's economic support, reform public institutions, stop favoritism, and encourage the development of the agricultural, industrial and tourist sectors.

First: I will engage the Lebanese emigrants in large economic projects that will create jobs.

Second: In order to minimize the national debt, which is nearing US\$40 billion, and put the Lebanese economy back on track I will push the Lebanese government to tighten its belt immediately by implementing the following economic reforms in all government institutions:

1. Stop the awarding of public contracts based on favoritism.
2. Stop the hiring of people based on political interests and favoritism, rather than qualifications and needs.
3. Limit the number of ministers to the existing ministries and even combine some of them. Streamline and reform the work of all ministries.
4. Stop the lifetime salaries for deputies elected for more than one term and use those saving to invest in education for our kids.
5. Stop perks and high overhead expenses in all public institutions.

Third: start a new program to encourage and simplify the export of Lebanese goods which in turn will directly benefit all sectors of the Lebanese society. This program requires a thorough understanding of the international Lebanese network and a clear desire to serve the people without expecting anything in return. I will help organize the export of goods to directly benefit the farmers, industries and commerce.

Economic growth for the Shouf and Ikleem:

While the general economic situation in Lebanon is paramount, I will focus my efforts on the Shouf and Ikleem areas. The Shouf and Ikleem have suffered from a long history of economic neglect. I intend to take a series of actions to build upon the strengths of the economy of the Shouf in order to improve the standard of living of the people of the Shouf. My economic plan for the Shouf will focus on finding markets for the agricultural products of the farmers, encouraging the establishment of agricultural and industrial factories, and developing a more vibrant tourism sector without infringing on the traditions and customs of the people of the Shouf. Moreover, I will work to insure the development of the educational sector in the Shouf area.

First: I will help establish three cooperatives for local produce, homemade products and handmade crafts in order to market and sell them in Lebanese, Arab, and international markets. These cooperatives will be staffed with qualified people who will help the Shouf farmers understand the process of exporting and will provide them with more information on what kind of produce, handmade product/crafts that are needed and desired. These cooperatives will research the best markets and advice farmers on when, how and what to produce.

Second: I will encourage Lebanese and foreign investors to come to the Shouf area and establish factories for processing agricultural crops and creating new industrial products. These factories will employ people from the Shouf, buy products from the Shouf and spend money in the Shouf area. Their presence in the Shouf will create jobs and improve the standard of living in the area.

Third: I will bring Lebanese investors to help build two large hotels in the Shouf district for both winter and summer tourist seasons. These hotels will hire a large number of people and will attract tourists who will spend their money in the Shouf. In addition, I will encourage the development of a not-for-profit organization that will champion responsible eco-friendly tourism which will build on the natural beauty of the Shouf area. In addition, this not-for-profit organization will coordinate with local governments (municipalities) to preserve the natural beauty of the Shouf and encourage people to come and visit the Shouf. This series of steps will benefit the ordinary people of the Shouf by creating jobs and involving them in the preservation of their environment.

Fourth: I will raise the necessary funds to build three libraries in the Shouf district to help our kids, teenagers and adults develop their skills and make them more appealing on the job market. These libraries will include reference sections to help students get grants to study in Lebanon and abroad.

All these economic efforts have the ultimate objective of discouraging our kids from migration. I think that the Shouf area specifically, and Lebanon in general, have suffered tremendously from the loss of a generation of gifted Lebanese and from the brain drain caused by the war. I want to keep families united in the Shouf. I want you to get up in the morning and see your kids next to you and not in some distant country. I want our kids to grow and flourish economically and socially while keeping our customs and traditions. With these projects and others, I believe I can create more than ten thousand jobs for the residents of my district, raise their standard of living, and make us continue to be proud that we are from the Shouf. Last, but not least, I will report every six months to the residents of the Shouf and the Ikleem on progress made with this program.

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So ladies and gentlemen,

We the family, friends and supporters of Mr. Maalouf urge you to help Walid win his seat in Parliament so he can, in turn, help you and help all of Lebanon.

The Walid Maalouf Campaign Team

Michel Yammine, National Chairman (Shebanieh - Aley)
Nasser Fayad, National Vice Chairman & Senior Legal Advisor (Bshatfeen - Shouf)

Joseph Hitti, Senior Political Advisor (Damour - Shouf)
Dr. Isam Harfoush, Media and Public Relations (Jezine)
Mounah Abdel Samad, Senior Economic Advisor (Ammatour - Shouf)
Toni Younis, Meeting Coordinator (Amik - Shouf)
Ibrahim Tannous, Fundraising Coordinator, (Jbeil)
Cheblie Hasib Mounzer, Fundraising Coordinator, (Kfarkatra – Shouf)
Ziad Maalouf, Fundraising Advisor (Kfarkatra – Shouf)

To learn more of Mr. Maalouf valuable work for Lebanon, visit the following links:

www.walidmaalouf.com

www.larpi.net

www.walidmaalouffoundation.org.lb

www.walidmaaloufforparliament.com

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