



## **COUNCIL OF LEBANESE AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS**

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The Council of Lebanese American Organizations expresses its concerns over the attempts by the Lebanese regime to annul the results of the partial elections that were held in the Metn District last week.

The elections saw the victory of the opposition candidate Mr. Gabriel El-Murr, who is openly against the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, and the resounding defeat of the pro-Syrian puppet regime candidate. The results of the elections pose a very serious threat to the grip that the regime of puppet president Emile Lahoud has on the destiny of the nation, since they anticipate the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections of 2004/2005. As a result, the puppet government is now bowing to pressures from its Syrian masters in Damascus to cancel the elections, annul their validity, or reverse their outcome.

The Lebanese people have chosen the path of sovereignty and freedom from occupation. The victory of the opposition is the victory of the people, and took place against a backdrop of fraudulent practices by the regime's agents who pressured and bribed voters and committed other serious election fraud. The economic decline and poverty of Lebanon is a direct consequence of the occupation and its collaborators, and the results of the elections are seen as a direct and unambiguous message that the people of Lebanon want change in the status quo of the occupation.

The Council stands by the freedom-loving people of Lebanon and urges them to continue their peaceful and non-violent resistance to the Syrian occupation and its collaborators in the Lebanese government. The people of Lebanon have the support of the Council, which will carry their message to every level of the American government. The Council hopes that the regime will listen to its people and learn the lessons of history regarding the fate of collaborators and tyrants. It finally advises the regime not to repeat the brutal repression it carried out last summer against peaceful freedom-calling demonstrators, because violence and bloody repression serve only the interests of the Syrian occupation and other enemies of Lebanon.

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