



The Final Statement

[Issued Following Sleiman-Assad Talks]

[Translation: Presidency of the Lebanese Republic- Press Office]

After the end of formal talks between Presidents Sleiman and Assad with the Lebanese and Syrian delegations, Khoury announced the final text of the joint statement:

"In the framework of strengthening fraternal relations between the two fraternal countries and in response to the invitation of the Syrian Arab Republic President Bashar al-Assad, His Excellency the Lebanese President Gen. Michel Sleiman president paid a visit to Syria heading an official delegation on 13 and 14/8/2008.

The two sides held talks on bilateral relations between the two fraternal countries in various fields and stressed their readiness to strengthen and develop them to serve the interests of both countries and peoples.

The two sides praised the positive developments on the Lebanese arena, particularly after the Doha agreement, which put Lebanon on the road to national reconciliation, preserving its security and stability. In this regard, both sides stressed the importance of supporting the Doha agreement, including the Lebanese national dialogue which will be resumed under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Lebanon as an emphasis on his role as head of state and symbol of the unity of the homeland.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to working to consolidate Syrian-Lebanese relations based on mutual respect of sovereignty and independence of the two countries, and the special brotherly relations between the two fraternal countries through means that respond to the hopes and aspirations of the fraternal peoples and deepen the bonds of cooperation and coordination between them.

In order to achieve this goal, the Syrian and Lebanese Presidents agreed on the following:

1. To establish diplomatic relations between the two countries at the level of ambassadors in accordance with the Special Declaration issued in Damascus on 13/8/2008 for this purpose.
2. To resume the work of the Joint Commission for delimitation and demarcation of the borders between Lebanon and Syria according to the priorities agreed upon between the two sides to serve the desired end and take necessary administrative and technical measures to launch this initiative.
3. To launch joint action to control borders and combat smuggling and all acts contrary to the law by the concerned authorities in both countries, by coordinating the actions on both sides of the border and developing mechanisms of prompt and accurate communication for this purpose through the daily follow-up process.
4. To activate and intensify the work of the Joint Commission on Missing Peoples and adopt mechanisms to reach the final results as soon as possible and closely inform concerned parties of the progress made in this field.
5. To review existing bilateral agreements between the two countries objectively and according to common convictions in line with developments in relations between the two countries and the interests of the two peoples.
6. To take the necessary measures aimed at activating trade exchange, insuring elements of economic integration and establishing a common economic market that provides a vital area for the free exchange of goods, funds and individuals in an effort to activate the implementation of the Convention on Facilitation.

The two sides thoroughly examined the regional situation, where they renewed their commitment to joint Arab action and efforts to achieve effective Arab solidarity, especially in light of the role played by Syria in the Arab summit presidency; the two sides stressed the importance of coordination between the two countries in political issues, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict knowing that the instability in the region is due to the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories.



In this regard, both sides stressed the necessity of achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Conference of Madrid, and the Arab peace initiative, ensuring the restoration of the Palestinian peoples legitimate rights including the right of return, the rejection of settlement, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, the full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of the June 4th, 1967, putting an end to Israel's continued flagrant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, where both sides stressed the necessity of Israel's withdrawal from the Lebanese Shebaa Farms and Kfar Shuba hills and the northern part of Ghajar according to relevant United Nations resolutions.

Regarding the situation in Iraq, the two sides confirmed support for the unity of Iraqi land and people, and for the current political process to ensure participation of all categories of the Iraqi people and withdrawal of foreign troops in accordance with the resolutions of the Arab League.

The two sides expressed their readiness to continue coordination and consultation between them and exchange visits, where his Excellency President Michel Sleiman invited President Bashar al-Assad to visit Lebanon. The date of this visit will be set according to the appropriate ways.

It was issued in Damascus on 14/8/2008.