

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H. RES. 1077
OFFERED BY MR. DEUTCH OF FLORIDA

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas the security, sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Lebanon, a pluralistic democracy in the Middle East, is in the interest of the United States and its allies in the region;

Whereas, for more than a decade, the United States has provided robust assistance for Lebanon, including training and equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), development assistance through the Economic Support Fund, funding for schools and hospitals in Lebanon through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Program, and funding through the Middle East Partnership Initiative;

Whereas the integrity and independence of the LAF serves a United States national security interest;

Whereas the LAF has a longstanding partnership with the United States military;

Whereas the LAF, as the primary institution entrusted with Lebanon's defense, security, and sovereignty, is an important force to support the safety and security of Lebanon;

Whereas international support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remains necessary to counteract destabilizing forces in Lebanon and help lower tensions at the Lebanon-Israel border;

Whereas, on August 28, 2020, the United Nations Security Council unanimously extended and expanded UNIFIL's mandate and called on the Lebanese Government to facilitate prompt and full access to sites requested by United Nations peacekeepers for investigation, urged freedom of movement and unimpeded access for peacekeepers to all parts of the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel, and condemned in the strongest terms all attempts to restrict United Nations troop movements and attacks on mission personnel;

Whereas United States support for American institutions in Lebanon through humanitarian and bilateral economic assistance is vital for fostering democratic ideals and principles throughout Lebanon;

Whereas Lebanon hosts an estimated 1,500,000 refugees, the highest refugee-per-capita ratio in the world, despite challenges within its own social and economic sectors;

Whereas endemic corruption and mismanagement by elites and the terrorist organization Hezbollah has led Lebanon to the brink of economic collapse, with one of the highest rates of public debt, food insecurity, and hyperinflation in the world;

Whereas Iran undermines Lebanon's sovereignty and its history as a strong United States ally and democratic actor in the Middle East;

Whereas Iran's terrorist proxy Hezbollah continues to harm the Lebanese people by violating United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), perpetuating undue foreign influence from Iran, harming the distinct demographic and social equilibrium of Lebanon, stoking sec-

tarian violence, weakening the Lebanese economy, and supporting corruption and violence within Lebanon;

Whereas, on August 4, 2020, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate detonated at the Port of Beirut, killing approximately 200 people and injuring thousands more;

Whereas the dangerous and highly explosive material had been unsafely stored at the Port of Beirut since 2014, despite repeated warnings over the threat the stockpile posed to the surrounding civilian population;

Whereas the explosions destroyed vast swaths of infrastructure across Beirut and displaced up to 300,000 people;

Whereas the explosions destroyed or damaged the entire Port of Beirut, through which Lebanon imports the bulk of its food, including the destruction of approximately 120,000 metric tons of desperately needed food stocks, according to the United Nations;

Whereas, prior to the explosions, nearly 1,000,000 people in the Beirut metropolitan area, including more than 500,000 children, did not have the means to buy basic essentials, including food;

Whereas the United States Government has longstanding concerns about Hezbollah's use of and influence over the Beirut Port as a transit and storage point for its terrorist enterprise;

Whereas the people of Lebanon across the political spectrum have renewed demands for a meaningful change in Lebanon's political leadership, government accountability, and transparency;

Whereas the United States has provided nearly \$19,000,000 in humanitarian assistance to aid the people of Lebanon following the explosions to support lifesaving medical re-

sponses and relief including food aid for 300,000 people and medical and pharmaceutical support for up to 60,000 people; and

Whereas a stable Lebanon with a credible, transparent government free from Iranian and Hezbollah interference and based on the rule of law and democratic principles is in the interests of the Lebanese people, the United States, and United States partners and allies: Now, therefore, be it

Strike the resolved clause and insert the following:

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) extends its heartfelt condolences to, and
- 3 stands with, the people of Lebanon following the
- 4 tragic events of August 4;
- 5 (2) calls on the Government of Lebanon to ad-
- 6 vance the interests of the people of Lebanon by root-
- 7 ing out corruption in government, executing struc-
- 8 tural reforms and anticorruption measures, and
- 9 working with international financial institutions like
- 10 the International Monetary Fund and World Bank
- 11 to undertake necessary reforms in order to stabilize
- 12 the economy;
- 13 (3) supports the right of the people of Lebanon
- 14 to engage in peaceful demonstration and assembly to
- 15 achieve accountability in government, democratic po-

1 litical representation, increased civil rights, and
2 anticorruption reforms;

3 (4) calls on the Government of Lebanon to ad-
4 dress the root causes of instability and mismanage-
5 ment that allowed the tragic August 4 blast to take
6 place, including by responding to calls for account-
7 ability and reform by the people of Lebanon;

8 (5) calls on the Lebanese Government, includ-
9 ing the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), to take all
10 appropriate action to fully implement United Na-
11 tions Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and
12 any successor resolutions and to secure the safety,
13 freedom of movement, and access for United Nations
14 Interim Force troops in Lebanon;

15 (6) recognizes the LAF as the sole institution
16 entrusted with the defense of the sovereignty of Leb-
17 anon and supports United States partnerships with
18 the LAF to counter terrorist groups such as
19 Hezbollah, ISIS, and Al Qaeda in Lebanon;

20 (7) supports United States efforts to provide
21 emergency humanitarian relief in concert with other
22 governments and international partners;

23 (8) affirms that United States assistance should
24 be delivered directly to the Lebanese people through
25 properly vetted channels, organizations, and individ-

1 uals, without risk of diversion to terrorist groups;
2 and
3 (9) calls on the Government of Lebanon to con-
4 duct a credible, impartial, and transparent investiga-
5 tion into the cause of, and responsibility for, the Au-
6 gust 4 explosions, and include impartial inter-
7 national experts as part of the investigation team.

Amend the title so as to read: “Resolution express-
ing the sense of the House of Representatives on the con-
tinued importance of the United States-Lebanon relation-
ship and expressing solidarity with the Lebanese people
following the devastating explosions at the Port of Beirut
on August 4, 2020.”.

