



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

18 September 1983

Over the weekend the Prime Minister sent the following message to President Amin Gemayel of the Lebanon:

"Your Excellency,

In these difficult times facing your country I would like you to know that the Australian Government and people fully support the efforts of your Government to assure the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon. The Australian Government and people, including the many Australians of Lebanese origin, are deeply distressed at the recent tragic outbreak of fighting in Lebanon and the high loss of life. We wish you success in your endeavours towards national reconciliation and believe that this requires engagement by all the communities in Lebanon in the process of healing the divisions which have arisen.

The very deep concern felt in Australia about the present situation in Lebanon is reflected in the following motion which was adopted by the Australian Parliament on 15 September 1983:

"This House -

- (1) notes with grave concern the violence and disorder in Lebanon and deploras the continuing presence of those foreign military forces, including the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, who are provoking and exacerbating the bloodshed and destruction, and
- (2) considers that an essential step towards the establishment of peaceful co-existence amongst all Lebanese people lies in the cessation of the flow of arms from other countries and the withdrawal of all troops except those necessary to foster the conditions for the development of public order and who are in Lebanon at the genuine invitation of the government".

Yours sincerely

R.J.L. Hawke"