

January 24, 2019

Dear AUB community,

The American University of Beirut (AUB) is an institution that puts its students first and is committed to ensuring they have the opportunity to complete their education whenever possible.

Earlier in January, the university was informed by representatives of the US government that students from the West Bank and Gaza would no longer be eligible for comprehensive scholarships under its US-Middle East Partnership Initiative-Tomorrow's Leaders (MEPI-TL) program and that their funding would cease effective January 31, 2019. It was explained that suspension of assistance to all projects in the Palestinian Authority and to citizens of those areas was an unintended consequence of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act of 2018 (ATCA) passed by Congress on October 3 last year.

The MEPI-TL program has been in operation since 2007 after being launched by the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs' Office of Assistance Coordination with the aim of supporting civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled students from around the MENA region to become future leaders in their communities. AUB has 82 currently-enrolled students on the program, 16 of whom are from the West Bank and Gaza.

In order to ensure that these outstanding Palestinian scholars are able to continue their education, AUB will secure the \$1.2 million in funds necessary to ensure that they can complete their courses up to graduation, without redirecting any of our already considerable financial aid commitments to other deserving and needy students. We are also working with our partners at the US Embassy in Beirut and in Washington, DC to mitigate the impact of ATCA on the MEPI-TL program.

At the university, we feel a profound sense of obligation to all of our students and our decision to support Palestinian scholars of the MEPI-TL program is aligned with the values of AUB which are aspirational, egalitarian, and enduring.

Best regards,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD  
President