

For Immediate Release



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## **Message from AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri to the AUB Community regarding the Jerusalem issue**

Dear members of the AUB community,

On July 26, President Donald Trump, flanked by our trustee, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, lauded US-Lebanese ties and commended Lebanon “for standing up for stability” in a troubled region. He memorably went on to reference AUB for our 150-year mission “to educate generations of leaders” with American support.

This week, the same president made our task of bringing forth thoughtful, moderate, and inclusive leaders harder when he recognized Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, undermining US efforts to be an effective driver of peace in the Middle East.

Since its establishment in 1866 to empower the Arab peoples with education and free thought and expression, AUB has consistently supported self-determination for the inhabitants of this region. On February 6, 1919, our second president, Howard Bliss, delivered a celebrated speech at the Paris Peace Conference arguing for what would become the King-Crane Commission to establish the “wishes and aspirations” of the peoples of the former Ottoman Syria. Bliss’s hoped-for “national governments which shall derive their authority from the initiative and free will of the peoples” were a long time coming. For the people of Palestine it has yet to materialize.

Commitment to Palestine is one of the hallmarks of AUB. It was at AUB that historian Dr. Constantine Zurayk named the Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948, and where much of Palestinian political and intellectual thought was forged. Here we educated many of Palestine’s most influential figures, and will continue to do so. This week we mourn the loss of one such figure, our alumnus and trustee Abdel Mohsen al-Qattan (BBA ’51), an exemplar of diligence, social responsibility, and tolerance, who like so many others dreamt of a prosperous, independent Palestine attainable through reason, education, and hard work.

We agree with President Trump on the folly of repeating the mistakes of the past. But we cannot agree to Israel's "right to determine its own capital" as "a necessary condition for achieving peace" while withholding that same right from the people of Palestine. We see it as inconsistent with the fundamental American value of equal justice for all and we fear it will detract from AUB's intent that the peoples of this region might "have life and have it more abundantly." As AUB president, I embrace these inclusive principles and reiterate my predecessor's appeal for a better form of citizenship and governance, emanating "from the initiative and free will of the peoples themselves."

ENDS

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## **Note to Editors**

### **About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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