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WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In Defense of Christians (IDC), the nation's leading advocacy organization for Christians and religious minorities in the Middle East and Africa, opposes H.R. 4230: the Strategic Lebanon Security Reporting Act and H.R. 4073: Countering Hizballah in Lebanon's Military Act.

On June 22, Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-NY) introduced H.R. 4073 asserting the presence of "significant [Hezbollah] influence over the policies or activities of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)", and further calling for the suspension of appropriated U.S. assistance to the LAF. On June 29, Rep. Elaine Luria (D-VA) introduced H.R. 4230, a similar yet separate bill, which also infers "Hezbollah's influence within the Government of Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces."

The premises upon which each bill is based have been investigated and discredited time and again by the U.S. State Department and Department of Defense.

This legislation comes after a May 18 letter from House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Gregory Meeks—signed by 24 congressional colleagues—to Secretary of State Antony Blinken urging for increased assistance to the LAF. Days later, on May 21, the State Department announced a \$15 million increase in Foreign Military Financing to the LAF.

In March, CENTCOM commander, General McKenzie, travelled to Lebanon and stated that "[o]ur relationship with the Lebanese Armed Forces is built upon a mutual desire for security and stability in the region and our ability to train together for collective benefit."

"The LAF maintains the firm support of the State Department, Department of Defense, the Administration, and bipartisan congressional support, all with good reason," said IDC President Toufic Baaklini.

"The U.S. has consistently certified the LAF to be in full compliance with End-Use-Monitoring reporting and security requirements. Continued U.S. support to the LAF is critical to U.S. interests in the region, namely countering Iran and supporting UNIFIL in the enforcement of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. The only actors that stand to benefit from wavering U.S. support for the LAF are Hezbollah and Iran," he added.

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