

Richard Kouyoumjian

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“We are the people of #Marfaa, #Achrafieh, #Remiel, #Saifi; we are the people of #Beirut.

We feel the tragedy of the displaced, but we are dealing with reality responsibly, truthfully, honestly and respectfully. And therefore:

- We reject the transformation of the Karantina and port area into a ticking time bomb that threatens our security and stability.
- We reject centers for the displaced becoming security compounds outside the law, full of illegal weapons.
- We reject the nightmare of another Beirut port explosion, caused by the storage of weapons, explosives or dangerous materials that threaten people and property. The spirits of those killed in the past are still with us and the wounds our people suffered have still not healed.
- We reject living under the fear of being attacked by militiamen and our people becoming collateral damage.
- We reject temporary shelter becoming a permanent demographic change an apparently humanitarian act having sectarian consequences.
- We reject returning to a dark past, when tent cities became a state within the state, a refuge for gangs engaged in theft and spreading chaos, allowing mafias to threaten people's lives and livelihoods.

“Let it be known that we will stop a shelter encampment for displaced people being put up at the northern entrance to the Port of Beirut, using all available political and popular means.

We support the state, and its security agencies are responsible for maintaining security. It is the responsibility of the state to protect residents and ensure social stability. It is also its duty to provide shelter for displaced people and preserve their dignity in centers that have better infrastructure, services and public health provision.

We have often paid the price for liberating this area from occupiers, foreigners and non-state actors.

Today, we pledge to remain faithful to the sacrifices of our people and our martyrs, and to stand by our city of Beirut, proud and defiant, under the authority of the state and the law.”