

Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia

— *FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS* —



Akram R. Elias
Grand Master

November 6, 2008

To all Grand Lodges with whom we are in amity:

I greet you well and extend warmest fraternal greetings on behalf of the brethren of the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.). The warm and cooperative fraternal relations we enjoy and maintain with all regular Grand Lodges remain among our highest priorities. For this reason, we are saddened to learn of the resolution of the Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, Most Worshipful Brother Edward Gilbert, to withdraw the Grand Lodge of New York's recognition of our Grand Lodge on November 5, 2008.

Regarding our creation of a new lodge under our jurisdiction in the Republic of Lebanon, we respectfully maintain that the Grand Lodge of New York's claim of exclusive jurisdiction in this free and sovereign nation outside of North America is invalid. The current operation there of regular lodges not beholden to the Grand Lodge of New York nullifies any claim of exclusive jurisdiction in Lebanon. Furthermore, the Grand Lodge of New York and the Grand Lodge of Scotland were officially informed of the actions of this Grand Lodge prior to the chartering and consecration of the lodge.

The claim by the Grand Lodge of New York that the Master and Secretary of the lodge are under suspension is also invalid. We would like to inform you that the brothers in question, who are longtime members of our Grand Lodge, had legally dimitted from the Grand Lodge of New York well before the action of its District Grand Lodge, attesting to the fact that no charges were pending against them. The Grand Lodge of New York was overreaching when it attempted to suspend brothers solely beholden to the Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C.

The Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C. has repeatedly requested clarification from the Grand Lodge of New York to back up its claims and assertions and even requested personal meetings. Regrettably, all of these earnest entreaties have gone unanswered.

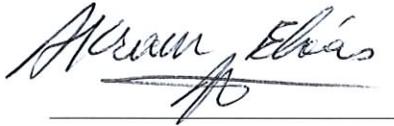
What we have done in Lebanon is legal and legitimate. The Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C. has for many, many years maintained close relations with Masons in Lebanon. This is due, in large measure, to the make up of our membership which includes a particularly large community of brothers of Lebanese origin. These brethren, having been made Masons in Washington, and being very active in their Washington lodges, have either returned to their homeland or are now frequent travelers there for business and other reasons.

Having reached a critical mass in Lebanon, and with many friends, family and associates indicating their desire to be accepted into our noble society, these brethren saw the need to have a lodge of their own based on affiliation with the Grand Lodge of Washington, D.C. and its Ritual. With great enthusiasm, these brethren petitioned our Grand Lodge to create a lodge in Beirut, with the sole purpose of strengthening the Craft, as they know it, in their native land. Rest assured, it is not and has never been the intention of these brethren or this Grand Lodge to interfere with lodges already operating in Lebanon.

We will continue in the good faith fashion we have always maintained and will avail ourselves of every opportunity for dialogue in order to foster understanding and harmony. We are also prepared to provide you with copies of the full correspondence between our Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge of New York, should you request it.

As Freemasons we have dedicated ourselves to building better communities and bridges of understanding. Our energies should be focused on these worthy goals and expanding the Light of Freemasonry to areas of the world that desperately need it. We hope and pray that we are up to the challenge and that you will see the goodness and right in our undertaking.

Fraternally,



Akram R. Elias
Grand Master of Masons
Washington, D.C.

Attest:



Mansour Hatefi, PGM
Grand Secretary
Washington, D.C.