

Proclamation of President Chehab
explaining why he has decided not to run for the 1970 Presidency
(Translated from French)

“In response to the pressures I have been subject to, to make me stand as a candidate to the first office, I have deemed it my duty, before taking any final decision, to proceed to an in-depth study of the elements of the conjuncture and of their implications in every field. I undertook this task, to assess the possibilities that would be presented to me in order to serve my country, according to my personal conception of that duty and of the imperatives of the future.

“Based on the experience I have acquired during the exercise of my various duties, notably as the Head of State; taking into account the political, economical and social evolutions; drawing inspiration from my personal conception of authority and of the role of the State, as well as from the prestige that must be attached to it; and conforming to my method of work and to what the Lebanese would expect from a man who has the experience of government, I believe that the situation is as follows:

“The Lebanese political institutions and the traditional customs of public life do not appear to constitute a tool suited to the imperatives of the Lebanese recovery as required by the new decade in all fields. Our political institutions are, in many respects, lagging behind the modern political regimes that try to ensure the efficiency of the State.

“Our electoral laws are based on temporary and provisional elements. As to our economical regime, the defects in its application favor the development of situations of monopoly. All this leaves little room for a project of a national level.

“The ambition of such an endeavor is the establishment of an authentic, lasting parliamentary democracy, the suppression of monopolies, the guaranty of a dignified life and a better existence for the Lebanese, within the framework of a truly liberal economy where jobs and equal opportunities are ensured, and where all can benefit from the positive elements of a true economical and social democracy.

“But the many contacts that I established and the analysis that I made have confirmed my conviction that the country is not yet ready to accept these fundamental solutions, that I would only consider within the respect of legality and of the fundamental freedoms to which I have always been attached.

“This is why I have decided not to be a candidate to the Presidency of the Republic. By rendering this decision public, I thank the Members of Parliament, the politicians, the authorities, and the citizens who have granted me their trust. I wish them to succeed in the service of Lebanon.”

4 August 1970