



HON KIM C BEAZLEY MP LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Message for the Memorial Mass for Martyr Gebran Tueni

I am honoured to have been invited to the Memorial Mass for Martyr Gebran Tueni and I am sorry that I am unable to attend.

I am a great admirer of the Australian World Lebanese Cultural Union and the Lebanese community generally. Lebanese Australians are prominent in the Australian way of life – in sport, the arts, the media, politics, and any number of everyday jobs and trades. You are very much a part of the lifeblood of Australia.

The Lebanese are very strong on faith and family, and these characteristics have put your community at the forefront of multiculturalism and tolerance in the broader Australian context.

On this occasion can do no better than to quote the words of a journalist colleague and friend of his, Scott MacLeod of *TIME*, writing shortly after the tragic assassination of Gebran Tueni:

“For a scribe, Gebran Tueni was shockingly high mannered. In his dapper suits, crisp shirts and designer ties, wearing a thin moustache that was always immaculately trimmed, he seemed to belong in a gentleman's club, not a newsroom. He didn't look the part of the bravest newspaperman in the Middle East. But after he was assassinated at the age of 48 this week in a car bombing that obliterated his Range Rover as he travelled to work in Beirut, it's clear that's exactly what he was. Many Arab journalists are fearless when it comes to criticizing Israel or the United States. None other has written so passionately-and in the face of such peril-in support of freedom against Arab dictatorships.”

On behalf of the Australian Labor Party and my Parliamentary colleagues I offer my best wishes to all in attendance at the mass.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kim C. Beazley'.

KIM C BEAZLEY MP
Canberra , January 2006