

Signing of an MOU between USJ and Zakat Fund in Lebanon for a "Subscription Scholarship Fund"



The Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ), represented by its Rector, Prof. Salim Daccache, SJ, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Zakat Fund in Lebanon, represented by its President, Consul Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Jouzou, establishing a "Subscription Scholarship Fund." The signing ceremony took place at the Rectorate on Tuesday, December 23, 2025, in the presence of the Vice-Rector for Research, Prof. Richard Maroun, the Director of *Fondation USJ*, Mrs. Cynthia Ghobril Andrea, as well as several representatives of the university bodies involved in this partnership. A delegation from the Zakat Fund in Lebanon was also present, including the Vice-President, Mr. Samer Al-Saffah, along with Mr. Mounir Fathallah, Ms. Yousra Sidani, Dr. Samer Soubra, Mr. Bachir Hariri, and the Executive Director, Dr. Mohammad Al-Tabbach and the Deputy General Director and Director of the Educational Project, Mr. Khodr Lawand.

This partnership reaffirms USJ's commitment to education and public service. It aligns with the humanitarian and charitable mission of the Zakat Fund in Lebanon by providing structured financial support to Lebanese students in need, thereby contributing to their academic and personal development.

Mrs. Andrea opened the ceremony by reaffirming *Fondation USJ's* commitment to supporting students' tuition, ensuring that financial constraints never hinder academic progress. Mrs. Elise Khoury Yammine, Operations Manager at *Fondation USJ*, noted that even before the protocol's official signing, USJ had already assisted twelve students.

Consul Al-Jouzou highlighted the importance of this collaboration with USJ, a distinguished institution with over 150 years of educational excellence. He emphasized that education represents the most valuable investment and noted that the Board of Directors of the Zakat Fund in Lebanon includes a USJ alumnus, underscoring the University's unifying role and service to Lebanese society.

The President of the Zakat Fund in Lebanon affirmed that this agreement "embodies the Fund's vision of placing education at the core of its work, as a pillar of sustainable and human development, enabling eligible students to pursue their studies while fostering academic excellence and community service."

Prof. Daccache stressed that "knowledge is a right for all, and the true house of learning must remain open to everyone to foster societal development and cohesion." He described the occasion as "a blessing for the University," expressing joy at welcoming the Zakat Fund to USJ's community. He highlighted the long-standing impact of the Fund, "founded in 1984 and serving thousands of beneficiaries, and underscored the shared mission of selfless service. Prof. Daccache further recalled the official decree recognizing USJ as a public-interest institution, issued after several years of anticipation. He concluded by highlighting the special symbolic significance of signing this protocol during the Christmas season.

This cooperation protocol aims to support eligible Sunni Lebanese students through a structured educational assistance program, enabling them to continue their university studies while easing financial burdens. It also seeks to strengthen the partnership between a prestigious academic institution and a social and humanitarian organization, establishing a joint coordination framework to oversee the effective implementation of the agreed commitments.