

Lebanese Ambassador attends 65th anniversary celebrations



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The Lebanese Ambassador of Lebanon to Canada, His Excellency (H.E.) Massoud Maalouf made a visit to Alberta during the week of November 25 - December 1st.

Maalouf was officially invited by the World Lebanese Cultural Union-Edmonton Chapter (WLCU) to attend the 65th anniversary celebrations of Lebanon's independence, held later that week. H.E. decided to also make the visit official and extended the visit to include provincial and municipal government protocol.

His stay in Edmonton was focussed on visiting with various Lebanese organizations, community leaders, churches, mosques and educational institutions.

H.E. also toured the different religious institutions. On Nov 26 he was a guest at the Alhadi Association where he met with members of the association for a visit and dinner. Other members of different religious affiliation also attended the dinner meeting.

The following day he toured Our Lady of Good Help Maronite church and met with Father Esper Antoun and met with members of the parish. Maalouf also visited the westend Orthodox church and met with the clergy and members of the parish as well.

H.E. kept a very busy schedule as he toured several area schools, the new Edmonton Islamic Academy as well as two other northeast schools, Glengarry school and Killarney school. Both public schools have an 80-90% arabic student population and offer arabic as a second language.

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Maalouf also went to city hall where he met and visited with Mayor Mandel and later presented him with a book of Khalil Gibran's writings, a classic, "The Prophet".

H.E. also met with Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach at the Legislature, and later visited members of the Edmonton Druze Association.

Maalouf's visit was capped off with the a dinner in celebration of Lebanon's 65th anniversary Independence Day celebrations, held at the Royal Glenora Club on Nov 28.

The independence celebration dinner was spearheaded by the WLCU, in cooperation with the various Lebanese community organizations, with planning and organization of the event.

The evening was Mceed by the ever charismatic Joe Hak and included a host of speakers from WLCU president Nizar Ali, WLCU international vice-president Samier Blibel, Calgary MLA Moe Amery carried a message from the province, MP for Westlock-St. Paul, Brian Storseth delivered a message on behalf of the federal government and the guest of honour, His Excellency Massoud Maalouf.

"You have the best of both worlds, you are very lucky to be here" said Maalouf, referring to the quality of life in Canada.

"Since arriving here, I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and hospitality you (community) have shown me said Maalouf, I am also moved by the WLCU's efforts for it's charity work for Lebanon, you make a difference."

He especially acknowledged MP Brian Storseth's help and support to the Lebanese community.



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