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**Students' speech competition: Martin Luther King inspired by his famous speech "I Have a dream.":**

It is my honor to be standing here today with all my classmates, and all the university's staff that has been working hard to make our experience at this educational institution memorable and unforgettable.

Looking at your faces, I can see and feel the hopelessness, fear, and uncertainty. Not only, we have been staying at home since last February because of the pandemic but, also the situation our beloved country has been going through made us feel more scared of what the future holds in store for us.

In 1875, our university was established and continued to deliver its mission of educating generations of students so that they become leaders of tomorrow. Our university and the students stood hand in hand and managed to always prioritize education, no matter how many obstacles they had to overcome, from the different conflicts in the MENA region to the Lebanese civil war in 1975.

2020 was not an easy year. The economic collapse and the Beirut blast made us realize how much we should appreciate each second, each minute, each hour, and each day of our lives!

Some of us, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, were taking a nap, reading a book, watching a movie, taking a bath, or even going for a walk and suddenly, at 6:07 pm, time stopped, and our hearts broke the way the glass of our windows was shattered.

And 6 months after the Beirut port explosion? Yes, **justice is still not served!**

Looking at your faces, I can see and feel the anger. And, yes, I am angry too!

I say to you today, my friends, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream.

**I have a dream** that one day we will be standing all together in the Martyr's square, singing the national anthem, waving the national flag, and shouting out loud "*We are free*" with tears of joy in our eyes.

**I have a dream** that one day we will be getting our bachelor's degrees, building careers in our homeland without having to check everyday where we can apply for a visa.

**I have a dream** that one day we will be hugging and kissing our parents and grandparents without having to say "*goodbye*" and "*take care*" through the phone.

**I have a dream** that one day we will be living within a political system that truly believes in the equality of chances between all Lebanese citizens.

**I have a dream** that one day we will be sleeping without fearing the next day losing our job or a loved one.

**Yes, I have a dream.** A dream of growing and sharing happy and sad memories close to our families and friends.

And is it too much to ask for?

You may say that my words today did nothing, but remind you of the bitterness of reality, but you know what?

Without dreaming, we may lose hope of a better tomorrow. This image built in our head, this dream is what is keeping us standing on our feet, fighting for our country, for our future and here comes the elections next year!

Let us rise together by casting ballots. Let us march on ballot boxes until brotherhood becomes more than a meaningless word in an opening prayer, but the order of the day on every legislative agenda. Here comes the change!