

**Transcript of Statement and Q and A by UN Special Representative for Syria
Staffan de Mistura Following meeting with Prime Minister Tamam Salam**

Beirut, Lebanon

Thursday, 16 October 2014

Good morning, Salam,

I have been visiting the region as you know and it is part of a second tour of a visit to the region. I am now planning after Lebanon to go to Tehran and then to Turkey of course and to many other countries in the region and then of course in New York. I am also planning to go to Moscow. Why? Because we are still in the process of understanding what has changed in the region in terms of some perception of how to address in a political format, through a political process, the conflict in Syria due to new factors which have taken place in the region and in particular “Daesh” (ISIS).

Now in that context, and apart from the fact that my heart is always and still in Lebanon, the international community is very concerned about the stability of Lebanon which has been paying a heavy price both in numbers and in vicinity and proximity to what has been the conflict and ongoing conflict in Syria. In that sense, it was important for me to meet today His Excellency the Prime Minister and I will be seeing also the Foreign Minister and other important and influential Lebanese personalities in order to acquire more information and also more ideas.

The international community stands firmly with Lebanon. We are fully aware of the price and the burden that Lebanon and the Lebanese people are paying and have paid during this period. We also see with concern what has been happening just recently, just on the border. At the same time, we are confident that with the international community Lebanon once again will be able to overcome this period. The stability of Lebanon is important for the region and for the international community. And of course that also means that the Lebanese political environment should be stabilizing the sooner and the better because the stronger Lebanon is the easier it will be to face what I think is going to be a very crucial period but hopefully with some type or form of political process in Syria.

That’s why my visit here today and that’s why I have been here every time I am going to the region to come to Lebanon, to hear what are the concerns and try to learn but also to contribute for the stability of Lebanon.

Thank You!

QUESTION: Did the Prime Minister ask for something, any demands or requests from the United Nations?

UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE STAFFAN DE MISTURA: Well I will leave it to the Prime Minister to indicate that but what the Prime Minister very correctly reiterated and the UN, and Ambassador (UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Derek) Plumbly here is with me not by accident, is strong and continuous support by the international community and the UN to Lebanon in this difficult moment.

QUESTION: What about the issue of the Syrian refugees, is there anything new on that (inaudible)?

UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE STAFFAN DE MISTURA: If there is one country, and there are others as you know such as Turkey, Jordan and other countries in the region, but if there is one country which has been bearing proportionally a very heavy burden and it has been doing it with great generosity in spite of some difficult moments and some incidents which are related to “we want to (inaudible)” it is in fact few people because the majority are “haram” poor people and they have been very warmly welcomed by Lebanon but it is also an issue that Lebanon needs to be helped on. There is a limit we know to what one country alone can do and that is why the international community must and has to help Lebanon to face this difficult crisis, which is also related to the number and the concentration of refugees in the whole country.

Thank you.