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for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial  
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Michael C. Williams  
UNIFIL Force Commander, Gen. Alberto Asarta Cuevas**

**Statement following Meeting with Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri**

**Beirut, Lebanon**

Tuesday, 07 December 2010

Good afternoon.

General Asarta and I just met with the Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri. Both of us are particularly grateful that Speaker Berri took the time to meet with us today at the beginning of Ashoura.

We had a very good meeting. Gen. Asarta and I informed Speaker Berri about our joint visit last week to Israel to discuss, in particular, the issue of a withdrawal of Israeli forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar, the part that falls north of the Blue Line inside Lebanese territory and has been under Israeli occupation since the war of 2006. As you know, in principle, the Israeli security cabinet has decided to accept the UN proposal for a withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from northern Ghajar. We believe this is an important development. At the same time, as we explained to Speaker Berri today, the withdrawal of the IDF from northern Ghajar is but a first step towards resolving the status of Ghajar so that Lebanese sovereignty is fully restored over all Lebanese territory and that also the humanitarian requirements of the villagers are met.

Gen. Asarta and I are hoping to meet later this week with Prime Minister Hariri and also with President Sleiman.

We have much work left to do, but Speaker Berri, General Asarta and I all welcomed today the calm that has prevailed in south Lebanon for several months.

The Speaker and I also touched on the domestic situation in Lebanon, and I reiterated the UN's concern over the crisis that has put on hold the work of key institutions of state. We continue to believe that all problems, no matter how sensitive, have to be resolved through dialogue and with all sides relying on the state institutions. And I believe strongly that this is also the view of His Excellency Speaker Nabih Berri.

Thank you very much.

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