



Office of the Special Coordinator
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams
Statement Following Meeting with Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri
Beirut, Lebanon**

Friday, 09 April 2010

Good Afternoon,

I just had a very good meeting with Parliament Speaker, H.E. Nabih Berri

Our discussions today focused mainly on Security Council Resolution 1701. I informed Speaker Berri that the thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Resolution is due to the Security Council in the coming days. I will be travelling to New York to brief the Council on the report later this month.

In that regard, we went over some of the recent developments in south Lebanon, including the protests by residents of several villages against UNIFIL training activities in the area. We are glad to hear that the situation is now calm again. We are sure that the relations between UNIFIL and the people of south Lebanon remain those of trust and harmony.

Speaker Berri today assured me that Lebanon is determined to maintain the best relations and cooperation with UNIFIL, at the official but also at the popular level. UNIFIL has also informed me that it continues to cooperate closely and to coordinate with the Lebanese Army. This is very important and is the backbone for the implementation of Resolution 1701 in a way that serves the interests of Lebanon and the stability of the entire region.

Speaker Berri also raised with me today the issue of the delineation of Lebanon's maritime borders. I assured him that I will raise it in New York with relevant UN officials, including with the UN's Legal Department to determine the best way to move forward on this issue.

Thank you

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IF ASKED:

UNIFIL yesterday organized maneuvers to prepare itself for possible rocket attacks against Israel. What is the UN and UNIFIL doing, on the other hand, to protect

Lebanese civilians from Israel, particularly after Israel kidnapped and beat a shepherd in the border area only two days ago?

The UNIFIL exercise earlier this week was not based on any particular scenario nor linked to any development. As UNIFIL has already indicated, the purpose of the exercise was solely to test UNIFIL's internal capacity to deploy maximum troops on the ground at any given time.

In that regard, UNIFIL's mandate and mission is to ensure that all sides respect Resolution 1701 and that the situation in south Lebanon remains calm and stable. UNIFIL has been trying to carry out this task in close cooperation and coordination with the Lebanese Army.

Regarding the kidnapping of the Shepherd, UNIFIL is still investigating the circumstances of that incident and cannot yet determine who had violated the Blue Line. UNIFIL Force Commander Alberto Asarta had immediately been in touch with the different parties when the incident took place to avoid an escalation and to ensure the release of the shepherd, which is what happened the next day.