



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 Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces Party
Beirut, Lebanon**

Tuesday, 09 November 2010

Good Morning.

I just met had a very good meeting with Dr. Samir Geagea. We had extensive talks on developments both within Lebanon and outside Lebanon in the wider Middle East.

Let me say a few words about Resolution 1701 because next week I will go to New York for a meeting of the Security Council to discuss Security Council Resolution 1701 and the latest report of the Secretary General. You may know in that regard that the Secretary General yesterday met with the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Netanyahu, and we understand that the question of Israel's continued occupation of the northern part of the village of Ghajar featured prominently in their discussions. And we hope that we will finally see an Israeli withdrawal from the northern part. This is something that I have raised consistently over the past two years and so have the commanders of UNIFIL. We believe that an Israeli withdrawal from Ghajar would be an important development that we hope would act as a catalyst for further progress on the implementation of 1701 and a permanent ceasefire.

Dr. Geagea and I also discussed the recent tensions within Lebanon on the question of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. For my part, I underlined the importance of dialogue between the various Lebanese sides and parties and the importance of keeping this dialogue within the institutions of the State, which in Lebanon, as in every other country in the world, protect the people and that is why we believe that any discussion, no matter on how sensitive an issue and no matter how powerful the views, must be within the institutions of State.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Do you think the Israelis will withdraw from Ghajar soon? When would that be?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: Inshallah. I honestly don't know. I hope there is real progress and as I say, it came up as an issue yesterday in the meeting in New York. We don't have the full details but we very much hope to see progress on this issue finally.

QUESTION: Do you think that there is someone in Lebanon who doesn't want the dialogue that you spoke about?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: The Lebanese are great talkers and you have the benefit of a very diverse media scene. So everybody can have their view on television, on the internet, in the newspapers. That's a very good thing. May it continue and prosper. It's the same within the institutions. You have your Council of Ministers, you have the Parliament, you have the National Dialogue under the chair of the President. These are the venues for discussion for everybody.
