



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 Caretaker Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud
Beirut, Lebanon**

Monday, 11 April 2011

I just had a very good meeting with H.E. the Minister of Interior, Ziad Baroud. We discussed many issues, including some of the political and security issues here in Lebanon.

I took the opportunity to commend Minister Baroud and his Ministry for all their hard work and efforts to address the recent security incidents in Lebanon and to keep the security situation under control.

These developments, security developments, for example the incident at Roumieh prison and the abduction of the seven Estonian cyclists, underline the pressing need for the formation of a government in Lebanon. I believe that this should be the top priority for all politicians in the country in the coming weeks and I hope its not more than weeks before a new government is formed.

The Minister told me that the situation in Roumieh prison is now stabilized and is calm and that he is anxious to see improvement in the prison. He shares with me the concern that 70 percent of the prisoners had not been tried. This is far too high a figure and does not reflect well on Lebanon and its principles. And a top priority of the incoming government, I believe, must be to address these concerns. We discussed the need for urgent reforms and I told the Minister that the United Nations was ready to assist if requested and when possible in this regard.

Thank you very much.

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