



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 Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir  
Bkirki, Lebanon**

Thursday, 11 November 2010

Sabeh El-Kheir, Good Morning.

It was a very great privilege to be here today in Bkirki and to have an audience with His Eminence Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir.

I expressed to His Eminence my condemnation of the attacks on Christians in Iraq. The Patriarch and I agreed that everything must be done to put an end to such horrific acts and to prevent any further displacement of Christian communities from Iraq and the entire Middle East, including Lebanon.

The Christian presence in the Middle East dates back many centuries to the birth of Christ, and it is at the heart of the diversity that characterizes this region. In that regard, we discussed with the Patriarch the recent Synod for the Middle East convened by Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican. I believe that this was a very important meeting in highlighting the situation of the Christian communities in the Middle East, including in Lebanon.

The Patriarch and I discussed the rich social fabric that is the strength of Lebanon, and which despite many difficulties remains a model of coexistence. We discussed the current situation, and I expressed to His Eminence the concerns of the United Nations over the tension that prevails in the country. I welcomed the meeting of the Council of Ministers last night, under the chairmanship of President Sleiman, which underlines the importance of continued dialogue through the regular institutions of the Lebanese State. I also recalled that all parties committed to refrain from violence, incitement and instigation in the Doha Agreement of May 2008. This is the basis for the National Unity Government. I hope that all Lebanese parties will remain committed to this pact and to the dialogue and constructive engagement in the coming period.

Thank you very much.

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