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**Office of the  
Special Coordinator  
for Lebanon**

**Bureau du  
Coordinateur Spécial  
pour le Liban**

## **UN Special Coordinator Michael Williams**

### **Statement Following Meeting with MP Michel Aoun**

Wednesday, 14 January 2009

Goodmorning. I just had a meeting with Gen. Aoun. We had arranged this meeting some time ago and I was looking forward to talking with him about the political situation here in Lebanon and the preparations for the General Elections which will be held on June 7.

Inevitably my discussions with Gen. Aoun this morning were overshadowed by the conflict in Gaza and worryingly, disturbingly, by the exchange of fire across the Blue Line this morning.

I have been in contact several times today already with Gen. Graziano, the UNIFIL commander. I just come off the telephone with him, regarding the firing of rockets from Lebanon into Israel and the return fire, return artillery fire from Israel into southern Lebanon.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all parties and I repeat, to all parties, to maintain calm and refrain from further attacks which could lead to a dangerous escalation. This cannot continue.

In the two years since the war in 2006 and the Security Council Resolution 1701, all the parties have worked very very hard to maintain the cessation of hostilities. Sadly, twice in the past week we have now seen exchanges of fire across the Blue Line.

The Secretary-General is in the area, is in Egypt at the moment, working very very hard to see the implementation of Resolution 1860 to bring an end to the conflict in Gaza and the last thing that we need at the moment is to see any escalation on the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel. So I reiterate my appeal to all parties to exercise the utmost restraint and vigilance and to commit themselves again to 1701 at this critical moment.

Thank You

Q: (Did the SG get the message of on Aoun statements and the SG's role)

A: Indeed, I think the position of the Secretary-General on Gaza could not be clearer. From the first day of the Israeli attack on December 27, he has called for an immediate end to the violence. He has made clear that there is no pretext for the Israeli attack upon Gaza and one has to distinguish between the role of the Security Council, which did pass Resolution 1860 but it took two weeks to adopt that resolution and the position of the Secretary General within hours of the Israeli attack made it very very clear that he demanded an immediate end to hostilities. And what we always need to bear in mind is that even now in these difficult times the UN is now working in Gaza to do its utmost to support and try and sustain the Palestinians in their hour of need. We have nearly ten thousand colleagues working in Gaza and of course the vast majority of them are Palestinians and they are working tirelessly to keep supplies going into Gaza and to try and sustain these people.

Q (inaudible)

A: The SG originally intended to spend some days in Lebanon. His visit now is likely to be short because of the situation in Gaza. The original intention of the SG was to visit Lebanon and Syria but because of the Gaza crisis he now has to tour the entire region: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Turkey, Lebanon and Syria. His time is very short but he will be meeting the President, the Prime Minister, Speaker Berri, and I am sure that he will want to return to Lebanon.

Thank you very much.

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