



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 Prime Minister Saad Hariri
Beirut, Lebanon**

Thursday, 20 January 2011

Good evening,

I am very grateful to Prime Minister Saad Hariri for receiving me today. Inevitably our discussions focused on the internal situation in Lebanon.

We discussed the various international initiatives, most recently that by Turkey and Qatar, and the prospect for achieving a new Government and political stability in Lebanon. I believe that that is possible, provided that there is a good will and cooperation of all political parties in working for justice as well as stability. In the United Nations, we see no contradiction between those two, quite the contrary we see them as complimentary.

I also like to take this opportunity to commend the Prime Minister for what he has tried to do over the past 13 months or so in his work as head of Government of this country. To say the least, Lebanon is not an easy country to govern. And we know it is in a neighborhood that also has many problems. I know the Prime Minister has done his best to steer the country on a wide course during this period.

We also discussed the general situation and I underlined the need for calm and order in the current period despite the political divisions that are obvious. And I received from the Prime Minister assurances that this would be the case.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Do you think there are threats against the United Nations organizations in Lebanon now, especially that some parties are looking at the situation as a direct confrontation between the UN and these political parties?

SCL MICHAEL Williams: No, No. The difficulties are within the Lebanese political body here, within the Lebanese political parties themselves. The United Nations contributes a great deal to Lebanon, not least its third largest peacekeeping mission in the world, UNIFIL, in a very small country. This underlines our commitment to ensuring that the stability for Lebanon, within such a difficult region, and that there not be a recurrence of conflict. I could speak for a long time about what the UN contributes in many other fields,

in social welfare, in education and medical sectors and so on. So our commitment is very robust and very strong. It does upset me when there is criticism of the UN.

QUESTION: What about the international tribunal, for example?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: The international tribunal was established by the Security Council but it is an international body and an independent body, and this needs to be borne in mind. There are other tribunals, there is the tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which has existed many years and which I had dealings with. These are established by the UN but they are completely autonomous and independent.

Thank you very much

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