



Office of the Special Coordinator  
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial  
pour le Liban

**United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams  
Statement During Visit to the Lebanese Mine Action Center  
Nabatieh, Lebanon**

Thursday, 22 April 2010

Good morning,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Nabatieh and to be a guest of General Fehmi and LMAC. I wanted to take this occasion on behalf of the United Nations to pay tribute to the work of General Fehmi and LMAC.

We have seen a very moving presentation of the damage, fatalities, the casualties that have been caused in this region by landmines and above all by the cluster bombs but also by unexploded ordinance over the past several years.

I think that since 2006 and the terrible war there have been more than 300 casualties. Many of them young people and children.

Our hearts go out to the victims and also to their families and we will invigorate our own efforts and initiatives to try to assist better General Fehmi and LMAC in the coming weeks, months and years.

This morning I spoke with General Fehmi about how the work of LMAC can be taken forward and how we, the UN and the international community, can support it.

And in the days and weeks ahead I intend to discuss this with the Ambassadors and the diplomatic community in Beirut.

My visit here today to Nabatieh comes a day after the Council of Ministers in Beirut, under the guidance of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, yesterday signed and approved the Oslo convention on cluster bombs.

We hope now that this treaty will go very shortly, within days, to the Parliament and that Parliament in its wisdom will ratify this important treaty.

We also believe it is important that Lebanon ratifies the Ottawa treaty on land mines.

I think already it is following the principles of the Ottawa treaty but formal ratification will, I believe, be an important step.

These two important acts, ratifying these treaties, do not only have symbolic and legal significance, I believe that they will enable Lebanon to receive stronger international assistance in the future.

And finally I would like to pay tribute again to the work of General Fehmi and the work of his colleagues here in LMAC, for their extraordinary service they are rendering to the people of Lebanon and especially the people of south Lebanon.

QUESTION: After you saw this very moving documentary, will that instigate the UN to increase the demining activities in the South?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: I think definitely there is still so much work to be done. A lot has been achieved by the LMAC and the support of the international community. And I think approximately more than 50% of the munitions, cluster bombs and mines have been cleared. That's the good news. But the bad news is that there is still a lot to do in the coming weeks and months.

QUESTION: Regarding the Israeli violations, will the UN only limit itself to condemnation or will it do something?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: This morning I came to look at the situation here in Nabatieh and to look at the work of LMAC. We have consistently criticized the Israeli violations since the war of 2006. And especially the aerial intrusions, our record is very clear on this.

QUESTION: While you were arriving here in Nabatieh, Israeli planes were overflying Nabatieh.

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: it doesn't surprise me.

QUESTION: will the violations of the Israelis make a new war other than 2006?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: No I don't think there will be a new war. I think some tensions are high but that happens periodically and I am not too worried.

QUESTION: Has Israel signed these conventions that you mentioned?

SCL MICHAEL WILLIAMS: No they have not.

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