



Office of the Special Coordinator
for Lebanon

Bureau du Coordinateur Spécial
pour le Liban

**United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon Robert Watkins
Statement following Meeting with Minister of Interior Marwan Charbel**

Beirut, Lebanon

Thursday, 23 August 2012

I would like to thank Minister Marwan Charbel for taking the time to meet with me this morning. We had a very detailed and lengthy discussion about the situation in Lebanon, particularly the latest security-related developments in the country.

I just wanted to confirm and convey to the Minister that the United Nations has been following closely and with concern recent security incidents in the country, particularly the kidnappings targeting Syrian nationals and others in Lebanon as well as armed clashes that have been taking place in the past few days in Tripoli. I expressed deep regret for the unfortunate loss of life that was reported and the fact that the violence has continued in Tripoli.

All these incidents undermine the efforts that many in Lebanon have been exerting to promote peace, stability and long-term development. We believe the Lebanese State has an important role to play in ensuring the stability is preserved while all sides in the country should respect and not overstep the country's State institutions. I praised the tireless efforts of Minister Charbel, the Lebanese Armed Forces and the security agencies in preventing the security situation from deteriorating further.

Lebanon cannot accept that there are actors who take the law into their own hands with impunity. We support the statements by the Lebanese President and Prime Minister to bring those guilty of crimes to justice.

I also agreed with Minister Charbel that the Lebanese State has a moral responsibility to protect innocent people, including Syrian nationals, many of whom are here as refugees seeking shelter from the violence in their own country. The UN Secretary-General has strongly condemned kidnappings and retaliatory hostage-taking in Syria and Lebanon and called for an immediate release of all those detained without due process and in violation of their human rights.

Later this week, I will be meeting with Prime Minister Mikati and with other political and security representatives in Lebanon to continue following up on the latest developments.

Thank you very much.
