



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam  
Permanent Representative of Lebanon  
to the United Nations**

**at the  
Security Council**

**The Situation in the Middle East  
including the Palestinian question**

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*Check Against Delivery*

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Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you for assuming the Presidency of the Council for this month, and I would also like to commend the Permanent Representative of Australia and his team for their excellent work during their presidency last month.

Mr. President,

When faced with challenges threatening the core of their stability and security, countries explore all ways and means to build partnerships, strengthen them, and establish safety nets.

In this context, Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 which this Council unanimously adopted on August 11, 2006. Likewise, over the past seven years, all of you have been expressing your unwavering support for the full implementation of said resolution. Thus, we believe that it is high time now for this council to translate this support into a strong message urging Israel to completely withdraw from the remaining Lebanese occupied territory, to put an end to its violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, air and sea, and to refrain from taking any unilateral action which undermines its obligations under International law.

Convinced of the importance of a stable Lebanon for the maintenance of peace and security in the region, this Council adopted a PRST on July 10, renewing its support for Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and endorsing Lebanon's disassociation policy vis-a-vis the situation in Syria as well as the Baabda declaration of July 2012. Again let me reiterate my country's deep appreciation for this message of political solidarity.

Capitalizing on the consensus articulated in said PRST, the Secretary General launched on September 25 of this year the International Support Group for Lebanon that stressed "the need for strong, coordinated international support for Lebanon to help it continue to withstand the multiple current challenges to its security and stability." Lebanon looks forward for the enlargement of this group and the convening of follow up meetings to address its specific requirements to cope with the humanitarian crisis resulting from the influx of refugees from Syria, to enhance the Lebanese army capabilities and to provide for Lebanon's economic and financial needs.

Mr. President,

With the ongoing Syrian crisis, the number of refugees from Syria has come to represent the equivalent of one fourth of the population of my country. Over and above the obvious humanitarian challenges, a World Bank recent report has underlined the severe socio-economic negative impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, and noted that "the Lebanese growth is estimated to be down by 2.9% ...government expenditures will increase by an estimated US \$1.1 billion over the 2012 to 2014 period,... and its revenues will drop by US \$1.5 billion. Unemployment rate could reach 20 percent over the same period and more than 170,000 Lebanese will be pushed into poverty by 2014."

In his address to the General Assembly last month, the President of the Republic of Lebanon General Michel Sleiman warned that this grave situation has begun to have an “existential dimension” for my country. And in his meeting in Beirut last week with representatives of the members of the International Support Group, he stressed that the financial burden sharing is still insufficient and the relocation of refugees remains symbolic, whereby 17 countries have only hosted few thousands of refugees, while the International community faces difficulties in providing them shelter within Syria notwithstanding that this country is 18 time larger than Lebanon.

Mr. President,

We welcome the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2118 regarding the chemical weapons in Syria and the PRST of October 2, of this year, on the humanitarian situation there. Lebanon considers that these united actions by the international community should lead to putting an end to violence, provide for a safe and dignified gradual return of Syrian refugees to their country and pave the way to a political process that will fulfill the aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. President,

On July 31, 2013, Palestinian-Israeli negotiations resumed owing to the efforts of the US administration and with an initial time frame of nine months to achieve progress. We, like many other countries, commended the US efforts in this regard, and were ready to see in it signs of hope.

However, three months through the set time frame, and in spite of many rounds of talks, Israeli authorities continue settlement expansion. The Peace Now movement along with other Israeli commentators and human rights organizations could not see in this but a lack on the part of their government to a “genuine intention to negotiate seriously.” Moreover, empowered with a sense of impunity, Israeli settlers multiply their assaults on Palestinian civilians and their properties; attacking elementary schools and terrorizing children, robbing farmers of their livelihood by uprooting their olive trees, and vandalizing churches and mosques. Clearly such actions threaten to undermine the prospects for the Palestinian Israeli negotiations. They must be condemned by you in the strongest terms.

Finally, should we remind this council that such negotiations have to be part of a comprehensive and inclusive approach if a durable and sustainable peace in the Middle East is to be attained?