



**Statement**

**by**

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

**at the  
Security Council open debate**

**The Situation in the Middle East  
“and on the tenth anniversary of Israel 33 day war on Lebanon”**

**New York, July 12, 2016**

*Check Against Delivery*

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
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Mr. President:

Time and again we have warned this august body against the dangers of the continued construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. Over and above their flagrant violation of public international law, international humanitarian law and numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, such activities have come to constitute the most serious obstacle to any negotiated political settlement.

In fact, having recently approved of the construction of 800 new housing units in the occupied territories, how could anyone take Mr. Netanyahu's statements that he is ready to negotiate a political settlement with the Palestinians more seriously than that of the man who pretends to negotiate over the sharing of a pizza while he keeps eating it?

Mr. President:

With the ongoing acts of collective punishment, best illustrated by the systematic campaign of house demolitions in the West Bank, and the increasingly inflammatory and provocative rhetoric of Israeli officials, such as Mr. Naftali Bennet's call for the kidnappings of Palestinians, the situation on the terrain remains very gloomy indeed.

Let me, however, welcome the Paris meeting convened at France's initiative on June 3 (2016) and its joint communiqué which reaffirmed the need to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and highlighted the importance of the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative. We were also encouraged by the mention in said communiqué of "the prospect of convening before the end of the year of an international conference", and would like to stress in that respect how critical to its success would be the participation of all directly concerned parties and their full engagement in the required preparatory works.

Mr. President,

Allow me now to remind that on this very day of July 12, ten years ago, Israel launched a 33 day war against my country which according to a Human Rights Watch report dated September 5, 2007 resulted in "at least 1,109 Lebanese deaths, the vast majority of whom were civilians, 4,399 injured, and an estimated 1 million

displaced.” An important feature of this war was Israel’s massive resort to one of the most vicious and disgusting weapons of all times: Cluster bombs (!) The estimated number of cluster submunitions fired into my country during the 2006 war was between 3.2 to 4.6 million according to another Human Rights Watch report of February 16, 2008, in which we also read:

“Research in more than 40 towns and villages found that the IDF’s use of cluster munitions was both indiscriminate and disproportionate, in violation of IHL, and in some locations possibly a war crime. In dozens of towns and villages, Israel used cluster munitions containing submunitions with known high failure rates. These left behind homes, gardens, fields, and public spaces-including a hospital-littered with hundreds of thousands and possibly up to one million unexploded submunitions. By their nature, these dangerous, volatile submunitions cannot distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, foreseeably endangering civilians for months or years to come.”

Mr. President:

I would like to seize this opportunity to also remind of my government’s firm commitment to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 which helped put an end to this Israeli aggression, and to stress the need to move from the precarious situation of a cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire.

Mr. President:

While Israel claims to abide by the terms of resolution 1701 which, first and foremost, calls for the respect of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, it has committed over the past 10 years no less than 11,856 violations of its sovereignty: 8561 by air, 1024 by sea, and 2274 by land. All these violations have been recorded and documented in tens of letters addressed to you and issued as official documents of the United Nations. We reiterate today our call on you to strongly condemn all these violations and to compel Israel to put an immediate end to them.

Moreover, Israel continues its occupation of the Northern part of Ghajjar in violation of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in a deliberate dismissal of the two initiatives launched by UNIFIL in 2008 and 2010 to ensure Israel’s withdrawal from this area. We would also wish to reiterate on this occasion our readiness to work with the Secretary-General to close the chapter of the Sheba’a Farms and Kfarshouba hills occupation by Israel and to remind that my

Government welcomed the territorial definition of these farms as published in his report S/2007/641 of 2007 as a starting point to address this issue, while Israel has not yet responded to the Secretary-General on this matter.

Mr. President:

Last April, I informed you that based on the principles enshrined in the charter, and on operative paragraph 10 of resolution 1701, my government sought the “good offices” of the Secretary General in the matter of the delineation of the disputed maritime border and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) between Lebanon and Israel”. Considering the Secretary-General’s reply, we now look forward to the role to be played in that respect by his Special coordinator in Lebanon.

Finally, need I remind that during its 2006 war on Lebanon, Israel bombarded in July the Jiyeh power plant causing an unprecedented oil spill on the Lebanese shores with heavy environmental impact, especially on fisheries and biodiversity?

This is why, for ten consecutive years, the General Assembly has been adopting, by an overwhelming majority of States from all regional and cross-regional groups, a resolution requesting Israel to assume prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon for the damage related to the oil spill it has caused.

Let me clarify, in this regard, that the amount of 856 million dollars adopted by the General Assembly and which Israel has been requested to pay in compensation, is simply drawn from a Secretary-General’s report, which relied on independent studies mainly conducted by the World Bank to quantify the said damage.

Mr. President:

It is almost impossible to maintain peace and security if States are not held responsible for their internationally wrongful acts. Hence, it is our firm belief that it is now the responsibility of this Council, as the main organ entrusted under the UN Charter to maintain peace and security, to act without delay to ensure that Israel compensate Lebanon for the damage related to the oil spill it has caused.

Thank you.