



Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Tammam Salam

President of the Council of Ministers

of the Republic of Lebanon

At the

General Assembly

**"High-level plenary meeting on addressing
large movements of refugees and migrants"**

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***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017***

Mr. Secretary-General,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world is witnessing the worst ever crisis of forced population displacement in history, with all what this drama entails of sufferings, miseries, criminality, abuse of human rights and dignity, in sum, a devastation of people's destinies.

This poses serious problems for our stability, our security, our economy, and our public services and the situation is becoming more dramatic by the day which does not bode well for the future of our country and for our future generations.

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, over one hundred thousand Syrian babies were born in Lebanon, and over fifty per cent of them were born in the last eighteen months!! More Syrians are born in Lebanon today than are being resettled in other countries, feeding a perilously destabilizing trend of internal growth in numbers.

It is unthinkable that Lebanon could, alone, cope with an existential challenge of such proportion.

This cannot continue!

I am sure that you will agree, Mr. Secretary-General that barring a massive effort of the international community, Lebanon runs the risk of a serious collapse.

I am appealing from this tribune to the world and especially to the United Nations to put urgently in motion a plan comprising the following steps:

One: draft, within 3 months, a detailed logistical mapping of the return in safety and dignity of the Syrians now in Lebanon to Syria, specifying transportation needs, departure locations and all associated costs. Raising the financing required for this plan should be started immediately. This will allow, when circumstances permit, a swift implementation.

Two: set-up burden-sharing quotas for countries in the region and elsewhere and negotiate the enactment of resettlement efforts before year-end.

Three: intensify the financing of development projects at local and regional level.

Four: proceed with the preparation of reliable reporting on effective payments made by donors by sector.

Five: launch a fund-raising effort in favour of UNRWA to allow it to address vital humanitarian needs, ensure a sustainable pursuit of its educational programs and complete the reconstruction of the Nahr-el Bared Palestinian camp.

Mr. Secretary-General,

My country is in serious danger.

What the Lebanese have done by harbouring one million and a half Syrians for a population of four million is unprecedented.

What the Lebanese have done by spending close to fifteen billion dollars – they do not have - in three years, to service the displaced Syrian population, is unprecedented.

What the Lebanese have done by maintaining stability and order and safeguarding security with means they do not have, is unprecedented.

What the Lebanese have done in order to ensure education to almost as many Syrian children as their own, is unprecedented.

What the Lebanese have done by being sometimes denied hospital beds because they are occupied by displaced Syrians, is unprecedented.

What the Lebanese have done by strictly clamping down on smuggling people to European shores, is unprecedented.

WHEN, I ask Mr. Secretary -General, WHEN is the world going to do something for Lebanon?

And WHEN is the UN going to stand up to the task and significantly rally efforts to help refugees and migrants in observance of its number one responsibility: safeguarding peace and security?