League statement at Int'l Conference in Support of Lebanese People and Sovereignty, delivered by Ambassador Hossam Zaki, Assistant Secretary-General

24 October 2024

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow us to extend our deep appreciation to the Republic of France for its gracious invitation and its sponsorship of this significant conference, convened at a time of profound crisis in Lebanon, where the country is engulfed in fire and bloodshed as a result of the grave Israeli aggression. These brutal, indiscriminate strikes have affected all Lebanese regions, targeting innocent civilians—men, women, children, and even paramedics—causing the deaths and injuries of thousands, and displacing over 1.2 million people due to terror, intimidation, and the destruction of their homes and villages.

Israel, with its year-long trail of bloodshed, first in Gaza and now in Lebanon, has positioned itself as a rogue state, defying both international law and global order. Its actions now represent the single greatest threat to peace and security, not only in the region but across the world. Through its crimes, Israel is inscribing a dark chapter in human history—one marked by the collapse of basic human values and the erosion of the most fundamental rights to life, liberty, justice, and equality—rights enshrined by divine and international law alike.

The path forward is unmistakably clear: it requires nothing less than decisive international will. We all bear a profound moral obligation—beyond our political duties—to bring an end to this war and to utilise all available diplomatic mechanisms. Chief among these is the urgent need for the United Nations Security Council to fulfil its mandated role, preventing the region from spiralling into an uncontrollable cycle of violence that could engulf the world at large.

Mr. President,

The Arab position regarding the salvation of Lebanon is unequivocal. The foremost priority is to bring an immediate end to the Israeli aggression against the Lebanese people, and to secure a ceasefire, with all parties fully committing to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701. This will definitively halt Israel's repeated violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and put an end to the escalating humanitarian catastrophe. Simultaneously, we call for a concerted intensification of international efforts to provide urgent financial and humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese state, alongside comprehensive support for the Lebanese army to enable it to fulfil its critical role in safeguarding the nation and extending state authority across all Lebanese territory, in line with its obligations under Resolution 1701.

We must underscore the essential role played by the UNIFIL peacekeeping forces in Lebanon. Their commitment to their duties amid these tumultuous circumstances, despite the serious violations they have endured, is commendable. We further stress the importance of ensuring the safety of their personnel and the security of their headquarters, as they continue to perform their mission in defence of peace and stability.

Mr. President,

Amidst this unfolding tragedy, Lebanon faces an unprecedented and intolerable presidential vacuum, which exacerbates the already formidable challenges and perils threatening the nation's future. The country's political leaders bear a profound historical and national responsibility to achieve the necessary consensus that will result in the election of a president in accordance with the Lebanese Constitution and the Taif Agreement. The current situation cannot endure any further delays or postponements of this vital constitutional duty, as it is crucial to preserve the cohesion of state institutions and restore their effective functioning.

In conclusion, we extend our deep admiration to the Lebanese people for their remarkable spirit of steadfastness and solidarity, which has been so powerfully demonstrated throughout this ordeal. We underscore the critical importance of maintaining national unity, standing firm against any attempts to sow division—whether political, sectarian, or religious. We sincerely hope that all our collective efforts will culminate in the much-needed support and assistance for Lebanon, enabling its people to reclaim their sovereignty and dignity, safeguard their civil peace, and begin the process of rebuilding their afflicted nation.

Thank you for your attention.