

28 January 2009



## Secretary-General

### SG/T/2643

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Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

#### **ACTIVITIES OF SECRETARY-GENERAL IN LEBANON, 16-18 JANUARY**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon arrived in Beirut from Ankara late in the evening of Friday, 16 January.

On Saturday morning, the first official meeting was with President Michel Sleiman, during which the Secretary-General briefed the President on his efforts to persuade the parties to the conflict in Gaza to stop the fighting. They also discussed the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Lebanon, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and Lebanon-Syrian relations.

He then met Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. The two men reviewed developments in Gaza, and the urgent need to stop the fighting and allow the United Nations to carry out its work in providing humanitarian assistance to the citizens of Gaza. The Secretary-General praised the Government of Lebanon for condemning the firing of rockets from south Lebanon into northern Israel. They also discussed UNIFIL and the importance of implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 in full, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and relations between Lebanon and Syria.

Following his meeting with the Prime Minister, the Secretary-General met a young boy injured in the 2006 war between Hizbullah and Israel, Ali Ghrayeb — 12 years old. In response to the young boy's appeal for peace, the Secretary-General said "Your message has touched me very much...I pledge to do everything in my power to achieve peace, stability, harmony and hope for the future."

Following discussions with Speaker Nabih Berri, Mr. Ban addressed Parliament. He commended the Lebanese, saying that, by revitalizing their institutions, they have pulled back from the brink of armed conflict, "proving once again Lebanon's unwavering desire for progress through dialogue". He encouraged to continue working together, across political and community lines, and he assured that the United Nations would continue to stand by all Lebanese "as you write the next chapter in your country's history". (See Press Release [SG/SM/12051](#).)

He then travelled by helicopter to visit UNIFIL — the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. While in Naqoura, he met with Force Commander Claudio Graziano, with UNIFIL staff, and held a [press encounter](#).

Back in Beirut, he met with the United Nations Country Team based in Lebanon, and held a [press conference](#) before attending a dinner hosted by Prime Minister Siniora. He opened his press conference by condemning "in the strongest terms" an "outrageous attack" on a United Nations school in Gaza, the third time it had happened. He demanded a thorough investigation into these incidents, and the punishment of those responsible.

That day, he issued a statement expressing relief that the Israeli Government had decided to cease hostilities as of midnight GMT. (See Press Release [SG/SM/12050](#).)

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