

Press stake-out

21st Semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on Resolution 1559 (2004)

28 April 2015

- Ten years ago, on 26 April 2005, all Syrian troops and security personnel withdrew from Lebanon, marking an important historical moment and the beginning of a new era of political independence in Lebanon. It was also a significant step towards the implementation of resolution 1559, on which I just briefed the Security Council following the latest report of the Secretary-General.
- Lebanon has faced challenges of a different kind for almost five years now. Its security and stability has been jeopardised as a result of the conflict in Syria. It has been a generous host to over 1.2 million Syrian refugees. Its economy has been affected. Nonetheless Lebanon has demonstrated a remarkable resilience, in part due to its leaders maintaining a political balance on key issues. It is essential that Lebanon's leaders continue to work towards achieving consensus, particularly focussing on issues of national interest and maintaining the policy of disassociation that they have all agreed to.
- With political independence comes the responsibility to govern. The failure to elect a President of the Republic for almost one full year is a disappointment at best and irresponsible at worst. I find it difficult to understand the justifications that some use for their refusal to attend parliament, preventing others from voting as a result. This goes against Lebanon's constitutional process and robs the Lebanese of their democratic rights. The presidential election is a Lebanese process, but partisan politics should be put aside for the greater national good of stability and security in Lebanon. I know that the international community and this Security Council have repeatedly also voiced their concerns. I call upon Lebanon's leaders to attend parliament and elect a President without delay.
- In the increasingly tense neighbourhood surrounding Lebanon – including vicious conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya, and the rising threat of terrorism and extremism – Lebanon remains, in spite of its vulnerabilities, a model of open society and co-existence in the region. That is why the Lebanese and the international community have a responsibility to preserve Lebanon from regional turmoil. Lebanon's resilience cannot be taken for granted. I therefore welcome the unity and vigilance with which the Security Council continues to support Lebanon's efforts and the full implementation of its resolutions.