



ADDRESS

BY

**H.E. GENERAL EMILE LAHOUD
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON**

**AT THE
62nd SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

Lebanese Presidency

Mr. President;

May I congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly: I wish you success. I also would like to offer my gratitude to your predecessor, Sheikha Haya Al Khalifa for the outstanding job she has performed, as the first Arab woman to ever preside over this august body. Finally, I would like to thank His Excellency, Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for all his efforts on behalf of world Peace and Security.

Mr. President;

A year ago, I spoke from this podium on Israel's brutalities against my country and its 33 day atrocious war, and had hoped then that such tragic events which we had bitterly lived and suffered back in Lebanon, would pave the way for activating the Middle East process based on the Arab Peace Initiative that was endorsed at the Beirut Arab Summit Meeting in the year 2002

Regrettably, nothing thrives in our Region more than violence and grudges and nothing deafens more than the sounds of wars, while all calls to stimulate the Peace Process remain echoless. It is against this gloomy background and with a mix of anticipation and reservation, that we await the results of the Middle East Peace conference to be held in the near future. In this respect I would like to reaffirm certain realities that cannot be ignored in any settlement, because I am a believer that unless we learn from our past mistakes, we will not be able to take full advantage of present opportunities.

* *First*, For any settlement to the Middle East crisis to survive, it should be lasting, just and global.

* *Second*, A viable solution must call for the implementation of all UN resolutions which pertain to the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories.

* *Third* and Paramount to all Arab rights, is the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with Resolution 194 , and to counter all calls for their resettlement in their temporary host countries.

Mr. President;

The resettlement of the Palestinians is contrary to the expressed will of World legitimacy as embodied in the United Nations General Assembly. Moreover, and more specifically in Lebanon, it will dangerously alter the delicate balance of its existence as a nation based on diversity and coexistence among a large number of its sects that had lived side by side in harmony and enjoyed mutual respect.

In this regard, Lebanon fully rejects to see the Beirut Arab Peace Initiative of 2002 being emptied from its contents namely by excluding the right of Palestinians to return. This Initiative we believe carries a realistic and global solution to the Middle East conflict, and its implementation could bring about stability and security to all parties.

Mr. President;

A year ago, the United Nation's Security Council adopted Resolution 1701 putting an end to Israel's aggression against Lebanon. We were quick to abide by this resolution, our Armed Forces have closely cooperated with the forces of UNIFIL as stipulated in their mission statements and as recounted in the Secretary General's reports on the implementation of resolution 1701.

Today, and as I stand here again to reiterate Lebanon's commitment to implement the resolution, I wonder why are we still in the phase of cessation of hostilities and haven't moved yet into the phase of a cease fire as called for by the resolution. This matter remains questionable to many Lebanese, especially that Israel continues and up to this very moment to violate our land, sea and skies. So far there have been over 500 breaches since the passing of the resolution 1701. I call upon the world community to remain vigilant against any malignant intents harbored by Israel towards Lebanon, as this could lead towards another conflagration in the area.

Despite the fact that the Lebanese recall with pain, agony and distress last year's destructive and hostile war on their country, they are proud about their national resistance and their army who were able to jointly claim a historic victory over one of the strongest military arsenals that has violated all international and ethical norms and wanted to terminate Lebanon's role as a nation of coexistence among all its religious sects.

To secure a full implementation of UN resolution 1701, we in Lebanon believe that this could happen only, when our nation regains its occupied Shebaa Farms, the Kfarshouba Hills, and some northern parts of the Ghajar village, secure the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israeli jails, restore Lebanon's legitimate rights over its water resources, give Lebanon the maps of the landmines and the sites of cluster bombs.

In this regard, we thank efforts made by the UN in terms of studying documents and maps related to the Shebaa Farms, and we express our relief over progress made so far to verify its Lebanese identity. We look forward to practical measures that would end Israeli occupation and the handing over of those territories and water rights to Lebanon.

Mr. President;

The United Nations has always given Lebanon special care, and such concern is clearly manifested in all UN resolutions on Lebanon. The Lebanese who reiterate their commitment to the implementation of those resolutions wish to see those resolutions being implemented in a fair manner and on real and constant grounds. As You know by now, the Special Tribunal on Lebanon and which was established to try the assassins of former Prime minister Rafic Hariri had been a controversial issue with regard to circumstances of its establishment, and we have referred to that in detail in our letters to UN Secretary General, and we had asked that copies be handed over to all UN Security Council member-states and to keep other copies as reference documents at the UN. We did so out of belief that international justice should be reinforced. Since the very first moment of the heinous crime of former

Prime Minister Hariri, we attempted to seek the whole truth, and I was probably the first to ask UN Secretary General Kofi Annan then to set up an impartial international investigation commission.

Now to enable all to overcome the controversy caused by the international tribunal, I believe the best way would be by having an impartial, transparent and a just hearing that seeks to determine the whole truth. Only then would the Lebanese be assured that this tribunal is just.

Mr. President;

Lebanon is about to witness democratic presidential elections, in which the Lebanese will make their choices in a free and responsible manner. Unfortunately, there have been attempts by international parties to intervene in Lebanon's domestic affairs in a way that contradicted international norms. Such interference could instigate hatred and increase tension on the Lebanese scene, a thing which not only might have negative repercussions on upcoming presidential elections but on the safety of the Lebanese as well.

Lebanon welcomes all foreign assistance, and pays tribute to those countries who have stood by it in the wake of last July's Israeli destructive war. Lebanon, however, hopes that any foreign assistance to Lebanon should be made to all the Lebanese without any discrimination, in order to stop possible divisions or clashes among them. Foreign aid to Lebanon should be made as a gesture of support to the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty, and the unity of the Lebanese people.

This is why we urge the international community through its commitment to the UN Charter to stop foreign intervention in domestic affairs of member-states. Consecutive events in Lebanon showed that the Lebanese are capable of making their own decisions and their own choices, and could live side by side and interact peacefully within institutional framework set by their civic bodies and protected by their security institutions namely their national army.

Mr. President;

Since we are referring to the national army, we should pinpoint to the heroic confrontations of the army for the past three months with an extremely dangerous terrorist organization that was equipped with updated weapons and believed in destructive objectives that target Lebanon, and many other states in the region as well.

The costly price that was paid by our national army in terms of human losses and number of injuries aimed at reinstating Lebanon's national goals of confronting and fighting terrorism. Lebanon has and will always be a nation that supports peace, and justice and promotes democratic values.

However, to enable Lebanon to confront and curb terrorism, real assistance should be given to its national army in order to accomplish its national and security goals.

Mr. President;

In a world that witnesses daily bloodshed known as the "conflict of civilizations", and in a world that is sharply and deeply divided between east and west, I find myself addressing the international community as a man of experience and from here I urge the world community not to allow Lebanon to fall... because the falling apart of Lebanon would mean a collapse of moderation and a victory to those who favor the use of force. Lebanon remains a "unique message to the world" where religions & cultures interact peacefully, so that we can live together, as noted by His Holiness the late Pope John Paul II.

As a Citizen of Lebanon, a small country that survived against all odds, I urge you not to recede in front of adversity and to support what is right and just. A last glimpse of a burning Middle East, where the flames devour the meek and the mighty, should allow you to reflect upon the choices ahead, lest, it becomes too late.

Thank You.