



Explanation of Vote on the Adoption of Resolution 1757 on the Establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon

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Remarks to the Security Council

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I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

We welcome the adoption of Resolution 1757 on the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

By adopting this resolution, the Council has demonstrated its commitment to the principle that there shall be no impunity for political assassinations, in Lebanon or elsewhere. Those who killed Rafiq Hariri and so many others will be brought to justice and held responsible for their crimes.

The tribunal will also serve to deter future political assassinations. Those who might be tempted to commit similar crimes will know there will be consequences for perpetuating political violence and intimidation in Lebanon.

We know that it was necessary and right for the Council to act now. The Council approved the tribunal agreement and statute on November 21, 2006. Since that time, the legitimate and democratically-elected Government of Lebanon and the parliamentary majority have tried every possible means to convince the Speaker of Parliament to fulfill his constitutional responsibility to convene parliament so that final action on the tribunal could be taken. But to no avail.

Several influential parties visited Lebanon in an effort to find a framework in which parliament could be convened. These include the Arab League, UN Legal Counsel Nicolas Michel, and the Secretary-General himself. After five months of tireless efforts to reach a solution to the impasse facing his country, Prime Minister Siniora sent the Secretary-General a letter on May 14 asking that the matter be put before the Security Council to take a "binding" decision to establish the Special Tribunal. The Secretary-General endorsed the Prime Minister's request one day later after concluding that all diplomatic efforts had been exhausted.

We would have preferred that the Lebanese ratify the tribunal agreement and statute. But we know that that was not possible. No one can say that the Lebanese Government, the Secretary-General, or the Security Council failed to pursue every possible option short of Council action on the tribunal. But those opposed to the tribunal made sure there were no such options available.

We have heard many voices warn of the risks to peace and stability in Lebanon. In the days ahead, we urge all parties to act responsibly and abide by their obligations to support Lebanon's sovereignty and political independence. For our part, we concluded that failure to act in support of Lebanon was unacceptable. There can be no peace and stability without justice.

In conclusion, the United States reaffirms our support for Lebanon. With the passage of this resolution, we are confident that the Security Council will live up to its commitment to support Lebanon in its pursuit of justice.

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