"We strongly condemn the assault by violent extremist groups on the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the area of Arsal in eastern Lebanon. This fighting has already led to the killing, wounding or abduction of a high number of Lebanese officers as well as Arsal residents and refugees. We express our sincere condolences to the families of all victims and call for the immediate release of those abducted.

We fully support the LAF in defending their country and people, and welcome the determination of Lebanese political leaders to put an end to terrorism and violent extremism.

We remain deeply concerned by the severe security, political, economic and social challenges Lebanon is facing as a result of the conflict in Syria. In these difficult times, Lebanon needs effective and legitimate state institutions. It is therefore essential that all Lebanese and the international community support Lebanon's authorities and security services to preserve peace and stability in the country.

The EU remains committed to Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence, unity and stability. We will continue to provide assistance to Lebanon, both in our bilateral relation and in response to the Syrian crisis."

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