



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UN and EU Appeal for Immediate Release of Seven Abducted Estonian Cyclists**

Monday, 23 May 2011

Today marks two months since the abduction of seven Estonian nationals in the area of Zahleh in the Beqaa Valley. The Head of the Delegation of the European Union, Angelina Eichhorst, and the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Michael C. Williams, made a joint appeal for the immediate and urgent release of these innocent tourists.

“We appeal for the immediate release of the seven abducted Estonian nationals. These bicyclists came to Lebanon as tourists, with no ill intent. No purpose whatsoever is served by their continued detention,” said Ms. Eichhorst and Mr. Williams.

The UN and the EU have been closely following the search undertaken by the Lebanese authorities for the seven men, whose abduction and continued detention is a violation of the most basic of human rights. “This criminal act is a reminder of a dark part of Lebanon’s history, which could threaten Lebanon’s standing in the international community,” the two envoys said.

The UN and the EU have continuously expressed their concern over the abduction. “We commend the Lebanese authorities for the steps they have undertaken but emphasize that no effort must be spared to bring these men safely back to their country and to their families. We hope this issue will be resolved very soon” Mr. Williams and Ms. Eichhorst added.

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