

**Statement attributable to the Spokesperson
for the Secretary-General on Special Tribunal for Lebanon**

Following the adoption by the Security Council today of resolution 1852 (2008) extending the mandate of the Independent International Investigation Commission (IIIC) to 28 February 2009, the Secretary-General is pleased to announce his decision that the Special Tribunal for Lebanon will commence functioning on 1 March 2009.

The Secretary-General has made this determination in accordance with Article 19 (2) of the Annex to resolution 1757 (2007), after consultation with the Prime Minister of Lebanon, H.E. Mr. Fouad Siniora, and with the IIIC Commissioner, Mr. Daniel Bellemare.

This commencement date will be preceded by a two-month period starting on 1 January 2009 during which there will be a coordinated transition of IIIC staff from Beirut to The Hague. Mr. Bellemare will then take up his functions as the Prosecutor in The Hague on 1 March 2009.

The Secretary-General underlines his firm commitment to ending impunity and to the need to bring to justice those responsible for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri, and related attacks.

New York
17 December 2008