

Britain: Lebanon needs more 'consensual government'

BEIRUT: Britain expressed concern over the weekend on the situation in Lebanon following the resignation of the government and called for the formation of a "consensual government."

"We are monitoring the situation in Lebanon carefully, following Prime Minister [Najib] Mikati's offer of resignation," Foreign Secretary William Hague said, according to a press release on the Foreign Ministry's website Saturday.

"I am also very concerned about the violence in Tripoli in recent days," he added, referring to the recent clashes in Lebanon's second largest city.

Recurrent fighting in the port city between supporters and opponents of Syrian President Bashar Assad has led to scores of fatalities and hundreds of wounded since the uprising began in 2011.

Hague praised Mikati, while noting the "mounting challenges" facing Lebanon from the conflict in its neighbor.

The British official called on all parties to prioritize national interests and work to form a "more consensual government."

"It is also critical that they reach a broad consensus to enable parliamentary elections to take place within the legal and constitutional framework and to support the work of the Lebanese security forces to maintain peace and protect Lebanon's territorial integrity," Hague said.

"We fully support the efforts of President [Michel] Sleiman in this process," he added.

Mikati, who formed his 30 member Cabinet in June 2011, tendered his government's resignation

to Sleiman Saturday.

The Tripoli lawmaker cited disagreement among ministers over extending the term of the country's police chief and an elections committee to oversee the June 9 parliamentary polls.

Mikati said he hoped the resignation of the government would pave the way for the resumption of the stalled National Dialogue in an effort toward the formation of a national "salvation Cabinet."

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