

**King urges EU efforts to rebuild Lebanon**

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**Siniora says Monarch 'one of first leaders to respond to call for help'**

AMMAN, August 16 (JT) — King Abdullah on Tuesday urged Europe to help rebuild Lebanon and deter future regional crises.

“Germany and other European Union states have an important role to play in backing the reconstruction of Lebanon and in offering the assistance needed by the Lebanese people now,” the King was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying at a meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

The Monarch also called on the international community to step up efforts to deter further violence in the Middle East and reiterated that a lasting and just settlement for the Palestinians was the only way to achieve stability in the region.

“The crisis that rocked the Middle East proved the importance of stepped up efforts by the international community to prevent new deadly crises in the region,” the King said.

“The Middle East will continue to be subject to a lack of stability and security... unless a just and comprehensive solution is found for the Palestinian cause,” he said.

“Regional peace and stability will only be achieved when the Palestinians restore their legitimate rights and establish their independent state,” he added.

Steinmeier, meanwhile, briefed King Abdullah on EU efforts to secure a ceasefire in the month-long conflict between Israel and Hizbollah.

Germany's top diplomat, who arrived late Monday in Amman, had been due to travel to neighboring Syria after Jordan, but cancelled the visit after President Bashar Assad's speech (see analysis).

His regional tour — the third in a month — was aimed at raising support to help foster a lasting peace in Lebanon, officials told Agence France-Presse.

Steinmeier was expected to travel to Saudi Arabia later this week.

Meanwhile, King Abdullah received a letter from Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, who thanked the Monarch for backing Lebanon throughout the crisis, Petra said.

Siniora said the King was one of the first leaders “to respond to Lebanon's call for help”. He added that Jordanian airplanes were the first to land in the Israeli-bombarded Beirut airport with relief aid. The premier also highlighted Jordan's political support.