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Further report on the status of the cease-fire
in the Israel-Lebanon sector

The Chief of Staff of UNTSO has submitted the following report on developments in the Israel-Lebanon sector during February 1978. 1/

1. Ground activity was at a moderate level and air and naval activity at a low level during the month. Ground activity occurred mainly in the vicinity of OPs Lab and Hin (south-western part of Lebanon) and concerned Israel forces road building and mine field operations. UNTSO operations continued to be hindered by incidents with de facto forces involving vehicle hijackings, denial of freedom of movement, armed thefts, forced entry into OPs, mined roads and shooting at or into the immediate vicinity of OP or OP relief/logistics operations.

2. Israel forces personnel continued to occupy six positions on the Lebanese side of the armistice demarcation line (ADL) near border pillars 6 (AMR 1680-2770), 2/ 11 (AMR 1799-2788), 14 (AMR 1838-2734), 18 (AMR 1880-2740), 19 (AMR 1907-2749) and 33 (AMR 2004-2904).

3. There were two cases of firing across the ADL or across the line between Lebanese territory and Israel-occupied Syrian territory. There were 36 crossing violations. The incidents were reported as follows:

(a) OP Lab (AMR 1643-2772), south of the village of Labouna, reported automatic-weapons fire by Israel forces on 16 February. The OP also reported crossing violations by Israel forces on 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20 (two reports), 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 (two reports) and 28 (two reports) February (maximum penetrations 300 metres to 1,500 metres each day). The crossing

1/ UNTSO observers are stationed in the Israel-Lebanon sector on the Lebanese side of the armistice demarcation line, in accordance with the consensus approved by the members of the Security Council on 19 April 1972, to observe the cease-fire between Israel and Lebanon called for by the Security Council. The present report of the Chief of Staff of UNTSO concerns essentially developments observed and reported by UNTSO observers in this context.

2/ AMR - approximate map reference.

party consisted either of 10 to 25 soldiers with construction equipment (bulldozers, trucks), who were engaged in the construction of a new road from border pillar 4 (AMR 1648-2772) to the vicinity of the Christian village of Aalma Ech Chaab (AMR 1675-2786), or of one or two patrol vehicles (jeeps or armoured personnel carriers) along the new road. Additionally, the OP reported that an Israel forces naval vessel penetrated Lebanese territorial waters on 27 February. Observation was hampered by hazy conditions, and the vessel was last seen in Lebanese waters heading in a north-north-western direction.

(b) OP Hin (AMR 1770-2790), east of the village of Marouhine, reported crossing violations by Israel forces in the vicinity of AMR 1775-2787 on 20, 21, 23, 26, 27 and 28 February (maximum penetrations 200, 200, 300, 400, 400 and 400 metres respectively). The crossing party consisted of 15 to 25 soldiers with military vehicles (jeeps and trucks), working in and around a mine field.

(c) OP Ras (AMR 1920-2785), south-east of the village of Maroun Er Ras, reported crossing violations by Israel forces in the vicinity of border pillar 20 (AMR 1914-2760) on 1, 2 and 16 February (maximum penetrations 200, 200 and 100 metres respectively). The crossing party consisted of 8 to 15 soldiers assumed to be working with mines.

(d) OP Khiam (AMR 2071-3025), south of the village of El Khiam, reported artillery fire (four rounds) by Israel forces on 28 February. Additionally, the OP reported crossing violations by Israel forces in the vicinity of AMR 2100-2980 and AMR 2130-2950 on 13 and 16 February (maximum penetrations 200 and 2,000 metres respectively). On 13 February, the crossing party, consisting of 20 soldiers and equipment, was engaged in improving and repairing the fence gate and the road near the ADL. On 16 February, one unidentified civilian truck crossed the ADL and proceeded towards the village of El Meri (AMR 2102-3028). When the truck was fired upon by de facto forces located in El Khiam, an Israeli party with a jeep, tank and armoured personnel carrier crossed the ADL to rescue it. No exchanges occurred between the two forces. Additionally, the OP reported a crossing violation by unidentified vehicles from Israel to Lebanon at AMR 2100-2980 on 20 February. The group, consisting of one jeep and three civilian pick-up trucks, was proceeding towards the village of El Meri.

4. There were 13 overflights reported during the period. Overflights by Israel forces jet aircraft were reported on 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 24 and 27 February (one each day) and on 4, 20 and 28 February (two each day).

5. With reference to paragraph 1, there were, during the month of February, 14 UNTSO vehicles hijacked, 33 forced entries into OPs in which theft of United Nations equipment and personal belongings of observers occurred on 17 occasions and 6 shootings into the immediate vicinity of OPs or OP logistic/relief operations by de facto forces in southern Lebanon. Twelve vehicle hijackings, 30 forced entries into the OPs and 4 shooting incidents occurred in areas assumed to be controlled by the Christian de facto forces. The remainder, with the exception of a stolen vehicle in Beirut, occurred in areas assumed to be controlled by Palestinian elements. Since 1 July 1977 to 28 February 1978, there have been approximately 236 incidents with de facto forces in southern Lebanon. It was estimated that 159 of the incidents occurred in Christian-controlled areas and the remainder, 77, in Palestinian-controlled areas or Beirut.
