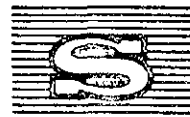


UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/12929  
18 November 1978

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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Interim report of the Secretary-General concerning  
the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon under  
Security Council resolution 434 (1978)

1. In deciding in its resolution 434 (1978) of 18 September 1978 to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of four months, the Security Council also called upon Israel, Lebanon and all others concerned to co-operate fully and urgently with the United Nations in the implementation of resolution 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the implementation of resolution 434 (1978) in two months to allow it to assess the situation and to examine what further measures should be taken, and to report again at the end of the four-month period.
2. The present report is submitted in pursuance of this request and contains an account of developments relating to the functioning of UNIFIL during the past two months.
3. During the period under review the Secretary-General, the Chief Co-ordinator of United Nations Peace-keeping Missions in the Middle East and the Force Commander maintained constant contact with the Lebanese authorities as well as the Israeli authorities concerned regarding the steps to be taken to further the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978) and 434 (1978). UNIFIL has maintained its contacts with the PLO throughout this period. It has also dealt on an ad hoc basis with the Lebanese de facto armed groups in southern Lebanon as occasion required.
4. UNIFIL has continued to use its best efforts to ensure that its area of operation is not used for hostile activities of any kind. In the area where UNIFIL exercises full control, effective action continues to be taken to prevent entry of armed personnel, and a progressive normalization of life is observed.
5. On the other hand, there has been no significant improvement in the deployment of the Force since the last report of the Secretary-General (S/12845). Through the Israeli authorities, contacts with the Lebanese de facto armed groups under Major Haddad were initiated on an urgent basis immediately after the adoption of Security Council resolution 434 (1978) with a view to securing UNIFIL's full deployment and control in the area handed over by Israel to the de facto armed groups in June 1978. But despite the efforts of UNIFIL, little progress has been achieved.

6. During the period from 11 to 22 September, there were heavy exchanges of artillery fire between the armed elements north of the Litani River and the Lebanese de facto armed groups in the Marjayoun area, which were mostly initiated by the latter. It was estimated that the de facto armed groups fired some 1,250 shells against 300 from the armed elements. In each case, UNIFIL intervened to restore the cease-fire. Since that time, there were no heavy exchanges of fire between the two groups, but UNIFIL has observed isolated cases of firing, mostly from the Marjayoun area.
7. Shortly after the intensification of the fighting in Beirut in late September, the attitude of the de facto armed groups markedly hardened, and tension in and near the UNIFIL area of operation increased.
8. In the area under the control of the Lebanese de facto armed groups, UNIFIL, which had previously secured limited freedom of movement there, was subject to periodic harassment. On 13 October, for example, these armed groups fired at a land-rover of the Irish battalion near Bent Jbail, although clearance had been obtained from them for the vehicle to pass through their area. On 18 October, Major Haddad barred all French personnel from the area controlled by the de facto armed groups. These and other incidents were strongly protested and, in the latter case, the restrictions were subsequently eased.
9. UNIFIL installations were also harassed by the de facto armed groups. On 16 October, a group of some 300 people led by Major Haddad and including armed personnel together with women and children held a demonstration at UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura in protest against the situation in Beirut. UNIFIL officers identified three personnel of the Israel Defence Force in plain clothes on the scene. A group of demonstrators forced their way into the premises of UNIFIL, severely damaged a Lebanese army helicopter used by the Lebanese liaison team and abducted four Lebanese liaison personnel. Strong protests were lodged both locally and at United Nations Headquarters. The Israeli authorities disclaimed all responsibility for this demonstration. The four Lebanese liaison personnel were eventually released with IDF assistance. In another incident on 25 October, three de facto armed personnel forcibly entered OP Ras and wounded a soldier of the Irish battalion with a knife. In this connexion, it should be mentioned that under a temporary practical arrangement reached with the de facto armed groups, OP Ras which is located inside the area controlled by them was manned by two unarmed UNIFIL personnel. Since the above incident and as a result of new negotiations, the UNIFIL personnel manning the OP have been increased and provided with defensive arms.
10. The Lebanese de facto armed groups have also harassed civilians in the UNIFIL area of operation. For example, mortar shells were fired at the village of Brashit on 30 October and at Haddatah on 3 November. The firing at Brashit resulted in the death of one woman.
11. During the period under review, there were a limited number of incidents involving Palestinian armed elements within and outside the UNIFIL area of operation. These incidents were mainly attempts at infiltration of armed personnel into the area. In each case, the armed personnel involved were escorted out of

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the area. There were also a few firing incidents. The most serious of these occurred at Wadi Jilu (some 12 kilometres east of Tyre) on 23 October when a Palestinian fired at a vehicle of the French battalion and wounded its driver. A strong protest was lodged with the PLO in this connexion. These incidents were isolated cases, and it was possible to resolve problems arising from them by negotiation.

12. UNIFIL has observed the presence of IDF personnel in southern Lebanon on a number of occasions. In particular, on 13 and 14 November, a group of about 30 IDF personnel were seen laying mines some 300 metres inside Lebanon in the area of OP Mar. This matter has been brought to the attention of the Israeli authorities with the request that such incursions cease.

#### OBSERVATIONS

13. Since 19 September when the Security Council renewed the mandate of UNIFIL for four months, continuous efforts have been made, both in the field and at United Nations Headquarters, to make progress in the further implementation by UNIFIL of its mandate under Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978) and 434 (1978), particularly as regards the full deployment of the Force and the progressive restoration of the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese Government in the area of operation. To my regret I have to report that, in spite of these efforts, little progress has been made during the period under review.

14. Inevitably, the tragic developments in Beirut, which escalated towards the end of September, had their effect on the situation in southern Lebanon which, as I have noted in my last report to the Security Council (S/12845), is closely linked to the situation in Lebanon as a whole. It is my hope that, in the relative calm which now prevails in Beirut, efforts to rebuild the Lebanese Army will be able to go forward. Progress in this field would certainly facilitate the fulfilment of the mandate of UNIFIL.

15. An essential pre-condition for UNIFIL's success is the co-operation of all concerned, especially those armed elements and groups in and around its area of operation. In the present circumstances, this particularly applies to the Lebanese de facto forces in the area and to the Government of Israel. I regret to have to inform the Council that at the present time the necessary co-operation is still lacking in these quarters, and the complete deployment of UNIFIL and the progressive re-establishment of Lebanese authority in the area is therefore blocked. The Commander of UNIFIL and his officers, the Chief Co-ordinator, and I and my colleagues at Headquarters, have made constant efforts to secure an improvement in this situation, so far to little avail. In fact, at the time of writing we are awaiting a response to certain detailed suggestions for further deployment of UNIFIL which would greatly improve its control in its area of operation and its capacity to protect all elements of the civilian population.

16. In this connexion, the fact that in some parts of the UNIFIL area of operation the de facto forces remain free to intimidate various elements of the civilian population is a cause for the most serious concern. Such a situation may well lead

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to an escalation of conflict as well as to a loss of confidence in UNIFIL. Particular attention is therefore being given to efforts to improve the capacity of UNIFIL to give protection to all elements of the civilian population. There can be no valid argument for obstructing this objective, which is in the interests of peace and normality in the whole area of operation.

17. The relationship between the Israel Defence Force and the Lebanese de facto forces is a major factor in the present situation. UNIFIL has from time to time requested the Israeli authorities to use their good offices and influence in efforts to control or moderate the actions of Major Haddad and his militia. The Israeli authorities have indicated that they do not control the Lebanese de facto forces. However, it has not been denied that they provide them with logistic and other forms of support. During the period under review, IDF personnel have also been observed on several occasions in southern Lebanon.

18. Relations with other armed elements in the area have not created major problems. Although there have been occasional clashes with armed personnel attempting to enter UNIFIL's area of operation from the north, these incidents have invariably ended with the negotiated withdrawal of the armed elements and with a re-establishment of the status quo with the assistance of the Liaison Officers of the Palestine Liberation Organization. I very much hope that this respect for the authority and functioning of UNIFIL will be maintained in the future.

19. In spite of the unsatisfactory and sometimes dangerous conditions outlined above, the officers and men of UNIFIL have maintained a disciplined and dignified attitude of restraint and have refused to be provoked into a degree of forceful reaction which would lead to a further escalation of fighting, with inevitable casualties among the civilian population, as well as military personnel. However, the indefinite continuation of such a situation is obviously unacceptable. Nor should UNIFIL's attitude of restraint be mistaken for lack of determination to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

20. It is therefore essential that the Lebanese de facto forces, and those who support them, come to terms with certain realities. In the first place, the restoration of the authority and sovereignty of the Lebanese Government in southern Lebanon is in the long run the only durable and reliable means by which normality and security for all can return to that strife-torn area. It is therefore vital that all concerned co-operate to this end. Continued military resistance to this effort can only be regarded as a deliberate defiance both of the legitimate authority of the Lebanese Government and of the decisions of the Security Council. In the second place, UNIFIL is there to protect all groups of the population and is a threat to none. The fact that the Force has persisted, in the face of provocation and harassment, in seeking by peaceful means the constructive co-operation of all concerned, should be proof enough of its good faith. Thirdly, the present state of affairs, if continued, will inevitably lead to the erosion of UNIFIL. No one should be in any doubt as to the dangers of the situation that would then inevitably emerge. It is in the long-term interests of all concerned to avoid such a development.

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21. In light of the above considerations, UNIFIL will continue to exert all possible efforts to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council in the hope that all the parties concerned will find it possible to extend to it their full co-operation and assistance.

22. In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the Commander of UNIFIL, Major-General Erskine, his staff, both civilian and military, and the officers and men of the contingents of UNIFIL for their steadiness, courage and sense of responsibility in an extraordinarily difficult and volatile situation. I wish also to express my appreciation to the Governments which are providing contingents and other forms of support for UNIFIL.

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