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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS
INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON

(for the period 23 January 1988-25 July 1988)

Introduction

1. In its resolution 609 (1988) of 27 January 1988, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further interim period of six months, until 31 July 1988. The Council also reiterated strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries; re-emphasized the terms of reference and guidelines of the Force as stated in the report of the Secretary-General of 19 March 1978, approved by resolution 426 (1978), and called upon all parties concerned to co-operate fully with the Force for the full implementation of its mandate and reiterated that UNIFIL should fully implement its mandate as defined in resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1970) and all other relevant resolutions. The Council requested the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the Government of Lebanon and other parties directly concerned on the implementation of the resolution and to report to the Council thereon.

2. On 14 March 1988, I submitted to the Security Council a special report concerning the kidnapping, on 17 February 1988, of Lieutenant-Colonel William Richard Higgins, an officer of the United States of America serving as Chief of the military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) assigned to assist UNIFIL in the performance of its tasks (S/19617). I regret to inform the Council that Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins remains in captivity, despite continuing efforts to obtain his release.

Organization of the Force

3. As of July 1988, the composition of UNIPIL was • @ follows:

Military personnel

Fiji	HQ UNIFIL	17	
	Infantry battalion	644	
	Force Mobile Reserve	32	
	Military police	<u>8</u>	701
Finland	HQ UNIFIL	9	
	Infantry battalion	508	
	Force Mobile Reserve	17	
	Military police	<u>9</u>	543
France	HQ UNIFIL	24	
	Composite battalion, (maintenance company, defence company, armoured escort company)	466	
	Military police	<u>10</u>	502
Ghana	HQ UNIFIL	45	
	Infantry battalion	016	
	Force Mobile Reserve	33	
	Military police	<u>7</u>	901
Ireland	HQ UNIFIL	33	
	Infantry battalion	646	
	Force Mobile Reserve	17	
	HQ Camp Command	36	
	Military police	<u>12</u>	744
Italy	HQ UNIFIL	4	
	Helicopter unit	44	
	Military police	<u>4</u>	52
Nepal	HQ UNIFIL	21	
	Infantry battalion	607	
	Force Mobile Reserve	23	
	Military police	<u>5</u>	856
Norway	HQ UNIFIL	31	
	Infantry battalion	661	
	Force Mobile Reserve	32	
	Maintenance company	165	
	Military police	<u>17</u>	906

Sweden	HQ UNIFIL	17	
	Logistic battalion	609	
	Force Mobile Reserve		
	Military police	- 4	639
	TOTAL UNIFIL		

The deployment of UNIFIL as of July 1988 is shown on the annexed map. (It should be noted that areas under Israeli control north of the UNIFIL area are not shown.)

4. With effect from 1 July 1988, Lieutenant-General Gustav Hägglund of Finland relinquished his command of the Force and returned to national service. He was succeeded by Major-General Larr-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden.

5. UNIFIL was assisted by 64 military observers of UNTSO. These unarmed officers are organized as Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) and are under the operational control of the Commander of UNIFIL. They manned the five observation posts along the Lebanese side of the Israel-Lebanon armistice demarcation line; the post at Château de Beaufort was closed in February. The military observers also operated three mobile teams in the part of the area of operation that is under Israeli control. Another five mobile teams, which had been assigned to the infantry battalions, were withdrawn after the kidnapping of Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins. Their functions were taken over by the battalions and by two field liaison teams set up by UNIFIL headquarters.

6. The Lebanese army unit serving with UNIFIL maintained a strength of 128 all ranks. The bulk of the unit was stationed at Tyre with small elements stationed at Arzun, Al Yatun and Qana.

7. Logistic support for UNIFIL was provided by the Swedish logistic battalion, elements of the French composite battalion, the Norwegian maintenance company and the Italian helicopter unit, as well as certain civilian sections (notably those responsible for communications and vehicle maintenance).

8. The security of its personnel and facilities remained a priority preoccupation of UNIFIL. In this connection, I have approved plans submitted by the Force Commander, involving the closing of some positions and the opening or strengthening of others. The Force Mobile Reserve, a composite mechanized company which comprises elements from 7 contingents, continued to function effectively as an integrated unit and was deployed during periods of tension and used for special tasks.

9. UNIFIL continued to have difficulty in obtaining the land and buildings it needs because the rents, for which the Lebanese Government is responsible, have remained unpaid since 1984 (see S/19445, para. 8). UNIFIL was in touch with the Lebanese authorities with a view to securing payment.

10. During the period under review, two members of the Force, an Irish and a French soldier, lost their lives in accidents. Fifteen soldiers suffered injuries; one as a result of hostile fire, 5 as a result of mine explosions and the others

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as a result of accidents. Since the establishment of UNIFIL, 153 members of the Force have died, 60 of them as a result of firing And mine or bomb explosions, 65 in accidents and 28 from other causes. Some 220 have been wounded by firing and mine or bomb explosions.

Situation in the UNIFIL area

11. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operation remained essentially unchanged. Israel continued to control in southern Lebanon an area manned by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the so-called "South Lebanon Army" (SLA). The boundaries of that area have not been clearly defined but are determined ~~de facto~~ by the forward positions of IDF And SLA. It includes the area adjacent to the international border, part of the Nepalese, Irish, and Finnish battalion sectors, the entire Norwegian battalion sector and sizeable areas to the north of the UNIFIL area of operation. Within the UNIFIL area of operation, IDF And SLA maintained 54 positions (see the annexed map). IDF personnel were observed in SLA positions on numerous occasions, especially at night.

12. Resistance groups continued to launch frequent operations against IDF and SLA, using small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets and mortars, as well as mines and roadside bombs. UNIFIL recorded 19 such operations in January, 19 in February, 26 in March, 19 in April, 14 in May and 17 in June. Many more operations were reported from those parts of the Israeli-controlled area where UNIFIL is not deployed. In the UNIFIL area, most of the resistance operations remained limited in scope and involved mainly the use of mines or bombs and firing at IDF/SLA positions. However, on 28 January 1988, some 150 men carried out a co-ordinated attack on SLA positions at Rshaf and Brashit.

13. IDF/SLA continued to fire frequently from their positions or when on patrol. When attacked, they generally responded with heavy artillery, tank and mortar shelling) Israeli helicopter gunships were also employed. In some cases, IDF/SLA retaliated for attacks by shelling villages. The most serious of those incidents occurred on 7 May, when 77 shells were fired into several villages in the Irish battalion sector, and on 12 July, when 150 shells were fired into the village of Brashit in the same sector.

14. As in the past, IDF/SLA fired frequently at or close to UNIFIL positions; sometimes this occurred during exchanges of fire with armed elements, but, very often the firing was unprovoked. During the period under review, UNIFIL protested more than 300 unprovoked firings to the Israeli military authorities. Friction with UNIFIL also resulted from the increased IDF/SLA activities in the Norwegian battalion sector that I noted in my last report (S/19445, para. 16).

15. IDF/SLA maintained their campaign to recruit local men into SLA. In the village of Chsbaa in the Norwegian battalion sector, the mukhtar and a number of men were expelled at the end of May for refusing to co-operate with that campaign. They were allowed to return to their village in early June, after the United Nations had raised this matter with the Israeli authorities.

16. UNIFIL continued to co-operate with the **Lebanese** authorities, United Nations agencies and programmes, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental **organizations** in extending humanitarian **assistance** to the local population. In addition, troop-contributing **Governments** funded **assistance** to medical and welfare institutions and schools in the respective battalion sectors. As before, a large number of Lebanese civilians **were** treated at UNIFIL medical **centres** and some 5,000 were treated at the UNIFIL hospital at Naqoura, **including** about 250 in-patients.

Financial aspects

17. By **its** resolution **42/223** of 21 December 1987, the **General** Assembly authoriaed the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for UNIFIL at a rate not to exceed **\$11,765,000** gross (**\$11,618,000** net) per month for the **12-month** period beginning 1 February 1988, should the Security Council decide to continue the Force beyond the period of six months authoriaed under its resolution 599 (1987). By its **resolution** 609 (1988) of 29 January 1988, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNIFIL to 31 July 1988. Should the Council decide to extend UNIFIL beyond its current mandate period, the costs to the United Nations for maintaining the Force during a six-month extension period would be within the commitment authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 421223, assuming continuance of the **Force's** existing strength and responsibilities. In the event that the current strength of the Force is increased or its mandate is extended beyond 91 January 1989, the Secretary-General will report to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to the General Assembly during its forty-third session on the additional requirements needed for maintaining the Force. **As** at the beginning of July **1988**, a total of \$282.9 million in **assessed** contributions to the UNIFIL Special Account remained unpaid.

Observations

18. Xt is with regret and concern that I have again to report to the Security Council that it has not been possible to make further progreas towards attaining the objectives aet out in its resolution 425 (**1978**), namely the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, **the** restoration of international peace and **security** and the re-eatnblishment of the **Lebanese** Government's **effective** authority in the area. More than ten years have paaed **since** UNIFIL was established. Yet Israel remains in occupation of large tracts of **Lebanese** territory both in the **UNIFIL** area of operation **and** to the north of it. Hostilities occur daily in southern Lebanon. And it has not proved possible to re-establish the central Government's authority. Although this state of **affairs** has become familiar, it is not one which can be accepted with equanimity, and the Security Council has been consistent in its refusal to do so.

19. The Lebanese authorities view **with** increasing frustration and **apprehension** the apparent permanence of the Israeli military **presence** on Lebanese territory. They reject this prsaence **as** a **matter** of principle and they **are**, moreover, convinced that **its** early withdrawal and the deployment, of **UNIFIL** to **the** internationally

recognized boundary would improve considerably the prospects for solving the very serious problems facing Lebanon and for restoring government authority, an objective that is mentioned expressly in resolution 425 (1978).

20. The Israeli authorities, on the other hand, continue to take the position that the Israeli presence in Lebanon is a temporary arrangement, which is necessary for ensuring the security of northern Israel so long as the Lebanese Government is not able to exercise effective authority and prevent its territory from being used to launch attacks against Israel. They do not consider that UNIFIL, as a peace-keeping force, can assume this responsibility.

21. Like any sovereign State Israel has a legitimate interest in preventing its territory from being subjected to attacks from the territory of a neighbouring State. But, as I have stated repeatedly, I do not think that this interest is legitimately served by maintaining Israeli military forces in Lebanon, thus infringing on Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

22. UNIFIL has continued to use its best efforts to prevent, or at least limit, hostilities and to shield the civilian population. It is a matter of regret that Israel has not been prepared to make further withdrawals on the lines of what was successfully achieved at Tallet Huqban in October 1987 (see S/19445, para. 26). I also remain extremely concerned by the frequency with which the "South Lebanon Army" fires deliberately at or close to UNIFIL positions, thereby exposing their occupants to the risk of death or serious injury. These firings, which are inexcusable, have been the subject of almost daily protests to the Israeli military authorities and have also been taken up at the political level.

23. I am distressed that, in spite of continuous efforts by myself and senior members of the Secretariat, it has so far not been possible to end Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins' ordeal and reunite him with his family. I wish to underline that at the time of his abduction Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins was serving the United Nations, under the authority of the Security Council. I again appeal to any Member State having influence in this matter to do everything in its power to help secure the release of this officer.

24. The financial situation of the Force remains most unsatisfactory, as is evident from paragraph 17 above. I again urge Member States to pay promptly and in full their assessed contributions to the UNIFIL Special Account. The effect of present arrears and withholdings is that the troop-contributing Governments are reimbursed by the United Nations less than two thirds of the amounts due to them.

25. I wish to inform the Security Council that on 11 July 1988 the President of Lebanon, Mr. Amin Gemayel, addressed to me a letter, in which he urged that a new look be taken at the political situation in southern Lebanon and that an effort be made now to put Lebanon on the road to recovery. The letter states that Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory is by itself a provocative act that will generate legitimate national defence and acts of violence against it. It also refers to a consensus in Lebanon that only the legitimate authority of the State of Lebanon can bring about stability, peace and progress and that the provisions of resolution 425 (1978) should be fully implemented. President Gemayel goes on to ask that the

United Nations starts a new momentum. He suggests that it would be timely for the Secretary-General, with the **backing** of the Security Council and the diplomatic support of Member States, to renew efforts aimed at exploring practical **steps** that could be taken towards the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

26. I have also received a letter, dated 13 July 1988, from the Permanent **Representative** of Lebanon, conveying his Government's request that the security Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of **six months**, "on the basis of the **provisions** of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 501 (1982), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and 520 (1982) and of other relevant resolutions of the Security Council". The text of the letter has been circulated as document A/43/461-S/20014.

27. Although the situation of UNIFIL **remains** very **unsatisfactory**, I again feel obliged to recommend that **the Council accept the Lebanese Government's** request and renew **the Force's** mandate for a further period of six months. The **Force** continues to play an important role in controlling the level of violence in a very volatile **situation** which, without it, could quickly **escalate into** wider conflict. And it provides humanitarian support to **the inhabitants** of the area, a role which will be **enhanced** through co-operation **between the** Force and my newly appointed Special Representative for the **Reconstruction and Development** of Lebanon. But in making **this** recommendation I must again urge that the necessary efforts **be** made to bring about the Israeli withdrawal which the Council **called for in its resolution** 425 (1978), so that UNIFIL **can** undertake the task originally assigned to it.

28. Finally, I **wish** to pay tribute to **Major-General** Lara-Eric Wahlgren, the new Force **Commander**, and to all the men and **women** under his command, both military and **civilian**, for the manner in which they **have carried out** their difficult assignment. Their **discipline** and bearing **have been of a** high order, reflecting credit on **themselves, on** their **countries** and on the United **Nations**. I **also wish to** pay a **special** tribute to Lieutenant-General Gustav **Hägglund** for his **outstanding** contribution in guiding the **Force** with great **success** through a very difficult **period**.

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