



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9121st meeting

Wednesday, 31 August 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Zhang Jun (China)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Spasse
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Issahaku
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Ms. Moran
Kenya	Ms. Nyakoe
Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
Norway	Mr. Heines
Russian Federation	Mr. Kirpichenko
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America	Mr. Mills

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 9 August 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/607)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 9 August 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/607)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2022/654, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/607, which contains the text of a letter dated 9 August 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2650 (2022).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): The United States welcomes today's renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for an additional year and thanks France, as the penholder, for its constructive engagement on the renewal.

The United States appreciates the international community's support for Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) during the country's ongoing crisis. We are pleased to see the mandate reauthorize

UNIFIL's provision of non-lethal material and logistical support to the LAF. That will help the LAF to extend and sustain State authority in southern Lebanon, including by increasing joint activities with UNIFIL and accelerating the deployment of a model regiment.

Through the new mandate, the Council reaffirms UNIFIL's authority to operate independently and to conduct both announced and unannounced patrols under the terms of its status of forces agreement with the Government of Lebanon and consistent with the terms of the mission's mandate. That serves as an important reminder, given that the Secretary-General has reported that UNIFIL peacekeepers are blocked with increasing frequency from conducting their mandated tasks and accessing sites of concern.

The proliferation of prefabricated containers placed by Green Without Borders obstructs UNIFIL's access to the Blue Line and is heightening tensions in the area, further demonstrating that the so-called environmental group is acting on Hizbullah's behalf. The presence of firing ranges in UNIFIL's area of responsibility — a serious escalation of Hizbullah's open defiance of resolution 1701 (2006) — is also increasing tensions in southern Lebanon.

We urge the Lebanese authorities, as the host State, to facilitate UNIFIL's full and timely access to its entire area of operations, including the entire Blue Line, the firing ranges, Green Without Borders sites and containers, the tunnel sites and all other sites of concern to which UNIFIL requires access in order to fulfil its mandate. Ensuring that UNIFIL's peacekeepers are able to move freely is also critical to helping mitigate the growing risks to their safety and security, which the United Nations has documented this year.

Recalling that host Governments have primary responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel and assets, we urge the Lebanese authorities to investigate attacks against peacekeepers, hold to account those responsible and proactively work to deter hostility towards peacekeepers.

The United States underlines that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River must be free of weapons, except for those used by the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. The Secretary-General continues to document a proliferation of unauthorized weapons in this area.

On a technical matter, we must clarify our position with respect to operative paragraph 22 of the resolution, which condemns the presence of these weapons, because the provision of resolution 1701 (2006) that calls for this area to be free of unauthorized weapons is not legally binding. "Violation" is therefore not the correct terminology. But that precise terminology aside, the United States shares the Security Council's significant concern about the state of affairs in southern Lebanon, in particular Hizbullah's threatening activities. With this resolution, the Security Council has made clear that Hizbullah's continued massing of weapons must stop.

In conclusion, we call on the Lebanese authorities to prevent such activities and on UNIFIL to fulfil its mandate by patrolling the entire area between the Blue Line and the Litani River.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I would like first to commend our French colleagues for their unwavering commitment to securing a consensus outcome for this important mandate renewal. The United Arab Emirates also appreciates the constructive and cooperative approach demonstrated by Security Council members to unify around a renewal of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Lebanon faces overlapping generational crises that have visited profound socioeconomic hardship on the Lebanese people. Resolution 2650 (2022) therefore represents the Security Council's much-needed reiteration of its commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity as it navigates a difficult path forward.

In the light of that, the United Arab Emirates strongly welcomes the renewal, noting the request for renewal from the Government of Lebanon and the letter of the Secretary-General (S/2022/607). We further recognize UNIFIL's vital role in supporting Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces, and we underscore UNIFIL's valuable contribution to maintaining regional stability, especially in the absence of a permanent ceasefire. In this regard, we must thank the police- and troop-contributing countries whose generous contributions are the foundation of peacekeeping in Lebanon and beyond in our region.

We particularly welcome the resolution's strengthened language expressing Council members' unified condemnation of the continued maintenance of weapons by armed groups outside the State's control in violation of resolution 1701 (2006), as noted by the

Secretary-General. Additionally, we underscore that the maintenance of weapons by non-State groups has been a demonstrably grave threat to Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability, as well as to the region as a whole. The inclusion of such a condemnation in a unanimous resolution by the Security Council reflects a collective expectation that this core issue is urgently addressed in the interest of the Lebanese people and Lebanon's sovereignty.

It remains vitally important that UNIFIL is able to support Lebanon through the coming period by carrying out the mandate given by the Security Council, including through the Interim Force's freedom of movement in its area of operations and along the Blue Line. The United Arab Emirates looks forward to continuing to work with Council members with the same spirit of constructive cooperation so as to enhance this body's invaluable support for Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and to realize the legitimate aspirations of the Lebanese people.

In conclusion, given that this is the last official meeting of the Security Council this month at which I will take the floor, I would like to take this opportunity also to congratulate China on a very successful and productive presidency in this month of August 2022. I also extend our best wishes to our colleagues in the French delegation for a successful presidency of the Council in September.

Mr. Ragutthalli (India): India voted in favour of the resolution to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (resolution 2650 (2022)), as we recognize and value the critical role played by UNIFIL in maintaining stability across the Blue Line, thereby contributing to regional stability.

As one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UNIFIL, India remains steadfast in its support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Lebanon. We thank the delegation of France for the important role it played in facilitating the negotiations on the resolution and in accommodating the various views of Council members.

We welcome the resolution's focus on addressing the key challenges faced by UNIFIL, restrictions on UNIFIL's freedom of movement both on land and at sea, and denial of access to sites of its operational interest in a timely manner. The resolution also underscores the need to counter widespread misinformation about UNIFIL's mandate and how the Interim Force

can conduct its patrolling and operations, which is a positive development. Such misinformation not only adversely affects UNIFIL's operational capabilities, but also poses a threat to the safety and security of its peacekeeping personnel.

However, while we extend UNIFIL's mandate, it is equally important that we provide its peacekeeping personnel with the required adequate resources for performing the tasks expected from them. Mandating additional tasks that are to be carried out within existing resources would affect the overall effectiveness of UNIFIL. We do hope that this anomaly can be addressed sooner rather than later.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): I briefly take the floor to commend — and thank — China for its very successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of August — and without neckties. I also wish the delegation of France all the best in its presidency of the Council next month.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his comments and his greetings addressed to the presidency. I am confident that he will have the opportunity next month to show off his collection of neckties.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.