



# Security Council

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## Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 1 November 2019 to 18 February 2020

### Report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my previous report, dated 18 November 2019 (S/2019/889), including on the provisions of resolution 2485 (2019). Against a backdrop of nationwide protests beginning in October 2019 and heightened regional tensions, the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained mostly calm. Outstanding obligations remain for both parties under resolution 1701 (2006). There was no progress towards a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel.

#### II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

##### A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

2. On 19 November, UNIFIL troops observed kinetic activity over the Golan, south of the Blue Line, as a result of which a stabilization fin of a Tamir missile damaged a UNIFIL vehicle inside a UNIFIL position south-east of Shab'a (Sector East). On 22 November, UNIFIL sent a letter to the Israel Defense Forces conveying serious concern for the safety of peacekeepers deployed in the area.

3. The Israel Defense Forces have continued construction work south of the Blue Line, including of a fence in Rosh HaNikra, across from Ra's al-Naqurah (Sector West), since 14 January. On 19 January, the Israel Defense Forces initiated drilling works in a Lebanese "reservation area" in Misgav Am, across from Udaysah (Sector East), aimed at installing underground movement sensors south of the Blue Line. The Israel Defense Forces had notified UNIFIL before commencing both works, which proceeded without incident.

4. The Israel Defense Forces continued to enter Lebanese airspace in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty on an almost daily basis. From 1 November 2019 to 18 February 2020, UNIFIL recorded 291 air violations for a total overflight time of 890 hours. Unmanned aerial vehicles accounted for approximately 79 per cent of the violations. The remaining airspace violations involved fighter



aircraft or unidentified aircraft. On 22 November, 11 December and 6 February, UNIFIL sent letters to the Israel Defense Forces protesting all airspace violations, in particular the overflights by fighter aircraft flying at a low altitude on 20 November and 4 December, respectively, and urging their immediate cessation. On 12 February, the Lebanese Armed Forces issued a statement that an unmanned aerial vehicle had entered Lebanese airspace over Mays al-Jabal (Sector East) and that the Lebanese Armed Forces had fired at it, prompting the unmanned aerial vehicle to return south of the Blue Line. UNIFIL did not detect any airspace violation or observe any gunshots at the alleged time of the incident. Despite follow-up with the parties by UNIFIL, no further information has been received.

5. The occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line by the Israel Defense Forces continued. While the Government of Lebanon has welcomed the UNIFIL proposal, shared with the parties in 2011, for the facilitation of the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the occupied area, the Government of Israel has yet to respond.

6. UNIFIL observed weapons being pointed towards areas north of the Blue Line on six occasions. On 10 November and 5 February, UNIFIL observed an Israel Defense Forces vehicle pointing its cannon towards an area north of the Blue Line. On 11 December, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol observed two Israel Defense Forces soldiers pointing their light machine guns towards the Blue Line, close to Rumaysh (Sector West). On 29 and 30 January, UNIFIL observed Israel Defence Forces soldiers close to Aytarun (Sector West) pointing their weapons towards individuals north of the Blue Line, who were taking pictures towards areas south of the Blue Line. On 11 February, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol in Aytarun (Sector West) observed an Israel Defense Forces vehicle pointing its cannon towards the patrol for about one minute. UNIFIL continues to follow up with the Israel Defense Forces regarding each incident.

7. From 1 November to 18 February, UNIFIL recorded 313 ground violations of the Blue Line by unarmed Lebanese civilians crossing south of the Blue Line, including 209 violations by shepherds and farmers, mainly in the vicinity of Bastrah, as well as 67 violations by civilians accessing Shu'ayb well near Blida (all Sector East). In addition, armed hunters from Lebanon crossed south of the Blue Line on 12 occasions, including 10 times in December. On 28 December, UNIFIL sent a letter to the Lebanese Armed Forces expressing concern over the high number of armed hunters crossing the Blue Line that month, mostly close to Blida.

8. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those belonging to the Government of Lebanon and to UNIFIL. To that end, in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL maintained 16 permanent and an average of 170 temporary checkpoints and conducted some 330 counter-rocket-launching operations each month.

9. UNIFIL observed unauthorized weapons in the area of operations on 350 occasions. Of these, all but the following two incidents involved hunting weapons. On 20 December, a UNIFIL patrol observed two civilians with two shotguns, north-west of Tulin (Sector East). On 2 January, UNIFIL observed seven individuals in civilian clothes walking close to the Blue Line, south-east of Aytarun (Sector West), with four of the seven carrying pistols in holsters.

10. UNIFIL finalized its investigation into the 1 September 2019 exchange of fire across the Blue Line and shared its investigation report with the parties. The UNIFIL investigation confirmed the conclusions, as detailed in my report dated 18 November 2019 ([S/2019/889](#), paras. 5–8). Despite repeated requests by UNIFIL to the Lebanese

Armed Forces and senior government officials, the mission was not provided access to the Green without Borders sites in Aytarun, from where the mission estimated that the missiles had been launched across the Blue Line.

11. Regarding the UNIFIL investigation into the alleged interception by Hizbullah of an Israeli drone on 9 September 2019 near Ramiyah (Sector West) referred to in my previous report (S/2019/889, para. 9), despite repeated requests by UNIFIL, neither party has provided information in this connection. As such, UNIFIL is unable to proceed with its investigation.

12. UNIFIL maintained its high operational tempo and visible presence throughout the area of operations in line with resolution 2373 (2017) and as reiterated in resolutions 2433 (2018) and 2485 (2019), conducting 14,457 monthly military operational activities on average, including 6,774 patrols. Some 4.5 per cent of UNIFIL operational activities included at least one female peacekeeper.

13. UNIFIL vehicle, foot and air patrols maintained an operational footprint in all municipalities and villages in the area of operations. Air reconnaissance patrols continued over areas to which ground patrols had limited access, including private property, rugged terrain or land contaminated by explosive remnants of war or anti-personnel mines. UNIFIL increased the percentage of night patrols from 35 per cent in June 2019 to 50 per cent of all independent patrols in January 2020.

14. The number of UNIFIL operations conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces was maintained at 22 per cent. However, the Lebanese Armed Forces participated in fewer training activities in November and December. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces have consequently adjusted their training schedule for the first quarter of 2020. Further to the mission's request to the Lebanese Armed Forces dated 5 September for access to the sites in connection with the 1 September missile launch claimed by Hizbullah, referred to in my previous report and again in paragraph 10 above, on 1 December and 4 February UNIFIL submitted letters to the Lebanese Armed Forces reiterating its request to visit Green without Borders sites and private properties close to the Blue Line, stressing the need for unrestricted access to the Blue Line in its entirety. UNIFIL has yet to be granted access to the requested sites. Furthermore, as detailed in paragraph 2 of my report dated 14 March 2019 (S/2019/237), and despite repeated requests, UNIFIL has yet to gain access to all locations north of the Blue Line related to the discovery of tunnels south of the Blue Line.

15. While the freedom of movement of UNIFIL was generally respected, several restrictions of freedom of movement and access were encountered (see annex I). The most serious incident occurred on 10 February in Bar'ashit (Sector West), where an estimated 15 individuals in civilian clothes violently protested the presence of a UNIFIL patrol. The individuals became aggressive, climbing on one of the armoured personnel carriers and seizing one portable radio, one Global Positioning System device, one notebook and one map from inside the vehicle after forcing the top hatch. During the altercation, some of the individuals punched four of the peacekeepers, who in turn used riot control equipment to fend off the individuals. One peacekeeper sustained minor injuries. Two other incidents occurred in the same area on 14 and 29 January. On each occasion, several individuals with vehicles blocked the movement of a UNIFIL patrol; some equipment was taken from the UNIFIL patrol vehicle on the second occasion. In another case, local residents claimed that the specific locations UNIFIL personnel were trying to access were private property (see annex I). UNIFIL maintains continuous engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces to secure full access to relevant locations in the area of operations.

16. Recently, the Lebanese Armed Forces have refused several routine UNIFIL requests to cross through the recognized crossing point at Ra's al-Naqurah/Rosh

HaNikra in order to carry out mandated tasks south of the Blue Line. UNIFIL is following up with the Lebanese authorities in this regard.

17. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force carried out maritime interdiction operations throughout the maritime area of operations, hailing 1,907 vessels. Of these, UNIFIL referred 268 vessels for inspection to the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces inspected and cleared 95 (35 per cent) of these vessels. Previously, the Lebanese Armed Forces had inspected 100 per cent of all referred vessels. UNIFIL is following up with the Lebanese Armed Forces on this matter.

18. As part of its regular monitoring activities, a unit of the mission's Maritime Task Force, on 26 November, observed the ship *MV Med Surveyor*, a Greek-owned, Panamanian-flagged hydrographic research/survey ship hailing from the Israeli port of Haifa, entering the southern end of the UNIFIL area of maritime operations. The ship was not registered in the list of expected vessels and remained within the boundaries of the area of maritime operations until its departure on 27 November. Information regarding the ship's movements was shared by the Maritime Task Force with the Lebanese Navy. The Maritime Task Force monitored the ship when it was within the area of maritime operations. The ship did not enter Lebanese territorial waters. In identical letters dated 24 January 2020 to the President of the Security Council and myself ([A/74/665-S/2020/71](#)), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations said: "Lebanon strongly condemns this fresh violation of its exclusive economic zone, which constitutes yet another flagrant violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law and international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#)." In a note verbale addressed to me dated 5 February 2020, the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations stated that the vessel had "conducted survey operations in Israeli maritime areas, when on 26 November 2019 a storm that formed in the area forced the vessel to relocate in order to ensure its safety and the safety of its crew". The Permanent Mission of Israel stated that "Israel rejects the claims that the vessel has at any point violated any Lebanese rights", as well as "the manifestly unfounded claim regarding a violation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#)" and that at "no point has there been any violation of international law as the vessel clearly exercised its freedom of navigation, a fundamental principle of international law".

19. Continuing its efforts to build the capacity of the Lebanese Navy, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force conducted 175 training sessions and jointly practised common operational standards for commanding, monitoring and hailing activities. As with the Lebanese Army, training of the Lebanese Navy was reduced during the reporting period.

20. Within the framework of the strategic dialogue, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL continued discussions regarding a phased transition of the Maritime Task Force's responsibilities to the Lebanese Navy and the deployment of a model regiment in the UNIFIL area of operations, pursuant to resolutions [2433 \(2018\)](#) and [2485 \(2019\)](#). On 5 February, the Lebanese Armed Forces presented to international community representatives its plan for a partial transfer of UNIFIL Maritime Task Force responsibilities, whereby the Lebanese Navy would autonomously cover the maritime entry corridor to the commercial port in Beirut, which lies within the UNIFIL area of maritime operations, with existing naval assets four days a week. The Lebanese Armed Forces also briefed the United Nations, the European Union and key donors supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces model regiment project on the design and timelines for the refurbishment of the facility in Sribbin (Sector West) to serve as the model regiment's headquarters.

## B. Security and liaison arrangements

21. UNIFIL convened tripartite meetings on 7 November and 16 December, during which liaison and coordination issues and violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were discussed. In addition, UNIFIL conducted frequent bilateral exchanges with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, including on arrangements to reduce tensions along the Blue Line, in particular regarding security arrangements at Blue Line point B1. The liaison and coordination arrangements of UNIFIL, including the tripartite meetings, continue to be the main tools available to the Head of Mission and Force Commander to de-escalate tensions along the Blue Line. In addition, the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander continued his regular engagement with senior civilian and military officials of both parties.

22. Despite the agreement of Israel to the proposal in 2008 for a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv, Israel, the establishment of the office remains pending.

23. In line with the priorities outlined in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, UNIFIL continued to liaise with the Government of Lebanon, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes on building the national civil protection capacity, including through firefighting and rescue operation drills. On 16 and 17 January, UNIFIL trained Lebanese civil defence personnel in first aid and traffic accident response.

24. In support of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, 2,423 UNIFIL military and civilian personnel, including 145 women (6 per cent), participated in UNIFIL training on gender mainstreaming. UNIFIL serves on the steering committee of the country's national action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000), adopted in September 2019, as mentioned in my previous report (S/2019/889, para. 72). The plan requires the Lebanese authorities to double the number of women in the Lebanese Armed Forces, the General Directorate of General Security and the Internal Security Forces each year from 2019 to 2023. On 17 December, UNIFIL facilitated an all-woman focus group meeting at Kawkaba (Sector East) to identify local priorities related to women, peace and security. The mission also participated in discussions among local women in Tyre (Sector West) to build capacity in conflict management and mediation.

## C. Disarming armed groups

25. No progress was achieved with respect to the disarmament of armed groups. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintains military capabilities. The maintenance of arms outside the control of the State by Hizbullah and other groups in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory.

26. On 1 November, following Hizbullah's claim of responsibility for shooting at an Israeli drone flying over Lebanese airspace on 31 October, as referred to in my previous report (S/2019/889, para. 41), the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, stated that Israel "thought the resistance would not dare to use the kind of appropriate weapons that were used yesterday, the resistance proved yesterday that it dares".

27. On 15 December, Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu stated that "if Hizbullah dares to attack Israel, the organization and the Lebanese State that enables aggression against us from its territory, will pay a very heavy price". On 25 December, the Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, Aviv Kohavi, stated: "In terms of rockets, the number and the range and the size of the warheads and the accuracy have

all grown...Hizbullah isn't just running around with Kalashnikov assault rifles and anti-tank missiles. It has anti-aircraft weapons and spectrum suppression equipment.”

28. Following a meeting with the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security on 8 January, the President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, expressed his hope that “the recent developments in the region will not lead to any repercussions on the Lebanese scene”.

29. The Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces made 14 terrorism-related arrests from 16 October to 18 February, including of suspected affiliates of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). On 5 November, the Lebanese Armed Forces announced the arrest of a suspect in the 2013 terrorist attack on an Army patrol in Arsal that killed two personnel. On 15 January, the General Directorate of General Security arrested a Syrian national allegedly affiliated with ISIL and seized explosive materials from his home.

30. On 16 November, one Syrian national was killed and another was injured after unknown assailants opened fire at them inside a Syrian refugee settlement near Baalbek, east Lebanon. Several personal disputes, largely in Baalbek, escalated into shooting, with individuals injured or killed. On 28 November, unknown assailants tossed a hand grenade in front of Beddawi municipal building, north Lebanon. No injuries were reported. On 8 and 19 December, the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted two countrywide security operations, arresting 269 persons, a majority of whom were Syrian nationals, for crimes that included drug trafficking and the smuggling of goods. On 11 February, at a police station in Awza'i, southern Beirut, an assailant fatally shot one Internal Security Forces officer and injured two others (one of whom succumbed to his injuries the following day).

31. While the security situation in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon was relatively calm, on 1 December, two persons were injured by gunfire in the Rashidieh refugee camp, near Tyre, south Lebanon. On 2 January, the Internal Security Forces announced the arrest outside Sidon of a Palestinian wanted for allegedly belonging to a terrorist organization. On 5 February, two persons were injured in the Ein El Hilweh refugee camp, near Sidon, south Lebanon, after a dispute escalated into shooting.

32. There was no progress in dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, which continue to compromise the sovereignty of Lebanon and impede the ability of the State to monitor and effectively control parts of the border.

#### **D. Arms embargo and border control**

33. Allegations of arms transfers to non-State armed actors continued and are of serious concern. While taking allegations of arms transfers seriously, the United Nations is not in a position to substantiate them independently. Were the allegations proved to be correct, they would constitute a violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) (see annex II).

34. On 25 December, the Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff was reported in the media as having stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran was working to set up forward operating bases throughout the region, from which it could itself carry out attacks against Israel using the expeditionary Quds Force of its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or order its proxies in the region, notably Hizbullah, to do so.

35. Reports of Hizbullah's engagement in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic continued.

36. The number of Syrians apprehended for entering or attempting to enter Lebanon in contravention of Lebanese law decreased significantly during the winter season,

and as a result of anti-smuggling operations conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces and border control procedures facilitated by the General Directorate of General Security. On 5 February, in Baalbek, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested a Lebanese national for smuggling people between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Separately, in Ayn Arab, east Lebanon, the Internal Security Forces arrested 12 persons of Syrian nationality for illegal entry into Lebanon.

37. From 1 November to 18 February, Lebanese authorities arrested eight individuals for smuggling people by sea, with 69 persons apprehended for departing in contravention of Lebanese law. On 20 November, the General Directorate of General Security announced that they had arrested two Lebanese and two Syrian nationals for operating a human smuggling network. On 30 November, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested 34 Syrian and 5 Lebanese nationals off the Lebanese coast near Tripoli, north Lebanon, for attempting to leave the country in contravention of Lebanese law. On 9 December, the General Directorate of General Security announced that they had arrested four individuals for smuggling people out of Lebanon.

38. International support to border security agencies continued, including training and provision of equipment to the land border regiments by Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Security deployments along the eastern border remained unchanged.

39. Counterterrorism and anti-trafficking operations conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces continued in border areas, with reported raids on Syrian informal refugee settlements in Riyaq, Baalbek and along the Qasr border with the Syrian Arab Republic. On 9 February, in Hirmil, east Lebanon, three soldiers were killed and three others were injured during a Lebanese Armed Forces anti-trafficking operation. One assailant was killed and one was arrested.

## **E. Landmines and cluster bombs**

40. UNIFIL military demining units cleared 11,455 m<sup>2</sup> of land and destroyed 393 anti-personnel mines in the UNIFIL area of operations. The Mine Action Service conducted 78 validation activities and site assessments, including quality assurance monitoring visits to UNIFIL, and delivered three risk-awareness training sessions to United Nations personnel. On 30 January, UNIFIL signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Lebanon with regard to assistance to the Lebanese Mine Action Centre's humanitarian demining activities until 30 January 2021.

## **F. Delineation of borders**

41. No progress was made towards the delineation or demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. There was no progress in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. The Syrian Arab Republic and Israel have yet to respond to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area proposed in my report dated 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641, annex).

42. There was no progress towards the resolution of the maritime dispute between Lebanon and Israel.

## **G. Political and institutional stability**

43. Against a backdrop of continuing countrywide popular protests, on 19 December 2019, the President of Lebanon designated Hassan Diab, a former Minister for Education, as the next Prime Minister, following the resignation of Prime

Minister Saad Hariri and his Government on 29 October, as referred to in my previous report (S/2019/889, para. 63).

44. During the formal binding parliamentary consultations conducted by the President, Mr. Diab secured 69 of 128 votes, including 6 out of the 27 Sunni votes, with the support of the Amal Movement, the Free Patriotic Movement, Hizbullah, the Marada Movement and their allies. The Future Movement, the Kata'ib Party, the Lebanese Forces and the Progressive Socialist Party stated that they would join the opposition. Upon accepting the nomination, the Prime Minister-designate underscored the importance of focusing on “preventing collapse, the restoration of trust and the preservation of national unity”.

45. On 11 December 2019, the International Support Group for Lebanon convened in Paris under the co-chairmanship of France and the United Nations. Emphasizing the importance of preserving the stability of Lebanon, the Group called for the urgent formation of an effective and credible Government capable of meeting the aspirations expressed by all Lebanese. The Group reaffirmed its commitment and readiness to support Lebanon, while emphasizing the urgent need for the adoption of a substantial, credible and comprehensive policy package of economic reforms to restore fiscal balance and financial stability.

46. On 21 January, the President signed the decree establishing Prime Minister-designate Diab's Government, comprising 20 members (down from 30 in the previous Government). For the first time, women's representation reached 30 per cent with the appointment of six female ministers, including, for the first time, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence (which was also a first for the Arab region), as well as Minister for Justice. The new Government excludes incumbent members of Parliament and ministers from the previous Government.

47. On 6 February, the new Cabinet approved a ministerial statement in which the Government reiterated the commitment of Lebanon to its international obligations, including resolution 1701 (2006) and the policy of disassociation. The Government also stated its commitment to addressing the needs of the people, including through economic and judicial reforms and addressing corruption, and recognizing the right to peaceful protest. On 11 February, the new Government gained a vote of confidence in Parliament with 63 votes from the 84 parliamentarians present. There was 1 abstention and 20 votes of no confidence; 44 parliamentarians were absent. Following the first meeting of the Cabinet on 13 February, all ministers pledged not to run in the parliamentary elections should they be held under the current Government's supervision. They also pledged to declare all personal financial interests to the national anti-corruption commission that the Government intended to establish as a matter of priority.

48. Financial and socioeconomic conditions continued to deteriorate. Absent formal capital controls, some banks lowered the withdrawal ceiling of United States dollars to \$100 per week. Pressure on the official fixed exchange rate of the Lebanese pound to the United States dollar increased, with an unofficial exchange rate system devaluing the pound to as much as 2,500 Lebanese pounds to the dollar, versus the official rate of 1,507. Credit rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's further downgraded the country's sovereign credit rating, and that of its three largest banks, to default status.

49. Meanwhile, given liquidity shortages and the suspension of credit lines, businesses faced increasing difficulty securing payment for imports. The Central Bank of Lebanon adopted a mechanism to regulate the provision of funds to ensure coverage for fuel, medicine and wheat imports. As at 31 January, a survey from InfoPro, a Lebanese market research firm, estimated that at least 12 per cent of all Lebanese companies had suspended operations since October 2019, 220,000 jobs had



been cut and 50 per cent of enterprises had reduced salaries by more than 40 per cent. The country's consumer protection association announced on 20 January that prices in Lebanon had increased by more than 40 per cent during the previous three months. The World Bank projected that poverty levels could rise from 30 per cent to more than 50 per cent if the economic situation continued to worsen.

50. On 27 January, Parliament approved the State budget for 2020, as submitted by the Government of former Prime Minister Hariri, within the constitutionally stipulated time frame. The budget, with a 7 per cent deficit, was adopted by 49 of the 76 parliamentarians present.

51. Through late November, large countrywide demonstrations involving significant numbers of youth and students were held in main squares and in front of State institutions, State-owned public enterprises and, increasingly, at banks. Gatherings were generally peaceful. Roadblocks fomented tensions between demonstrators and other citizens, however.

52. Throughout the reporting period, demonstrators continued to take to the streets to call for government change, just reforms, good governance, accountability for corruption, better management of the economy, the end of sectarian patronage and early parliamentary elections.

53. Citizens of all backgrounds, civil society organizations and non-establishment political parties coordinated activities through local forums and social media. Women played a leading role in de-escalating tensions and maintaining non-violence. The prominent role of women in the protest movement has amplified demands for improved women's rights, including increased political representation, equal nationality rights, a unified personal status law and enhanced protections against sexual harassment and violence.

54. Coordination among the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces and the General Directorate of General Security was established soon after the protests began. The Army assumed a significant portion of the security response, especially the reopening of roads, while the Internal Security Forces operated in central Beirut, in particular at banks. The deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces to reopen roads resulted in localized scuffles.

55. On 12 November, as a group of demonstrators attempted to block a road in Khaldeh, south of Beirut, one demonstrator was fatally shot by a member of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces released a statement that night indicating that the accused soldier had been arrested. On 21 November, a military prosecutor indicted the soldier and his superior officer for murder.

56. On 19 November, thousands of demonstrators disrupted the convening of a session of Parliament dedicated to the review of draft legislation on anti-corruption, a special court for financial crimes and a general amnesty, as well as on the election of parliamentary committee membership. Several members of Parliament boycotted the session, which was ultimately postponed owing to the lack of a quorum.

57. Street violence and the politicization of protest movements in some instances, as well as the destruction of protest tents and the targeting of members of the media, increased in late November. On 24 and 25 November, demonstrators blocked main roads across Lebanon. Supporters of the Amal Movement and Hizbullah scuffled in downtown Beirut with demonstrators, as well as with supporters of caretaker Prime Minister Hariri. The Lebanese Armed Forces and riot police intervened to separate the groups.

58. On 26 November in Tripoli, a demonstrator attempting to storm an office of the Free Patriotic Movement threw a hand grenade, which did not explode, at Lebanese Armed Forces personnel. The same day, supporters of the Sabaa and Free Patriotic

Movement parties clashed near the Presidential Palace in B'abda, east of Beirut. Also on 26 November, the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed to end scuffles between supporters of the Amal Movement and the Lebanese Forces in Shiyah, south of Beirut, and between supporters of Hizbullah and the Amal Movement and local demonstrators in Baalbek. Muslim and Christian women led a peaceful march the following day to reject sectarian strife.

59. On 14 and 15 December, demonstrators and security forces clashed across Lebanon. Many demonstrators travelled from Tripoli and elsewhere to partake in the demonstrations in Beirut. Parliament guards and the Internal Security Forces deployed tear gas against demonstrators attempting to enter the Parliament area. On 15 December in Akkar, north Lebanon, assailants vandalized offices of the Free Patriotic Movement and the Future Movement.

60. On 15 December, the caretaker Minister for the Interior and Municipalities, Raya el-Hassan, ordered an investigation into the actions of the Internal Security Forces. In her statement, the caretaker Minister also called on demonstrators to “be alert to the presence of parties trying to exploit their rightful demonstrations, eliminate the protest movement and ignite violent confrontations between them and the security elements, who are working to protect them and protect their right to demonstrate, for the sake of a political agenda”.

61. On 19 and 20 December 2019, while peaceful protests against the designation of Hassan Diab as Prime Minister occurred in front of the residences of Mr. Diab and of the Grand Mufti of Lebanon, supporters of former Prime Minister Hariri and security forces clashed in Sunni strongholds in Beirut, despite calls by Mr. Hariri for demonstrators to remain calm and leave the streets.

62. On 14 January 2020, as demonstrators called for a “week of wrath”, demonstrators and riot police clashed outside the Central Bank of Lebanon when demonstrators sought to forcibly enter the Bank’s compound. Riot police, hit with fireworks and rocks, employed tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators. Nearby commercial banks were vandalized. The Internal Security Forces issued a statement indicating that 49 officers had been injured, while 59 suspects had been detained. The following day, demonstrators and security forces clashed outside the police barracks in Beirut, where the families of those detained had gathered to demand their release. Journalists assembled outside the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to protest violence perpetrated by security forces against media personnel. While drawing attention to the increased violence and vandalism of some groups among the demonstrators, the Head of the Internal Security Forces, Imad Othman, and the caretaker Minister for the Interior and Municipalities accepted responsibility for the response of security forces, whom they said were exhausted, and reaffirmed their respect for the right of freedom of expression.

63. On 18 and 19 January in Beirut, large-scale clashes between groups of demonstrators and security forces near Parliament resulted in nearly 500 injuries, according to the Lebanese Red Cross. The Internal Security Forces reported more than 142 injured personnel and 45 suspects detained. Security forces used water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets at close range to disperse the crowds. In a statement dated 21 January, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called for de-escalation and for the authorities to conduct prompt, thorough, independent, transparent and impartial investigations into alleged violations regarding the use of force. Recalling the obligation for law enforcement officers to abide by international norms and standards on the use of force, particularly the principles of legality and proportionality, OHCHR welcomed the statement by the Head of the Internal Security Forces, who acknowledged the importance of acting with restraint when confronting violent protestors and of the need to protect

journalists and peaceful demonstrators. OHCHR also underscored the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

64. On 20 January, following a security meeting chaired by the President, the Office of the President issued a statement stressing the “importance of distinguishing between peaceful protestors and those who carry out rioting acts”, indicating that it would “take the necessary measures to protect peaceful protestors, prevent attacks on public and private property and crack down on rioters”.

65. In anticipation of the announcement of the formation of a Government, widespread protests took place on 21 January. On 11 February, demonstrators sought to impede Parliament from convening for the scheduled vote of confidence in the new Government.

66. From 17 October 2019 to 18 February 2020, the Lebanese Red Cross reported 4,191 injured civilians, with 2,064 injured in October alone. Ten persons were reported to have died, directly or indirectly, as a result of the demonstrations. The Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces reported 311 and 782 injuries, respectively, among their personnel.

67. On 14 November, the new Lebanese National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, elected its president and members of the Bureau of the Commission. The Committee for the Prevention of Torture will serve, *inter alia*, as the national preventive mechanism required under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As yet, there is no funding allocated to the Commission under the State budget for 2020.

68. As at 31 December, 932,619 refugees and asylum seekers were registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon, including 914,648 Syrian refugees and 17,971 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities. With new registrations of Syrian refugees by UNHCR suspended by the Government since 2015, the actual number of Syrians in need of international protection in Lebanon is unknown. The Government of Lebanon estimates there are 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. According to UNHCR, the continued decrease in the number of registered Syrian refugees was mainly the result of natural deaths, onward movements, resettlement and voluntary returns to the Syrian Arab Republic.

69. UNHCR was aware of some 24,100 refugees returning to the Syrian Arab Republic in 2019, compared with the 16,700 returns noted by UNHCR in 2018. This included over 15,000 refugees returning on their own and 8,827 returning in groups, facilitated mainly by the General Directorate of General Security. In January 2020, some 1,200 refugees returned on their own to the Syrian Arab Republic. The main reasons for return cited by the refugees included reunification with family members in the Syrian Arab Republic, improved security in their place of return and their dire socioeconomic situation in Lebanon.

70. In its ministerial statement, the Diab Government stated that it was “committed to taking measures and using the available means to press the international community to push for a safe and dignified return of the displaced to their country and to contribute more to bearing the costs of their burden that is already shouldered by the State”.

71. Deportations of Syrians who entered or re-entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019 continued, without due process. The United Nations continues to raise the importance of applying the procedural safeguards provided for in Lebanese law to ensure that the country’s commitment to the principle of non-refoulement is respected.

72. As at 31 December, available resources amounted to \$1.8 billion, with \$1.52 billion disbursed in 2019 by donors and \$270 million carried over from 2018. Funding committed for 2020 and beyond amounted to \$523 million. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017–2020) is 55 per cent funded, with \$1.43 billion in available resources out of the overall appeal of \$2.62 billion, including \$1.23 billion received in 2019 and \$200 million carried over from 2018.

73. Humanitarian conditions in Palestinian refugee camps also deteriorated owing to the worsening economic situation in the country. Calling for urgent implementation of an emergency relief plan, Palestinian refugees demonstrated near the facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to call attention to their declining living standards and a growing inability to cover basic needs. While UNRWA has maintained its core operations, it requires supplemental funding for any emergency relief plan. On 29 January, Palestinian refugees demonstrated in camps across the country against the proposed plan of the United States entitled “Peace to prosperity: a vision to improve the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli people”. All UNRWA installations closed for the day.

### **III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon**

74. UNIFIL upgraded its security plans and risk prevention and mitigation measures in close coordination with Lebanese authorities, taking into consideration domestic and regional developments. Following an attack on protesters by counter-protesters in Tyre on 25 November, United Nations personnel were advised to avoid unnecessary movements, and military support for the UNIFIL security plan was upgraded to allow the extraction of staff from Tyre if required. Roadblocks, including of the main highway connecting the UNIFIL area of operations with Beirut, hampered movements of UNIFIL personnel.

75. Strict security measures remained in place in the Arqub area (Sector East), including the use of armed escorts for official movements by United Nations personnel. UNIFIL facilitated 51 missions to the Arqub area by members of the United Nations country team.

76. The United Nations continued to follow up with the Lebanese authorities on the incident of 4 August 2018 in the village of Majdal Zun (Sector West) in which armed individuals attacked a UNIFIL patrol, as described in my report dated 15 November 2018 (S/2018/1029, para. 16). As described in previous reports (S/2019/237, para. 20; and S/2019/889, para. 24), UNIFIL has provided the Lebanese authorities with information to assist in the identification of the perpetrators. Despite continued engagement with the Lebanese authorities, to date, the United Nations has not been informed of any criminal proceedings to bring the perpetrators to justice.

77. UNIFIL continued to monitor proceedings in Lebanese military courts against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against the Mission. In the case of the attempted serious attack against UNIFIL in 2008, in which one of the four convicted perpetrators filed an appeal, a hearing scheduled for 7 January was postponed to 10 March. Following the arrest on 3 March 2019 of a suspect in relation to the three cases of serious attacks perpetrated against UNIFIL on 27 May, 26 July and 9 December 2011, the investigations remain pending with the investigating judge. In the 1980 case in which two UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ireland were shot dead and one was injured, a hearing was held on 29 January, with the next hearing scheduled for 9 March.

## IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

78. As at 18 February, UNIFIL comprised 10,368 military personnel, including 571 women (5.5 per cent), from 45 troop-contributing countries; 233 international staff, including 87 women (37.3 per cent); and 580 national civilian staff, including 157 women (27.1 per cent). The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force comprised 6 vessels, 2 helicopters and 854 of the Force's military personnel, including 34 women (4.0 per cent). In addition, 53 military observers, including 6 women (11.3 per cent), from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization serve with Observer Group Lebanon, under the operational control of UNIFIL. The most senior military women serve at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; the most senior civilian woman serves at the D-2 level.

79. UNIFIL continued to expand the scope of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment System pilot project, to cover: (a) conflict management; (b) deterrence, de-escalation and protection; and (c) effective and accountable institutions in the South. UNIFIL identified process improvements and further expanded its comprehensive geographical information systems data platforms to allow for additional data to be collected to support performance analysis and to facilitate informed decision-making by the Mission leadership. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment System is expected to be fit for purpose when reporting becomes mandatory from July 2020, and thereafter will inform the budgetary planning processes, starting with the budget for UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

80. Pursuant to resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#), UNIFIL assessed 12 subordinate military units and two ships from October to December 2019 for logistics, training and operational preparedness. Six military units and two ships were assessed as having satisfactory operational preparedness. Six military units were assessed as facing minor shortfalls, mainly in infrastructure and logistical aspects, which are being addressed.

81. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping commitment to improve the security of peacekeepers and the action plan to improve the security of peacekeepers, UNIFIL initiated the fortification of 19 positions along the Blue Line in January. The Mission continues to adapt its policies and conduct training sessions to enhance peacekeepers' security awareness and understanding of sensitive locations in the area of operations, and to strengthen mutual support and integration among UNIFIL components.

## V. Conduct and discipline

82. Neither UNIFIL nor the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) received allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse during the reporting period. Both missions reviewed their preventive mechanism on sexual exploitation and abuse to increase awareness-raising efforts on the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse among civilian and military personnel and among the local population. Both missions continued to enhance measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and to assess the risks in connection with the impact of the changes in the economic environment in Lebanon. UNIFIL contingent commanders continued to hear briefings on their accountability in respect of conduct and discipline matters. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to promote a productive, harmonious and inclusive working environment, with emphasis on developing a prevention strategy for protection against sexual harassment and other forms of misconduct, including fraud.

## VI. Observations

83. In welcoming the formation of the new Government of Lebanon, I reiterate my message of 21 January that the United Nations looks forward to working with the Prime Minister of Lebanon and his Council of Ministers, including in support of the country's reform agenda and to address the pressing needs of the Lebanese people. Echoing the statements of the International Support Group for Lebanon dated 23 January and 12 February, I urge the Government to undertake the required reforms. I urge all political forces, in the Government and opposition alike, to work collectively to address the challenges facing Lebanon.

84. In affirming the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression and the need for the protection of peaceful demonstrations, I applaud the positive leadership role played by women and youth. I encourage the new Government of Lebanon to accelerate the implementation of the country's national action plan on resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security.

85. I have expressed my concern regarding instances of violence between demonstrators and security forces. I urge the Government to protect the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. I call upon the security forces to abide by international norms and standards on the use of force, in particular the principles of legality and proportionality, while maintaining law and order. I reiterate my appeal both to demonstrators and the security forces to exercise the utmost restraint to ensure the peaceful character of the demonstrations. I also call upon all community and religious leaders to support efforts to maintain the peaceful nature of the demonstrations. I commend the security forces for their commitment to investigate allegations of the use of disproportionate force perpetrated during the demonstrations.

86. As recent developments both domestically and regionally underscore, the continued commitment by all sides to resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) remains essential for the stability of Lebanon and the region. I remain concerned over the lack of full implementation of the resolution and the unfulfilled obligations of Lebanon and Israel. I urge both parties to redouble their efforts towards full adherence to the resolution and to move decisively towards a permanent ceasefire. The United Nations will continue to support efforts to defuse tensions through dialogue, to pursue opportunities for confidence-building and to create an environment conducive to resolving underlying grievances in support of a permanent ceasefire, including through the continued good offices of my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander.

87. I remain seriously concerned by the continued violations by Israeli aircraft of Lebanese airspace, including by fighter aircraft, which cause distress to Lebanese civilians. Such overflights constitute a violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and of Lebanese sovereignty. I am also concerned about the continued occupation by the Israel Defense Forces of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). I reiterate my condemnation of all violations of Lebanese sovereignty and my calls for Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese airspace and to expedite the withdrawal of its forces from northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

88. The repeated self-acknowledged maintenance of unauthorized weapons outside State control by Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups represents a persistent violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). Furthermore, I call upon the Government of Lebanon to take all actions necessary to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1680 \(2006\)](#), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State. I call upon

the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure that the area along the Blue Line remains free of unauthorized weapons and is not used for hostile activities.

89. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to abide by its policy of disassociation, consistent with the Baabda Declaration of 2012, and as reiterated in the Government's ministerial statement. I call upon all Lebanese parties to cease their involvement in the Syrian conflict and other conflicts in the region. I condemn any movement of fighters and war materiel across the Lebanese-Syrian border in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

90. I further encourage the parties to reach agreement on outstanding points of contention along the Blue Line. Unilateral action in those areas escalates tensions and must be avoided. The UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements, including the opportunity for regular open and constructive exchanges in the tripartite forum, are key to mitigating and de-escalating incidents, violations and tensions along the Blue Line. I call upon the parties to avail themselves of the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements.

91. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL in its entire area of operations, including along the full length of the Blue Line, remains critical. I call upon the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Government of Lebanon to facilitate the Mission's access to all locations necessary for it to implement its mandate. I reiterate my concern that UNIFIL has not been able to access locations north of the Blue Line in connection with its investigation into the incident of 1 September 2019, including Green without Borders sites. I am also concerned that UNIFIL has yet to gain access to all locations north of the Blue Line in relation to the discovery of tunnels crossing the Blue Line in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). I urge the Government of Lebanon to expeditiously undertake and conclude all necessary investigations regarding the tunnels on the Lebanese side and to take preventive measures against similar occurrences in the future.

92. A year and a half after the attack on peacekeepers in Majdal Zun, the United Nations has still not been informed of any criminal proceedings against the attackers. I reiterate my call upon the Lebanese authorities to fulfil their obligation to ensure the safety and unimpeded freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel and full accountability for those who attack peacekeepers. In this regard, the latest restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNIFIL, including the incident that occurred in Bar'ashit on 10 February, are of concern and require appropriate follow-up.

93. I welcome the plan of the Lebanese Armed Forces for a partial transfer of UNIFIL Maritime Task Force responsibilities to the Lebanese Navy, in line with the provisions of resolutions [2433 \(2018\)](#) and [2485 \(2019\)](#). I call upon the international community to increase its support in this regard, noting that further progress in the enhancement of naval capabilities remains a precondition for a gradual reduction of the Maritime Task Force. I encourage the Lebanese Armed Forces to conduct inspections of vessels that were referred to them by UNIFIL. I also welcome the completion of the planning process for the refurbishment of the Lebanese Armed Forces model regiment headquarters and encourage donors to provide the support necessary to enable the regiment's deployment.

94. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for their continued efforts to secure the eastern border of Lebanon. Recognizing the importance of continuing to curb illicit smuggling activities, I encourage the swift operationalization of the strategy on integrated border management adopted by the Government of Lebanon on 17 October 2019. Increased donor support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces and other security institutions is ever more relevant. Strengthening Lebanese State institutions remains central to ensuring stability. The United Nations will

continue to support Lebanon in that regard, in particular in terms of building the capacity of its security institutions as the sole defenders of the country's sovereignty.

95. I encourage Lebanon and Israel to renew the momentum towards resolution of the maritime dispute. The United Nations stands ready to exercise good offices to support the parties, at their request. Meanwhile, I urge the parties to conduct the exploration and exploitation of their respective natural resources in a manner that does not give rise to tensions.

96. In the light of the prevailing challenges facing Lebanon, it is critical that the Government exert all efforts to provide a social safety net to the most affected groups and that the international community increase its support to Lebanon to help to address the growing needs of vulnerable segments of the Lebanese population.

97. The continued hospitality and generosity of Lebanon towards Syrian refugees is commendable. The United Nations will continue to support Lebanon in these efforts, while stressing the importance of respect for due process of law and the dignity of refugees as the United Nations and international partners work collectively towards creating enabling conditions for safe, dignified and voluntary returns and third country resettlement in a sustainable manner. I thank donors for their enduring commitment in responding to the refugee crisis in Lebanon. I appeal to donors to provide flexible and generous funding to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan at this particularly difficult time for Lebanon.

98. The consistent support of Member States to enable UNRWA to continue its delivery of essential health, education and relief services has never been more important. I urge the donor community to continue and increase support for UNRWA, including funding of its emergency relief plan.

99. I reiterate my gratitude to all countries contributing military personnel and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon and encourage them to increase the number of women among military personnel in UNIFIL. I thank my Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ján Kubiš, and the staff of his office; the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Stefano Del Col, and the civilian and military personnel under his leadership; and the members of the United Nations country team.



## Annex I

### **Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from 1 November 2019 to 18 February 2020**

1. In its resolution [2485 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council called on the Government of Lebanon to facilitate the access of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in line with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), while respecting Lebanese sovereignty.
2. During the reporting period, UNIFIL conducted an average of 6,774 monthly patrols, of which 1,773 (26 per cent) were foot patrols. UNIFIL conducted an average of 2,216 monthly patrols (33 per cent) along the Blue Line, both by vehicle (62 per cent) and on foot (38 per cent). UNIFIL also conducted an average of 43 helicopter patrols each month, as well as an average of 991 monthly inspection activities, including the operation of temporary and permanent checkpoints, and counter-rocket-launching operations. On average, UNIFIL conducted 50 per cent of its patrols at night.
3. While the freedom of movement of UNIFIL was generally respected, UNIFIL was denied access to certain locations and, in other instances, encountered temporary restrictions to its freedom of movement, as detailed below. The most serious incident occurred on 10 February in Bar'ashit (Sector West), in which individuals violently protested the presence of a UNIFIL patrol. All the incidents were reported to the Lebanese Armed Forces and duly followed up by UNIFIL.

#### **Access to Green without Borders sites and other locations**

4. As detailed in paragraphs 10 and 15 of the present report, to date, the Lebanese Armed Forces have yet to enable full access by UNIFIL to Green without Borders sites, including those related to the investigation of the incident of 1 September 2019. Since January 2019, UNIFIL has requested the Lebanese Armed Forces to facilitate access to all locations north of the Blue Line related to the discovery of tunnels south of the Blue Line, as detailed in my report dated 14 March 2019 ([S/2019/237](#), para. 2). The Lebanese Armed Forces have yet to provide access to those locations.
5. During the reporting period, the Lebanese Armed Forces objected to some patrol routes proposed by UNIFIL in order to expand its presence in areas outside main routes and municipal centres, on the grounds that these either were private roads or areas of strategic importance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL continuously engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces to resolve such issues and secure access to all areas relevant to its mandate implementation.

#### **Freedom-of-movement incidents**

6. On 17 November, individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL vehicle in Blida (Sector East) by placing a civilian vehicle in front of the UNIFIL vehicle. Subsequently, a group of approximately 20 civilians started hitting and shaking the UNIFIL vehicle and tried to open the doors while shouting and gesturing. About half an hour later, two Lebanese Armed Forces officers arrived, whereupon the civilians left. In the follow-up meeting between UNIFIL and the Mayor of Blida, the Mayor indicated that the patrol had entered a narrow road going through the village, disregarding local road signs, which had angered residents.
7. On 21 November, a group of 15 individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol south-west of Ayta al-Sha'b (Sector West). The group informed UNIFIL in an aggressive manner that the road was private property. The group also took some maps and cameras and a Global Positioning System device from the patrol.

UNIFIL deployed an armoured personnel carrier to the location, while the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed 15 soldiers. Shortly thereafter, three Lebanese Armed Forces officers arrived at the location and were able to persuade the group to return the seized items to the UNIFIL patrol and allow the patrol to continue its movement. Following up on the incident, the mukhtar of Ayta al-Sha'b said that UNIFIL had entered a private park, which had triggered the angry reaction.

8. On 29 November, seven individuals in civilian clothes blocked a UNIFIL patrol in Habis, north-west of Yarun (Sector West), by placing four vehicles across the road. The individuals took photographs of the UNIFIL vehicles and asked the UNIFIL personnel to show their identification cards. Shortly thereafter, a Lebanese Armed Forces officer arrived and talked to the individuals, whereupon they removed their vehicles and the patrol continued its movement.

9. On 30 November, a UNIFIL patrol conducted in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces was stopped by two civilians on motorbikes in Kafr Kila (Sector East). The two civilians made offensive gestures and shouted at the patrol. The Lebanese Armed Forces intervened, and the patrol subsequently continued its duties. UNIFIL followed up on the matter with the Mayor of Kafr Kila.

10. On 1 December, three individuals in civilian clothes stopped an Observer Group Lebanon patrol on the road bordering the Green without Borders site in Ramiyah (Sector West), saying that the patrol needed to be accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Observer Group Lebanon patrol left the location without reaching the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces were informed.

11. On 1 January, six individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol in Bafliyah (Sector West). The individuals warned the patrol not to use the particular road it was on. In order to avoid further tension, the UNIFIL patrol left the area. The Lebanese Armed Forces were informed.

12. On 7 January, two individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of an Observer Group Lebanon patrol in Marun al-Ra's (Sector West) by placing a vehicle across the road. They claimed that the patrol should not be patrolling in the village without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Subsequently, two additional vehicles arrived, also blocking the road. Shortly thereafter, a Lebanese Armed Forces officer arrived, whereupon the Observer Group Lebanon patrol was able to continue its movement. Following the incident, municipal authorities claimed that the residents believed that the patrol was lost and needed the assistance of the Lebanese Armed Forces to find the right road.

13. On 7 January, three individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol in Markaba (Sector East) and asked the patrol to leave the area immediately. Following unsuccessful negotiations, the patrol left the area, whereupon it was followed by one of the individuals on a motorcycle. The following day, representatives of the municipality of Markaba said that they were unaware of the incident, but informed UNIFIL that there had been a funeral in the village on 7 January, which had resulted in some roads through the village being temporarily closed off.

14. On 8 January, two individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of an Observer Group Lebanon patrol in Shaqra (Sector East) by placing a vehicle across the road. The individuals claimed that the patrol could not enter the village without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces and asked the patrol to leave the area. After a few minutes of unsuccessful negotiations, the patrol left the area. The Lebanese Armed Forces were informed. The Mayor of Shaqra subsequently reported that the individuals had believed that the patrol was lost and had meant to guide it so as to avoid narrow roads inside the village.

15. On 9 January, a civilian vehicle blocked the path of a stationary Observer Group Lebanon patrol near Muhaybib (Sector East). The driver told the patrol to leave the area immediately, claiming that the patrol was not allowed to be in that particular area. In order to avoid further tension, the patrol left the area. Subsequently, the mukhtar said that the Observer Group Lebanon patrol had entered narrow streets in the village, which had upset the resident who had asked them to leave the area.

16. On 14 January, two individuals in civilian clothes blocked a UNIFIL patrol north-west of Bar'ashit by placing one vehicle in front and one behind the patrol. Subsequently, 14 other individuals also blocked the road with a total of 11 vehicles. The patrol tried to negotiate with the individuals but failed to resolve the issue. About 20 minutes later, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrived at the scene and assisted UNIFIL in continuing its movement. In a meeting the same day, the Mayor of Bar'ashit told UNIFIL that the patrol had entered a narrow road, which had raised suspicion among the residents who subsequently stopped the patrol. The Mayor insisted that UNIFIL must be accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces when in the area.

17. On 29 January, a UNIFIL patrol entered a dead-end street while patrolling south-east of Bar'ashit. When the patrol attempted to perform a U-turn, around 20 individuals in civilian clothes blocked the road by placing three vehicles across the road. The individuals opened the doors of the patrol vehicles and took three maps, two radios and one laser rangefinder. Subsequently, a municipal police officer arrived at the scene and attempted to de-escalate the situation. The Lebanese Armed Forces arrived shortly thereafter, whereupon the individuals who had blocked the road left the spot. The patrol resumed its movement together with the Lebanese Armed Forces. As at 18 February, all items except for the laser rangefinder had been returned to UNIFIL.

18. On 10 February, around 15 individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a stationary UNIFIL patrol in Bar'ashit consisting of three armoured personnel carriers by placing five vehicles across the road. The UNIFIL patrol leader exited the vehicle to talk to the gathered individuals, who questioned why UNIFIL was in the area without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. The patrol leader explained that the patrol was waiting for the Lebanese Armed Forces at the location in order to conduct a coordinated and planned patrol. The individuals became aggressive, climbing on one of the armoured personnel carriers and seizing one portable radio, one Global Positioning System device, one notebook and one map from inside the vehicle after forcing open the top hatch. During the altercation, some of the individuals punched four of the peacekeepers, who in turn used riot control equipment to fend them off. One peacekeeper sustained minor injuries. A Lebanese Armed Forces patrol arrived at the scene after approximately 20 minutes, followed by UNIFIL reinforcements and two Lebanese Armed Forces officials. A tense stand-off ensued, as UNIFIL tried to persuade the individuals to return the items. At that point, the crowd had increased to around 30 individuals, including women and children. Upon insistence by the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL decided to pull out its troops to avoid further escalation in the presence of a large civilian gathering. UNIFIL has requested of the Lebanese authorities a prompt investigation of the incident, the return of the UNIFIL property and prosecution of the perpetrators by judicial authorities, as appropriate. As at 18 February, all items except for the Global Positioning System device had been returned to UNIFIL.

## Annex II

### Implementation of the arms embargo

1. In paragraph 19 of its resolution [2485 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council recalled paragraph 15 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), according to which all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent, by their nationals or from their territories or using flag vessels or aircraft, the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to any entity or individual in Lebanon other than those authorized by the Government of Lebanon or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The United Nations continued to engage with Member States on allegations of weapons transfers and efforts to address such violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

2. No response was received during the reporting period to my letter dated 22 October 2019 addressed to the President of Lebanon, in which I reminded the Government of Lebanon to share with the Secretariat any pertinent information or developments related to the arms embargo ([S/2019/889](#), annex III, para. 2).

3. In accordance with paragraph 14 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and pursuant to the 2006 request from the Prime Minister of Lebanon, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to assist the Lebanese Navy in monitoring the country's maritime border and entry points to prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel into Lebanon by sea.

4. The United Nations remains committed to supporting overall compliance by the parties with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) in all its provisions and to advancing its implementation. This applies to the implementation of the arms embargo under paragraph 15 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and any decision that would be adopted by the Security Council in this regard. I look forward to continued dialogue with the Council and its members on furthering our joint goal of the full implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

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## Annex III

### **Efficiencies and effectiveness between the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon**

1. Further to my letter dated 31 December 2018 (S/2018/1182) addressed to the President of the Security Council and my report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) dated 17 July 2019 (S/2019/574), and in line with paragraphs 8 and 13 of resolution 2485 (2019), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) are taking steps to increase their coordination and enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in line with my recommendations.
2. During the reporting period and following regular consultations led by my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and by the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, the strategic forum between UNIFIL and UNSCOL convened on 29 January and on 13 February to take stock of the implications of the current situation in Lebanon and the region for the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The forum will continue to meet on a regular basis to produce shared assessments aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of both missions.
3. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to encourage a coordinated donor approach, including through coordination mechanisms convened on 5 February and the alignment of messaging regarding existing pledges of support for the deployment of the model regiment and the development of the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy and the Navy transition strategy.