

**Security Council**Distr.  
GENERALS/2011/406  
1 July 2011

Original: English

**Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)**

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**II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)****A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations**

7. The parties have maintained their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) and the cessation of hostilities. The situation in the UNIFIL area of operations remained stable and quiet for most of the period, despite regular violations of Lebanese airspace and a number of ground violations of the Blue Line. There was a deadly and tragic incident on 15 May during a Palestinian demonstration near Maroun al-Ras (Sector West).

8. UNIFIL estimates that around 8,000 to 10,000 demonstrators, mostly Palestinian refugees, participated in the event. Organizers included Palestinian and Lebanese organizations, among them Hizbullah. While the majority of demonstrators commemorated the day peacefully at the site prepared for the occasion, away from the Blue Line, around 1,000 protesters left the main gathering and, crossing through a minefield, moved towards the Blue Line and the Israeli technical fence. Using cordons and firing in the air, the Lebanese Armed Forces was able to stop a first attempt by a smaller group to reach the technical fence but was not able to prevent the second attempt by the demonstrators. At the technical fence, demonstrators unearthed 23 anti-tank mines, threw stones and two petrol bombs across the fence and attempted to climb it and bring it down. Following a verbal warning and firing into the air, the Israel Defense Forces then directed live fire at the protesters at the fence. After the arrival of reinforcements, Lebanese Armed Forces Special Forces reserve moved the protesters away from the fence. The Lebanese Armed Forces initially informed UNIFIL that 11 persons were killed. This figure was later revised to 7, with 111 people injured. In addition, the respective parties informed UNIFIL that 70 Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers and 4 Israel Defense Forces troops were lightly wounded by stones. One UNIFIL soldier also sustained light wounds from a thrown stone.

9. UNIFIL immediately initiated an investigation into the incident in order to determine the violations of resolution 1701 (2006) that occurred on that day, as well as the deployment, posture and actions of all parties involved in the incident. Preliminary findings indicate that the demonstrators, in throwing stones and petrol bombs across the Israeli technical fence and the Blue Line, and in attempting to bring down a section of the fence, carried out a provocative and violent act that constitutes a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese Armed Forces troops deployed in the area tried to prevent the demonstrators from approaching the technical fence and the Blue Line. The number of troops and the available equipment proved, however, insufficient for the expected turnout and the envisaged risks concerning the event. Once deployed, the Lebanese Armed Forces Special Forces managed quickly to push back the crowd, using batons, tear gas and heavy firing in the air. Other than firing initial warning shots, the Israel Defense Forces did not use conventional crowd control methods or any other method than lethal weapons against the demonstrators. The firing of live ammunition by the Israel Defense Forces across the Blue Line against the demonstrators, which resulted in the loss of civilian life and a significant number of casualties, constituted a violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and was not commensurate with the threat to Israeli soldiers.

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**C. Disarming armed groups**

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37. No progress was achieved during the reporting period towards dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and by Fatah al-Intifada. These military bases are outside the control of the Lebanese State, with most of them straddling the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. As in my previous reports, I once again call upon the Lebanese authorities to dismantle the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with these efforts.

38. No major security incidents were recorded in Lebanon's 12 Palestinian camps during the reporting period. Lebanese security authorities continue to point to good cooperation existing between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Palestinian security officials in the camps. They also highlight the positive impact on security conditions in the camps brought about by the reconciliation agreement that was concluded on 27 April between Palestinian parties under the auspices of the Government of Egypt.

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**V. Observations**

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72. I am also concerned by the continued presence of the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases in Lebanon. They pose a challenge to Lebanon's ability to manage its borders and undermine Lebanese sovereignty. I reiterate my call on the Government of Lebanon to dismantle these military bases, as

agreed upon by the National Dialogue in 2006 and reiterated since, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with these efforts.

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76. The situation faced by Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon continues to be a matter of concern. Two thirds of these refugees live in poverty and are affected by very high unemployment rates, high prevalence of chronic illnesses and nutritive deficiencies and poor living conditions. I call on the new Government of Lebanon to implement the amendments to the Lebanese Labour Code and Social Security Law that were adopted in August 2010, so as to effectively improve the prospects of employment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. I also continue to be very concerned by the continued funding shortfalls faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), both in its regular programmes aimed at delivering basic education and health care to the Palestinian refugees and for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp, which was destroyed four years ago. I urge donors, including countries in the region, to continue, and if possible increase, their support for UNRWA. Progress in ensuring the full realization of the human rights of Palestinian refugees is without prejudice to the resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement.

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