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Fourteenth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)**I. Background**

1. The current report is my fourteenth semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It reviews and assesses the process of the implementation of the resolution since my previous report issued on 19 April 2011 (S/2011/258). It notes the absence of tangible progress on key provisions of the resolution, and highlights concerns that continue to impede efforts to strengthen Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, which is the main objective of the resolution.

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II. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

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B. Extension of control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory

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24. Security sources in Lebanon have continued to report shootings and explosions in and around paramilitary infrastructures in the eastern Bekaa Valley belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada, confirming that paramilitary training occurs in these facilities. The permanent presence of such bases along the Syrian-Lebanese border adds to the general porosity of parts of the land border and poses a challenge for the control of the border by the Lebanese security forces. It also makes the delineation of the border more difficult.

25. Given the above-mentioned concerns and continued existence and activities of militias in Lebanon, improving the management and control of Lebanon's land borders is critical to prevent the illegal flow of weapons to armed groups. A comprehensive border management strategy is needed. Government of Lebanon officials acknowledge the porous nature of the border and the possibility that arms smuggling occurs. The Government of Lebanon has so far taken limited steps to confront the issue. The effective management of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic also continues to be adversely affected by the absence of a delineation of the border.

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C. Disbanding and disarmament of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias

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28. Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias continue to operate in the country outside of the control of the Government in serious violation of resolution 1559 (2004). While several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside Government control, the armed component of Hizbullah is the most significant and most heavily armed Lebanese militia in the country, reaching almost the capacities of a regular army. The leadership of Hizbullah itself continues to acknowledge that it maintains a substantial military arsenal. In addition, there are a series of Palestinian armed groups operating in the country inside and outside the refugee camps.

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33. With respect to the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon, I am glad to report that the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has reiterated its call upon all Palestinians in Lebanon to respect the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon and to adhere to Lebanese law and security requirements. The President of the Palestinian Authority and Chairman of the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas, visited Lebanon from 16 to 19 August. During his visit, he stated unequivocally his position that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon do not need arms to defend themselves because "the Lebanese State, represented in its government, army and Parliament, would protect them".

34. This declaration came in the context of heightened tension in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp. On 5 and 6 August heavy clashes erupted in the camp following an assassination attempt on a senior Fatah figure, Colonel Mahmoud Issa. The following day, two suspects from the Jund al-Sham militia were apprehended and handed over to the Lebanese authorities, which prompted armed clashes between the group and Fatah militia members. A ceasefire was agreed upon after hours of fighting that had left a number of people injured. Considerable material damage was also caused by the heavy fighting. One of the schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade, resulting in material damage to two classrooms. Refugees voiced their anger and demanded compensations from the responsible parties for their financial loss.

35. The situation in most of the 12 Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon has remained relatively stable, although a few shooting incidents and explosions were registered in some of the camps, in particular in Ain al-Hilweh, as mentioned above. The threat of internal violence that could potentially spill over into surrounding areas still exists in a number of camps, as some of them continue to provide safe haven for those who seek to escape the authority of the State.

36. During his visit, President Abbas also discussed the dire humanitarian conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Prime Minister Mikati pledged that his Government would do its best to improve living conditions. In this context, the labour reforms for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon that was agreed to by the Parliament last year are yet to be properly implemented. The United Nations continues to urge the Lebanese authorities to improve the conditions in which Palestinian refugees live in Lebanon, without prejudice to the eventual resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace agreement in the region, in particular given the detrimental effects of dismal living conditions on the wider security situation.

37. Lebanese authorities have acknowledged the existence of good cooperation between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Palestinian security officials in the camps. However, with the exception of the Nahr al-Bared camp, Lebanese authorities do not maintain a permanent presence inside the camps, despite the fact that the Cairo

agreement of 1969, which permitted the presence of Palestinian armed forces in the refugees' camps, was annulled by the Lebanese Parliament in 1987. More will need to be done to contain tensions and potential violence in the camps.

38. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps continues to challenge the ability of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty over its territory. I have called upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle the Damascus-headquartered PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases in the country, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with these efforts. Regrettably, there was no progress during the reporting period towards the disarming of such groups, as called for and agreed upon by Lebanese leaders at the National Dialogue session of 2006 and reaffirmed in subsequent sessions of the National Dialogue since 2008.

III. Observations

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46. I also encourage President Sleiman and the Government of Prime Minister Mikati to implement decisions taken in the past by the National Dialogue, such as the dismantling of Palestinian military bases maintained by the Damascus-headquartered PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada outside the refugee camps. Under three Prime Ministers and two Presidents, there has regrettably been no progress on this issue. The commitment of the new Government policy platform to the implementation of previous National Dialogue decisions must be materialized. These bases, most of which straddle the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, undermine Lebanese sovereignty and challenge the country's ability to manage its land borders. Mindful that these two militias maintain close regional ties, I renew my call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to assist in this process.

47. I also urge donors to continue their support for UNRWA, which faces funding shortfalls in its regular programmes and for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp. I recall that two thirds of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live in dire poverty. I therefore call upon the Government of Prime Minister Mikati to implement amendments to the Lebanese Labour Code and Social Security Law adopted in August 2010, so as to improve the employment prospects of Palestinian refugees. I am convinced that addressing the difficult conditions of Palestinian refugees will have a positive impact on the coexistence of Lebanese and Palestinians and hence, on national security and stability. Improving the living conditions and human rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon does not prejudice the resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

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56. In conclusion, I share the opinion of President Sleiman as outlined in his address to the Security Council on 27 September, in which he stated that the implementation of Security Council resolutions is the best guarantee to ensure peace and security and prevent conflicts. I remain firmly committed to the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) for the sake of regional peace and stability, in a particularly difficult and challenging time. I therefore call on all parties and actors to fully abide by resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). I will continue my efforts for the purpose of the full implementation of these and all other Security Council resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.
