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

(for the period 22 July 1989-25 January 1990)

#### Introduction

1. In its resolution 639 (1989) of 31 July 1989, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further interim period of six months, until 31 January 1990. The Council also reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries; re-emphasized the terms of reference and general guidelines of the Force as stated in the report of the Secretary-General of 19 March 1978, approved by resolution 426 (1978), and called upon all parties concerned to co-operate fully with the Force for the full implementation of its mandate; and reiterated that UNIFIL should fully implement its mandate as defined in resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978) and all other relevant resolutions. The Council requested the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the Government of Lebanon and other parties directly concerned on the implementation of the resolution and to report to the Council thereon.

### Organization of the Force

2. As of January 1990, the composition of UNIFIL was as follows:

### Military personnel

pili	IIO IDITETT		
Fiji	HQ UNIFIL	14	
	Infantry battalion Force Mobile Reserve	670	
	· · ·	35	
	Military police	8	727
Finland	HQ UNIFIL	12	
	Infantry battalion	500	
	Force Mobile Reserve	16	
	Military police	9	537
France	HQ UNIFIL	16	
	Composite battalion		
	(maintenance company,		
	defence company,		
	armoured escort company)	472	
	Military police	10	498
Ghana	HQ UNIFIL	28	
	Infantry battalion	751	
	Engineer company	75	
	Force Mobile Reserve	33	
	Military police	7	894
Ireland	HQ UNIFIL	33	
	Infantry battalion	655	
	HQ Camp Command	34	
	Force Mobile Reserve	17	
	Military police	_12	751
Italy	HO UNIFIL	4	
	Helicopter unit	44	
	Military police	4	52
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Nepal	HQ UNIFIL	12	
	Infantry battalion	811	
	Force Mobile Reserve	28	
	Military police	5	856
Norway	HQ UNIFIL	20	
Morway	Infantry battalion	29 E00	
	Maintenance company	588	
	Force Mobile Reserve	243	
	Military police	33 16	000
		<u>16</u>	909

Sweden	HQ UNIFIL	21	
	Logistic battalion	618	
	Force Mobile Reserve	5	
	Military police	8	652
	Total UNIFIL	<u>5 876</u>	<u>a</u> /

a/ The total UNIFIL strength includes 17 officers from the Force (5 Fijians, 6 Ghanaians and 6 Nepalese) who have been temporarily assigned to serve with the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP).

The deployment of UNIFIL as of January 1990 is shown on the map attached to the present report.

- 3. The command of UNIFIL continues to be exercised by Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden.
- 4. In the period under review, 65 military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) assisted UNIFIL in the performance of its tasks. Sixty-four of these unarmed officers are organized as Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) and are under the operational control of the Commander of UNIFIL. They man the five observation posts along the Lebanese side of the Israel-Lebanon armistice demarcation line. They also operate four mobile teams in parts of the area of operation, including those under Israeli control, the so-called "security zone". One UNTSO military observer is attached to UNIFIL headquarters as a member of the Operations Branch.
- 5. Logistic support for UNIFIL was provided by the Swedish logistic battalion, elements of the French composite battalion, the Norwegian maintenance company and the Italian helicopter unit, as well as by UNIFIL's civilian staff, especially in the areas of communications and vehicle maintenance.
- 6. Arrangements to improve the ability of UNIFIL to deal with explosive ordnance have now been completed. Expert teams of the Irish contingent search for, and dispose of, explosive ordnance in the Irish battalion sector, as well as training personnel from the other UNIFIL battalions in these tasks.
- 7. The Force Mobile Reserve, a composite mechanized company, consisting of elements from seven contingents (Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Nepal, Norway and Sweden), organized as an integrated unit, has been frequently called upon to reinforce UNIFIL battalions. The Force Mobile Reserve has again demonstrated its value on many occasions during the current mandate.
- 8. The strength of the Lebanese army unit serving with UNIFIL stands currently at 128, all ranks. The bulk of the unit is stationed at Tyre, while small elements are at Arzun, Al Yatun and Qana.

- 9. I regret to report that, during the period under review, seven members of the Force, one Ghanaian, one Irish, two Nepalese, two Norwegians and one Swede, lost their lives from firing, accidents and natural causes. Eight others suffered injuries as a result of accidents. Since the establishment of UNIFIL, 171 civilian and military members of the force have died, 65 as a result of firing or mine or bomb explosions, 75 in accidents and 31 from other causes. Some 233 have been wounded by firing or mine or bomb explosions.
- 10. Following the announcement on 31 July 1989 by a group in Lebanon that it had killed Lieutenant-Colonel William Richard Higgins, who had been kidnapped on 17 February 1988 while serving as Chief of the UNTSO military observers assigned to UNIFIL (see S/19617). I have made every effort to ascertain the facts concerning Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins' fate and to endeavour to recover his body if it is true that he has been killed. These efforts have not yet produced any conclusive evidence as to Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins' fate despite extensive conversations with various parties who may be in a position to know the facts. My efforts to establish the facts will continue.
- In the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 31 July 1989 (S/20758), the members of the Security Council, inter alia, reaffirmed their profound concern over the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and called upon all parties to do their utmost to ensure the effective reinforcement of the security of the members of the Force. UNIFIL itself has maintained its efforts to improve the security of its personnel and positions. The relocation of the headquarters of the Norwegian battalion to a defensible compound near Ebel es Saqi is progressing and is expected to be completed during the current year. The security and defence of the Naqoura camp and of the headquarters of the Irish battalion have also been improved. More positions throughout the UNIFIL area of deployment have been reinforced with protective measures. Ten modern armoured personnel carriers (APCs) have been made available by Finland for use by the Irish battalion and provide, inter alia, increased protection and security to that battalion's personnel and positions. This arrangement has been financed from a voluntary contribution received from the Government of Japan after consultation with the donor Government.
- 12. The Security Council has been informed, in several previous reports, of UNIFIL's difficulties in obtaining the land and buildings it requires in its area of operation. In my last report (S/20742, para. 11), I informed the Security Council that the difficulties remained acute and that they resulted from arrears in the payment of rent by the Government of Lebanon to the landlords concerned and from the sharp depreciation of the real value of such rent payments as were made. That situation was exacerbated during the first three months of the current mandate by the shortage of accommodation which resulted from the influx into southern Lebanon of people fleeing the hostilities in Beirut. In recent consultations the Lebanese Government has undertaken to make a renewed effort to pay the arrears of rent due.

#### Situation in the UNIFIL area

- 13. UNIFIL remained unable to extend its area of operation up to the Israel-Lebanon armistice demarcation line, as envisaged in Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Israel continued to control in southern Lebanon an area manned by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the de facto forces (DFF) or so-called "South Lebanon Army" (SLA). This area is known to UNIFIL as the "Israel controlled area" (ICA). The boundaries of ICA have not been clearly defined but are determined de facto by the forward positions of IDF and DFF. It includes territory adjacent to the international border, part of the Nepalese, Irish and Finnish battalion sectors and the entire Norwegian battalion sector, as well as sizeable areas to the north of the UNIFIL area of operation. Its approximate extent within the UNIFIL area of operation is indicated on the attached map. (It should be noted that the map does not show the areas under Israeli control north of the UNIFIL area.) Within the UNIFIL area of operation, the positions maintained by IDF and DFF increased to 70, as compared to 64 during the last reporting period (see S/20742, para. 12). The IDF and DFF positions are shown on the attached map. IDF personnel were observed in DFF positions on numerous occasions, especially at night.
- 14. In the period under review, UNIFIL recorded a total of 47 operations by resistance groups against IDF and DFF targets (10 in August, 8 in September, 10 in October, 10 in November, 3 in December and 6 in January). These operations usually took the form of attacks with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets and mortars; mines and roadside bombs were also often used against IDF/DFF vehicles and foot patrols.
- 15. Activities from IDF/DFF positions or patrols, whether in retaliation for attacks by armed elements or unprovoked, often involved the use of heavy artillery, tank and mortar fire and Israeli helicopter gunships. Fire from IDF/DFF positions or patrols resulted in many firings close to, and on occasions direct hits on, UNIFIL positions. In the current reporting period, there were 151 unprovoked firings close, all of which were protested by UNIFIL to IDF. Indiscriminate fire from DFF positions has on several occasions resulted in fatal injuries to civilians in the UNIFIL area of operation.
- 16. UNIFIL has been subjected to other harassments, e.g. threats to UNIFIL personnel and damage to UNIFIL property by IDF and DFF personnel, all of which were protested to the Israeli authorities.
- 17. Following a car bomb attack against an IDF convoy within ICA on 9 August 1989, IDF/DFF closed a number of access roads between that area and the rest of Lebanon. These measures have affected the freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel as well as that of the military observers of OGL. Protests were made to the Israeli authorities and after negotiations, UNIFIL troops were again able to move along some of the roads in question. These road closures have also caused hardships to the local population. Particularly affected were the inhabitants of Rshaf, a village in the Nepalese battalion sector, who have been unable to communicate by car with the region north of their village, since IDF closed the access road to it. Following negotiations with IDF, UNIFIL has been able to provide, as part of its humanitarian activities, water, medicines and health services to the village.

- 18. As in the previous reporting period, firings close to UNIFIL positions resulted also from action by resistance groups; in most cases, such firings stopped after warnings by UNIFIL personnel. UNIFIL has invariably opposed attempts by armed elements to establish their own check-points within its area of operation. All such check-points were dismantled following negotiations between UNIFIL and the armed elements concerned. Other incidents between UNIFIL and armed elements resulted mostly from the refusal of armed elements to have their vehicles searched by UNIFIL personnel or from the denial to armed individuals of passage through UNIFIL check-points. At times these incidents resulted in harassment and threats against UNIFIL personnel, attempts at forced entry or even firing close to and at UNIFIL check-points.
- 19. The following paragraphs describe some of the more serious incidents which occurred during the current mandate period.
- 20. On 15 November 1989, two uniformed DFF personnel in a civilian vehicle approached a check-point in the Norwegian battalion sector, near the village of Ebel es Saqi, where the headquarters of the Norwegian battalion is located. After the DFF personnel refused to comply with UNIFIL instructions concerning passage through the check-point, the UNIFIL sentry fired warning shots. The DFF personnel got out of their car, exchanged warning shots with UNIFIL soldiers, readied a light anti-tank weapon for action and threw a grenade which exploded near the UNIFIL position by the check-point. During the exchange of warning shots, one of the DFF personnel was wounded, apparently by a ricochet. He was taken to the Marjayoun Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. Thanks to efforts by all sides concerned, the resulting tension was defused and further serious confrontations were avoided.
- 21. Another fatal incident took place in the evening of 29 November, when a UNIFIL patrol, consisting of an armoured personnel carrier of the Norwegian battalion, with its lights on and flying a fully illuminated United Nations flag, accompanied by two soldiers on foot was fired at with rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons. One of the two soldiers was hit and subsequently died from his injuries. UNIFIL has not so far been able to establish beyond doubt the identity of those responsible for the attack.
- 22. A further serious incident occurred at dawn on 21 December 1989, when the DFF compound in Al Qantarah in the Finnish battalion sector directed tank, mortar and heavy machine-gun fire indiscriminately in all directions in response to the firing of an anti-tank round by unidentified armed elements. One of the tank rounds fired by DFF impacted on a position of the Irish battalion, badly damaging the sleeping accommodation. The incident could have resulted in heavy UNIFIL casualties, had the soldiers not vacated their billet and taken shelter in time. The incident was strongly protested to IDF.
- 23. A very tense situation developed in the Norwegian battalion sector in the evening of 25 December 1989, when an IDF battery entered that sector and deployed near a UNIFIL position. When UNIFIL protested this breach of an informal agreement under which IDF do not undertake operational missions in the Norwegian battalion sector, it was informed that the deployment was part of a training exercise.

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Shortly thereafter, however, the IDF battery fired more than 50 rounds towards the north. Despite UNIFIL's protests, the battery remained deployed until the morning of 26 December. The deployment of the IDF battery in the Norwegian battalion sector and the use of that sector as a fire base has subsequently been protested to senior Israeli military and civilian authorities.

- 24. In my report to the Security Council of 21 July 1989 (see S/20742, para. 25), I informed the Council of the construction by IDF of an access road for military purposes in an area within Lebanon to the south of the eastern extremity of the Norwegian battalion sector. Construction of the road began in late July 1989 and has interrupted the access of Lebanese civilians to their properties in the area. Following a letter addressed to me by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon on 27 November 1989 (see A/44/805-S/20993), the matter was again raised by UNIFIL officials with Israeli military and civilian authorities. The Israeli authorities promised to look into the matter, specifically the access of Lebanese civilians to their properties, and inform UNIFIL accordingly. UNIFIL has recently reminded them that a reply is awaited.
- 25. The current mandate period has seen a further strengthening of Israeli control over ICA, with significant consequences for the daily life of the civilian population. This control is exercised through the military activities of IDF and DFF and through "civilian administration offices" that have been opened in a number of towns and villages in ICA. These offices have responsibilities in the fields of security, intelligence, the collection of taxes and other levies and various other civilian administrative functions. An important role is also played by the security branch of DFF known as the General Security Service (GSS). Many gendarmes previously appointed by the Lebanese Government have been prevented by GSS from carrying out their duties and some gendarmerie stations have been closed.
- 26. On several occasions UNIFIL personnel have witnessed the abduction of young men for service in DFF. This enforced recruitment also involves threats and punitive action (e.g. eviction from their villages) against the families of young men who are reluctant to join DFF. Israel has made further efforts to enhance the operational effectiveness of DFF, e.g. by the provision of better equipment and improved training programmes. As noted in paragraph 13 above, there has also been an increase in the number of IDF/DFF positions in ICA.
- 27. In recent months Israel has also imposed stricter control over movement between ICA and the rest of Lebanon. This has involved the closure of roads and for some villages has meant a disruption of their traditional economic and social links with their neighbours. Any inhabitant of ICA wishing to travel to other parts of Lebanon has to obtain from the "civilian administration office" a travel permit (in effect, an internal passport), which is valid for six months only but can be used for multiple journeys. Passage out of or into ICA has to take place at one of a small number of designated crossing points where strict control is enforced.
- 28. The "civilian administration offices" have recently issued new vehicle licences and registration plates that are manufactured in Israel and are different from those used in the rest of Lebanon. Vehicle owners have been required to

obtain the new licences and plates in return for a fee payable in United States currency.

- 29. Israel also plays an increasing role in the economic and social life of the population of ICA. More than 2,000 Lebanese workers are permitted to cross daily to employment in Israel, this being regarded as a privilege to be extended mostly to the families of men serving in DFF/GSS. Israeli products are imported into ICA and several towns and villages there have been linked to the Israeli water or telephone networks. Israel has financed the improvement of roads and has made doctors available to work in hospitals in ICA, some of which are administered by IDF.
- 30. Although some of these activities may be of benefit to the local population, UNIFIL has observed, in those parts of its area of operation which overlap ICA, a growing disquiet at this deepening of the occupation. In some cases, notably in the village of Chebaa in the Norwegian battalion sector, the establishment of a "civilian administration office" has been strongly resisted by the inhabitants. UNIFIL is often asked to provide support and protection in such cases and does everything it can to ensure that the human rights of the population of ICA are respected.
- 31. UNIFIL troops detonated mines and roadside bombs, as well as unexploded remnants of war, in the area of operation. A total of 10 controlled explosions were carried out.
- 32. UNIFIL pursued its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the maximum extent possible within available resources. As was the case during previous mandates, such assistance was given by individual battalions, mainly in the medical and hygiene areas and in support of welfare institutions, out of funds provided by the troop-contributing Governments. In addition, UNIFIL medical centres in the area of operation provided, during the current mandate, care to an average of 3,700 civilian patients per month; at the UNIFIL hospital at Nagoura, some 900 Lebanese civilian patients were treated, approximately 200 of them as in-patients. The humanitarian assistance provided by UNIFIL continued to be of great importance, especially at a time when Lebanese facilities in the UNIFIL area of operation were stretched to the limit, owing to the sudden influx of people fleeing from the hostilities in Beirut.
- 33. Close co-operation in the humanitarian field between UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities, the United Nations agencies and programmes operating in Lebanon, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organizations has continued during the current mandate.

### Financial aspects

34. By its resolution 44/188 of 21 December 1989, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for UNIFIL at a rate not to exceed \$12,001,000 gross (\$11,806,000 net) per month for the 12-month period beginning 1 February 1990, should the Security Council decide to continue the Force beyond

the period of six months authorized under its resolution 639 (1989). If the Council decides to extend UNIFIL beyond its current mandate period, the costs to the United Nations for maintaining the Force during the extension period would be within the commitment authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 44/188, assuming an average maximum force strength of 5,850 troops and continuance of the Force's existing responsibilities.

35. As at the beginning of January 1990, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNIFIL Special Account for the mandate periods ending 31 January 1990 amounted to \$318 million, which is equivalent to the budget of the Force for over two years at the current rate of expenditure.

### **Observations**

- 36. I regret that I again have to inform the Security Council that UNIFIL remains unable to implement the mandate given to it by the Security Council in resolution 425 (1978), namely, to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, to restore international peace and security and to assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.
- 37. Israel maintains the policy outlined in previous reports (see S/20416, para. 32). During the current mandate period, the positions occupied by IDF and those of DFF have again increased. As described in paragraphs 25 to 30 above, Israel has further strengthened its hold on ICA, the so-called "security zone", and has introduced there some elements of a civilian administration in which a leading role is given to DFF. This is a matter of growing concern in Lebanon. At the same time attempts by armed elements to infiltrate Israel and air and ground attacks by the Israeli forces on targets in Lebanon well to the north of the UNIFIL area have continued. International peace and security have not therefore been restored.
- 38. The current mandate period has, however, seen positive developments on the wider Lebanese scene. The Security Council, in its statement of 27 December 1989 (S/21056), welcomed the election of Mr. Elias Hrawi as President of the Lebanese Republic and the appointment of the Lebanese Government led by Prime Minister Salim al Hoss. In the same statement, the members of the Council expressed their support for President Hrawi's efforts in implementation of the Taif Agreement to deploy Lebanese Government forces to restore central government authority over all Lebanese territory.
- 39. In recent consultations with me and members of my staff, the Lebanese authorities have stressed their conviction that the restoration of constitutional authority in Lebanon creates new possibilities for making progress towards the long overdue implementation of Security Council 425 (1978). They have spoken of their determination to take early steps to re-establish the central Government's authority in southern Lebanon, including the deployment there of units of the Lebanese army. UNIFIL stands ready to play its part in assisting the restoration of the Government's authority in southern Lebanon, including deployment of units of the Lebanese army there.

- 40. In these circumstances I recommend that the Security Council should accept the request, conveyed in the letter dated 11 January 1990 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations (S/210/4), and extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months until 31 July 1990.
- 41. In making this recommendation, I must also draw the Security Council's attention to the fact that there has been no easing of the difficulties which UNIFIL faces and which have been described in earlier reports. During the current mandate period, the Force has again suffered loss of life and other casualties as well as continuing harassment, as a result of the activities of various armed groups in the area. It is inexcusable that United Nations peace-keepers should be subjected to constant threats and danger. I appeal once more to all parties concerned to co-operate with UNIFIL with a view to ensuring the security of its members and of course helping them to carry out the tasks entrusted to them by the Security Council. I am also deeply dismayed that, in spite of persistent efforts and in particular those of Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, who again visited the region this past week it has not so far been possible to ascertain with certainty the fate of Lieutenant-Colone! William Richard Higgins. I repeat my most vigorous condemnation of the ordeal to which this courageous officer and his family have been subjected.
- 42. The safety of UNIFIL personnel is a matter of continuing concern to me and, during the current mandate period, significant efforts have been undertaken to improve further the security of UNIFIL personnel and facilities. This vitally important question will continue to be monitored closely and security agrangements on the ground will be modified and updated where necessary.
- 43. UNIFIL's financial situation also remains grave. The total of unpaid assessments has again increased and now amounts to some \$318 million. This represents money owed by the United Nations to the Member States that have voluntarily contributed troops to serve in UNIFIL, often in conditions of danger and discomfort. It is difficult to understand why such a problem should afflict a United Nations peace-keeping operation that has such an important mission and whose mandate has repeatedly been renewed by unanimous vote of the Security Council. I hope that recent developments in Lebanon will cause the Governments concerned to re-examine their positions, both as regards the payment of their assessed contributions and as regards effective support at the political level to my efforts to secure implementation of resolution 425 (1978).
- 44. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren, the Force Commander, and to all the men and women under his command and control, both military and civilian, for the courage and determination with which they have again faced a difficult mandate period. Their discipline and bearing have been of a high order, reflecting credit on themselves, on their countries and on the United Nations.



