

Middle East

32. The situation in the Middle East

A. United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Decisions of 22 May 2000 to 9 December 2003: resolutions 1300 (2000), 1328 (2000), 1351 (2001), 1381 (2001), 1415 (2002), 1451 (2002), 1488 (2003) and 1520 (2003) and statements by the President

During this period, the Security Council held eight meetings on the item,¹ at each of which, unanimously and without debate, it adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the basis of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on UNDOF.² In his reports, the Secretary-General stated that the situation in the Israeli-Syrian sector had generally remained calm, without serious incident. He did note increased activity in the Shab'a farms area originating from the area of operation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon;³ a shooting incident on 8 January 2003, in which one member of the Syrian security forces was killed and another was taken into custody by the Israel Defense Forces; the latter was later released through the intervention of UNDOF;⁴ and the disruption of the

ceasefire on 5 October 2003 by an Israeli air strike on a target north-west of Damascus.⁵ The Secretary-General considered the continuing presence of UNDOF to the area to be essential and recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force. He also noted that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Government of Israel had given their assent to the proposed extensions.

In the resolutions adopted during this period,⁶ the Council called on the parties concerned to implement Council resolution 338 (1973); renewed the mandate of UNDOF for subsequent six-month periods, the last expiring on 30 June 2004; and requested the Secretary-General to submit reports on the developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement the resolution.

Complementary statements by the President were also released, in which it was stated that, despite the quiet in the Israeli-Syrian sector, the situation in the Middle East continued to be potentially dangerous and was likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem could be reached.⁷

¹ 4148th meeting, held on 22 May 2000, 4235th meeting, held on 17 November 2000, 4322nd meeting, held on 18 May 2001, 4428th meeting, held on 15 November 2001, 4546th meeting, held on 17 May 2001, 4670th meeting, held on 4 December 2002, 4779th meeting, held on 18 June 2003 and 4889th meeting, held on 9 December 2003. During this period, in addition to those meetings, the Council held a number of meetings in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B. The meetings were held on 21 November 2001 (4425th), 24 May 2002 (4545th), 17 December 2002 (4669th), 11 December 2003 (4778th) and 11 December 2003 (4878th).

² S/2000/459, S/2000/1103, S/2001/499, S/2001/1079, S/2002/542, S/2002/1328, S/2003/655 and S/2003/1148.

³ S/2001/499, S/2001/1079, S/2002/542, S/2002/1328, S/2003/655 and S/2003/1148. See also subsection B, relating to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

⁴ S/2003/655.

⁵ S/2003/1148.

⁶ Resolutions 1300 (2000), 1328 (2000), 1351 (2001), 1381 (2001), 1415 (2002), 1451 (2002), 1488 (2003) and 1520 (2003).

⁷ S/PRST/2000/19, S/PRST/2000/36, S/PRST/2001/15, S/PRST/2001/37, S/PRST/2002/18, S/PRST/2002/37, S/PRST/2003/9 and S/PRST/2003/29.

B. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and developments in the Israel-Lebanon sector

Decisions of 31 January 2000 (4095th meeting): resolution 1288 (2000) and statement by the President

At its 4095th meeting,⁸ on 31 January 2000, the Security Council included in its agenda a report of the Secretary-General dated 17 January 2000 on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).⁹ In his report, the Secretary-General observed that the fighting in southern Lebanon had continued and the area remained volatile. He noted that a significant political development in the region had been the resumption, in December 1999, of negotiations between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic as brokered by the United States of America.

At the meeting, the President (United States) drew attention to a letter dated 28 December 1999 from the representative of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General,¹⁰ in which Lebanon requested the extension of the mandate of UNIFIL, which expired on 31 January 2000, for a further period of six months.

The President drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;¹¹ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously as resolution 1288 (2000), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Decided to extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months, until 31 July 2000;

Reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

Re-emphasized the terms of reference and general guidelines of the Force and called upon all parties concerned to fully cooperate with the Force for the full implementation of its mandate;

⁸ During this period, in addition to the meetings covered in this section, the Council held a number of meetings in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B. The meetings were held on 21 January 2002 (4455th), 17 July 2002 (4576th), 21 January 2003 (4689th) and 25 July 2003 (4795th).

⁹ S/2000/28, submitted pursuant to resolution 1254 (1999).

¹⁰ S/1999/1284.

¹¹ S/2000/57.

Condemned all acts of violence committed in particular against the Force, and urged the parties to put an end to them;

Encouraged further efficiency and savings provided they did not affect the operational capacity of the Force;

Requested the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the Government of Lebanon and other parties directly concerned with the implementation of the present resolution and to report to the Security Council thereon.

At the same meeting, the President made a statement on behalf of the Council,¹² by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Reaffirmed its commitment to the full sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

Asserted that all States should refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State;

Reiterated its full support for the Taif Agreement and for the continued efforts of the Lebanese Government to consolidate peace, national unity and security in the country;

Commended the Lebanese Government for its successful effort to extend its authority in the south of the country in full coordination with UNIFIL;

Expressed concern over the continuing violence in southern Lebanon and urged all parties to exercise restraint; and paid a special tribute to all those who gave their life while serving in UNIFIL.

Decision of 20 April 2000 (4131st meeting): statement by the President

At its 4131st meeting, on 20 April 2000, the Council included in its agenda a letter dated 6 April 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council,¹³ in which he reported on his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Israel, held at Geneva on 4 April 2000, concerning Israel's decision to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon. Also included in the agenda was a letter dated 17 April 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President,¹⁴ informing the Council that Israel had conveyed by formal notification its decision to withdraw its forces present in Lebanon, by July 2000. This was to be carried out in full accordance with Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). The Secretary-General also reported that he had

¹² S/PRST/2000/3.

¹³ S/2000/294.

¹⁴ S/2000/322.

initiated preparations to enable the United Nations to carry out its responsibilities and intended to consult with the parties and interested Member States, including those contributing troops to UNIFIL. He requested that his Special Envoy go to the region as soon as practical.

At the meeting, the President (Canada) drew attention to a letter dated 6 April 2000 from the representative of Lebanon concerning the withdrawal of Israel from southern Lebanon in compliance with Council resolution 425 (1978).¹⁵ The President then made a statement on behalf of the Council,¹⁶ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed the decision of Israel to withdraw its forces present in Lebanon in full accordance with resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and Israel's intention to cooperate fully with the United Nations;

Endorsed the decision of the Secretary-General to initiate preparations to enable the United Nations to carry out its responsibilities under those resolutions;

Shared the view of the Secretary-General that cooperation by all parties concerned would be required to avoid a deterioration of the situation;

Welcomed his decision to send his Special Envoy to the region as soon as practicable;

Looked forward to his report on relevant developments, including the outcome of the consultations with the parties and all interested Member States and his conclusions and recommendations on plans and requirements to implement resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and all other relevant resolutions.

**Decision of 23 May 2000 (4146th meeting):
statement by the President**

At its 4146th meeting, on 23 May 2000, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General dated 22 May 2000 on the implementation of resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and the situation in the Middle East.¹⁷ In his report, the Secretary-General informed the Council that, as a first step for preparations to enable the United Nations to carry out its responsibilities under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), he had sent his

Special Envoy, together with the Force Commander of UNIFIL and a team of experts, to meet with the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. He also observed that resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) called not only for the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon but provided for the means, supported by UNIFIL, whereby the withdrawal could lead to enhanced conditions for international peace and security and the return of effective authority of the Government of Lebanon in the area. He noted the short deadline of 7 July 2000 set by the Government of Israel for the completion of the withdrawal of its forces from Lebanon and set out the minimum conditions and requirements which needed to be met if resolution 425 (1978) was to be implemented fully and without conditions and if the United Nations was to be in a position to fulfil its responsibilities. For the Government of Israel he defined the main requirements which would have to be met for the United Nations to confirm that the Israeli withdrawal had been completed in full compliance with resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978). From the Governments of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic he requested full cooperation in the process of identifying on the ground the lines on the Lebanese-Israeli and Lebanese-Syrian boundaries, respectively, to be used for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal. He stressed that only with the support of all parties would it be possible for peace and security to be restored in southern Lebanon.

At the meeting, the President (China) drew the attention of Council members to two letters submitted by the President of the Council of Ministers of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 15 May 2000¹⁸ and 22 May 2000.¹⁹ The President then made a statement on behalf of the Council,²⁰ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed and strongly endorsed the report of the Secretary-General of 22 May 2000;

Welcomed also his intention to take all necessary steps for any eventuality and to enable UNIFIL to confirm that a complete

¹⁵ S/2000/295, transmitting a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon concerning the need to disarm Palestinians in camps in Lebanon.

¹⁶ S/PRST/2000/13.

¹⁷ S/2000/460, submitted pursuant to resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

¹⁸ S/2000/443, enclosing documents and a map regarding the position of Lebanon with respect to the Shab'a farms.

¹⁹ S/2000/465, reporting that Israeli helicopters and tanks had opened fire on villagers who had returned to inspect their homes in the villages from which Israeli forces had withdrawn, killing six persons and injuring 22.

²⁰ S/PRST/2000/18.

withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon had taken place in compliance with resolution 425 (1978);

Endorsed his requirement for confirming the compliance of all parties concerned with resolution 425 (1978);

Called on all parties concerned to cooperate fully in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General, to exercise utmost restraint and to cooperate with UNIFIL and the United Nations to ensure the full implementation of its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978);

Welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to send his Special Envoy back to the region immediately to ensure that the requirements were met and that all parties concerned cooperated fully with the United Nations in the complete implementation of its resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

**Decision of 18 June 2000 (4160th meeting):
statement by the President**

At its 4160th meeting, on 18 June 2000, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General of 16 June 2000 on the implementation of resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).²¹ In his report, the Secretary-General stated that Israel had met the requirements set out in his report of 22 May 2000 according to resolution 425 (1978), and confirmed that Israeli forces had completed their withdrawal in conformity with the line identified by the United Nations. He noted that Israel's auxiliary force, known as the South Lebanon Army, had been dismantled, and there were no more detainees at Al-Khiam prison. He also observed that the Government of Lebanon had cooperated with the United Nations, quickly re-established its effective authority in the area through the deployment of security forces, and planned to send a force composed of army and internal security personnel upon confirmation of the withdrawal of Israel.

At the meeting, the President (France) made a statement on behalf of the Council,²² by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General of 16 June 2000 and endorsed the work done by the United Nations as mandated by the Security Council, including the Secretary-General's conclusion that as of 16 June 2000 Israel had withdrawn its forces from Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978) and met the requirements defined in the Secretary-General's report of 22 May 2000;

²¹ S/2000/590, submitted pursuant to the report of the Secretary-General of 22 May 2000 (S/2000/460).

²² S/PRST/2000/21.

Stressed that the redeployment of UNIFIL should be conducted in coordination with the Government of Lebanon and with the Lebanese armed forces as stated in paragraph 21 of the report of the Secretary-General of 16 June 2000.

**Decision of 27 July 2000 (4177th meeting):
resolution 1310 (2000)**

At its 4177th meeting, on 27 July 2000, the Council included in its agenda a report of the Secretary-General dated 20 July 2000 on UNIFIL,²³ and a letter dated 24 July 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.²⁴ In his report, the Secretary-General stated that the Israeli forces had left, the local Lebanese auxiliary had been disbanded, the guns had fallen silent, and that the fighters of the Lebanese resistance had conducted themselves in a controlled manner. He emphasized that while it was an enormous improvement compared to the past, the situation in the Israel-Lebanon sector fell well short of peace, and the potential for serious incidents still existed.

By his letter dated 24 July 2000, the Secretary-General observed that the Israeli authorities had removed all violations of the line of withdrawal and that the deployment of UNIFIL would take place on 26 July 2000 and be immediately followed by the deployment of the Lebanese unit.

At the meeting, the President (Jamaica) drew the attention of the Council to a letter dated 11 July 2000 from the representative of Lebanon to the Secretary-General.²⁵ The President further drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution²⁶ prepared on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General; it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1310 (2000), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Endorsed the understanding, expressed in the report of the Secretary-General of 20 July 2000, that UNIFIL would deploy and function fully throughout its area of operations and that the

²³ S/2000/718, submitted pursuant to resolution 1288 (2000).

²⁴ S/2000/731.

²⁵ S/2000/674, in which Lebanon requested that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL on the basis of the provisions of resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and called for the release of the Lebanese who had been detained for years in Israeli jails "without due process of law".

²⁶ S/2000/741.

Government of Lebanon would strengthen its presence in this area by deploying additional troops and internal security forces;

Decided, in this context, to extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months, until 31 January 2001;

Reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

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 Security Council thereon;

Decided to review the situation, by early November 2000, and to consider any steps it deemed appropriate regarding UNIFIL, on the basis of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, the extent of the deployment of UNIFIL and the actions taken by the Government of Lebanon to restore its effective authority and presence in the area.

Decisions of 30 January 2001 to 30 January 2003: resolutions 1337 (2001), 1365 (2001), 1391 (2002), 1428 (2002) and 1461 (2003)

At its 4267th, 4354th, 4458th, 4593rd and 4696th meetings,²⁷ the Security Council adopted, unanimously and without debate, a resolution extending the mandate of UNIFIL on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General²⁸ and the requests of Lebanon²⁹ and Israel.³⁰ In his reports, the Secretary-General noted that the general situation in southern Lebanon had remained mostly calm and orderly. Nevertheless, tension between Israel and Lebanon remained high and the relative calm along the Blue Line was an uneasy one. The Secretary-General condemned the violations of the Blue Line over the period that had occurred. These included the launching of hostile attacks across the Blue Line and in the Shab'a farms area by Hizbullah; as well as the recurring violations of the Blue Line by Israeli aircraft. Following the incidents, he stressed that each violation of the Blue Line risked an escalation into confrontation. He determined that UNIFIL had essentially completed two of the three parts of the mandate stipulated in resolution 1310 (2000) and noted that UNIFIL had focused on the last part of the mandate, which was the restoration of peace and

security. Pending a comprehensive peace, UNIFIL had sought at least to maintain the ceasefire along the Blue Line through patrols and observation from fixed positions and close contact with the parties, with a view to correcting violations and preventing the escalation of incidents.

By the resolutions adopted during this period,³¹ the Council renewed the mandate of UNIFIL for subsequent six-month periods, the last expiring on 31 July 2003; reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries; and condemned all acts of violence and expressed concern over the violations of the withdrawal line. The Council also requested that the Secretary-General continue his consultations with the Government of Lebanon and other parties directly concerned on the implementation of those resolutions and report to the Security Council thereon.

Decision of 31 July 2003 (4802nd meeting): resolution 1496 (2003)

At its 4802nd meeting, on 31 July 2003, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General dated 23 July 2003 on UNIFIL.³² In his report, the Secretary-General observed that the UNIFIL area of operation had generally remained calm since the last report, but that tension between Israel and Lebanon still remained high. On 21 January, a breach of the ceasefire occurred when Hizbullah fired mortar rounds at an Israel Defense Forces position; one Lebanese civilian was killed and two civilians were injured by Israel Defense Forces fire. He stated that the air incursions by Israel had provoked and intimidated the population of Lebanon and were at variance with Israel's otherwise full compliance with resolution 425 (1978). The firing of anti-aircraft weapons by Hizbullah across the Blue Line was a violation and placed the civilians of both Lebanon and Israel at risk, as well as UNIFIL personnel. The Secretary-General noted that the Government of Lebanon had demonstrated its capacity to increase its authority throughout southern Lebanon, complying with resolution 425 (1978).

²⁷ Held on 30 January 2001, 31 July 2001, 28 January 2002, 30 July 2002 and 30 January 2003, respectively.

²⁸ S/2001/66, S/2001/714, S/2002/55, S/2002/746 and S/2003/38.

²⁹ S/2001/14, S/2001/677, S/2001/734, S/2002/40, S/2002/739 and S/2003/36.

³⁰ S/2001/55.

³¹ Resolutions 1337 (2001), 1365 (2001), 1391 (2002), 1428 (2002) and 1461 (2003).

³² S/2003/728, submitted pursuant to resolution 1461 (2003).

At the meeting, the President (Spain) drew the attention of the Council to two letters from the representative of Israel addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 2 June 2003³³ and 24 July 2003.³⁴ The President further drew attention to two letters from the representative of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 2 July 2003³⁵ and 9 July 2003.³⁶

³³ S/2003/603, noting that the Government of Lebanon had failed to comply with its international obligations under resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 1310 (2000) and 1337 (2001) to eliminate terrorism from its territory, namely ending the ongoing violations of the Blue Line by the terrorist organization Hizbullah.

³⁴ S/2003/758, reporting that Hizbullah had fired missiles across the Blue Line on 21 July 2003, resulting in three injured civilians; stating that the Government of Lebanon had not satisfied its obligations under the norms of international law and Security Council resolutions; and alleging that the Government of Lebanon had relinquished control of southern Lebanon to Hizbullah.

³⁵ S/2003/685, requesting an extension of the mandate of UNIFIL for a further interim period of six months.

³⁶ S/2003/698, transmitting a statistical breakdown of alleged Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty during the month of June 2003 and stating that such acts posed a threat to the stability of the region by promoting a climate of tension.

At the same meeting, the President drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution submitted by France;³⁷ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1496 (2003), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Decided to extend the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 January 2004; and reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;

Called on the parties to ensure that UNIFIL was accorded full freedom of movement in the discharge of its mandate throughout its area of operation as outlined in the Secretary-General's report; reiterated its call on the parties to continue to fulfil the commitments they had given to respect fully the withdrawal line identified by the United Nations, to exercise utmost restraint and to cooperate fully with the United Nations and UNIFIL;

Condemned all acts of violence, expressed great concern about the serious breaches and the air, sea and land violations of the withdrawal line, and urged the parties to put an end to those violations and to abide scrupulously by their obligation to respect the safety of UNIFIL and other United Nations personnel;

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 thereon to the Council before the end of the present mandate as well as on the activities of UNIFIL and the tasks carried out by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

³⁷ S/2003/778.

33. The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Decision of 7 October 2000 (4205th meeting): resolution 1322 (2000)

By letters dated 2 October 2000 to the President of the Security Council, the representative of Iraq, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States and on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States,¹ and the representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Islamic States and on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement,² requested an urgent meeting of the Council to discuss the Israeli aggression against Haram al-Sharif in occupied Jerusalem and subsequent wave of Israeli

attacks against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. Similarly, in a letter of the same date, the representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, also requested an urgent meeting of the Council to respond to the critical situation in occupied East Jerusalem, other parts of the occupied Palestinian territory and parts of Israel.³

By a letter dated 2 October 2000 to the President of the Council, the Permanent Observer of Palestine called for an immediate meeting of the Council to consider the Israeli aggression against Haram al-Sharif

¹ S/2000/928.

² S/2000/929 and S/2000/935.