



## Security Council

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

(for the period 25 January 1989-21 July 1989)

#### Introduction

1. In its resolution 630 (1989) of 30 January 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 July 1989. The Council also reiterated 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 July 1989, the composition of UNIFIL was as follows:

## Military personnel

Fiji	HQ UNIFIL	14	
	Infantry battalion	662	
	Force Mobile Reserve	35	
	Military police	8	719
Finland	HQ UNIFIL	12	
	Infantry battalion	505	
	Force Mobile Reserve	16	
	Military police	9	542
France	HQ UNIFIL	16	
	Composite battalion, (maintenance company, defence company, armoured escort company)	477	
	Military police	10	503
Ghana	HQ UNIFIL	28	
	Infantry battalion	750	
	Engineer company	75	
	Force Mobile Reserve	36	
	Military police	7	896
Ireland	HQ UNIFIL	32	
	Infantry battalion	591	
	HQ Camp Command	97	
	Force Mobile Reserve	17	
	Military police	12	749
Italy	HQ UNIFIL	4	
	Helicopter unit	41	
	Military police	4	52
Nepal	HQ UNIFIL	12	
	Infantry battalion	807	
	Force Mobile Reserve	32	
	Military police	5	856
Norway	HQ UNIFIL	28	
	Infantry battalion	655	
	Maintenance company	163	
	Force Mobile Reserve	31	
	Military police	18	895

Sweden	HQ UNIFIL	22	
	Logistic battalion	607	
	Force Mobile Reserve	5	
	Military police	8	642
	Total UNIFIL	5 854	a/

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

The deployment of UNIFIL as of July 1989 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 manned the five observation posts along the Lebanese side of the Israel-Lebanon armistice demarcation line. They also operated 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 Liaison 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 certain civilian sections (notably those responsible for communications and vehicle maintenance).

6. In January 1989, I informed the Security Council (see S/20416, para. 7) of my continuing efforts to improve the ability of UNIFIL to deal with explosive ordnance, following the withdrawal, in the second half of 1987, of the explosive ordnance detachment, which was previously part of the French composite battalion. I am pleased to inform the Council that, as a result of these efforts, the Government of Ireland has agreed to provide expert teams, as part of the Irish contingent, to search for, and dispose of, explosive ordnance in the Irish battalion sector. These teams will also train personnel from the other UNIFIL battalions. These arrangements are already under way.

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 several occasions during the current mandate.

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8. The strength of the Lebanese army unit serving with UNIFIL has increased to 200, all ranks. The bulk of the unit was stationed at Tyre, while small elements were at Arzun, Al Yatun and Qana.

9. I regret to report that, during the period under review, eight members of the Force, five Irish, two Norwegians and one Swede, lost their lives from firing, mine or bomb explosions, accidents and natural causes. Fifteen others suffered injuries, 3 as a result of hostile fire and 12 from accidents. Since the establishment of UNIFIL, 164 civilian and military members of the Force have died, 64 of them as a result of firing and mine or bomb explosions, 70 in accidents and 30 from other causes. Some 233 have been wounded by firing and mine or bomb explosions.

10. Further progress has been achieved in improving the security of UNIFIL personnel and facilities. In particular, the protection of the headquarters of the Irish battalion is being improved as a matter of priority, following recent firing incidents. The relocation of the headquarters of the Norwegian battalion to a secure compound near Ebel es Sagi is well under way. Individual positions and check-points throughout the UNIFIL area of operation are being strengthened with the construction of gabions and other protective devices.

11. There has been no solution to acute difficulties of UNIFIL in obtaining the land and buildings it needs in the area of operation. As the Security Council is aware from my last report (S/20416, para. 13), these difficulties have resulted from arrears in the Government of Lebanon's payment of rents to the landlords and from the sharp depreciation, on account of exchange rate changes and inflation, of the real value of such rents as are received. Some additional problems arose over properties already at UNIFIL disposal, when landlords escaping the recent hostilities in Beirut requested repossession of their buildings for their own use; in all cases, solutions were found through negotiations, which often involved the Mukhtars of the localities concerned.

#### Situation in the UNIFIL area

12. 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). The boundaries of that area have not been clearly defined but are determined de facto by the forward positions of IDF and DFF. It includes the area adjacent to the international border, parts of the Nepalese, Irish and Finnish battalion sectors, the entire Norwegian battalion sector and 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, there was a notable increase in the number of positions maintained by IDF and DFF, which rose to 64, from 54 during the last reporting period (S/20416, para. 14). The IDF and DFF positions are shown on the attached map. IDF personnel were observed in DFF positions on numerous occasions, especially at night.

13. In the period under review, UNIFIL recorded a total of 98 operations by resistance groups against IDF and DFF targets (18 in February, 21 in March, 15 in April, 19 in May, 17 in June and 8 in July). 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.

14. Activities by IDF/DFF positions or patrols, whether in retaliation for attacks by armed elements or unprovoked, often involved the use of heavy artillery and tank and mortar shelling. Israeli helicopter gunships were also deployed. 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 112 unprovoked firings close, all of which were protested by UNIFIL to IDF. In view of the seriousness of some of these incidents, especially the frequent unprovoked firings close to positions of the Irish battalion from the DFF compounds at Haddathah, Brashit and Beit Yahun (see, for instance, paras. 19 and 23 below), the matter was taken up with the Israeli authorities at a senior level in May 1989. I am pleased to report that the number of firings close against UNIFIL positions has since registered a marked decrease.

15. UNIFIL has been subjected to other harassments, e.g., interference with the movement of its troops (mainly by DFF personnel, but also by IDF, such as the incident on 7 March described below), threats to its personnel and damage to property, all of which were protested to the Israeli authorities.

16. 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 warning shots by UNIFIL personnel. Other incidents between UNIFIL and armed elements were a result of the refusal of armed elements to have their vehicles searched by UNIFIL personnel or to the denial to armed individuals of passage through UNIFIL check-points. These incidents often resulted in threats against UNIFIL personnel, attempts at forced entry or even firing against UNIFIL check-points.

17. The following paragraphs describe some of the more serious incidents which occurred during the current mandate period.

18. On the night of 18 February 1989, a three-man foot patrol in the Norwegian battalion sector was fired at with two rounds of anti-personnel tank ammunition containing arrow-shaped projectiles ("flechettes"). The incident took place during darkness, but in clear weather conditions that permitted good visibility with night vision equipment. Two of the soldiers suffered serious injuries and were treated at the UNIFIL hospital in Naqoura, to which they were evacuated by a UNIFIL helicopter. IDF, to whom the incident was strongly protested, carried out an investigation and subsequently reported to UNIFIL that a routine IDF patrol had detected suspicious movements but, as a result of a malfunction of the tank's sighting system, the rounds fell far from their intended target. IDF further expressed its deepest regret for the injuries to the two UNIFIL soldiers, and gave an assurance that it had taken all possible measures to ensure that incidents of that nature would not recur.

19. On the morning of 24 February 1989, indiscriminate and unprovoked firing from the Haddathah compound at Lebanese civilians and UNIFIL positions led to the killing, by a round from a heavy machine gun, of an Irish soldier who was on duty inside his post. DFF personnel in the Haddathah compound admitted to members of the Irish battalion that they had fired towards the village of Haddathah at the time of the incident. IDF, with whom UNIFIL lodged a strong protest, pledged to investigate the matter and to court-martial the DFF individual responsible for the firing.

20. A serious confrontation developed in the Norwegian battalion sector on 7 March 1989, when an IDF military vehicle was stopped by UNIFIL personnel from entering Ebel es Sagi, site of the headquarters of the Norwegian battalion, in accordance with agreed procedures concerning the entry of non-UNIFIL military vehicles into that village. Negotiations between an IDF officer and UNIFIL and OGL officers were inconclusive, and IDF reinforcements of one additional vehicle and one armoured personnel carrier arrived on the scene. An IDF senior officer was also dispatched from Marjayoun. As negotiations between the senior IDF and UNIFIL officers did not resolve the issue, IDF, now reinforced by a tank, proceeded to a forced entry, seriously damaging UNIFIL vehicles, including armoured personnel carriers, which had been positioned on the road leading to Ebel es Sagi. The situation was finally defused through negotiations on the spot between the UNIFIL Chief of Staff and the IDF senior officer referred to above. The incident was strongly protested to the Israeli authorities.

21. While this incident was in progress, IDF closed the international border at Rosh Hanigra, as well as the crossings at Metulla and a swing gate, manned by DFF, north of the Nagoura camp, to all UNIFIL military personnel, but not to the civilian staff and OGL personnel. This violation of UNIFIL freedom of movement remained in force until the morning of 8 March, when it was lifted following negotiations with IDF.

22. A tragic incident occurred on the morning of 21 March 1989 when a UNIFIL truck carrying three soldiers of the Irish battalion on a routine detail hit a powerful mine placed at the side of a track. The three soldiers lost their lives when the truck was hurled by the explosion into a nearby field and completely destroyed. A second smaller mine was discovered nearby and was detonated by the UNIFIL explosive ordnance detachment. The track had been used daily by Irish battalion vehicles for several weeks but was not used by other vehicles. The UNIFIL investigation of the incident concluded that the two mines had probably been laid the previous night. No group has claimed responsibility and the UNIFIL investigation has been inconclusive as to the identity of those responsible. Investigations carried out by the Lebanese authorities also yielded no clear evidence in this case.

23. Another serious incident, again affecting the Irish battalion, occurred when one of four tank rounds fired from the IDF/DFF position in Rshaf on the early evening of 17 May impacted extremely close to a prefabricated billet in Camp Shamrock, the Irish battalion headquarters. Ten Irish soldiers were inside the billet at that time. The explosion caused serious damage to the billet and seriously injured one Irish soldier, while a second soldier suffered lighter wounds. During the same incident, the position of the Norwegian maintenance company near Camp Shamrock was also hit, but only minor material damage was caused.

24. Finally, in the early morning hours of 21 July 1989, a group of unidentified armed elements opened fire, first with three rounds of rocket-propelled grenades and then with automatic rifles, on a Fijian check-point near the village of Siddiqin. A Fijian soldier sustained serious injury to his right eye.

25. In late April 1989, the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations expressed its concerns to the Secretariat about information it had received from Lebanon that the Israeli authorities were planning to occupy lands owned by Lebanese farmers to the south of the eastern extremity of the Norwegian battalion sector, near the international border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and within the Israeli controlled area. UNIFIL was requested to ascertain the facts. Local Lebanese authorities and civilians contacted by UNIFIL stated that IDF had requested them to sell their lands in the area described above, which would subsequently become an out-of-bounds military zone. They believed it was the intention of IDF to build a road in the area. They also stated that they were unwilling to sell their property to IDF. The Israeli authorities stated that Israel did not claim an inch of Lebanese territory, but that it was necessary for IDF occasionally to use land in the "security zone" for military purposes and as a temporary measure. The Israeli authorities further stated that, in the case at hand, IDF needed to construct an access road because the area was used by armed elements in Lebanon. The Israeli authorities added that only the land affected by the road construction would be involved and that the Lebanese civilians concerned had agreed on the terms of compensation with IDF. Local Lebanese civilians deny the last point. UNIFIL has protested to the Israeli authorities this intended violation of Lebanese territory.

26. UNIFIL continued to provide protection and security to the civilian population. The DFF campaign of forced recruitment of men in the Israeli controlled area has continued. Concurrently, efforts by IDF/DFF to establish "civil administration" offices in villages in that area, some located within the UNIFIL area of operation, have intensified. This has been particularly evident in the Norwegian battalion sector. These efforts are often accompanied by threats against the civilian population. UNIFIL reports that these attempts are opposed by the local population, who often appeal to UNIFIL for protection and support.

27. In my report to the Security Council on 24 January 1989 (S/20416, para. 22), I referred to the abduction of Lebanese civilians from their villages by DFF and their expulsion from the Israeli controlled area. Although some of the Lebanese civilians expelled were allowed to return, the majority are still barred from their homes. UNIFIL has continued to raise the matter with Israeli military and political authorities.

28. UNIFIL troops continued to dispose of mines and roadside bombs, as well as unexploded remnants of war, in the area of operation. A total of 31 controlled explosions were carried out. This is an important activity given the high risk such explosives present to UNIFIL personnel and the civilian population, especially unsuspecting children.

29. UNIFIL pursued its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the maximum extent possible within available resources. This was done by individual

battalions, mainly in the medical and health areas and in support to welfare institutions, using funds supplied by the troop-contributing Governments. In addition, UNIFIL medical centres in the area of operation provided care to an average of 5,000 civilian patients per month; at the UNIFIL hospital at Naqoura, approximately 2,045 Lebanese patients were treated, 163 of them as in-patients. The humanitarian assistance provided by UNIFIL proved of great importance, especially during the recent hostilities, when thousands of inhabitants of Beirut fled the city. Some 70,000 found a safe haven in the UNIFIL area of operation and thousands more in other parts of south Lebanon, increasing the demands on the already strained facilities, especially for medical care.

30. 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 continued during the current mandate. Consultations between the Force Commander and the Co-ordinator of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon continue, although the recent hostilities in Beirut have delayed the completion of existing welfare and reconstruction projects and the formulation of new ones in the UNIFIL area of operation and southern Lebanon generally.

#### Financial aspects

31. By its resolution 43/229 of 21 December 1988, the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for UNIFIL at a rate not to exceed \$11,903,500 gross (\$11,714,500 net) per month for the 12-month period beginning 1 February 1989, should the Security Council decide to continue the Force beyond the period of six months authorized under its resolution 617 (1988). By its resolution 630 (1989) of 30 January 1989, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNIFIL to 31 July 1989. Should the Council decide to extend UNIFIL beyond its current mandate period, the costs to the United Nations for maintaining the Force during a six-month extension period would be within the commitment authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 43/229, assuming continuance of the Force's existing strength and responsibilities. In the event that the current strength of the Force is increased or its mandate is extended beyond 31 January 1990, the Secretary-General will report to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to the General Assembly during its forty-fourth session on the additional requirements needed for maintaining the Force. As at the beginning of July 1989, outstanding assessed contributions to the UNIFIL Special Account for the mandate periods ending 31 July 1989 totalling \$304.6 million remained unpaid.

#### Observations

32. I regret to have to inform the Security Council that, after another difficult mandate period, UNIFIL remains far from being able to implement the mandate given to it by the Security Council in resolution 425 (1978), namely, to confirm the withdrawal of Israel 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.



33. UNIFIL has again been unable to make progress towards deployment to the international border. Israel, while maintaining the position described in previous reports (see S/20416, para. 32), keeps its forces in Lebanon and has strengthened its hold on the so-called "security zone" where positions occupied by its own forces and those of SLA have increased by 18.5 per cent during the current mandate period. At the same time there has been an increase both in attempts by armed elements to infiltrate Israel and in attacks by the Israeli Air Force on targets in Lebanon well to the north of the UNIFIL area. International peace and security has therefore not been restored. UNIFIL efforts relating to its third task will also remain frustrated as long as the tragic situation in Beirut remains unresolved.

34. At the same time, UNIFIL has positive achievements to its credit. It plays a significant role in controlling the level of violence in its area of operation and thus reducing the risk of a wider conflagration in the region. Its presence underlines the conviction of the Security Council and the international community at large that the solution to the problems of southern Lebanon lies in the full implementation of resolution 425 (1978). Its presence is also a symbol of the international community's commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon and is valued as such by the great majority of the Lebanese people. Finally, it provides humanitarian assistance to the people of southern Lebanon.

35. These are substantial achievements, but their cost is high. UNIFIL cannot insulate itself from Lebanon's ordeal. That agony, which has resulted in such terrible suffering for the Lebanese people, also exposes UNIFIL and its personnel to considerable dangers. As reported above, the Force suffered loss of life and other casualties during the current mandate period, as a result of harassment of its personnel by various armed groups in the area. The safety of UNIFIL personnel is a matter of continuing and deep concern to me. 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 enhancing the security of its members and of course helping them to carry out the tasks entrusted to them by the Security Council.

36. I must also report to the Security Council, with deep regret, that, despite continuing efforts by myself and my staff, Lieutenant-Colonel William Richard Higgins, an officer of the United States of America serving as an UNTSO military observer with UNIFIL, who was kidnapped near Tyre on 17 February 1988, has not yet been released. I appeal once again to all Governments or individuals who may be in a position to influence those holding Colonel Higgins to use their good offices to help secure his release without delay.

37. The conditions under which UNIFIL is operating are kept under constant review so as to ensure that the security of its members, to which I attach the utmost priority, is maintained at the highest level. 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 arrangements on the ground will be modified and updated where necessary.

38. Meanwhile, in a letter dated 13 July 1989 (S/20733), the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations conveyed his country's request to the Security Council to extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months, adding that the renewal of the UNIFIL mandate is "a desideratum for both Government and people of Lebanon and one which clearly and self-evidently enjoys the consensus of all leaders and all classes of people".

39. As a result of this request, the Security Council is faced with a complex decision. On the one hand, there are the frustrations and dangers which result from the fact that UNIFIL is prevented from carrying out its mandate. The Force's financial position also remains most unsatisfactory, with over \$300 million still owed by the United Nations to the troop-contributing countries. On the other hand, there is the positive contribution of UNIFIL, described in paragraph 33 above, and the considerable distress that would be caused in Lebanon if the Security Council were to make any substantial change in the Force's strength or deployment.

40. I believe that the prevailing view among the members of the Security Council is that due weight should be given to the latter consideration and that this is not the moment to make radical changes, especially when international efforts are under way to resolve the wider Lebanese crisis. I accordingly recommend that the Force's mandate be extended for a further period of six months, until 31 January 1990, in accordance with the Lebanese request.

41. 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 faced a very difficult period. Their discipline and bearing have been of a high order, reflecting credit on themselves, on their countries and on the United Nations.