

**General Assembly
Security Council**

Distr.: General
23 July 2009
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Agenda item 15
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

**Identical letters dated 22 July 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the
Security Council**

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you of the latest developments in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

On 14 July 2009, there was an explosion in the village of Khirbat Silm in southern Lebanon. Subsequently, a joint investigation commission was formed, made up of officers from the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL. That commission is working together with officers from the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL, who are almost constantly present at the site. Having been isolated and placed under constant surveillance, the site is now under joint guard.

The investigation began two days after the explosion because explosives experts from the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL had determined that the site was not safe to approach on the day after the explosion. Despite the danger, the Lebanese Army remained at the site on the day after the explosion and a Lebanese Army soldier was injured by a secondary explosion in the area near the building. That refutes false Israeli allegations that the Lebanese Army deliberately delayed the deployment of UNIFIL at the explosion site and the start of the investigation.

Upon investigation, it became evident to the Lebanese Army officers in the investigation commission that the building where the explosion took place had contained a variety of munitions and weapons, and that the cause of the explosion had been a fire that broke out in the unfinished non-residential building. It was concluded that those munitions and weapons were left over from the July 2006 war because:

- The items found included 100 mm Israeli tank shells with Hebrew writing on;
- All weapons and munitions remaining at the site were of types used during the July 2006 war;



- There was ammunition for 130 mm artillery, which the resistance does not possess, but which was used by the Lahad militia that collaborated with Israel prior to the 2000 liberation.

In view of the close cooperation between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL in investigating the cause of the explosion, Israel has attempted to pre-empt the results of the investigation by levelling accusations of arms smuggling in the Force's area of operations south of the Litani river. Those accusations are false and a blatant attempt to interfere with the investigation in order to influence its conclusions. It should be noted that, in paragraph 28 of his tenth report on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), dated 29 June 2009, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated that to date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of new military infrastructure or the smuggling of arms into the area of operations.

In paragraph 49 of the report, the Secretary-General states that the Government of Lebanon and its agencies have not reported to the United Nations any incidents of arms smuggling into Lebanon, while the Government of Israel continues to allege significant breaches of the arms embargo that the United Nations has not been able to verify independently. He further adds in paragraph 66 that the Force has not found evidence of the smuggling of arms into its area of operations.

Israel's allegation that Hizbullah has been storing weapons in civilian areas, thereby placing them at risk, is intended to justify intentional targeting of Lebanese civilians by Israel in the future, as Israel made clear repeatedly at the tripartite meetings at Naqurah. Such targeting constitutes a blatant violation of international law, international humanitarian law, human rights and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

On 19 July 2009, the Lebanese Army received information from UNIFIL command concerning the possible removal of the munitions from the site of the explosion to another location in Khirbat Silm. The Lebanese Army requested the coordinates of the new location, to which it subsequently sent some of its soldiers. That location consisted of three houses under construction and one inhabited house. The soldiers searched the aforementioned places and ascertained that they did not contain any prohibited items. In accordance with standard procedures, UNIFIL forces were then called in to review the results of the search and enter the aforementioned location accompanied by the Lebanese Army. Two UNIFIL patrols arrived at the aforementioned location, while other UNIFIL patrols went to a number of other locations in the village.

Because of a lapse in coordination, one UNIFIL unit attempted to enter one of the houses without a Lebanese Army escort. Taken by surprise, some women and girls screamed, after which some youths threw stones at the force, injuring a UNIFIL soldier. As a result, the situation deteriorated between the international forces and the locals, who began to pelt UNIFIL troops with stones, hitting several of them.

Israel is constantly attempting to create problems between Lebanon and UNIFIL as a cover for its ongoing occupation of Lebanese territory in the Shab'a Farms, the Kafr Shuba hills and the northern part of the town of Ghajar, as well as for its daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty by air, land and sea, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006).

Those failed Israeli efforts to stir up trouble between Lebanon and UNIFIL are also a cover for its spy networks, which are planted all over Lebanese territory. In a letter dated 20 May 2009, Lebanon informed the United Nations about some spy networks that had been uncovered. The purpose of those networks is to destabilize Lebanon and threaten its security; they also threaten peace and stability in the region. In paragraph 20 of his ninth and most recent semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), the Secretary-General stated that Israeli spying activities would constitute a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty. In paragraph 71 of his latest report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), the Secretary-General expressed his concern that Israeli spy cells in Lebanon, if proven to exist, could, in his words, endanger the fragile cessation of hostilities that exists between Israel and Lebanon.

Those failed Israeli attempts are also intended to serve as a cover for land violations of Lebanese sovereignty, the latest of which occurred on 17 June 2009 when an earthen berm and a reinforced concrete observation tower were erected adjacent to the Hassan Gate on the outskirts of the village of Kafr Shuba. Lebanon informed the United Nations of that violation in a letter dated 29 June 2009. The latest Israeli violation involved an incursion 10 metres beyond the Israeli technical fence, into an area with regard to which Lebanon had expressed a reservation in 2000 during United Nations verification of the Israeli withdrawal.

By committing this violation beyond the technical fence, Israel is trying to create a new *fait accompli* in areas with regard to which Lebanon expressed reservations, in order to chip away at Lebanese territory, as it has previously done with its piecemeal occupation of the Lebanese Shab'a Farms. The latest Israeli violation provoked a number of Lebanese citizens, in particular the owners of the land that was encroached on, prompting them to proceed there on 17 July 2009, and raise the Lebanese flag. Lebanon demands the complete removal of this new Israeli encroachment on the outskirts of Kafr Shuba and a return to the status quo ante. UNIFIL must play a leading role in that regard and in preventing the repetition of such violations in the future.

Those failed Israeli attempts are also intended to provide cover for the delay in providing information on areas in which cluster bombs were dropped. Meanwhile, hundreds of Lebanese civilian victims have been killed. The Lebanese Government has informed the United Nations that the accuracy of that information is uncertain, particularly given that there are 37 areas littered with cluster bombs for which no information was provided. The Lebanese Army has asked for specific information on the dropping of cluster bombs, which Israel has not yet provided.

Lebanon stresses the importance of close operational and strategic cooperation between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL and, in that regard, notes the recent enhancement of that cooperation through joint patrols with UNIFIL in its area of operations. It should be noted that, to date, no new weapons have been discovered in the Force's area of operations. Such weapons as have been discovered are left over from Israel's 2006 war against Lebanon.

Lebanon reiterates its commitment to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). To that end, it sent a letter dated 4 July 2009 to the Secretary-General asking for an extension of the Force's mandate, as currently set out, for another year. Lebanon reiterates its rejection of any curtailment of the Force's mandate, as defined in the relevant resolutions, with regard to the assistance

it provides to the Lebanese Army, and/or any change in its concept of operations and rules of engagement, or existing arrangements for close cooperation between the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL. Lebanon affirms its appreciation for UNIFIL and the work it is undertaking in southern Lebanon, as well as its contribution to the preservation of security and stability in its area of operation.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Caroline **Ziade**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
