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Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)

Thirty-first semi-annual report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is the thirty-first semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It provides a review and an assessment of the implementation of the resolution since the issuance of my previous report on the subject, on 15 October 2019 (S/2019/819), and covers developments up to 7 April 2020.

I. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

2. Since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004) by the Security Council on 2 September 2004, limited progress has been made in its implementation. A number of provisions, including with respect to the existence and activities of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, remain pending.

3. During the reporting period, Lebanon, like many other countries, was affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which compounded issues that the country had faced prior to the health emergency.

A. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon

4. Through the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council sought to strengthen respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout the country, in accordance with the Taif Accords of 1989, to which all the political parties in Lebanon had committed themselves. That objective has remained the priority of my efforts.

5. Large-scale peaceful protests began countrywide on 17 October, as a broad cross-section of Lebanese society called for government change, just reforms, good governance, accountability for corruption, better management of the economy, the end of sectarian patronage and early parliamentary elections, as noted in my most recent report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2020/195). The announcement of a tax on Internet-based free phone services appeared to spark the demonstrations, as noted in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2019/889).



6. As noted in my most recent report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), in the context of the protests, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, resigned on 29 October, and on 19 December, the President, Michel Aoun, designated Hassan Diab, a former Minister for Education, as the next Prime Minister. During formal binding Parliamentary consultations conducted by Mr. Aoun, Mr. Diab secured 69 of 128 votes with the support of the Amal Movement, the Free Patriotic Movement, Hizbullah, the Marada Movement and their allies. The Future Movement, the Kata'ib Party, the Lebanese Forces and the Progressive Socialist Party stated that they would join the opposition.

7. On 21 January, Mr. Aoun signed a decree establishing the Government of Prime Minister-designate Diab, comprising 20 members, 6 (30 per cent) of whom were women, including for the first time those occupying the key portfolios of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, as well as that of Minister for Justice. On the same day, I welcomed the announcement of the formation of a new Government of Lebanon and looked forward to working with Mr. Diab and the incoming Council of Ministers, including in support of the country's reform agenda and to address the pressing needs of its people. In a statement on 23 January, the International Support Group for Lebanon urged the new Government "to swiftly adopt a ministerial statement with the necessary substantial, credible and comprehensive policy package of measures and reforms that can address the demands of the Lebanese people". In the same statement, the Group called upon "all Lebanese parties to implement a tangible policy of disassociation from any external conflicts, as an important priority, as spelled out in previous declarations, in particular the 2012 Baabda Declaration". The Group recalled "the importance of implementing relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and previous commitments which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State" and "that the Lebanese Armed Forces are the only legitimate armed forces of Lebanon, as enshrined in the Lebanese constitution and in the Taif Agreement".

8. On 11 February, the new Government gained a vote of confidence in Parliament, with 63 votes from the 84 parliamentarians present. There was one abstention and 20 votes of no confidence, and 44 parliamentarians were absent. In a ministerial statement, the Government stated its commitment to addressing the needs of the people, including through economic and judicial reforms, tackling corruption and recognizing the right to peaceful protest.

9. The provisions of the ministerial statement that were of particular relevance to the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) were in line with earlier ministerial statements. The Government reiterated its commitment to the disassociation policy and the Taif Accords and to following the course of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

10. The Government also renewed its pledge to "strengthen the Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue to spare the camps recurring tensions, which are not accepted by the Lebanese, according to the Unified Lebanese Vision", in line with the previous statement.

11. In the statement, the Government affirmed "the right of the Lebanese people to resist Israeli occupation [...] and restore the occupied territories". As was the case on the occasion of the formation of the Government of Mr. Hariri in 2019, the Government did not refer to its earlier commitment to developing a national defence strategy. The most recent reference in a ministerial statement to a national defence strategy had been in 2016.

12. It was noted in the ministerial statement that the Ministers vowed to have "a non-sectarian vision that meets the principles of citizenship and social justice", pledged to protect freedom of expression and peaceful protest while maintaining

security and public order and pledged to work on reforming and amending the law on parliamentary elections.

13. The Government pledged to work with all its components to execute the national action plan on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and to make progress towards gender equality by abolishing all forms of discrimination against women and girls in Lebanese laws and legislation.

14. Various groups in the protest movement released their own statement, offering alternative solutions to the economic and financial crisis, proposing ways to fight corruption and calling for early elections on the basis of a new electoral law. In the statement, it was added that “the Lebanese system has generated several crises that have become impossible to solve under this system [including] the issue of foreign policy and the issue of arms outside the control of the State”. It was affirmed in the same statement that “the government [should] also have deep faith in the State’s inevitable ability to lead a confrontation, to place armed brigades in Lebanon under the administration, authority, decision, and funding of the State, and to impose the official and legitimate State authority on the entire Lebanese territory”.

15. On 12 February, the International Support Group for Lebanon called “on the newly confirmed Government of Lebanon led by H.E. Hassan Diab to swiftly and resolutely undertake timely, tangible, credible, and comprehensive set[s] of measures and reforms to stop and reverse the deepening crises, to address the needs and demands of the Lebanese people”. It also reiterated “the importance of Lebanon implementing Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006), 1559 (2004) and other relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as the Taif Accord and the Baabda Declaration and its commitments made at the Brussels, Paris and Rome conferences”.

16. The release of a document entitled “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People” by the United States of America on 28 January triggered numerous reactions in Lebanon. President Aoun reportedly “assured Palestinian President Abbas on 29 January of the importance of Arab unity and stressed Lebanese adherence to the Arab peace initiative [...] especially regarding the Palestinian right of return to their lands and the establishment of a Palestinian independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital”. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Nassif Hitti, similarly reiterated the commitment of Lebanon to the Arab Peace Initiative on 25 February. On 29 January, the Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, mentioned the right of return of Palestinians, and on 8 February, in his address at the 30th emergency session of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, announced “on behalf of the Parliament [...] our rejection and condemnation of this deal, and our refusal to resettle the Palestinians in their places”. The Lebanese and Palestinian working groups on Palestinian refugee affairs in Lebanon held a joint meeting on 19 February, in which they “firmly rejected the plan. On 29 January, Palestine refugees demonstrated against the proposed plan in camps across the country. All installations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) closed for the day.

17. In a speech on 16 February, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, stated that “this new phase requires from us, people of the resistance, to divert our attention to the main confrontation. The main confrontation is unavoidable [...]. We are headed to a confrontation with the mother of all wars, crimes, oppressions, and corruptions”. He added that “the plan offered the Shab‘a Farms, Kfar Shuba Hills, the Lebanese part of the village of Ghajar as well as the entire Golan Heights to Israel. Mr. Nasrallah noted that “concerning the naturalization of Palestinians, there have been several encouraging initial reactions against the plan”.

18. UNRWA continued to deliver essential services with regard to health, education, improvement of the camps, relief and social services to Palestine refugees in Lebanon in the face of a serious Agency-wide funding shortfall, which currently stands at \$422 million for the programme budget. In addition, the spread of COVID-19 in Lebanon led to concerns that the disease could enter the overcrowded Palestinian refugee camps with potentially devastating effects, while refugees would face challenges in gaining access to medical treatment. The closure of businesses and restrictions on movement affected Palestine refugees considerably, and in that context, UNRWA received increasingly desperate appeals for additional assistance.

19. As at 31 January, 910,256 refugees and asylum seekers were registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon. Competition for access to resources, combined with fears that COVID-19 could spread particularly quickly in refugee settlements, could lead to increased tensions between refugees, both Syrian and Palestinian, and Lebanese communities.

20. In its resolution [1680 \(2006\)](#), the Security Council strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request made by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border. Such delineation remains critical to enable proper border control and management, including the movement of people and the potential movement of arms.

21. The delineation and demarcation of the boundaries of Lebanon remain essential to guaranteeing national sovereignty and territorial integrity. While border delineation is a bilateral matter, progress on the issue remains an obligation for Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with resolution [1680 \(2006\)](#).

22. Israel continued to occupy the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#).

23. There was no progress on the issue of the Shab‘a Farms area. Furthermore, neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel responded to the provisional definition of the area contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) of 30 October 2007 ([S/2007/641](#)).

24. Uncrewed aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, of the Israel Defense Forces continued to make near daily overflights above Lebanon during the reporting period, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#). In identical letters dated 11 March addressed to the President of the Security Council and me ([A/74/749-S/2020/199](#)), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, on behalf of her Government, stated that “on 5 March 2020, four Israeli enemy warplanes entered Lebanese airspace”, two of which went on “to attack points in the Syrian Governorate of Qunaytirah” and that two others also headed for Syrian territory. She added, “The fact that Israel has repeatedly violated Lebanese airspace and used it in order to attack Syrian territory poses a direct threat to civil aviation and could end in disaster”. In identical letters dated 3 April addressed to the President of the Council and me, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon said that “on 31 March [...] three Israeli enemy warplanes flying at low altitude violated Lebanese airspace and fired missiles from above Lebanese territory at Syrian territory” and that “Israel not only violated Lebanese airspace by its actions, it could also have endangered civilians and Lebanese territory had fire been opened on the source of the missiles”, adding that “this act of aggression comes at a time when all international efforts must be directed towards combating the pandemic [...]”.

25. As I noted in my most recent report on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, in identical letters dated 24 January addressed to the President of the Security Council and me

(A/74/665-S/2020/71), condemned what she called a “violation of [Lebanon’s] exclusive economic zone” and constituted a “flagrant violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon, the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law and international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)” by a Panamanian-flagged hydrographic survey vessel hailing from the Israeli port of Haifa. The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, in a note verbale dated 5 February addressed to me, stated that “Israel rejects the claims that the vessel has at any point violated any Lebanese rights”.

26. In identical letters dated 26 February addressed to the President of the Security Council and me (A/74/725-S/2020/154), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, on behalf of her Government, said that a “on 6 February, a security patrol from the Jazzin security station came across a suspicious object in the town of “Surayri, Jazzin district”. She added that “on 8 February, an engineering team [...] determined that it was a recently manufactured, Israeli-made MK83 guided bomb” and that it was “equipped with a SPICE-1000 guidance device, which is made in Israel and currently used by the Israeli army”. The Permanent Representative called upon the Council “to condemn this act in the strongest possible terms and compel Israel to bring an end to its violations of Lebanese sovereignty by air, sea and land”.

27. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon continued its proceedings in *Prosecutor v. Ayyash et al.* On 5 February, the Tribunal issued a decision to proceed with another trial in absentia against Salim Jamil Ayyash, who was charged with several crimes in relation to attacks on Marwan Hamadeh, Georges Hawi and Elias El-Murr that were carried out in Lebanon on 1 October 2004, 21 June 2005 and 12 July 2005, respectively. On 5 March, the Trial Chamber provided notice that it would deliver its judgment in the case in a public session in mid-May 2020.

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

28. The Government of Lebanon continued its efforts to extend the authority of the State throughout all the Lebanese territory, as called for in the Taif Accords and in resolution 1559 (2004). The Lebanese Armed Forces stepped up their operations to maintain security and stability in the country during the reporting period in response to developments that included both the protests from October onwards and the enforcement of restrictions on movement associated with COVID-19.

29. On 5 November, the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that they had arrested a prominent suspect involved in the 2013 terrorist attack on one of their patrols in Aرسال, which had killed an officer and a soldier.

30. On 9 February, three military personnel were reportedly killed in the town of Mashrafah, Hirmil district, after their military vehicle was subjected to an ambush. Mr. Diab then stated that “[...] every aggression against the Lebanese Armed Forces is an attack against the Lebanese in all their categories and regions”.

31. As reported in (S/2020/195), coordination among the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces and General Security was established soon after the protests began, with the Lebanese Armed Forces assuming a significant portion of the security response, especially the reopening of roads, while the Internal Security Forces operated in central Beirut, in particular at banks. On 12 November, as a group of demonstrators attempted to block a road in Khaldah, south of Beirut, one demonstrator was fatally shot by a member of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces released a statement that night indicating that the accused

soldier had been arrested. On 21 November, a military prosecutor indicted the soldier and his superior officer for murder.

32. In the context of the pandemic, Mr. Aoun addressed the nation on 15 March, declaring a national health emergency. Mr. Diab declared a state of “general mobilization”, requesting citizens and residents to remain at home, except for essential movement. The mobilization included a prohibition of gatherings and the closure of Rafic Hariri International Airport and all air, sea and land ports as at 18 March. In addition, most public institutions were closed, with the exception of critical ministries and institutions, as was the private sector, except for banks and essential businesses.

33. On 26 March, the Government extended the state of health emergency until 12 April, expanded its scope to include the shutdown of all institutions and stores except essential ones, such as bakeries and pharmacies, and introduced a curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. The Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces monitored the compliance of businesses with the directives, imposing fines on violators, closing shops, dispersing public gatherings and sending warnings to municipalities to abide by the instructions of the general mobilization. Small groups of protesters in north Lebanon and Beirut defied curfew measures, which they said imposed too many hardships on them, compounding the pre-existing economic situation. Clashes with security forces followed the reopening of some shops and the blocking of roads.

34. Various security agencies implemented the Government’s decision of 15 March to close air, land and sea borders, including all five land border crossings with the Syrian Arab Republic, with the Lebanese Armed Forces carrying out patrols along the border to enforce that decision. In a speech on 20 March, Mr. Nasrallah stated that “regarding returnees from Iran and Hizbullah militants who are present on the front lines in Syria and travel back and forth between Beirut and Damascus, they have all been appropriately examined because we don’t want to spread the virus either in Lebanon or in Syria”.

35. In addition to the State-managed measures to prevent and mitigate COVID-19, a number of political parties reportedly offered health services to their constituencies in various parts of Lebanon. In a speech on 21 March, Mr. Nasrallah said that “our health workers, medical personnel, cadres, nurses, volunteers, civil defence teams are ready to serve in all regions. Our personnel exceed 20,000, and their activity is restricted to regions where we have a certain presence. We did not expand our presence elsewhere to avoid negative reactions, but we are ready to extend our services to the entire Lebanese soil and to refugee camps in all”.

36. On 6 April, the International Support Group for Lebanon held a meeting in Beirut, attended by Mr. Aoun and Mr. Diab, that was focused on the economic situation and the pandemic.

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

37. In its resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#), the Security Council called for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, a key provision of the resolution that has yet to be implemented. The provision reflects and reaffirms a decision to which all Lebanese committed themselves in the Taif Accords.

38. Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias within the country continued to operate outside the control of the Government, in violation of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#). While

several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside government control, Hizbullah is the most heavily armed militia in the country.

39. There has been no tangible progress towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as called for in the Taif Accords and resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#). Since the adoption of that resolution, no specific steps have been taken to tackle that crucial issue, which lies at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. The maintenance by Hizbullah of a military arsenal outside a legal framework and its involvement in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be denounced by a number of voices in Lebanon, who consider those issues to be destabilizing factors in the country and ones that undermine democracy. In a speech on 19 February, Mr. Hariri stressed “the necessity to call for a dialogue table to discuss the defence strategy and restore the decision of war and peace to the Lebanese State”. Many Lebanese see the continued presence of arms outside State control as an implicit threat that the weapons could be used within Lebanon for political reasons.

40. In a speech on 5 January, following the announcement on 3 January by the United States of the death of General Qasem Soleimani, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran, Mr. Nasrallah stated that “Qassem Soleimani is not solely an Iranian matter, he is the entire axis of the resistance [...]”. He said that “all resistance forces across the region must seek fair punishment”, which he explained was “the expulsion of all American troops in the Middle East”, adding that “once the Americans are expelled, the Zionists will directly follow them, and we might not even need a battle to liberate Palestine”. He noted that “we, of course, will not target the entire American people. We do not intend to target United States citizens, journalists, or medical workers because that will help Trump’s intentions”. On 8 January, Mr. Aoun expressed his hope that “the recent developments in the region will not lead to any repercussions on the Lebanese scene”.

41. The self-acknowledged maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups and the alleged increase by Hizbullah of its arsenal pose a serious challenge to the State’s ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. In a speech on 11 November, Mr. Nasrallah denied that Hizbullah needed to use the Albu Kamal crossing between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to transfer weapons into Lebanon, adding, “we have more missiles than we need and we don’t know where to put them”.

42. In identical letters dated 7 April to the President of the Security Council and to me ([S/2020/281](#)), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations said that on 26 March, Hizbullah had “launched a tactical remotely-piloted aerial vehicle from southern Lebanon into Israel’s airspace. The Israel Defense Forces shot down the aerial vehicle”. The Permanent Representative reiterated that “it is Lebanon’s responsibility to abide by Security Council resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#), calling for the dismantling of Hizbullah and the removal of its presence in Lebanon, and for the Lebanese Government’s assertion of its effective sovereignty over all of the Lebanese territory”.

43. The participation of Hizbullah and other Lebanese parties in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to breach the policy of disassociation and the principles of the Baabda Declaration. In identical letters dated 5 March to the President of the Security Council and me ([S/2020/180](#)), the Permanent Representative of Israel noted “the worsening situation in south-western Syria, where armed groups affiliated with the Iranian regime, such as Hizbullah, have continued to destabilize the region. The presence of such groups, coupled with the growing sphere of Iranian influence, poses an imminent threat not only to Israel’s security, but to international peace and security”. He stressed “the need for [...] the total withdrawal of Iran and the Iranian Command Forces from Syria”.

44. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside camps continued. Notwithstanding the decision taken in 2006 in the context of the national dialogue and confirmed at subsequent sessions to disarm Palestinian militias outside the camps within a six-month period, no progress was made during the reporting period with regard to dismantling the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada in the country.

II. Observations

45. I reiterate my message on the need for the Government of Lebanon to move the country's reform agenda forward and address the pressing needs of its people. As the dire economic and financial situation in Lebanon is now compounded by the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the country's economy, it is all the more urgent that the country's leaders develop and implement the required reforms. Measures to prevent, limit and mitigate the impact of the pandemic have to be taken in parallel to the provision of financial and food support to the rapidly increasing numbers of the most vulnerable groups of the population facing dire poverty.

46. The Lebanese State should increase its efforts to achieve a monopoly over the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout its territory. I continue to urge the Government and the armed forces of Lebanon to take all measures necessary to prohibit Hizbullah and other armed groups from acquiring weapons and building paramilitary capacity outside the authority of the State, in violation of resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#).

47. The continued involvement of Hizbullah in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is not only a breach of the disassociation policy and the principles of the Baabda Declaration. In addition, because the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is characterized by confrontations among regional actors, it carries the risk of entangling Lebanon in regional conflicts and undermining the stability of Lebanon and the region. Furthermore, it demonstrates the failure of Hizbullah to disarm and its refusal to be accountable to the very State institutions that the implementation of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#) was intended to strengthen.

48. The reported involvement of Hizbullah, as well as that of other Lebanese elements, in fighting elsewhere in the region remains of serious concern. I call upon the countries that maintain close ties with Hizbullah to encourage the transformation of the group into a solely civilian political party, as well as its disarmament, in accordance with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#). It is critical that the Accords be preserved and implemented by all to avoid the spectre of a renewed confrontation among Lebanese citizens and to strengthen the institutions of the State. Hizbullah's involvement in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing, as demonstrated in the acknowledgement by Mr. Nasrallah that "returnees from Iran and Hizbullah militants [...] are present on the front lines in Syria and travel back and forth between Beirut and Damascus". Such involvement by Hizbullah is in breach of the disassociation policy and the principles of the Baabda Declaration.

49. Hizbullah's renewed admission that it possesses missiles is also of concern. I note the continuous calls by political leaders for the development of a national defence strategy through a Lebanese-led, Lebanese-owned process in line with the country's international obligations. As stated in many of my previous reports, it is important that such a dialogue address the need to achieve a State monopoly over the possession and use of weapons and the use of force, a crucial issue that stands at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.

50. I have repeatedly condemned all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. I reiterate that such violations, by air and ground, run the risk of triggering an escalation and could jeopardize stability in Lebanon, Israel and beyond. They undermine the credibility of the Lebanese security and State institutions and generate anxiety among the civilian population. The alleged use of Lebanese airspace by the Israel Defense Forces to strike targets in the Syrian Arab Republic is deeply concerning. I renew my call for Israel to adhere to its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and immediately cease its overflights above Lebanese airspace. Similarly, I urge Israel to withdraw its forces from the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line without further delay.

51. The renewed commitment by the Government of Lebanon in its ministerial statement to strengthen the Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue in order to prevent tensions in Palestinian refugee camps is positive. It is critical that the maintenance of weapons by non-Lebanese militias be addressed and that the earlier decisions emanating from the national dialogue be implemented. This includes following up on the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to deal with “quality-of-life, social and humanitarian issues with regard to Palestine refugees living inside and outside refugee camps”, as decided at the National Dialogue Conference of 2006 and called for in the document entitled “A unified Lebanese vision for the Palestinian refugees affairs in Lebanon”.

52. The pledge by the Government of Lebanon to implement the national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is a positive step towards increasing the role and participation of women in decision-making at all levels and involving women effectively in conflict prevention and resolution. I commend Lebanon for its progress towards improving the representation of women in the political domain, including through its designation of six female ministers, among them the first female Minister for Defence in the Arab world. The United Nations stands ready to support Lebanon in the implementation of the action plan.

53. As the Special Tribunal for Lebanon moves forward in its proceedings, I reiterate that it is in the interest of Lebanon and in line with its obligations under international law to ensure that those behind terrorist acts, including political assassinations, are held accountable and that violence is not committed with impunity. I welcome the Government’s commitment to establishing the truth in that connection, as expressed in its ministerial statement.

54. As in the past, I renew my calls to donors to support the State institutions of Lebanon, including the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces, because they are at the forefront of maintaining national security in the country.

55. Furthermore, I encourage donors to provide funding to UNRWA, including in support of its request for cash assistance to address the deteriorating economic situation in Palestinian refugee camps, exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, so that it can continue to perform its essential role and deliver services, which are vital to the dignity and security of Palestinian refugees. Such efforts are without prejudice to the need for the just resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive settlement in the region.

56. I am counting on the continued commitment of the Government of Lebanon to its international obligations and call upon all parties and actors to fully abide by resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The United Nations will continue its efforts towards the full implementation of those and all other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.