



Security Council

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Letter dated 4 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Kindly find attached my statement for the Security Council meeting on United Nations peacekeeping operations, held on 4 June 2020 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Amal Mudallali**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 4 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, Amal Mudallali, for the Security Council open videoconference on United Nations peacekeeping operations, 4 June 2020

Allow me to congratulate France on assuming the presidency of the Council, and to commend Estonia on its excellent job during its presidency of the Council last month.

On 29 May, we celebrated the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. On that same day, the Lebanese Cabinet met and took a decision to ask the Security Council to renew the mandate of the peacekeeping operation in Lebanon, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), for another year without any changes. UNIFIL is one of the Organization's largest and oldest peacekeeping missions. The Lebanese President, Michel Aoun, in his meeting yesterday with representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council, declared that the role of UNIFIL in Lebanon was critical for the region and internationally. The President recalled how southern Lebanon had been enjoying 14 years of calm, unparalleled in a region rife with conflict, because of the partnership between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. He called UNIFIL an exemplary peacekeeping force for all to emulate.

The Lebanese Prime Minister, Hassan Diab, also expressed Lebanon's deep appreciation for the work of peacekeepers all around the world, especially UNIFIL, and conveyed Lebanon's recognition of their continuous sacrifices.

These 42 years of partnership between Lebanon and UNIFIL have been providing southern Lebanon and the region with relative calm and stability, allowing the Lebanese inhabitants to return to their villages and live their normal lives after years of occupation and displacement. Troops from 45 countries, through their daily patrols with the Lebanese Army and their own work monitoring the border area, contribute to the de-escalation of tension, conflict prevention and the continued, albeit fragile, peace, in the absence of a real permanent ceasefire and solution to the conflict.

The UNIFIL daily joint patrols, joint military drills with the Lebanese Armed Forces, demining operations, demarcation of the Blue Line and Maritime Task Force, in close cooperation with the Lebanese Armed forces, are ensuring the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), to which Lebanon is fully committed.

My country thanks each and every country participating in this mission and pays tribute to the memory of the 315 UNIFIL soldiers who have lost their lives for the cause of peace in southern Lebanon since 1978.

UNIFIL, in all its components, proves every day that it is an effective mission, a mission able to deliver on its mandate and to avert the deterioration of the situation in one of the hottest points in the world.

Lebanon is going through a difficult situation owing to multiple crises, namely the unprecedented economic and financial crisis, the impact of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the persistence of the terrorist threat in the region and the protracted refugee crises in the region.

These combined challenges make the extension of the UNIFIL mandate as critical as ever. Lebanon calls on all the members of this august body to support the renewal of the UNIFIL mandate, when the time comes in August, without any changes and without any reduction in the troop level or the budget of the peacekeeping force,

to enable it to continue doing its vital work without any interruption at this challenging time for Lebanon and for peace in the region.

Lebanon also calls upon members of the United Nations to facilitate the adoption of the financing of UNIFIL resolution that is being negotiated currently in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Lebanon stresses the importance of providing this mission and all peacekeeping missions with the funding necessary to carry out their mandates. It is very important to note that UNIFIL is a very efficient mission and that peacekeeping missions all around the world cost merely 0.5 per cent of the total military spending worldwide. Yet this 0.5 per cent has brought more peace than all larger military spending. It is less costly to maintain the peace than to let situations devolve into conflict and war.

Finally, I would like to express my Government's appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, troop-contributing countries and the UNIFIL command, military and civilian components in their role in maintaining peace in southern Lebanon. I would like to also express appreciation for the work of United Nations peacekeepers with the host communities in all fields and their contributions lately to the fight against the COVID-19 crisis in their area of operations.

I reiterate also my Government's unwavering commitment to the continued role and mandate of UNIFIL, as well as its commitment to the security and safety of all the peacekeepers in UNIFIL who are putting their lives at stake on a daily basis for the cause of peace.
