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Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), notably on efforts towards the achievement of a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and a long-term solution based on the principles and elements outlined in paragraph eight of the resolution. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the steps taken to implement resolution 1701 (2006) since my last quarterly report was issued on 14 March 2007 (S/2007/147).

2. This report is being issued as we approach the first anniversary of last summer's conflict between Hizbullah and Israel. On 12 July 2006, eight Israeli soldiers were killed and two soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, were abducted and are still being held by Hizbullah. This event precipitated Israeli military reprisals on the same day and Hizbullah rocket fire into northern Israel, igniting a conflict that ultimately led to the deaths of nearly 1,200 Lebanese and 160 Israelis, the destruction of much of Lebanon's infrastructure and severe damage to the economies of both countries involved. The present report highlights both continuing progress in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and areas of concern, which to date, have not led to the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution as envisioned in the resolution. I am encouraged by the significant deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and UNIFIL in the area south of the Litani River, whose activities are working to ensure that the area is free of any unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons and the continued absence of any positions other than those of the Lebanese Army (LAF) and UNIFIL along the Blue Line. This constitutes a strengthening of the security arrangements aimed at preventing the resumption of hostilities in the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River. I am also pleased to report that there remains an enduring commitment by the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

3. However, I am deeply concerned that Lebanon remains in the midst of a debilitating political crisis and faces ongoing attacks aimed at destabilizing and undermining its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. During the reporting period, the country witnessed the worst internal fighting since its 1975-1990 civil war, between militants from the Fatah el-Islam group and the Lebanese security forces; a series of bomb explosions in and around Beirut, the latest of which killed Mr. Walid Eido, a member of the Lebanese parliament, and 9 others on 13 June; as well as a bomb attack on 24 June against UNIFIL that killed six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent. In addition, the firing of Katuysha rockets from southern Lebanon into northern Israel on 17 June by unknown elements is the most serious breach of the cessation of hostilities since the end of the war. Such incidents pose a direct challenge to both the new security arrangements in southern Lebanon and to the stability of the country as a whole.

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4. Against this background, I am concerned that continued implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) may face repeated difficulties. Greater progress is necessary on key issues that are central to the achievement of a permanent ceasefire and a longer-term solution, such as the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and of the Lebanese prisoners, the enforcement of the arms embargo, the halting Israeli air violations of Lebanese sovereignty and the Shab'a Farms issue.

II. Attack against UNIFIL

5. As this report was being finalized, on 24 June, a Spanish battalion patrol was hit by an explosion on the main road between the towns of Marjayoun and Khiam. The initial investigation confirmed that the explosion was caused by a car bomb. Six UNIFIL personnel serving with the Spanish contingent were killed, and two others were injured. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

6. The Lebanese political leadership, including Prime Minister Siniora, condemned the attack and expressed condolences to UNIFIL and to the Governments of the nations concerned. Hizbullah also denounced the attack, stating that it only hurt the people of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon has established a high commission to investigate and a UNIFIL is also underway.

7. I am deeply saddened and condemn in the strongest possible terms this terrorist attack on soldiers who have come to Lebanon in the name of peace. I urge the Government of Lebanon to bring to justice those responsible as swiftly as possible.

8. In recent months, there have been a number of threats against the UN Mission from militant groups. UNIFIL has put in place a number of mitigation measures in order to ensure the safety and security of all military and civilian mission personnel and its installations. It has reinforced its installations throughout its area of operations south of the Litani River and in Beirut, and has implemented enhanced security procedures for all military and civilian mission personnel. Once the investigation into the 24 June attack is concluded, security arrangements will be further adjusted if and as necessary to mitigate the potential for future such incidents. At the same time, all measures will continue to ensure that mandated activities are conducted without hindrance, while taking due care of the prevailing security environment.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Respect for the Blue Line

9. The military and security situation in the UNIFIL area of operations has been generally stable since my report of 14 March 2007 (S/2007/147). However, in the most serious breach of the cessation of hostilities and violation of the Blue Line since the end of the conflict in 2006, three Katyusha rockets were launched from the area of El Aadeisse in south Lebanon on 17 June 2007. Despite very rudimentary launching mechanisms, two of these rockets impacted in the Israeli town of Kiryat Shemona, causing minor damage but

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claiming no casualties. The attack was carried out by unidentified perpetrators. An unknown group with the name of Jihadi Badr Brigades-Lebanon Branch claimed responsibility; however, their claim could not as yet be verified. Immediately after the attack occurred, Hizbullah denied any responsibility or knowledge of the attack and issued a press statement to this effect.

10. The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) quickly deployed to the area, along with units from UNIFIL, and deactivated a fourth rocket that had failed to fire. No suspects were found at the site.

11. Subsequent to the attack, the LAF deployed additional personnel in the area, established a number of new checkpoints, and detained over 200 persons for investigation. UNIFIL has also increased its patrolling activities in the area, working in close coordination with the LAF and the Force Commander, and maintaining open lines of communication with the army senior commanders on both sides. The Lebanese Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament and the LAF promptly issued statements strongly condemning the attack.

12. UNIFIL was also in close contact with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) immediately after the incident occurred to urge Israel to exercise maximum restraint. Israel has so far refrained from taking retaliatory action.

13. I would like to commend the LAF, the IDF and UNIFIL for the way in which they handled the incident. It shows that, with appropriate coordination and liaison arrangements in place, it is possible to prevent such incidents from escalating. However, the fact that as yet unidentified elements were able to execute this attack from southern Lebanon is deeply troubling and underlines the need to further strengthen security arrangements, which are being put in place by the LAF, together with UNIFIL.

14. Aside from this incident, the situation along the Blue Line remains tense and fragile. On a number of occasions, IDF and LAF patrols have aimed weapons at each other across the Blue Line. In each instance, UNIFIL has acted promptly to dispatch a patrol to the scene to calm the situation and prevent confrontation. A number of ground violations by both sides have also raised tensions. On 28 May, the IDF violated the Blue Line by approximately 60 meters in the vicinity of UN position 4-31 with a tank and earthworks machinery. IDF subsequently stated that the exact location of the Blue Line at this spot was unclear and that the violation occurred inadvertently. A number of minor violations have also occurred on the Lebanese side, predominantly by shepherds and hunters. On two occasions, individuals who crossed the Blue Line were detained by the IDF and released hours later. Inadvertent crossings are a particular concern in the Sheba'a Farms region where there is rough terrain and no Israeli technical fence. UNIFIL's Force Commander has urged both parties to act with restraint and refrain from activities that contribute to tension along the Line.

15. The ground violations underscore the importance of visibly marking the Blue Line in sensitive areas, particularly where there is a considerable distance between the Line and the

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Israeli technical fence. In my report of 14 March, I noted that both parties had orally agreed to UNIFIL's proposal to mark the Line. After further intensive discussions in tripartite meetings on the issue, the Government of Lebanon has officially accepted UNIFIL's proposed technical process for marking the Blue Line, while the Government of Israel has sought clarifications. I urge both parties to move forward expeditiously on this issue with UNIFIL, which, if fully implemented on the ground, would build trust, decrease tension and significantly contribute to the reduction in incidents and inadvertent violations of the Blue Line.

16. UNIFIL has reported a significant increase in Israeli air violations, through jet and unmanned aerial vehicle overflights of Lebanese territory. These violations occur on an almost daily basis frequently numbering between 15 and 20, and have even reached 32 overflights in a single day. The Government of Lebanon continues to protest the overflights as a serious violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). The Government of Israel maintains that they are a necessary security measure that will continue until its two abducted soldiers are released and the measures established in paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006) are implemented in full. Notwithstanding the essential requirement to fully implement all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006), Israeli overflights not only constitute repeated violations of that and other relevant Security Council resolutions and also undermine the credibility of both UNIFIL and the LAF in the eyes of the local population, and negatively affect efforts to stabilize the situation on the ground.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

17. UNIFIL's Force Commander continues to hold regular tripartite meetings with senior representatives of the LAF and the IDF, in which critical security issues are addressed. Steady progress has been made on a number of key areas through this forum, which is essential to the UN Force's efforts to foster stability and prevent incidents across the Blue Line.

18. I am pleased to report that liaison and coordination arrangements, referred to in my previous report, were accepted by both parties and came into force during the period under review following written notification of acceptance from the LAF and the IDF. These arrangements stipulate that both the LAF and the IDF must ensure that an Officer at the rank of General or his deputy can be contacted at all times by the UNIFIL Force Commander, so that any incidents can be quickly resolved before they escalate. As noted above, the benefits of having strong coordination and liaison arrangements became clear during the incident of 17 June where the Force Commander was able to establish and maintain a continuous exchange with senior level IDF and LAF officers. UNIFIL is in the process of establishing a hotline between the Force Commander and his counterparts in the LAF and IDF.

19. The IDF remains in control of the northern part of Ghajar village, north of the Blue Line inside Lebanese territory, although they do not maintain a permanent military presence. Discussions on the issue of temporary security arrangements for northern Ghajar

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continue in tripartite meetings, and both parties indicate that they are committed to reaching an agreement with UNIFIL, which would facilitate Israeli withdrawal from the area. However, the duration of the temporary security arrangements still remains a point of contention. The UNIFIL Force Commander is actively engaged with both sides in an attempt to overcome this obstacle and finalize the arrangements. I am concerned that further delay in resolving this issue may contribute to increasing tensions along the Blue Line. It should be recalled that, for as long as the IDF remains in northern Ghajar, Israel has yet to complete its withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006).

20. The existing planning and coordination mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army Command remains instrumental in coordinating activities on the ground. Collaboration between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army and Navy has been further strengthened through coordinated exercises and training initiatives during the current reporting period. LAF Liaison Officers are detached in the UNIFIL HQ's Joint Operation Centre and Naval Operation Centre, in both sector HQ and in all infantry battalions. While UNIFIL maintains two officers at IDF Northern Command headquarters in Zefat, agreement has yet to be reached between the Government of Israel and the United Nations on establishing a civilian-led integrated UNIFIL Liaison Office in Tel Aviv.

21. The Lebanese Army maintains four Infantry Brigades south of the Litani River, operating 145 positions. Efforts are underway to increase and fortify the 47 LAF observation towers and positions along the Blue Line. The Lebanese Army monitors and controls entry into the UNIFIL area of operations across the Litani River through permanent checkpoints and patrols. It has also requested UNIFIL's assistance building a military road parallel to the Blue Line in order to improve its monitoring capabilities. Construction of this road is contingent on the marking of the Blue Line.

22. UNIFIL continues to implement its mandate to assist the Lebanese Army in ensuring that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets, weapons, infrastructure or related materiel. To this end, UNIFIL carries out more than 400 patrols per day throughout its area of operations, night surveillance on suspected activities by armed elements, and operations in open areas. In addition, UNIFIL troops stop any individual if they have reason to suspect any activity in violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

23. Coordinated operations, undertaken by the Lebanese Army and UNIFIL during the period under review have led to the discovery of abandoned arms, ammunition, explosive devices, bunkers and related infrastructure. The most significant discoveries were an ammunition dump and 17 rockets in the vicinity of El Fardeis, a cave with 100 mortar bombs in the vicinity of Mazraat Islamiye, two rocket launchers in Rchaf, a cave containing mines, mortars and detonators in the Kafr Shouba area and a weapons and ammunitions cache containing an anti-tank recoilless gun with two rocket launchers and ammunition in the same general area. The LAF destroys or confiscates all arms and ammunition found south of the Litani River.

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24. With the exception of two very disturbing incidents that took place at the end of the reporting period - the 17 June rocket attack of Kiryat Shemona and the 24 June attack on UNIFIL - the UN Force neither discovered nor received reports of armed elements inside its area of operations, other than those within Palestinian refugee camps and local hunters. At the same time, the LAF and UNIFIL did not detect any illegal transfers of arms south of the Litani River. However, the two recent attacks, as well as the continuing weapons discoveries by UNIFIL and LAF, clearly indicate that there are still weapons in the UN Force's area of operations and persons prepared to use them. This underlines the importance of LAF and UNIFIL activities to ensure that this area becomes free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, which will require more time to achieve. UNIFIL and the LAF have very strict security controls in place, including a significant number of positions, LAF checkpoints and UNIFIL road and open area patrols. In addition, as a consequence of the two attacks, the LAF is now taking additional security steps to address the situation in any suspected areas and UNIFIL will support their efforts.

25. The Government of Israel continues to claim that Hizbullah is rebuilding its military capacity primarily north but also south of the Litani River. UNIFIL, in collaboration with the LAF, stands ready to immediately investigate any such claims or alleged violations of resolution 1701 (2006) once the necessary specific information and evidence is received. Hizbullah continues to have strong support among the local population and maintains a significant non-military presence. Suspected members have continued to closely monitor UNIFIL activities throughout the period under review, including through the taking of photographs and filming.

26. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force (MTF), in collaboration with the Lebanese Navy, continues to enhance control of Lebanese territorial waters to prevent entry into Lebanon of unauthorized arms or related materiel by sea. Since my last report, the MTF has hailed more than 3,000 ships. The identities of all vessels were checked and confirmed, and 25 suspicious vessels were inspected by Lebanese naval and customs officials on arrival in port. No attempts to smuggle weapons were reported. I am grateful to the Government of Germany for donating two naval vessels to the Lebanese Navy, which will represent a significant step in building its naval capacity and assisting Lebanon to assume increased responsibility for securing its sea boundaries.

27. I regret to report that there have been several occasions during the reporting period when actions by IDF personnel have endangered their own security and that of UN personnel. In an incident on 30 April, an IDF fast patrol boat approached a UNIFIL MTF frigate on a collision course at high speed and did not respond to the MTF frigate's radio communication. The frigate was only able to avoid collision by rapidly and significantly reducing speed. On two other occasions Israeli aircraft flew at low altitude over MTF frigates in contravention of established procedures. In a meeting between the MTF Commander and his Israeli Navy counterpart, the IDF reassured UNIFIL that they will adhere to the operational arrangements between the IDF and the UNIFIL MTF.

28. Relations between UNIFIL and the local population have continued to develop, especially through the work undertaken by the Force's Civilian-Military Cooperation units

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and Civil Affairs teams. The implementation of Quick Impact Projects is proving to be a critical instrument to assist local communities. The Force Commander has also initiated a series of meetings with community leaders throughout the mission area, which have further helped to build trust and confidence as well as broaden the understanding of UNIFIL's mandate within local communities. Nevertheless, UNIFIL patrols have faced a number of isolated stone throwing and other incidents, mainly by local youths. The Lebanese Army has taken a proactive role in preventing and addressing these incidents and in some cases has detained the perpetrators.

C. Disarming armed groups

29. A number of reports have indicated an increase in activities conducted by armed elements north of the Litani River, where the Lebanese authorities and LAF have sole security responsibility. Suspected Hizbullah armed elements are alleged to be constructing new facilities in the Bekaa valley, including command and control centres, rocket launching capabilities and conducting military training exercises. These reports have not been refuted by Hizbullah.

30. In a letter dated 12 June from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, the Government of Lebanon provided detailed information, collected by the Lebanese Army, relating to the activities of Palestinian armed elements and groups outside the Palestinian refugee camps based in Lebanon. A comprehensive update on the status of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias has also been provided in my latest semi-annual report and briefing on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) in May and earlier this month respectively.

31. Specifically, we have been informed by the Government of Lebanon that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah-Intifada have reinforced their posts throughout the country following the attacks launched by Fatah al-Islam against the LAF in northern Lebanon. The information provided details of PFLP-GC reinforcements in areas such as Jubayla and Ain el-Bayda outposts where about 100 members dressed in military uniforms similar to that of the Lebanese Army have been deployed. In the Qussaya outpost, the group has installed 8 rocket launchers (12 and 40 barrels) and directed them towards the Rayak airport. The information also outlines how Fatah-Intifada has reinforced its posts in Wadi al-Asswad, Balta, Helwa and Deir el-Achayer. Their number is estimated at about 500 men equipped with sophisticated weaponry, including rockets, mortars, antitank guns (106 mm recoilless gun, B10) and anti-aircraft guns.

32. It is widely believed in Lebanon, including by the Government, that the strengthening of Fatah-Intifada and PFLP-GC outposts could not have taken place without the tacit knowledge and support of the Syrian Government. The Prime Minister of Lebanon has recently stated publicly that these outposts have been reinforced with munitions, arms and fighters by the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has denied such assertions as misleading. It should be noted that the Lebanese national

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dialogue involving all major Lebanese political parties, which took place in April-May 2006, agreed that Palestinian armed groups outside the Palestinians camps should be disarmed within six months. I expect the support of the Syrian Government on this particular issue.

33. In addition, the Government of Lebanon provided us with information on a recent seizure of a truckload of Grad rockets, mortars, and ammunition for automatic rifles and machineguns. The truckload, which belonged to Hizbullah, was seized on 5 June 2007 at a Lebanese army checkpoint at Douriss near Baalbek in east Lebanon's Bekaa valley. According to the Government of Lebanon, the arms were being moved within the country. There seems to be an emerging consensus in Lebanon that the incident is similar to the one that took place on 8 February 2007, which was documented in my last 1701 report to Council.

34. These reports are disconcerting and a cause of great concern and constitute a clear violation of both the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) as well as resolution 1559 (2004).

35. With reference to paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006) and the issue of disarmament, I continue to believe that the disarmament of Hizbullah and other militia should take place through a Lebanese-led political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon in all its territory so that there will be no weapons of authority other than its own.

36. The Government of Lebanon maintains that the question of Hizbullah's arms and other militias remains open and in the center of the political debate. However, no progress on this issue has been made. The ongoing political crisis continues to prevent the parties from discussing national dialogue issues or making progress on the Government's Seven-Point Plan adopted on 27 July 2006.

D. Arms embargo

37. Further to the update I have provided in relation to possible breaches of the arms embargo in my fifth semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), I have received further disturbing information from the Government of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon has informed me that on 6 June 2007, four truck carriers, each carrying two vehicles mounted with 40-barrel rocket launchers (a total of eight rocket-launchers) were seen by the Lebanese Army heading from Al-Kafeer in the Syrian Arab Republic across the Syrian-Lebanese border to Idriss Fortnress and then on to a PFLP-GC outpost in Jabal al-Maaysara.

38. For its part, the Government of Israel continues to allege significant breaches of the arms embargo across the Lebanon-Syria border, which it states, pose a serious strategic threat to the security of Israel and its citizens. It has claimed that the transfer of sophisticated weaponry by Syria and Iran across the Lebanese-Syrian border, including long-range rockets (with a range of 250 miles), anti-tank and anti-aircraft defence systems,

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occurs on a weekly basis, enabling Hizbullah to rearm to the same levels as before last year's war or beyond. It has not provided any further specific evidence to back up these claims.

39. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has denied any involvement in effecting breaches of the arms embargo. In identical letters to me and the President of the Security Council dated 4 May 2007, it provided a table listing weapons and ammunition smuggled into Syria from Lebanon, which have been confiscated by the Syrian security forces during the period from 26 April 2005, the date of the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon until 4 May 2007. Through its identical letter to me and the President of the Security Council dated 11 May 2007, and subsequently, the Syrian authorities have informed me of their support for the meetings of the regional governors on either side of the Lebanese-Syrian border to agree measures to halt smuggling and unauthorised movements across the border. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has informed us that it has recently requested from European governments technical border assistance, which included the provision of equipment for the border and the training of Syrian border guards.

40. The Government of Lebanon has stated to me that it has a vital interest in controlling its borders to prevent the smuggling of arms, munitions and personnel into its territory. It has repeated its request that any information about illegal smuggling of arms or persons in the possession of any third country be shared with the Government of Lebanon directly if possible or, alternatively, through the United Nations. It has informed me that the Lebanese Army has maintained its positions along its border with Syria. In addition, the Government of Lebanon has informed me that the various security crises throughout the reporting period have placed a huge strain on the LAF, which is now called upon to perform such various but critical tasks as fighting militants in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, internal security, traditional territorial defence and anti-smuggling activities. In this context, the Government of Lebanon has made it clear that the control of its northern and eastern borders is a responsibility shared both by Syria and Lebanon as per paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006).

41. Pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 17 April 2007 encouraging me to establish an independent team to fully assess the monitoring of the Lebanon-Syria border and to report back before this report, I am pleased that the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team has completed its work and has now presented its report. In my view, this is a serious report, which provides a professional and detailed technical evaluation of the difficult situation along the entire Lebanon-Syrian border. I note in particular the recommendations to improve, urgently and longer-term, Lebanese capacities to secure the border regime along Lebanon's border with Syria. The report clearly shows that, in addition to the valuable assistance being provided by the German pilot project along the northern border and their proposals for Lebanese integrated border management, further international assistance is urgently required to enhance Lebanese capabilities and to ensure that there are no breaches of the arms embargo.

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E. Land mines and cluster bombs

42. In southern Lebanon, clean-up of the estimated one million unexploded cluster munitions continues. Since my last report to the Security Council, an additional fifty new cluster bomblet strike locations have been identified by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre - South Lebanon (MACC-SL). As of 31 May 2007, 904 cluster bomblet strike locations have been recorded, contaminating an area of up to 36.6 million square meters.

43. As a result of the joint efforts of the LAF, 22 UNIFIL teams, and 75 UN contracted and bilaterally funded clearance teams operating under the coordination of the UN MACC-SL, a total of 28% of the surface and 15% of the sub-surface of the 36.6 million square meters have been cleared, and 117,872 of an estimated one million unexploded cluster munitions have been neutralized.

44. While there has been a decrease in the number of casualty figures in recent months, there have been 22 additional incidents among civilians since my last report, with one person killed and 21 injured. Since the cessation of hostilities came into effect, a total of 203 civilians have been injured (180) or killed (23) as a result of cluster munitions. I regret to have to report that, despite a number of attempts by UN senior officials to obtain information regarding the firing data of cluster munitions utilized during last summer's conflict, Israel has yet to provide this critical data. I call on the Government of Israel once again to provide this information to the United Nations.

F. Abducted soldiers and prisoners

45. Despite major efforts spent by the facilitator and flexibility by Israel beyond the framework of UNSC-Resolution 1701, implementation of the resolution's humanitarian aspects has not yet been possible.

46. Controversial issues raised by Hizbullah require sustained and complicated efforts for reaching a solution. Progress is therefore slow but continues. The situation unfortunately is aggravated by Hizbullah's persistent refusal to provide a proof of life. Worries are thus increasing about the fate of the two soldiers. I share deeply the anxiety of the families and call again on Hizbullah to reconsider this posture which contradicts basic humanitarian values.

47. Despite difficulties, both sides request further UN facilitation in order to overcome the remaining obstacles. In this regard, Hizbullah expressed its hope that a compromise be found prior to the next report to the Council due in September 2007. Israel is still ready to show flexibility with regard to the Lebanese prisoners. Against this background, I still hope that a solution be found soon on the basis of moderation and strict restraint in demands in compliance with UNSC-Resolution 1701.

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G. Delineation of borders

48. My representatives and I have continued to stress to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Government of Lebanon the importance of the final determination of their common borders for peaceful coexistence and good neighborliness. Bilateral agreement on the borders would present a permanent solution to the issue of delineating Lebanon's international boundaries with Syria in fulfillment of resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has insisted, as stated in more detail in my semi-annual reports on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), that the demarcation of the borders is a bilateral matter. On the other hand, no movement has been reported by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on restarting the Syrian-Lebanese Border Committee, as was suggested by President Assad at his last meeting with me on 24 April 2007.

49. Specifically, as regards the Shab'a Farms, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, while agreeing with the Lebanese position in maintaining that the Shab'a Farms are Lebanese, has conveyed to me its view that a resolution of the issue would be possible only after a peace treaty with Israel has been concluded. I would encourage the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider this policy, which is in contradiction of resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). At the same time, I continue to investigate the cartographic, legal and political implications of the alternative path suggested by the Government of Lebanon in its Seven-Point Plan, namely placing the Shab'a Farms under United Nations jurisdiction until a boundary is permanently delimited.

50. I am pleased to report that the senior cartographer, based on the best available information, has made solid progress towards a provisional determination of the geographical extent of the Shab'a Farms area. The Government of Lebanon has submitted to us new and useful material. I hope the Council will understand the need to discuss his findings with the relevant parties next. Israel has indicated its willingness to agree to my request to enable the senior cartographer to visit the area in the next few weeks. I look forward to delivering a detailed report on the conclusions of his work and on our discussions with the relevant parties, including with the Government of Israel, the Government of Lebanon and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in my next report on the implementation of this resolution.

III. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

51. Since my last report, UNIFIL's strength has increased as planned. The total number of military personnel, as of 19 June 2007, now stands at 13,313. This number includes 11,113 UNIFIL ground troops deployed in two sectors, with headquarters in Tibnin and Marjayoun and 2,000 personnel serving in the MTF, in addition to 179 staff officers at Force Headquarters in Naqoura and 21 national support elements. UNIFIL is assisted in its tasks by 51 Military Observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). Twenty-nine staff officers serve with the Strategic Military Cell based at UN Headquarters. With the planned deployment of approximately 340 troops from South Korea in July, UNIFIL's strength will reach approximately 13,700 military personnel from

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thirty troop contributing countries. UNIFIL troops have reached a high level of operational readiness, which allows the Force to react promptly to incidents throughout its area of operations. The civilian component has also continued to strengthen across all components of the mission. As of 5 June 2007, UNIFIL civilian staff strength was 706 (254 international and 452 national staff).

52. The mission is carrying out an expansion and refurbishment programme of its Naqoura Headquarters to ensure adequate facilities for all personnel in full compliance with Minimum Operating Security Standard (MOSS) requirements. UNIFIL will also refurbish the Naqoura port that borders the Force Headquarters to provide improved maritime access to the Force, resulting in better security for UNIFIL in a crisis situation, as well as to support LAF and local civilian maritime activities.

IV. Observations

53. It is almost one year since hostilities erupted in southern Lebanon in July 2006. The swift and effective deployment of a significantly expanded peacekeeping force has helped to establish a new strategic military and security environment in southern Lebanon. I am grateful to the thirty troop contributing countries that make up the new UNIFIL. The speed with which they responded to resolution 1701 (2006) and the activities that their troops undertake on a daily basis have been critical in preventing a recurrence of hostilities across the Blue Line. At the same time, we must recognize the immense and historic contribution of the LAF in helping to stabilize the situation in southern Lebanon. Over the last ten months, the LAF and UNIFIL have developed a partnership that has achieved a number of key objectives within the Council's resolution and has helped to maintain the cessation of hostilities.

54. The 17 June rocket attack from southern Lebanon against Israel constitutes a serious breach of the cessation of hostilities. This attack did not come entirely as a surprise since hostile groups have publicly voiced their opposition to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In order to address this threat, it is important that all parties maintain their strong commitment and continue to show determination to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement and implement all provisions of the resolution.

55. As I have done in previous reports, I urge the international community to provide relevant, timely and necessary bilateral assistance and support to the LAF to help it implement its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). For the Lebanese Government to extend its authority and exercise full sovereignty, it is crucial that it has credible and legitimate armed forces capable of ensuring security and stability over all its territory. There is a risk that the current fighting in Nahr Al-Bared refugee camp and the volatile situation in other camps may lead to additional shortages of resources and could negatively affect the LAF's ability to carry out its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). While appreciating the considerable difficulties faced by the LAF at this current time, I appreciate the Government's pledge to maintain the army's high visibility and close coordination with UNIFIL in southern Lebanon. The rocket attack on 17 June, and the attack against UNIFIL

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one week later, only serves to underline the importance of maintaining the highest degree of vigilance.

56. I also appreciate the support of the Government of Israel and IDF to UNIFIL. In this connection, I note especially the words of appreciation expressed to me and other UN personnel by a number of senior Israeli political and military officials, and their acknowledgement of the new strategic realities created by the deployment of UNIFIL and the LAF in southern Lebanon. I welcome the decision of the Government of Israel not to retaliate following the rocket attack on 17 June. I regret, however, that the IDF continues with almost daily flights over Lebanese territory and, once again, call upon the Government of Israel to cease the air violations.

57. With reference to paragraph 6 of resolution 1701 (2006), I am pleased to report that the international community continued to provide assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon. The Stockholm conference, which focused on emergency assistance and rehabilitation, and more recently, through the Paris III process, Lebanon has received substantial international financial support. However, updated information related to donors' commitments and disbursement figures highlight the importance for all donors to fulfil their pledges of financial assistance and reconstruction programs.

58. As noted earlier, as well as in previous reports, Israel has yet to provide detailed firing data that would give the exact location, quantity and type of cluster munitions utilized during last summer's conflict. The provision of such information to UNIFIL would greatly assist the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in its efforts to clean up the estimated one million unexploded cluster munitions. While the LAF, UN, and bilaterally funded teams are making progress, it will take until 2008 to clear the estimated 36.6 million square meters contaminated by the cluster munitions. Continuing deaths and injuries to Lebanese civilians caused by these munitions, not to mention the loss of agricultural production in affected areas, only increases the local population's antagonism towards Israel. I again urge Israel to provide detailed data on its use of cluster munitions to the United Nations as soon as possible.

59. I am disturbed by the persistent reports pointing to breaches of the arms embargo along the Lebanon-Syria border. Such reports constitute a major impediment to the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). While a complete sealing of the border may not be possible, I am concerned that the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) report concludes that the Lebanon-Syria border is not sufficiently secure and that Lebanese capabilities are lacking. I also note the LIBAT report's observation that there already exists the potential to significantly improve the border security regime and that the Government of Lebanon could do more with existing capabilities. I would recommend that the Government of Lebanon implements the report's findings in full. Further to the recommendations of the LIBAT, I would again call upon member states and relevant regional organizations to provide the urgently needed technical assistance, training and equipment that the Government of Lebanon requires to strengthen the border security regime along its border

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with Syria and to ensure the full implementation of paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), including the arms embargo.

60. The Syrian Arab Republic, other regional states and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a particular responsibility to ensure that the provisions related to the arms embargo of resolution 1701 (2006) are fully respected. The Syrian Arab Republic, in particular, has a shared responsibility in controlling its borders with Lebanon and in implementing paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), including in safeguarding against breaches of the arms embargo. In this regard, I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to do more to control its border with Lebanon and look forward to specific proposals from the Syrian authorities in time for the next quarterly report of resolution 1701 (2006) due in September. I have taken note of the Syrian Arab Republic's expressed willingness to consider working with European Governments on improving border security. I welcome this development. I also welcome and would encourage, as suggested by the Government of Lebanon, the establishment of a mechanism also including the Government of Syria and the European Union or the United Nations that would aim to improve technical facilities and arrangements along Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic.

61. As I stated in my last report, border delineation, including in the Shab'a Farms area, remains a key issue in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In that regard, I am disappointed that no further progress has been made between the Government of Lebanon and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in determining their common borders. I call again on the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary steps with Lebanon to delineate their common border in accordance with resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). It should be recognized that joint Lebanese-Syrian boundary committees demonstrated good collaboration and agreement on boundary procedures during the 1960s. It is suggested that with the assistance of the United Nations a joint boundary commission could be re-established.

62. I would like to commend the senior cartographer on his work, to date, on developing an accurate territorial definition of the Shab'a Farms area. I believe the provisional determination of the geographical extent of the Shab'a Farms area based on the best information available, provides a good basis on which to move the issue forward. I would note the cooperation that the Government of Lebanon has given to the senior cartographer in his work and would urge Member States, particularly the Syrian Arab Republic to provide any relevant documentation in their possession and other assistance. In this regard, I am pleased that the Government of Israel has agreed to a visit by the senior cartographer to the Shab'a Farms area. I am hopeful that further discussions on the area, including on its territorial definition, with the Governments of Lebanon, Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic respectively will strengthen a diplomatic process aimed at resolving this key issue in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). Progress on this issue, however, cannot be separated from the principles and elements required for a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution identified in resolution 1701 (2006).

63. I am concerned by the activities of armed elements and groups and the challenges they pose for the stability and independence of Lebanon and for the implementation of

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resolution 1701 (2006). The appalling attack on 24 June against UNIFIL is only the latest example of the threat that they pose. I am very concerned for the safety and security of all UN presences based in Lebanon. Further assistance to the Government of Lebanon and its security forces is required to ensure that, as stated in its Seven-Point Plan, it can extend its authority over its territory through its legitimate armed forces and that there are no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese state.

64. As we move towards the one year anniversary of the hostilities that erupted last year, I regret that we have not been able to arrive at a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. I also regret that further progress has not been made on obtaining the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and on such issues such as halting Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace. However, I am hopeful that a long-term solution can be found if we, in particular, further consolidate the strategic change that has occurred in southern Lebanon; strengthen the security regime along Lebanon's border with Syria; and as we make further progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms. Above all, I would call on Lebanon, Israel and key states such as Syria and Iran, as well as the international community, to support the implementation of all aspects of resolution 1701 (2006). At a time of heightened regional instability and tension, resolution 1701 (2006) remains a vital element in helping to settle issues of critical importance to international peace and security. We must not lessen our commitment to this resolution's full implementation. At the same time, we must remain committed to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

65. As the Council is aware, UNIFIL's mandate will expire on 31 August 2007. On 25 June, the Lebanese Council of Ministers requested the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate. On the same day, during my meeting with Prime Minister Siniora in Paris, I received a letter requesting the Security Council extend UNIFIL's mandate for a further period of one year, without amendment. In this regard, I intend to submit a letter to the Council during the month of August requesting the Council to consider the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate.

66. In concluding, I want to pay tribute to all United Nations military and civilian personnel serving in these difficult circumstances in Lebanon. I want to express my heartfelt condolences to the Government of Spain and the families of the six peacekeepers killed last weekend. I would add that the terrorist attack against UNIFIL will not deter the United Nations from carrying out its Security Council-mandated activities. Rather it redoubles our commitment to ensuring that resolution 1701 (2006) is fully implemented by all parties, and that the larger United Nations goals of peace, stability and justice in the Middle East are achieved. In this connection, it will be critical at this time to maintain UNIFIL's full capacities to preserve stability in its area of operations south of the Litani River.

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