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DIVIDENDS *of Peace*

Cover design: Zeina Ezzeddine | Photo: Hanza Bazroun/UN Student

“UN peacekeeping is one of the international community’s most effective investments to support peace, security and prosperity. While peacekeeping carries a tragically high price in lives lost, it brings enormous returns in lives saved.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres

UN Photo/Pasqual G. Marcus



Message from the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Michael Beary

Economic dividends of peace

The economic dividends of 11 years of peace here in south Lebanon is the central theme chosen for this edition of *“Al-Janoub”*. It is, I believe, an appropriate theme to follow the special issue of the magazine that marked the 10th anniversary of the adaption of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

The infrastructure associated with those economic dividends is arguably the most visible sign of the benefits that peace can bring to the UNIFIL Area of Operations (AO) and its 450,000 residents. It represents a physical manifestation of what a permanent ceasefire can mean for the people of south Lebanon and provides inspiration for the Mission’s 10,500 peacekeepers as we strive to implement our mandate in conjunction with our colleagues and strategic partners in the Lebanese Armed Forces. Of course, it also demonstrates what potentially could be lost to the current and future generations of Lebanese, should there be a return to hostilities.

Readers will therefore get to explore the role of Lebanese entrepreneurs in the UNIFIL AO as well as hearing the views of the Lebanese Chamber of Commerce on the economic development of the south and the important role that UNIFIL has played in facilitating this development. The story of how the clearing of minefields has allowed farmers to return to their traditional land is featured, and in addition, we will get an opportunity to understand the economic perspective of local

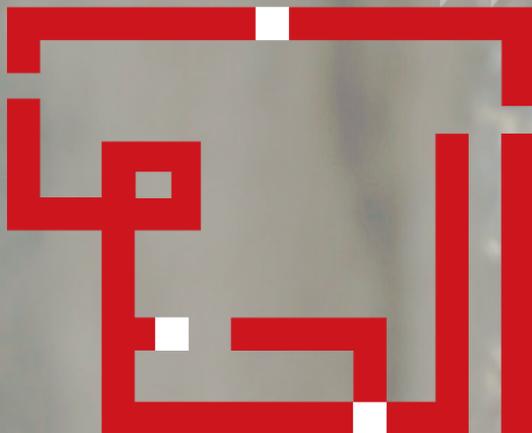
business people as well as students from the Lebanese International University in Tyre.

It is appropriate that the magazine will also pay tribute to our dear friend, the late Mr. Abdul Mohsen El Husseini, who, for so long ably led the Tyre Union of Municipalities and who contributed so much to its current prosperity and level of development. I hope our Uncle would have approved of the theme of this month’s publication.

Finally, since assuming my role of Head of Mission and Force Commander I have been struck by the continued loyalty of peacekeeping veterans who return to UNIFIL on a regular basis, to revisit old friends and share their experiences with the current generation of peacekeepers. More than anyone perhaps, they have witnessed the wonderful economic development that has transformed south Lebanon since the dark days of war and conflict. I hope they will get to enjoy our tribute to them when they access the digital edition of the magazine.

I thank the editorial staff for their work on this edition and I look forward to continuing to engage with you all in the coming months.

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UNIFIL donations to Lebanese security forces



In February, March and June 2017, UNIFIL donated a number of UN-owned vehicles and other assets to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the LAF Intelligence and the General Security (GS).

Among the vehicles and equipment donated to the LAF and the LAF Intelligence on 8 February included 62 vehicles, 18 engineering assets and 757 information technology assets. The support is in line with the UNSCR 1701 (2006) and 2305 (2016), which urged international support for the LAF for its capabilities development. Also on 28 June, UNIFIL handed over 366 UN assets worth nearly \$400,000 to the LAF and LAF Intel.

Separately, UNIFIL also donated 11 vehicles and 278 information technology assets to GS on 3 March. It was the sixth in a series of donations by UNIFIL to the security body since 2011.

Since the beginning of the Strategic Dialogue process in 2010, UNIFIL has donated various resources to the LAF including vehicles, prefabricated buildings, generators, sea containers and computer equipment worth more than \$2.8 million.

Speaking about the donation to the LAF, UNIFIL Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Beary said such donations are "a clear and important" demonstration of how UNIFIL is striving to increase the capacity of both the LAF and LAF Intel in south Lebanon.

"I sincerely hope that this equipment will facilitate an increase in the number of joint operations (with UNIFIL)... to maintain the cessation of hostilities and provide an environment that will allow the civilian population of south Lebanon to continue to live a normal life," he added.

UNIFIL CIMIC activities



UNIFIL's Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) projects address some of the most pressing needs of the host population and support local authorities while strengthening the links between UNIFIL and local communities. Be it fixing a road, providing medical, dental or veterinary assistance, educational courses or capacity-building, these projects are leaving their imprint on the lives of people in southern Lebanon.

Since 1 January to 31 May 2017, about 5,000 activities were carried out within UNIFIL's area of

operation in south Lebanon. Of them, 39 per cent were related to sanitary assistance, medical, dental and veterinary; 26 per cent were related to liaison, market patrols, road traffic management and confidence-building; and 20 per cent of the activities involved various language courses.

As of 23 June 2017, more than 40 projects are ongoing with the budget of about \$520,000. During 2016, UNIFIL and various battalions spent a total of \$3.56 million in 279 projects across UNIFIL's area of operations.

UNIFIL observes International Day of UN Peacekeepers



On 29 May 2017, UNIFIL observed the International Day of UN Peacekeepers in Naqoura, vowing to advance its partnership with Lebanese authorities and local leaders in maintaining a safe and stable environment in south Lebanon.

In his address to UNIFIL peacekeepers, acting Head of Mission Imran Riza paid tribute to all the peacekeepers "who serve selflessly, tirelessly and courageously" in UNIFIL.

"Your work is a source of pride for the UN every day of the year," said

Mr. Riza, adding, "As you know, peacekeeping is an investment in global peace, security, and prosperity. It is a flagship enterprise of the UN."

He also hailed the strong mutual respect and friendship between UNIFIL and the people of south

Lebanon as "extremely rewarding and motivating."

"In our efforts to keep the peace, we will continue to work closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Lebanese authorities - and to rely on the bond of friendship with the people of south Lebanon," said Mr. Riza.

The global theme of this year's observance is "Investing in Peace Around the World."

UNIFIL Deputy Force Commander Brig. Gen. Sandeep Singh Bajaj reviewed a Guard of Honour, and together with Mr. Riza and LAF Brig. Gen. Abbas Zamat, laid wreaths at the cenotaph in memory of the 325 UNIFIL peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in south Lebanon since the Mission's establishment in 1978.

Adnan Atieh (LIU student)



Prime Minister Hariri lauds UNIFIL's role

During his maiden visit to the UNIFIL Headquarters in Naqoura on 21 April 2017, Prime Minister Saad Hariri lauded UNIFIL's commitment and role working together with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to maintain stability along the Blue Line.

"I am here today to reaffirm my Government's commitment, with all its components, to Security Council Resolution 1701," he said. "I urge the UN Secretary-General to support efforts to secure, as soon as possible, a state of permanent ceasefire. This is long overdue, and my Government is committed to move this agenda forward."

The PM applauded UNIFIL and all the 40 countries contributing troops to the UN peacekeeping mission for "playing a key role in maintaining peace on our southern border."

He further requested the UN Secretary-General's good offices for the delineation of Lebanon's international borders especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain.

In his July 2017 report on the implementation of the resolution 1701, Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed PM Hariri's statement on pursuing a permanent ceasefire. "Given that it remains the best guarantee for long-term stability, I reiterate the readiness of the United Nations to further assist in that regard," he wrote in the report. "I encourage the parties to actively explore... tangible

confidence-building measures that can help sustain calm and gradually pave the way towards a permanent ceasefire."

UNIFIL head Maj. Gen. Michael Beary also commended the PM for reaffirming commitment to resolution 1701 and a permanent ceasefire.

"UNIFIL has been here for too many years," said the UNIFIL head. "We really need to get to a point where we are discussing permanent ceasefire and make sure that that term enters into the lexicon here and we move on to a real settlement."

The UNIFIL head also said that the cooperation between UNIFIL and LAF has been crucial for preserving stability along the Blue Line for more than a decade.

During the visit, undertaken together with Defense Minister Yaacoub Sarraf, LAF Commander General Joseph Aoun and a number of senior LAF officers and government officials, PM Hariri also toured the UNIFIL area of operations in south Lebanon and the Blue Line.

Tilak Pokharel
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office

“ I encourage the parties to actively explore... tangible confidence-building measures that can help sustain calm and gradually pave the way towards a permanent ceasefire. ”

Secretary-General
António Guterres

OBITUARY

Legacy of 'El Khal' stays on

"20 years for his family, 20 years for himself, and... 40 at the service of others!"

This is how Mohamed El Hussein, the son of late Abdel Mehsen El Hussein, who was the Mayor and President of the Union of Municipalities of Tyre until his passing on 25 February 2017, summed up his father's extraordinary life story.

Also known as "El Khal" (transl. "maternal uncle"), late Hussein was the metaphorical maternal uncle - someone who is affectionate and attentive to his nephews - to many residents of south Lebanon. Besides giving a sense of security and patronage to his people, he was also known for his kindness and affection.

To UNIFIL, which has operated in south Lebanon since 1978, late Hussein was the quintessence of unparalleled cooperation in maintaining peace and stability in the area.

Born in 1935 in Tyre, late Hussein spent the first 20 years of his life with his family with most of his teenage years spent assisting his father in the farms and agriculture. Like many south Lebanese, he emigrated to West Africa in 1955. He lived in Tyre ever since his return in 1978, the same year UNIFIL was deployed.

However, the journey back home was not a smooth sail. He endured decades of conflicts, civil war, occupation and insecurity. The undaunted Hussein always pressed on and prevailed. He was elected the Mayor of Tyre in 2001 and later on, President of the Union of Municipalities of Tyre. During the 2006 war, according to his son Mohamed, Mr. Hussein provided unremitting assistance to the people in need despite the intensity of the war. He was later honoured by the President of Lebanon for his "heroic" acts.

He has always been a close, dependable

and honest friend of UNIFIL. Some of the UNIFIL Force Commanders even nicknamed him "baba" (transl. "daddy") and "uncle." Nevertheless, to UNIFIL, he was an omnipresent bridge connecting to the grassroots people of his constituency. And he will be sorely missed.

For Albagir Adam, UNIFIL's Chief Civil Affairs Officer, "El Khal" Hussein was "UNIFIL's ambassador."

"He made use of all his energy and relations to reinforce trust and confidence between the local community and the UN peacekeepers and excelled in that because he believed in UNIFIL's role in development and sustainable peace in south Lebanon," says Mr. Adam.

Mr. Adam says "El Khal" was the pillar for the community and "the number one peace-builder" during hard times.

"He always remained a good channel to relay issues to the communities, to calm down tensions that he used to call 'passing clouds'," says Mr. Adam.

Being the "son of the diaspora," he knew the meaning of being away from home. Thus, "El Khal" always showed respect to UNIFIL peacekeepers. His legacy for his children and family was that of support and understanding towards UNIFIL blue berets. "These people have left their homes and countries to serve Lebanon; you should always make them feel home," he used to tell, according to his son Mohamed.

Following his passing, and in order to honour his unprecedented legacy, the Municipality of Tyre has proposed to name a street in Tyre as "El Khal, Sayyed Abdel Mehsen El Hussein Street."

Rest in peace "El Khal"!

Iman Ismail - Civil Affairs Office

Abdel Mehsen El Hussein



- Born in 1935 in Tyre, Lebanon.
- Married with 7 children and 11 grandchildren.
- Mayor of Tyre from 2001 to 2010.
- Founded the Union of Municipalities of Tyre in 2001-2002.
- President of the Union of Municipalities of Tyre from 2004 till his death on 25 February 2017.
- Founded the Committee for Development of Tyre in 1985.
- Founder of the Union of Farmers of the south.
- Created the "Tyre Natural Reserve" with the support of Speaker Nabih Berri in 1997.



Reaping economic potential in the south

For the last decade or so, south Lebanon has been enjoying an unprecedented calm, thanks to the strategic partnership between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), which was enhanced following the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1701 in 2006. The calm that followed helped to a great extent in the economic development that south Lebanon has been witnessing. *“Al-Janoub”* interviewed the **First Vice-Governor, Banque du Liban, Raed Charafeddine**, asking him about ways to encourage investments, and how things have changed in south Lebanon and the role of UNIFIL in this regard.

What drives people to invest in the south? What can be done to help the southerners stay in their land?

Mr. Charafeddine: Historically, south Lebanon, as an integral part of the eastern Mediterranean coast, has been one of the most vulnerable regions of Lebanon and the East. Yet, this vulnerability, which was manifested through a 22-year occupation and climaxed at the 33-day July war (2006), has been always seeded with vibrant social, political, and economic resilience and dynamism. The actual driver behind this very resilience, in Lebanon in general and specifically in its southern part, can be formulated by [Antonio] Gramsci’s saying “pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will”. This optimism is, in fact, based on tangible factors that make south Lebanon one of the most promising regions for local and foreign investment.

First, Lebanon in general, and south Lebanon in particular, are considered one of the few secure areas in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region since more than a decade, amid the swarming regional disputes. Second, the southern region of Lebanon is an averagely dense region in

population (more than 17 percent of the Lebanese population reside in the south), with high youth rates and vast land areas that await fruitful investment projects in all sectors. Hence, south Lebanon constitutes a rich target market and labour pool. Third, the diversified geographic and social structure of the south qualifies it to endorse diversified economic schemes and prospects that can encompass agricultural, industrial, services, and even high-tech and knowledge sectors. Fourth, the rich water resources in the south make it an attractive spot for water and alternative energy projects. Fifth, southerners are known for their vital contribution in the diasporic financial remittances, especially from African countries.

However, these investment opportunities need further remedial reform and structural transformation in order to polish its attractiveness and ensure its efficiency. These reform and transformation measures include, among others: establishing professional capacity building and training programmes for entrepreneurs and SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises); enhancing vocational education; focusing on diversified

economic development, encompassing agricultural, industrial, and services sectors on the basis of comparative advantage; enhancing the infrastructure, especially water and electricity; capitalizing on the abundance of water resources through implementing strict environmental policies and efficient water projects; seventh, the development of industrial parks, special economic zones (SEZs), and agricultural cooperatives.

How have things changed in south Lebanon in the last years due to the prevailing calm and the role of UNIFIL’s presence in this regard? Do you think this change is sustainable?

Mr. Charafeddine: As I have mentioned, the stability that has distinguished south Lebanon throughout the last decade, and to which the UNIFIL has a remarkable contribution, has been reflected positively on Lebanon as a whole, and on its southern scene in particular. Yet, this stability needs to be capitalized upon economically and financially.

In this regard, south Lebanon accounts for around 11 percent of the total bank branches operating in Lebanon. Moreover, the loans acquired in the south account



“ Stability that has distinguished south Lebanon throughout the last decade, and to which the UNIFIL has a remarkable contribution, has been reflected positively on Lebanon as a whole, and on its southern scene in particular. ”

for around 4.5 percent of the total loans offered by the Lebanese banking sector (around \$2.8 billion at beginning of 2017, compared to around \$525 million at end of 2006). This development in terms of access to finance reflects a significant progress, yet it signifies momentous potentials and opportunities for further financial inclusion.

Furthermore, the mere presence of more than 10,500 UNIFIL troops in the south constitutes an economic driver in terms of increasing internal-regional demand and creating job opportunities that benefit thousands of southern families.

Where does south Lebanon stand in terms of the overall economic development of Lebanon?

Mr. Charafeddine: Economic development critically involves diversification and structural transformation, that is, the continued, dynamic reallocation of resources from less productive to more productive sectors and activities, in both external trade as well as domestic sector diversification and the underlying dynamic process of structural transformation of production across sectors.

In this context, and based on the aforementioned characteristics of the southern economy, south Lebanon is certainly reaping its share from the initiatives launched by Banque Du Liban (BDL) on the national scale, the United Nations (UNDP Programme for Economic and Social Development in south Lebanon), and other programmes.

Some of the key features of BDL strategic initiatives include providing a financial scheme for commercial banks that enables them to invest in knowledge economy start-ups; encouraging banks to offer low-interest-rate credit; regulating micro-finance schemes; restructuring bad debts (specifically in the aftermath of the July-2006 war); promoting consumer protection tools; launching the financial inclusion strategy with a view to promote economic and financial wellbeing, as well as sustainable economic growth and financial stability.

Last but not least, south Lebanon is qualified to play a developmental role through its vibrant diaspora in Africa and elsewhere. The financial resources of this diaspora, once oriented and framed towards strategic and

efficient economic projects, can play a crucial role as an agent for development, linking the Lebanese economy with economic endeavours and financial markets abroad.

Joumana Sayegh
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office

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Market patrols support the local economy



In the antique historical city of Tyre - criss-crossed by a labyrinth of narrow streets and pathways - the onset of summer is usually a boon. The reason: it brings with it economic prosperity in the form of thousands of tourists.

One Saturday afternoon in May 2017, shop-owners and residents of the south Lebanese city witnessed an atypical group of people - that included the local Mayor, regional army commander and UNIFIL commander - walking together, passing by their stores, talking to them and buying stuff.

The goal was two-fold: to consolidate the relations between the local people and UNIFIL, and to encourage economic activities. With UNIFIL and LAF working together for peace in south Lebanon, Tyre has certainly become a must-see for tourists.

"This is a really important occasion today for UNIFIL," said the UNIFIL head, Major General Michael Beary, flanked by the President of the Tyre Union of Municipalities, Hassan Dbouk, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)'s south Litani Sector Commander Brigadier General Khalil Al Gemayel.

Major General Beary added that the aim of the "great tour" was "to ensure that the people of Tyre and UNIFIL remain very closely nestled together, that we are a community, we are a family and that we are here to keep the peace and to ensure that the people of Tyre can continue to enjoy peace."

Mr. Dbouk agreed and said it was like a "family tour."

"UNIFIL and LAF are doing big roles to provide stability which is very

essential for the economy of the city," he said.

Earlier in April 2017, the UNIFIL head had also joined local dignitaries in a market walk in the town of Bint Jbeil. After touring the local market and buying a number of items, he commented that he had "a very special experience."

UNIFIL peacekeepers - from both the sectors in the east and the west, and the Force Commander's Reserve - visit such markets across the Mission's area of operations in south Lebanon almost daily. In all, they carry out about 50 so called "market patrols" every week.

The President of the Union of Municipalities of Bint Jbeil, Atallah Sheayto, said the efforts of the local authorities and UNIFIL contribute to the "re-flourishing of [local] markets."

Tilak Pokharel
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office

Promoting arts



UN Photo/Pasqual G. Marcos

About twenty young actors poured onto the stage of the Hamra Theatre in Tyre. As they moved around the scene, each one paused to greet the audience with the same word, “Marhaba”. Kassem Istanbouli, the stage director and the founder of Istanbouli Theatre, explains, “Marhaba is greeting with peace. In this play every one of the youngsters is telling their story.”

This play was a culmination of a 2014 UNIFIL-capacity building activity. The support was given to Tyros Arts Association (TAA), a creative training organization for young actors, photographers, painters, filmmakers and martial arts enthusiasts. Since its founding TAA has nurtured and trained many young talents in south Lebanon. UNIFIL’s support provided the sound and lighting equipment, and facilitated intensive and structured training in the arts for 100 young people from ten schools across the region.

Batoul Al-Boussi, a student from Bint Jbeil, is one of these participants. To her, TAA is the only place where she could have learned about acting and participate in an artistic project in the south. Batoul added the training had strengthened her fellow students’ personalities and self-esteem.

UNIFIL Civil Affairs Officer, Marius Campean, said the project, “is a win-win situation” for the Tyros Association to build its teaching capacities, and for the students to enhance their artistic capacities.

With UNIFIL’s support, Mr. Istanbouli took the initiative to renovate a previously deserted theatre building in south Lebanon. He started with Hamra Theatre in Tyre in 2013, and since then has also renovated two other theatres in Nabatieh and Tyre. Enthusiastic young participants of Istanbouli Theatre even spent their personal savings and took bank loans in order to get the projects going.

It paid off. Since then the Tyre-based theatre has hosted a number of Arab and international film festivals, held well attended theatre performances as well as vibrant music festivals. According to Mr. Istanbouli, the goal is to steer a cultural and arts movement in south Lebanon both through highlighting the arts and through training young enthusiasts. He said, “this has created a big artistic movement in Tyre and will build a new generation that promotes culture in the south and a culture of life and peace”.

Ghifar Charafeddine
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office

Arqoub flourishes in festival season



Maarajen El Hebbariyeh FB page

Maarajen El Hebbariyeh FB page

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The area of Arqoub is located on the slope of Mount Hermon. With an altitude of 700 to 1,200 metres above sea level Arqoub enjoys moderate weather. The hills and its beautiful landscape bear forests of pine, olive, fig and oak trees.

However this beautiful landscape and its people have endured decades of wars and occupation, forcing many of its residents to seek refuge elsewhere, within Lebanon and abroad. The region’s economy has been hit hard with emigration of young people. Following the withdrawal of the Israeli forces in 2000, the situation started to gradually improve. After 2006, the area witnessed a tectonic shift towards prosperity.

Nowadays, summertime in the remote Arqoub towns brings with it the festival season, enticing back the Lebanese diaspora and other tourists, and creating a buzz of social activities and festivals.

In the southern town of Hibbariyeh the iconic and antique Roman Temple dominates the centre of the town. Every summer since 2000, the Temple’s spacious hall plays host to the annual “Hibbariyeh festival,” which was previously called “Olives Festival”. Besides reviving the traditional Lebanese “Zajal” song, the festival includes poetry recitals, folklore dances such as “Dabke,” theatre performances, as well as bustling stalls of

traditional food, “Saj” bread, “Manqoushe”, pottery, glass art and handcraft.

“This turns out to be a good chance for small businesses, co-ops, women’s initiatives, and handcraft groups to sell out their products,” explained Ahmad Barakat, the Mayor of Hibbariyeh.

A similar hive of activity is replicated in Kfar Hammam, where the town’s festivals – named “Pines Festival” and “Figs Festival” – have become an annual event boosting the local economy, and particularly benefitting small businesses. According to Kfar Hammam’s Mayor, Haitham Soweid, the festivals also enhance social cohesion between the town’s residents as well as their neighbours as residents from nearby villages pour in to the festival towns to visit.

“Last year, 1,500 people attended the Kfar Hammam festival,” said Mr. Soweid. “Any vendor setting up a stall – out of the 30 stalls in the festival – was able to make around 500,000 Lebanese Lira (\$334) in two days.”

In Shab’a, between 2009 and 2010, the town started hosting a variety of activities attracting thousands of visitors to the town. According to the town’s Deputy Mayor, Bassem Hashem, several social, sports and cultural activities are organized each year, drawing in tourists from the rest of the country and abroad.

UNIFIL peacekeepers, who operate in south Lebanon, attend these festivals and also extend their support to the coordinators. For instance, at the request of the local municipality, UNIFIL’s Indian Battalion (INDBATT) has provided tents, chairs, gifts to children, and a sound system to these festivals in Shab’a and Hibbariyeh.

INDBATT’s Public Information Officer, Major Siddharth Rawat, says the peacekeepers also contribute to the diversity of the festival by doing Indian cultural shows, dog shows, and setting up Indian food stalls. “This helps enhance cultural interaction (between the locals and UNIFIL peacekeepers),” says Major Rawat.

Hiba Monzer
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office



Did you know? Nepal

Sandwiched between two giant neighbours, China and India, the Republic of Nepal stands out in the world for its majestic Himalayas, gallant Gurkhas, spectacular natural splendour and rich cultural diversity. As the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, Nepal is a mecca for millions of Buddhists around the world. With 123 languages spoken by the country's roughly 29 million people living in the terraced area of 147,181 square kilometres, Nepal finds the true essence of its identity in diversity.

The tiny republic, also known as the Himalayan Shangri-La, boasts a stunning array of the Himalayas, hills, plain land and a web of glacial rivers – becoming a must-go destination for many tourists around the world. Mountaineering, trekking, water sports, paragliding, wildlife expeditions and cultural and religious voyages are some of the enchanting ventures a tourist can pursue in Nepal. In addition, agriculture, hydro projects and remittances are other sources of the country's economy. Politically, Nepal – as a former kingdom ruled by hereditary kings for about 250 years – promulgated its first ever "republic" Constitution in 2015, paving the way for stability, prosperity and economic development.

The Nepalese Army is one of the oldest institutions not only of Nepal but also in the world with its glorious history of 250 years. Anglo-Nepal war, World War I, World War II, Waziristan War and Afghan War are some of the main historic events in which the Nepalese soldiers demonstrated their valour along with sincerity and simplicity, which not only impressed and astonished the world but also earned the identity of "Gurkhas." Today, in addition to national defense, development, wildlife conservation and disaster management, UN Peacekeeping is one of the major tasks of the Nepalese Army. With the on-ground

deployment of 4,447 troops in 16 different UN peacekeeping operations, Nepal is the sixth largest troop-contributing country (TCC).

The Nepalese Army is also one of the oldest TCCs to Lebanon and UNIFIL. In 1958, for the first time five Nepalese peacekeepers were deployed under the UN Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL). That was also the beginning of Nepal's endeavour in world peace and security. Since then, the country has been a reliable partner of the UN Peacekeeping. In 1978, soon after UNIFIL's establishment, Nepalese peacekeepers were deployed in Al-Hinniyah. For 24 years, the contingent was deployed there to maintain peace. In 2002, as the Mission's mandate was reviewed and the strength downsized, the Nepalese Army too withdrew from UNIFIL. Nonetheless, Nepal's contribution continued in the form of staff officers and to Observer Group Lebanon (OGL).

Following the Hizbullah-Israel war in 2006, Nepalese contribution resumed. This time the contingent was deployed in Meis El Jabel and tasked to man 15 kilometers stretch

of 120-kilometre long Blue Line. Currently, about 900 Nepalese Army personal are serving in Lebanon, both with UNIFIL and OGL. Out of them, 25 are women – which makes up 21 per cent of Nepal's total women peacekeepers to UN peace operations worldwide. The organization has the policy to increase women's participation in the days ahead.

The Commanding Officer of the Nepalese Battalion (NEPBATT), Lieutenant Colonel Sanjaya Deuja, says that Nepalese peacekeepers will not leave any stone unturned to fulfill UNIFIL's mandate. "NEPBATT will always stand at the fore front to assist the Lebanese people and state institutions to maintain peace and stability in south Lebanon, while working tirelessly as directed by the Mission leadership for a permanent peace," says Lieutenant Colonel Deuja.

Major Shrijan Bahadur Malla
Chief Operation Officer, NEPBATT, UNIFIL



UN Photo/Lt. Col. Sanjaya Deuja



Farmers return to fields cleared of landmines

UN Photo/Mohammad Hanze

On normal situations, visiting one's agricultural land should be at the owner's discretion. But this is not the case for many farmers in the village of Blida in south Lebanon. The main reasons are mainly twofold: first, the hazards of unexploded mines buried under the surface; and second, the farmers may inadvertently cross the Line of Withdrawal or "Blue Line," the 120-km long line between Lebanon and Israel that passes through some of the Lebanese-owned fields.



UN Photo/Suzanne Badereddine

Since 2006, UNIFIL and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) have been working tirelessly, in support of the Lebanese authorities and institutions – primarily the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Lebanese Mine Action Centre – to clear the areas contaminated with unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and explosive remnants of war (ERWs). Since then, UNIFIL de-miners have cleared 4.7 million square metres of land contaminated with cluster munitions and 105,000 square metres contaminated with landmines, besides destroying some 36,000 explosive devices. This has allowed many farmers to return to their fields, including in Blida, bolstering economic activities.

The Mayor of Blida, Hassan Abed El Rassoul Hijazi, says that at the end of the 2006 war, the entire village was littered with cluster

bombs. "We could not move from one house to another because of the cluster bombs," says the Mayor, adding that the LAF mine experts and a non-governmental organization called "Ajyal al Salam" cleared the village.

He stresses the importance of clearing all minefields because "we are an agricultural country and 80 per cent of the people depend on agriculture, livestock and cattle." If a farmer cannot benefit from his land, he adds, "his conditions become very difficult."

Underscoring the importance of maintaining a healthy relationship with UNIFIL peacekeepers, Mr. Hijazi says the UN Mission's presence "has had a positive impact in several areas."

One of the farmers in the area, Hassan Mohammad Tarraf, gives credit to UNIFIL and LAF for clearing the areas of landlines

and facilitating access to his olive fields. Another farmer, Khalil Kaour, says there is still a large swathe of land infested with cluster bombs. "We have a land next to ours and we cannot go there because we are afraid of cluster bombs," says Mr. Kaour.

Lt. Col. Sanjaya Deuja, the Commanding Officer of UNIFIL's Nepalese Battalion which has the responsibility in the area, says UNIFIL peacekeepers work with local authorities and farmers round the clock. "We basically help them harvest, we help them collect their olives and other things, and we are just making them ease at work without violating the provisions of the UN Security Council resolution 1701," he says.

Suzanne Badereddine
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office



Haima Barzoun (LIU student)

Testament of prosperity

After the 2006 war between the Hizbullah and Israel, the United Nations' relentless efforts resulted in an agreement to end the hostilities.

Since the end of the war and to this day, south Lebanon is witnessing the safest and most stable period in the recent history. The calm prevailing in the south would not have been possible without the presence of UNIFIL peacekeepers and their efforts to ensure the smooth implementation of resolution 1701.

Since the first day of UNIFIL's arrival in the south, an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity has prevailed among the southerners who wholeheartedly welcomed the UN peacekeepers. This has helped create a new strategic environment in south Lebanon, reinforced by the close cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). The result of such cooperation was demonstrated by the flexibility in solving problems that could threaten security and calm in the south.

When anyone visits UNIFIL's area of operations, he/she quickly senses the effects of stability and security enjoyed by the people of the south which is considered one of the safest areas in the Middle East, in comparison with neighbouring countries that are experiencing civil wars.

The peace in the south has had positive effects on economic, security, social and humanitarian sectors. The stable security situation has helped restore the normal lives of the residents of the area who have been carrying on with their daily business in safety and peace.

The well-maintained security has also encouraged other fellow Lebanese to visit the south. It has also created conditions for the return of tourists after many decades.

On the other hand, Lebanese entrepreneurs have taken good advantage of the golden opportunity provided by the presence of UNIFIL. They have invested their money and resources in the tourism, economic and commercial sectors. As a result, the south witnessed a significant economic and urban boom, including the opening of a large number of commercial ventures and other tourist projects, resulting in an unprecedented commercial boom.

UNIFIL's mission was not only to bring peace and preserve it, but it also added a humanitarian dimension that left a great impact on the southern community which suffered from the remnants of the July war, such as landmines and cluster bombs that pursued their children to their small playgrounds and gardens. UNIFIL's demining work has been critical in keeping this danger away. It rushed to bring a number of engineering teams equipped with modern and sophisticated tools and machinery to detect and destroy landmines and cluster bombs. UNIFIL has also cleaned the roads, playgrounds and parks, and ensured a safe environment for children. This huge humanitarian operation also allowed the farmers to reclaim and use their lands.

The most significant aspect of the stability enjoyed by the residents in UNIFIL's area

of operation is that the owners of the land adjacent to the Blue Line, which otherwise were infested with landmines, reaped significant economic benefits. They also started to build modern houses and villas, while cultivating other parts with trees and vegetables.

UNIFIL's mission is not limited to maintaining calm and stability but it also expanded to include the development aspect, as the governments of various troop-contributing countries have allocated budgets for the implementation of various projects in the southern cities, towns and villages. Moreover, UNIFIL has provided employment to hundreds of Lebanese.

Because of UNIFIL's presence here, even the movement of international dignitaries to the south has taken an upward trend. The visits of heads of state, governments and diplomats from the Troop Contributing Countries to the south are no longer as rare as they used to be. This, if anything, shows the solid stability and security situation, as well as the strength of the relations between UNIFIL and the people of the south who have overcome fear and have become further steadfast in their land. Growing up with UNIFIL, they have also become more confident about their own future.

Faten Bazzi and Abeer Ajami

(The authors are bachelors-level journalism students at Lebanese International University (LIU), Tyre. This article was selected from six submissions from LIU students).

Economy in the south

The southern economy is resilient. It managed to overcome all challenges, despite the complicated and difficult conditions that south Lebanon has gone through as a result of the exceptional suffering that it has experienced, and continues to experience, because of the repeated conflicts on its soil. The southern citizenry - with their strength, determination and modest financial capabilities - have managed to stand firm in their land and revive the productive sectors, namely the agriculture, trade and industry.



South Lebanon, as is known, relies mainly on agriculture and trade. The existing industry is newly established and still emerging, struggling to make its way in the absence of security and lack of investment. The economic situation began to decline after the area's economy witnessed a golden age during the years from 1950 to 1960, a period that was characterized by the prosperity of all productive fields, especially the industrial ones, where the factories of shoes, textile and furniture, as well as dairy and cheese expanded. But, as a result of decades of conflict in the 1980s and the 1990s, all these establishments and factories in the south were destroyed, and their owners were forced to migrate and re-establish their commercial and industrial activity in other Lebanese areas or abroad.

The economy of the south today relies on the revival of traditional handicrafts and agricultural and commercial projects. In order to regain economic prosperity in the south, it is necessary to benefit from the expatriates, who make up between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of the total population of the southern villages and towns, and most of them have rich experiences and have successfully established large projects abroad. They also have investments in countries that witness conflicts.

The natural and human resources as well as the economic potentials and investment opportunities available in the south remain without value if they do not enjoy the conducive political and security climate necessary for any economic stability and growth. Based on this fact, we acknowledge that UNIFIL has played an important role in maintaining peace and security in the south.

The challenges facing the public and private sectors, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Saida and the south - as representative of all economic sectors, remain great in terms of exploiting human resources, economic potential and investment opportunities through the development of small and medium



UN Photo/Mohamad Haima

enterprises and supporting the establishment of enterprises in all productive sectors.

The Chamber assists all entrepreneurs in preparing feasibility studies for any project, and guides them on how to obtain soft loans for their projects. The Chamber also provides training to small and medium enterprises to develop and improve the production and marketing process in the local and foreign markets according to international quality standards.

At the level of the agricultural sector, it is necessary to develop this sector and to improve the ability of farmers to adopt alternative crops, along with traditional crops, and to adopt them in reclaimed land, because the revenue of these goods is multiplier. Such alternative crops can be imported easily, and the surplus can be used in the manufacture of several food products or cosmetics.

On the industrial level, the opportunity to re-develop the industrial investment in the south is still possible by working to find industrial zones that take into account the environmental conditions and the regulations in force and have an integrated set of infrastructure and sewage services, as well as fire brigade and public safety systems, and logistics area at low prices. This would lead

to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the stability of firms, attracting investments and promoting industries of all kinds.

With the revival of the agricultural and industrial sectors, this will positively affect the increase in the volume of investments in the commercial sector so as to address the need of raw materials for various production operations, to import the products, and to meet the needs of internal and external markets. The tourism sector will also be affected as a result of the need to host businessmen and trade delegations to conclude agreements, which activates the economic cycle.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that development in the context of peace, security and stability is our goal. We hope that cooperation with all local and international actors, including the United Nations, will help us reach this goal. Also, investment that is based on well-maintained security and political stability can alone create the appropriate climate for the advancement of Lebanon at various levels, and in the forefront the economic level.

Mohamad Saleh

(Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Sidon and the south).



Keeping a part of Lebanon in heart



The months of April and May saw multiple visits to UNIFIL Headquarters and south Lebanon by dozens of veterans from The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, who served with the Mission during its early years. The visits offered the opportunity for the Mission to pay tribute to their contribution to the peace and stability south Lebanon is enjoying now, and for the veterans to reflect back on the old days and see for themselves how the area has developed over the years.

Every summer, veterans keep coming to visit the areas and meet the population they served under the UN flag. Many of them have also contributed to the local economy through donations and social activities. For instance, some Dutch veterans recently donated a number of medical equipment to Hiram Hospital in Tyre and implemented a water project in Rechknany, according to Chris Laarhoven, who served with UNIFIL as an ambulance driver in 1978 and now heads a charity foundation called "Reunion with Lebanon."

Fred Gallefoss, a Norwegian veteran who served with UNIFIL in 1987-1988 as an APC (armed personnel carrier) driver, says he will keep coming back to Lebanon because the veterans have a strong connection with the people and the area.

"All the veterans, despite having served for (only) six months, are keeping a part of Lebanon in their hearts," he says, during a visit to the UNIFIL Headquarters in May. Like many peacekeepers now, Norwegian peacekeepers followed a six-month rotation cycle in UNIFIL.

Dutchman Honfo Puttin, who came to UNIFIL in the 1980s, says despite losing both hands while serving in the Mission he had a "good time" here. "The memories are still very good even though I lost my hands," he says.

Some veterans are mesmerized by the development here. "We have highway now from Beirut to Tyre; that time it was coastal road; a lot of buildings, big buildings, better infrastructure now," says Gerardus Johannes, a Dutch veteran who served with UNIFIL for one year from 1979 to 1980. For Petrus Johannes, "some economic activities over the past 30 years" stand out.

Dutchman Andre Matach is in awe of the development in south Lebanon. "There was nothing in the wadis (transl. "valleys")," he says. "Now we come here and just say 'wow.'" Swedish veteran Mona Sochston says it is nice to see that Lebanon is prospering: "I think it would be very nice to live here nowadays."

During an interaction with the returning veterans, UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Major General Michael Beary said they all made contribution to the peace the south Lebanese are enjoying now. Deputy Head of Mission Imran Riza said the veterans' own work and their colleagues' sacrifices have made south Lebanon a better place to live.

"For the people here to see you coming back regularly is such an important aspect of keeping south Lebanon and the experience of UNIFIL, your commitment to it, the services you have done alive and move obviously in the right direction," said Mr. Riza.



“The memories are still very good even though I lost my hands”

Dutchman Honfo Puttin

Tilak Pokharel
Strategic Communications and Public Information Office

National Recruitment in UNIFIL

As of 1 January 2017, UNIFIL National positions will be advertised electronically on the United Nations Careers Portal <http://careers.un.org>

When applying to a job opening, be sure to submit your application well before the deadline stated in the job opening.

All applications shall be in the Personal History Profile (PHP) format. You may create your PHP using the inspira web-based tool - <https://inspira.un.org>. Also, ensure that relevant supporting documents are attached in Inspira.

Once you apply to a job opening, your application will go through an automated pre-screening process. The process checks the information you entered in your application against the eligibility criteria established for that job opening.

Only candidates who meet the set criteria of the job opening will be shortlisted and contacted by the Human Resources Management Section to undergo an assessment and/or a competency-based interview.

Preference will be given to equally qualified women candidates.

UNIFIL does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process (application, interview meeting, processing, training or any other fees).

For more information please visit our website:
<http://unifil.unmissions.org/jobs>

UNIFIL: We Work With You

From joint police training to medical visits, this is a new TV/Web series highlighting UNIFIL's collaboration with Lebanese security forces and civic organizations to support local communities and maintain peace. Twice a month on NBN, OTV and YouTube.



Every two weeks a new 10-minute radio episode is aired in Arabic on: Al-Risala, Sawt El-Mada, Voice of Lebanon, Voice of People and Radio Delta.

Check unifil.unmissions.org to watch and read a weekly multimedia report on one of over 400 UNIFIL activities that happen every single day in south Lebanon.



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