



Security Council

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Letter dated 2 August 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my latest report to the Security Council concerning the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/392), I noted that I intended to submit a letter to the Council during the month of August requesting that it consider the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is due to expire on 31 August 2007. This followed receipt of a letter, dated 25 June, from the Prime Minister of Lebanon requesting such a renewal for a period of one year, without amendment (S/2007/396).

As I observed in my report, the swift and effective deployment of UNIFIL has helped to establish a new strategic military and security environment in southern Lebanon. The total number of military personnel, as at 24 July 2007, now stands at 13,633. That number includes 11,428 UNIFIL ground troops deployed in two sectors, and 2,000 personnel serving in the Maritime Task Force, in addition to 185 staff officers at UNIFIL headquarters and 20 national support elements. Since my last report, a contingent from the Republic of Korea has deployed to UNIFIL, ensuring that the Force is now approaching full strength. At the same time, the UNIFIL civilian component has continued to strengthen, and now numbers 748 (272 international and 476 national staff).

I am deeply grateful to the 30 troop-contributing countries that make up the UNIFIL land and maritime force for their ongoing commitment. That commitment, coupled with the development of a strong peacekeeping partnership with the Lebanese Armed Forces, has made possible the successful implementation of several key aspects of resolution 1701 (2006). However, as the UNIFIL mandate approaches its expiration date, recent events have tragically shown that much work remains to be done. The vicious attack perpetrated against UNIFIL on 24 June, in which six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent were killed, as well as the Katyusha rocket attack on Kiryat Shemona on 17 June, have highlighted the precarious security situation in the UNIFIL area of operations. The threat to the mission was again underlined on 16 July, when a UNIFIL military police vehicle of the Tanzanian contingent was attacked at the northern entrance to the UNIFIL area of operations, causing minor damage to the vehicle.

As I, and other senior United Nations officials, have repeatedly stated in the aftermath of the attacks against UNIFIL, the United Nations will not be deterred from implementing its Security Council-mandated activities. UNIFIL continues to carry out all these activities in its area of operations, as well as to facilitate



negotiations on critical issues between the parties, through the regular tripartite meetings.

At the same time, the attacks on UNIFIL have changed the security environment in which the mission operates in Lebanon. In an effort to enhance Force protection and civilian staff security, the mission will continue to strengthen its cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, and will also require the additional risk mitigation assets outlined by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, in his briefing to the Council on 18 July.

I would like to express my strong appreciation to the Force Commander, Major General Graziano, and to all the military and civilian personnel of UNIFIL, for the work they are carrying out in southern Lebanon in the service of peace.

Regarding the financial aspects related to UNIFIL, by its resolution 61/250 C of 29 June 2007, the General Assembly appropriated to the Special Account for UNIFIL the total amount of US\$ 748.2 million gross for the maintenance of the mission for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the mission beyond 31 August 2007, the cost of maintaining it will be limited to the amounts approved by the General Assembly.

As at 31 March 2007, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNIFIL Special Account amounted to \$142 million. At present, money owed to the Member States that contribute the troops who make up UNIFIL totals \$15.0 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs have been made for the periods ending 31 May 2007 and 31 December 2006, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule. I appeal to all Member States to pay their assessments promptly and in full to clear all remaining arrears.

With the above information in mind, and further to the receipt of the letter from the Prime Minister of Lebanon (S/2007/396), I recommend that the Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of 12 months, until 31 August 2008.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Council.

(Signed) **Ban Ki-moon**
