

**UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON
(UNIFIL)**

Naqoura,
11 October 2006

PRESS RELEASE

UNIFIL: Dealing with UXO deadly threat

Since the 14 August cessation of hostilities, the UNIFIL Chinese Battalion has surveyed over 140,000 sq. metres of areas suspected of having unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and cluster bomb units (CBUs) and destroyed over 3800 of these UXOs and CBUs. Additional de-mining activities are conducted by the French, Italian and Spanish battalions.

Most of the CBUs disposed since 14 August are from the Al Hinnayah area where many civilians reside. The Chinese de-miners try to interact as much as possible with the civilian population. *“I believe we are doing an important and dangerous job out there,”* said the **UNIFIL Spokesman Alexander Ivanko**, *“The civilians know we are doing something good for them.”*

The CBUs present a threat not only to civilians, but also to UNIFIL and Lebanese Army troops deployed in the South.

In his **Report of 12 September 2006 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701**, the **UN Secretary-General** said that *“While IDF has provided some maps to UNIFIL regarding cluster strikes, they are not specific enough to be of use to operators on the ground. I expect that Israel will provide further detailed information to UNIFIL regarding the exact location, quantity and type of cluster munitions utilized during the conflict. In addition to cluster munitions, unexploded bombs, rockets, mortars and other ordnance also litter the south and areas in the north and east of Lebanon.”*

UNIFIL de-mining experts are worried about the worsening weather during the winter months when the soil becomes softer because of the rain. The CBUs then might sink into the ground. *“This will make the job more dangerous since it becomes difficult to detect and clear the suspected contaminated areas. UNIFIL de-mining teams and UXO disposal units are trying to remove as many as they can before the winter season,”* said **Ivanko**.

For further information, Please contact Alexander Ivanko, UNIFIL Spokesman, at (+961) 70 910064.