



PIO/016e  
3 May 2007

## PRESS RELEASE

### UNIFIL Force Commander holds meeting with local authorities in the Tyre Caza

Tyre, Lebanon – The Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Major-General Claudio Graziano, today began the first in a series of meetings with local authorities in southern Lebanon.

Major-General Graziano met officials representing the municipal authorities in the Tyre caza. The meeting was attended by the members of Parliament from this region, representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and UNIFIL peacekeeping contingents deployed in the area, with the latter hailing from Italy, Ghana, France, Turkey, China and Portugal.

The Force Commander was welcomed at the meeting by the Mayor of Tyre, in his capacity as the head of the association of the municipalities in Tyre caza. In his opening remarks at the meeting, Major-General Graziano spoke about issues ranging from the security situation in southern Lebanon and UNIFIL's cooperation with the LAF, to UNIFIL's humanitarian efforts. A video of UNIFIL's activities was also shown and the Mayor of Tyre and Major-General Graziano exchanged commemorative wall plaques. Afterwards, the Force Commander fielded questions from the attendees.

Speaking at the end of the meeting, Major-General Graziano echoed his opening remarks.

"I consider the relationship between UNIFIL and the local communities a high priority," he said. "It is essential that these relations are characterised by trust, confidence and mutual respect. UNIFIL has traditionally had good relations with the communities and while many things about UNIFIL have changed since last summer – mandate, structure, size – UNIFIL remains committed to maintaining these relations and protecting and supporting the population in the south."

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