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PRESS RELEASE

UNIFIL's Quick Reaction Force Conducts Live Fire Training Exercise

Naqoura, Lebanon – The Field Artillery Group, part of the Quick Reaction Force of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), today carried out a major live fire training exercise near UNIFIL headquarters at Naqoura in southern Lebanon.

The aim of the exercise was to hone the skills and expertise of the battle group. This falls within the group's regular training schedule and the planning for the exercise began in March.

“The Quick Reaction Force's field artillery battle group was already highly trained to conduct fire missions in support of UNIFIL before being deployed to Lebanon,” Major Bertrand Taddei, an officer involved in the exercise, said. “However every professional soldier needs to regularly hone his skills. Training is of the utmost importance to guarantee the accuracy needed to avoid any collateral damage in the case of combat action.”

The cooperation of Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) for ensuring security, both at sea and on the ground, was of utmost importance for the smooth conduct of the exercise. In addition, high-ranking officers from the LAF's 1st and the 2nd Brigades as well as from the 65th Lebanese Artillery Battalion participated as observers.

A priority during the planning for the exercise included limiting any potential disturbance to the local population. To this end, the targets were located at sea in order to reduce noise in any inhabited area and the firing position was located between the coastal road to Naqoura and the shoreline, thus preventing any blockage of local traffic. In addition, the firing time period was kept to a minimum of just six hours from 12:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

In that six-hour period, the battle group fired 76 rounds of artillery at targets located off the coastline.

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