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PRESS RELEASE

UNIFIL Marks 62nd Anniversary of the Foundation of the United Nations

Naqoura, Lebanon – The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) today marked United Nations Day in a ceremony at its headquarters in southern Lebanon.

United Nations Day is held annually on this day to mark the founding of the United Nations with the entry into force of the United Nations Charter, which occurred on 24 October 1945.

In the flag-raising ceremony held at UNIFIL's cenotaph, UNIFIL's Force Commander, Major-General Claudio Graziano, delivered a speech before an audience that included representatives from the Lebanese government and armed forces, the diplomatic community, local mayors and community officials, and peacekeepers.

"*In the world of today, despite all the changes, the United Nations represents the best hope of achieving peace, security and development for mankind*," Major-General Graziano told the audience. He later added, "*For us in UNIFIL, the occasion is an opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to the noble cause of peace and stability in South Lebanon.*"

Major-General Graziano also paid tribute those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace around the world, in particular peacekeepers serving in Lebanon.

"*May God give strength and fortitude to the families of these gallant soldiers and civilians to bear the irreparable loss that they have suffered*," Major-General Graziano said. He also remembered the soldiers of Lebanese Armed Forces who recently lost their lives in their efforts to ensure peace and security in Lebanon.

Since 1978, when UNIFIL was established, 260 peacekeepers serving with the mission have lost their lives. Of these, ten have died since the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1701, which called for the expansion of UNIFIL, in August last year.

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