

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

Naqoura,
8 August 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Exchanges of fire continued in the past 24 hours, with a high intensity and throughout the UNIFIL area of operations. Hezbollah fired rockets in large numbers from various locations. The IDF continued shelling and aerial bombardment across the south.

Intensive air strikes and shelling were reported this morning in the eastern sector between the villages of Kafr Kila and Shaba, and in the area between Naqoura and Bayyadah/Mansuri along the Mediterranean coast. Israeli gunboats also shelled the coastal areas north of Naqoura.

The IDF has maintained their presence and continued to operate on Lebanese territory in different areas. It seems that the IDF has extended their presence in the general area of Ayta ash Shab, and intensive shelling and ground exchanges were reported around Dibil to the north during the night and this morning. There are reports this morning of sporadic ground exchanges in many areas: Bayyadah and Mansuri along the coast, Bint Jubayl and Aytarun in the central sector, Mays al Jabal, Markaba, Addaisseh, Kafr Kila, Hula, and Tayyabah in the central east sector. The IDF reinforced their presence in the general areas of Mhaibeb in the central sector.

There were two incidents of firing from the Israeli side close to a UNIFIL position in the area of El Meri, and one incident of firing close to a UNIFIL position by Hezbollah in the area of Hula yesterday. In another incident yesterday, one rocket missiles from an unknown source impacted in the vicinity of a UNIFIL position in the area of Hinniyah. This morning, Hezbollah fired rockets from the vicinity of the UN position in Tibnin, and the IAF carried out air strikes on the areas from which the fire originated. There were no injuries or damage to UNIFIL property. UNIFIL strongly protested all these incidents to the Lebanese and Israeli authorities respectively.

All UNIFIL positions remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. Fourteen UN positions, including the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, are currently located in the areas where the IDF operates inside Lebanese territory, and where intensive shelling and ground exchanges are taking place.

Following the reports of a number of civilian casualties in Hula yesterday afternoon, UNIFIL immediately dispatched a search and rescue team to the village. The team provided medical assistance to some fifteen civilians and evacuated five injured civilians to a nearby UNIFIL position. The team also reported the presence of the remains of five people. Around 175 civilians

from the village were evacuated, at their request, to the Hula educational center on the periphery of the village. The map coordinates of the building were communicated to the IDF and UN flags displayed prominently around it. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese authorities and Red Cross about the situation and about the request by the villagers to be evacuated.

In coordination with the Lebanese authorities, UNIFIL is still trying to ensure with the IDF the reopening of the road between Tyre and Beirut by putting up another provisional bridge in that area, especially for humanitarian purposes.

UNIFIL provided water to the village of Ibil as Saqi, and medical assistance to the internally displaced people in the village. A humanitarian convoy to distribute food provided by the French government and the Maronite Bishop of Tyre to the villages of the western sector could not proceed for the last two days due to denial of consent by the IDF.

The IDF handed over to UNIFIL two civilians from Al Jibbayn village at the Ras Naqoura crossing yesterday. This move was coordinated with the Lebanese authorities. UNIFIL handed the over to the Lebanese authorities.