

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

Naqoura,
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PRESS RELEASE

Heavy exchanges of fire continued in the past 24 hours throughout UNIFIL's area of operation. Hezbollah fired rockets in somewhat reduced numbers from various locations. The IDF continued shelling and aerial bombardment across the south.

The IDF has maintained their presence and continues to operate inside Lebanese territory in different areas. It seems that they attempted to advance from the general areas of Sarda and Deir Mimesh towards Khiyam in the eastern sector last night and this morning. Intensive ground exchanges were reported yesterday in the general area of Labouneh on the Mediterranean coast. Sporadic exchanges on the ground were reported in various locations, in particular in Tayyabah, Qantarah, and Markaba yesterday and this morning.

Israeli forces took control of the Lebanese Joint Security Force (JSF) Headquarters in Marjayoun on Thursday afternoon. At the request of the Lebanese government, UNIFIL dispatched 2 Armored Personnel Carriers to the JSF HQ in Marjayoun this morning to facilitate the withdrawal of the JSF and to escort them out of the town (approximately 350 troops, all ranks). Israeli forces informed UNIFIL that they agree to such a request. The Internal Security Forces (ISF) personnel in Marjayoun also joined the JSF for the relocation. It is reported that a significant number of local residents with civilian vehicles gathered this morning in the town with the intention of joining the JSF convoy and relocating to the north. However, it seems that all the roads leading from Marjayoun are destroyed and it is not possible to leave the area at this time.

One Katyusha rocket from the Hezbollah side impacted directly inside the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura yesterday evening, causing extensive material damage, and lightly wounding one French soldier. One artillery round from an unknown source impacted 10 meters from a UNIFIL position in the area of Hula last night. Hezbollah fired small arms at a UNIFIL APC moving on the coastal road some 5km north of Naqoura this morning, causing some damage on the vehicle, but no injuries. Hezbollah also fired from the vicinity of UN positions in Labouneh, Tibnin, Brashit and Haris. UNIFIL strongly protested all the incidents to the Lebanese and Israeli authorities respectively.

All UNIFIL positions remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. 19 UN positions, including the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, are

currently in the areas where the IDF operates inside Lebanese territory and where intensive shelling and ground exchanges are taking place.

UNIFIL's freedom of movement and the ability to re-supply positions and provide humanitarian assistance were denied by the IDF due to the intensive hostilities on the ground.

Attempts are being made today to re-supply nine UNIFIL forward positions of the Indian battalion in the eastern sector which are facing critical shortages of fuel. If UNIFIL is not able to re-supply these positions today, it may face the situation where it would be impossible to maintain these positions.

UNIFIL sent a medical and rescue team to the village of Haris in the central sector this morning. They provided medical assistance to 25 civilians wounded as a result of intensive shelling. Seven of them who sustained serious injuries were relocated to a UNIFIL position in the area of Tibnin. It is planned to transport them to the hospital in Tibnin today.

The IDF has not responded yet to the repeated requests by UNIFIL to reopen the road between Tyre and Beirut by putting up another provisional bridge over the Litani River.

A humanitarian convoy to distribute food to the villages in the western sector and other humanitarian activities planned by UNIFIL, could not proceed in the last five days due to the denial of consent by the IDF.

It was reported that a large number of inhabitants and internally displaced persons left the village of Ibil as Saqi yesterday, and relocated to the north.