

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

Naqoura,
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PRESS RELEASE

The military situation in the UNIFIL area of operation for the most part has remained unchanged in the past 24 hours. Exchanges of fire continued with same intensity. Hezbollah fired rockets in large numbers from various locations. The IDF continued intensive shelling and aerial bombardment across the south. Israeli gunboats also shelled the coastal areas north of Naqoura.

The IDF has maintained their presence and continued to operate inside Lebanese territory in different areas. It seems that the IDF advanced during last night towards the general area of Ghanduriyah in the central sector. Intensive shelling and ground exchanges in this area were reported this morning.

One member of the Ghanaian battalion with UNIFIL was wounded early this morning, when two artillery rounds from the Israeli side impacted directly inside a UNIFIL position in the area of Haris in the central sector. There were four other incidents of firing from the Israeli side close to UN positions in the areas of Hula, Addaisseh, Tibnin and Ghanduriyah, causing material damage, but no casualties. Hezbollah also fired rockets from the vicinity of UN positions in Tibnin and At Tiri. UNIFIL strongly protested all the incidents to the Israeli and Lebanese authorities respectively.

(Since the outbreak of hostilities, four military observers from OGL, one UNIFIL international staff member and his wife were killed, and five Ghanaian soldiers, three Indian soldiers, three Chinese soldiers, one French soldier and one OGL military observer were wounded as a result of firing.)

All UNIFIL positions remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. Eighteen 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 because of the lack of security clearance from the IDF and due to the intensive hostilities on the ground.

A re-supply convoy with fuel reached the Headquarters of the Indian Battalion in Ibil as Saqi yesterday. Attempts are being made today to re-supply nine forward positions of the Indian battalion in the eastern sector which are facing critical shortages of fuel.

At the request of the Lebanese government, UNIFIL was in contact with the IDF to facilitate the withdrawal of the Lebanese Joint Security Forces (JSF) from Marjayoun yesterday. Israeli forces informed UNIFIL that they agree to such a request. Yesterday afternoon, the JSF convoy (87 vehicles with around 350 troops, all ranks), which was joined by the Internal Security Forces (10 vehicles with around 40 troops) and around 100 civilian vehicles, left the town of Marjayoun. UNIFIL informed the IDF about the convoy and its planned route to Beirut through the west Beka'a valley. The convoy followed 2 UNIFIL APCs out of the town to Ibil as Saqi. It was reported that 365 additional civilian vehicles from Marjayoun joined the convoy in the area of Ibil as Saqi. Subsequently, the convoy departed from UNIFIL area of operations and continued north. At around 22.00 hours, the Lebanese authorities informed UNIFIL that the convoy came under Israeli air strikes in the general area of Kefraya in the west Beka'a, and a number of people were killed and wounded. UNIFIL conveyed this information to the IDF and asked them to immediately cease attacks on the convoy. At the request of the Lebanese authorities today, UNIFIL requested the IDF to give security clearance for the convoy to proceed towards Beirut.

UNIFIL sent a medical and rescue team to the village of Haris in the central sector yesterday. They evacuated 25 civilians (23 Lebanese, 1 Iraqi and 1 Tanzanian) to a UNIFIL position in the area of Tibnin. UNIFIL provided medical assistance to ten of them who were wounded as a result of intensive Israeli air strikes overnight. Two of them who sustained serious injuries were relocated to a UNIFIL hospital. It is planned to transport the remaining 23 to Tyre today.

UNIFIL position in the area of Duhayra provided medical assistance to three wounded Lebanese civilians (two women and one man) with multiple splinter injuries, and relocated them to the UNIFIL hospital in Naqoura.

The IDF handed over to UNIFIL three Lebanese civilians from Mays al Jabal and Bazuriya villages at the Ras Naqoura crossing yesterday. This move was coordinated with the Lebanese authorities. UNIFIL handed them over to the Lebanese authorities.

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 six days due to the denial of consent by the IDF.

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.