

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

Naqoura,
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PRESS RELEASE

Heavy exchanges of fire continued along the length of the Blue Line with increased intensity. Hezbollah continued to fire rockets from various locations in the south, and there was intensified shelling and aerial bombing of the south by the IDF. The continued hostilities are taking a heavy toll on the civilians caught in the cross fire, and on the civilian infrastructure.

Two IDF ground incursions inside Lebanese territory were reported today. In the early morning, six tanks, one bulldozer, and two graders moved into the area south of the village of Alma Ash Shab, close to the Mediterranean coast, and withdrew to the Israeli side after a couple of hours. Half an hour ago, around noon local time, three tanks entered the area southeast of Bint Jubayl in the central sector. Exchanges of fire were reported during both of these operations.

There were seven incidents of firing close to UN positions. Impacts of Israeli aerial bombardment detonated around 20 land mines in the immediate vicinity of a UNIFIL position south west of the village of Yarun, and caused an outbreak of fire. The troops were able to extinguish the fire before it reached the position. All UNIFIL positions in the area of operation are permanently occupied and maintained by the troops.

UNIFIL is still facing serious restrictions in its freedom of movement, and was able to carry out only a small number of logistic and humanitarian convoys yesterday. Some humanitarian and logistic convoys are planned for today, but the ability to move will depend on the situation on the ground.

The joint centers to coordinate humanitarian activities, set up by the Lebanese authorities and UNIFIL in Marjayoun, in the eastern sector, and in Tyre in the western sector, are now functional. Most of the requests received are for humanitarian escorts to relocate local civilians and the wounded and the dead. The ability to respond to these requests is seriously impeded by the ongoing hostilities. UNIFIL is in constant contact with the parties to ensure safe passage for the civilians in different areas, but the response to many of these requests was not forthcoming.

One UNIFIL staff member and his spouse are not accounted for since the Hosh area of Tyre, where he resides, was shelled by Israeli Air Force on Monday night. We have no confirmed information about his fate. UNIFIL dispatched a rescue engineering team to the location the same evening, but due to the destruction of the roads, they were not able to reach the location yet.

Arrangements are being made for the evacuation from the country of the dependents of UNIFIL staff located in Tyre. All UNIFIL staff members remain, and are not being evacuated.