

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

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PRESS RELEASE

Italian troops to deploy in Lebanon tomorrow

“I welcome this major contribution to UNIFIL,” says Major-General Pellegrini

On Saturday, 2 September 2006, the first large contingent of Italian troops will arrive in Tyre, Lebanon, joining UNIFIL. Some 880 officers and soldiers and 158 vehicles from the Navy San Marco Regiment and the Army Lagunari “Serenissima” Regiment will disembark on two beaches next to the Rest House starting 0900. They will then proceed to a staging camp located in the area of Jabal Marun (Burj Qallawiyah) where they will be briefed on their mission before being deployed to the Area of Operations.

This is the largest single deployment of additional troops to UNIFIL II since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that mandated an increase of UNIFIL to up to 15,000.

Major-General Alain Pellegrini, UNIFIL Force Commander, said: “I welcome this major contribution to UNIFIL from Italy. These troops have a challenging job ahead of them and I am fully confident that they are up to the task. I am well acquainted with the glorious history of the San Marco and Lagunari Regiments and all of us at UNIFIL are honored to serve with them here in South Lebanon”.

Background:

*The **San Marco Regiment** was formed in 1713. In 1915 it was redesigned as the "Marina Brigade" with an artillery and infantry regiment. In 1956, the San Marco Regiment was deactivated, but was reactivated in 1964. Within the past 20 years, the San Marco Regiment has participated in several missions, including: in Lebanon in 1982; in the Persian Gulf in 1987 and again during the Gulf War in 1991; in Somalia in 1992; in Albania in 1997; in East Timor in 1999-2000, and in Kosovo.*

*The **Lagunari Regiment**, which is the only amphibious asset of the Italian Army, is normally based in Venice. It takes its origins from "Fanti da mar", a Venetian unit formed in 1400. Composed of professional soldiers, the Regiment belongs to those units of the Italian Army which are specifically trained to be sent abroad either for operational or humanitarian tasks. The Regiment had been deployed in Bosnia and in Kosovo and conducted reconstruction work in Iraq during the last war.*