

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

Naqoura,
25 July 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Heavy exchanges of fire continued along the length of the Blue Line in the last 24 hours, with a major concentration in the western sector. Hezbollah fired rockets from various locations, and the IDF continued the shelling and aerial bombardment. Yesterday and during last night, the IDF moved significant reinforcements, including a number of tanks, armored personnel carriers, bulldozers and infantry, to the area of Marun Al Ras inside Lebanese territory. The IDF advanced from that area north toward Bint Jubayl, and south towards Yarun. Intensive fighting was reported at the outskirts of both Bint Jubayl and Yarun this morning. There are a number of civilians who are still stranded in these two towns and caught in the crossfire.

Four members of the Ghanaian battalion with UNIFIL were lightly injured yesterday evening, when a tank round from the Israeli side impacted inside their position south of Rmaich. They were evacuated to the UNIFIL hospital in Naqoura and their condition is stable. There was also extensive material damage to the position. There were six other incidents of firing close to UN positions from the Israeli side during the past 24 hours.

This morning, Hezbollah opened small arms fire at a UNIFIL convoy consisting of two armored personnel carriers (APC) on the road between Kunin and Bint Jubayl. There was some damage to the APCs, but no casualties, and the convoy was obliged to return to Kunin.

All UNIFIL positions in the area of operation remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. A number of positions were re-supplied yesterday, and some additional re-supply convoys are planned for today. A French ship arrived to the waters of Naqoura this morning, bringing a critical supply of water, fuel and food to UNIFIL. The ship will also evacuate a number of foreign nationals who were extricated from the border areas by UNIFIL today.

This morning, UNIFIL provided a humanitarian escort for foreign nationals from the villages of Aitaroun, Ramiyh, Bayit Lif, Haris and Dibil, to Tinbin and further to Tyre. Similar humanitarian convoys, intended for Yarun, Rmaich and Ayn Ibil, were unable to reach their destination.

UNIFIL is still facing serious restrictions in its freedom of movement due to the ongoing hostilities and the extensive destruction of roads and bridges throughout the area of operation. Yesterday, a UNIFIL engineering contingent from China managed to do some repairs on a key road artery

between Tyre and Naqoura, and the road is now usable for traffic. However, more road destruction was reported in various areas in the south.