



Security Council

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Identical letters dated 16 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you in advance of the upcoming consultations regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). It is imperative that the facts regarding the reality in southern Lebanon be accurately conveyed to the Security Council for it to assess the situation effectively and attain a comprehensive and credible understanding of the activities of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the restrictions that have been placed by Hezbollah on its freedom of movement and access.

Over the past months since the adoption of Security Council resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), Hezbollah, the Iranian proxy in Lebanon, has continued its undisturbed military entrenchment and presence in southern Lebanon throughout the UNIFIL area of operations, including along the Blue Line, in blatant violation of Security Council resolutions [1701 \(2006\)](#) and [1559 \(2004\)](#).

This dangerous situation poses a threat not only to Israel and its citizens, but also to the people of Lebanon, which Hezbollah uses as human shields to protect its arsenal of over 130,000 rockets and military infrastructure. Hezbollah conceals these military assets and operations and uses fictitious non-governmental organizations and legitimate international organizations as a front for its malign and illicit activities.

Hezbollah continues to operate a multitude of military installations and positions along the Blue Line. It routinely patrols the area, collects intelligence on Israel Defense Forces (IDF) activities and prepares for attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians. Moreover, Hezbollah systematically deprives UNIFIL of its ability to discharge its mandate by restricting its freedom of movement and labelling military areas as ostensible “private properties” in an effort to hide its activity in plain sight, assure the continuation of its military build-up and prevent UNIFIL from accessing locations used for military purposes.

During the reporting period covered in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) during the period from 17 June to 20 October 2020 ([S/2020/1110](#)), IDF recorded 293 reconnaissance patrols conducted by Hezbollah in proximity of the Blue Line. These patrols consisted of known individuals following familiar paths and routes in the terrain and equipped with high-end reconnaissance equipment, such as cameras with high-resolution zoom lenses and binoculars. Hezbollah operatives conducting these patrols are dressed in civilian attire and use civilian vehicles, but their identity is clear from their demeanour, equipment and actions. When confronted by UNIFIL personnel, Hezbollah does not hesitate to attack UNIFIL troops, confiscate their equipment and prevent them from patrolling and fulfilling their mandate.



In addition to these incidents, IDF recorded and reported during the same period 163 instances of armed individuals being present in southern Lebanon and 16 incidents of rock-throwing by Lebanese across the Blue Line towards Israeli territory.

Attached to the present letter is a map illustrating the precarious security situation in southern Lebanon due to Hezbollah activities in the heart of the UNIFIL area of operations (see annex). This map, which has been constructed solely on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), is an updated version of the one sent to the Security Council and the Secretary-General in my letter dated 25 August 2020.

The map includes the two most significant attacks conducted by Hezbollah against Israeli soldiers and positions in recent months:

1. On 27 July 2020, IDF thwarted an attack by a squad of armed Hezbollah militants who crossed the Blue Line in the Mount Dov area, infiltrating Israeli territory in an attempt to attack an IDF position.
2. On 25 August, Hezbollah militants opened fire on IDF located in the vicinity of the Israeli village of Manara.

Were it not for the restrained defensive response of IDF, these two incidents could easily have led to a renewal of large-scale hostilities between the parties. These incidents stand as proof of the volatile situation and the growing potential for miscalculation and escalation caused by Hezbollah's ongoing and open disregard of Security Council resolutions.

The map also illustrates locations in which the freedom of movement of UNIFIL was restricted, or its access altogether denied, on the basis of those locations noted in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) (S/2020/1110). The fact that some of these locations are mentioned in the report more than once clearly demonstrates that these attacks, acts of intimidation and restrictions on movement are not coincidental, but rather a part of a broader, premeditated and intentional strategy.

I would like to reiterate that Israel is not interested in escalation. However, Hezbollah's continued military build-up and activities in southern Lebanon carry the serious risk of escalation along Israel's northern border, which could lead to undesirable consequences and large-scale regional effects.

In the light of these facts, I would like to stress the need for an accurate reflection of the current situation in southern Lebanon to the members of the Security Council during consultations on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), in order to guarantee their informed discussion and action, as necessary.

I call upon the Security Council to demand concrete action from UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities to ensure that Hezbollah ceases its repeated and unceasing violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), which could have disastrous consequences for the region.

Likewise, I reiterate the need to provide UNIFIL with the means to implement its core mission and discharge its mandate effectively, including taking all action necessary to ensure that no armed groups other than the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL are operating in southern Lebanon.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gilad **Erdan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

