



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

Provisional

8610th meeting

Thursday, 29 August 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Ms. Wronecka (Poland)

Members:

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| Belgium | Mrs. Van Vlierberge |
| China | Mr. Zhang Dianbin |
| Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Ipo |
| Dominican Republic | Mr. Singer Weisinger |
| Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| France | Mrs. Gueguen |
| Germany | Mr. Schulz |
| Indonesia | Mr. Djani |
| Kuwait | Mr. Alotaibi |
| Peru | Mr. Ugarelli |
| Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| South Africa | Mr. Matjila |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Mr. Allen |
| United States of America | Mr. Cohen |

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 1 August 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/619)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 1 August 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/619)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Lebanon to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2019/690, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/619, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 August 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2485 (2019).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2485 (2019), illustrating the Security Council's collective support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), whose role is essential to preserving peace in a volatile regional context. As it does every year, France worked energetically to maintain this Council

unity. We thank all the members for their involvement in the negotiations and for their spirit of compromise.

UNIFIL is vital to stability in Lebanon and the region and must remain the guarantor of the cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel, in keeping with resolution 1701 (2006). We, members of the Council, are all guarantors of UNIFIL's credibility. It is important that UNIFIL remain a peacekeeping and dissuasive force seen as neutral by all the parties. It must remain a mediation tool in the service of conflict resolution.

Under the impetus of the Council, UNIFIL has made considerable efforts over the past two years to implement resolutions 2373 (2017) and 2433 (2018) — for example, by stepping up patrol operations on the ground, in close cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces. We wanted this momentum to continue this year on the occasion of the mandate renewal. We also wanted to reflect the concerns raised by several of the delegations, all the while maintaining consensus within the Council.

This new text clearly reiterates the need to guarantee UNIFIL's freedom of movement and security throughout its area of operation, in coordination with the Lebanese authorities. Protecting the integrity of UNIFIL's mandate contributes to the political stability and security of Lebanon and the region at a time when the balance is fragile. France repeats its attachment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. In the light of recent tensions, it is imperative that all parties show the utmost restraint and adhere to Security Council resolutions by refraining from any violation of the Blue Line. In the end, only the presence of the Lebanese State and of its armed and security forces will create the conditions for long-term stability in southern Lebanon and in Lebanese territorial waters. It was with this ultimate objective in mind that we this year again approached the mandate renewal.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2485 (2019), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for one year without amendment of the mandate or a reduction of forces. We thank France, the penholder, for its professionalism and constructive cooperation throughout the negotiations. This unanimous extension reflects the continued support of the Security Council for UNIFIL's mandate and our joint belief in UNIFIL's important and significant role, in close cooperation with the Lebanese Government

and army, for promoting security and stability in the country and the region.

The negotiations on the draft resolution coincided with worrisome developments on the ground, in particular the recent incident involving two Israeli drones in Beirut. We reiterate our condemnation of Israel's continued violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006), as well as its other repeated airspace violations, which have been condemned by the Secretary-General in all his consecutive reports on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The Security Council should send a stern message to compel Israel to stop such violations.

The recent escalation by Israel reaffirms the importance of UNIFIL's role in alleviating tensions and maintaining peace and security in south Lebanon. Preserving that important role is what led us to work together in order to maintain UNIFIL's mandate and show our unity in supporting it.

In conclusion, we thank UNIFIL troops for their efforts and sacrifices, as well as all contributing countries. We call once again on all parties to respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon as well as its right to take back the Sheba'a Farms, the Kfar Shuba Hills and the Lebanese part of Al-Ghajar village, which are occupied by Israel.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): The United States joined the consensus in support of today's renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We commend France for the cooperative spirit in which it led this process. I also want to express our deep appreciation to the troop-contributing countries for their ongoing sacrifices in support of UNIFIL's critical work.

We of course welcome the active approach that UNIFIL's leadership has taken to de-escalate tensions along the Blue Line and preserve the mission's vital access to it. The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to UNIFIL and to Lebanon's security, stability and sovereignty. We have a common interest in seeing UNIFIL succeed, but it continues to be prevented from fully implementing its mandate. We cannot continue to accept that status quo.

The implementation of the arms embargo under resolution 1701 (2006) remains a top priority for the United States. While some Council members did not want to include language that was too prescriptive in

this mandate renewal, in the coming year the Secretariat needs to take serious steps to build on the annex and increase the United Nations reporting on and ability to effectively monitor and verify the implementation of the arms embargo. As we made clear to the Council just a few weeks ago, we continue to see UNIFIL prevented from accessing areas of concern. Eight months after their discovery, UNIFIL still cannot access suspected Hizbullah tunnel sites on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line because Lebanese leaders have not directed their armed forces to investigate suspected sites with UNIFIL. In this renewal, we made serious efforts to address access issues. There was some progress, but we were unable to include a time frame for facilitating access, which is necessary for accountability. We must do more to ensure that UNIFIL has unimpeded, timely access to the entire Blue Line and to urge the Lebanese civilian leadership to address these concerns.

The fact that UNIFIL cannot access all of the areas within its area of operations leads us to believe that it is time to re-examine the troop strength and begin the process of putting the mission on a trajectory toward right-sizing. In the year ahead, we will be scrutinizing the ability of the mission to implement its mandate, and we hope that the United Nations will take the assessment of the continued relevance of UNIFIL's resources and options for mission efficiencies seriously.

We have all endorsed the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. One of those commitments is to pursue clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable mandates by the Security Council matched by appropriate resources. If UNIFIL is prevented from fully implementing its mission within the parameters of its current mandate, it is the Council's responsibility to adjust the mandate accordingly.

We look forward to working with the Council over the course of the year, but I must reiterate that we need to see serious progress and cannot, and will not, accept the status quo, moving forward.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): We welcome today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2485 (2019), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We want to explicitly thank France, as penholder, for the professional and constructive conduct of the negotiations. The extension of UNIFIL's mandate is proof of the Council's continuous and strong

support for the mission and its appreciation for its work. In the current regional context, the role of UNIFIL in preserving calm at the Blue Line and beyond cannot be overestimated. For all of us who want to see stability between Lebanon and Israel, investment in the mission is worthwhile. UNIFIL remains a crucial de-escalating element in the region that we must preserve, support and strengthen.

In that regard, we call on Lebanon and Israel to use the instruments of UNIFIL, in particular the communication channel through the Tripartite Mechanism, in order to find a way to de-escalate and reduce current tensions. We call on all sides to exercise restraint with regard to both action and rhetoric, respect the provisions of UNIFIL's mandate and avoid any action that violates resolution 1701 (2006) and threatens the stability between Lebanon and Israel.

Finally, we want to commend the valuable work of all peacekeepers on the ground under the leadership of Force Commander Del Col. It remains essential that UNIFIL be able to fully implement its mandate.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to thank France, as the penholder, for its hard work in facilitating the mandate renewal process. My delegation voted in favour of resolution 2485 (2019), primarily as a result of fully respecting and preserving the unity of the Council. We have always stated that the unity of the Council is of the utmost important.

Indonesia commends the dedication of all men and women serving under the Blue Flag in the various United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). For the past two decades, United Nations peacekeeping operations have proved to be highly adaptable. They have significantly contributed to the declining number of conflicts and have become flagship activities of the United Nations. Let that be clear.

For Indonesia, it is therefore unacceptable if the objective and activities of such missions, including those of UNIFIL, are to be undermined. Indonesia is concerned about the trend of the systemic approach in weakening the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is important to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations will always be collective efforts, in which all stakeholders of United Nations peacekeeping operations play an important role in those concerted efforts.

My delegation has repeatedly stressed the important and positive role of UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, in sustaining the cessation of hostilities, preventing new conflicts and assisting the Lebanese Government to ensure the return of its effective authority in the area.

As a troop-contributing country. Indonesia has always highlighted the importance of the professionalism of our peacekeepers in implementing their mandates on the ground. That includes engaging with the host country and local communities in order to assist the mission in ensuring that its activities are indeed effective in improving the lives of the people whom it is deployed to serve and protect.

Regarding the request to the Secretary-General to conduct and provide the Council with an assessment of UNIFIL's resources, my delegation would like to stress that such an assessment needs to be conducted in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders, particularly the troop-contributing countries. It is only logical that countries whose people participate in peacekeeping missions should be properly engaged. Clearly, the United Nations peacekeeping operation must be fully prepared, especially in the face of the changing and complex situation, as well as the increasingly dangerous security environment. However, it is also critical to ensure that the mission be given clear mandates, with the necessary equipment and resources.

Lastly, there are those who question the performance and effectiveness of the Blue Helmets in serving UNIFIL. I would like to say that such a view is not only demeaning but also disrespectful to the many peacekeepers who have sacrificed their lives serving humanity and peace, including the 314 peacekeepers who gave their lives serving UNIFIL and the world to date in 2019. That is the highest number of fatalities of United Nations peacekeepers in all United Nations missions.

I would like to be clear in saying that I hope that we have all made the right decision today. May the souls of those 314 peacekeepers rest in peace,

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2484 (2019), which demonstrates the Security Council's overall recognition of the important support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). It is conducive to maintaining stability in southern

Lebanon and facilitates the further implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

China recognizes the important contribution of UNIFIL in continuing to effectively implement its mandate and maintaining overall calm in its area of operations and regional stability. The Tripartite Mechanism is a good example of conflict-resolution through dialogue and consultation. We commend the great dedication of the troop-contributing countries and all peacekeeping personnel and hope that the safety of those personnel can be effectively guaranteed.

Currently, there are escalating tensions in the region, as well as frequent local conflicts. All parties should effectively respect Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. UNIFIL should communicate and consult closely with the countries concerned and focus on its core mandate by maintaining stability in the area of the Blue Line. It should urge Lebanon and Israel to adhere to the agreement on the cessation of hostilities and actively help the Lebanese Armed Forces to enhance its capacity-building and increase its deployment across the country.

China welcomes the practical measures taken by the Secretary-General to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UNIFIL and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, particularly regarding the management of UNIFIL's civilian resources. We hope that he will continue to push forward the process.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom continues to support a sovereign, stable Lebanon, governed and underpinned by legitimate State institutions. We recognize that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon makes a significant contribution to Lebanon's stability and security and we are pleased to renew its mandate for a further year. We reiterate the need for all parties to allow the mission to deliver its mandate in full. That is particularly pertinent at the present time.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the recent escalation between Israel and Hizbullah, and we condemn all violations resolution 1701 (2006). We strongly urge all parties to show restraint and to de-escalate. Conflict is in no one's interest.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Dominican Republic recognizes the work and important role performed by

the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in contributing to maintaining stability in Lebanon and the region. We therefore strongly support the renewal of its mandate for another year. We commend the work of France in coordinating the negotiations and the spirit of consensus in the Security Council on the renewal of the mandate in the light of the prevailing situation and competing national priorities.

We call on the parties to strengthen their commitment to complying fully with resolution 1701 (2006), exercise maximum restraint and avoid anything that may contribute to an escalation of tensions, thereby consolidating the recent period of relative calm into a permanent ceasefire that would contribute to regional stability. We highlight that UNIFIL's capacity to deter, prevent and reduce tensions remains crucial at this time, as does the support of the Lebanese Government in full exercise of its sovereignty and territorial control, while strengthening its capacities, abilities and presence.

As this is the final public meeting during Poland's presidency, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on the exemplary manner in which you have conducted the work of the Security Council throughout the month of August. You and your team have once again exhibited the highest standards of professionalism, transparency and excellence in discharging your sensitive responsibilities. We therefore express our thanks and admiration in the strongest possible terms.

The President: I thank the representative of the Dominican Republic for his very kind words.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning this meeting, which is the last scheduled meeting in the Chamber for the month of August, let me express, on behalf of the Polish Mission, our sincere appreciation and thanks to all the members of the Security Council for their continued support and cooperation during this very busy month. I also thank the States Members of the United Nations for their active participation in our meetings: they are always with us.

I would like to thank all members of Council members' teams, including the permanent representatives, deputy permanent representatives and political coordinators as well as the experts on the various issues we have discussed for their hard work and dedication.

We thank Director Hasmik Egian, James Sutterlin, who is with us today, and the professional Security Council Affairs Division team for their assistance, as well as the conference officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff.

I also thank the members of my team for their work, organization and dedication throughout our presidency.

I am grateful for their tireless efforts to fulfil this delicate task in the most efficient way possible.

I am now pleased to turn over the gavel to the Russian Federation and wish its team great success in September, which I am sure they will achieve. We offer them our full support and cooperation.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.