

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

Naqoura,  
21 July 2006

**PRESS RELEASE**

Heavy exchanges of fire continued along the length of the Blue Line in the last 24 hours, with somewhat reduced intensity in the eastern sector. Hezbollah fired rockets from various locations, and the IDF continued the shelling and aerial bombardment of the south. The IDF and Hezbollah are engaged in exchanges on the ground inside Lebanese territory in the area of Marun Al Ras in the central sector, and Marwahin in the western sector. The IDF is present in these two areas since 19 July. There were also intensive cross border exchanges in the area of Alma Ash Shab close to the Mediterranean cost yesterday evening.

There were seven incidents of firing close to UN positions during the past 24 hours, with three positions suffering direct hits from the Israeli side. Three artillery shells impacted on the building inside the patrol base of the Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) in the Marun Al Ras area, causing extensive damage to the buildings and vehicles, but with no casualties. Four artillery shells also hit this position a day earlier. There are 34 civilians from the village of Marun Al Ras inside the position. One artillery shell impacted inside the UNIFIL Headquarters compound in Naqoura yesterday evening, and one impacted inside a Ghanaian battalion position in the area of the village of Marwahin this morning. No casualties were reported, but there was material damage. UN equipment and vehicles were also damaged by splinters in the Ghanaian battalion position in the area of At Tiri in the central sector, and in the patrol base of the OGL in the Khiyam area in the eastern sector.

All UNIFIL position in the area of operation remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. UNIFIL is still facing serious restrictions in its freedom of movement due to the ongoing hostilities and extensive destruction of roads and bridges throughout the area of operation. UNIFIL was able to re-supply a number of its positions yesterday. All UN positions in the close proximity of the Blue Line are facing shortages of basic supplies, and our ability to re-supply them is vital. The re-supply of the forward positions along the Blue Line is planned for today.

UNIFIL provided humanitarian escort from Naqoura to Tyre for the local civilians. UNIFIL also carried out a medical evacuation from Naqoura to the hospital in Tyre of a child who was operated on in the UNIFIL hospital.

There are reports of concentration of local civilian population displaced from the border areas in towns further north in the area. At present, there are around 2500 in Kleyaa, over 1000 in Hasbaya, 1000 in Tibnin, some 700 in Ain Quenia, as well as in Marjayoun, El Mari, Rmeich, Bint Jubayil, Deir

Mimmes, and Ebl El Saqi. Some humanitarian convoys are planned for today, but the ability to move will depend on the situation on the ground.

Families of UNIFIL staff and a limited number of non-essential civilian staff located in Tyre were evacuated from the country yesterday to Cyprus by sea as part of the 950 persons boarded on the "Serenade" boat. All UNIFIL troops, military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, and essential civilian staff remain on duty.