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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION BULLETIN

LEBANON

UN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ASSASSINATION OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER RAFIQ HARIRI
AND UNHCR'S POST-CONFLICT POSITION PAPER

8 DECEMBER 2006

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1. Introduction

- 1.01 This Country of Origin Information Bulletin (COI Bulletin) has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, to identify information about the United Nations' investigation into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and the aftermath of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, obtained from a wide variety of recognised sources. It does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy.
- 1.02 This COI Bulletin has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum / human rights determination process.
- 1.03 The COI Bulletin is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.
- 1.04 This COI Bulletin is intended to cover major developments that have taken place in Lebanon since publication of the Lebanon COI Report in July 2006 and must be read in conjunction with that. It replaces the COI Bulletin on the Hezbollah-Israel conflict dated 31 August 2006.
- 1.05 This COI Bulletin and the accompanying source material are publicly disclosable. Where sources identified in the COI Bulletin are available in electronic form the relevant link has been included. The date that the relevant link was accessed in preparing the COI Bulletin is also included.
- 1.06 As noted above, the COI Bulletin is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the COI Bulletin, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. Bulletins do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text.
- 1.07 In producing this COI Bulletin, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this COI Bulletin or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

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2. Maps

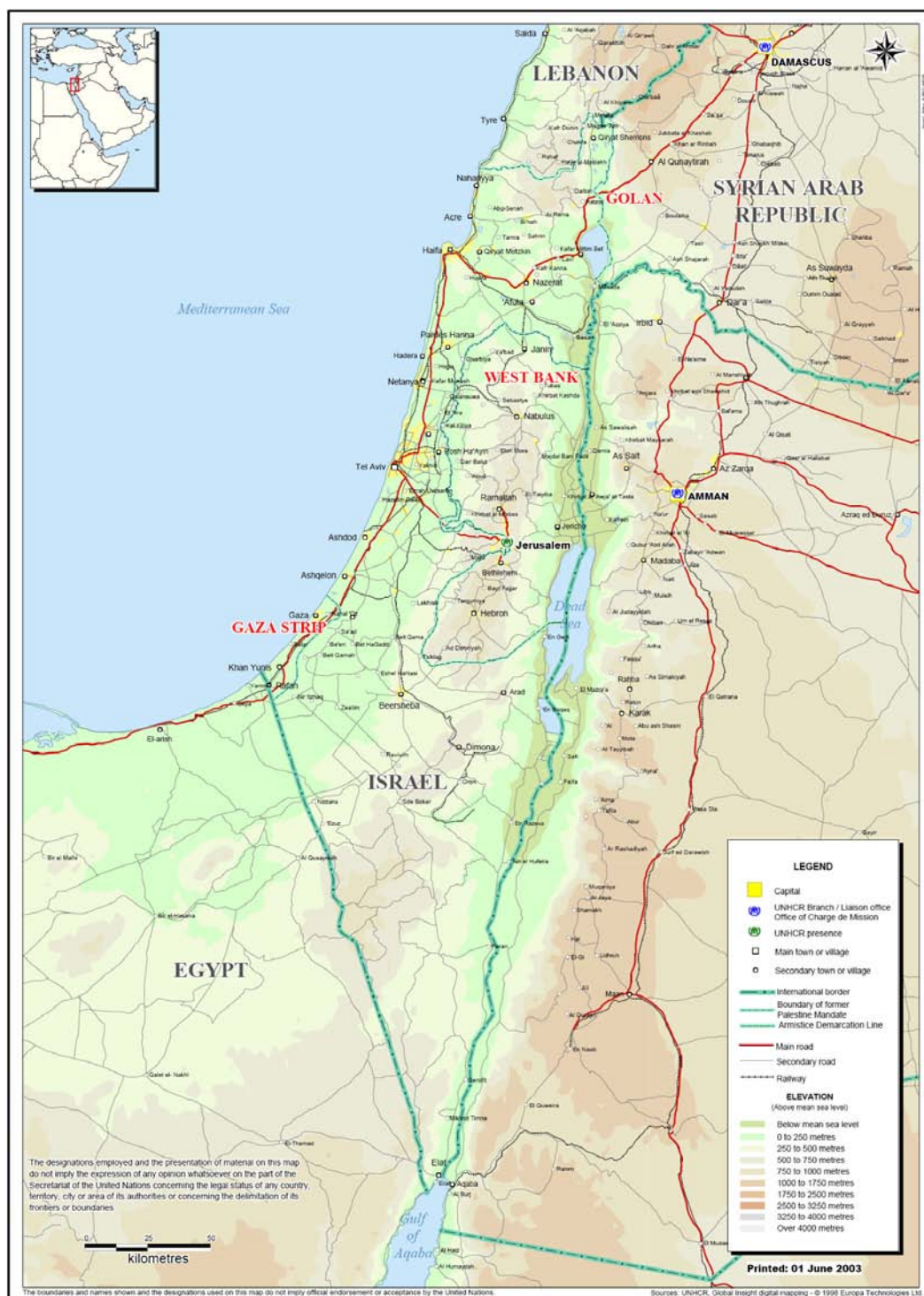
LEBANON

- 2.01 A United Nations (UN) map of Lebanon, bordered by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south. [9a]



ISRAEL

- 2.02 A UN map of Israel, bordered by Lebanon and Syria to the north, Jordan to the east and Egypt to the south. [9b]



See also: Section 4 – Map of UNIFIL Deployment, as of September 2006

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3. Assassination of Rafiq Hariri: 14 February 2005

THE ASSASSINATION AND ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

- 3.01 On 14 February 2005, the anti-Syrian former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was assassinated by a bomb blast in Beirut, which also killed over 20 and wounded more than 200 others. The assassination was swiftly condemned by the United Nations (UN), foreign governments and all political parties within Lebanon. It also led to major anti-Syrian protests as Syria – whose troops and intelligence forces were still in occupation of Lebanon at the time of the killing – was seen as being responsible for Hariri's death. (BBC, 14 February 2005, 14 March 2005; *The Daily Star (Lebanon)*, 15 & 22 February 2005, 16 March 2005) [1ap-1aq] [25a-c]
- 3.02 Despite counterdemonstrations by pro-Syrian groups – particularly Hezbollah which is known to be supported politically and, it is believed, militarily and logistically, by Syria – intense national and international pressure forced Syria to accede to the demands of UN Security Council resolution 1559, passed in September 2004. (BBC, 14 February 2005; *The Daily Star (Lebanon)*, 22 February 2005, 16 March 2005) This called for "... respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon; all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon; and the disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militia." (FCO Country Profile, last updated 19 September 2006) [BBC-1aq] [CNN-b] [DS[24] (Political system and history since Syrian withdrawal) [25b-25c]
- 3.03 The October 2005 UN report on the implementation of UN Resolution 1559 recorded that the latest verification mission had ascertained, to the best of its ability, that all Syrian troops had been completely withdrawn from Lebanese territory, although the status of the intelligence apparatus remained unclear. [12d] (para 12-13) Following the departure of Syrian armed forces, completed in April 2005:
- "Elections for the Lebanese National Assembly were held over four consecutive weekends beginning in Beirut on 29 May 2005 and finishing in northern Lebanon on 19 June 2005. This resulted in victory for the '14 March' coalition (named after the largest protest against the assassination of Hariri). Subsequently Fuad Siniora was appointed Prime Minister of a coalition government including most of the major parties." (FCO Country Profile, last updated 19 September 2006) [24] (Political system and history since Syrian withdrawal)
- 3.04 International Crisis Group's (ICG) December 2005 report 'Lebanon: Managing the Gathering Storm' remarked that "Significantly, the elections witnessed an intensification of sectarian polarisation at candidate and voter level. To some extent, this was inevitable in a country that allocates legislative seats and key official positions on the basis of confessional affiliation." [20c] (p3) Such polarisation reportedly only worsened when, on 12 July 2006, Hezbollah sparked a 34-day conflict with Israel, primarily fought on Lebanese soil, by abducting two Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers (see Section 4 for more detail). (BBC, 12 July 2006, 30 October 2006, 10, 13, 21 & 22 November 2006) [1a-1b, 1ab, 1ad-1ae, 1ai] In the face of Hezbollah's claims of victory in facing the Middle East's greatest military power and forcing a stalemate, some commentators suggested that not all Lebanese felt such elation and blamed Hezbollah for the unmitigated destruction by Israel of much of the country's infrastructure. (BBC, 22 September

2006, 10, 13 & 22 November 2006; ICG, Report N°59, 1 November 2006) [1y, 1ad-1ae, 1ai] [20d] (p7)

THE UN INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION COMMISSION

- 3.05 In April 2005, following the recommendations of an initial fact finding mission into the causes, circumstances and consequences of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, UN Security Council Resolution 1595 established an International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC) "... to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of this terrorist act, including to help identify its perpetrators, sponsors, organizers and accomplices". [11c] (p2) [12c]
- 3.06 Following the death of Rafiq Hariri on 14 February 2005, and the subsequent Syrian withdrawal, a number of prominent Lebanese figures were targeted in similar attacks. In June 2005, anti-Syrian journalist Sami Qasir and anti-Syrian politician George Hawi were both killed, whilst the following month pro-Syrian politician Elias Murr survived an attempt on his life. In September 2005, anti-Syrian journalist May Chidiac survived a bomb attack on her car that left her with severe injuries. Whilst in December 2005 leading Hezbollah member Hussein Assaf survived an attempt on his life but anti-Syrian journalist Gibran Tueni was killed the day after his return to Lebanon from Paris. (BBC, 19, 23 & 27 March 2005, 2 April 2005, 7 May 2005, 2 & 21 June 2005, 12 July 2005, 17 & 25 September 2005, 11 & 14 December 2005) [1ar-1bc]
- 3.07 At the request of the Lebanese Government, the UNIIC opened lines of enquiry into 14 other alleged terrorist attacks – including the six listed above – thought to potentially be linked to the death of Hariri. (UNIIC, 14 March 2006) [12f] Following is an overview of the 14 cases in chronological order:

Number	Date	Type of explosion	Area	Victims
1	1 October 2004	Car bomb	Dar El-Mraisseh locality, California Street, Beirut	Marwane Hamadeh and driver wounded, bodyguard killed
2	19 March 2005	Bomb	New-Jdeidh, northern suburb of Beirut	11 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
3	23 March 2005	Bomb	Altavista shopping centre, Kaslik, north of Beirut	3 persons killed, 7 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
4	26 March 2005	Bomb	Sid-El-Bouchria, north-east of Beirut	6 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
5	1 April 2005	Bomb	Plaza shopping centre, Broumana, east of Beirut	9 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
6	6 May 2005	Bomb	"Voice of Charity" radio station, Jounieh, north of Beirut	11 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars

7	2 June 2005	Victim's car	Ashrafieh locality, Beirut	Samir Kassir killed
8	21 June 2005	Victim's car	Wata Msaytbeh, Boustany Street, Beirut	George Hawi killed
9	12 July 2005	Car bomb	Naccache area, Beirut	Elias El-Murr and 2 other persons wounded and 1 person killed
10	22 July 2005	Bomb	Monot Street, Ashrafieh locality, Beirut	13 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
11	22 August 2005	Bomb	Zalka locality, near Promenade Hotel, north of Beirut	11 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
12	16 September 2005	Bomb	Naoum Libki Street, Ashrafieh locality, Beirut	1 person killed and 10 persons wounded and serious material damage to buildings and cars
13	25 September 2005	Victim's car	Ghadir locality, suburb of Beirut	May Chidiac seriously wounded
14	12 December 2005	Car bomb	Mkalles, north of Beirut	Gebran Tueni and 2 other persons killed

[12f] (p13)

- 3.08 The UNIIIC had, at time of writing, produced five reports – in October and December 2005, and March, June and September 2006 – the former two when under the lead of Detlev Mehlis, and the latter three under Serge Brammertz. [12d-12h] The findings of the reports to date, whilst not detailed, do indicate that the UNIIIC strongly suspects the involvement of high level Syrian security and intelligence officials, and their Lebanese counterparts. [12d-12h] The reports by Mehlis recorded a distinct lack of cooperation from the Syrian authorities but Brammertz indicated that relations between Damascus and the UNIIIC had improved. [12d-12h] Brammertz also reported positively on the progress of his investigation into the primary evidence concerning Hariri's assassination but was less effusive concerning 14 other alleged terrorist attacks that he had been tasked with opening in an effort to uncover any possible links with Hariri's death. [12f-12h]

THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL

- 3.09 On 15 November 2006, the UN Secretary General wrote a letter to the UN Security Council outlining his proposals for a Special Tribunal that would try those suspected of the murder of Rafiq Hariri, in which he states:

"On 10 November 2006, I transmitted to the Prime Minister of Lebanon the draft agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Lebanon on the establishment of a special tribunal for Lebanon, to which was annexed a draft statute for such a tribunal. By his letter to me of 13 November 2006, the Prime Minister informed me that the Lebanese Council of Ministers had agreed in its session of that date to the draft and looked forward to the completion of the

remaining steps leading to the establishment of the tribunal. By a note verbale dated 14 November 2006, the Permanent Mission of Lebanon forwarded to me a copy of observations made by the President of the Lebanese Republic, including a challenge to the decision of the Council of Ministers. The negotiated instruments are now submitted to the Security Council for its consideration.”
[12i] (p14)

- 3.10 In the course of reaching a decision on the approval of the Special Tribunal, the Government of Lebanon faced a major political obstacle when six pro-Syrian (five Shia and one Christian) Cabinet Ministers resigned, followed by accusations of unconstitutionality by pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud when the formation of the Tribunal was agreed in the absence of those Ministers who had resigned. (BBC, 10, 13 & 14 November 2006; CNN, 1 & 13 November 2006; IRIN, 29 September 2006; Al-Jazeera, 14, 17 & 22 November 2006) [1ad-1af] [2g-2h] [3h] [4f-4g]

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ASSASSINATION OF PIERRE GEMAYEL: 21 NOVEMBER 2006

- 3.11 Pierre Gemayel, Minister of Industry, was shot dead on 21 November 2006 by unknown gunmen as he drove through a Christian district of Beirut. Gemayel – whose grandfather founded the right-wing Maronite Christian Phalange Party – was staunchly anti-Syrian thus the finger of blame has automatically been pointed again at Syria, as seen at the demonstrations that followed his death and the message from mourners at his funeral. (BBC, 21-25 November 2006; CNN, 1, 13, 21-23 November 2006; IRIN, 22 November 2006) [1ag-1al, 1an] [2g-2k] [3i]
- 3.12 The United States Ambassador suggested that the killing of Gemayel may be the first shot in a coup attempt, a move the US Government claims was being contemplated by Syria and Iran. (BBC, 25 November 2006; CNN, 1 & 21 November 2006; *Al-Jazeera*, 22 November 2006) [1al] [2g, 2i] [4h] However, other commentators asserted that Gemayel's assassination did not serve Damascus's purposes but only piled further pressure on President Bashar al-Assad's regime. (BBC, 24 November 2006) [1ak] On 25 November 2006, BBC Correspondent Kim Ghattas in Beirut asked:

“So who did it? Was it the Syrians? Or the Americans, the Israelis, al-Qaeda, political rivals, disgruntled businessmen?

“Who knows?

“But as I drove back into Beirut from Damascus that evening [21 November 2006], with tyres burning at street corners and the army deploying troops with armoured personnel carriers, I felt that the killing may have crystallised the divisions between the rival camps to a point of no return.

“It feels like showdown time in Lebanon - winner takes all.

“And the Lebanese can only hope that the final battle will be a political one.” [1an]

OBSTACLES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL

- 3.13 Despite the tragic death of Gemayel – an act condemned by the UN, foreign governments, and all political parties within Lebanon – and the threats of pro-Syrian Hezbollah and Amal to stage a mass demonstration in support of their claimed right to a controlling minority of Cabinet Ministers, the decision by the Cabinet to approve the Special Tribunal endured and the Government, though only two resignations or deaths away from collapsing, remained in place at the time of writing. (BBC, 21-25 November 2006; CNN, 1, 13, 21 & 23 November 2006; IRIN, 22 November 2006; *Al-Jazeera*, 24-25 November 2006; UN News, 21-22 November 2006) [1ag-1an] [2g-2k] [3i] [4i-4k] [10e-10g]
- 3.14 Nevertheless, President Emile Lahoud was reportedly intending to block the approval of the Tribunal, citing the lack of Shia representation in the cabinet following the recent resignations. “Critics say Mr Lahoud and other pro-Syrian politicians are trying to prevent the Hariri tribunal from going ahead because it might embarrass them and their Syrian backers – accusations they deny. He [Lahoud] said he was in favour of a just tribunal to try the culprits, but he described the current project as highly politicised.” (BBC, 28 November 2006) [1ao]
- 3.15 A protest compromising Hezbollah, Amal and Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) supporters commenced on 1 December 2006 in Beirut. Following a march through the streets, the protesters began a sit-in protest outside the Government’s offices and surrounding streets, which continued at time of writing. Hezbollah leaders also stated that they were considering an escalation to their peaceful protest against the Government, which they claimed was unconstitutional as it no longer represented Lebanese Shia (see [paragraph 3.10](#)). (BBC, 1-2 December 2006; CNN, 1-3 December 2006) [1bd-1bf] [2n-2o] Small clashes between Shias and Sunnis have occurred since the protest began and some media outlets have written of their concern of civil war but, although a number of people have been injured and one Shia man killed, by and large the continuing protest remained non-violent. (BBC, 4-5 December 2006; CNN, 3-5 December 2006; *Al-Jazeera*, 4-6 December 2006; *The Daily Star (Lebanon)*, 6 December 2006) [1bg-1bh] [2p-2r] [4l-4n] [25d-25f]

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4. Hezbollah-Israel conflict: July-August 2006

- 4.01 On 12 July 2006, the Lebanese Shia militant group Hezbollah launched a rocket attack on Israeli positions; abducting two Israeli soldiers and killing three others during a cross border raid between the towns of Zar'it and Shtula. (BBC, 13 & 18 July 2006; CNN, 12 & 14 July 2006; IRIN, 13 July 2006; Aljazeera, 14 July 2006) [1b, 1g] [2a, 2e] [3a] [4a] The 'Blue Line' (a UN demarcation imposed to verify that the Israeli withdrawal of May 2000 was complete) has been the scene of Hezbollah-Israeli skirmishes, involving rocket attacks and air strikes, throughout the six years since Israeli forces left the Lebanon. (BBC, 13 July 2006; CNN, 14 July 2006; IRIN, 13 July 2006; Aljazeera, 14 July 2006) [1a] [2a] [3a] [4a]

See also Annex A: [Chronology of events – Hezbollah-Israel](#)

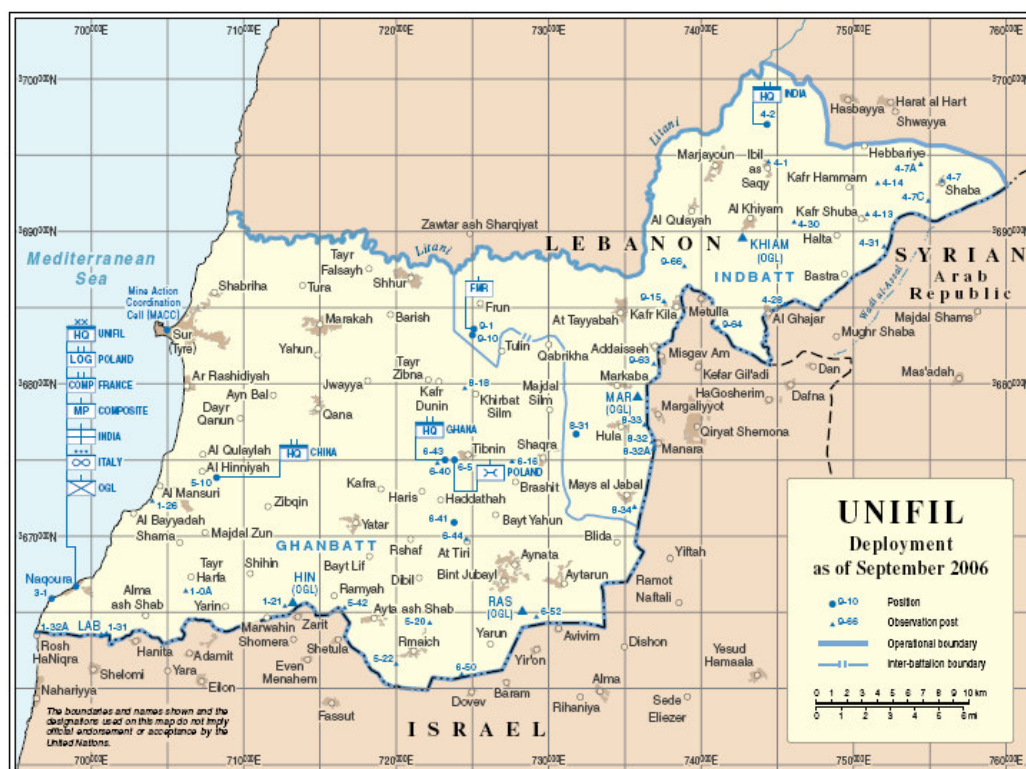
- 4.02 The Israeli response to Hezbollah's actions was to bomb Hezbollah positions and blockade Lebanon's sea ports, whilst Israeli Defence Force (IDF) ground troops entered Lebanese territory for the first time since May 2000. (BBC, 12-14 July 2006 & 18 July 2006; CNN, 14 July 2006; Aljazeera, 14 July 2006) [1b-1d, 1g] [2a] [4a] Over the next few weeks Israel continued its air attacks, targeting Hezbollah positions, as well as bridges, roads and fuel depots. (BBC, 12-14 July 2006 & 16-19 July 2006; CNN, 15 July 2006 & Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; IRIN, 16-18 July 2006 & Lebanon Crisis; Aljazeera, 14 July 2006 & 20 August 2006; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1b-1d, 1f-1i] [2d-2e, 2f] [3b-3e, 3g] [4a, 4d] [19] On the morning of 19 July 2006, the BBC and CNN reported that Israeli ground troops had entered southern Lebanon, an action – originally intended as 'pinpoint attacks' – that later developed into a larger-scale invasion of south Lebanese territory. (IRIN, Lebanon Crisis; Aljazeera, 20 August 2006; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1h-1m] [2b, 2f] [3g] [4d] [19]
- 4.03 Hezbollah countered by firing hundreds of rockets from Lebanese territory, which reached as far as the towns of Haifa and Tiberias, and also by bombing an Israeli missile boat – one of the Israeli navy's most sophisticated warships – using a Chinese-made, radar-guided C-802 missile. (BBC, 12-14 July 2006 & 16-19 July 2006; CNN, 15 July 2006 & Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1b-1e, 1g] [2d] [19] Hezbollah fighters also put up fierce resistance to the Israeli ground forces that entered Lebanon. (BBC, 19 July 2006-17 August 2006; CNN, 19 July 2006 & Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; IRIN, Lebanon Crisis; Aljazeera, 20 August 2006; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1h-1m] [2b, 2f] [3g] [4d] [19] Whilst the IDF did succeed in taking key villages and territory up to the Litani River, they did so with difficulty suffering a number of casualties. (BBC, 19 July 2006-17 August 2006; CNN, 19 July 2006 & Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; IRIN, Lebanon Crisis; Aljazeera, 20 August 2006; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1h-1m] [2b, 2f] [3g] [4d] [19]
- 4.04 On 3 August 2006, in response to the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released a position paper, which appealed to states receiving Lebanese and persons habitually resident in Lebanon fleeing the conflict to grant temporary refuge and to cease all enforced returns to the country. [15b]

- 4.05. On 11 August 2006, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1701, which called for a full cessation of hostilities, the deployment of the United Nation's Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and Lebanese armed forces in southern Lebanon – accompanied by the withdrawal of Israeli Defence Forces from Lebanese territory – and the enlargement of UNIFIL to a maximum strength of 15,000 troops. [11] On 29 August 2006, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) raised questions about deliberate ambiguities over key issues in the resolution, including the disarmament of Hezbollah, the policing of the Syrian border to ensure that Hezbollah is not easily able to re-arm, the exchange of prisoners – Hezbollah still holds the two IDF troops it captured on 12 July 2006, which sparked the conflict, whilst Israel still has Lebanese citizens in detention – and the fate of Israeli-occupied Shebaa farms. [1s]
- 4.06 The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), published on 18 August 2006, noted that some of the heaviest fighting of the entire conflict occurred in the 48 hours immediately prior to the ceasefire deadline. [12b] (paras 4-13) It also recorded that, at the time the Secretary-General had written the report, the parties to the conflict were generally compliant with the ceasefire, which had come into effect on the morning of 14 August 2006. [12b] (paras 4-13) Nevertheless, there continued to be reports of sporadic clashes after the ceasefire deadline had passed, including an Israeli raid deep in Lebanese territory allegedly conducted with the objective of capturing relatives of the Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah. (BBC, 17-24 August 2006; CNN, Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; IRIN, Lebanon Crisis; Aljazeera, 22 August 2006; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East) [1m-1p] [2f] [3g] [4e] [19]
- 4.07 Within hours of the ceasefire coming into effect, tens of thousands of displaced Lebanese began flooding back to southern Lebanon, the districts of south Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley in east Lebanon; estimates of how many have already returned range from 550,000 – 735,000. (IDMC, 30 August 2006) [21] The Israeli air attacks inflicted significant damage on Lebanese infrastructure – including roads, bridges, and water and power supply – consequently a huge rebuilding effort is required, as are measures to safeguard the well-being of returnees by removing unexploded ordnance and ensuring adequate supplies and shelter are available. (BBC, 27 August 2006; IDMC, 30 August 2006) [1r] [21]
- 4.08 Despite the obvious needs of the Lebanese Government and people to begin rebuilding as soon as possible, the intermittent ceasefire violations by both sides and continuing Israeli air and sea blockade of Lebanon hindered that recovery process. (BBC, 29-30 August 2006; CNN, Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East; IRIN, Lebanon Crisis; *The Guardian (UK)*, Special Report: Israel and the Middle East; IDMC, 30 August 2006) [1t-1u] [2f] [3g] [10b] [19] [21]
- 4.09 With regard to the raising of a multinational peace-keeping force – on which the withdrawal of Israeli forces and ending of the embargo are dependant – as of 30 August 2006 the United Nations had received the following troop pledges:
- France: Leadership and 2,000 troops
 - Italy: 2,500-3,000 troops
 - Bangladesh: Two battalions (up to 2,000 troops)
 - Malaysia: One battalion
 - Spain: One mechanised battalion
 - Indonesia: One battalion, an engineering company

- Nepal: One battalion
- Denmark: At least two ships
- Poland: 500 troops
- Finland: 250 troops
- Belgium: 302 troops, later rising to 392
- Germany: Maritime and border patrols but no combat troops
- Norway: 100 soldiers (BBC, 29 August 2006; UN News, 29 August 2006) [1s] [10b]

MAP

4.10 Deployment of UNIFIL forces in Lebanon, as of September 2006:



4.11 Throughout the 34-day conflict – and in the days and weeks following the ceasefire – news organisations, human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI), and national and international organisations, including the Lebanese Government, International Crisis Group and various United Nations bodies reported on the conflict and its aftermath, covering abuses committed by both Hezbollah and Israeli forces. [1v-1aa] [5a-5q] [6a-6l] [7a-7d] [8a-8c] [10c-10d] [12a-12b, 12h] [13] [14a-14q] [15a-15c] [16] [17] [18] [20a-e] [21] [22] [23] For more detailed information, comment and analysis refer to these and other sources listed at Annex B: [References to source material](#)

4.12 On the future risk of conflict – both internal and regional – International Crisis Group's (ICG) November 2006 paper, 'Israel/Hizbollah/Lebanon: Avoiding Renewed Conflict' states that, from the Israeli point of view, "... should the UN not follow up [in disarming and disbanding Hezbollah], it will be 'a crucial mistake, sowing the seeds of the next round' [of conflict]." [20d] (p6) Whilst, in Lebanon itself, "The Lebanese government emerged from the war weakened; the country was shattered, its economy a shambles, its population demoralised and

its politics more polarised than before. If during the war support for Hizbollah was widespread, recriminations started even before the ceasefire came into view.” [20d] (p7)

UNHCR’S POST-CONFLICT POSITION PAPER: 15 NOVEMBER 2006

- 4.13 On 15 November 2006, UNHCR released a further position paper that superseded its August 2006 stance. Although additional considerations were urged for specificities – such as political, religious or communal affiliations and humanitarian concerns – generally:

“UNHCR’s current position is that, given the cessation of hostilities and efforts being made toward recovery and reconstruction, Lebanese and individuals who fled Lebanon due to the armed conflict should no longer be presumed automatically to be in need of international protection because of the conflict. Any international protection needs should be examined individually based on the merits of the case, taking into account the update of the situation provided in this document. In States parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and/or its 1967 Protocol, the criteria set out in the Convention should be applied and claims examined in fair and efficient asylum procedures to determine refugee status.” [15c] (p3)

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Annex A: Chronology of events – Hezbollah-Israel

- 1982** **6 June:** Following the attempted assassination of Shlomo Argov, Israeli ambassador to Britain, Israel launched a full-scale invasion of Lebanon with about 60,000 troops. 'Operation Peace for Galilee' was a push to destroy the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), and forced Arafat and the PLO to flee Lebanon in **August**. [1a] [2a] The occupation of south Lebanon, including Beirut – a move designed to prevent Palestinian attacks – led to the suspension of peace initiatives, and the pro-Israeli Christian South Lebanon Army (SLA) committing a series of massacres and human rights abuses. [4a]
14 September: The Israel-backed Lebanese president-elect, Bashir Gemayel, was assassinated, shortly before his inauguration. Israeli troops entered West Beirut a day later, and the next day, nearly 800 Palestinian refugees were massacred by Lebanese Christian militias in the Sabra and Shatila camps. Israel was accused of doing nothing to prevent or stop the massacre. [2a] Hezbollah, a fundamentalist Shiite Muslim militant group, emerged as a force in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon. Sponsored by Iran, modeled after Iran's Revolutionary Guards and supported by Syria, Hezbollah aims to establish a Shiite Islamic state in Lebanon and force Western interests like Israel and the United States out of the region. [2a]
- 1983** **18 April:** A suicide attack by Hezbollah on the U.S. Embassy in West Beirut killed 63 people, a harbinger of future attacks against U.S. and Western interests. [2a]
17 May: Lebanon and Israel signed a U.S.-brokered peace agreement, spelling out terms of Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, conditional on the withdrawal of Syrian forces. Syria opposed the agreement. [2a] An ending of hostilities, a partial withdrawal and the establishment of a security or 'buffer' zone in southern Lebanon was agreed. [1a] [2a]
23 October: An alleged Hezbollah suicide bomber blew up the headquarters of U.S. Marine and French forces in Beirut killing 298 people including 241 U.S. Marines and other military personnel, and 56 French paratroopers. [1a] [2a] The responsibility for the attack was claimed by two militant Shia groups. [1a] U.S. troops were withdrawn from Lebanon a few months later. [2a]
- 1984** **March:** With pressure mounting from Syria, Lebanon cancelled the **17 May 1983** peace agreement. [2a]
- 1985** **June:** Israel withdrew from most of Lebanon but retained control of the 12-mile-wide security zone in the south. Most Israeli troops were withdrawn, but the SLA, led by Maj-Gen Antoine Lahd, continued to operate in the security zone with the support of some Israeli soldiers. [1a] [2a] [4a]
16 June: A TWA plane landed in Beirut having been hijacked on a flight from Athens to Rome by two alleged members of Hezbollah who demanded the release of Shia in Israeli jails. The crisis was resolved with the help of Syrian mediation. [1a]
- 1987** **21 May:** Lebanon abrogated the **1969** Cairo agreement with the PLO as well as officially cancelling the **17 May 1983** agreement with Israel. [1a]
- 1989** **28 July:** Shaykh Abd-al-Karim Ubayd, Hezbollah leader in Jibshit, was abducted by Israeli forces. [1a]

- 1990** **13 October:** The Syrian air force attacked the Presidential Palace at B'abda and Awn took refuge in the French embassy. This date is regarded as the end of the 15-year civil war. [1a] [2a]
- 1991** The National Assembly ordered the dissolution of all militias by **30 April** although Hezbollah was allowed to remain active whilst the South Lebanon Army (SLA) refused to disband. [1a]
- 1992** Israel assassinated the secretary-general of Hezbollah, Sheikh Abbas al-Musawi, when Israeli helicopter gunships attacked his motorcade on a road south-east of Sidon. [1a] [4a]
By **17 June** all Western hostages held by Shia groups had been released. [1a]
- 1993** **25 July:** Israel attempted to end the threat from Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in southern Lebanon by launching 'Operation Accountability', its heaviest attack since 1982. [1a] [2a] [4a]
- 1994** **21 May:** Mustafa Dib al-Dirani, head of the Believers' Resistance, a breakaway group from the Shia Amal organisation, was abducted by Israeli commandos from his house in eastern Lebanon. [1a]
- 1996** **11 April:** 'Operation Grapes of Wrath', a 16-day battle in which the Israelis bombed Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon, the southern district of Beirut and the Bekaa, resulted in the death of at least 137 people who were mostly Lebanese civilians. [1a] [2a] [4a]
18 April: An Israeli attack on a UN base at Qana resulted in the death of over 100 Lebanese refugees who were sheltering there. [1a]
26 April: US negotiated a truce and an 'understanding' under which Hezbollah and Palestinian guerrillas agreed not to attack civilians in northern Israel, and which recognised Israel's right to self-defence but also Hezbollah's right to resist the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Although Lebanon and Syria did not sign the 'understanding', the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG) – whose members were drawn from the US, France, Israel, Lebanon and Syria – was set up to monitor the truce. [1a]
- 1998** **1 April:** Israel's inner cabinet voted to accept UN Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978 if Lebanon were to guarantee the security of Israel's northern border. However, both Lebanon and Syria rejected this condition. [1a]
- 1999** **3 June:** South Lebanon Army (SLA) completed its withdrawal from the Jazzin salient (north of the 'security zone') occupied since 1985. [1a]
- 2000** **5 March:** Israeli cabinet voted for the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon by July 2000. [1a]
18 April: Israel released 13 Lebanese prisoners held without trial for more than 10 years but extended the detention of Shaykh Abd-al-Karim Ubayd and Mustafa Dib al-Dirani. [1a]
Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak, announced the withdrawal of troops from southern Lebanon earlier than scheduled and – after the collapse of the SLA and rapid advances by Hezbollah – Israeli forces were completely withdrawn by **24 May**, six weeks before the stated deadline of **7 July**. [1a] [4a]
25 May: declared an annual public holiday, called 'Resistance and Liberation Day'. [1a]

- May:** the United Nations established the 'Blue Line' as a border between the Lebanon and Israel. [2a]
- 2001 March:** Lebanon began pumping water from a tributary of the River Jordan to supply a southern border village despite opposition from Israel. [1a]
- 2002 January:** Elie Hobeika, a key figure in the massacres of Palestinian refugees in 1982, died in a blast shortly after disclosing that he held videotapes and documents that challenged Israel's account of the massacres. [1a]
September: Israel threatened a return to military action against Lebanon over its plan to divert water from the Wazzani border river, which provided 10% of Israel's drinking water. [1a] [4a]
- 2003 August:** car bomb in Beirut, which was blamed on Israel by Hezbollah and a Lebanese government minister, killed a member of the Lebanese militant group. [1a]
September: Israeli warplanes hit southern Lebanon in response to Hezbollah's firing antiaircraft missiles at Israeli planes in the area. [2a]
October: Israel and Lebanon exchanged gunfire in the disputed area known as Shebaa Farms. [2a]
- 2005 14 February:** Former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri is assassinated. Pressure builds on Syria to withdraw its remaining troops from Lebanon, which it does in **April**. [1a] [2a]
- 2006 July:** Hezbollah militants crossed into Israel, killed three Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two others in a bid to negotiate a prisoner exchange, a demand rebuffed by Israel whose Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, described Hezbollah's actions as an 'act of war'. Another five Israeli soldiers were killed after the ambush. Israel responded with a naval blockade and by bombing hundreds of targets in Lebanon, including Beirut's airport, Hezbollah's headquarters in southern Beirut and the group's Al Manar television station. Hezbollah countered with rocket attacks targeting northern Israeli cities. Fighting left dozens of Lebanese civilians dead and coincided with a two-week-old Israeli military campaign in Gaza in response to the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian militants. [1a] [2a] [4a] Hezbollah fired more than 100 rockets at towns across northern Israel, including the country's third-largest city, Haifa, about 35km from the border. [4a]
Russia, the EU, Iran and some Arab states condemned the attacks but the US President, George W. Bush, said that Tel Aviv has the right to defend itself. Israel ruled out any prisoner exchange with Hezbollah. [4a]
As of **17 July**, some 2,000 foreign nationals had been evacuated from Beirut, but tens of thousands remained in the country. Efforts to help them leave the country, mostly by sea, were increasingly stepped up over the next couple of days. [1f, 1h] [2b]
19 July: Israeli ground troops crossed into southern Lebanon to carry out what the army called 'restricted pinpoint attacks'. [1h] [2b]
July: Israeli bombardment of mainly southern Lebanon and other Shia-dominated areas, such as the southern suburbs of Beirut and parts of the Bekaa Valley continued, as did Hezbollah rocket launches into Israel. [1j-1k]
August: Israeli ground troops pushed into south Lebanon, waging violent battles with Hezbollah militants. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert asserted that fighting was to continue until an international peacekeeping force was established in south Lebanon, whilst Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah – the leader of

Hezbollah – warned that the group would target Tel Aviv if Beirut came under attack again. [1a, 1k-1l]

11 August: UN Resolution 1701 – which called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah – was unanimously approved by the United Nations Security Council; UN Secretary General Kofi Annan announced that the ceasefire would begin as of 5am Monday **14 August**. In the meantime, Israel continued its ground offensive – reaching the Litani River – and continued its bombing campaign in Tyre and Beirut, whilst Hezbollah continued to fire hundreds of rockets a day into Israel. [11] [1m]

14 August: A ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah came into effect. Approximately 1,000 mainly civilian Lebanese and 159 Israelis, who were mostly soldiers, died in the preceeding 34 days of fighting. [1a]

August: Despite Israeli travel restrictions and the damaged state of the roads, thousands of displaced Lebanese flooded back to their homes in south Lebanon. There were reports of breaches of the ceasefire by both sides, including an Israeli raid in the Bekaa, which is deep in Lebanese territory. The UN's attempts to form a multi-national peacekeeping force continued in the face of concerns about its make-up, deployment and mandate. [1a, 1m-1p]

September: Lebanese government forces deployed along the Israeli border – in territory formerly controlled by Hezbollah – for the first time in decades. [1a]

November: Israel committed air violations of the **14 August 2006** ceasefire, while UN peacekeepers discovered unauthorised arms and ammunition in Lebanon. [10c-10d]

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