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# Security Council

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## Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004)

### Thirtieth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General

#### I. Background

1. The present report is the thirtieth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). It provides a review and an assessment of the implementation of the resolution since the issuance of my previous report on the subject, on 25 April 2019 (S/2019/343), and covers developments until 30 September 2019.

#### II. Implementation of resolution 1559 (2004)

2. Since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004) by the Security Council on 2 September 2004, limited progress has been made in its implementation. A number of provisions, including with respect to the existence and activities of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, remain pending.

##### A. Sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon

3. Through the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004), the Security Council sought to strengthen the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout the country, in accordance with the Taif Accords of 1989, to which all the political parties in Lebanon had committed themselves. That objective has remained the priority of my efforts.

4. In my most recent report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2019/574), I reported on the progress made by the Government of Lebanon in addressing pressing economic issues that could have an impact on the stability of Lebanon. After the Council of Ministers had approved the draft 2019 national budget and presented it to Parliament on 27 May, Parliament adopted it on 19 July. The International Support Group for Lebanon, in a statement issued on that day, “welcome[d] the adoption of the 2019 budget as an urgently needed first step by Lebanon in fiscal management and towards reducing its deficit, as part of Lebanon’s economic vision and its commitments at the *Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises* (CEDRE)”. The President of



Lebanon, Michel Aoun, signed the budget into law on 31 July. Subsequently, in a meeting on 2 September, President Aoun, the Prime Minister, Saad Hariri, and the Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, together with heads of political parties and parliamentary blocs and their representatives, declared a “state of economic emergency” through a statement in which the seriousness of the economic situation in Lebanon was recognized. The International Support Group for Lebanon, in a statement dated 13 September, welcomed that meeting “as a catalyst for political leaders to address the economic challenges Lebanon faces in light of its own economic assessments and in line with Lebanon’s economic vision and its commitments at the *Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises* (CEDRE)”. On 11 September, the Minister of Finance, Ali Khalil, submitted the draft 2020 budget to the Council of Minister for review, to be presented to Parliament by mid-October in accordance with the constitutional time frame.

5. Further to my reporting (S/2019/574) on the statements of the Minister of Defence, Elias Bou Saab, on 29 April, the Minister stated that President Aoun would soon launch an initiative to gather Lebanese actors together for a dialogue on the national defence strategy. On 14 May, the Minister of Interior and Municipalities, Raya al-Hassan, stated that “the Prime Minister was clear when he asked to put aside the strategic disagreement about weapons until it is time to discuss this issue within the defense strategy”, while noting that the matter’s resolution should take place within a regional framework. It was reaffirmed in a presidential statement of 20 August that “the President is committed to the positions already announced on the subject of the defense strategy”. In an interview on 4 September, the Prime Minister likewise referenced the decision of President Aoun to open a “strategic dialogue on how to defend Lebanon from any intrusion, or wars”.

6. On 9 May, Lebanon ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force for the country on 7 August in accordance with article 22 (2) of the Treaty. On 5 September, Lebanon became a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. On 12 September, the Lebanese Cabinet endorsed the national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security.

7. As previously noted (S/2019/574), at its April meeting, the Higher Defence Council requested the Ministry of Defence to establish a mechanism to, among other things, address smuggling through illegal crossings. The Council also requested the State authorities to take appropriate measures against people crossing borders illegally, including Syrians registered as refugees. As at 31 August, 942,565 refugees and asylum seekers were registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Lebanon. The long-term sizeable presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, in particular in the context of an economic crisis and high unemployment, represents a growing challenge and is increasingly affecting the public perception of refugees and intercommunity relations at all levels.

8. Tensions arose during the reporting period in relation to the decision by the Ministry of Labour to address foreign employment. On 3 June, the Minister of Labour, Camille Bou Sleiman, announced a plan, entitled “Action against illegal foreign employment on the Lebanese territory”, to enforce previous labour legislation that would require Palestine refugees, among other things, to obtain work authorizations. On 15 July, after the Ministry had begun to implement the law, Palestine refugees in camps throughout the country participated in marches and demonstrations to express their opposition to the plan. Some also conducted a general strike in the camps, erected roadblocks, burned tires, closed the camp entrances and exits and called for the boycott of Lebanese businesses and banks. On 17 July, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, issued a statement in which he called for dialogue and rejected all forms of escalation. On his behalf, a member of the Executive Committee

of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Azzam al-Ahmad, met key leaders in Lebanon and reiterated the Palestinian leadership's commitment to respecting Lebanese laws and resolving any issue through dialogue. On 18 July, the head of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Hassan Mneimneh, underscored the importance of implementing decrees regarding the relevant legislation in order to protect the special status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. The Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee has pointed to A Unified Lebanese Vision For the Palestinian Refugees Affairs in Lebanon (S/2017/867) as setting out a way forward for dealing with the issues of labour, social security and mechanisms regulating Palestine refugee employment. On 22 August, the Lebanese Cabinet formed a committee chaired by the Prime Minister with five ministers to study the Palestinian file.

9. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued its efforts to deliver essential health, education, relief and social services to Palestine refugees in Lebanon, in the face of a serious funding shortfall affecting the Agency, which currently stands at \$89 million.

10. In its resolution 1680 (2006), the Security Council strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request made by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border. This remains critical to enabling proper border control and management, including the movement of people and the potential movement of arms. In a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister of Lebanon on 11 September dedicated to tackling the issue of border smuggling, the Minister of Defence of Lebanon reported on a decision by the Prime Minister to bring together all parties, including the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Finance, Customs and General Security, with a view to addressing smuggling collectively.

11. The delineation and demarcation of the boundaries of Lebanon also remain elements essential to guaranteeing national sovereignty and territorial integrity. While border delineation is a bilateral matter, progress on the issue remains an obligation for Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with resolution 1680 (2006). There were no reports of cross-border incidents on the eastern and northern borders through 30 September.

12. Israel continued to occupy the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of the sovereignty of Lebanon and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

13. There was no progress in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. In addition, neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has responded to the provisional definition of the area contained in my predecessor's report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

14. Unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, of the Israel Defense Forces continued to make almost daily overflights of Lebanon during the reporting period, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

15. On 25 August, two drones crashed in the southern suburbs of Beirut. In identical letters to the President of the Security Council and to me dated 25 August (A/73/988–S/2019/683), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations conveyed that the Orientation Directorate of the Lebanese Army Command had determined that, on “25 August 2019 at 0230 hours, while two Israeli reconnaissance aircraft were violating Lebanese airspace ... in the Dahiyah area south of Beirut, the first fell to the ground and the second exploded in the air, causing material damage. Lebanon condemns in the strongest possible terms this flagrant Israeli violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)”. In a statement on 27 August, Hizbullah announced that, “after the experts of the Islamic Resistance

dismantled the first plane ... [it was found to contain ...] C4 explosive material and weighed 5.5 kg". In announcing the findings of the Lebanese Armed Forces investigation, the Minister of Defence, in a press conference on 19 September, denounced the incident as "the most serious since the July war of 2006". He added that "there have been 480 Israeli violations of resolution 1701 within the last two months, the most serious of which has been the explosive-loaded drones that passed over Beirut airport and endangered air traffic, and then headed to the city's southern suburbs ...; one of the two drones was carrying 4.5 [kg] plastic explosives and the second had eight engines. The drone ... is a sophisticated military one which aimed to attack the city of Beirut. It was launched from Habonim Airfield in Israel and could be controlled via UAV".

16. On 25 August, the Prime Minister called the drone crash "a blatant aggression against Lebanese sovereignty and a clear violation of resolution 1701". In a meeting with ambassadors of the five permanent members of the Security Council on 26 August, the Prime Minister stressed the interest of the Government of Lebanon in avoiding a serious escalation, but noted that the international community should "prove its rejection of this flagrant violation of our sovereignty and of resolution 1701".

17. On 26 August, President Aoun characterized these events as "tantamount to a declaration of war", further declaring that they allowed Lebanon to assert its right to defend its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. He denounced the attack on the southern suburbs and on the Qusaya area on the Lebanese-Syrian border as violations of resolution 1701. Meanwhile, on 27 August, the Lebanese Higher Defence Council affirmed the right of the Lebanese to self-defence by all means and against any aggression.

18. In a speech on 25 August, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah deemed the incident involving the drones to be "the first aggressive act since 14 August 2006". He added, "This is a violation of the rules of engagement that were established after the July war of 2006". He referenced an air raid on 24 August in the town of Aqraba, outside Damascus, in the Syrian Arab Republic, later claimed by Israel, which he said had targeted a Hizbullah centre and killed two Lebanese young people from Hizbullah. He reiterated his earlier pledge that, "if Israel kills any of our brothers in Syria, we will respond to that killing in Lebanon and not in the Shebaa Farms". In a letter to me dated 27 August (S/2019/688), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations claimed Israeli responsibility for the strike in the Syrian Arab Republic and said that it had "neutralized the threat of launching the armed drones from the Quds Force and Shiite militia site in Aqrabeh". He added that "the ongoing Iranian military entrenchment and malign activities in the region, including its direction of Hezbollah, pose a significant threat to international peace and security".

19. On 1 September, anti-tank missiles were fired from southern Lebanon at a vehicle from the Israel Defense Forces south of the Blue Line. Hizbullah claimed responsibility for the attack, stating it was on behalf of the Lebanese young people from Hizbullah killed in the Israeli air raid of 24 August in the Syrian town of Aqraba. In response, the Israel Defense Forces conducted artillery fire directed at the general area from where the missile attack had originated. There were no casualties reported as a result of the exchange. On 3 September, I expressed serious concern about the incidents across the Blue Line, called for maximum restraint and urged all concerned to cease all activities that violate resolution 1701 (2006) and endanger the cessation of hostilities.

20. The Secretary-General of Hizbullah, in a speech on 2 September, stated that, "while [Prime Minister] Netanyahu was trying to change the equation ... we told him there are no longer red lines at all because you tried to change the terms of engagement. We moved from responding in occupied Lebanese land called the Shebaa Farms and Kfarshouba Hills to responding in occupied Palestine. This is new". He added, "It is

our right, the right of the Lebanese to defend their land, their sky, their water, their sovereignty, their security and we [confront] the drones in Lebanon's sky".

21. On 3 September, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, in response to a journalist's question about those recent developments, stated "the Lebanese state contained what happened diplomatically, starting with the drones to Hezbollah's reaction. We should preserve stability and UNSCR 1701". On 6 September, President Aoun said that "the latest Israeli attack on the southern suburbs of Beirut marked a departure from the rules of engagement reached after the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and pointed out that any attack on Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity would be met with legitimate self-defense and Israel would bear all the consequences".

22. In identical letters to me and to the President of the Security Council dated 3 September (A/73/996-S/2019/708) referencing the above incident, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, on behalf of her Government, condemned in the strongest possible terms what she said was an Israeli violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006), drew attention to "the serious human cost of cluster bomb remnants" and called upon the Council "to condemn the use by Israel of cluster and incendiary munitions and bombs, and to use its influence to press Israel to accede to the relevant international conventions and protocols".

23. On 28 August, the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that it had fired at three Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles in southern Lebanon, prompting them to return south of the Blue Line. Later that evening, the Israel Defense Forces issued a statement saying that shooting had taken place in an area where one of the unmanned aerial vehicles had been overflying.

24. On 9 September, Hizbullah stated that "the resistance [had] intercepted with the appropriate weaponry an Israeli drone that was crossing the Palestinian-Lebanese border". The Israel Defense Forces confirmed that a drone had fallen inside Lebanese territory that day. In a speech for Ashura on 10 September, the Hizbullah Secretary-General stated that "we are here to reassure, Lebanon respects 1701 and Hizbullah is part of the Lebanese government that respects resolution 1701. But ... if Israel attacks Lebanon ... it is then the legitimate [human] right of the Lebanese ... and through the ministerial statement and the Higher Defense Council to defend Lebanon, its sovereignty, their dignity, their life and their property ... There are no red lines at all. This is over".

## **B. Extension of control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory**

25. The Government of Lebanon continued its efforts to extend the authority of the State throughout all the Lebanese territory, as called for in the Taif Accords and in resolution 1559 (2004), but challenges remained.

26. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued its operations to maintain security and stability in the country, including through their counter-terrorism activities. As I previously reported (S/2019/574), on 3 June, two members of the Internal Security Forces and two members of the Lebanese Armed Forces were killed in a suicide attack perpetrated by a Lebanese national affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Tripoli. Four servicemen were wounded, and eight suspects were arrested in connection with the attack. On 17 June, in Nabatiyah, the Internal Security Forces arrested two Syrian nationals over their affiliation with Islamic State and for planning bomb attacks at Christian and Muslim religious sites. Separately, on 9 June, the head of public relations of the Al-Jama'a al-Islamiya group, Sheikh Mohammad Jarrar, was killed in Shab'a by unidentified individuals.

27. On 30 June, in protest of a planned visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, to the Aley district, south of Beirut, supporters of the Progressive Socialist Party blocked several roads. The convoy of the Druze Minister of State for Refugee Affairs and member of the Lebanese Democratic Party, Saleh al-Gharib, encountered the protestors, leading to a firefight, during which two of the Minister's bodyguards were killed, one injured and two supporters of the Progressive Socialist Party wounded, while the Minister escaped unharmed. He denounced the clashes as "an armed ambush and a clear assassination attempt". The head of the Lebanese Democratic Party, Talal Arslan, subsequently called for the case to be referred to the Judicial Council for being an attack on a minister and thus a matter of State security. As a result of the incident, on 2 July, the Prime Minister suspended Cabinet sessions.

28. On 7 August, the Embassy of the United States of America in Beirut issued a statement expressing support for a "fair and transparent judicial review without any political interference. Any attempt to use the tragic June 30 event in Qabr el-Shamoun to advance political objectives should be rejected". The United States conveyed to the Lebanese authorities its expectation that they would handle the matter in a way that achieved justice without the politically motivated inflammation of sectarian or communal tensions.

29. On 9 August, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, Walid Jumblatt, and the leader of the Lebanese Democratic Party, Talal Arslan, met under the auspices of President Aoun and in the presence of Speaker of Parliament and the Prime Minister. In a statement after the meeting, the Prime Minister said that "the participants condemned the unfortunate [Aley] incident...that resulted in two victims and a number of wounded, which is now under the jurisdiction of the military judiciary, which is investigating its circumstances". The Cabinet resumed its meetings on 10 August.

### **C. Disbanding and disarmament of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias**

30. In its resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#), the Security Council called for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, a key provision of the resolution that has yet to be implemented. The provision reflects and reaffirms a decision to which all Lebanese committed themselves in the Taif Accords.

31. Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias within the country continued to operate outside the control of the Government, in violation of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#). While several groups across the political spectrum in Lebanon possess weapons outside government control, Hizbullah is the most heavily armed militia in the country. In a speech on 12 July on the anniversary of the breakout of the July 2006 conflict, the Hizbullah Secretary-General warned that a war against the Islamic Republic of Iran would mean that "war has opened in the whole region". In an interview on 4 September, the Prime Minister stated, "Hizbullah is not a Lebanese problem only, it is a regional problem".

32. There has been no tangible progress towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as called for in the Taif Accords and resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#). Since the adoption of that resolution, no specific steps have been taken to tackle that crucial issue, which lies at the heart of the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon. The maintenance by Hizbullah of a military arsenal outside of a legal framework and its involvement in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be denounced by a number of voices in Lebanon, who consider those issues to be destabilizing factors in the country and ones that undermine democracy. Many

Lebanese see the continued presence of such arms as an implicit threat that the weapons could be used within Lebanon for political reasons.

33. The self-acknowledged maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups and the alleged increase by Hizbullah of its arsenal pose a serious challenge to the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. In a speech on 31 May, the Hizbullah Secretary-General denied that either Hizbullah or the Islamic Republic of Iran possessed factories for precision or non-precision missiles in Lebanon. He added, however, "it is our right to own any arms to protect our country. It is our right to manufacture any weapons...There is no factory for manufacturing weapons now but [the United States] ha[s] no right to discuss this issue with us. We have the right to own weapons, whether buying or manufacturing...If the United States keeps this file open, we will establish factories for manufacturing precision missiles in Lebanon".

34. At the quarterly open debate of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, on 23 July, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated, "The Port of Beirut is now the Port of Hezbollah. Led by the Quds Force...dual-use items are smuggled into Lebanon to advance Hezbollah's rocket and missile capabilities and conversion program". The Hizbullah Secretary-General, in a speech on 26 July, denied the claims of the Israeli Ambassador at the Council that Hizbullah was using the port of Beirut to transfer arms to Lebanon.

35. On 29 August, the Israel Defense Forces released a video in which it named three senior officers from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps whom it said were "inside Lebanon leading Hizbullah's precision-guided missile project in order to attack Israel". The Hizbullah Secretary-General, in a speech on 31 August, stated, "We have enough precision missiles that are sufficient for us but we don't have factories for the production of precision missiles".

36. In a letter to the President of the Security Council and to me dated 3 September (S/2019/704), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated that "Israel has warned the international community time and again against Iran and Hizbullah's ongoing efforts to expand Hizbullah's military build-up in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). Hizbullah's precision-guided missile programme is the most alarming expression of these efforts. Over the past few months, Iran and Hizbullah have redoubled their efforts to convert and produce precision-guided missiles in Lebanon by attempting to build manufacturing and conversion facilities in a number of locations in Lebanon". He further said that the Government of Lebanon was "fully aware of the existence of Hizbullah's precision-guided missile. Unfortunately, it has never taken any steps to shut down the programme". On 3 September, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, reportedly announced that "the Israel Defense Forces has exposed another precision missile facility in Lebanon".

37. In a letter to the President of the Security Council and to me dated 7 September (S/2019/716), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations said that, "on September 3, the Israel Defense Forces exposed a facility belonging to Hezbollah, located near Nabi Chit in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, designed to manufacture precision guided missiles", the accuracy of which was less than 10 m.

38. The participation of Hizbullah and other Lebanese in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to breach the policy of disassociation and the principles of the Baabda Declaration.

39. At the Mecca conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the emergency summits of the League of Arab States and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf on 30 and 31 May 2019, the Prime Minister of Lebanon voiced

support for the summit statement. In a speech on 31 May, the Hizbullah Secretary-General, referencing the Prime Minister's support for the statement, stated that "the position of the official Lebanese delegation does not correspond to the ministerial statement and is in violation of commitments of the Lebanese government [on disassociation]". On 11 June, the Prime Minister stated, "My speech and stance at the Mecca summit are the peak of commitment to the ministerial statement, the disassociation policy and the interest of the country".

40. Tensions in some Palestine refugee camps, in particular Ein el-Hilweh, persisted during the reporting period and at times involved the use of weapons. On 26 April, a member of Fatah was reportedly killed by an unidentified gunman in the camp of Ein el-Hilweh, leading to an escalation of tensions there. This came within the context of recurrent clashes between Fatah and members of Islamist armed groups. On 2 August, Hussein Alaaeddine, the brother of a member of Islamist group Asbat al-Ansar, reportedly died after being shot while marching in a rally in Ein el-Hilweh in protest of the decision by the Minister of Labour to address foreign employment, as referenced in paragraph 8. This triggered clashes involving the use of rocket-propelled grenades and heavy gunfire in the Safsaf neighbourhood of the camp between the family of the deceased and the group of Bilal Abu Arqub, accused by the family of being behind the assassination. On 4 August, Bilal Abu Arqub was reportedly killed, while two of his sons were arrested and handed over to the Lebanese army intelligence. Bilal Abu Arqub had been responsible for several violent incidents in the camp, as previously reported ([S/2017/867](#), [S/2018/920](#) and [S/2019/343](#)). On 14 August, a man was reportedly shot and killed in the camp, triggering tensions.

41. In an effort to address the persistent presence and use of weapons in some of the Palestine refugee camps, as reported previously ([S/2019/574](#)), initial steps were taken in Mieh Mieh, including dismantling a security checkpoint and eliminating the carrying of weapons and the wearing of military fatigues.

42. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps also continued. Notwithstanding the decision taken in 2006 in the context of the national dialogue, and confirmed at subsequent sessions, to disarm Palestinian militias outside the camps within a six-month period, no progress was made during the reporting period with regard to dismantling the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada in the country.

### III. Observations

43. I remain seriously concerned about the incidents that took place in Beirut on 25 August and across the Blue Line on 1 September. The events demonstrate the need for progress in addressing some of the outstanding provisions of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#), namely, the disarmament and disbandment of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and the strict respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. There has been limited progress in the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory.

44. The incident of 1 September demonstrates anew that Hizbullah maintains heavy weapons, including in southern Lebanon. It could have led to a dangerous escalation. It again shows the risks posed to the security and stability of Lebanon by Hizbullah's maintenance of weapons outside of State control and its lack of accountability to State institutions.

45. I note the statement of 27 August of the Higher Defence Council in which it underlined the right of the Lebanese to exercise self-defence with all means against any aggression. All concerned must contribute to efforts to reinforce the institutions

of the Lebanese State. The Lebanese State should increase its efforts to achieve a monopoly over the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout its territory. I continue to urge the Government and the armed forces of Lebanon to take all measures necessary to prohibit Hizbullah and other armed groups from acquiring weapons and building paramilitary capacity outside the authority of the State, in violation of resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#).

46. The allegations by Israel that Hizbullah possesses a facility designed to manufacture precision-guided missiles, as well as the claim by the Hizbullah Secretary-General that Hizbullah possesses such weapons and could establish factories for manufacturing precision missiles in Lebanon, run the risk of triggering an escalation in a tense regional context. I urge all concerned to exercise restraint.

47. Hizbullah's continued involvement in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic not only is in breach of the disassociation policy and the principles of the Baabda Declaration, but also carries a risk of entangling Lebanon in the regional conflicts and poses risks to the stability of Lebanon and the region. Furthermore, it demonstrates the failure of Hizbullah to disarm and its refusal to be accountable to the very State institutions that the implementation of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#) was intended to strengthen.

48. The reported involvement of Hizbullah, as well as that of other Lebanese elements, in fighting elsewhere in the region remains of serious concern. Separately, the statement issued on 12 July by the Hizbullah Secretary-General suggesting that a war against the Islamic Republic of Iran would lead to a regional war is a cause for grave concern. I call upon countries that maintain close ties with Hizbullah to encourage the transformation of the group into a solely civilian political party, and its disarmament, in accordance with the requirements of the Taif Accords and resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#).

49. I have repeatedly condemned all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. I reiterate that such violations, both by air and ground, run the risk of triggering an escalation and could jeopardize stability in Lebanon and Israel and beyond. They undermine the credibility of the Lebanese security and State institutions and generate anxiety among the civilian population. I renew my calls for Israel to adhere to its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions and immediately cease its overflights of Lebanese airspace. I similarly urge Israel to withdraw its forces from northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line without further delay.

50. The clashes in Aley underline that the widespread presence of weapons outside the control of the State remains an issue throughout Lebanon and continues to undermine security and stability in Lebanon. These clashes compromised effective institutional functioning and presented risks to the power-sharing arrangements enshrined in the Taif Accords at a time when Lebanon needs to address urgent priorities. It is critical that the Accords be preserved and implemented by all to avoid the spectre of a renewed confrontation among Lebanese citizens and to strengthen the institutions of the State.

51. The agreement in Mieh Mieh, with a view to improving the safety and security in the camp, is a step in the right direction. I encourage Lebanese leaders to make progress in that regard.

52. These crucial and interlinked issues demonstrate the importance of holding a national dialogue on the development of a national defence strategy through a Lebanese-led, Lebanese-owned process in line with the country's international obligations. I reiterate my earlier encouragement to the President to spearhead a renewed dialogue on a national defence strategy and to political leaders to support

him in that endeavour. It is important that such a dialogue address the need to achieve a State monopoly over the possession and use of weapons and the use of force, a crucial issue that stands at the heart of the sovereignty and the political independence of Lebanon.

53. The steps being taken by Lebanese leaders on addressing pressing economic issues are welcomed. The same sense of unity should inform the preparation of and speedy agreement on the 2020 budget in line with the constitutional time frame. I urge Lebanese leaders to maintain that spirit of unity and sense of urgency in implementing the critical fiscal, structural and sectoral reforms.

54. The adoption of the national action plan on resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) is welcomed. This is an opportunity to take forward core provisions of the resolution, including to increase the role and participation of women in decision-making at all levels and to engage women effectively in conflict prevention and resolution.

55. I renew my calls to donors to support the State institutions of Lebanon.

56. I encourage donors to provide funding to UNRWA so that it can continue to perform its essential role and deliver services, which are vital to the dignity and security of Palestine refugees. Such efforts are without prejudice to the need for the just resolution of the Palestine refugee question in the context of a comprehensive settlement in the region.

57. I count on the continued commitment of the Government of Lebanon to its international obligations and I call upon all parties and actors to fully abide by resolutions [1559 \(2004\)](#), [1680 \(2006\)](#) and [1701 \(2006\)](#). The United Nations will continue its efforts towards the full implementation of those and all other resolutions pertaining to Lebanon.

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