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Implementation of Security Council resolution **1701 (2006)** during the period from 25 June to 31 October 2019

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution **1701 (2006)** since my previous report, dated 17 July 2019 (S/2019/574), including on the provisions of resolution **2485 (2019)**. The area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) experienced heightened tensions. Outstanding obligations remain for both parties under resolution **1701 (2006)**. There was no progress towards a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel.

II. Implementation of resolution **1701 (2006)**

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

2. On 1 September, UNIFIL witnessed a serious escalation in the Mission's area of operations. This came amid heightened tensions following reports on 25 August that one unmanned aerial vehicle had crashed and a second had exploded in Beirut.

3. Following the 25 August unmanned aerial vehicle incident, UNIFIL observed an increase in Israel Defense Forces overflights into Lebanese territory and activities south of the Blue Line, as well as movement of individuals in civilian clothes on the Lebanese side observing areas south of the Blue Line. As a preventive measure, UNIFIL increased its counter-rocket-launching operations and observation activities in all municipalities along the Blue Line. The Head of Mission and Force Commander also stressed to the political leadership of Lebanon and Israel the need for full compliance with resolution **1701 (2006)**.

4. On 26 August, UNIFIL observed 10 illumination flares fired by the Israel Defense Forces close to Shab'a (Sector East), with two flares impacting north of the Blue Line, igniting a bush fire. The Lebanese Armed Forces announced on 28 August that it had fired at three Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles flying above Kafr Kila (Sector East), prompting them to return south of the Blue Line. UNIFIL did not observe the incident. In a statement issued the same day, the Israel Defense Forces acknowledged that while its drones had been targeted, "no damage was caused". On



31 August, UNIFIL detected four illumination shells fired from near an Israel Defense Forces position close to Bastrah (Sector East). Remnants of some projectiles crossed the Blue Line, landing inside a United Nations position north-east of Bastrah, posing serious risks to UNIFIL personnel.

5. Subsequently, on 1 September, UNIFIL heard three loud explosions believed to be missiles fired towards an area south of the Blue Line, from a location east of Aytarun (Sector West). UNIFIL then observed artillery explosions fired from an area south of the Blue Line directed at the area where the missiles had originated. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander urgently engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces.

6. A technical investigation by UNIFIL of the incident on 1 September revealed that three anti-tank missiles had been launched from north of the Blue Line at a moving Israel Defense Forces Wolf armoured personnel carrier with five Israel Defense Forces personnel on board. The Israel Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that it had assessed that the missiles used were Kornet missiles. Based on its technical assessment of the impact location of the missiles, velocity, expected trajectory and line of sight from launch to impact, the Mission estimated that the locations from where the suspected anti-tank missiles were launched were in the area of two adjacent Green without Borders sites in Marun al-Ra's. UNIFIL formally requested the Lebanese Armed Forces to facilitate its access to those sites in a letter dated 5 September.

7. Hizbullah claimed responsibility for the strike. The Israel Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that the five Israel Defense Forces personnel in the vehicle were unharmed. UNIFIL confirmed that on 1 September, Israel Defense Forces had fired artillery rounds into Lebanon in the vicinity of Marun al-Ra's and Aytarun (both Sector West), scorching grassland. UNIFIL did not find evidence of the use of cluster or incendiary bombs by the Israel Defense Forces, as stated by Lebanon in its identical letters dated 3 September addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me ([A/73/996-S/2019/708](#)).

8. In a letter dated 19 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces confirmed that it would facilitate access to the relevant Green without Borders sites. However, on 20 September, a Lebanese Armed Forces officer granted UNIFIL only partial access to the sites, denying the use of necessary technical equipment. Despite repeated communications by the Mission leadership with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the political leadership of Lebanon, UNIFIL has not been granted full access on the grounds that the sites are private property. The Mission continues to stress the need for unimpeded access to relevant sites.

9. On 9 September, Hizbullah claimed that "the resistance" had intercepted, "with the appropriate weaponry", an Israeli drone that was crossing the Palestinian-Lebanese border near the southern town of Ramiyah. The Israel Defense Forces confirmed that a small unmanned aerial vehicle had fallen inside Lebanese territory. UNIFIL is following up with the parties to determine the circumstances of the incident. On 23 October, Lebanese media reported that a resident of Kafr Kila had shot down a small Israeli drone. The Israel Defense Forces tweeted that a drone had fallen within Lebanese territory. A UNIFIL investigation is ongoing.

10. Tensions increased in Blida (Sector East) in connection with Israel Defense Forces vegetation clearance south of the Blue Line in June and July. As a preventive measure, UNIFIL increased its presence in the area. UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon experienced restrictions of movement in and around Blida during that period. The most serious incident occurred on 30 June when eight men with four vehicles blocked an Observer Group Lebanon patrol near Blida and hit the patrol vehicle with baseball bats while threatening to set it on fire. The following day, four

individuals approached a UNIFIL team in the same area and warned it to leave. UNIFIL subsequently determined that an Israel Defense Forces excavator arm had crossed the Blue Line on 1 July.

11. UNIFIL observed 11 bush fires in minefields along the Blue Line, resulting in 51 mine explosions. On three occasions tensions rose in Blida as the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces accused each other of having ignited the fires. To prevent future tensions, UNIFIL liaised with the parties regarding their firefighting interventions close to the Blue Line, while supporting the firefighting capacity of Lebanese civil defence personnel.

12. In a letter to the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, received on 17 September, the Lebanese Minister for Defence, Elias Bou Saab, stated that the Israel Defense Forces had access to a non-operational railway tunnel along the Ra's al-Naqurah/Rosh HaNiqra coastline which was allegedly blocked by concrete 40 metres north of the Blue Line. The Minister asked UNIFIL to establish whether the Israel Defense Forces had access to the tunnel beyond the Blue Line. On 25 September, the Israel Defense Forces placed a camera at the northern entrance of the tunnel. On 26 September, despite assurances from the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander that he was engaged with the Israel Defense Forces in efforts to have the camera removed, the Lebanese Armed Forces proceeded to remove the camera but had to abandon their attempt when smoke reportedly emitted from the camera. UNIFIL observed 14 Israel Defense Forces soldiers south of the Blue Line firing four shots towards the sea. The activities were not coordinated with UNIFIL. At the Mission's request, the Israel Defense Forces removed the camera later that day. UNIFIL is following up with the Israel Defense Forces regarding their access to the tunnel.

13. The Lebanese Armed Forces objected to the Israel Defense Forces tower erected in a Lebanese reservation area in Rosh HaNiqra, across from Ra's al-Naqurah, in June, as described in paragraph 5 of my previous report ([S/2019/574](#)), as well as to the construction of T-walls in a Lebanese reservation area in Arab al-Wazzani (Sector East). UNIFIL continues to urge both parties to give prior notification of any activity close to the Blue Line.

14. Israel continued to enter Lebanese airspace in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and Lebanese sovereignty on an almost daily basis. From July to October, UNIFIL recorded 787 airspace violations, for a total of 3,292 overflight hours. Unmanned aerial vehicles accounted for approximately 91 per cent of the violations. This included an increase in small unmanned aerial vehicles observed from 25 August to 1 September. The remaining airspace violations involved fighter aircraft or unidentified aircraft. In identical letters dated 19 August addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me ([A/73/986-S/2019/675](#)), Lebanon stated that Israel had continued its "serial flagrant violations of Lebanese sovereignty and Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#)" and that "on 1 July 2019, nine Israeli aircraft violated Lebanese airspace and fired missiles, on two occasions, over Lebanese territory and deep into the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. Lebanon condemns this dangerous Israeli violation in the strongest possible terms". UNIFIL continued to protest all air violations to the Israel Defense Forces and to urge their immediate cessation.

15. The occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line by the Israel Defense Forces continued. While the Government of Lebanon has welcomed the UNIFIL proposal, shared with the parties in 2011, for the facilitation of the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the occupied area, the Government of Israel has yet to respond.

16. UNIFIL observed four instances of weapons pointing towards areas north of the Blue Line by Israel Defense Forces soldiers. In the most serious such incident, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol on 30 October observed three Israel Defense Forces soldiers pointing their weapons towards two Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers north-east of Bastrah (Sector East) before leaving the area.

17. From 25 June to 31 October, UNIFIL recorded 420 ground violations of the Blue Line by unarmed Lebanese civilians crossing south of the Blue Line, including 271 violations by shepherds and farmers, mainly in the Shab'a Farms area, and by farmers cultivating their fields near Rumaysh, as well as 99 violations by civilians accessing Shu'ayb well near Blida (all Sector East). Armed hunters from Lebanon crossed south of the Blue Line on one occasion. UNIFIL conducts outreach activities with the local population to prevent such violations. In addition to the violation by the Israel Defense Forces detailed in paragraph 10 above, Israel Defense Forces soldiers crossed north of the Blue Line close to Bastrah on 18 and 23 October while patrolling on foot.

18. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those belonging to the Government of Lebanon and to UNIFIL. With regard to deterrence and prevention, UNIFIL continued to prioritize patrols, counter-rocket-launching operations and checkpoints in areas of recent tensions and historic significance. In close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL maintained 16 permanent and an average of 163 temporary checkpoints and conducted some 293 counter-rocket-launching operations each month.

19. In addition to the three missiles noted in paragraph 6 above and the weapons observed in connection with demonstrations in Tyre (Sector West) on 18 and 19 October (see para. 64 below), UNIFIL observed unauthorized weapons in the area of operation on 260 occasions. As detailed in annex I, all but four incidents involved hunting weapons.

20. UNIFIL maintained its high operational tempo, in line with resolution [2373 \(2017\)](#) and as reiterated in resolutions [2433 \(2018\)](#) and [2485 \(2019\)](#), conducting 14,356 monthly military operational activities on average, including 6,669 patrols. Some 6.4 per cent of UNIFIL operational activities included at least one woman. UNIFIL continued to conduct 22 per cent of its operational activities in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces.

21. UNIFIL vehicle, foot and air patrols maintained an operational footprint in all municipalities and villages in the area of operations. UNIFIL continued air, vehicle and foot patrols in areas surrounding Green without Borders sites close to the Blue Line. Air reconnaissance patrols continued over areas to which ground patrols had limited access, including private property, rugged terrain or land contaminated by explosive remnants of war or anti-personnel mines. UNIFIL increased its night patrols from 35 per cent of its overall patrols in June to 45 per cent in September.

22. While the freedom of movement of UNIFIL was generally respected, several restrictions of freedom of movement and access were encountered (see annex II). Both the Lebanese Armed Forces and members of the local community frequently claimed that specific locations UNIFIL was trying to access were private property and that the Mission had to be accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces at those locations. UNIFIL maintains continuous engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces to secure full access to relevant locations in the area of operations.

23. As detailed in my report dated 14 March 2019 (S/2019/237, para. 2), and despite repeated requests, UNIFIL has yet to gain access to the tunnel openings north of the Blue Line.

24. The United Nations continued to follow up with the Lebanese authorities on the incident of 4 August 2018 in the village of Majdal Zun (Sector West) in which armed individuals attacked a UNIFIL patrol, as described in my report dated 15 November 2018 (S/2018/1029, para. 16). Lebanese authorities have not provided an explanation as to why the conclusions of the Lebanese Armed Forces shared on 17 December 2018 and detailed in my report dated 14 March 2019 (S/2019/237, para. 20) diverged significantly from those of UNIFIL. To date, the United Nations has not been informed of criminal proceedings to bring the perpetrators to justice. UNIFIL has provided the Lebanese authorities with information to assist in the identification of the perpetrators. The United Nations continues to engage with the Lebanese authorities to request updates on this incident and its follow-up.

25. In close coordination with the Lebanese Navy, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force carried out maritime interdiction operations throughout the maritime area of operations, hailing 3,340 vessels, 537 of which were inspected and cleared by the Lebanese authorities. In support of the continued capacity-building of the Lebanese Navy, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force conducted 202 training sessions for the Lebanese Navy regarding monitoring and hailing procedures.

26. Within the framework of the strategic dialogue mechanism, UNIFIL continued discussions on a strategy for a phased transition of Maritime Task Force responsibilities to the Lebanese Navy, pursuant to resolutions 2433 (2018) and 2485 (2019). On 30 August and 13 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces presented to the United Nations, the European Union and the representatives of seven interested countries elements of a long-term development plan for the Lebanese Navy as well as its plan for the deployment of its model regiment. A building in Sibrin (Sector West) was presented as the future headquarters for the regiment.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

27. UNIFIL convened tripartite meetings on 8 August and 26 September, during which liaison and coordination issues and violations of resolution 1701 (2006) were discussed. In addition, UNIFIL conducted frequent bilateral exchanges with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, including on arrangements to reduce tensions along the Blue Line. The liaison and coordination arrangements of UNIFIL, including the tripartite meetings, continue to be the main tools available to the Head of Mission and Force Commander to de-escalate tensions along the Blue Line.

28. In the context of the ongoing protests, UNIFIL has adapted its force posture in its area of operations as a result of the demands placed on the Lebanese Armed Forces since 17 October. The Mission has maintained regular contact with both parties to mitigate any security concerns, with a focus on the Blue Line.

29. Despite the agreement of Israel to the proposal in 2008 for a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv, Israel, the establishment of the office remains pending.

30. With regard to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, 5,331 UNIFIL military and civilian personnel, including 363 women, participated in UNIFIL training sessions on gender mainstreaming. On 17 July, UNIFIL, with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), launched the second conflict resolution and

mediation training module, benefiting 34 women from Tyre. UNIFIL engaged with 17 women representing various associations on disaster risk reduction.

C. Disarming armed groups

31. As stated in my report on the implementation of resolution [1559 \(2004\)](#) of 15 October 2019 ([S/2019/819](#)), no progress was achieved with respect to the disarmament of armed groups. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintains precision missile and other military capabilities. The maintenance of arms outside the control of the State by Hizbullah and other groups in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory.

32. On 12 July, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, said that the north of Israel was "all in the line of our fire from all areas, from any spot in Lebanon and at any time needed". He added that there was also "the development of the resistance missile capabilities, in number much greater than 2006 and in quality, the precision weapons that are creating concerns for Israel and [the United States of America]".

33. In identical letters dated 25 August addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me ([A/73/988-S/2019/683](#)), and as stated in paragraph 15 of my report of 15 October 2019 ([S/2019/819](#)), 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 \(2006\)](#)".

34. In a speech on 25 August, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah deemed the incident the "first aggressive act since 14 August 2006", adding that it was "a violation of the rules of engagement that were established after the July war of 2006" and vowing that "from now on, we will confront the Israeli drones in Lebanon's skies". 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 young Lebanese 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 Shab'a Farms". On 1 September, he stated that the Hizbullah attack on Israeli targets was on behalf of the young Lebanese people from Hizbullah killed in the Israeli air raid of 24 August in the Syrian town of Aqraba.

35. Immediately following the drone incident in Beirut, the President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, condemned what he called "a blatant aggression on Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and another chapter of the continuous violations of resolution 1701". The Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, said, "the latest aggression and the heavy Israeli overflights that followed" were a threat to regional stability. The Prime Minister appealed to the need "to resort to wisdom, calmness and restraint" in order to "get out of the crisis and stop the Israeli attacks on Lebanon".

36. On 26 August, the President of Lebanon stated, "Lebanon reserves its right to defend itself because what happened was tantamount to a 'declaration of war' that allows us to resort to our right to defend our sovereignty, independence and our territorial integrity". On 27 August, the Higher Defence Council affirmed the right of the Lebanese to self-defence by all means and against any aggression.

37. As stated in paragraph 15 of my report of 15 October 2019 (S/2019/819), in announcing the findings of the Lebanese Armed Forces investigation, the Minister for 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”.

38. The Lebanese Armed Forces stated on 12 October that an Israeli drone violated Lebanese airspace over the same area in Beirut as on 25 August. The Lebanese Armed Forces subsequently deployed to the area.

39. On 10 September, stating that, “Lebanon and its Government respects 1701 and Hizbullah is part of the Government that respects this resolution,” the Secretary-General of Hizbullah said, “if Lebanon is attacked ... this would be responded to with the appropriate and proportionate response ... There are no red lines at all. This is over”.

40. On 9 October, the Prime Minister assured my Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, during her visit to Lebanon, of the Government’s commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) and the disassociation policy.

41. On 31 October, following media reports of the launch of an anti-aircraft missile from Nabatiyah, Hizbullah claimed responsibility for “confront[ing] an Israeli enemy drone, flying in the Lebanese airspace, with the appropriate weapons, forcing it to leave the Lebanese airspace”. The Israel Defense Forces tweeted that one of its unmanned aerial vehicles had been fired at, though not hit.

42. On 30 June in Alayh, Mount Lebanon, Progressive Socialist Party supporters protested a planned visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement. When the convoy of the Druze Minister of State for Refugee Affairs and member of the Lebanese Democratic Party, Saleh al-Gharib, encountered the protestors, two of the Minister’s bodyguards were killed in an exchange of fire. The Lebanese Armed Forces subsequently deployed 100 checkpoints and arrested at least 171 persons.

43. Several personal disputes, mostly in Baalbek, east Lebanon, escalated into shootings. Following a shooting in Baalbek on 28 July in which three people were killed and three injured, unknown assailants shot at a Lebanese Armed Forces patrol, injuring one soldier. On 12 September, an Internal Security Forces officer was injured while attempting to arrest illegal hunters in Akkar, north Lebanon.

44. The security situation in the Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon remained stable, notwithstanding an incident in Ein El Hilweh camp. On 2 August, the brother of a member of Asbat al-Ansar was allegedly killed by individuals affiliated with the Islamist Bilal Abu Arqub, leading to an escalation involving heavy weapons. Two of Bilal Abu Arqub’s sons were apprehended and handed over to the Lebanese Armed Forces, while Bilal Abu Arqub was killed during the ensuing clashes.

45. There was no progress in dismantling the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, which continue to compromise the sovereignty of Lebanon and impede the ability of the State to monitor and effectively control parts of the border.

46. The Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces made 23 terrorism-related arrests from 25 June to 15 October, including of suspected affiliates of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and of the former Nusra Front.

D. Arms embargo and border control

47. Allegations of arms transfers to non-State armed actors continued and are of serious concern. While taking allegations of arms transfers seriously, the United Nations is not in a position to substantiate them independently. Were the allegations proved to be correct, they would constitute a violation of resolution 1701 (2006). See annex III for allegations received during the reporting period.

48. As stated in paragraph 34 of my report of 15 October 2019 (S/2019/819), at the quarterly open debate of the Security Council on 23 July the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated: “The Port of Beirut is now the Port of Hezbollah.” He added that the Iranian “Quds Force exploits civilian airports in Damascus and Beirut as well as civilian land infrastructure and the Syria-Lebanon border to smuggle weapons, dual-use items and other capabilities”. On 26 July, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah rejected the allegations as “false claims that aim to impose control on the port and airport”.

49. 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”. On 30 August, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, stated: “We are determined to eliminate this dangerous project ... we will not sit by and allow our enemies to arm themselves with deadly weapons directed at us.” On 31 August, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah stated: “We have enough precision missiles that are sufficient for us, but we don’t have factories for the production of precision missiles.”

50. In identical letters dated 3 September addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me (S/2019/704), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hizbullah had “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”. The Permanent Representative of Israel again reiterated those concerns in identical letters dated 7 September addressed to the President of the Council and to me (S/2019/716). In identical letters dated 6 September addressed to the President of the Council and to me (S/2019/714), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations rejected all such claims (see annex III).

51. Reports of Hizbullah’s engagement in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic continued.

52. Lebanese authorities reportedly apprehended 285 Syrian nationals for illegally entering Lebanon from the Syrian Arab Republic, down from 587 during the previous period (S/2019/574, para. 41), following anti-smuggling operations conducted by the Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces since April along the northern and eastern borders. Subsequently, 87 Syrian nationals were apprehended crossing into south-east Lebanon. Some 8 to 12 illegal crossing points reportedly remain, down from approximately 140 such points reported prior to the 2017 Lebanese Armed Forces operations along the north-eastern border. On 17 October, the Council of Ministers adopted a strategy on integrated border management.

53. From 25 June to 15 October, Lebanese authorities arrested 12 individuals for human smuggling. On 18 September, the Lebanese Armed Forces intercepted the smuggling at sea of 65 persons.

54. Twenty Syrian nationals were reportedly arrested following four raids as part of counter-terrorism or anti-drug trafficking operations.

55. Lebanon became an official State party to the international Arms Trade Treaty on 7 August.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

56. UNIFIL cleared 16,834 m² of land and destroyed 1,945 anti-personnel mines along its main patrol roads and in the vicinity of Yarun and Naqurah (Sector West). The Mine Action Service conducted 108 quality-assurance monitoring visits.

F. Delineation of borders

57. No progress was made towards the delineation or demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. There was no progress in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. The Syrian Arab Republic and Israel have yet to respond to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area proposed in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) (S/2007/641, annex).

58. Further to my previous report ([S/2019/574](#)), the United States continued its efforts to establish a framework for negotiations towards the resolution of the maritime dispute between Lebanon and Israel.

G. Political and institutional stability

59. Large-scale, peaceful protests began countrywide on 17 October, including in the UNIFIL area of operations, as a broad cross-section of Lebanese society called for government change, just reforms, good governance, accountability for corruption, better management of the economy, the end of sectarian patronage and early parliamentary elections. The announcement of a tax on Internet-based free phone services appeared to spark the demonstrations.

60. On 21 October, the Prime Minister of Lebanon announced the adoption of an emergency reform package and the draft 2020 budget, with a 0.63 per cent deficit and no new taxes, for referral to Parliament. The reform measures included the halving of salaries of former and current ministers and members of Parliament, the abolition of the Ministry of Information and a number of public entities, a 70 per cent reduction in development fund budgets, a significant reduction in electricity costs, additional taxes on banking profits and measures to counter smuggling efforts. He announced additional support to the most vulnerable, funding for housing loans and the adoption of a pension fund by the end of 2019, and committed to adopting legislation to recover stolen funds and to establishing a national anti-corruption commission.

61. Acknowledging calls for early elections, the Prime Minister stated:

[You] should know that what you did has broken all the barriers and shook all the parties and movements and leaderships. The most important barrier that was broken was that of blind sectarian allegiance. You have restored the Lebanese national identity to its right place above the sectarian or confessional identity. I

hope this will be the beginning of the end of the sectarian system in Lebanon, a real beginning of the new Lebanon.

62. As protests continued, the Council of Catholic Bishops, with the participation of Orthodox bishops and the Grand Mufti of Lebanon expressed support for the “popular uprising”, while the Lebanese diaspora have protested worldwide. Women have played a prominent role in the protests, including by informally mediating between security forces and protestors as well as by driving political mobilization and activism. My Special Coordinator for Lebanon underscored to the constitutional, political and security leaders the importance of responding to the demands of the people by enacting thorough reforms, protecting the peaceful protests and commending the responsible behaviour of the security forces. On 22 October, members of the diplomatic community met with the Prime Minister.

63. On 29 October, the Prime Minister of Lebanon resigned. He stated: “Today, I reached a dead end and it has become necessary to make a big shock to face the crisis. I am going to ... submit the resignation of the Government to President Michel Aoun and to the Lebanese people in all regions, in response to the will of the many Lebanese who took to the streets demanding change.” The Government subsequently went into caretaker mode. In his midterm speech on 31 October, the President called for the formation of a new Government that included ministers with qualifications rather than political allegiances, vowed to fight corruption and called for citizens to avoid confrontations in the streets.

64. In the wake of the protests, banks, schools and many businesses closed. The security situation has remained largely calm, despite some instances of rioting and looting. The Lebanese Armed Forces kept some major roads open, including to the airport, and protected peaceful demonstrations, including during some counterdemonstrations. The Internal Security Forces reported injuries to 52 personnel. In Tyre, the day following an arson attack on a hotel on 18 October, a counterdemonstration by a group of armed individuals reportedly affiliated with the Amal Movement escalated into riots. The Amal Movement denied involvement.

65. Following the aforementioned clashes on 30 June in Alayh, the Council of Ministers did not reconvene until 9 August when the President oversaw a reconciliation meeting between the head of the Progressive Socialist Party, Walid Jumblatt, and the head of the Lebanese Democratic Party, Talal Arslan, in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, to agree on the judicial proceedings. The government deadlock resulting from the clashes generated widespread concern given the country’s deteriorating economic situation.

66. After signing the 2019 budget into law on 31 July, the President convened a forum on 2 September, after which officials and party leaders from across the political spectrum declared an “economic state of emergency”. On 15 October, the International Monetary Fund revised its estimates for the country’s growth downward from 1.3 to 0.2 per cent in 2019 and from 2.0 to 0.9 per cent in 2020.

67. On 19 July and 13 September in Beirut, the International Support Group for Lebanon issued statements urging the country’s leaders to promulgate a transparent plan for reform and to act expeditiously to adopt fiscal, structural, sectoral and governance reforms essential for the country’s economic recovery and growth.

68. As a result of the Economic Conference for Development through Reforms with the Private Sector, held in Paris in 2018, it was agreed that a coordination mechanism between donors and authorities, informed by continuous dialogue with the private sector and civil society, would be set up in Beirut, and regular follow-up meetings would be held in Beirut and in the capital cities of donor countries.

69. A three-year freeze on public sector recruitment and spending limits imposed on the defence sector delayed implementation by the Lebanese Armed Forces of its plans presented at the Rome II conference held in 2018. Accordingly, my Special Coordinator for Lebanon advocated for increased donor support.

70. On 22 August, the 10-member Constitutional Council (an electoral dispute resolution mechanism) was formally reconstituted after Parliament and the Cabinet finalized their 5-member nominations on 26 July and 22 August, respectively. On 25 September, the Council rejected the electoral challenge from the runner-up in the Tripoli by-elections, won by Dima Jamali of the Future Movement on 14 April.

71. The resignation of Hizbullah Member of Parliament Nawaf al-Moussawi on 19 July triggered by-elections for a Shiite seat in the Tyre district. Following the withdrawal of two of the three candidates prior to the scheduled 15 September election, on 12 September the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities cancelled the election and declared the Hizbullah-nominated candidate Sheikh Hassan Ezzeddine the winner. Of the by-elections for 81 municipalities and 27 mukhtars scheduled for 27 October, 7 uncontested candidates were declared winners by acclamation, while 77 municipal and 24 mukhtar elections were postponed.

72. On 16 July, the members of the national human rights institution and its related national preventive mechanism against torture were sworn in by the President. On 12 September, the Council of Ministers endorsed the country's first national action plan on resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security. On 20 September, the Government finalized national consultations in connection with the national strategy on the prevention of violent extremism.

73. The investigation by the Public Prosecutor into the case of Hassan Toufic Dika, referred to in my previous report ([S/2019/574](#), paras. 54–55), concluded. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has requested a copy of the Prosecutor's report.

74. As at 30 September, 938,008 refugees and asylum seekers were registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Lebanon, including 919,578 Syrian refugees and 18,430 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities. With new registrations of Syrian refugees by UNHCR suspended by the Government since 2015, the actual number of Syrians in need of international protection in Lebanon is unknown. The Government of Lebanon estimates there are 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. According to UNHCR, the decrease in the number of registered Syrian refugees since my previous report was mainly the result of natural deaths, onward movements, resettlement and voluntary returns to the Syrian Arab Republic.

75. Between January and September 2019, UNHCR was aware of 10,822 Syrian refugees having returned to the Syrian Arab Republic on their own, and 5,183 returning in groups, facilitated mainly by the General Directorate of General Security. The most frequently cited reasons by refugees for their return included a desire for reunification with family members, the improved security situation in some parts of the Syrian Arab Republic and difficult living conditions in Lebanon.

76. Without prior independent judicial or administrative review, 2,731 Syrians who entered or re-entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April were deported. My Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator communicated concern at the lack of procedural safeguards against refoulement in a letter dated 16 September to the President of Lebanon. Forced demolitions by the Lebanese Armed Forces of unauthorized hard structures in informal refugee settlements affected more than 1,600 persons.

77. As at 30 September, donors reported that \$1.012 billion had been disbursed and \$371 million had been committed for 2019. Funding committed for 2020 and beyond amounted to around \$378 million. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017–2020) is 37 per cent funded with \$981 million in available resources out of the overall appeal of \$2.62 billion, including \$778 million in funds received in 2019 and \$203 million carried over from 2018.

78. As at 20 October, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had a budget shortfall of \$89 million – the amount required to deliver its regular programmes and critical humanitarian services through 2019.

79. From 15 to 30 July, Palestinian refugees staged daily protests over the decision by the Minister for Labour, Camille Abousleiman, to enforce existing laws to curtail illegal foreign labour. On 22 August, the Council of Ministers established a ministerial committee, headed by the Prime Minister, to address the matter, but as of the time of writing it had yet to convene.

80. On 16 September, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon made public an indictment against Salim Jamil Ayyash relating to the attacks against Marwan Hamadeh, George Hawi and Elias El-Murr between 2004 and 2005, which the Tribunal deemed to be connected to the attack of 14 February 2005 resulting in the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and in the death or injury of other persons. Mr. Ayyash is also one of four accused in relation to the attack of 14 February 2005.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

81. UNIFIL continuously reviewed its security plans and risk prevention and mitigation measures in close coordination with Lebanese authorities. During the incident on 1 September, international staff members were instructed to remain in their residences. National staff members living in areas along the Blue Line were instructed to seek shelter at United Nations assembly points. In response to the protests that commenced on 17 October, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) and UNIFIL adopted alternate working modalities for staff.

82. UNIFIL conducted exercises to test the readiness of civilian and military personnel in the event of evacuation or relocation during a crisis. Strict security measures remained in place in the Arqub area (Sector East), including the use of armed escorts for official movements by United Nations personnel. UNIFIL facilitated 111 missions to the Arqub area by members of the United Nations country team.

83. UNIFIL continued to monitor proceedings in Lebanese military courts against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against the Mission. The Permanent Military Court held hearings on 5 July regarding the attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent in 2007 and in the case of terror intent opened in January 2014. The next hearings for both cases are scheduled for 2 March 2020. In the case of the attempted serious attack against UNIFIL in 2008, in which one of the four convicted perpetrators filed an appeal, a hearing was held on 17 October. The next hearing is scheduled for 7 January 2020. Following the arrest on 3 March of a suspect in relation to the three cases of serious attacks perpetrated against UNIFIL on 27 May, 26 July and 9 December 2011, the cases were referred on 3 June 2019 to the first investigating judge. In the 1980 case, in which two UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ireland were shot dead and one was injured, the hearing was postponed and a new date will be determined.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

84. As at 31 October, UNIFIL comprised 10,252 military personnel, including 587 women (6 per cent), from 45 troop-contributing countries; 236 international staff, including 88 women (37 per cent); and 584 national civilian staff, including 158 women (27 per cent). The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force comprised 6 vessels, 2 helicopters and 778 of the Force's military personnel, including 46 women (6 per cent). In addition, 50 military observers, including 4 women (8 per cent), from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization serve with Observer Group Lebanon, under the operational control of UNIFIL. The most senior military women serve at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; the most senior civilian woman serves at the D-2 level.

85. With regard to the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, the Mission's current focus is to assist in maintaining an environment conducive for a political process, improve capacity for the protection of civilians and develop the capacities of the Lebanese Armed Forces. Pursuant to the action plan to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers, UNIFIL has completed all of its planned 184 activities to increase standards of force protection.

86. In implementing the comprehensive performance assessment system, aimed at enabling strategic planning and the monitoring and assessment of peace operations, UNIFIL has developed its results framework to focus on three mandate performance areas: deterrence, de-escalation and physical protection; effective and accountable institutions; and conflict management.

87. Pursuant to resolution [2436 \(2018\)](#), UNIFIL has assessed 16 subordinate military units in 2019 in terms of their logistics, training and operational preparedness. Twelve units were assessed as having satisfactory operational readiness. Four were assessed as facing minor challenges relating to deficiencies in infrastructure and standard operational procedures, which are being addressed.

V. Conduct and discipline

88. In August, UNIFIL received one allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. The matter was referred to the concerned troop-contributing country and is under investigation. UNIFIL and UNSCOL reviewed preventive mechanisms on sexual exploitation and abuse to increase awareness-raising efforts for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse among civilian and military personnel. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to brief military commanders on their accountability in respect of conduct and discipline matters. The prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse network in Lebanon, led by the United Nations country team, and the sexual and gender-based violence working group, which includes international and national non-governmental organizations, continued to inform local communities of the expected standards of conduct for United Nations personnel and to promote the community-based complaints mechanism to raise awareness on the procedures for reporting all forms of misconduct involving United Nations personnel. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to promote a productive, harmonious and inclusive working environment, with emphasis on developing a prevention strategy for protection against sexual harassment and other forms of prohibited conduct.

VI. Observations

89. I am closely following the ongoing developments in Lebanon. I reiterate my appeal for calm and restraint and call upon all political actors to seek a political solution that will preserve the stability of the country and respond to the aspirations of the Lebanese people. Furthermore, I call upon all actors to avoid violence and respect the rights to peaceful assembly and expression.

90. The incidents that took place in Beirut on 25 August and across the Blue Line on 1 September raise serious concerns and demonstrate the need for progress in addressing some of the outstanding provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). I call upon the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure that the area along the Blue Line remains free of unauthorized weapons and is not used for hostile activities.

91. I am seriously concerned by the increase in Israeli flights over Lebanese territory, causing distress to Lebanese civilians. The repeated flights constitute a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). The recent developments underscore the risk emanating from such overflights. I reiterate my condemnation of all violations of Lebanese sovereignty and my calls for Israel to cease its violations of Lebanese airspace and to expedite the withdrawal of its forces from northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

92. I strongly condemn violations of resolution 1701 (2006) by land or air, and violations of the cessation of hostilities by both sides. I reiterate my urgent appeal to all parties to honour their commitments to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006), to cease violations and to respect the cessation of hostilities. This is necessary to maintain calm and to facilitate progress towards a permanent ceasefire.

93. Using established channels, the United Nations will continue supporting efforts to defuse tensions through dialogue, pursue opportunities for confidence-building and create a conducive environment for resolving underlying grievances in support of a permanent ceasefire. I strongly encourage both parties to seize upon the United States-led efforts in respect of the maritime dispute between Lebanon and Israel as an opportunity to build confidence, mitigate a potential source of conflict and contribute to needed sustainable economic development. The United Nations stands ready to exercise good offices to support the parties, at their request.

94. I further encourage the parties to reach agreement on outstanding points of contention along the Blue Line. Unilateral action in those areas escalates tensions and must be avoided. The parties should avail themselves of the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements.

95. The 1 September incident demonstrated the risks to the stability of Lebanon posed by the presence of weapons outside State control. The repeated self-acknowledged maintenance of unauthorized weapons outside State control by Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups represents a persistent violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Furthermore, I call upon the Government of Lebanon to take all actions necessary to ensure the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State.

96. The 30 June clash in Alayh again reflected the potential for confrontations posed by the maintenance of weaponry outside the control of the State. Noting that the incident prevented the Council of Ministers from undertaking its urgent duties, I welcome the efforts of the country's leadership to overcome the deadlock through dialogue.

97. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL in its entire area of operations, including along the full length of the Blue Line, remains critical. I note with concern that UNIFIL has not been able to access locations north of the Blue Line in connection with its investigation into the 1 September incident, including Green without Borders sites. I call upon the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Government of Lebanon to facilitate the Mission's access to all locations necessary for it to implement its mandate.

98. I am also concerned that UNIFIL has yet to gain access to all relevant locations north of the Blue Line, in relation to the discovery of tunnels crossing the Blue Line in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). I urge the Lebanese Armed Forces to expeditiously undertake and conclude all necessary investigations regarding the tunnels on the Lebanese side and to take preventive measures against similar occurrences in the future.

99. More than a year after the attack on peacekeepers in Majdal Zun, the United Nations has regrettably not been informed of any criminal proceedings against the attackers. I reiterate my call upon the Lebanese authorities to fulfil their obligation to ensure the safety and unimpeded freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel and full accountability for those who attack peacekeepers.

100. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to abide by its policy of disassociation, consistent with the Baabda Declaration, and for all Lebanese parties and nationals to cease their involvement in the Syrian conflict and other conflicts in the region. I condemn any movement of fighters and war materiel across the Lebanese-Syrian border in violation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

101. I reiterate the importance of moving forward with the commitment of the President to convene a national dialogue to determine a national defence strategy. It is important that such a process be Lebanese-owned and Lebanese-led, inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable, and in conformity with the country's international obligations. Earlier decisions of the national dialogue pertaining to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada should be implemented.

102. The efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces in support of the durable extension of State authority are welcome. In this regard, I welcome the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a strategy on integrated border management. I encourage further steps by the Government to curb smuggling activities, although such efforts should not occur to the detriment of strengthening Lebanese Armed Forces deployments in the UNIFIL area of operations. I welcome the identification of a future command post for the model regiment funded by the European Union, as well as other efforts undertaken by donors and the Lebanese Armed Forces to operationalize the regiment. Increased donor support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces and other security institutions is ever more relevant. Strengthening Lebanese State institutions remains central to ensuring stability. The United Nations will continue to support Lebanon in that regard, in particular in terms of building the capacity of its security institutions as the sole defenders of the country's sovereignty.

103. I welcome the continued discussions in the framework of the strategic dialogue between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well as their joint coordination efforts with the international community regarding the gradual transition of the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force responsibilities to the Lebanese Navy. I encourage the Lebanese Armed Forces to develop a practical and sustainable transition strategy, in line with resolutions [2433 \(2018\)](#) and [2485 \(2019\)](#).

104. I congratulate the Government on its adoption of a national action plan on the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), which marks an important step towards

the greater inclusion of, political participation by and the empowerment of women in Lebanon. I note the constructive role of women in the ongoing protests.

105. The continued hospitality and generosity of Lebanon towards Syrian refugees is remarkable and commendable. The United Nations will continue to support Lebanon in these efforts, while stressing the importance of respecting due process of law and the dignity of refugees as the United Nations and international partners collectively work towards creating enabling conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns. I thank donors for their enduring commitment in responding to the refugee crisis in Lebanon. I reiterate my appeal to donors to provide flexible funding to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan.

106. I reiterate that the support of Member States to enable UNRWA to continue its delivery of essential health, education and relief services remains crucial.

107. I reiterate my gratitude to all countries contributing military personnel and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon and encourage them to increase the number of women among military personnel in UNIFIL. I thank my Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ján Kubiš, and the staff of his office; the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Stefano Del Col, and the civilian and military personnel in UNIFIL under his leadership; and the members of the United Nations country team.

Annex I

Unauthorized weapons in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from 25 June to 31 October 2019

1. In resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), the Security Council called for the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as authorized in paragraph 11 of that resolution, deployed in that area.
2. As detailed in paragraph 6 of the present report, the most serious occurrence of unauthorized weapons in the area of operation took place on 1 September, when three anti-tank missiles were fired from an area between Marun al-Ra's and Aytarun towards a moving Israel Defense Forces armoured personnel carrier south of the Blue Line. Hizbullah claimed responsibility for the strike.
3. Furthermore, in connection with demonstrations in Tyre and Tibnin (both Sector West) on 18 and 19 October, UNIFIL observed individuals dressed in black carrying automatic rifles (AK-47 type or similar) while walking and driving through the streets of the towns. Videos of these heavily armed individuals clashing with protesters circulated widely on social media. On 23 October, a video of a local resident of Kafr Kila (Sector East) allegedly shooting at an Israeli drone was also widely shared on social media. UNIFIL has opened an investigation into the case.
4. In addition, between 25 June and 31 October, UNIFIL observed 260 instances of individuals carrying firearms in the area of operations, all but four of which involved individuals carrying hunting weapons. On 27 August, UNIFIL observed four individuals in Kawkaba (Sector East) walking into a store, one of them carrying a weapon of unknown type. On 3 September, an individual armed with a pistol stopped a UNIFIL patrol in Habis village in Yarun (Sector West). The pistol was not used or directed at anyone during the interaction. On 11 September, UNIFIL saw an assault rifle in a vehicle belonging to a group of individuals who had stopped a UNIFIL patrol in Blida (Sector East). The Lebanese Armed Forces later informed UNIFIL that the individuals were municipal police officers, though none of them had been wearing a uniform at the time of the incident. On 13 September, UNIFIL observed two individuals on a scooter northeast of Mays al-Jabal (Sector East) with two small-calibre rifles.
5. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces of each of the incidents of unauthorized weapons being observed in the area of operations. To date, UNIFIL has not been informed of any arrests in connection with the information provided by UNIFIL.

Annex II

Restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon from 25 June to 31 October 2019

1. In its resolution [2485 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council called on the Government of Lebanon to facilitate the access of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in line with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), while respecting Lebanese sovereignty.
2. During the reporting period, UNIFIL conducted an average of 6,669 monthly patrols, of which 1,336 (20 per cent) were foot patrols. UNIFIL conducted an average of 2,177 monthly patrols (33 per cent) along the Blue Line, both by vehicle (63 per cent) and on foot (37 per cent). UNIFIL also conducted an average of 43 helicopter patrols each month, as well as an average of 945 monthly inspection activities, including the operation of temporary and permanent checkpoints, and counter-rocket-launching operations. On average, UNIFIL conducted 41 per cent of its operational activities at night.
3. While the freedom of movement of UNIFIL was generally respected, UNIFIL was denied access to certain locations and, at some other locations, encountered temporary restrictions on its freedom of movement, as detailed below. All the incidents were reported to the Lebanese Armed Forces and duly followed up by UNIFIL.

Access to Green without Borders sites

4. As detailed in paragraph 8 of the present report, to date, the Lebanese Armed Forces are yet to enable full access by UNIFIL to the Green without Borders sites in Aytarun, close to Marun al-Ra's, which are relevant for its investigation of the 1 September incident.
5. In addition, the Lebanese Armed Forces are yet to facilitate access to a Green without Borders site in Ayta al-Sha'b, access to which was requested separately by UNIFIL on 23 September.
6. On 24 September, a UNIFIL team was stopped by five individuals in civilian clothes at the gate of the Green without Borders site in Ramiyah (Sector West). They were informed that the UNIFIL team had to be escorted by the Lebanese Armed Forces in order to visit the site, despite UNIFIL having had regular unrestricted access to that site since 2017. Subsequently, on 26 and 27 September and on 1 October, UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon visited the site without being accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. On 4 October, a UNIFIL team was able to access the site but was prevented from approaching Blue Line point B29 by two Green without Borders personnel who claimed that UNIFIL was not allowed to access the area unless it was accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Subsequently, on 9 October, a UNIFIL team visited the site in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces; however, UNIFIL is yet to regain unrestricted access to the Blue Line at this location.

Access to other locations

7. As detailed in one of my previous reports (see [S/2019/237](#), para. 2), since January 2019, UNIFIL has requested the Lebanese Armed Forces to facilitate access to the tunnel openings north of the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces is yet to provide access to those locations.
8. During the reporting period, the Lebanese Armed Forces objected to some patrol routes proposed by UNIFIL in order to expand its presence in areas outside main routes and municipal centres, on the grounds that these either were private roads or

involved areas of strategic importance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL continuously engages with the Lebanese Armed Forces to attempt to secure access to all areas relevant to its mandate implementation.

Freedom-of-movement incidents

9. During the reporting period, UNIFIL experienced three incidents involving movement restrictions in Blida (Sector East). The first two incidents occurred in connection with monitoring by UNIFIL of the Israel Defense Forces works south of the Blue Line in June and July. On 30 June, a group of eight individuals with four vehicles blocked the path of an Observer Group Lebanon patrol near Blida. The individuals hit the patrol vehicle repeatedly with baseball bats while threatening to set it on fire. There was no physical contact between the group and the Observer Group Lebanon personnel sitting inside the vehicle. About half an hour later, Lebanese Armed Forces intelligence personnel arrived and escorted the Observer Group Lebanon patrol to a nearby United Nations position.

10. The following day, on 1 July, four individuals stopped a UNIFIL team in the same area of Blida. The individuals demanded that the UNIFIL personnel leave the area and warned that “here everybody wants to kill United Nations personnel” because the organization was biased. The individuals claimed to have been involved in the 30 June incident detailed above and asked to see photos taken by the UNIFIL team. Ten minutes later, the UNIFIL team left the area.

11. On 2 July, UNIFIL met with a representative of the municipality who stated that the residents of Blida believed that UNIFIL was biased in its monitoring of the Israel Defense Forces works south of the Blue Line and that the peacekeepers were more concerned with documenting the actions of Lebanese civilians in the area than those of the Israel Defense Forces. In a meeting with UNIFIL on 5 July, the mayor of Blida stated that UNIFIL lacked impartiality and respect for private property.

12. On 11 September, east of Blida, a group of individuals in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL Blue Line patrol undertaken in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. One of the individuals spoke to the UNIFIL patrol in an aggressive manner and an assault rifle was seen in one of the group’s vehicles. Shortly after discussion with the group, the Lebanese Armed Forces advised the UNIFIL patrol to leave the area without providing any further explanation. UNIFIL followed up on the incident with the mayor of Blida and the Lebanese Armed Forces intelligence branch, both of which claimed that the patrol had been stopped by the municipal police because it had entered a residential area.

13. The situation in Blida remains difficult and UNIFIL experienced three denials of freedom of movement. Despite the fact that UNIFIL patrolled through Blida 612 times without problem during the reporting period, its access was limited to a few roads only. UNIFIL continues to engage with local officials in Blida to ensure its unrestricted movement. On 5 July, the UNIFIL Sector East commander met the mayor of Blida and raised concerns in this regard. The mayor in turn presented a list of grievances and alleged that the local population was suspicious of the intent of UNIFIL.

14. On 14 September, two individuals dressed in civilian clothes blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol northeast of Ayta al-Sha‘b (Sector West). The UNIFIL patrol was advised to leave the area without any further explanation. The individuals also took a video of the patrol using a mobile phone.

15. On 27 August, an Observer Group Lebanon patrol was stopped by five individuals in civilian clothes in the vicinity of Rashaf village close to Bint Jubayl (Sector West). One of them respectfully requested the patrol to not enter the village.

The team continued its patrol using an alternative route without further incident. On 28 August, UNIFIL met with the mayor of Rashaf, who explained that the patrol had been asked to redirect its movement to an adjacent road because of a gathering taking place next to the town mosque.

16. On 3 September, a UNIFIL patrol was stopped by two individuals, one of whom was armed with a pistol, at a road junction southwest of Habis village in Yarun (Sector West). The two individuals told the patrol that it could not pass, even as civilian vehicles were being allowed through. An hour later, the same UNIFIL patrol, this time accompanied by the Lebanese Armed Forces, was able to pass the point where it previously had been stopped. This may have been related to Ashura' commemorations being held across the area of operations at the time.

17. On 26 September, two individuals in civilian clothes blocked the road in front of a UNIFIL patrol in At Tiri (Sector West) using two motorbikes and asked the patrol to leave the area. The patrol had entered a narrow road normally not used for vehicular patrols. The UNIFIL patrol continued its movement using an alternative route.

18. On 7 August, a UNIFIL team was stopped by an individual in civilian clothes in Kunin (Sector West), who respectfully asked the team members to turn back, saying that they might experience problems if they continued. A second individual appeared and took photos of the UNIFIL vehicles' number plates. As the team turned around and drove back, it observed a motorbike following them for a few kilometres. On 8 August, UNIFIL met with the mayor of Kunin, who said that traffic had been diverted around the town centre owing to a funeral taking place.

19. On 25 September, two individuals in civilian clothes used a vehicle and a scooter to block the path of a UNIFIL patrol in Suwwanan (Sector East). The two individuals said that the patrol could not use the road it was on without being escorted by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Subsequently, two additional individuals in civilian clothes arrived and took pictures of the patrol. The UNIFIL patrol used an alternative route to continue its movement. The vehicle and scooter followed the patrol a short distance while taking pictures and recording video. The Lebanese Armed Forces were informed. Following the incident, UNIFIL met with the mayor of Suwwanan on 26 September to discuss the incident.

20. On 16 October, a group of 11 individuals in civilian clothing with six vehicles blocked the path of a UNIFIL patrol in the vicinity of Hanin (Sector West), which had stopped on the road because of a technical problem with one of the patrol's vehicles. The individuals spoke to the patrol in an aggressive manner. After a short conversation, the patrol leader was able to defuse the tension and the patrol was able to continue its activity.

Annex III

Implementation of the arms embargo

1. In paragraph 19 of its resolution [2485 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council recalled paragraph 15 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), according to which all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent, by their nationals or from their territories or using flag vessels or aircraft, the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to any entity or individual in Lebanon other than those authorized by the Government of Lebanon or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The United Nations continued to engage with Member States on allegations of weapons transfers and efforts to address such violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

2. In my letter dated 22 October to the President of Lebanon, I reminded the Government of the letter dated 30 October 2018 from my Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in which Lebanon had been requested to share with the Secretariat any pertinent information or developments related to the arms embargo.

3. Lebanon is now a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, the object of which is, inter alia, to “prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion”.

4. In a letter dated 3 September addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me ([S/2019/704](#)), the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hizbullah had “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 stated that the Government of Lebanon was “fully aware of the existence of Hizbullah’s precision-guided missile programme. Unfortunately, it has never taken any steps to shut down the programme. In some instances, it has even aided and abetted Hizbullah, concealing the missile programme from the eyes of the world.”

5. In a follow-up letter dated 7 September to the President of the Security Council and to me ([S/2019/716](#)), the Permanent Representative of Israel stated that, “on September 3, the Israel Defense Forces exposed a facility belonging to Hizbullah, located near Nabi Shit in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, designed to manufacture precision-guided missiles. The facility contained machinery designed to manufacture the motors and the warheads of missiles with an accuracy of less than 10 metres.” He also stated that “the components necessary for manufacturing and converting precision-guided missiles are transported from Iran to Syria by three primary routes: by ground – from Syria to Lebanon; by air – using civilian flights to the Rafic Hariri International Airport, in Beirut; and by sea – through the international port of Beirut.” He further stated that, “since 2016, Iran and Hizbullah have focused their efforts on converting existing rockets into precision-guided missiles on Lebanese soil. In order to sustain this conversion, Hizbullah established facilities across Lebanon, including in Beirut. The Commander of the Lebanon Corps in the Quds Force, Muhammad Hussein-Zada Hejazi, oversaw the project, under the guidance of Qassem Suleimani, High Commander of the Quds Force.” In addition, he said that, “to assist Hizbullah in these efforts, Iran [...] provides cutting-edge equipment and expertise to the manufacturing crews”. The information provided was accompanied by satellite imagery. While taking these allegations seriously, the United Nations is not in a position to verify this information.

6. In identical letters dated 6 September to the President of the Security Council and me ([S/2019/714](#)), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations stated that, “while rejecting all claims raised in the

aforementioned letter [S/2019/688], as well as the fabrications in another letter of the Israeli regime ... [S/2019/704], the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran fully supports the inherent right of all regional countries who were attacked by the Zionist regime to self-defence". In identical letters dated 23 October to the President of the Security Council and me, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran rejected the claims put forward in the identical letters dated 7 September 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the President of the Security Council and me (S/2019/716).

7. Further to earlier reporting (S/2018/1029) and paragraph 52 of the present report, the strategy on integrated border management was adopted at a meeting of the Council of Ministers on 17 October. The adoption of this strategy represented a positive step towards enhanced cooperation among border actors and improved border management practices at all legal border-crossing points (air, maritime and land). The Lebanese Armed Forces-led Border Control Committee has spearheaded the updating of the 2014 strategy through promoting cooperation and coordination among the four border security agencies in liaison with international actors.

8. On 6 September, the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces stated that 80 per cent of the border of Lebanon with the Syrian Arab Republic was under the control of the Lebanese Armed Forces, with 74 bases and watchtowers erected along the 365 km border and four land border regiments of well-trained soldiers equipped with reinforced capabilities deployed. According to the Minister of Defence, most illegal crossing points had been closed by the Lebanese Armed Forces. Furthermore, he stated that the lack of clear border delineation in some areas was what hindered the complete control of the eastern border of Lebanon. The adoption of the strategy on integrated border management will catalyse further support from the United Nations and donors to border management efforts. Initial discussions in the Council of Ministers on the establishment of a centre to collect information on smuggling activities are a welcome step towards the enhanced coordination that integrated border management requires.

9. As a result of efforts by the Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces to control the unauthorized transfer of weapons and related materiel by non-State armed groups and terrorist and criminal networks, the seizure of weapons was reported on at least five occasions during the reporting period. On 26 June, in raids in Aarsal (East Lebanon), the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested several suspects with alleged links to terrorist groups and confiscated weapons. On 21 August, in raids in Aarsal (East Lebanon), the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested an undisclosed number of Lebanese and Syrian nationals and confiscated weapons and ammunition. On 24 August, the Internal Security Forces arrested two of the most wanted criminals involved in shooting incidents, kidnapping operations and drug trafficking and confiscated weapons and ammunition. On 24 September, two Lebanese nationals were arrested by the Lebanese Armed Forces in Akkar (North Lebanon), for arms dealing. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition were confiscated.

10. Pursuant to resolution 1701 (2006), UNIFIL continued to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in establishing an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those belonging to the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. In close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL maintained 16 permanent and an average of 163 temporary checkpoints daily and conducted on average 293 counter-rocket-launching operations each month.

11. In accordance with paragraph 14 of resolution 1701 (2006) and pursuant to the 2006 request from the Prime Minister of Lebanon, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to assist the Lebanese Navy in monitoring the country's maritime border

and entry points to prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel into Lebanon by sea. In doing so, it hailed 3,340 vessels, of which 537 were inspected and cleared by the Lebanese authorities. No smuggling attempts were detected during these activities. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force also continued to support the capacity-building of the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy through 202 training sessions aimed at improving common operational standards for monitoring and hailing activities.

12. The United Nations remains committed to supporting overall compliance by the parties with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) in all its provisions and to advancing its implementation. This applies to the implementation of the arms embargo under paragraph 15 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and any decision that would be adopted by the Council in this regard. I look forward to continued dialogue with the Security Council and its members on furthering our joint goal of the full implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#).

Annex IV**Efficiencies and effectiveness between the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon**

1. Further to my letter dated 31 December 2018 ([S/2018/1182](#)) addressed to the President of the Security Council and my previous report on the implementation of Security Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) ([S/2019/574](#)) and in line with paragraphs 8 and 13 of resolution [2485 \(2019\)](#), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) are taking steps to increase their coordination and enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in line with my recommendations.
2. During the reporting period and following regular consultations led by my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and by the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, a strategic forum between UNIFIL and UNSCOL was created to institutionalize coordination and collaboration between the mission political components. On 3 October, UNIFIL and UNSCOL held the first meeting of the strategic forum, aimed at deepening collaboration between the two missions to develop a joint assessment of the situation in Lebanon, improve information-sharing, foster strategic thinking and streamline early warning and preparedness mechanisms.
3. During the escalation of tensions in late August and early September, both missions worked collaboratively towards preventing conflict and de-escalating tensions, including through the complementary good offices of my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and liaison by the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander with their respective political and military counterparts in both Lebanon and Israel, as well as through alignment of messaging. The forum met again on 17 October to further elaborate this joint assessment of the implications of the recent escalation and regional tensions for the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). The forum will continue to meet on a regular basis to produce shared assessments aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of both missions.
4. UNIFIL and UNSCOL continued to encourage a coordinated donor approach, including through joint participation in donor consultations and alignment of messaging, with regard to existing pledges of support for the deployment of the model regiment and the build-up of the Lebanese Armed Forces-Navy.
5. Further to my previous report and in support of completing the assessment required by the Headquarters Committee on Contracts on alternative rental of office premises in Beirut before the end of 2019, the premises working group of UNSCOL undertook an analysis of potential options. On behalf of UNSCOL, UNIFIL has solicited a preliminary, informal market analysis of commercial spaces, which is currently under way. An internal review of the options is expected to inform my Special Coordinator's assessment of the operational and staffing impacts of each respective option and to determine the most viable way forward.