

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

Naqoura,
9 August 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Exchanges of fire continued in the past 24 hours with high intensity throughout the UNIFIL area of operations. Hezbollah fired rockets from various locations. The IDF intensified shelling and aerial bombardment across the south, especially in the areas of: Labouneh - south east of Naqoura; At Tiri in the central sector; and Khiyam in the eastern sector.

The IDF has maintained their presence and continued to operate inside Lebanese territory in different areas. It seems that the IDF attempted to make limited advances towards Labouneh, in the area west of Bint Jubayl, towards Qantarah, and in the direction of Khiyam. Ground exchanges were reported in these areas during the night and this morning. It was reported that the IDF demolished ten houses in Mays al Jabal. The IDF reinforced their presence in the general areas of Marwahin in the western sector, and Sarda in the eastern sector. There were also reports about a concentration of IDF troops in the Manara and Metulla areas on the Israeli side.

Two artillery rounds from the Israeli side impacted directly inside a UNIFIL position in the area of At Tiri yesterday evening, causing extensive material damage, but no casualties. During the same period, 38 artillery rounds from the Israeli side impacted in the vicinity of this position. There were two other incidents of firing from the Israeli side close to UN positions in the area of Addaisseh and Kafr Shuba. Hezbollah fired rockets from the vicinity of UN positions in At Tiri and Tibnin. UNIFIL strongly protested all the incidents to the Lebanese and Israeli authorities respectively.

All UNIFIL positions remain permanently occupied and maintained by the troops. Eighteen UN positions, including the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, are currently in the areas where the IDF operates inside Lebanese territory, and where intensive shelling and ground exchanges are taking place. UNIFIL's freedom of movement and the ability to re-supply positions and provide humanitarian assistance were denied because of the lack of security clearance from the IDF and due to the intensification of hostilities on the ground, including shelling and aerial bombardment. UNIFIL forward positions in the eastern sector are facing critical shortages of fuel, and the ability to re-supply them in the next 48 hours is vital to maintaining these positions.

The IDF has not responded to the repeated request by UNIFIL to reopen the road between Tyre and Beirut by putting up another provisional bridge over the Litani River.

The IDF confirmed to UNIFIL that any movement of vehicles south of the Litani River is prohibited, with the exception of UNIFIL and Red Cross vehicles. The IDF may target all other vehicles.

A humanitarian convoy to distribute food in the villages in the western sector, and other humanitarian activities planned by UNIFIL, could not proceed for the last three days due to the denial of consent by the IDF. UNIFIL provided a limited supply of fuel for water pumping in the village of Rmeich today. Around 175 Lebanese civilians remain stranded in the Hula village, and the efforts to relocate them by the Red Cross are still ongoing.