

For Free Distribution | Not For Sale



al-janoub

May 2016 - no.18



UNIFIL
magazine

Building
blocks
for peace



Southern children learn Origami

In Japan, the art of folding of paper is called Origami. It is not only fun, but very useful too.

A series of Origami learning sessions for children was organized by UNIFIL's Civil Affairs office in cooperation with an organization called All One, which promotes Japanese culture in Lebanon. The children were between eight and 13 years old and some had learning difficulties.

Folding paper is a type of art therapy as it strengthens hand muscles helping children develop motor skills, and can aid in rehabilitating those with hand injuries, arthritis and strokes.





Investing in peacekeeping for today and beyond

In late September 2015, more than 50 world leaders met at a remarkable summit on the sidelines of the 70th session of the General Assembly to pledge support and new contributions to UN peacekeeping. The summit exceeded all expectations, with governments pledging some 40,000 troops as well as much-needed critical enablers including more than 40 helicopters and other aircraft, 29 engineering units, 32 policing units and 12 field hospitals. This historic show of support did not materialize overnight. It was the culmination of a continuous and consistent global effort over the last few years, in which member states across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas lent their political weight to generate capabilities to fill critical gaps identified by the UN. These pledges, if realized, would make a stronger and more resilient UN peacekeeping for the people and communities we serve.

Why this surge of support now? UN peacekeeping has grown steadily in both scope and scale since the end of the Cold War. We are currently operating 16 peacekeeping missions across four continents serving a total population of over 125 million people. But peacekeepers have been increasingly targeted by armed groups including terrorist elements. In Mali alone, 42 peacekeepers have been killed and 126 injured since July 2013 [Editor's note: the figure is as of November 2015. The number of fatalities has increased to 81 as of 4 April 2016]. Today the blue helmets operate in remote and austere environments, confronting asymmetric and complex threats each day in areas of political instability with little peace to keep and large vulnerable populations to protect. While violence and conflict are the primary threats, peacekeepers are often deployed in complex and dangerous contexts that require specialized skills, modern equipment, advanced technology and well trained forces.

In these increasingly challenging missions, we are also being asked to do more. The mandates entrusted to us by the Security Council have become broader and more complicated. Over 95 percent of our peacekeepers now work in missions with a protection-of-civilians mandate. In South Sudan, we protect in our bases some 185,000 internally displaced persons fleeing conflict and violence. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, our peacekeepers are actively engaged in fighting a number of vicious armed groups

which have pillaged villages and murdered hundreds of civilians in the east of the country. A great deal is at stake. Why do we need the support? Put simply, real challenges require real capacities. Highly trained military, police and civilian personnel enabled by technology and aviation support will allow UN peacekeeping to conduct more effective and efficient operations. A key element to this approach is the use of new technologies that can help us monitor ceasefires more efficiently, enhance the safety and security of our personnel, provide early warning and ultimately better protect civilians. But we also need dedicated personnel trained to the highest standards of professionalism. Being a peacekeeper is no easy task.

Where are we going from here? As US President Barack Obama noted at the summit, our partnership with member states "has often depended on the willingness of courageous UN peacekeepers to put their lives on the line in war-torn corners of the world." The Secretary-General has warned of a divide between troop contributing countries, the Security Council and major donors. Similarly, we have long urged member states to be at a higher level of readiness so that we don't have to "build the ship while sailing it." The pledges made now need to be translated into tangible contributions that match needs and requirements on the ground.

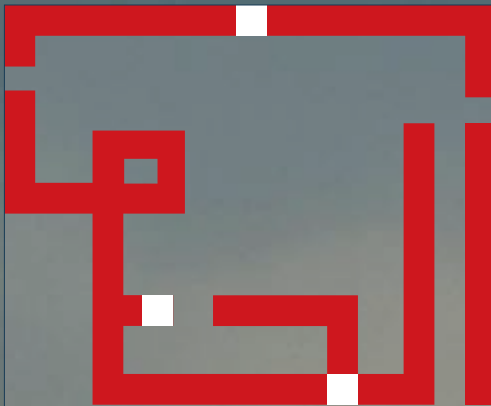
Our engagement will not stop at the summit. In October 2015 in New York, I held a meeting with the member states that committed their support to review the summit's implications and how to move forward with the contributions and pledges. Most of the pledges generated at the summit cannot currently be deployed to our ongoing missions, however, having a reserve of available contributions will help us provide UN peacekeeping with greater predictability and the capacity to respond to crises rapidly and effectively. We will continue to work with world leaders and countries from around the globe to meet future needs and enhance our capabilities for the future.

Peacekeeping requires strength in unity and a commitment to improving rapid deployment, responsiveness, performance and accountability. This is the backbone in our efforts to contribute to sustainable peace and stability. Peacekeeping is a unique global partnership, and we will only succeed with the firm political support and commitment of resources from our troop and police contributing countries.

Hervé Ladsous
Undersecretary-General, U.N. Peacekeeping Operations

A version of this article appeared in The Daily Star on 4 November 2015, on page 4.

CONTENTS



'Al-Janoub'

is published by **UNIFIL Office of Public Information**

Publisher
Imran Riza

Editor-in-Chief
Andrea Tenenti

Senior Editor and Editorial Advisor
Tilak Pokharel

Senior Editors
Joumana Sayegh
Tana Halaszova

Editorial Advisor
Hassan Siklawi

Production/Design
Zeina Ezzeddine

Editorial Support
Adib Al Moussa

Photographers
Ghifar Charafeddine
Pasqual Gorris Marcos
UN Photo

Contributors
Aoibheann O'Sullivan
Hassan Siklawi
Hiba Monzer
Rania Bdeir
Rania Harb
Tilak Pokharel
Yury Kushko

Al-Janoub contact

Tel. +961 1 926 441
+961 1 926 442

Email unifil-pio@un.org
Fax +961 1 827 016

Except where identified by the copyright symbol ©, articles in *Al-Janoub* may be reprinted without permission on condition that two copies of the publication containing the reprint are sent to the Editor-in-Chief of *Al-Janoub*.

The logo 'Al-Janoub' is a calligraphic representation of the word *Al-Janoub* in Arabic

Colour correction and printing



Disclaimer

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNIFIL concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city area or of its authorities, or concerning delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the policies or positions of UNIFIL, nor does the citing of trade names or commercial processes constitute endorsement.

Editorial 3

Investing in peacekeeping for today and beyond

Chronicle 5

'UN is a blessing' 6 | 7

Retired Norwegian peacekeepers seek peace of mind in south Lebanon 8

UNIFIL's Spanish battalion: 9

Raising awareness about hazards of mines

Centre spread 10 | 11

UNTSO: the first UN peacekeepers 12 | 13
continue to uphold peace with a smile

Qana has best evidence of UNIFIL's positive role: 14
Mayor

Market walk: 15

Deepening ties with communities

Did you know? 16

China

UN contributes to peace and stability: 17

a gender perspective

UN Secretary-General 18

Ban Ki-moon visits UNIFIL HQ

Fire safety drill held with Lebanese Civil Defence



UNIFIL's Fire Safety Unit conducting a three-day training in Naqoura in collaboration with the Lebanese Civil Defence Centre in south Lebanon.

The Fire and Safety Unit of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) recently joined forces with Lebanese civil defence units in conducting a joint drill in the Nabatiyeh governorate as part of the UN mission's efforts toward capacity-building and supporting extension of State

authority in south Lebanon.

The training brought together 14 persons from five centres from UNIFIL's Area of Operations – Meiss el Jabal, Markaba, Al Taibe, Frun and Qabriha. They practiced the use of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus and the strategy and tactics in

internal firefighting, control of a flashover situation and ventilation.

UNIFIL's Civil Affairs team also equipped civil defence units in Meiss el Jabal, Al Taibe and Markaba, and intends to equip at least one centre per year with personal protective equipment sets, firefighting and rescue tools.

CIMIC Projects

A total of 203 CIMIC projects were completed for a total amount of approximately \$3.15 million during 2015.

- 26 related to capacity building for about \$368,000
- 49 related to education for about \$476,000
- 7 related to environment for about \$108,000
- 12 related to health for about \$110,000
- 1 related to local economy for about \$5000
- 34 related to power for about \$647,500
- 23 related to roads for about \$556,000
- 30 related to social for about \$416,000
- 17 related to water for about \$360,000
- 4 related to other topics for \$104,000

Currently, 33 CIMIC projects are ongoing in the UNIFIL Area of Operations, with a total amount of \$500,000.

UNIFIL Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) projects



A UNIFIL Malaysian peacekeeper with a group of students in Deir Kifa, south Lebanon.

UNIFIL projects address some of the most pressing needs of the population and support local authorities while strengthening the links

between UNIFIL and local communities. Be it fixing a road, providing medical, dental or veterinary assistance, educational courses or capacity-

building (sewing, language, computer or first-aid lessons), these projects are leaving their imprint on the lives of people in southern Lebanon.

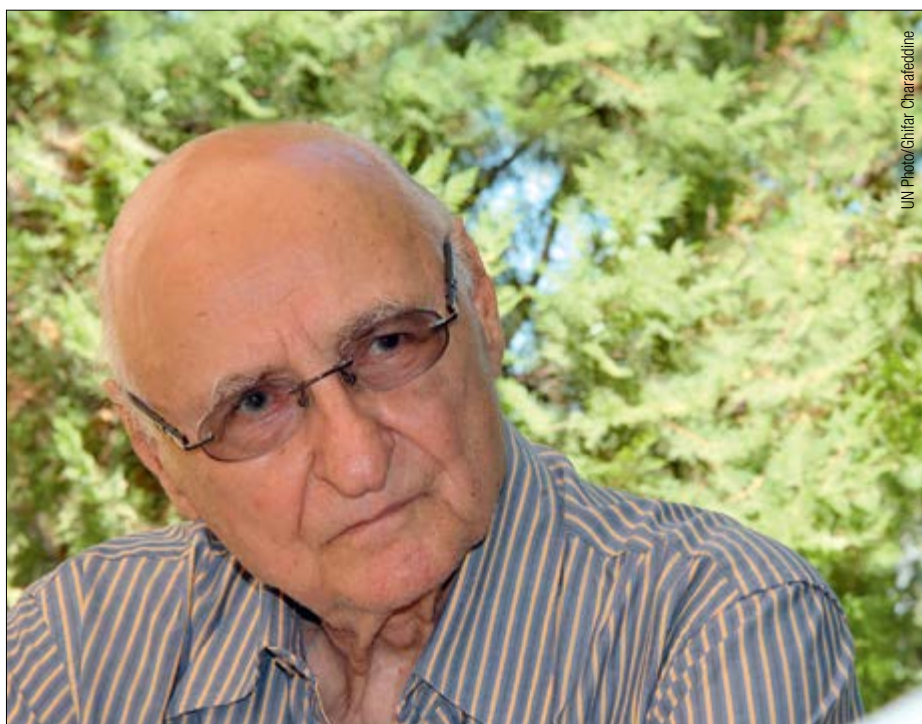
CIMIC Activities

In 2016, from 1 January to 2 April, more than 3,500 activities were carried out, including:

- 34 per cent related to sanitary and health assistance (including treatment to 9,964 patients which also included 2,188 Syrians and 85 Palestinians)
- 28 per cent related to liaison and meetings with local and religious authorities, school directors, directors of social centres, NGOs, contractors. The liaisons focused on CIMIC projects, organization of market walks, road traffic issues, scheduling of health consultations, situation assessment, so a way of confidence building.
- 25 per cent education activities (mainly language courses).
- Additionally, from 1 January 2016 to 8 April 2016, troop contributing countries did 70 donations.

‘UN is a blessing’

When the Charter of the United Nations (UN) was being signed in San Francisco in 1945, Khalil Makkawi was a high school student. He could not have imagined that one day he would work with this newly formed international organization as Ambassador of Lebanon. *“Al-Janoub”* met Ambassador Makkawi to hear about his diplomatic career and his work with the UN.



“When there is any problem between any countries or a problem related to the global security or peace, it (UN) is the place where they meet and try to solve their issues in a peaceful way.”

The Makkawi family was in the shipping business, but young Khalil chose to study political science at the American University of Beirut (AUB). He was also interested in sports.

“I was a basketball player,” he said, “and in my capacity as a sportsman, I travelled so much with Lebanese teams abroad, to Egypt, Greece, Spain, etc. I loved travelling. And studying political science, I thought that the best way to see the world is to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and become a diplomat.”

He did so by joining the Foreign Service in 1957, was appointed Secretary in the

Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the UN in 1959 and became the Deputy Chief of Mission just two years later.

During his time in New York, he completed a Ph.D. at Columbia University and wrote his thesis on the UN’s role in accelerating the process of decolonization. “At that time I was sitting in the fourth committee, which dealt with the problems of decolonization, which helped me a lot in my research,” he said.

In 1990 he returned to New York as Lebanon’s Permanent Representative to the UN for a period of five years. These appointments

gave Ambassador Makkawi the unique opportunity to see the UN evolve as an organization over several decades, growing from a small, ambitious organization of 51 member states at its inception to more than 190 during his lifetime.

It also gave him a front-row seat at some major world events such as the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. He recalls the tension at the UN Security Council when the US Ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson II, questioned Ambassador Valerian Zorin of the Soviet Union on the placement of missiles in Cuba.

"The US Ambassador at that time brought maps, based on images taken from space, with all the locations of the Russian missiles on the island," he recalled the historic moment he was a witness to. He vividly remembers the US envoy's pointed question to his Soviet counterpart: "You are saying that you have not (seen the missiles)? Here are the maps. What can you say now?"

"It was a clear sign of a confrontation between the two superpowers that might have led, as many feared at the time, to a nuclear war," he said. "The UN played its part to avert war by resolving the crisis diplomatically, to everyone's relief."

A significant moment in his career came when he spoke against repealing UN Resolution 3379 that equated Zionism with racism.

"At that time, I was ambassador to the UN and the head of the Arabic group of nations within that international body," he said. "In that capacity, I voiced against such a move, stressing in my speech at the General Assembly, that it would be a terrible mistake in the history of the UN. Never before was any incident or resolution abolished."

Despite his passionate appeal, the majority (111 nations) voted in favor of repealing 3379.

In the course of his career, Ambassador Makkawi met many of the eminent world leaders including former US President Ronald Reagan, British monarch Queen Elizabeth II and Pope John Paul II. One such memorable meeting was with Dr. Charles Malek, Lebanon's first ambassador to the United States and to the UN in 1945.

Dr. Malek was instrumental in crafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), alongside former US First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and fellow diplomats. "When people speak about human rights issues, which is a major topic nowadays, we always mention Dr. Charles Malek and his contribution," he said.

Ambassador Makkawi believes the UN holds a place of relevance in the arena of international relations. "At the United Nations, which comprises all the countries, the whole world meets on a small scale to negotiate. When there is any problem between any countries or a problem related to the global security or peace, it is the place where they meet and try to solve their issues in a peaceful way," he said.

He pointed out that the UN's work is not limited to matters of security, peace and conflict-resolution. "(The UN) comprises more than a dozen of specialized agencies, like



WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF that have been playing a major role in trying to help humanity in different ways. I always say, if there was no UN, we should have created it for the world we are living in."

In Lebanon, Ambassador Makkawi believes that the UN, through its peacekeeping efforts, has managed to limit and de-escalate war in the region. He also spoke of the important role UNIFIL plays in the south.

"If we don't have UNIFIL in the south of Lebanon today, if UN Security Council Resolution 1701 had not been adopted, what would be the situation like? The danger and the confrontation would be much bigger. So if you look from this angle, it becomes clear that the UN has been playing a positive role in the region, even though it did not solve the problem, but it contained it," he said.

His interaction with the UN in Lebanon began when he was Advisor to the Minister of Defense, and acted as Coordinator to liaise

with the UN in the south on mining activities. He was impressed with the sensitive and dangerous nature of demining work. "Once I sat and looked at this gentleman who was approaching the spot where the mine was placed, and how he very carefully dug and cleaned the area, so he could bring the booby trap from the hole," he said.

He reiterated that the very presence of UNIFIL in south Lebanon has made a difference to peace and development in the region. "The UN peacekeeping forces in south Lebanon, as I said, are playing a major part in keeping this area as much quiet as they can. The UN is also playing a big role in helping the people in many fields, in medicine, in social work, so I think the UN is doing a great job in south Lebanon."

When asked about the value the UN creates, Ambassador Makkawi said, "I always receive this question about the value of the United Nations, and I say that it is in fact a blessing to the world."

Yury Kushko - Public Information Office

Retired Norwegian peacekeepers seek peace of mind in south Lebanon

"I keep coming back to south Lebanon searching for peace of mind," said Erik Hovet, a former Norwegian peacekeeper who previously served in UNIFIL's Norwegian Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) Platoon, in the southern town of Ibl Saqi in 1980.

Mr. Hovet was one of the hundreds of Norwegian peacekeepers who served in south Lebanon during Norway's 20-year service with UNIFIL from 1978 to 1998. As part of UNIFIL's 5,000 troops, Norway contributed 800 troops through 44 battalion rotations. However, relations between the Norwegians and the local population did not end with the withdrawal of the Norwegian battalion.

For instance, Louis Assi is a Lebanese national from a small town called Ibl Saqi in Marjayoun district (south-eastern Lebanon) who developed strong ties with the Norwegian peacekeepers during their deployment with UNIFIL. Mr. Assi has now taken the charge of coordinating activities and annual visits for the Norwegian Veterans for World Operations to south Lebanon. One of the activities is the celebration of Norway's National Day (17 May) every year in Ibl Saqi.

In 2015, more than 30 Norwegian veterans came to south Lebanon to celebrate National Day. Many of them were accompanied by their families.

Dr. Harald Hope, who had served as a medical officer with UNIFIL in 1979 and 1981, returned to Lebanon after 35 years in order to be a part of last year's celebration. Recalling his first time in Lebanon, Dr. Hope said, "Upon my arrival to Lebanon in 1979, I was shocked to see the massive damages in the houses in south Lebanon, where areas were poorly populated."

"Coming back to Lebanon with my family this year, I can see that south Lebanon has better roads, hotels, fuel stations, infrastructure, and many new houses," he added, with his face beaming.

Another veteran, Leiv Olsen, was a traffic controller with UNIFIL in 1979, 1982, 1983 in the town of Rashaya al-Fukhar. "The best thing that happened to me while I was in Lebanon is the relationship with the people here," Mr. Olsen said.

"We did not live in barracks at that time; we lived inside the houses in the towns, and this



A Norwegian soldier at an observation post in the town of Ibl Saqi in Southern Lebanon on 5 April 1978.

is one of the reasons that made me come back to Lebanon again," he explained.

Recalling an endless series of memories from 30 years ago, veteran Erik Hovet spoke of serving in an APC platoon in Ibl Saqi in 1980. "We had to carry out 100 hours of surveillance per week, including checkpoints, patrolling and so on," he said.

"The memories in Lebanon never hurt me; they are always relaxing to my mind. Over the past 30 years, I was in Lebanon every day, thinking about my friends and life in Lebanon," Mr. Hovet added, as he gazed upon the green hills of Ibl Saqi, taking a walk down his memory lane.

Describing his relationship with Norwegian peacekeepers and veterans, Mr. Assi said, "What they built in the past constituted the foundation for UNIFIL's mission in south Lebanon later. They were civilians and the military at the same time."

He also spoke of so-called "Norway House", which was established in Ibl Saqi, along with a museum that showcases old photographs

and a Record of Honour for visitors who come to the town from Norway. Wreaths are laid every year at Norway Park, located in the centre of the town, in honour of Norwegian peacekeepers who died in south Lebanon.

UNIFIL was created following the adoption of the UN Security Council adopted resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), in which it called upon Israel to immediately cease its military action and withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory.

UNIFIL was intended to fulfil three defined purposes: confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces; restoring peace and security; and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area in addition to ensuring the safety of the Lebanese in the mandated area.

The first UNIFIL troops arrived in the area on 23 March 1978. Norway was one of the participating countries at that time, along with Sweden, Nepal, Ghana, Finland, France, Italy, Ireland and Fiji.

Hiba Monzer - Public Information Office

UNIFIL's Spanish battalion:

Raising awareness about hazards of mines

A hand-held metal detector hovers a few centimetres above the ground, emanating a high-pitched electronic tone as its user gingerly scans the ground for mines. Suddenly the pitch of the sound escalates, alerting the handler to a metal object below.

Typically this metal detector is used by UNIFIL Spanish battalion's demining unit, but, in this case, it was being tested by local high school students in south-east Lebanon, as part of a mine awareness outreach activity organized by UNIFIL in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces.

As he watches the next young person take their turn in scanning the ground with the device, Major Ruiz de Ona from UNIFIL's Spanish Battalion comments, "We want to show how UNIFIL is working for a better Lebanon and to show the population the danger of mines and unexploded ordnances; it's a real danger for children."

According to the UN Mine Action Service in Lebanon (UNMAS Lebanon), "a great number" of landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and cluster munitions continue to threaten the civilian lives in this country that has been in war since the late 1970s. An unofficial estimate has put the mine-contaminated land area, following the 2006 war, at 48.1 million square metres, which is roughly seven times the size of the city of Saida.

In the wake of the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from southern Lebanon in 2000, the Mine Action Coordination Centre for South Lebanon (MACC-SL) was established within UNIFIL to commence the clearing of hundreds of thousands of mines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs) left behind by the war. Since the 2006 war, MACC-SL has coordinated the mine and cluster bomb clearance efforts in collaboration with various government entities and NGOs.

One of the significant achievements of UNIFIL's de-mining work is the opening of safe lanes through minefields to reach the Blue Barrel points along the Line of Withdrawal with Israel, clearing 103,620 square metres.



A local student from south Lebanon gets a chance to use the metal detector that locates mines underground.

As of 1 March 2013, UNIFIL demining teams completed over 80,000 square metres of mines and over 4.6 million square metres of battle area.

Raising awareness in local communities in southern Lebanon about the risks posed by UXOs and ERWs forms a major component of UNIFIL demining work, and regularly teaching school students how to recognize and react when they encounter these dangerous devices has been an effective tool to that end.

At this event in south-east Lebanon, the UN peacekeeping mission's engineers also set up a physical exhibition of various types of UXOs that have been found by their team in recent years. The range and style of these dangerous devices is diverse and scary. In many instances their threat is masked by a simple and innocuous design.

As he holds up a small green cube, Lieutenant Luis Enrique Alejo Rico says, "We have a mine which is a little box, so it's like a toy

for children. It's very important for them to know that this could even kill them. That's why we are going to do this lesson for them. Furthermore we have some parts of projectiles. Some of these don't have an explosive charge but they have phosphorus and it's very dangerous for everyone."

Groups of students arrive and in turn Lt. Alejo Rico patiently explains the various types of mines and the risks they carry.

Fortunately the exhibition in the south-eastern Lebanon hits home and after his talk Jana Hajali, a student from a local school, shares what she has learned about mines: "They told us that they come in different sizes and colours and the main warning they gave us was not to touch anything if we find them because we're very prone to finding them. And to call an adult, because they know the types of authorities they need to call."

Aoibheann O'Sullivan & Tilak Pokharel -
Public Information Office





On the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness, which falls on 4 April, UNIFIL's Cambodian de-miners demonstrated (shown in this image) to a group of school children in Tyre, South Lebanon, on 9 April 2016. A great number of landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and cluster munitions continue to threaten civilian lives in Lebanon. Raising awareness in local communities about the risks posed by unexploded ordnances and explosive remnants of war forms a major component of UNIFIL's demining work.

UNTSO:

the first UN peacekeepers continue to uphold peace with a smile

The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) is the first peacekeeping mission of the United Nations (UN) and is still active today. In marking 70 years of the founding of the UN, *“Al-Janoub”* spoke to UNTSO Communications Officer Commandant Kevin McDonald to learn more about UNTSO’s history, their close coordination with UNIFIL and why it remains relevant.

UNTSO was formed on 29 May 1948 when the UN Security Council called for cessation of hostilities in Palestine through UN Security Council Resolution 50 (1948). The UN Security Council decided that the truce should be supervised by a UN mediator, assisted by

international military observers, who arrived in the region shortly afterwards.

Today in the Middle East, groups of UNTSO military observers are attached to the peacekeeping forces in the area: the UN

Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). A group of observers remains in Sinai to maintain a UN presence in that peninsula. In addition, UNTSO maintains offices in Beirut and Damascus.



An OGL team patrolling along the Blue Line near Kafr Chouba, South Lebanon.

UNTSO: first boots on Lebanese soil

UNTSO military observers came to Lebanon in 1948 when the UN Security Council called for the parties directly involved in the conflict in Palestine to establish an armistice - the Israel/Lebanon Mixed Armistice Commission (ILMAC). Following this, in 1949, through UN Security Council Resolution 73 (1949), UNTSO military observers were tasked over four Armistice Agreements between the four Arab nations - Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic - and Israel.

Thus UNSTO observers were stationed in each of the countries including Lebanon, where they are known as Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) and maintain observation posts on the Lebanese side of the border.

According to Comdt. McDonald, OGL's mission is to observe and report activities which threaten peace in south Lebanon and sustain a capability to detect encroachments of the Line of Withdrawal, also known as the Blue Line. OGL assists UNIFIL in achieving its mandate, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 425 (1978) and continues to observe the Armistice Demarcation Line (ADL).

This assistance dates back to 1978 when UNIFIL was first established. UNTSO was the main party that assisted in the establishment of UNIFIL. UNTSO's Chief of Staff was the acting UNIFIL Force Commander in UNIFIL's early days, while UNTSO liaison teams acted as local guides for UNIFIL on their initial deployment.

Comdt. McDonald explained that after the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, OGL was still able to operate in the Israel-controlled - or occupied - areas. Its observers were the eyes and ears for UNIFIL's Force Commander at the time, providing regular updates on the situation and liaising with the parties present in the occupied areas.

OGL was also in charge of patrolling the area between the edge of UNIFIL's area of operations and the ceasefire line at the time, commonly known as the ICA (Israeli Controlled Area).

OGL is currently under operational authority of Chief of Staff/Head of Mission of UNTSO and under operational control of the Head of Mission of UNIFIL. The separation of authorities has been provided for in the resolution 425 and the report of the Secretary-General in 1978 (S/12611).

OGL: A beacon of resilience in the face of insecurity and threats

During the 2006 war, OGL lost four officers - Austrian Major Hans-Peter Lang, Finnish



A Swedish military observer serving with the Observer Group Lebanon checking coordinates while his partner takes a look over the Blue Line.

UN Photo/Pasqual G. Marcos

Lieutenant Senior Grade Jarno Mäkinen, Chinese Major (posthumously promoted to Lieutenant Colonel) Du Zhaoyu, and Canadian Major Paeta Derek Hess-von Kruedener. They fell in the southern town of Khiam on 25 July 2006, when Israeli forces shelled their post, despite repeated requests from UNIFIL, UNTSO and UN Headquarters in New York to consider proximity to the OGL patrol base in the area.

Several other OGL officers were injured, with some of them sustaining life-long disabilities. "Operating in areas of conflict and dispute will undoubtedly put people's life and safety at risk," Comdt. McDonald said. "Nonetheless we take challenges the way they come to us."

OGL's main assets: adaptability and flexibility

OGL officers enjoy a unique relationship with the local population as they patrol unarmed, which Comdt. McDonald considers an asset. "We drive through the villages and along the Blue Line unarmed, equipped with our smile, accompanied by our liaison assistants who are local staff, and our technical devices that allow us carry out our tasks," he said.

"It is an asset to patrol unarmed, because rolling down the window of the vehicle saying 'Marhaba, kif al hal?' ['hello, how are you doing?']" can assure the right level of communications with the locals and can defuse many things. This is how we make our biggest achievement of maintaining good ties and communications with local

residents," Comdt. McDonald added.

An OGL patrol team includes officers from two different countries so that neutrality is always respected when a violation is observed and has to be endorsed equally by both officers. Becoming the senior patrol leader requires rigorous 12-week training where officers learn all about the roads in the region and particular reporting terminology.

Today, OGL is composed of 53 unarmed UN military observers from Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, India, Ireland, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland.

What has OGL achieved?

Comdt. McDonald, who is from Ireland, has served both with OGL and UNIFIL on several occasions since 1984. He believes that the close ties established between the OGL teams and the local residents are one of OGL's key achievements in the region, along with the ability for quick and flexible intervention when needed.

This allows OGL to remain a valuable asset for UNIFIL to implement UN Security Council resolutions as well as to assist other UN missions in Lebanon and the region to accomplish their mandates, which all work towards one goal: peace.

Hiba Monzer - Public Information Office



Qana has best evidence of UNIFIL's positive role: **Mayor**

In an interview with *"Al-Janoub"*, the Mayor of Qana in south Lebanon, Dr. Salah Salameh, speaks about the historical significance of the town, the difference made by UNIFIL peacekeepers in the lives of the local people, and the way forward in attaining sustainable peace in the south.

What is Qana's significance in Lebanon?

Qana is a town where many people have travelled throughout history, including the Romans before Jesus. It is believed that Jesus visited Qana with Virgin Mary and his students. He came to Qana fleeing persecution by the Romans in Palestine, and stayed in a place in a cave that is now named after him. It is here that Jesus transformed water to wine during the famous Qana wedding.

Qana's flag has the cross and the crescent embracing each other. The crescent represents Islam and the cross represents Christianity. We have Muslims and Christians who have lived continuously in peace. There are historical relations dating back 2,000 years.

Qana's economy depends on two sources - remittances from abroad and agriculture, especially olives. Qana's olive oil is famous throughout Lebanon.

With 70 years of the UN's founding, what role has the world body played in the history of Qana?

The United Nations has a big role, not only in Qana but also in the entire south (Lebanon) due to the presence of (peacekeeping) forces and the international efforts to bring (permanent) peace to south Lebanon. We overcame occupation. The situation is secure and stable - something which is lacking throughout the Arab world these days.

UNIFIL forces have played an important role here, especially in the last 20 years, in developing various fields of life in Qana, whether it's health, agricultural, human development or the reconstruction of infrastructure. Many families benefit from aid - whether food-related or in kind, as provided by UNIFIL.

We have two historical places here in Qana. The first is the cave where Jesus Christ hid and the other is the place where the wedding happened and the miracle (of turning water to wine) took place. I would like UNESCO to classify and preserve these landmarks as part of the world's archaeological heritage.

Is there a difference in how UNIFIL is perceived in south Lebanon since the war of 2006?

When the Security Council passed Resolution 1701 (mandating additional troops to monitor cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel) in August 2006, the people did not immediately understand why there were new foreign troops on the Lebanese soil. They didn't realize that the troops' mission was to observe the withdrawal of Israeli troops from south Lebanon, to uphold the unity, sovereignty and political independence of the region and to help the Lebanese government take back control of the southern lands - the areas that were occupied by Israel at that time.

Over time, through daily interactions, living side-by-side, and through the aid provided to develop our society, the new troops are accepted and they became part of our society. We can say that these forces have played a big role alongside the Lebanese Army in ensuring security and stability in the south of Lebanon.

Will a stranger passing through Qana see any sign of UNIFIL's presence in the town?

There is a monument here commemorating the martyrs of UNIFIL. On the monument are the names of the soldiers who died during their service with the peacekeeping mission. There are also a lot of local projects that have been funded by UNIFIL, and these are the best evidence of the positive role that UNIFIL plays in Qana.

The Fijian contingent were present in Qana until the liberation in 2000. Relationships were built that can best be described as brotherly between the contingent members and the local society. Some of the kids who used to live next to the Fijians are now called by the nickname of Fiji instead of their own family surnames. For example, Ali Shalhoob became Ali Alfiji, Hassan Ayoub became Hassan Alfiji and so on.

UNIFIL's Italian contingent helped establish a municipal infirmary back when Qana had no medical facilities - before the establishment of the public hospital in Qana. We implemented a medical card system and provided free

medical services to the people. UNIFIL's Italian contingent also provided us with tens of thousands of dollars to complete the sewage pipe network in the town.

UNIFIL provided our public hospital with modern medical equipment for services like echography, X-ray, blood tests, etc., as well as 20 beds for patients.

UNIFIL also helped us build relations with some Italian municipalities. Thanks to their support, we established a nursery for children from one month to 5 years of age. The nursery gave working mothers in Qana a chance to support their families through economic and professional activities.

I can say that UNIFIL's aid to Qana covers all areas of life: health, agriculture, reconstruction of infrastructure, support for women etc. We consider the officers and soldiers as a part of our society. We offered most of the officers a certificate as an honorary citizen. We told them that you have become a part of our society, we owe you gratitude and appreciation - you can consider yourselves as Qana's people, with the exception of the right to run for the position of Mayor.

This is the kind of relationship that we have with UNIFIL, with the Italian, Malaysian and French contingents. We enjoy a fruitful relationship with the Civil Affairs office in Naqoura. We wanted to establish a sports complex and they approved the project very quickly. All these projects are appreciated by the local population.

Do you envisage a time when LAF will take over UNIFIL's tasks?

I think that this mission will stay for many more years because of the Israeli intransigence to arrive to a solution that is peaceful and just for the area and the whole Middle East. As long as there is something called the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East crisis, as long as we don't find solutions for Shebaa Farms and Arkoub, there will always be an essential role for UNIFIL to stay in south Lebanon.

Hassan Siklawi - Public Information Office



UNIFIL peacekeepers participating in a market walk in Al Taibe village, south Lebanon.

Market walk: Deepening ties with communities

The city of Al Taibe in south-western Lebanon holds a popular market every Wednesday in the town square. The market - started some three to four centuries ago - is now a popular shopping place for locals and United Nations peacekeepers alike.

In a recent afternoon, some of the peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) joined the mayor of the city, Abbas Diab, who gave the curious uniformed men a tour of the thriving market.

"It is a traditional popular, spontaneous market, where people come and put on display various products, including food, drinks, clothes, and other goods," said the mayor, adding that the goods on display are generally cheaper than in regular shops.

He is delighted to see the UN peacekeepers

shopping there. "This deepens the ties between both sides, and this contributes to understanding and improving the relationship," said Mr. Diab.

UNIFIL peacekeepers in their Area of Operations regularly participate in these kinds of market walks as a way of consolidating their relationships and interactions with the local population.

One of the merchants, Hisham, says the presence of international peacekeepers in the streets, together with the Lebanese Armed Forces, increases the perception

of security among the local people.

"We feel that they are close to us," says the merchant. "For us, human interaction is very important."

During the tour, Mayob Diab showed the peacekeepers the hallmark that embodies the town's rich past heritage, an ancient water fountain called Ein al-Taibe, which had been used thousands of years ago for baptism, now worn down with age.

Rania Bdeir & Yury Kushko -
Public Information Office



Did you know?

Founded on 1 October 1949, the People's Republic of China is a socialist country. Spread across the vast land area of 9.6 million square kilometres in Asia, China has 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities directly under the Central Government, and two Special Administrative Regions.

With its 1.37 billion inhabitants, China is the most populous country in the world. The country is also known for its cultural and ethnic diversity, with 56 different ethnic groups living in harmony. Its capital, Beijing, situated in the north of the country, is the centre of culture, politics and economy.

The country is also known as a cradle of civilization. It is home to one of the Four Great Ancient Civilizations of the world. Ancient Chinese people created unique and independent language and writing system. Many heritage relics and various types of historical books are often found in different parts of China. For instance, the compass invented by ancient Chinese people still guides modern navigation.

China is bestowed with countless cultural heritages and spectacular natural beauty. According to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it has 48 World Heritage Sites, 33 Biosphere Reserves and 31 Global Geoparks, among many other world class landmarks. UNESCO has also included eight of the Chinese cities in the

list of Creative Cities Network: Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing (cities of design); Chengdu and Shunde (cities of gastronomy); Hangzhou, Jingdezhen and Suzhou (cities of crafts and folk art). A part of the world famous, 21,000-kilometre long Great Wall was built as early as the seventh century BC.

As one of five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, China adheres to the principle of peace and friendship. China has been providing support to Lebanon since the two countries established diplomatic relationships in 1971.

Since China sent its first peacekeeping troops to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1990, it has been an active troop contributing country to UN missions worldwide. So far, it has contributed troops and police to 29 UN missions, demonstrating the country's commitment to multilateral solutions to conflict. Today it is one of the top 10 troop and police contributors.

More than 3,000 Chinese military and police personnel, including some 70 women, currently serve in 10 UN peacekeeping missions. There are 425 of them serving with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In the course of their service with the UN peacekeeping, 15 Chinese women and men have lost their lives in the line of peace.

A special construction engineering unit of China's People's Liberation Army joined UNIFIL for the first time in May 2015. Its main tasks include providing construction engineering support, conducting rapid and effective repairs to critical UNIFIL infrastructure, and carrying out essential humanitarian activities.

"We are fully devoted to the peacekeeping tasks assigned to us in order to reiterate our unwavering commitment to world peace," said Company Commander Lt. Col. Tian Shengping.

Tilak Pokharel - Public Information Office
(with inputs from Captain WANG Yongan, Military Public Information Officer).

UN Photo/Pascal G. Marcos

Issue 18 | May 16



Chinese peacekeepers serving with UNIFIL placing a Blue Barrel along the Blue Line in the vicinity of Meiss al-Jabal, south Lebanon.





UN contributes to peace and stability: a gender perspective

Nada Bazzi was just a child when United Nations peacekeepers started patrolling in her home village of Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon. During her lifetime, their presence has been a welcome fixture in the local landscape.

"Throughout all wars and aggressions, the role of UNIFIL has remained one of (ensuring) peace and security. The UN peacekeepers were never seen as otherwise by anyone," Ms. Bazzi said.

Additionally, the UN through its humanitarian agencies has made remarkable contributions to south Lebanon, as attested by Ms. Bazzi who is now Director of the Social Affairs Ministry's Social Development Centre in Bint Jbeil district.

As the leader of a visible and socially active development organization, Ms. Bazzi has had plenty of interactions with various components of the UN, and has witnessed the changes brought by the UN to the region.

"Had it not been for networking and partnering with local societies and associations, as well as international organizations and NGOs, all this work would not bear fruit or create any change," Ms. Bazzi said, of the effectiveness of the development programmes in the region.

The Bint Jbeil Social Development Centre, through their affiliated branches across the region, provides preliminary healthcare services and spread awareness on social, health, psychological and educational issues. It also organizes workshops and vocational training courses to local community members and women in particular.

The outcome of these efforts can be seen in successful gender-focused projects run through the centre over the last 15 years.

Women's empowerment

One of these was a nation-wide project called Women's Empowerment: Peaceful Action for Security and Stability that ran from 2006 to 2010. The project was a training programme for a committee of 50 women drawn from all

parts of the country and addressed women's empowerment issues at strategic and grassroots levels. It involved the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

"Women were trained, inter alia, at the social, healthcare, and occupational levels," Ms. Bazzi said.

"The training focused on communication skills, where they learnt how to express their opinions, but most importantly how to listen to others, even when they were different. Out of fifty (committee members), there was an average of ten to twenty ladies who were empowered to a great extent," she added.

The project evolved into the Women's Agricultural Cooperative and Handicrafts Association of Bint Jbeil, which aims to improve the social and economic conditions for its members.

Role of women in peace and security

The presence of the UN in the south also brought a platform to discuss the role of women in peace and security in the region. Thus was formed the Gender Working Group in 2012 in order to bring forward women's voices on issues of safety and how they can make a difference.

During the annual Open Day on Women, Peace and Security, organized by UNIFIL, the Gender Working Group had an opportunity to speak to UN officials and the public.

"This was a very good opportunity to listen to these women who represent a major sample from our community, and it was a first step for them to speak up and be listened to," Ms. Bazzi said.

"We convinced women to be assertive, without

being provocative; we even reached a phase where we encouraged them to work in the political field and run for municipal elections," she added.

Safe centres for GBV victims

A crucial project being rolled out by the Ministry of Social Affairs in partnership with UNICEF and Abaad, an NGO focusing on combating violence against women, is the establishment of eight Safe Centres for Women and Girls subject to gender-based violence across the country.

Bint Jbeil Social Development Centre will run the safe centre in the South. This project not only aims to follow up on the cases of violence, but also covers a number of activities that provide psychological, social and entertaining support for women, teenagers, children, and men. "Through that we can face cases of violence, that we can now address, under a legal framework," she said.

Common ground

"I have to highlight the bridges built between the local and Irish and Finnish women," Ms. Bazzi said, of the close relations built between the women of the south and the female peacekeepers posted in the region. "It was very interesting how many common denominators there were."

One of their projects was a wide-scale first-aid course aimed at women, in order to train them not only to provide first aid, but also to recognize additional signs of ill-health or medical concern.

Ms. Bazzi believes that the contributions of the UN go beyond the services and changes brought to the region; they include their very presence in the community.

Rania Harb - Public Information Office

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits UNIFIL HQ



On the first day of his two-day tour of Lebanon in late March 2016, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited the world body's peacekeeping mission headquarters in Naqoura, and met UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Major-General Luciano Portolano.

In his remarks at the UN base, Mr. Ban noted that south Lebanon has seen one of the quietest periods in nearly four decades since the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), which now forms the core basis of the work of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

"Prevalence of a stable security environment in south Lebanon, continued commitment of the parties to the cessation of hostilities, increasing ability of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to ensure security of the country – these are the key elements for the successful implementation of the [UNIFIL] mandate," said Mr. Ban, after being received by the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major-General Luciano Portolano.

He also called for making an effective and meaningful use of UNIFIL in preventing hostilities and de-escalate tension in the southern part of the country.

The Secretary-General particularly stressed upon the need to make the continued use of the constructive role played by the tripartite forum – comprising of the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Israel Defense Forces, and UNIFIL - in facilitating discussions, preserving stability in UNIFIL's area of operations as well as encouraging both parties to take advantage of this window of opportunity presented by the calm along the Blue Line to make the concrete progress on the ground.

In an interview with UNIFIL TV, Mr. Ban said the close collaboration with LAF has been the "backbone" of our strength and capacity in delivering and maintaining peace and security. "Peace and security in Lebanon will have implications far beyond this country," he added.

In his remarks, Major-General Luciano Portolano said, "In the face of multiple challenges facing south Lebanon, UNIFIL has been providing a strong deterrent to the resumption of hostilities."

Tilak Pokharel - Public Information Office



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon receiving the guard of honour from members of the Korean contingent after his arrival at the UNIFIL Headquarters on 24 March 2016.



During his visit to the UNIFIL Headquarters on 24 April 2016, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the close collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has been the “backbone” of our strength and capacity in delivering and maintaining peace and security in south Lebanon. Shown here is a joint patrol by UNIFIL peacekeepers and LAF soldiers in El Adeisse, south Lebanon, in December 2015.



Salam from the South

Every two weeks a new 10-minute radio episode is aired in Arabic on: Al-Risala, Sawt El-Mada, Voice of Lebanon, Voice of People and Radio Delta.

“We Work With You”

From joint police training to medical visits, this is a new TV/Web series highlighting UNIFIL’s collaboration with Lebanese security forces and civic organizations to support local communities and maintain peace. Twice a month on NBN, OTV and YouTube.

Check unifil.unmissions.org to watch and read a weekly multimedia report on one of over 400 UNIFIL activities that happen every single day in south Lebanon.



unifil.unmissions.org



facebook.com/UNIFIL



[@UNIFIL_](https://twitter.com/UNIFIL)



English: youtube.com/UNIFILVIDEOUNIT
Arabic: youtube.com/UNIFILARABIC



flickr.com/photos/unifil