

U.N., Countries Contributing Troops to UNIFIL for Mandate Extension without Amendments

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U.N. Security Council and countries contributing troops to UNIFIL decided to extend the U.N. peacekeepers' mission for another 12 months

The U.N. Security Council and countries contributing troops to UNIFIL decided to extend the U.N. peacekeepers' mission for another 12 months without a change to their mandate.

During Thursday's closed-door Council session, Deputy Assistant Undersecretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmond Mullet briefed the conferees on the UNIFIL mission and the latest incidents of Khirbet Selm and Kfarshouba.

Mullet stressed the need for the peacekeepers to continue their mission in Lebanon although he said the situation was fragile as a result of continued violations of resolution 1701 by "both sides."

He asked the council for a technical review of the status of UNIFIL as a result of the recent developments without amendments to its Rules of Engagement.

A Western diplomatic source confirmed to An Nahar that the conferees didn't discuss amendments to UNIFIL's Rules of Engagement.

The U.S. representative remained silent during Thursday's meeting despite comments last month by Deputy U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Alejandro Wolf, who hinted that Washington was seeking to expand UNIFIL's mission.

Another diplomat told An Nahar that representatives of countries contributing troops to the peacekeeping mission in south Lebanon, such as Spain, Italy and others, also said they were not willing to change the UNIFIL mission or resolution 1701.

France is expected to prepare the draft resolution to extend UNIFIL's mission for another year in order to discuss it during a closed-door session on August 20. The Council will officially vote on the draft resolution on August 27.

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Williams: United Nations Read to Give Lebanon Necessary Support

U.N. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams met Thursday with PM-designate Saad Hariri at Center House, and renewed the United Nations commitment "to offer the support that Lebanon needs."

Williams told reporters the talks covered "the challenges that Lebanon is currently facing and will be facing in the future."

He expressed hope a government can be formed "soon in order to address the economic, social and political difficulties."

The meeting also covered the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701, three years after its adoption, he said.

"The Lebanese authorities and various political groupings have reiterated their commitment to Resolution 1701," Williams said.

"Today I also expressed hope, during my talks with the premier-designate, for the next government, once formed, to work effectively to renew its commitment to the resolution and to work on its full implementation," he added.

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