

Report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team

Contributed by Administrator
Tuesday, 26 June 2007
Last Updated Wednesday, 27 June 2007

June 26, 2007

At the request of the Lebanese Government a UN team of border police experts was dispatched to Lebanon to assess the situation along the border. The findings were published today.

[[Full Report Here .pdf](#)]

A U.N. report has called for a major upgrading of Lebanon's lax border security to prevent arms smuggling from Syria, including assigning international experts to a new, multi-agency Lebanese border force.

The report which was released in New York Tuesday was produced by a team of international security experts just back from a three-week assessment mission in Lebanon to probe allegations of widespread weapons smuggling across the border with Syria.

The team led by Lasse Christensen of Denmark concluded that "the present state of border security was insufficient to prevent smuggling, in particular of arms, to any significant extent."

In a report which U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon forwarded to the Security Council Tuesday, the team called for the deployment "of international border security experts" to back up a new Lebanese "multi-agency mobile force" that would be tasked with doing a better job to stem the arms smuggling.

"There is still substantial room for improvements on the Lebanese border security management, some of which can only be reached through assistance and support from the international community," the report said.

Two weeks ago, the Security Council reiterated "deep concern" at mounting reports of "illegal movements of arms" across the Lebanese-Syrian border.

It did so after hearing from U.N. Middle East envoy Terje Roed Larsen, who drew an "alarming and deeply disturbing picture" of the border situation, citing Lebanese army reports of "a steady flow of weapons and armed elements across the border from Syria."

The U.N. assessment team recommended that Lebanon set up "a multi-agency mobile force focusing on arms smuggling with the purpose of creating seizure results within a short time span through its intelligence and rapid interception capabilities."

It also lamented the fact that "there is no (cross border) cooperation" at the operation level between Lebanese and Syrian authorities and urged both sides to remedy the situation.

It expressed concern about the presence of "several heavily armed Palestinian military strongholds covering both sides" of the border, saying they "constitute pockets of territories where the Lebanese security forces are denied the possibility to exercise their mandate."

The report also criticized the "lack of operational cooperation and coordination" among Lebanon's four different security agencies: the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, the General Security and the General Customs.

It said that during the nearly 30 years of Syrian domination which ended in 2005 "no concept of border security at the border was ever implemented."

Noting that there "is no real alternative to the existing model of four agencies responsible for border security," the U.N. team suggested the creation of a "multi-agency mobile task force" that would work in parallel with the existing structure "but with an enhanced focus on arms smuggling."

"The unit should be highly skilled and suitably equipped for special operations. It should have a high level of mobility,

including airlift capacity and 4x4 vehicles," the report said.

The new unit should have a "high degree of independence and integrity "through appropriate command and control mechanisms" and should include an intelligence and analysis cell to provide timely information to all Lebanese security agencies.(AFP-Naharnet)

Beirut, 27 Jun 07, 07:53