

Ban releases report on Resolution 1701

Contributed by Administrator
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BEIRUT: United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon released his fourth report on Security Council Resolution 1701 on Friday, voicing his dismay over the political turmoil in Lebanon and Israel's continual violations of the resolution. [Full Report Here .pdf]

"I am deeply concerned that Lebanon remains in the midst of a debilitating political crisis and faces ongoing attacks aimed at destabilizing and undermining its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence," Ban said in the report, which was presented to the Security Council on Friday. "Against this background, I am concerned that continued implementation of Resolution 1701 may face repeated difficulties."

"Greater progress is necessary on key issues that are central to the achievement of a permanent cease-fire and a longer-term solution, such as the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and of the Lebanese prisoners, the enforcement of the arms embargo, the halting of Israeli air violations of Lebanese sovereignty and the Shabaa Farms issue," he said.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701 ended the summer 2006 war with Israel and called for a halt in border violations between the two states and the termination of arms shipments to Hizbullah.

While noting that the military and security situation has been relatively stable in the South, Ban also said the situation along the Blue Line remained "tense and fragile." He urged both the Lebanese and the Israeli governments to push forward in accepting an official demarcation of the Blue Line in order to stabilize the situation further.

"The government of Lebanon has officially accepted UNIFIL's proposed technical process for marking the Blue Line, while the government of Israel has sought clarifications," he said. "I urge both parties to move forward expeditiously on this issue with UNIFIL, which, if fully implemented on the ground, would build trust, decrease tension and significantly contribute to the reduction in incidents and inadvertent violations of the Blue Line."

Condemning Sunday's attack in the Dardara area near Marjayoun on a Spanish UNIFIL contingent's patrol that resulted in the deaths of six peacekeepers, Ban urged the Lebanese government to fulfill its obligation to deliver justice.

"I am deeply saddened and condemn in the strongest possible terms this terrorist attack on soldiers who have come to Lebanon in the name of peace," he said. "I urge the government of Lebanon to bring to justice those responsible as swiftly as possible," he said.

Ban expressed concern over certain groups rearming and strengthening their outposts throughout the country, naming Hizbullah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada.

"I continue to believe that the disarmament of Hizbullah and other militia should take place through a Lebanese-led political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the government of Lebanon in all its territory so that there will be no weapons of authority other than its own," he said.

Ban also addressed the issue of the movement of arms across the Syrian-Lebanese border.

"I would again call upon member states and relevant regional organizations to provide the urgently needed technical assistance, training and equipment that the government of Lebanon requires to strengthen the border-security regime along its border with Syria and to ensure the full implementation of paragraph 15 of Resolution 1701," he said.

He called on Syria and Iran to respect the arms embargo stated in the resolution and for Syria to step up its border control.

Ban also urged Israel to provide exact information regarding the locations of landmines, cluster bombs and munitions left behind from the summer war, in order to prevent further casualties and to help demining organizations in their work.

"The provision of such information to UNIFIL would greatly assist the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Center in its efforts to clean up the estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions," he said.

"Continuing deaths and injuries to Lebanese civilians caused by these munitions, not to mention the loss of agricultural

production in affected areas, only increases the local population's antagonism toward Israel. I again urge Israel to provide detailed data on its use of cluster munitions to the United Nations as soon as possible."

He ended the report by pledging the UN's dedication to fulfilling its role in Lebanon to ensure the implementation of peace and stability.

Ban said he intends to ask the Security Council to approve Premier Fouad Siniora's request for a one-year extension of UNIFIL's mandate, which expires August 31. The report put current UNIFIL strength at 13,313 personnel. - With agencies, Nour Samaha, Daily Star staff

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