



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 June 2026 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution [2790 \(2025\)](#), in which the Council requested that I explore options for the future of the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) after the withdrawal of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), including options for assistance in respect of security and monitoring of the Blue Line and the ways to enhance the support to the Lebanese Armed Forces redeployment south of the Litani River through United Nations tools.

In exploring these options, the United Nations Secretariat consulted the parties, Lebanon and Israel, as well as members of the Security Council.

Since the adoption of resolution [2790 \(2025\)](#), the situation across the Blue Line and beyond has changed significantly. The recurrent hostilities underscore the imperative of the full implementation by the parties of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#), which is the framework established by the Council towards peace and stability between Lebanon and Israel. The resolution forms the basis of the proposed options presented in the present letter, alongside the Charter, relevant Council resolutions and applicable provisions of international law.

The cessation of hostilities arrangement of November 2024 between Lebanon and Israel, albeit fragile, proved critical in reducing hostilities across the Blue Line and provided an opportunity for the parties to further the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). The Government of Lebanon scaled up measures to extend its authority over all Lebanese territory, including to strengthen the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River and to ensure that there were no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon. Nevertheless, weapons continued to exist outside of State authority. The Israel Defense Forces retained a presence at five positions and two so-called “buffer zones” north of the Blue Line.

In the context of the military escalation in the Middle East, the security situation deteriorated dramatically on 2 March 2026, when Hizbullah fired drones and rockets at Israel and Israel subsequently launched large-scale air strikes across Lebanon in response. The Israel Defense Forces also expanded its presence north of the Blue Line. The intensified hostilities have resulted in 3,412 fatalities and over 10,000 wounded in Lebanon, including many civilians, among them women and children, according to the Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon. At least 21 Lebanese Armed Forces personnel have been killed. There have been at least three Israeli civilian fatalities and 26 Israel Defense Forces personnel killed, and destruction and displacement on both sides of the Blue Line. Six UNIFIL peacekeepers have been killed and several wounded. The Lebanese Armed Forces maintained some presence south of the Litani River but have temporarily withdrawn from areas near the Blue Line.



Following a meeting hosted by the United States of America in which representatives of Lebanon and Israel held direct talks, the United States on 16 April 2026 announced a 10-day cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel. The cessation of hostilities was extended for three weeks after a second meeting held on 23 April. A third round of talks took place on 14 and 15 May 2026, which resulted in an extension of the cessation of hostilities for 45 days, and additional political and security talks were planned .

These developments have underscored the urgent need for progress on the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) to achieve a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict between Lebanon and Israel. To end recurrent cycles of violence across the Blue Line, it is imperative that the parties take constructive steps towards a diplomatic solution to outstanding issues in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Their recommitment to the resolution is crucial.

To support progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) after the end of the UNIFIL mandate, advancement of the following core functions is recommended. Support for a political track between the parties towards a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict will be fundamental. Impartial monitoring, observation and reporting to the Security Council is paramount in supporting full respect for the Blue Line by the parties. Liaison and coordination at tactical, operational and strategic levels, including to de-escalate tensions and ensure deconfliction between the parties, will continue to be indispensable in enhancing security and building trust across the Blue Line. Support to the Lebanese Armed Forces, at operational and strategic levels, remains crucial and needs to be increased, including in coordination with international partners, with a view to assisting the Government of Lebanon in extending State authority over all its territory and advancing a State monopoly over weapons following the important decisions and measures undertaken by the Government of Lebanon in this regard and in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006). Support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders is essential.

The Secretariat explored several options based on the core functions set out above, with a view to identifying how Lebanon and Israel could be further supported in fully implementing resolution 1701 (2006) after the end of the mandate of UNIFIL. Under all proposed options, a uniformed United Nations presence working to facilitate de-escalation, dialogue, liaison and coordination, and support for the Lebanese Armed Forces would be necessary to complement a strengthened Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon for the overarching objective of a long-term solution to the conflict. More specifically, the United Nations, as the temporary custodian of the Blue Line, would continue to have a vital role in impartially monitoring and maintaining the Blue Line, including through observation, reporting, cartography, surveying, marking and technical deconfliction efforts. In this regard, a uniformed United Nations presence would perform the fundamental task of supporting full respect for the Blue Line by the parties, including through monitoring the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces to south of the Blue Line. In facilitating the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River, a uniformed United Nations presence could contribute to the extension of State authority and efforts to ensure a State monopoly over weapons. Furthermore, a uniformed United Nations presence could carry out tactical and operational liaison and coordination between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces.

Continued support for the implementation of the political elements of resolution 1701 (2006): a strengthened Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon

The United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon will continue to coordinate and lead United Nations efforts in supporting the full implementation by Lebanon and Israel of their respective obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), in line with the existing mandate of the Office of the Special Coordinator. After the end of the UNIFIL mandate, the Office will continue to play a critical role, through the exercise of the good offices of the Secretary-General, in providing support to the political track to advance the resolution of outstanding issues between the parties. It will also continue to actively engage with the parties to de-escalate tensions and advance dialogue to resolve any dispute or reservation pertaining to the international border between Lebanon and Israel, as well as other outstanding issues, including in support of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict. In addition to its existing tasks, and following the end of the UNIFIL mandate, the Office could assume further responsibilities in facilitation of dialogue, including hosting meetings between the parties, and in support of any arrangement that would monitor a cessation of hostilities and other international initiatives. In support of the Government's efforts to extend State authority, including with respect to a State monopoly over weapons, the Office will continue to lead and coordinate the mobilization of international support to the Lebanese Armed Forces. Moreover, the Office will continue to promote dialogue and forge consensus among Lebanese stakeholders to facilitate progress on these objectives.

As the lead United Nations official in the country, my Special Coordinator will also continue to lead and coordinate an integrated United Nations presence, including the work of the United Nations country team, in supporting the governance and socioeconomic reform efforts of Lebanon, as well as the nationally led humanitarian response and recovery and reconstruction processes, all of which continue to underpin efforts to extend State authority.

Options for continued support to the implementation of the operational elements of resolution 1701 (2006)

In support of the future of the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) after the end of the UNIFIL mandate, the following three options are proposed for a future United Nations uniformed presence that would work in coordination with a strengthened Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator and the United Nations country team.

Option 1: an unarmed United Nations military observer presence of 350 uniformed personnel, combined with an armed United Nations presence for force protection, including four infantry battalions of 750 armed troops each and a force reserve of 700 armed troops, would have the capacity to most credibly observe developments along the length of the Blue Line and up to the Litani River. From static positions at critical locations, including at the Blue Line, the military observers could monitor approximately two thirds of the Blue Line, with the remaining segments covered by temporary observation positions and mobile observations. While there would be capacity to directly monitor most of the Blue Line through the physical presence of a mix of unarmed United Nations military observers and an armed United Nations force presence, technological support would be required to cover the Blue Line on a continuous basis. The United Nations could extend its monitoring capacity through patrols as far north as the Litani River and carry out verification tasks and investigations of violations of resolution 1701 (2006), including north of the Litani River, within the mission's capacity, as required.

This deployment would have the capacity to perform liaison and coordination functions with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces at tactical and operational levels, including to de-escalate tensions through a presence on the ground. There would be capacity to interpose between the parties, as well as to deconflict Israel Defense Forces movements – until they fully withdraw to south of the Blue Line, in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and in line with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) – from those of the Lebanese Armed Forces or civilians north of the Blue Line.

Under this option, the uniformed United Nations presence would have the capacity to provide a cessation of hostilities monitoring arrangement with information about developments on the ground, including on alleged violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) or of a cessation of hostilities arrangement.

It would also possess the necessary personnel, capacity and enablers to support the strengthened deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River in support of Lebanese State efforts to ensure a State monopoly over weapons, including through joint operations, as well as to conduct verification of violations and the inspection of any alleged presence of unauthorized weapons, assets or armed personnel between the Blue Line and the Litani River, as well as north of the Litani River, as required. The United Nations uniformed presence could perform engineering, demining and explosive ordnance disposal tasks along the Blue Line and, to some extent, as far north as the Litani River.

Option 2: an unarmed United Nations military observer presence of 285 uniformed personnel, combined with an armed United Nations presence for force protection, including two infantry battalions of 750 armed troops each and a force reserve of 450 armed troops, focused on the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line, would have capacity to directly monitor some of the Blue Line through its physical presence, including from static observation posts and through patrols. Observation technology would be required to monitor the entirety of the Blue Line on a continuous basis. This deployment would have capacity to conduct verification and investigations of violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) between the Blue Line and Litani River, as well as, on a limited basis, north of the Litani River, as required.

The United Nations uniformed presence would have some capacity to liaise and coordinate between the parties. There would be limited capacity to interpose between the parties and to deconflict the movements of the Israel Defense Forces – until they fully withdraw to south of the Blue Line in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and in line with resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) – from those of the Lebanese Armed Forces or civilians north of the Blue Line.

Under this option, the uniformed United Nations presence would have limited capacity to provide information about developments on the ground to a cessation of hostilities monitoring arrangement, including on alleged violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) or violations of a cessation of hostilities arrangement.

The United Nations uniformed presence could provide limited support to the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces and efforts in advancing a State monopoly over weapons by conducting some joint operational activities with the Lebanese Armed Forces between the Litani River and the Blue Line, including verification and investigation of violations of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). The United Nations presence could conduct some engineering, demining and explosive ordnance disposal tasks along the Blue Line and, to some extent, as far north as the Litani River.

Option 3: an unarmed United Nations military observer presence of 215 personnel, combined with two light infantry battalions of 450 armed troops each and a quick-reaction force of 350 armed troops for force protection, would monitor

developments along the Blue Line and up to several kilometres north of the Blue Line, including from static positions at critical locations and through mobile observations. However, the entirety of the Blue Line could not be monitored on a continuous basis without the necessary technological capacity. The United Nations presence would have some capacity to conduct verification and investigation of violations of resolution 1701 (2006) up to the Litani River.

The presence could carry out some limited liaison and coordination activities between the parties, with a focus along the Blue Line, including to deconflict the movements of the Israel Defense Forces – until they fully withdraw to south of the Blue Line, in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and in line with resolution 1701 (2006) – from those of the Lebanese Armed Forces or civilians north of the Blue Line. However, there would be no capacity to interpose between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, to de-escalate.

Capacity to provide information about developments on the ground, including on alleged violations of resolution 1701 (2006), in support of a cessation of hostilities monitoring arrangement would be limited.

This option would involve minimal necessary enablers, including engineering, demining and explosive ordnance disposal capacities. Consequently, with limited capacity to support the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces or verify violations of resolution 1701 (2006), there would be limited ability to support State efforts to ensure that the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line is free of unauthorized assets, weapons or armed personnel.

Enablers and resource requirements

Any future United Nations uniformed presence would require operational mission support, as well as force protection and life-sustaining service capacities, including medical support capacity, considering the significant risks to the safety and security of United Nations personnel in the prevailing fragile environment. Air assets would be essential for medical evacuation and casualty evacuation purposes. Demining, explosive ordnance disposal and engineering capacities would be essential for ensuring freedom of movement, including along the Blue Line. These capacities would have the corollary effect of enhancing movement of the Lebanese Armed Forces and other State entities, which is instrumental in empowering the Lebanese Armed Forces to extend State authority. Radar capacity and limited air assets (helicopters) in addition to static cameras, uncrewed aerial vehicles and the use of satellite imagery would enhance the monitoring, observation and reporting capacity of the United Nations.

Accordingly, option 1 would tentatively comprise a total of approximately 5,525 uniformed personnel, including the unarmed observer presence, armed United Nations units and other support units and personnel. Option 2 would tentatively comprise a total of approximately 3,370 uniformed personnel, including the unarmed observer presence, armed United Nations units and other support units and personnel. Option 3 would tentatively comprise a total of approximately 1,980 uniformed personnel, including the unarmed observer presence, armed United Nations units and other support and personnel.

As the situation continues to evolve, any future United Nations presence must be flexible, adaptable and subject to periodic review and adjustment, including to ensure that its structure and core tasks best support the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Taking into consideration the current high-risk environment, appropriate resources must be made available in terms of operational support and force protection capacities and personnel in support of any uniformed United Nations

presence. As the parties make tangible progress towards the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), a United Nations uniformed presence could be adjusted, including as permitted by the prevailing security conditions.

Additionally, in the absence of UNIFIL, consideration must be given to ensuring the necessary protection and logistical arrangements for the unarmed military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Observer Group Lebanon. Any future configuration would therefore need to incorporate alternative provisions to enable or replace these functions.

Notwithstanding these resource requirements, any of the above options, as well as a strengthened Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, would represent a rationalization of United Nations resources in support of the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), following the end of the UNIFIL mandate.

Arms embargo

United Nations support for the implementation of the arms embargo in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006) would be limited to reporting on relevant information shared with the United Nations by Member States.

Maritime task force

The capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces Navy to independently operate across its territorial waters continues to require strengthening, with gaps remaining in maritime surveillance capabilities, naval assets and operational reach. Accordingly, the Lebanese authorities have highlighted the value that a maritime presence could provide in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces Navy in monitoring the territorial waters of Lebanon, securing the Lebanese coastline and preventing the unauthorized entry of arms or related materiel by sea into Lebanon. In light of this, a maritime task force could provide such support and could augment any of the above options.

Notwithstanding the challenging environment for the attainment of the goals set out in Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), only the full implementation of the resolution will enable long-term and sustainable security and stability between Lebanon and Israel. It is ultimately the responsibility of the parties to fulfil their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), the Charter of the United Nations and other applicable provisions of international law, and relevant resolutions of the Council. As the situation across the Blue Line and in southern Lebanon remains volatile, the United Nations, in partnership with the international community, has a crucial role to play in assisting the parties in taking constructive steps towards resolving outstanding issues. United Nations efforts and presence on the ground, including in southern Lebanon, will continue to be critical in support of a political track, ensuring impartial monitoring and reporting, conducting liaison and coordination, and providing assistance to a cessation of hostilities arrangement and the Government of Lebanon in its efforts to extend State authority. These efforts would be complemented by coordinated humanitarian, recovery and governance support delivered through the wider United Nations presence in Lebanon, including the United Nations country team. They continue to be vital in creating an environment conducive to a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the parties in fulfilling their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) and achieving peace and stability.

(Signed) António **Guterres**