

**Outcome evaluation of the
support provided by the
United Nations Interim Force
in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the
establishment of a stable and
secure environment and the
extension of the State
authority in southern Lebanon**

20 May 2024

IED-24-010



INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

Function *“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization;”* ([General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B](#)).

Project team members include:

Siva Methil, Team Leader

Wenxin Zhang, Team Member

Contact Information **OIOS-IED Contact Information:**
phone: +1 212-963-8148; fax: +1 212-963-1211; email: ied@un.org

Srilata Rao, Chief of Section

Tel: +1 212-963-3550, e-mail: rao3@un.org

Demetra Arapakos, Deputy Director

Tel: +1 917-367-6033, e-mail: arapakos@un.org

Yee Woo Guo, Director

Tel: +1 917-367-3674, e-mail: guoy@un.org

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Summary

The Office of Internal Oversight Service (OIOS) evaluated the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the establishment of a stable and secure environment and the extension of the State authority in southern Lebanon. The evaluation covered the period from July 2017 to December 2023. During the period reviewed, UNIFIL support was found to be partially relevant, with varying stakeholder perceptions. UNIFIL demonstrated the value of monitoring and reporting violations along the Blue Line in ensuring the cessation of hostilities between the parties to the conflict, and the overall support provided was generally aligned with the relevant Security Council mandates. However, some inconsistencies were noted in interpreting and understanding the mandate by both internal and external stakeholders. While UNIFIL support was somewhat responsive to the needs of the people, external stakeholders were of the opinion that it was of limited responsiveness to the core security needs of both governments due to unmet expectations.

UNIFIL military and civilian components worked coherently in delivering the mandate and collaborated well with interested Member States. However, limited advancement was achieved with United Nations partners in pursuing the common objectives of the mandate. UNIFIL attempts to enhance coordination with the United Nations partners were hampered by the limited presence and programmes of the country team in southern Lebanon, and the lack of synergy hindered the progress toward achieving collective outcomes with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) in advancing resolution 1701. Despite dedicated UNIFIL support to the Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the stability and security in southern Lebanon remained fragile due to significant external factors. In the absence of a permanent ceasefire and political agreement, UNIFIL contributed to relative stability by containing tensions and preventing their unintended escalation through its liaison and coordination mechanisms. However, UNIFIL had limited influence over minimising violations across the Blue Line and restricting hostile actions by non-State actors from within its area of operations (AO). Overall, the trust and confidence levels between the parties to the conflict, between UNIFIL and the Governments of the Republic of Lebanon and the State of Israel, as well as that of the people of southern Lebanon towards UNIFIL remained challenging.

Despite the Mission's efforts, the presence and authority of LAF were not extended as envisaged by the Security Council mandate, primarily due to external factors. UNIFIL support to the civil administration institutions and the people of southern Lebanon, although limited in scale, made positive contributions. While UNIFIL support sufficiently incorporated sustainability considerations, resource constraints of State authorities hindered long-term sustainability. Several internal barriers inhibited the effectiveness of UNIFIL, including the lack of proactiveness, frequent military rotations, and inadequate institutional memory. Increased hostile actions by non-State actors, undue dependency of State institutions on UNIFIL, and unrealistic expectations of communities were cited as major unintended consequences. On cross-cutting areas, UNIFIL made significant contributions to gender equality and environmental protection through dedicated efforts.

Against the backdrop of the unpredictable regional security situation exacerbated since October 2023, OIOS makes three important recommendations, including:

- a. A review conducted by the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) to reconcile the gaps in UNIFIL interpretation and implementation of the mandate.
- b. Strengthening the collaboration between UNIFIL and UNSCOL to advance the common objectives of the Security Council mandates.
- c. Incorporating and consistently applying the mandate and Mission guidance in the implementation of UNIFIL operational tasks, as well as enhancing accuracy and impartiality in its reporting to the Security Council.

I. Introduction

1. The evaluation objective was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, coherence, and effectiveness of the support provided by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the establishment of a stable and secure environment and the extension of the State authority in southern Lebanon.¹ The evaluation was conducted in conformity with the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations System.²
2. The evaluation covered the period from July 2017 to December 2023. The evaluation focused on the outcomes of UNIFIL support to the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) for the establishment of a stable and secure environment, and the extension of the State authority in southern Lebanon (**Annex I: Theory of Change**, p.25).³ The evaluation also considered crosscutting aspects of human rights, disability inclusion, gender, environment and the contributions made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
3. Comments were sought from the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO) and UNIFIL (see **Annex II**, p.26) for the management response.

II. Background

4. **Overview, Role and Mandate.** UNIFIL was established pursuant to the United Nations Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) to confirm the withdrawal of Israel Defence forces (IDF), restore international peace and security, and assist the host Government in establishing effective authority in the area. The Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) further expanded UNIFIL mandate and capabilities, focusing on security aspects related to the cessation of hostilities between the parties to the conflict in its area of operations (AO), and the surveillance of its area of maritime operations.⁴ The main elements of UNIFIL mandate, included, among others, monitoring the cessation of hostilities; ensuring that its AO was not utilized for hostile activities of any kind; protecting civilians; accompanying and supporting the Security forces and assisting them in the establishment of the area free of any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the State and the Mission. UNIFIL worked in close coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) to support the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and enable the parties to fulfil their outstanding obligations.⁵ UNIFIL had an authorised strength of 13,845 military personnel and civilian staff, deployed in 50 operational bases and a budget of \$500 million (2023-24) to implement the mandate. From 1978 to 2023, 334 UNIFIL peacekeepers had given their lives for the cause of peace and stability in the country.

5. **Current Situation.** Following the events of 7 October 2023 in the region, UNIFIL AO witnessed a severe deterioration of the security situation caused by daily exchanges of fire across the Blue Line in breach of the cessation of hostilities and increased air and ground violations across the Blue Line. This included repeated aerial bombardment, use of direct and indirect weapon systems, and clashes along the Blue Line, leading to loss of lives.⁶ Due to persistent security threats, a large section of the population on both sides of the Blue Line became internally displaced. Despite the threat to the safety and security of peacekeepers, UNIFIL continued to use its good offices as well as liaison and

¹ OIOS-IED Inception Paper IED-23-10 (4 August 2023).

² United Nations Evaluation Group, 2005.

³ A/76/700.

⁴ UNIFIL Mission Concept, May 2021.

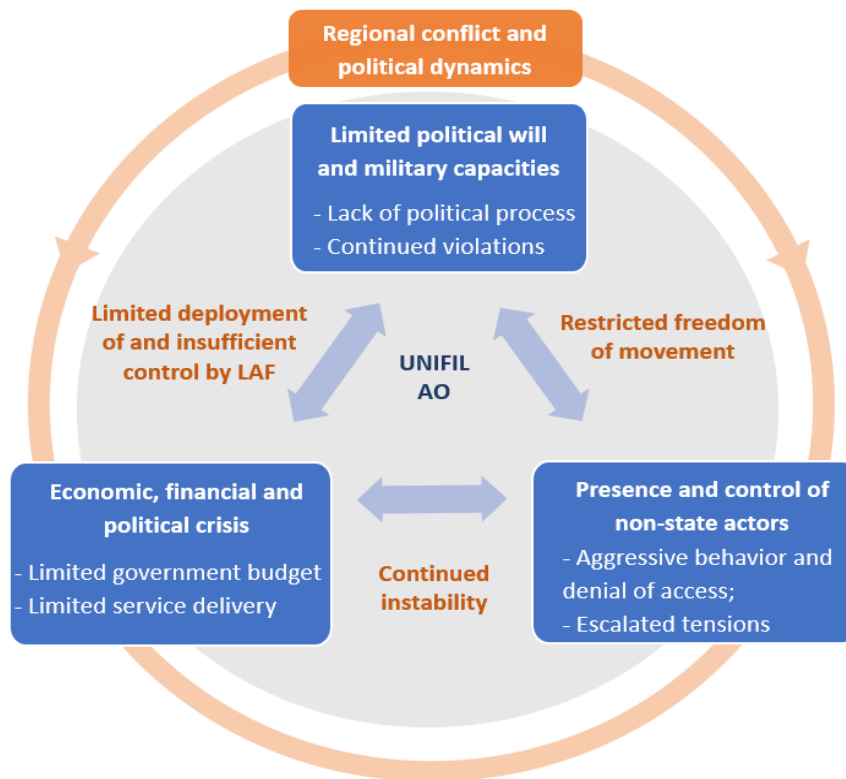
⁵ Specifically, UNSCOL follows up on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) to make progress toward securing a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution, the relevant provisions of the Taif accords and resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including disarmament, and the delineation of Lebanon's international borders, as well as dealing with the Shab'a farms area.

⁶ S/2023/879.

coordination mechanisms to try to de-escalate and avert a full-scale war, while the Force continued to monitor and report on the evolving situation and the violations across the Blue Line. At the time of writing this report, the situation along the Blue Line and in the region remained fragile and unpredictable with a prospect of further escalation.

6. **Socio-politico-economic Situation.** Political instability and impasse in the country persistently hindered the ability of the caretaker Government to address pressing socioeconomic, security, and humanitarian needs. Limited progress had been achieved on economic and governance reforms, including the development of a national defence strategy, among others. The political divisions and governance issues in the country, coupled with the economic and financial crisis, further exacerbated the sectarian tensions, increased difficulties in reaching political consensus, impacted basic service delivery, and limited the ability of the State to extend its authority and control, especially in UNIFIL AO (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Socio-politico-economic and security context.



Source: Interviews, survey and secondary data.

7. **Security Situation.** Due to the lack of political will of the parties to the conflict, the outstanding obligations under the Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) continued to impede the progress towards a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution to the conflict, which directly restricted the ability of UNIFIL in implementing its mandate. The pending withdrawal from Northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line; the unresolved marking of the Blue Line in the Eastern Sector⁷; a disputed border, the continued presence of unauthorized armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the Government and UNIFIL in the AO; the recurring hostile actions by the non-State actors from UNIFIL AO across the Blue Line⁸; the limited deployment and security control of the

⁷ Thirty-seven out of 118 kilometres remained unmarked.

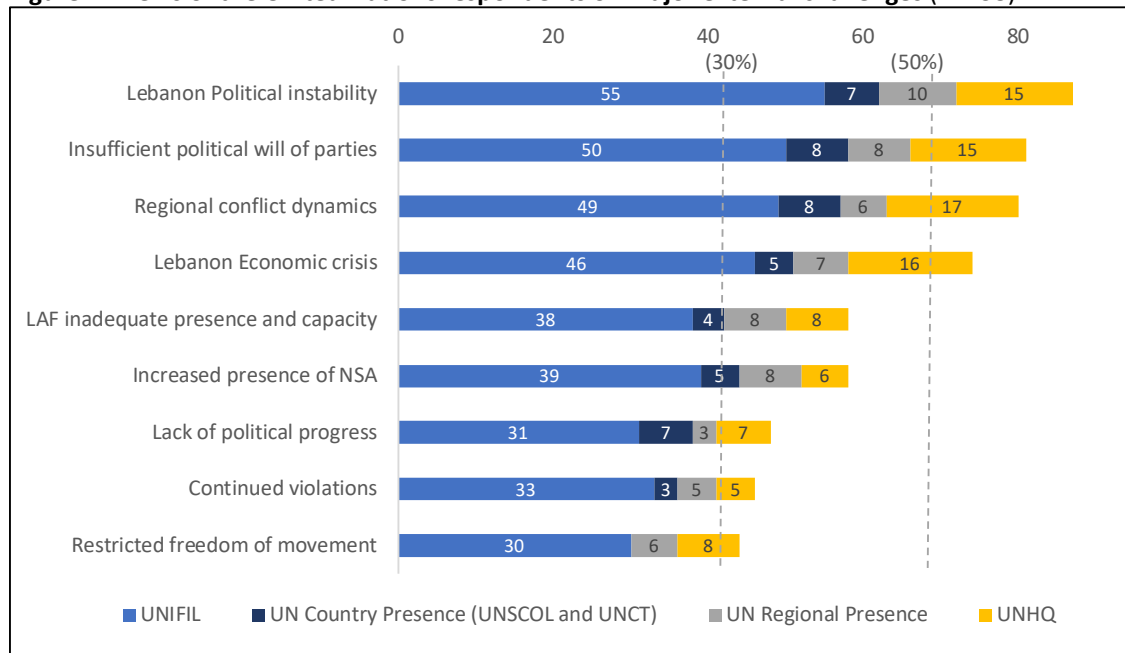
⁸ UNIFIL data.

AO by the national security forces⁹; and the frequent air and ground violations of the Blue Line as well as attacks and violations against UNIFIL peacekeepers, restrictions of freedom of movement, and lack of access to sites of interest in the AO all posed significant challenges for UNIFIL mandate implementation. UNIFIL peacekeepers operated in a non-permissive and restricted environment and faced significant threats to personnel and property.¹⁰

8. **Humanitarian Situation.** At the end of 2023, the country hosted approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees (87,715 refugees in UNIFIL AO), and an additional 11,645 refugees of other nationalities as per Government estimates, with 784,884 Syrian refugees registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).¹¹ This prolonged presence of refugees exacerbated intercommunal tensions and placed additional pressure on already stretched State resources. The country accounted for 487,000 Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Due to the ongoing breach of the cessation of hostilities since October 2023, approximately 86,874 people from UNIFIL AO were internally displaced.¹²

9. **Major external challenges.** More than 50 per cent of the survey respondents and 45 per cent of the interviewees cited political instability, insufficient will of the parties to the conflict, regional conflict dynamics, and the ongoing economic crisis as major external challenges that impacted UNIFIL mandate implementation (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Views of the United Nations respondents on major external challenges (n=138).



Source: Survey, 2023.

10. **Opportunities.** The maritime boundary agreement between the parties to the conflict in 2022 marked a significant milestone, fostering conditions conducive to resolving contentious issues. This development was perceived by both internal and external stakeholders as an opportunity, reflecting the increased willingness of the parties to the conflict in addressing lingering disputes over remaining maritime and land border questions.

⁹ Only part of the mandated 15,000 troops deployed in the AO.

¹⁰ UNIFIL data.

¹¹ UNHCR data.

¹² International Organization for Migration data.

III. Methodology

11. The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach and used primary data, including extensive document review, direct observation of the Blue Line and areas on both sides, interviews and focus group discussions, two case studies, and an electronic survey, along with secondary data from UNIFIL and 20 external sources. OIOS engaged with representatives of the community (religious leaders, women, and youth), civil society organizations, officials of the governments of the parties to the conflict, the United Nations presence in the region and the country, and DPPA-DPO. OIOS conducted 99 interviews (50 United Nations and 49 external key informants) and four focus group discussions (with women and youth groups), reaching over 217 individuals (34 per cent women). In the OIOS survey (hereinafter 'Survey'), 186 (138 United Nations and 48 external respondents) of the 364 individuals invited to participate (52.2 per cent) responded. The evaluation also benefitted from the results of the UNIFIL perception surveys conducted between 2017 to 2020.

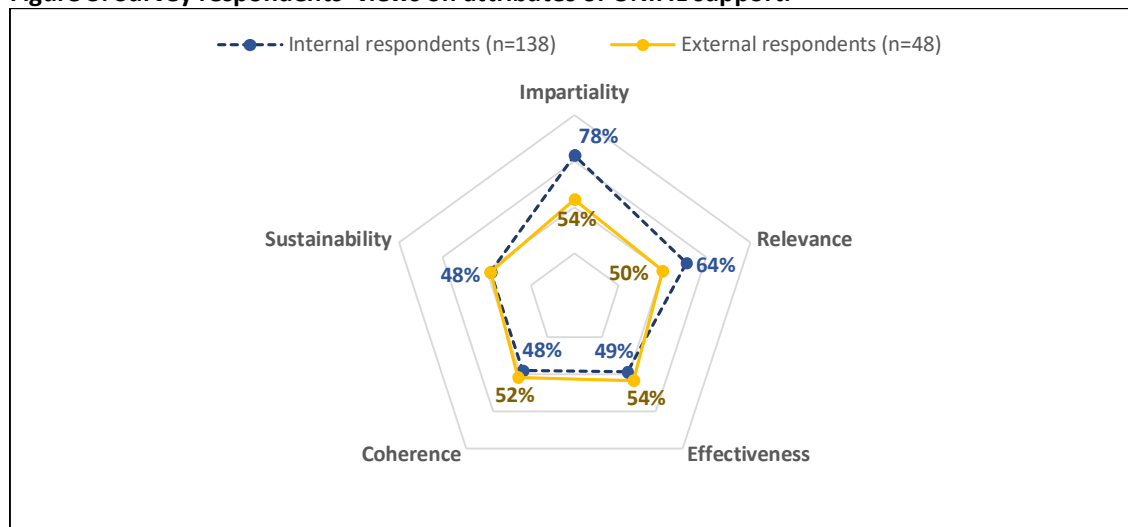
12. **Evaluation limitations.** The access to and engagement with Government officials and community representatives were restricted. The availability of Government and the United Nations country team data on UNIFIL AO was limited. Mission data was not consistently made available, and some discrepancies in data management and reporting were noted. The breach of the cessation of hostilities since October 2023 imposed delays in data collection and further limited access to key stakeholders. To overcome these limitations and to reduce potential bias, the evaluation triangulated evidence from various sources and stakeholders.

IV. Evaluation Results

A. UNIFIL support for the establishment of a stable and secure environment and the extension of State authority in southern Lebanon was partially relevant, with varying stakeholder perceptions.

13. Among United Nations survey respondents, 78 and 64 per cent respectively rated the impartiality and relevance attributes of UNIFIL positively. External respondents rated these 54 and 50 per cent, respectively. The opinions of both internal and external respondents aligned on UNIFIL effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability hovering at around 50 per cent rating indicating largely mixed views (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Survey respondents' views on attributes of UNIFIL support.



Survey: Survey, 2023.

A1. UNIFIL demonstrated the value of monitoring and reporting violations, along with providing a liaison mechanism between parties to the conflict.

14. In interviews, the Government officials of the parties to the conflict emphasized the crucial role of UNIFIL in monitoring and reporting on the status of cessation of hostilities and Blue Line violations. Given the absence of a permanent ceasefire and limited trust and confidence between the parties to the conflict, the presence of UNIFIL was considered essential for accurate reporting of all violations. However, there were concerns about the impartiality and the balance of reporting in the periodic reports to the Security Council, with the parties to the conflict calling for enhancements in accuracy, transparency, and greater balance. The need for strengthening reporting was also highlighted by some key United Nations leaders and staff.

15. In addition, major value additions of UNIFIL identified by interviewees and survey respondents were:

- a. Its unique liaison mechanism between the parties to the conflict making it well-positioned to de-escalate tensions of daily incidents along the Blue Line and within its AO, limiting miscalculations that could lead to escalation of tensions;
- b. Extensive presence and knowledge of the AO with protracted deployment and a strong presence that enabled direct engagement with civil administration and a profound understanding of the ground situation; and
- c. Continued support to communities providing a sense of security during times of crisis.

A2. UNIFIL support was generally aligned with the United Nations Security Council mandate, albeit with some inconsistencies.

16. The support provided by UNIFIL was generally aligned with its mandate and reflected in the mission concept, mission plan, budget documents, and implementation. However, some inconsistencies in the interpretation and understanding of the mandate by both internal and external stakeholders were observed. There was a lack of clarity on where UNIFIL held primary responsibility and accountability in monitoring the cessation of hostilities, ensuring UNIFIL AO was not utilized for hostile activities, conducting independent operations, and supporting the extension of State authorities. The priorities, targets, and indicators set out in the mission guidance documents at the outcome level did not fully align with the Security Council mandates (See Table 1). In its assessment, DPO observed differences in UNIFIL contingents’ understanding of how they were expected to ensure that their area was not utilized for hostile activities, often deflecting this responsibility to LAF, while restricting themselves to an observation and monitoring role.¹³

Table 1: Comparison of UNIFIL mandate with mission guidance documents and practice.

Issue	Cessation of hostilities	Non-State Actors	Independence	Extension of State authority
Mandate	- Monitor cessation of hostilities (SCR 1701)	- take all necessary actions to ensure AO is not utilized for hostile activities.... resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate.....	- conduct its operation independently, while continuing to coordinate with the Government, as per SOFA (SCR 2650 and 2695)	- Assist the Government to return of its effective authority (SCR 425) - Support deployment of LAF (SCR 1701)

¹³ Office for Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership Report on UNIFIL (2023).

Issue	Cessation of hostilities	Non-State Actors	Independence	Extension of State authority
		- Assist LAF to establish an area free of ... (SCR 1701)		
Mission Concept Strategic Priorities	- Maintain cessation of hostilities - Absence of hostilities - A permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel	- UNIFIL is to assist the Government to ensure AO not utilized for hostile activity....(Military Concept) - Area between... free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons		- Increase LAF, enhance governance structures and outcomes
Budget (Indicator of Achievement)	-Absence of air, sea and ground incursions or firing incidents across the Blue Line	- An area free of unauthorized weapons		- Functionalize Municipalities - Enhance support to the Government
CPAS (Strategic Impact)	Absence of hostilities	Absence of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons		Enhanced institutional governance structures
Interviews and Practice	No control over the violations committed by parties to the conflict, hostile actions by non-state actors, or on cessation of hostilities	- UNIFIL is a Chapter 6 Mission and responsible for only monitoring and reporting - No mandate to act against non-State actors - LAF is responsible to keep the area free	-Prior approval of patrolling plans on a sketch required - All activities coordinated with LAF - Limited freedom of movement/ access	- Not a core task of UNIFIL - Limited support provided for force acceptance and confidence building

Source: Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 1701 (2006), 2650 (2022) and 2695 (2023); UNIFIL Mission Concept (2021), UNIFIL Budget (2022-23), UNIFIL CPAS Reports (2020-23), and Interviews.

17. These inconsistencies in the language used and priorities set out in the guidance documents impacted the understanding of the intent and practice on the ground. Fifty per cent of interviewees had varied interpretations of the mandate of UNIFIL and approximately 30 per cent of the survey respondents highlighted the inconsistent understanding of the mandate as an internal challenge.

A3. UNIFIL support was somewhat responsive to the needs of the people; however, external stakeholders were of the opinion that it was of limited responsiveness to the core security needs of both governments due to unmet expectations.

18. UNIFIL support to the extension of State authorities and communities was assessed as relevant to address their respective needs and priorities. Eighty-two per cent of interviewed Government officials and community members in southern Lebanon indicated that UNIFIL support was attentive to evolving needs and followed a consultative approach. The civic support provided by UNIFIL through Quick Impact Projects (QIP) and Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) programmes was appreciated by beneficiaries. UNIFIL provided prompt help to the local administration and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, medical emergencies and fire incidents, and protected 221 civilians by sheltering them in bunkers during the breach in the cessation of hostilities in late 2023.

19. Notwithstanding the above, the parties to the conflict indicated limited responsiveness of UNIFIL to their core security needs, because of different interpretations of the mandate, as well as the Mission's inability to implement the mandate due to internal and external constraints. The parties wanted UNIFIL to play a proactive role in preventing Blue Line violations and hostile activities by non-State actors, eliminate the threats against each other, support LAF in exercising security control in the AO, and help resolve long outstanding disputes. While acknowledging the responsibility of the Government to provide basic services, community members expected enhanced support from UNIFIL to fill the gap and a greater focus of UNIFIL on preventing violations and resolving problems along the Blue Line - its core area of work. However, UNIFIL had limited leverage and deterrence against violations committed by both sides¹⁴ because of the constraints of the mandate, its conservative interpretation by UNIFIL, and the limited will of the parties to the conflict.

B. UNIFIL strengthened coherence within the Mission and with Member States but achieved limited advancement with United Nations partners on common objectives of the mandate.

B1. The military and civilian components of UNIFIL were coherent in delivering the mandate; however, a few challenges remained.

20. During the evaluation period, UNIFIL enhanced coordination structures within the mission. For example, it established the Principal Coordinator's Office and deployed civilian staff at the sector level to facilitate coordination. In addition to comprehensive guidelines, functional systems and mechanisms, such as Information Management Systems, Geographical Information Systems and system for tracking community engagement were put in place to facilitate the sharing of information across Mission components. This ensured effective coordination between civilian and military activities; for example, in partner engagement and community outreach activities. Joint initiatives and sufficient coordination between QIP and CIMIC programmes further amplified the synergies of the support provided by UNIFIL.

21. Despite overall positive perceptions of internal coherence among interviewed stakeholders supported by evidence found in document review, 37 per cent of the United Nations stakeholders in the survey identified 'inadequate coordination among Mission components' as an internal challenge. The main challenges to greater internal coherence included frequent rotation of military staff and contingents and inconsistent operational practices.

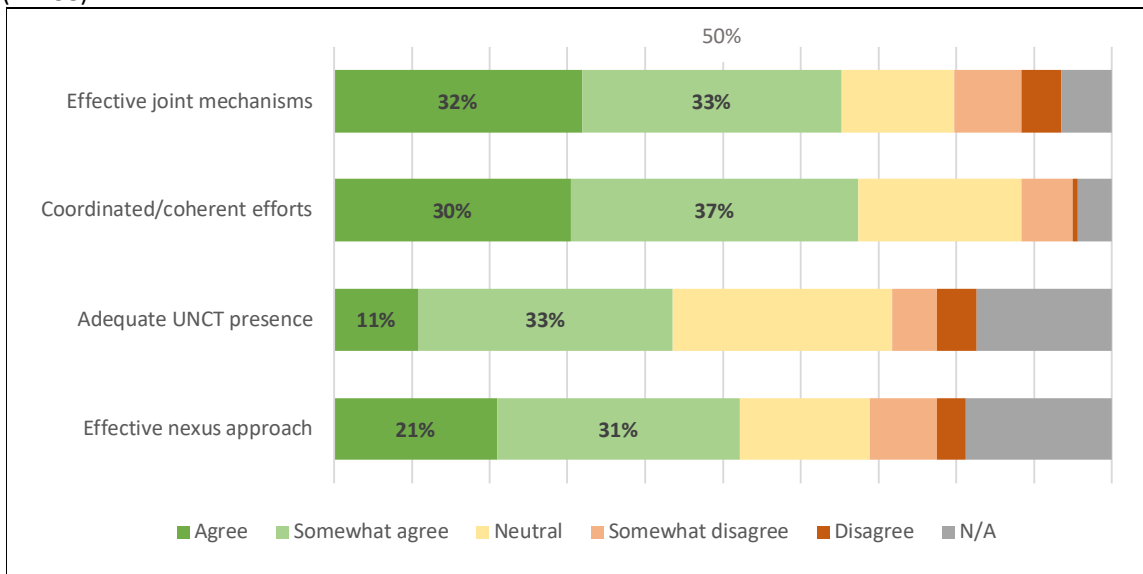
¹⁴ 47 per cent of Government officials of the parties to the conflict interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of deterrence of UNIFIL against violations committed by the opposing party.

B2. UNIFIL strengthened coordination with its United Nations partners, although the overall synergy with UNSCOL and the United Nations country team in mandate implementation was limited.

22. UNIFIL utilized existing mechanisms for coordination and information sharing with regional and country-level United Nations entities. This included sharing security updates with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) through regional conferences or monthly meetings. UNIFIL fostered information sharing, joint analysis and common messaging with UNSCOL and shared civic support activities with the country team through inter-agency working groups to avoid duplication. Furthermore, UNIFIL provided office space at its Naqoura Headquarters to the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes based in southern Lebanon, which was appreciated as an effort to strengthen the ‘One UN’ approach. Information sharing and coordination enhanced the complementarities of support among various actors. For instance, UNIFIL provided infrastructure support, while the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) delivered technical assistance to the same schools and social development centres.

23. Over 65 per cent of the United Nations survey respondents agreed or somewhat agreed that there were effective joint mechanisms and coordinated efforts between UNIFIL and other United Nations partners (see **Figure 4**). However, only a smaller percentage agreed that there was adequate United Nations country team presence and effective humanitarian-development-peace nexus in southern Lebanon. The need for strengthened collaboration, coherence and complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace actors was recognized by the country team.¹⁵

Figure 4: Views of the United Nations stakeholders on coherence within the United Nations (n=138).



Source: Survey, 2023.

24. Despite advocacy efforts of UNIFIL, the United Nations country team had limited presence and activities in southern Lebanon, with only four of its 21 entities operating in Lebanon deployed in the region. Southern Lebanon was not prioritized for humanitarian and development support as part of resource mobilization mechanisms, including the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, due to its lower

¹⁵ The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-25) and End of Assignment Report (EoAR) of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (2022).

numbers of Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Although the conceptual linkages between humanitarian, development and peace pillars of work were recognized, strengthened collaboration, including harmonizing plans and frameworks, and fostering strategic-level coordination, remained limited in southern Lebanon. Joint projects were hindered by internal barriers such as different budget cycles and planning approaches. Nevertheless, a few positive examples of collaboration were noted, including co-funding a waste management project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and collaboration with UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on youth programmes. While acknowledging the limited role of UNIFIL in facilitating humanitarian access, both internal and external stakeholders emphasized the imperative for a more integrated approach by the United Nations system to address the growing humanitarian and developmental needs in southern Lebanon.

25. Limited advancement was made towards achieving the common objectives of UNIFIL and UNSCOL in implementing Security Council resolution 1701 for a permanent ceasefire as required by the strategic review (S/2017/202) and the Secretary General's special report (S/2020/473). Their collaboration primarily involved information exchange, coordinated messaging, and joint reporting in the quarterly reports to the Council. Recent working-level coordination was seen as a positive step, with a generally clear division of focus between UNIFIL and UNSCOL. However, tangible outcomes of this partnership remained limited, prompting stakeholders to call for further enhanced collaboration to advance common objectives.

26. UNTSO Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) was seen as having complementary capabilities to UNIFIL, possessing certified military observers with longstanding experience in ceasefire monitoring, and better access to certain areas¹⁶. Despite coordination between UNIFIL and UNTSO-OGL on information sharing and reporting, OGL presence and capacity were not fully leveraged to maximize synergies in utilising their specialised skillsets, especially in observation, reporting and community engagements.

B3. UNIFIL advanced synergy and partnerships with Member States, which complemented the implementation of the mandate.

27. UNIFIL fostered effective coordination and partnerships with Member States. The Mission facilitated the use of \$15.3 million from Troop Contribution Countries (TCC) for CIMIC programmes over six years. UNIFIL facilitated the Strategic Dialogue by facilitating international support for the LAF Model Regiment and reaching out to Member States and donors to address the essential needs of LAF. UNIFIL kept Member States and TCCs informed of the ground situation through regular meetings and bilateral exchanges, although some Member States expected the United Nations Headquarters to provide more frequent and detailed information sharing through alternative channels.

28. In southern Lebanon, UNIFIL supported Member States in playing a complementary role and contributing to the stability and security of the environment as well as the extension of State authority. Diplomatic interventions of Member States helped prevent escalatory actions and facilitated the resolution of border disputes, including the negotiation of the maritime boundary agreement in 2022. Additionally, Member States provided necessary bilateral support to LAF, encompassing financial assistance on livelihoods and fuel, provision of assets such as military hardware and essential supplies, as well as capacity-building initiatives to enhance the capabilities of LAF personnel. While UNIFIL coordination minimized duplication in the provision of support to LAF and LAF-Navy in UNIFIL AO, there remained room to improve synergies for equipment donations and training initiatives.

¹⁶ Military observers conducted unarmed patrols in small teams, accompanied by language assistants.

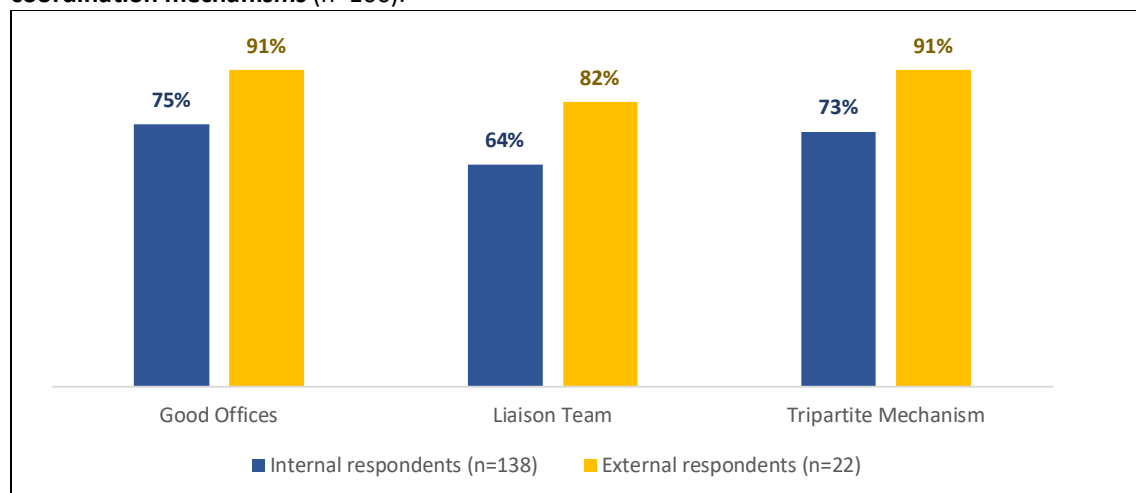
C. Despite dedicated UNIFIL support to the Government of Lebanon and LAF, the stability and security in southern Lebanon remained fragile due to significant external factors.

29. To maintain stability and security in southern Lebanon, UNIFIL undertook over 450 operational activities daily on land, air, and sea; monitored and reported over 15,000 violations from 2017 to 2023; and endeavoured to de-escalate tensions along the Blue Line¹⁷. Enhancing the protection, UNIFIL also cleared 149,866 square meters of the land area free of mines and destroyed 18,896 anti-personnel mines¹⁸. Notwithstanding the dedicated efforts of UNIFIL, stability and security remained fragile due to the spillover effect of regional incidents and the geopolitical environment, lack of political will of the parties to the conflict, recurrent Blue Line violations, and weak State capacity. The ability of UNIFIL to deliver the mandate was severely restricted due to its lack of independence in conducting operations, denial of freedom of movement, the inability to access places of interest (designated private properties, firing ranges, tunnel sites, sensitive villages, and interior roads), and the limited capacity of LAF to establish effective security control in southern Lebanon.

C1. In the absence of a permanent ceasefire and political agreement, UNIFIL contributed to relative stability by containing tensions and preventing their unintended escalation through liaison and coordination mechanisms.

30. The extended presence and operational activities of UNIFIL contributed to relative stability¹⁹. Sixty-two per cent of interviewees considered the situation to be relatively stable without developing into a major conflict²⁰, with 57 per cent of survey respondents indicating that UNIFIL contributed to a large extent to the stability and security in southern Lebanon. The Good Offices of the Head of Mission/Force Commander of UNIFIL with direct connection to the senior leadership of both LAF and IDF was seen as contributing to de-escalation and finding workable solutions at the tactical and operational levels. The intervention and de-escalation of tensions along the Blue Line by the Liaison Teams, and the facilitation of periodic engagements between the parties to the conflict through the Tripartite forum were positively viewed by interviewees and survey respondents (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5: Percentage of survey respondents expressing positive views on UNIFIL liaison and coordination mechanisms (n=160).



Source: Survey, 2023.

¹⁷ UNIFIL data.

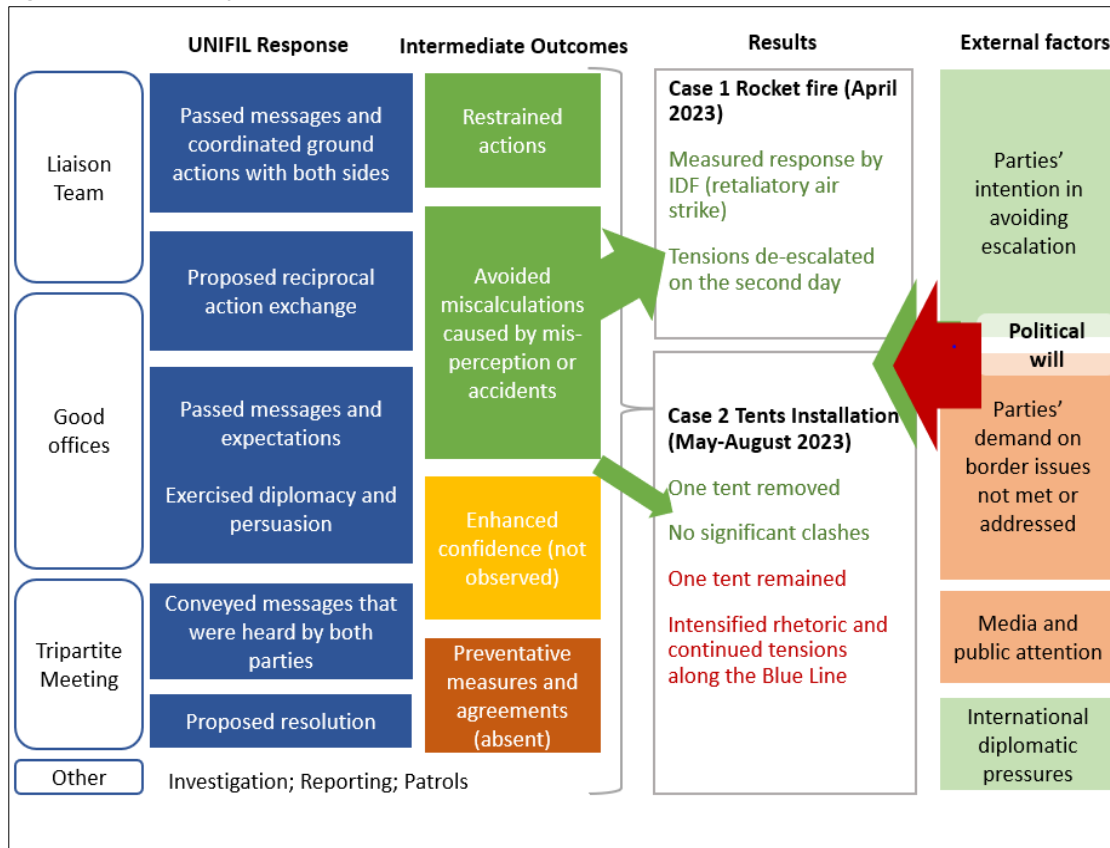
¹⁸ UNIFIL data.

¹⁹ Some key interviewees and Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS) reports noted that this could not be fully attributed to UNIFIL.

²⁰ Interviews conducted prior to October 2023.

31. The in-depth study of two incidents (see **Figure 6**) demonstrated the response and utilization of UNIFIL liaison and coordination mechanisms. While these mechanisms were effective and timely in mitigating tactical-level incidents by restraining the actions of parties and avoiding miscalculations and escalation of tensions, they were less effective in addressing incidents associated with strategic issues, wherein the will of the involved parties, over which UNIFIL had limited influence, was the decisive factor. Additionally, there was a lack of preventive outcomes in resolving the disputes or in the recurrence of incidents as a result of UNIFIL intervention.

Figure 6: UNIFIL response to examined incidents, external factors and contribution to results.

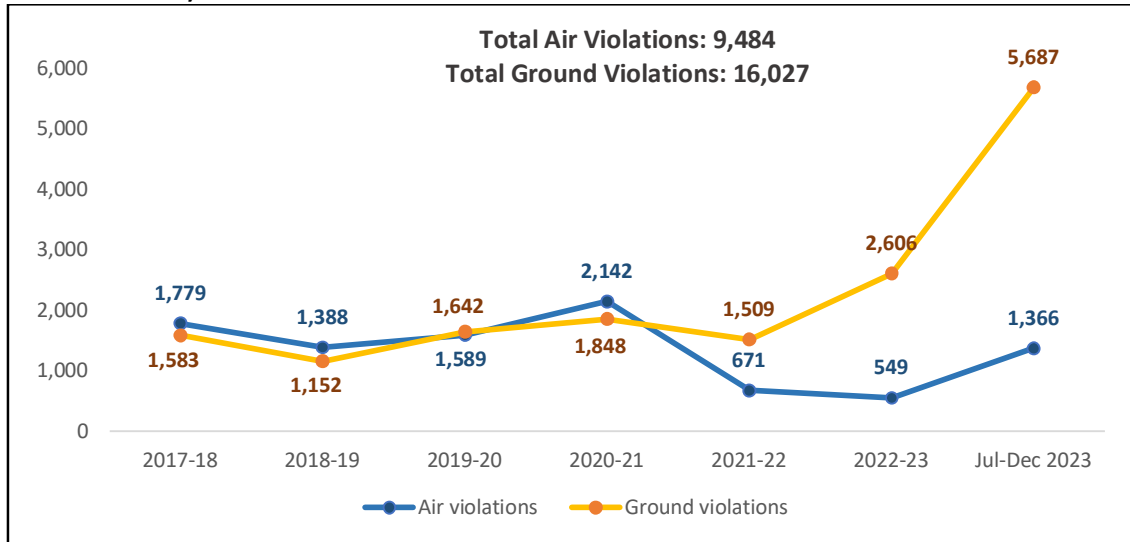


Source: UNIFIL data, interviews, external data.

C2. UNIFIL had limited influence to minimise violations across the Blue Line and hostile actions from within its AO.

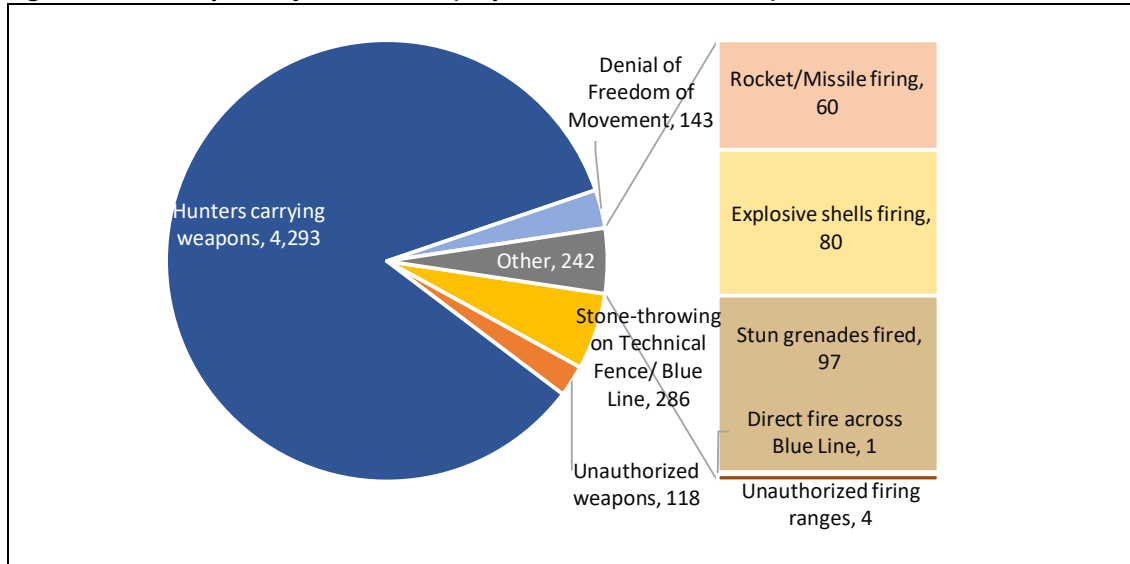
32. The presence and hostile activities of non-State actors in southern Lebanon increased in the past few years with the construction of infrastructure affiliated to non-State actors, tunnels (discovered in 2018) and observation towers along the Blue Line, and firing ranges in the AO. UNIFIL recorded 16,027 violations, which included over 9,000 air and 16,000 ground violations committed by parties to the conflict (see **Figure 7**). The summary in **Figure 8** outlines major violations of the past six years. From October to December 2023, there was a sharp escalation with increased daily firing exchanges across the Blue Line as parties to the conflict committed over 7,000 Blue Line and within the AO violations (a substantive increase of 46 per cent over the total number of violations during the previous six years). As collateral, approximately over \$600,000 worth of UNIFIL property was damaged and three peacekeepers were injured. The uninterrupted hostile activities from southern Lebanon indicated the accumulation of unauthorized personnel, assets, and weapons in the AO, undermining mandate implementation.

Figure 7: Summary of air and ground violations and incidents reported by UNIFIL (July 2017 – December 2023).



Source: UNIFIL data.

Figure 8: Summary of major violations (July 2017 – December 2023).



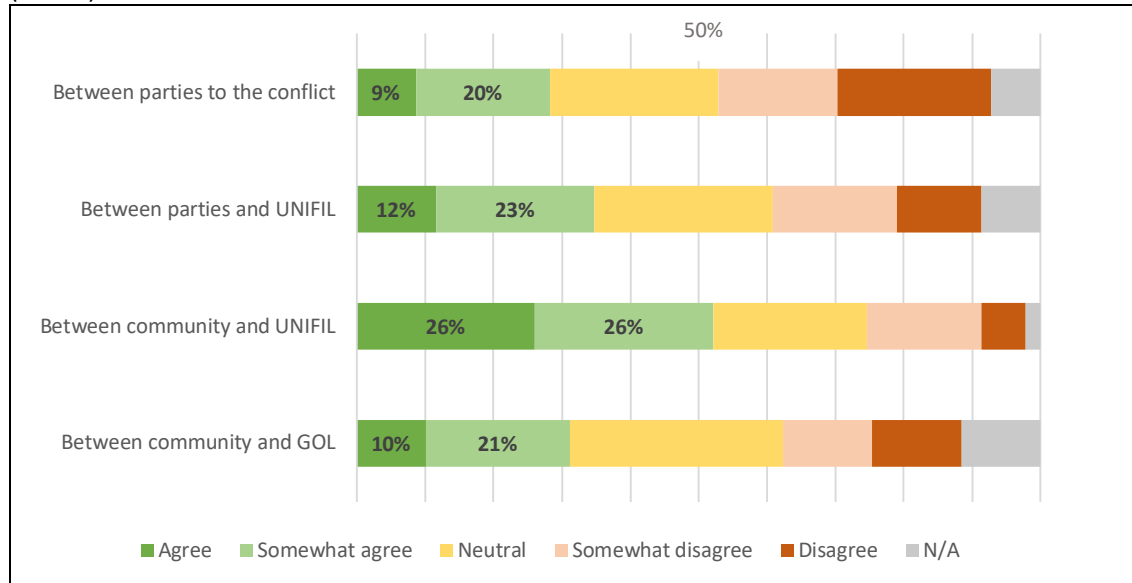
Source: UNIFIL data.

C3. Overall, the low trust and confidence levels between the parties to the conflict, and that of the Governments of Lebanon and Israel and the people of southern Lebanon towards UNIFIL remained challenging.

33. The trust and confidence between the parties to the conflict remained low as they were still technically at war. There was no ongoing political process for a permanent ceasefire and the Blue Line talks, stalled in 2017, were not resumed since both parties to the conflict had limited willingness to resolve outstanding disputes. Only a third of the survey respondents believed that trust had improved mutually between parties to the conflict, as well as between UNIFIL and the parties to the conflict (see **Figure 9**). UNIFIL faced challenges in exercising its operational independence, endured recurring violations of its status of forces agreement (SOFA), experienced continued impunity for aggressive actions by non-State actors, faced stymied deployment of liaison officers in respective military

headquarters, and was targeted directly at times due to limited trust and confidence of the parties to the conflict. UNIFIL Maritime Task Force (MTF) ships were endangered twice with the “lock-on mode” of the fire control radar of fighter aircraft and faced restricted freedom of movement on two other occasions from a party to the conflict²¹.

Figure 9: Views of the United Nations stakeholders on the improvement of trust and confidence (n=138).



Source: Survey, 2023.

34. In the context of limited trust and confidence in the Mission among certain segments of the population, UNIFIL experienced aggressive (such as seizure of equipment, damages to assets, and physical assaults) and unfriendly behaviour (such as use of harsh words and threatening gestures) from some individuals in the population and elements of non-State actors, evidenced by the physical attacks on peacekeepers and United Nations properties, stone throwing at patrols, snatching of weapons and equipment, blocking of roads, denial of freedom of movement, and unauthorised observation of UNIFIL activities. Reportedly, UNIFIL could not patrol or visit many areas without coordinating with LAF in advance and without prior approval, even to deliver civic support. From 2021 to 2023, UNIFIL was subjected to 374 targeted violations (see **Figure 10**) by some individuals and elements of non-State actors. From October 2021 to October 2023, UNIFIL was targeted with at least 15 incidents of unlawful seizures²², 10 incidents of physical assaults that injured 20 peacekeepers, 12 instances of laser beam pointing (from both sides of the Blue Line), 24 incidents of damages to multiple vehicles, and 662 unauthorised observations. In addition, from 2017 to 2023, 68 out of 71 requests from UNIFIL for access to places of interest were not granted²³. Only half of the survey respondents believed trust between the communities and UNIFIL had improved.

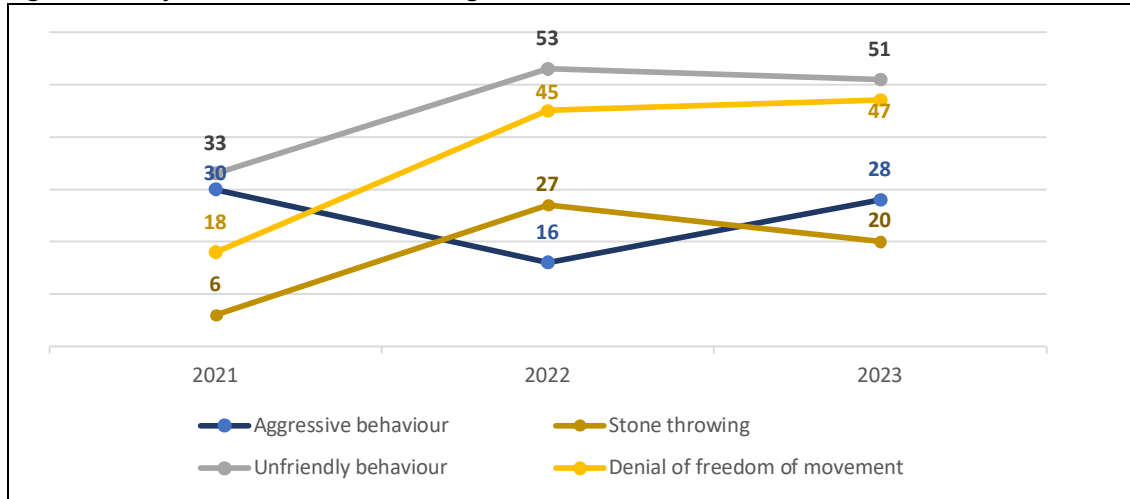
35. The respondents of the UNIFIL perception survey of 2020 rated the impartiality of UNIFIL at nearly 50 per cent, which was an increase of approximately 30 per cent compared to the 2019 and 2018 surveys. Only 54 per cent of external respondents of the survey rated impartiality as an attribute of UNIFIL and 19 negative opinions on impartiality and neutrality of UNIFIL were noted in interviews with external stakeholders. In some instances, the parties to the conflict rated UNIFIL negatively in its proactiveness, impartiality and neutrality in the execution of its tasks and reporting.

²¹ UNIFIL data.

²² Included weapons, radios, jammers, maps, body armour, mobile phones, and other personal items.

²³ UNIFIL data.

Figure 10: Major violations committed against UNIFIL since 2021.



Source: UNIFIL data.

D. UNIFIL support for the extension of State authority made limited progress, primarily hampered by external factors.

D1. Despite the Mission’s efforts, the presence and authority of LAF was not extended as envisaged by the mandate.

36. UNIFIL took various initiatives to strengthen LAF presence and capability. As part of the Strategic Dialogue, UNIFIL facilitated the establishment of a Model Regiment within LAF including the refurbishment of its headquarters through donor support. Additionally, the UNIFIL MTF assisted LAF Navy in establishing the Charlie 1 control centre and 10 coastal radar stations²⁴, which enabled the monitoring of maritime space. Coordinated or joint exercises and training were regularly undertaken with both the LAF and LAF Navy to enhance their tactical and operational capacities. However, key stakeholders were of the view that the overall effectiveness of such exercises was not conclusively proven²⁵. UNIFIL further provided non-lethal material and logistical support valued at \$683,000, donated assets worth \$2.4 million²⁶ (depreciated value), and transferred five UNIFIL ground positions to LAF in 2022 and 2023.

37. However, LAF maintained only a partial presence in southern Lebanon, deploying between 3,000 to 4,000 troops as against the 15,000 committed in 2006²⁷. LAF deployed only 100 soldiers for the Model Regiment as opposed to the required 1,300. Despite the temporary relief LAF experienced by receiving non-lethal support from UNIFIL, their joint activities remained limited between nine to 15 per cent of UNIFIL activities. LAF faced constraints in operational and logistical capabilities, including maintaining equipment and vehicles, and had limited responsiveness to hostile actions by non-state actors. With UNIFIL support, LAF Navy increasingly assumed hailing and tracking duties in the Central maritime corridor of territorial waters, although it continued to face challenges in sustaining long-term operations and conducting proper inspections²⁸. In addition, no seizure of unauthorized arms and related materials were reported by LAF-Navy, despite 49,408 vessels being hailed, and 9,755 inspections conducted from 2017 to 2023.

²⁴ Through bilateral Member State support.

²⁵ EoAR and interviews indicated the lack of clear benchmarks and understanding of LAF capability.

²⁶ Included radars, vehicles; generators; shelters, information, communication and technology equipment, medicines, fuel tanks, spare parts, and so on.

²⁷ S/RES/1701 (2006).

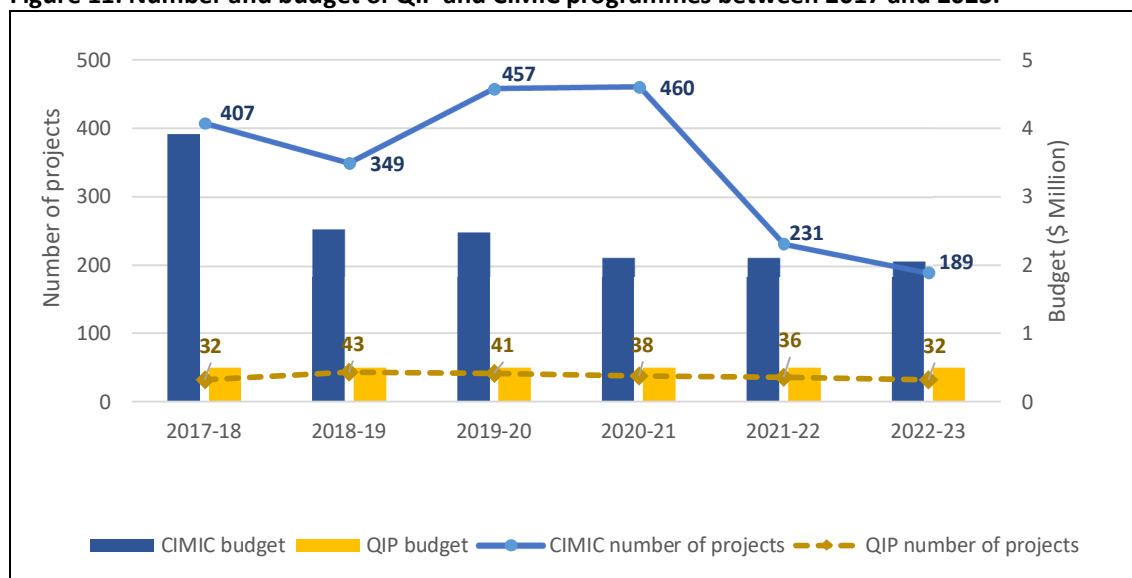
²⁸ A/78/596.

38. The economic crisis affected LAF significantly, leading to soldier desertions and many seeking additional employment to augment their livelihoods. Additionally, the limited political will of the Government and insufficient military capacities hindered LAF deployment in southern Lebanon. Factors such as insufficient personnel, equipment, military hardware, and logistical capabilities further impeded LAF operational effectiveness.

D2. Despite being limited in scale, UNIFIL support to the civil administration institutions and the people of southern Lebanon made positive contributions.

39. UNIFIL provided support to civil administration institutions and the people of southern Lebanon through frequent small-scale interventions. Throughout the period reviewed, UNIFIL implemented 2,315 civic projects within its AO, including \$3 million for QIP and \$15.3 million for CIMIC programmes (see **Figure 11**).

Figure 11: Number and budget of QIP and CIMIC programmes between 2017 and 2023.



Source: UNIFIL data.

40. Although limited in scale, UNIFIL civic support generated positive results in the following areas:
- Providing humanitarian relief that addressed critical needs of the people in water, power, medical and other essential services;
 - Contributing to the enhanced operational functionality of municipalities and social services through logistics and infrastructure assistance. For instance, UNIFIL facilitated the re-opening of seven Social Development Centres and the establishment of a civil defence training centre. Solar panels provided by UNIFIL ensured the sustained functionality of several schools and facilities of the Internal Security Forces; and
 - Facilitating capacity building and confidence building of communities. Some activities, such as training and educational activities, fostered positive intra-communal and inter-communal relationships and empowered women and youth groups.

41. These endeavours were acknowledged by beneficiaries for their good quality, although they fell short of fully addressing the basic needs of the communities facing economic hardships. Stakeholders and secondary data²⁹ indicated that such support improved community relations with UNIFIL, fostering greater acceptance of UNIFIL presence and activities.

²⁹ UNIFIL Public Perception Survey and external research paper.

D3. UNIFIL support sufficiently incorporated sustainability considerations, however, resource constraints of State authorities hindered long-term sustainability.

42. UNIFIL implemented measures to ensure sustainability in its civic support. This included integrating sustainability and ownership considerations into project selection, prioritizing co-funding modality and implementing low-maintenance projects. UNIFIL also maintained regular follow-up activities with the supported institutions and established a unit to monitor the long-term sustainability of these projects. Similarly, in its support to LAF, UNIFIL provided capacity-building assistance and skill transfer, aimed at fostering self-reliance in operating and maintaining assets. Procedures were put in place to guarantee the effective utilization of donated equipment and materials. Coordination with other actors, such as UNCT and Member States, enhanced the continuity of benefits. For example, UNICEF, in collaboration with UNIFIL, refurbished a disused agricultural factory and re-purposed it into an education centre.

43. However, the long-term sustainability of UNIFIL support to LAF and Government institutions was limited by inadequate national budget allocation, staffing shortages, delayed security reforms and other structural deficiencies. Challenges included retaining trained personnel within LAF (including its Navy), and the closure of UNIFIL-supported social development centres due to a lack of availability of national funding to cover operating costs.

E. Some internal barriers inhibited the effectiveness of UNIFIL in implementing its mandate.

44. The lack of proactiveness, frequent rotations and inadequate institutional memory were cited as major internal barriers, including by parties to the conflict (see **Table 2**).

Table 2: Major internal barriers.

Major internal barriers	Cited by survey respondents	Cited by interviewees	Observations
Lack of proactiveness in mandate implementation	42%	34%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viewed as less responsive and effective - Lack of will, due to perceived risks to peacekeepers - Leading to a negative perception regarding Mission impartiality
Frequent rotation of military staff and contingent personnel	40%	38%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More prone to friction and limited engagement with communities - Limited relationship building with the Government and LAF
Inadequate institutional memory	41%	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited knowledge of the situation prior to deployment - Inadequate dissemination of information at functional levels - Inconsistent hand-over documentation - Absence of After-Action Reports of major incidents - Lack of documentation of Mission leadership response to critical incidents

45. Other internal barriers included shortcomings and inaccuracies of the incident management and reporting systems (including mis-categorization and misclassification of incidents; insufficient documentation of incident details; overly excessive review processes that diluted messages), incoherent practices across contingents; a hierarchical structure and inflexible procedures that delayed incident responses; and language barriers that limited community engagements.

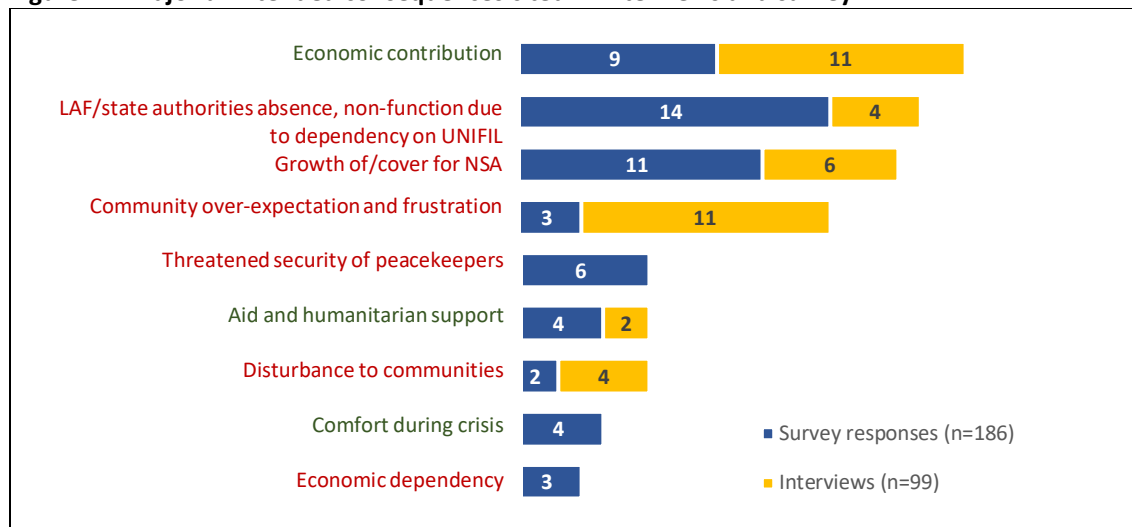
F. Increased hostile actions by non-State actors, undue dependency of State institutions on UNIFIL, and unrealistic expectations of communities were cited as unintended consequences.

46. Key interviewees and survey respondents cited the following major negative unintended consequences of UNIFIL support (see **Figure 12**), including:

- a. Increased presence of non-State armed personnel, their construction of defence infrastructures, and increased hostile actions;
- b. Continued absence of and the dependency of State authority on UNIFIL for increasing the deployment of LAF in southern Lebanon, provision of logistics support for conducting joint operations, and augmenting the delivery of basic services; and
- c. Over-expectations of communities on UNIFIL for preventing Blue Line violations and providing various forms of support.

47. The economic benefits accrued from the presence of UNIFIL (including job opportunities and commercial activities) and civic support provided by UNIFIL through QIP and CIMIC programmes were considered positive unintended consequences.

Figure 12: Major unintended consequences cited in interviews and survey.



Source: Survey, 2023.

G. UNIFIL made significant contributions to gender equality and environmental protection through dedicated efforts.

G1. UNIFIL systematically mainstreamed gender in Mission activities and contributed to positive outcomes towards gender quality.

48. Within the Mission, a suitable governance structure and sufficient mechanisms were established to mainstream gender equality in its activities. These included a dedicated gender unit, a High-Level Gender Task Force and focal point networks within Sectors and battalions, thereby ensuring the incorporation of gender perspectives across various organizational levels. The establishment of the

Female Assessment Analysis and Support Team facilitated engagement with female community members. UNIFIL QIP allocated 15 per cent of its budget to programmes targeting women and ensured that 50 per cent of beneficiaries were women and girls. In the survey, 93 per cent of UNIFIL respondents believed that the Mission adequately mainstreamed gender considerations in its activities.

49. UNIFIL facilitated the advancement of gender equality within LAF and the civil society at large through various means. Notably, it supported the establishment of the LAF Gender Department, leading to increased recruitment of female officers and Non-commissioned Officers. The UNIFIL Gender Unit regularly advised the LAF Gender Unit and provided technical inputs on the LAF Gender mainstreaming strategy. Furthermore, UNIFIL facilitated the creation of three Gender Working Groups in southern Lebanon, enhancing collaboration with civil society organizations focusing on women's issues, and established networks of women mediators in collaboration with UN-Women and the Saint Joseph University in Beirut. At the national level, UNIFIL established a strategic partnership with the National Commission for Lebanese Women and contributed to the development and adoption of the first National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security, and the Lebanon Strategy for Women (2023-2030).

G2. UNIFIL sufficiently incorporated environmental considerations in its activities.

50. Through dedicated projects focused on environmental protection or including environmental elements, UNIFIL incorporated environmental considerations into its QIP and CIMIC programmes. The Mission assisted municipalities and communities in promoting environment-friendly practices and improving their environmental conditions through projects on solar power systems, water and waste management, tree plantation and so on.

51. UNIFIL implemented various measures within the Mission to mitigate its environmental footprint, including establishing an environmental governance structure and focal point networks, transitioning to solar power, monitoring waste treatment, disposal and recycling, adapting operational exercises to minimize negative environmental effects, and promoting good practices through publications, events and awards. Overall, UNIFIL improved its environmental performance and action planning score from 76 in 2017 to 85 in 2022.

G3. The visibility and mainstreaming of human rights, disability inclusion and SDG were limited.

52. **Human rights.** UNIFIL did not have a specific mandate for human rights monitoring, reporting and investigation. Nevertheless, in accordance with the human rights policy applicable to United Nations peace operations³⁰, UNIFIL interacted with the Regional OHCHR and participated in relevant inter-agency working groups, including on protection issues through a designated focal point. The Mission applied the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy in providing non-lethal support to LAF.

53. **Disability inclusion.** Disability inclusion was not fully mainstreamed within the Mission in its policies, programme design and collection of disaggregated data on persons with disabilities. The surveyed and interviewed UNIFIL personnel confirmed that there was limited focus on this aspect. Nevertheless, UNIFIL provided sporadic assistance and donations³¹ to persons with disabilities. For example, UNIFIL supported two schools for children with special needs by providing infrastructure assistance and conducting psychological assessments and activities.

54. **SDG.** The alignment of UNIFIL operational and civic activities with the SDG framework at the strategy and policy level was limited. However, its activities potentially contributed to Goal 16 'Peace

³⁰ 2011.20.

³¹ Including wheelchairs and walking aids.

and Security’, particularly on Target 16.1 and Target 16.4³², as well as Goal 5 ‘Gender Equality’, particularly on Target 5.5³³ through women empowerment projects and Target 5.C³⁴ through support for national policies.

V. Conclusion

55. The breaches of the cessation of hostilities along the Blue Line since October 2023 with a risk of escalation to a more protracted and devastating conflict created the necessity for UNIFIL to adapt its role and tasks to the evolving situation and proactively continue to implement the mandate. In this regard, the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1701 (2006), by the parties to the conflict will be key for peace, security and stability in Lebanon and the region³⁵.

56. The mandate delivery by UNIFIL continued to be challenging in a highly sensitive and non-permissive operational environment. While key stakeholders expected UNIFIL to play a more credible role in maintaining stability and security, the Mission faced internal and external constraints in meeting expectations and implementing its mandated tasks. Despite UNIFIL support, the prevailing economic, social and security contexts hampered the effective extension of State authority. Nevertheless, UNIFIL meaningfully contributed to maintaining relative stability in the AO, which was the primary responsibility of the parties to the conflict.

57. The recent events in the region have created an opportunity for UNIFIL and UNSCOL to use their respective good offices as well as liaison and coordination mechanisms in an integrated manner in order to make progress towards resolving the outstanding obligations of, and forging a permanent ceasefire between, the parties to the conflict. Furthermore, the immediate humanitarian and longer-term development needs of the local population in southern Lebanon will require greater presence and programmes of the United Nations country team to work synergistically and effectively to achieve the extension of State authority in southern Lebanon as envisioned by the Security Council resolution 1701 in 2006.

VI. Recommendations

58. OIOS makes three important recommendations:

No	Results	Recommendations	Type	Indicators
1	A2 A3 C2	DPPA-DPO should undertake a review to address the gaps in UNIFIL interpretation and implementation of the mandate through: a. Providing interpretation of the mandated tasks and setting clear, realistic, and achievable objectives for UNIFIL based on relevant Security Council mandates. b. Suggesting further measures to better strengthen the “One UN approach” and	Important	Review completed with a clear articulation of points a to c.

³² Target 16.1 ‘Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates’; Target 16.4 ‘Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime’.

³³ Target 5.5 ‘Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making’.

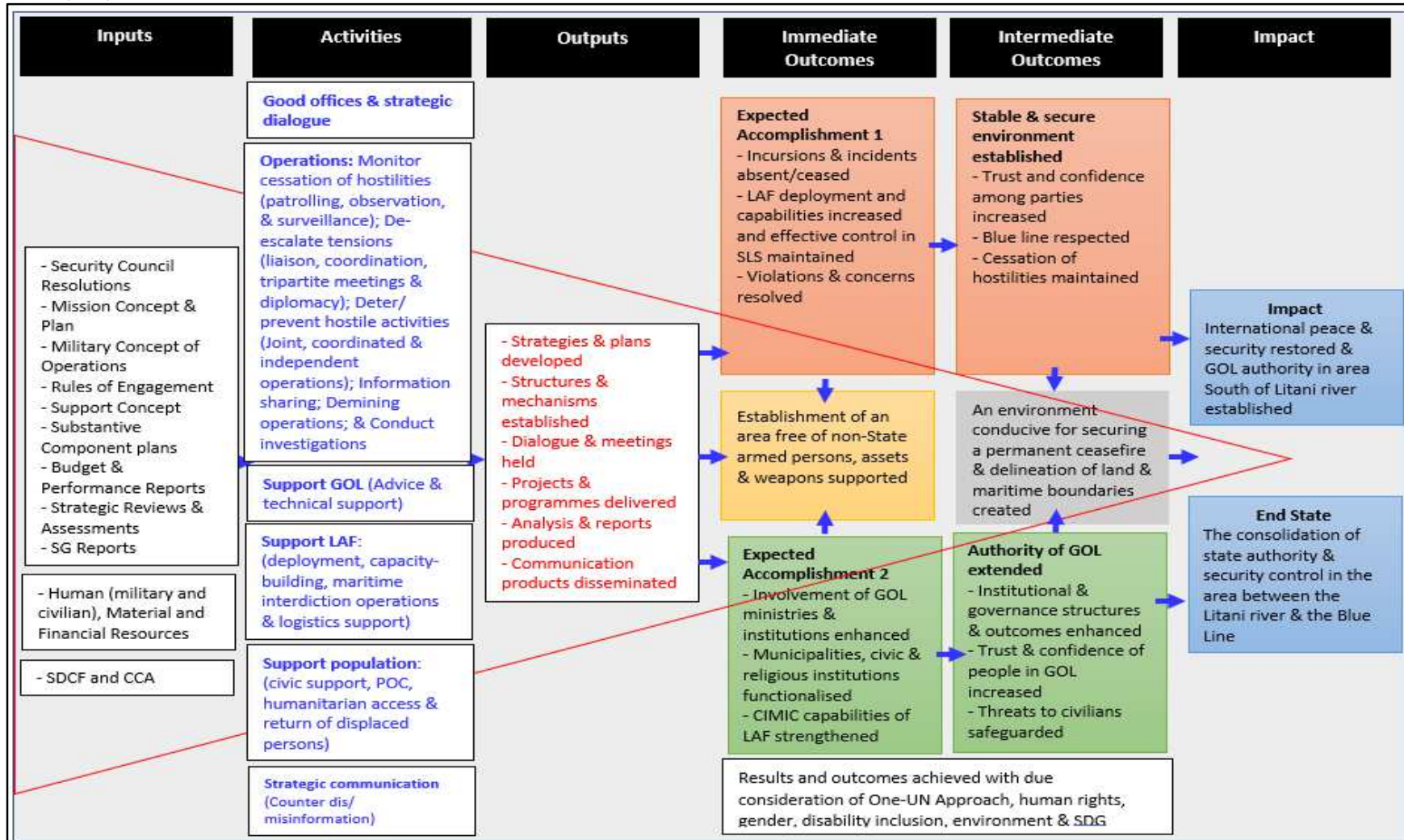
³⁴ Target 5.C Sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality.

³⁵ S/2023/879.

No	Results	Recommendations	Type	Indicators
		<p>integrated strategies for the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) by UNIFIL and UNSCOL.</p> <p>c. Making recommendations on the potential need for reconfiguration and resource requirements of UNIFIL to the Security Council as per the findings of the review.</p>		
2	B2	<p>UNIFIL, in collaboration with UNSCOL, should:</p> <p>a. Develop a comprehensive joint strategy and implementation plan to advance the common objectives of the Security Council mandates to ensure the cessation of hostilities between parties and progress towards a permanent ceasefire.</p> <p>b. Along with the United Nations country team, develop an integrated strategy and implementation plan to strengthen collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace pillars to increase the country team presence and programmes in southern Lebanon.</p>	Important	<p>i. Joint UNSCOL-UNIFIL strategy and implementation plan developed.</p> <p>ii. Measures to facilitate and build on the presence and programmes of the country team identified and adopted.</p>
3	A2 A3 C3 E	<p>UNIFIL should take measures to:</p> <p>a. Incorporate and align with the objectives of the Security Council mandate accurately as per the DPPA-DPO review in recommendation 1 above into the Mission Concept and Mission Plan, ensuring a consistent approach in executing the operational tasks, and sensitizing parties to the conflict and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>b. Ensure the accuracy of reporting on violations by clearly and impartially describing the situation on the ground and the various challenges to mandate implementation.</p>	Important	<p>i. Mission guidance documents updated, communicated, and operational tasks evaluated as per Mission guidance.</p> <p>ii. Periodic and transparent communication with key stakeholders.</p> <p>iii. Institution of checks and balances for comprehensive, objective, consistent, and accurate reporting, and a feedback mechanism for key stakeholders.</p>

Annex I: Theory of Change

(Refer p.5, para.2)



Annex II: Management response.



TO: Mr. Yee Woo Guo, Director
A: Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 10 May 2024

REFERENCE: DPPADPO-2024-00846

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

THROUGH: Fatoumata Ndiaye, Under-Secretary-General
S/C DE: Office of Internal Oversight Services

FROM: Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General
DE: for Peace Operations

SUBJECT: **Final draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Outcome Evaluation of the support provided by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the establishment of a stable and secure environment and the extension of State authority in southern Lebanon**

1. With reference to your memorandum dated 15 April 2024, reference OIOS-2024-00653, and draft final report on the outcome evaluation of the support provided by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the establishment of a stable and secure environment and the extension of State authority in southern Lebanon, as well as with reference to the memorandum to you from the UNIFIL head of mission and force commander General Lazaro, dated 28 April 2024, I would like to extend my appreciation for the comprehensive evaluation conducted by the OIOS team, as well as the constructive collaboration between the evaluation team and colleagues in New York and Lebanon.
2. The Department of Peace Operations concurs with the response outlined in the “Action Plan to Implement the Recommendations 11 April 2024” (the Action Plan) as provided by UNIFIL to you in its response of 28 April. As General Lazaro indicated in his memorandum of 28 April, developments since October 2023 necessitate renewed efforts by the United Nations to encourage the parties to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) to recommit to their obligations and take concrete steps towards full implementation of the resolution. Work has already begun in this regard, and we will outline the related actions in accordance with the Action Plan in due course.

Cc. Ms. Rosemary A. DiCarlo
Ms. Joanna Wroniecka
Mr. Khaled Khiari
Lt. Gen. Aroldo Lazaro
Mr. Imran Riza



Head of Mission and Force Commander

Inter Office Memorandum

Date: 28 April 2024
564 / UNIFIL / FC 06

To: Mr. Yee Woo Guo, Director
Inspection and Evaluation Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

From: Lt. Gen. Aroldo Lazaro
Head of Mission/Force Commander
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "A. Lazaro", written over a faint grid background.

Subject: Management Response to the OIOS Outcome Evaluation (UNIFIL)

1. I would like to appreciate the work and reflection that has gone into this evaluation at a very challenging time for the Mission and the region. Despite daily violations that UNIFIL now records, with the continued breaches of the cessation of hostilities across the Blue Line since 8 October 2024, all parties continue to reiterate their support for UNSCR 1701 and UNIFIL. The Mission has adapted in implementing its mandate in the current challenging circumstances and will continue to be required to orient to new realities. The recommendations here within are a constructive contribution in this regard.
2. Specifically in regards understandings of the mandate, it is more apparent than ever that the parties have significant differences in the elements and understandings they focus on within the resolution. As set out in the attached Action Plan, and in line with current negotiations aimed at ensuring a recommitment to a restoration of the cessation of hostilities under the framework of resolution 1701 (2006), UNIFIL will move to re-engage the parties to build common interpretation of the resolution and the Mission's role. Internally, UNIFIL will streamline consistent documentation and ensure internal systems better support shared understandings and approaches.

3. The need for enhanced synergies across UN entities in regards support for implementation of 1701 is appreciated. As set out in the Action Plan, UNIFIL will seek to ensure greater coordination and strategic approaches, while respecting differing roles and distinct accountabilities. This includes the primary responsibility of the parties to implement SCR1701 (2006).
4. With reference to reporting, the Mission follows the extensive and robust UN systems required for Secretary General's reporting. Deeply contested historic narratives and political perceptions mean it must be expected that both parties will challenge accuracy and impartiality of even the most rigorous and balanced systems. UNIFIL has long been recognized for its data-driven approach and internally there will be further efforts to streamline and upgrade systems and processes, in consultation with the parties as outlined in the attached Action Plan in further enhancing future monitoring and verification requirements.
5. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff, particularly those directly involved in the evaluation of UNIFIL, for their professionalism and excellent cooperation.

cc: Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, USG OIOS
Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, USG DPO
Ms. Srilata Rao, OIOS
UNIFIL MLT