

MEMMO

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Expanded UNIFIL Mandate Needed to Stop Hizballah Arms Smuggling

Hizballah, with the assistance of Iran and Syria, continues to amass thousands of rockets and other sophisticated weaponry, rebuilding its arsenal up to the level before last summer's war with Israel. Top U.N. officials have concluded that the Syrian-Lebanese border is being used to smuggle arms to Hizballah and that the terrorist group is reconstructing fortifications throughout Lebanon. The U.N. Security Council needs to expand the mandate of the U.N. forces in Lebanon—which have failed so far to stop the smuggling—if it is serious in seeking to curb illegal weapons trafficking into Lebanon.

Iran and Syria continue to smuggle weapons to Hizballah and other terrorist groups in Lebanon.

- Terje Roed-Larsen, the special U.N. envoy for Lebanon, warned the Security Council on June 11 of an “alarming and deeply disturbing picture” of “a steady flow of weapons and armed elements across the border from Syria.”
- U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, in his semi-annual report on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 said Iran and Syria “have a particular responsibility to ensure that the provisions related to the arms embargo of resolution 1701 ... are fully respected.”



UNIFIL's current mandate is insufficient to prevent Iran and Syria from rearming the terrorist group Hizballah.

- Syria has transferred several hundred medium-range missiles to Hizballah along with other weaponry, completely replenishing its weapon supplies that were fired by Hizballah or were destroyed by Israel during last summer's war, *The Jerusalem Post* reported July 11, citing Israeli military intelligence.
- Syria is also facilitating the supply of weapons to other terrorist groups in Lebanon. The Lebanese government said eight vehicles mounted with 40-barrel rocket launchers were seen on June 6 crossing the Syrian-Lebanese border and entering an outpost of a Palestinian terrorist group.

Hizballah continues to violate other key provisions of Resolution 1701.

- Ban said the recent rocket firings by unknown elements in southern Lebanon into Israel constitute “the most serious breach of the cessation of hostilities since the end of the war.”

- Reports indicate Hizballah has constructed new facilities in the Bekaa Valley—including command and control centers—and rebuilt its rocket launching capabilities to prepare for a new round of violence against Israel. Resolution 1701 required Hizballah’s armed militia to be dismantled.
- In violation of Resolution 1701, Hizballah has failed to release the two Israeli soldiers it kidnapped in July 2006, which precipitated last summer’s war.

The U.N. peacekeeping force’s actions and mandate are inadequate to address continued weapons smuggling and terrorist activity.

- Despite its mandate, the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) are not patrolling the villages of southern Lebanon, allowing Hizballah to use these unmonitored areas.
- The U.N. mandate does not allow UNIFIL to deploy along the border with Syria without a call from the Lebanese government, which has yet to make such a request.
- An independent mission sent by the U.N. to assess the border found “the present state of border security was insufficient to prevent smuggling, in particular of arms, to any significant extent,” adding that given the present situation it is “still possible for arms to be smuggled undetected through the border line.”
- U.N. forces are limited to operations in southern Lebanon, allowing Hizballah and other terrorists to operate freely north of the Litani River and in the Bekka Valley. The area between the Litani River and Israel’s border is at some points narrow as four kilometers.

The Security Council should expand the mandate of U.N. peacekeepers in Lebanon and hold Iran and Syria accountable for violating Resolution 1701.

- U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 calls for the Council to reconsider “further enhancements to the mandate” in the future.
- As part of the renewal process of UNIFIL’s mandate, which expires in August, the United States should encourage the Security Council to expand the force’s mandate to allow monitoring of the Lebanese-Syrian border in order to prevent Iran and Syria from rearming Hizballah.
- The U.N. also should hold Syria and Iran accountable for violating Resolution 1701’s arms embargo against Hizballah through further sanctions on the two regimes.

Basic Facts Summary

- Iran and Syria continue to smuggling weapons to Hizballah and other terrorist groups in Lebanon.
- Hizballah continues to violate other key provisions of Resolution 1701.
- The UNIFIL peacekeeping force’s mandate is inadequate to address continued weapons smuggling and terrorist activity.
- The Security Council should expand the mandate of U.N. peacekeepers in Lebanon and hold Iran and Syria accountable for violating Resolution 1701.