

**Reply to the statement of the Israeli delegate on the occasion of the renewal of UNIFIL mandate, by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Ambassador Nawaf Salam, delivered before the Security Council on August 27, 2009.**

At the outset, allow me, Sir, to recognize your effective stewardship of this Council during this month. I would also like to acknowledge your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Uganda, for his leadership in assuming the presidency of this council in July.

In few days, Mr. President, it will be the third anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). In these three years, the Lebanese government reiterated time and again its commitment to the full implementation of said resolution in its entirety, and to working closely with UNIFIL.

Today, my government would like first and foremost to thank all members of this august Council for their decision to renew for another year UNIFIL's mandate without amendment in its mission, the rules of engagement, or the concept of operations, as per the request of my government. Having been the victims of repeated Israeli aggressions since the 1978 invasion which led to SC resolution 425 and the creation of the first UNIFIL, I am sure, you realize how important for all Lebanese your decision of this day is.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to praise UNIFIL for its remarkable work in close coordination and cooperation with the Lebanese army, to commend the wise leadership of General Graziano, its commander, and to thank all troop contributing countries, as well as the Department of Peace Keeping Operations.

Mr. President,

Three years after its adoption, we need, however, to acknowledge the fact that resolution 1701 has still not been fully implemented.

This is not only because Israel continues to breach the blue line and to violate Lebanese airspace on a daily basis as stated by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the implementation of resolution 1701.

It is also because Israel continues to refuse to withdraw from the northern part of Al-Ghajar.

And it is also because the issue of the Shebaa Farms and Kafarshuba hills has not found its way yet towards a solution, even on an interim basis as earlier proposed by the Lebanese Government.

And how not to mention in this context the operation of the Israeli spy networks, which you have been briefed about by Mr. Michael Williams on July 8? Don't they constitute a serious violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and, consequently, contribute to undermine Security Council resolution 1701?

Given all these undisputable facts, I am sure you have no doubt about the identity of the party which must be held responsible for obstructing the full implementation of resolution 1701.

More disturbing however is the fact that Israeli officials have recently been launching a series of alarming threats against Lebanon which raise serious concerns about Israeli intentions. Wouldn't it be enough here to mention the words of Israel's defense minister, Ehud Barak, who stated on August 7, 2009 that "Israel did not strike at Lebanon's infrastructure hard enough during the summer war of 2006" (!!!) and emphasized that a future attack would have an even more destructive effect on the Lebanese infrastructure than the July 2006 war?!

Do I need to remind members of this august council that during its 2006 war on Lebanon, over and above the thousands of civilian casualties and hundreds of thousands of displaced people, and as far as infrastructures are concerned, Israel destroyed 91 bridges, damaged 137 roads and 5 airport runways, 58 telephone exchanges and tens of transmission centers, 1514 points on water networks and tens of reservoirs and pumps, in addition to 929 schools which were totally or partially destroyed or damaged! And this is without mentioning the bombing of the fuel oil tanks in the Jieh thermal station which led to the release of over 15,000 tons of fuel oil into the Mediterranean Sea, leading to the contamination physically and chemically of the Lebanese coastline with serious implications for human health, biodiversity, fisheries and the economy of Lebanon.

Mr. Chairman,

What Mr. Barak is promising us with is but more of such acts! Acts, which are in violation not only of the letter and spirit of resolution 1701, but which stand against the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, let alone the rules and principles of International humanitarian Law.

The credibility of this august body requires that such threats against my country be also condemned in the strongest words.

Thank you Mr. President.