

**Address by HE Prime Minister Hassan Diab**  
**UNIFIL headquarters, Naqoura, May 27, 2020**

Good morning,

Around forty-two years ago today, the United Nations Forces were established in Southern Lebanon, following a 1978 Israeli aggression. At that time, Resolution 425 was issued, calling on the Israeli enemy to withdraw from Lebanon. However, the occupation lasted 22 years, until the Lebanese liberated most of their land and defeated the enemy on May 25, 2000 which has become a public holiday in Lebanon to be called the “Resistance and Liberation Day”.

For forty-two years, the archives of the United Nations Forces in Lebanon were filled with minutes documenting Israeli violations of international resolutions and of the Lebanese sovereignty, while Lebanon has been respecting international legitimacy, reiterating its commitment to the United Nations authority and reaffirming its attachment to the role of its forces in Lebanon.

Your presence here is not only out of international will, but also out of a Lebanese desire; it is embraced by the upstanding people of the South.

We are committed to the implementation of Resolution 1701, and we call on the United Nations to impose obligations on the Israeli enemy to commit to this resolution, for it has been utterly disregarding international resolutions, has not been committed to implementing Resolution 1701, has been violating Lebanese

sovereignty by land, sea and air, has been threatening Lebanon, has been professing its hostile practices in front of the world and has been suggesting to the international public opinion that it is stronger than the United Nations, Security Council and relevant resolutions.

From here, from UNIFIL headquarters, I launch an appeal to the world to enforce the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1701 by the Israeli enemy and its withdrawal from occupied Lebanese lands and waters, because the continuation of this land and sea occupation prevents stabilization of the situation.

Here in Naqoura, this 1800 meter-land is ours; this is Lebanese land facing Lebanese waters. In other areas, there are still occupied lands; we will not give up a grain of our homeland's soil.

Lebanon is committed to the implementation of Resolution 1701, to the role of United Nations forces and to the preservation of its mandate and number of personnel without any modification, for it remains necessary and urgently needed in light of the Israeli enemy's continuous attempts to destabilize Southern Lebanon and its continued violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, sea and air.

I also reaffirm the importance of the continued coordination and close cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army, thereby facilitating the UNIFIL's mission and fostering the confidence of the people of the South.

I take the occasion of the 42th UNIFIL anniversary to extend my

gratitude and appreciation to all the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers who have served and have been serving in Lebanon since 1978, to those who are still alive, to the martyrs who fell in the performance of their humanitarian duty and to those who have passed away.

The good people of the South are grateful for you for having their back; the people of southern Lebanon have paid the highest price of Israeli occupation and attacks.

Lebanon expresses its deep gratitude to the friendly countries contributing to UNIFIL staff members, embodying their commitment to the values of peace enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

I also express my appreciation for the efforts made by HE United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres, for always standing by Lebanon's side and helping the country overcome the challenges it faces.

From this place, I extend my greetings to General Del Col and to UNIFIL's Command, officers and soldiers.

I am here today to stand firm beside you, as you are living far away from your homelands and families, bearing the responsibility of protecting international decisions and coming under great pressure from the Israeli enemy challenging your role and impeding your mission.

You are here in Lebanon, embraced by the Lebanese people and by the good and honest people of the South who respect your presence and value your sacrifices; for the blood of UNIFIL

martyrs has been mixed with the blood of Lebanese martyrs in the heroic South, and the Qana massacre makes an example of history.

Greetings to you from Lebanon that respects your role and values your efforts.

Long Live Lebanon!