

Looking Northward: An Exploratory Examination of Israeli Perspectives on the United
Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), 1978-2017

By

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LOOKING NORTHWARD EXPLORATORY EXAMINATION

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Israelis for some four decades, to one extent or another, and has gone unexplored for far too long.

I thank you all, and am grateful beyond words.

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Abstract

This study examines Israeli perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)'s performance between 1978-2017. The study is the first exploratory study of its kind, addressing a gap in the literature which has excluded Israeli perspectives since the peacekeeping operation was first deployed between Israel and Lebanon. Utilizing Systematic Grounded Theory (SGT) in conjunction with other qualitative methods of inquiry, the findings of the data suggest that Israelis experience a "chronic security condition" (CSC) in which conflict along Israel's northern frontier is viewed as "normal" and "inevitable." The study demonstrated that participants possess a generally negative view of both the UN and UNIFIL, viewing them as synonymous and unable to secure the northern frontier. This is informed by a further belief that Israel is unfairly discriminated against in international forums, which creates a perception that UNIFIL's poor performance in preventing cross-border hostilities is partially motivated by a trickle-down effect of UN bias against Israel. Such perceptions feedback into the Israeli discourse, further strengthening this perception, which in some circumstances is justified, while in others is not. This research demonstrates the relationship between perception and reality, and the influence it has for Israelis living in northern Israel and their everyday experience with conflict and the threat thereof.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to all those who have devoted, and to those who have sacrificed, their lives labouring for peace and security between Israel and Lebanon.

לֹא-יִשָּׂא גוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב, וְלֹא-יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more.”

- Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 2:4

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Introduction

Our study seeks to explore Israeli perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)'s performance between 1978-2017, as a way to correct a glaring gap in the available literature on UN peacekeeping and UNIFIL in particular. The mission itself is the largest UN peacekeeping, or peace support operation, in the Middle East and has existed for 40 years as of the time of this writing. It sits on the Lebanese side of the Israel-Lebanon border, but largely operates in an area that is immediately adjacent to Israel's border, mere metres away in some cases from Israeli towns and villages.

For years prior to UNIFIL's establishment by the UN Security Council in 1978, Israel and Palestinian militias engaged in cross-border attacks along that very frontier, culminating in Israel's invasion and subsequent occupation of the country, in the years following UNIFIL's inaugural deployment, between 1982-2000. What is significant about this very brief bit of history is that throughout UNIFIL's entire deployment, and for many reasons, there has been little improvement in the security situation for either Israel or Lebanon.

Throughout this period, much has been written about UNIFIL and its impact on Lebanese society. In fact, the Secretary-General's biannual reports to the UN Security Council on UNIFIL's performance regularly make mention of the various types of military and humanitarian impacts UNIFIL has made in southern Lebanon over the years. Academic literature has focused on the subject as well, likely given that the mission is located on the Lebanese side of the border, and that UNIFIL has no military presence on the Israeli side.

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However, this is precisely the problem—despite bearing the burden of cross-border attacks for the four decades that UNIFIL has been in place, despite UNIFIL’s best efforts—no study has been undertaken to ascertain how Israelis perceive the operation. Half of the element necessary to consider UNIFIL’s efficacy was left out of the equation. In particular, Israelis who live in northern Israel, or who have served there (or in Lebanon) militarily, are in a unique position to offer insights into how UNIFIL performs its functions, what consequences the mission has for Israeli security, and how these perceptions on the part of such Israelis impacts their respective behaviour in their daily lives. It is these questions that our study will seek to answer

My interest in UNIFIL stems from several directions. First and foremost, as an Israeli citizen myself, I have a genuine and personal interest in the subject of Israeli security studies and politics, generally speaking. Second, I vividly remember visiting northern Israel many years ago, and seeing a Hizballah position in close proximity to a UN position, which shocked me. I wondered how it could be possible that the UN is within a stone’s throw of a Hizballah position, yet seemingly did nothing to challenge the organization. This question in particular, related to my previous research on UNIFIL, when I focused the pursuit of my Master of Arts in Political Studies at the University of Manitoba on UNIFIL. In particular, I focused my research on the efficacy of UNIFIL, but only to the extent that I could rely on the available literature to make that determination without referencing the Israeli perspective.

At the time, I noticed that I had not encountered any studies exploring Israeli perspectives—excluding official government positions—on UNIFIL’s performance, and felt that to be bizarre at best, and a major oversight at worst. Over ten years have since

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elapsed, and the gap has not yet been remedied. I was interested in exploring this topic and seeing what would be uncovered, so in consultation with my academic advisors, I designed a study utilizing rigorous qualitative research techniques to begin an exploratory examination of this subject, in the hope of beginning a much-needed conversation.

The process was arduous, as I had to ensure that the approach taken would convey reliable information on the part of participants, requiring a distilling of the candidate profile by developing particular eligibility requirements. Furthermore, in an effort to be able to sift fact from fiction, I had to review the available literature on UNIFIL, peacekeeping theory and doctrine, peacebuilding theory, a significant corpus of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) literature, and acquaint myself with various methodological modes of inquiry to determine which approach would be optimal in reaching my goal. Moreover, I had to pore over dozens of UN policy documents and other gray literature to further refine the baseline from which I would be approaching an otherwise unexplored topic.

I was also motivated for a second reason in conducting this study, which only became apparent once I began the actual process of conducting interviews, in that those I approached *wanted* to share their stories. Participants were eager to offer their perspectives and experiences, their hopes and fears, and how they have coped with conflict and insecurity - some for decades. There was a noteworthy satisfaction in knowing that, if nothing else, at the very least I would have the opportunity and privilege to relay the everyday realities of Israelis impacted by conflict in Israel's north, and facilitate their voice in speaking about how the UN and UNIFIL affect their lives to various degrees.

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In this respect, the aim of this study is indeed to answer our central research question and to contribute to the existing PACS literature for practical and academic purposes, both of which cannot always be meaningfully separated. Throughout this study, I was driven by the notion that this project is, in a very real way, a conduit by which Israelis can express themselves for the first time on this subject, which will hopefully have a positive impact on UNIFIL in the future, UN PSOs around the world in general, and—perhaps with a self-admitted degree of exuberant optimism—peace between Israel and Lebanon in the near future.

Significance of the Study

The study seeks to explore Israeli perspectives on UNIFIL's performance since its creation in 1978, up until 2017. The study will be the first exploratory examination of Israeli perspectives on UNIFIL, and will hopefully serve as a foundation for future research. The research is significant in that the perspectives, opinions, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of a cohort of individuals—amounting to an entire nation—affected by a cross-border conflict that predates even UNIFIL itself, has been absent from the existing discourse on UNIFIL's performance as a peace support operation (PSO) intended to prevent cross-border hostilities, and facilitate the disarming of hostile militias and restoring international peace and security to the Israel-Lebanon border region. This study remedies the gap in the literature by allowing a detailed study of Israeli perspectives to inform the existing literature, and possibly serve as a catalyst for future research on UNIFIL.

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Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is composed of eleven chapters, each with a corresponding emphasis and with subdivisions illustrating focus and direction. The first chapter explores the relevant literature in an effort to provide background and theoretical grounding on the origin, evolution, and other substantive aspects of United Nations peacekeeping and PSOs, especially principles of peacekeeping, and peacebuilding theory. Specific attention is also afforded to challenges confronting PSOs, including both internal and external challenges, and issues surrounding the assessment of contemporary operations.

The second chapter provides the context to our study by outlining a brief history of Lebanon, significant actors and political considerations, all of which have resulted in, and have had influence on the deployment and continued operation of UNIFIL. Attention is paid to political, socioeconomic, and religious dynamics in Lebanon, which have had an influence on UNIFIL's operation to this day. Historical elucidation of Israel-Lebanon relations is also demonstrated, in conjunction with how UNIFIL has reacted and adapted to the political milieu it has operated within over the years.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters explore UN Secretary-General reports on UNIFIL to the UN Security Council divided up by significant milestones. Examining these reports offers a unique UN-centric perspective on UNIFIL's performance to supplement both the participant data, as well as the available literature. The third chapter explores the period immediately prior to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. The fourth chapter focuses on reports in the intervening years up until 2006, immediately prior to the outbreak of the devastating 2006 Israel-Hizballah War. The fifth chapter focuses on the 2006 war and its aftermath, and the evolution of UNIFIL in the following

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years up until 2017, in an effort to demonstrate the prospects and pitfalls of both UNIFIL, and various attempts to augment its operation to accommodate changing needs on the ground.

The sixth chapter takes a birds-eye view of UNIFIL after considering the information provided in the previous chapters to explore its functions, doctrinal and credibility challenges, and round out the reader's knowledge of UNIFIL before delving into the additional data presented later in the study.

The seventh chapter illustrates the methodological approaches and framework of the study and explains the rationale and utility behind the utilization of the chosen research methodology, Systematic Grounded Theory (SGT). The chapter breaks down how the theory will be utilized, address special considerations, strengths, and risks, and clarify the interview, triangulation, research design and implementation, recruitment, and ethical considerations and processes that were carried out.

Chapter eight begins the discussion and relaying of Israeli participant data, utilizing information gathered from the in-depth semi-structured interviews and the SGT methodological process. Specific trends were identified and illustrated in this chapter, focusing on general Israeli perceptions of UNIFIL's role, as well as particular and novel pieces of information derived from the SGT coding process, which is explained in more depth in chapter seven. Chapters nine and ten continues the discussion and relaying of Israeli participant data, focusing on separate trends that emerged utilizing the SGT coding process, as well as the cross-comparative method.

Chapter eleven illustrates the key findings of the study, providing eight particular themes emerging from the aggregate data. The data is presented as a model that conveys

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participant behaviour, and is subsequently presented in a summarized fashion before exploring the study's implication for future research, its limitations, and followed by concluding remarks providing an overview of the project.

Conclusion

The introduction to this study illustrated the importance of the study, its rationale, and the relevance it has in terms of its potential contribution to the available PACS literature. It clearly delineated the process by which this study was organized, and was designed with the intent in mind to make it digestible for the reader to understand and follow along with purposeful clarity. To that end, we begin with a discussion of the institution and phenomenon of United Nations peacekeeping, and begin our exploration of our central research question with a firm understanding of the subject matter.

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CHAPTER ONE: REVIEWING THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

1.1 – Introduction

Armed with a sufficient appreciation for the context in which Lebanon, Israel, and particularly the area straddling both countries finds itself in, along with its concomitant challenges, any appropriate delving into the subject of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and judgments on its performance requires a firm theoretical grounding on a variety of theoretical and practical considerations.

As such, below we review the literature and discuss the origins and evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations, and how they have transformed since their advent following World War II. This evolution necessarily entails qualitative differences in how peacekeeping and peace support operations were employed, including in the contemporary period, which will be illustrated by a discussion of “first-generation” and “second-generation” operations, referring to those deployed prior, and following, the Cold War, respectively.

Both Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) and Peace Support Operations (PSOs), which have been synonymized in the post-Cold War era, operate on the basis of UN doctrines at least in theory, but not necessarily in practice. For instance, doctrinally, “peacebuilding” has become an essential component of PSOs around the world, but the implementation of peacebuilding measures has been constrained by a variety of factors.

The same can be said for other “peacebuilding” approaches such as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) between UN PSO troops and civilian agencies on the ground. As such, we will explore the theoretical and practical constraints of peacebuilding theory, as well as the decision-making theory surrounding how PSOs are formed, deployed, and

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bureaucratically supported, coupled with the doctrinal challenges impacting these decisions and operations in the field and how they impact the UN's "Responsibility to Protect (R2P)" principle, which overarches all other considerations.

Additionally, we draw attention to how "second-generation" PSO's contend with gaps in their credibility as a result of insufficient buy-in, and what approaches are utilized to contend with this reality. In particular, we examine external challenges to PSOs, such as spoiler agents committed to a PSO's failure; internal challenges with PSOs themselves, and contemporary gaps and obstacles to effectively evaluate and assess UN PSOs and the consequences of this problem.

This contextualization provides us with an understanding of the myriad challenges—without diminishing the opportunities and benefits—of UN PSOs, as a way to inform a more detailed and case-specific examination of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and garner an appreciation for the difficulty associated with carrying its mandate in its Area of Operations (AO).

1.2 - The Origins and Evolution of UN Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations

Following the global devastation of the Second World War, the United Nations (UN) came into existence on June 26, 1945 through the signing of the United Nations Charter (Kertcher, 2014) by all UN Member States. The document delineates the vision and mission of the UN, and amounts to an international treaty between all Member States and the UN itself, committing its members to preventing future wars, reaffirming fundamental human rights, dignity, and equal rights of all peoples and nations,

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establishing justice and the rule of law as a basis for solving disputes, and promoting improved standards of living and freedom for all (UN Charter's Preamble, 1945).

To that end, the UN has concerned itself generally with improving the welfare of humanity at large, but with regards to the phenomenon of peacekeeping, the UN Charter makes no explicit mention of such an option (Beker, 2014). However, the legal basis for what was to become a hallmark institution of the UN—its peacekeeping operations (PKOs)—derives its legal basis from the UN Charter itself, particularly from chapters six and seven of the Charter, which deal with the “*pacific settlement of disputes* (UN Charter, 1945), and “*action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression* (UN Charter, Chapter VII, para. 1., 1945),” respectively (Kertcher, 2014), as the Charter delineates the powers the UN Security Council (UNSC) has in dealing with such matters (Sens, 2006).

Before exploring the specifics of peacekeeping operations (PKOs), it is important to define the phenomenon from the outset. Given that the UN has both pioneered, and contributed to its development as an international practice more than any other international organization, the UN not only enjoys unrivalled legitimacy in this regard (Bellamy and Williams, 2005), it has contributed to its doctrinal development more than any other global actor.

Furthermore, the UN possesses a generally high success rate in employing and maintaining peacekeeping operations around the world, especially given its financial wherewithal compared to other actors (and competitors) (Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl, 2015) such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the African Union (AU), and its ability to muster comparatively more troop contributing countries

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(TCCs) for operations around the world (Dobbins, 2005; Dobbins, 2007). Additionally, UN peacekeeping operations enjoy demonstrably significant rates of reducing conflict zone death in environments where they are deployed (Patrick, 2015).

As such, it is worth citing the UN's most basic definition of PKOs to begin our discussion. According to the UN's 2008 *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* doctrinal document, known also as the "Capstone Doctrine," peacekeeping is a "technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers" (Capstone, 2008, p. 18).

With the Capstone Doctrine in mind, it is safe to say that the primary purpose of UN PKOs, at least prior to the end of the Cold War, focused chiefly on imposing forces between two states at war (Jett, 1999), with the ultimate aim of acting as a deterrent for either side to reignite the conflict (Dorn, 2007; Hultman, et al., 2013). However, this is not all that can be said about PKOs. In reality, PKOs have appeared (and continue to appear) in different sizes, locations, while simultaneously varying in their mandates, political, economic, and social constraints and opportunities, as well as the degree of influence the UNSC, and other regional and context-specific actors and forces have on a given PKO's operational capabilities. We will observe how PKOs have changed in response to such pressures, including the nature of conflict itself both immediately following the Second World War, and again following the end of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

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1.3 - The Principles and Practices of “First-Generation” UN PKOs

Three years following the UN’s creation, the UNSC established and deployed the world’s first PKO, the United Nations Treaty Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948 (UN, United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, n.d.). It was during this period, up until the establishment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I) in the Sinai peninsula, following the Suez Crisis, that the UN’s consensus surrounding the five official (and two unofficial) principles of peacekeeping came to define PKO principles and practices up until the end of the Cold War (Sens, 2006).

The ‘official’ agreed upon principles were to establish PKOs only on the basis of the initial and continued consent of the parties to the conflict (Beker, 2014); the use of force only in cases of self-defence; the voluntary contribution of TCCs to a PKO’s force composition; a commitment to impartiality on the part of the PKO towards the antagonists, and; the appointment of the UN Secretary-General as the direct charge of all global PKOs, answerable only to the UNSC (Jett, 1999). However, there were two ‘unofficial,’ but equally important principles for all intents and purposes, when deploying a PKO. TCCs that had direct stakes in a given conflict could not contribute their forces to a mission, and; the two Cold War superpowers—the United States and the (former) Soviet Union—were mandatorily exempt from participating in UN PKOs (Kertcher, 2014). Both of these principles were accepted as a measure to prevent interference in any peace negotiations on the ground, or in encouraging the use of violence for purposes of competing superpower national interests (Jett, 1999).

Thus, for the period between 1948 and 1989, this understanding of PKOs formed the logic of UN intervention between two warring states in what has come to be known as

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“first-generation PKOs” (Sens, 2006). During these decades, global conflict was couched in the context of proxy wars between states caught between two larger client states: the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively. In this concept, the main threat to human security were competing national militaries defending the interests and security needs of different states.

1.4 – “Second-Generation” PKOs in the Post-Cold War Era

However, with the fall of the Soviet Union, there emerged a relatively unforeseen rise in intrastate conflicts, with interstate warfare experiencing a substantial decline in frequency and intensity (Sens, 2006). The new nature of conflict, such as it was characterized by militia groups, defunct state authority and institutions, as well as burgeoning humanitarian crises not typically dealt with within the purview of military personnel became the new norm. It was during this period, up until the present day, that PKOs were now expected to take on state governance functions in intrastate conflicts that lacked functioning institutions, including such activities as coordinating and delivering humanitarian aid, assistance, and services, in addition to the traditional security provision expectation of PKOs.

Also, it was during this period where “Chapter Seven” PKOs—sometimes referred to as ‘third-generation’ PKOs under the UN Charter—allowing for greater use of violence in pursuit of a mandate without the consent of the parties—became more common in an effort to combat the growing threat of “spoiler” agents opposed to concurrently ongoing peace negotiations (Sens, 2006), often in the absence of any other

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state authority with the sufficient capability or legitimacy to carry out such tasks themselves.

Thus, at this point, while the traditional “seven principles” of PKOs remained the cornerstone of UN peacekeeping doctrine, a recognition of the challenges of the new post-Cold War reality required a reassessment and reinvigoration of the UN’s peacekeeping regime. In 1992, soon after the end of the Cold War, the UN, under the leadership of then UN Secretary-General (SG) Boutros Boutros-Ghali, issued the *Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* which became the foundational text defining the characteristics of what was to become “second-generation” (also known as “multidimensional” (Hegre, et al., 2010, p. 3) or “complex” or “integrated” (Fortna and Howard, 2008, p. 285) UN peacekeeping in the new era of predominantly intrastate conflict, and all of its associated challenges (Sens, 2006).

1.5 – Peacebuilding Theory and Practice in the Post-Cold War Era

The Agenda for Peace was revolutionary in that it took the *de facto* practices that vexed post-Cold War peacekeeping, including governance functions, the provision of humanitarian aid, and robust military action against spoiler agents, and formalized them into the UN’s peacekeeping doctrine from that point forward. This was the introduction of “peacebuilding,” actions that “identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (UN, Agenda for Peace, 1992, para. 21), which according to Garon (2006), includes any initiative that serves to address the root causes of a given conflict and to support endogenous institutions of governance and social order.

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Particularly, PKOs across the board were expected to engage, at least partially, in actions that prevent, deescalate, and de-intensify conflicts, be they interstate or intrastate in nature. PKOs were also to directly promote negotiations towards ending a given conflict, and use all PKO resources—military, civilian, and otherwise—towards pursuing such a negotiated agreement, while also aiding in the institution, or reinstitution, of self-governance capacities (Hegre et al., 2010).

The UN's premise for employing elements of "peacebuilding" into the traditional military role of PKOs is that such measures would serve to address the root causes of violence both in intrastate and interstate conflicts, which were believed to be a combination of deficiencies in governance and basic necessities, and the lack of peace, order, accountability, and justice, the proliferation of cultures of violence (UN "Statement by the President of the Security Council," 2001), as well as conflict between competing social groups (Black, 2008). To this end, the more PKOs could contribute to the improvement of legitimate and functioning institutions that enjoy the trust of the affected citizenry, the greater likelihood a negotiated settlement could be reached between the parties in question (UN, Capstone Doctrine, 2008).

The expectations placed upon UN PKOs were rapidly changing during this period; so much so that a mere three years after the publication of *An Agenda for Peace*, in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the UN issued the 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, which not only reinforced the necessity of peacebuilding as a metric to be permanently incorporated into all UN PKOs (UN, *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, 1995, 12), but also emphasized eleven specific—and ambitious—tasks for PKOs to pursue, if and when needed, including the:

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- provision of internal security for citizens in a given conflict zone;
- safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs);
- demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants into society;
- training national military and police forces, promoting civilian oversight, and ensuring a monopoly on such violence by legitimate state institutions through security sector reform (SSR);
- development of institutions to ensure free and fair democratic elections;
- restoring national systems of justice, including courts and prisons;
- promoting, and facilitating dialogue processes between parties to the conflict;
- providing trauma recovery services;
- engaging in demining operations, as appropriate; and
- promoting economic development initiatives (Sens, 2006).

Again, these innovations were entirely new territory for UN PKOs which traditionally served as unarmed observer missions, where peacekeepers observed a conflict and reported on violations and compliances of a ceasefire agreement, or peace enforcement operations, where peacekeepers intervened militarily as a buffer force between two warring states with a monopoly on violence. Nevertheless, peacebuilding efforts such as these were considered instrumental in managing and/or resolving conflicts around the world and to be utilized as necessary (Sens, 2006), resulting in larger levels of investment on the part of UN Member States into the peacebuilding capacity on the part of PKOs (Sens, 2007).

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The idea that UN PKOs now had to focus on everything from negotiation, to business development, to running government-like institutions, among countless other tasks, was completely novel—and also rife with challenges for peacekeeping personnel—as military training does not traditionally encompass any of these tasks (Rana, 2004; Meharg, 2009; Maley, 2012). Further, peacebuilding efforts may sometimes be predicated on models employed elsewhere, which has often resulted in a “delivery” of a model that works in one context, rather than the designing of an indigenous model of peacebuilding that would serve a specific population, which runs the risk of fostering resentment against a PKO among the very population it is intended to serve (Sens, 2007). For instance, economic liberalization is often viewed as part and parcel of peacebuilding initiatives, even if such an approach is not desired—or the most pressing issue—in a given conflict zone from the perspective of the affected population (Fortna and Howard, 2008).

By definition, peacebuilding efforts are designed to create conditions that, as implied by the name, “build peace,” which may motivate spoiler groups to deliberately oppose or sabotage such efforts, if they are perceived at diminishing their relative power vis-à-vis another antagonist in a conflict setting. What is more, is that investment in peacebuilding activities is often time sensitive as there is no eternal source of funding. This places much pressure on completing particular tasks within a given timeframe, even if the rate of change may be either too fast (or too slow) to elicit the desired outcome. This is complicated by the fact that decisions surrounding the financial investment in PKOs depend on the shifting political priorities of the UNSC, which can change suddenly and without notice (Sens, 2007).

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The UN was (and is) not unaware of the challenges faced by these bold innovations, which led to a greater emphasis on cooperating with other regional and military organizations, including NATO, and others, to provide greater support to UN missions. This led, for example, to strategic cooperation with NATO when NATO forces provided the bulk of military hardware and troop capacity in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia during the 1993 United Nations Protective Force (UNPROFOR) PKO presence throughout the Yugoslav Wars in the early 1990s (Sens, 2006). The mission employed a preponderance of NATO forces, but under a UN peacekeeping mandate, particularly a “Chapter Seven” mandate which allowed for the use of force without the consent of all of the parties (Hegre, et al., 2010).

Moreover, such cooperation provided both the UN and NATO mutual benefits. First, given the UNs broadly recognized legitimacy as a peace broker and peacekeeping organization, NATO was able to enjoy this legitimacy by transitive property, making it easier for the mission to deploy with limited scandalization (Sens, 2006), including among the receiving population. Enjoying legitimacy among the population is critical to a mission’s success, as operating against the popular will of the served population makes matters unworkable in the field (Bellamy and Williams, 2005). Second, the UN was able to avoid having to muster up TCCs to the same extent, as NATO is an established military organization that can more readily—and aggressively—deploy into an active conflict zone (Sens, 2006).

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1.6 - The Formation and Deployment of UN PKOs

We can see that since the UN first established the institution of peacekeeping, it has undergone a sea change in terms of how it views global threats to human security, both during and following the Cold War era, and the measures it has taken via its PKOs around the world to alleviate those threats. With that background in mind, we can now delve deeper into how UN PKOs are formed and deployed, followed by a discussion of their malleability in the field and the associated ramifications in theory and in practice, using the case study of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) operation.

The UN has a multistep process it uses to establish a PKO, all of which are undergirded by the discretionary powers of the UNSC. The UNSC is empowered by the UN Charter to maintain international peace and security. It is composed of five permanent members, including the United States, Russia, China, Britain, and France, alongside fifteen rotating member states, with only the permanent five states enjoying veto power, and requiring a consensus on all UNSC decisions to become UN-binding Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs).

Based on internal deliberations, the UNSC identifies a conflict that is of interest and believed to merit UN PKO intervention. With the exception of Chapter Seven PKOs, the UNSC liaises with the parties to the conflict, in order to obtain their permission to deploy a PKO. Subsequently, relevant UN agencies that would work in tandem with the PKO on the ground, or that would offer support are sought out, followed by discussions with UN Member States willing to act as TCCs to PKOs, as well as with other regional and military organizations such as NATO and the African Union (AU), and so forth (UN, "Forming a New Operation," n.d.). The UN has no standing military force, thereby

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requiring that all PKOs are staffed by soldiers “on loan” by UN Member State TCCs for the sake of carrying out PKOs around the world.

Upon identifying the need and reaching out to stakeholders, the UNSC may instruct the UN Secretariat—which is the civil service branch of the organization—to carry out a technical assessment, in order to ascertain what political, military, humanitarian, and other considerations need to be accounted for in designing a PKO that will have the maximum desired effect in a given scenario. This process is undertaken in order to best estimate all military, financial, and logistical investments in a way that gives the biggest “return on investment” in terms of positive outcomes (UN, “Forming a New Operation,” n.d.).

Following the satisfactory completion of the technical assessment, the UNSC will use this document to inform its adoption of an UNSCR, formally outlining a PKO’s mandate, with accompanying resources, troop and personnel limitations, and an operational budget, and finally authorizing its deployment to the conflict zone. Prior to, and post-deployment, all PKOs are managed politically and administratively by special departments dedicated to field operations, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) (UN, DPKO, “About Us,” n.d.) and the Department of Field Support (UN, DFS, “About Us,” n.d.) within the UN Secretariat.

PKOs are assigned a Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG), which reports to the UN Secretary-General (UN, “Forming a New Operation”)—as all UN PKOs fall under the SG’s jurisdiction (Jett, 1999)—as well as a Force Commander, and senior civilian staff that oversee the operation under the guidance of the SRSG. The UNSC endeavours to deploy PKOs as fast as possible, in an effort to maximize the

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immediate effectiveness of an operation. The PKO reports progress and challenges to the SG via the SRSG, which is then relayed to the UNSC. On the basis of these reports, as well as in consultation with the host countries and parties to a given conflict, the UNSC determines whether or not to renew, revise, or terminate a PKO, and does so on an established basis laid out in a PKO's mandate (UN, "Forming a New Operation").

1.7 - When and Why PKOs are Deployed

We have discussed the formal bureaucratic process of establishing a UN PKO, answering the "who," "where" and "how" question surrounding their creation, design, and deployment. However, when discussing "why," "when," or "what kind" of PKO is deployed somewhere in the world, the answer to such queries are far less clear. Scholars differ on the rationales that lie behind their deployment, and the factors that are considered before sending (or not sending) troops—under UN auspices—into harms way. Considering that the UNSC has sole discretion on if, when, where, and how UN PKOs are deployed around the world (Heldt and Wallenstein, 2007), it is not possible to ignore the manner in which the UNSC determines what conflicts merit intervention, on what basis, and with what degree of investment on the part of the UN.

Naturally, competing national interests, disagreements, and other considerations impact the negotiations between the permanent five *and* the rotating Member States on a frequent and continuous basis, and influence political outcomes and their associated consequences, including for PKOs (Sens, 2006). Such a state of affairs often leads to risk- and conflict-mitigating PKO mandates that are sufficiently vague and flexible so that the competing interests of the various UNSC countries can be satisfied on a consensus-basis

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(Jett, 1999). However, this practice may very well serve to hinder the effectiveness of PKOs in the name of political expediency.

Moreover, scholars differ in their perspective as to what motivates the UNSC in terms of establishing PKOs. Gilligan and Stedman (2003) suggest that in conflicts that are seemingly simpler to deal with, especially in the absence of a powerful military force, the UNSC tends to organize and authorize PKO deployment far more readily and rapidly. Howard (2015) suggests that where PSOs actually thrive in complex environments, as long as those environments are not politically sensitive to the UNSC. Mullenbach (2005) argues that the UNSC does indeed prefer simpler conflicts, but defines such conflicts to be those, which are not values-based, as these conflicts are less amenable to resolution, and PKOs are more ineffective in such scenarios. Mullenbach further argues that this practice can be evidenced by examining past patterns of UNSC intervention.

However, scholars such as Fortna (2008) take a more charitable view of the UNSC's calculus surrounding PKO design and deployment, suggesting that the UNSC tends to prefer deploying PKOs to where the greatest need is, acting in good faith to present a credible deterrent force between parties in conflict. Beardsley (2012) posits that the greatest calculus for the UNSC is not a furtherance of the national interest of its respective members, but rather is due to genuine humanitarian concerns of the UNSC's Member States. Ruggeri, Dorrusen, and Gizelis (2017) even suggest that where deployed, PSOs contribute to the lessening of the duration of conflict.

Regardless of the ongoing research and discussion into the phenomenon of UN peacekeeping operations, there is a general recognition as to what a PKO is, and what it is not. For Jett (1999), the term "peacekeeping" is not particularly apt given that the

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changes that UN PKOs have undergone in the wake of *An Agenda for Peace* and subsequent doctrinal updates, including the *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, are substantial. What all missions have in common, be they traditional observer missions, or enforcement missions under Chapter Seven mandates, is that they are ultimately aimed towards the same task: supporting peace; even when there is no real peace to keep, and a semblance of peace must first be established.

As such, Jett (1999) refers to PKOs as “Peace Support Operations (PSOs)” as a means to provide precision to the phenomenon of peacekeeping, and what it *actually* entails on the ground, which meshes well with developments in contemporary peacekeeping doctrine. For Jett, a PSO must contain at least one of the following traits:

- utilization of mediation methods to encourage the nonviolent settlement of disputes between antagonistic parties;
- the use of military personnel to observe violations of ceasefire agreements;
- the use of military force to enforce the terms of an agreement, including peacebuilding activities, and;
- the use of force to protect humanitarian projects on the ground.

Thus, we see, both in theory and in practice, what UN PKOs—or more appropriately, PSOs—are expected to do on the ground. However, the particular contexts of the myriad scenarios confronting PKOs around the world often confound a mission’s success to varying extents. While some missions are more successful than others, there is a generally well-established understanding of the factors that either aid or hinder an operation in fulfilling its duties and objectives. Understanding these factors is critical

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before exploring UNIFIL as our case study, and taking into consideration Israeli participant perspectives on the subject elsewhere in our discussion.

1.8 - What Can Be Done?: Doctrinal Challenges for UN PSOs

As can be gathered from the above discussion, a PSO's success is contingent not only on the material conditions of an operation, such as the number of troops, weapons, financial investment, and so forth, but also the political support and mandate it is given by the UNSC, international UN Member States, and the support of the host country, or countries, to the operation (Sens, 2006; Kertcher, 2014). A lacking in any of these areas may tangibly translate into a diminished role on the ground, and can quickly impact a PSO's effectiveness, and legitimacy, which can have a cascading effect on its credibility—and in turn—the credibility of the institution of UN peacekeeping. However, such issues are often difficult to recognize *a priori*, since not all contingencies can be predicted.

For instance, Sens (2006) argues that observer missions, which have no offensive capacity given the nature of their mandate, are typically the smallest type of PSO, armed only—if at all—with light arms for personal defence, and tasked with monitoring compliance with a ceasefire after a negotiated settlement. This in and of itself is not a problem, but may become one, if this limited “investment” in a PSO signals to belligerent parties—be they state or spoiler agents—that there is no appetite for a significant and more substantial investment in a PSO with greater enforcement capacity in a given conflict zone on that part of the UNSC or international Member States. As a consequence, this can embolden such actors to continue violent operations against their targets in violation of a ceasefire.

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As such, Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon (2013) argue that in terms of PSOs, bigger is better, because the larger a UN mission is, and the more force it is authorized to use, the greater the signal to belligerents that violations of a ceasefire agreement or peace accord will be met with requisite force. Moreover, a large investment in a given PSO indicates strong UNSC interest in that particular conflict, which not only translates into greater enforcement capacity and the signalling of a commitment on the part of the international community to resolve a particular conflict, but exacts a greater cost on TCCs, or countries investing financially in the PSO, to withdraw their support without facing political embarrassment or scrutiny once they have already committed to a PSO's deployment.

However, Sloan (2014), like Jett (1999) suggests that simply investing in a PSO is insufficient unless clear mandates are provided, because it is seldom the case that PSO's are ineffective solely, or even predominantly due to a lack of resources, but rather because of vague mandates, which are designed as such with deliberate intention to attenuate competing interest within the UNSC. As such, because the doctrinal changes in the UN were applied rapidly across the board, no amount of political support, or context-specific resource provision will be of assistance to a PSO unless that assistance directly correlates to the needs of a clear and unambiguous mandate directing the daily operations of the mission.

Compounding this problem, is the fact that while peacekeeping doctrine has changed, the decision-making process at the UNSC, and throughout the UN more broadly, retains a state-centric and risk-averse orientation be it out of either harming

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interstate relations, jeopardizing personal careers within the UN Secretariat (Sloan, 2014), or legal considerations, including the UN's own Charter.

For instance, Article 2(4) of the UN Charter—which is binding upon all UN Member States—explicitly forbids states from threatening or using force against another state, while simultaneously permitting the UNSC to utilize armed force against a state that has engaged in such behaviour under Chapter Seven of the same Charter. While this seems to make sense given that the use of force to deter the abuse of force is a right commonly accepted in international affairs, and even guaranteed under Article 51 of the UN charter, matters becoming complicated when considering a separate Charter provision allowing for states to engage in necessary self-defence until the UNSC can intervene with force, and/or other measures to maintain international peace and security.

It is unclear then, when a state can claim that its hostility against another state is in self-defence, and therefore legitimate, and under what circumstances the UN can deploy a Chapter Seven mission without challenging individual state sovereignty. Moreover, how the UNSC can intervene is questionable, as it always needs to muster up TCCs to form PSOs given the lack of a standing UN military force. This is especially the case today when intrastate conflicts far outpace interstate conflicts in both frequency and intensity. The use of force by states against their own citizens in the name of self-defence has resulted in tremendous human rights abuses around the world, causing a disconnect between the once state-centric way of thinking about international security, and new ways of thinking about the balance between state sovereignty and the right to national self-defence in the post-Cold War era (Sloan, 2014).

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The tension then, between relying on peace enforcement versus non-enforcement missions within the UN, which straddle Chapters Six and Seven of the UN Charter, respectively, is partially resolved through the hybridization of PSOs to contain elements of both chapters in what has been referred to as “Chapter 6 and ½ missions” (Sloan, 2014). However, this approach has done little to resolve the issue of mandate clarity because even with greater latitude afforded to PSOs in the employment of force, the vagueness of mission mandates encourage Force Commanders to avoid using such force in order to avoid inadvertently breaching the mandate, or otherwise compromising the good will engendered by the mission among the local population (Sloan, 2014), which is crucial in terms of maintaining support for the existence of a PSO (Diehl and Druckman, 2010) and the likelihood of success (Garon, 2007).

Thus, while most missions today can technically be characterized as Chapter Seven PSOs in that the use of force is permitted, in principle, for the defence or furtherance of any aspect of a mission’s mandate (Sloan, 2014), the UN has recognized that the unclear nature of its “second-generation” peacekeeping doctrine has had negative impacts on PSO implementation in the field. Particularly troublesome are issues surrounding the application of force—such as if and when to use force—and how to avoid the politicization of PSOs that often have mandates augmented by the UNSC based on political whims, without the requisite investments necessary to achieve new objectives (Sloan, 2014).

In an effort to remedy this problem, the 2000 *Report of the Panel on United Nations*, known as the “Brahimi Report,” not only emphasized the need to protect civilians with armed force when necessary, but called for a reforming of PSOs in order to

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be more responsive to the actual needs on the ground, and improved decision-making both in the field and at the UNSC (UN, Brahimi Report, 2000; Sloan, 2014). The aim here was to clarify the role of PSOs in directing the use of force, when necessary, by enhancing their capacity to be a credible deterrent against hostile agents, in an effort to protect not only UN personnel and assets, but humanitarian endeavours on the ground, as both peacekeeping and peacebuilding were no longer viewed as separate undertakings (Brahimi Report, 2000).

1.9 – The Theory and Practice of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)

This new doctrine had novel ramifications for peacekeeping as an institution, formalizing civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) as a “new normal” in UN PSOs. First, it required the collaboration of military and civilian personnel in almost all areas of a PSO—other than enforcement—in order to fulfil the expectations of the myriad forms of peacebuilding tasks that could manifest in a given situation (Garon, 2006). This established a need for what has become an accepted norm of peacekeeping in the post-Cold War era, of “civil-military cooperation” (CIMIC), whereby military and civilian personnel of a PSO, as well as relevant civilian agencies on the ground, work collaboratively with the local population towards achieving the PSO’s mandated objectives, to both enhance the likelihood and rapidity of the mission’s success (Garon 2006; Garon 2007).

While CIMIC is often portrayed as a principled way to garner support from the local population in pursuit of a PSO’s aims, it is actually an “effects-based operation (EBO),” or strategy that aims to utilize any method—military or otherwise—to achieve

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its mandated objectives while satisfying the peacebuilding needs of the local population. In other words, it uses both military and non-military means, including diplomatic, economic, psychological, and other methods to achieve a military objective (Garon, 2006, 2007; Kilcullen, 2006; Meilinger, 2007).

What is interesting then about CIMIC operations is that inasmuch as they can be perceived as a subordination of military objectives to civilian ones, the opposite can be said to be the case, demonstrating a peculiar symbiosis between two seemingly contradictory worlds. For instance, CIMIC operations can include anything from active protection of civilians, to providing humanitarian assistance, engaging in construction projects, militarily securing natural resources against their exploitation by spoiler groups, to the gathering of intelligence by engaging in public events and speaking with community leaders, and forming relationships with the served population. What is a military objective becomes a civilian one and what is a civilian objective becomes a military one, all for a common goal (Garon, 2006, 2007).

This understanding of CIMIC is critical in alleviating erroneous comparisons made between CIMIC and civil-military coordination, more generally, which is the mere coordination between military and civilian agencies within a PSO and a given conflict zone, without necessarily fostering cooperation between those two worlds. The two are important but distinct phenomena with separate aims. The clarification on this issue is not only necessary conceptually, but also as a distinction to be made in the field. The UN DPKO's 2010 *Policy on Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC)* gives clarity on the important difference between the two phenomena:

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In a UN peacekeeping context, this coordination is called “UN-CIMIC” which is a military staff function that contributes to facilitating the interface between the military and civilian components of an integrated mission, as well as with the humanitarian and development actors in the mission area, in order to support UN mission objectives. UN Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) on the other hand refers to the humanitarian civil-military coordination function that provides the necessary interface between humanitarian and military actors to protect and promote the humanitarian principles and achieve the humanitarian objectives in complex emergencies and natural disaster situations (UN-DPKO, “Policy on Civil-Military Coordination,” 2010, p. 2).

Thus, the nuanced clarification of CIMIC by the UN allows us to explore the various models of CIMIC found in PSOs around the world. According to Garon (2006), there are four models of CIMIC operations found globally:

1. *Independent model* – referring to instances where military and civilian agencies collaborate on a case-by-case basis, but otherwise operate in separate domains;
2. *Collective model* – whereby military and civilian organizations establish a consensus on a given objective(s) and work collaboratively towards achieving that objective;
3. *Bottom-up model* – where a military force solely operates as a protective agent for humanitarian actors on the ground; and
4. *Civil-military operations model* – where a government simultaneously directs the activities of both a military force and civilian humanitarian activities in an operational theatre.

CIMIC operations vary from context to context, and tend to produce positive outcomes if employed in a manner, which maximizes the perception of impartiality on the part of both military and civilian actors. The credibility of CIMIC operations can be affected not only by poor execution due to limited resources, improper training, or

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promising more than can be delivered, but primarily due to perceptions of bias favouring one social group over another, or difficulties in the working relationship between military forces and civilian agencies due to ideological or practical reasons stemming from differences in operational emphases, mandates, and worldviews (Garon, 2006; Sens 2007; De Carvalho and Aune, 2010).

Maley (2012) argues that in terms of “peacebuilding” in general, UN PSOs face several systemic challenges, including suffering from a lack of personnel and requisite funding to take on the additional burden of peacekeeping activities, best-case scenario planning in terms of troop deployment to PSOs, disparities in troop quality and training, which is further aggravated by the ever-diminishing presence of highly trained Western military TCCs to PSOs around the world, delays in deployment of PSO components, especially police and civilian staff, and a general problem associated with drastically varied levels of competence between and among staff and personnel (Dobbins, 2004). Scholars continue to debate as to the best solutions to such problems, but no consensus has yet been reached (Dobbins, 2004; Meharg, 2009).

1.10 – Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in UN PSOs

However, while PSOs continue to struggle with how best to deal with the new intrastate reality of the conflict environments in which they are commonly deployed, there remains the issue of how the UN confronts the challenge between civilian protection and negotiating the limits of state sovereignty. This particular dilemma came to the fore in the 1990s, when the UN faced a series of scandalous failures to intervene in genocides, including in Rwanda, Kosovo, and Srebrenica. Out of these disasters arose an

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even greater emphasis on civilian protection known as the “Responsibility to Protect (R2P)” principle.

R2P became yet another doctrine, that was elaborated upon under then SG Kofi Annan, when he commissioned the *International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (ICISS) in 2000 - the same year as the Brahimi Report. The report was issued in 2001, and forcefully argued that international intervention *must* take place in situations where sovereign states are either unable, or unwilling, to protect their own citizens from avoidable dangers (ICISS, 2000). The report went further than previous reports by openly subsuming state sovereignty *under* the R2P principle while simultaneously *requiring* action to be taken (ICISS, 2000). The recommendations of the report openly illustrated the state-centric tensions within the UN itself, as both the UNSC and the UN General Assembly of Member States (UNGA) failed to endorse the report’s conclusions.

Instead, five years after the report’s publication, the UNSC endorsed R2P in the 2005 *Summit Outcome Document* through UNSCR 1674 (2006) (UNSCR 1674, 2006), requiring every Member State to protect their populations from war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, as well as to commitment to deploying Chapter Seven missions, in coordination and conjunction with other regional authorities, in cases that may merit such intervention (UN, Summit Document, 2005). However, and again, this document does nothing to clarify contextual considerations of the use of force, requiring the discretion of PSO Force Commanders on the ground, who may nevertheless not always be certain when the use of force is merited in accordance with a mandate. This problem is compounded by the fact that the UN has no endogenous peacekeeping

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personnel, and that military personnel often defer to their own national defence hierarchy when in doubt.

1.11 – Bureaucratization and Technical Support of UN PSOs

Also in 2005, and despite the endemic confusion in terms of the hybridization of peacekeeping and peacebuilding into a simultaneous goal of PSOs, the UN committed itself to this new vision by establishing the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to act as an intergovernmental entity providing advice towards peace efforts wherever necessary (UN, The Peacebuilding Commission, n.d.), while also involving stakeholder and expert analysis for consideration by both the UNSC and UNGA, as relevant (Sens, 2007). The PBC is supported financially by a designated fund known as the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), which was established in 2006 to allow Member States to allocate donations to UN peacebuilding activities (Sens, 2007), both of which enjoy the bureaucratic support of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to provide administrative assistance on behalf of the UN SG (UN, Peacebuilding Support Office, n.d.).

Provided our understanding of the doctrinal expectations of PSOs around the world, including the bureaucratic support systems in place to serve such operations, we turn our attention towards an exploration of how these factors translate into the field, and provide a critical lens on the subject which will be applied specifically to UNIFIL's case.

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1.12 - The New and (Not So) Improved PSO Model

Thus, we can observe how the UN has evolved over the decades to—not without its challenges—accommodate new realities in the world of international conflict and inter- and intrastate warfare, but without having answered many operational questions necessary for PSOs to carry out their work most effectively. Compared to “first-generation PSOs”—and without taking away from the devastation that has been historically wrought in the course of interstate conflicts—in terms of an international response, such conflicts were more simply contended with politically, legally, and militarily, as the two sides were more clearly defined, and the parameters were far more limited in terms of mandated expectations and objectives. Today, the situation is far different.

Contemporary, “second-generation PSOs,” must contend with ills as complicated as rebuilding dissolved state institutions, to policing against organized crime, to combatting drug trafficking, preventing terrorism, and everything in-between (Brzoska, 2006). It is fair to say that to a large extent, they are expected to act as mini-governments where they are deployed. Compounding this problem is the fact that what has *caused* the transformation from inter- to intrastate conflict around the world, has much to do with the fact that with the collapse of the Soviet Union as a benefactor to particular states, the internal discord that befell many countries occurred along ethnically-oriented social fissures that were simmering under the surface for decades.

According to Brzoska (2006), the ethnicization of conflict within a society, in reality, creates a multitude of competing societies that erode a shared sense of a shared civil society. While this has practical impacts on PSOs in terms of governance, policing,

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and so forth, it forces PSOs to be perpetually weary of being accused of favouring one side over another, risking their legitimacy, and personal safety.

Thus, the provision of security—for everyone—must *necessarily* transpire without compromising on the delivery of other social goods for everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without appearing preferential to any one side. For instance, physical security then, extends beyond mere military patrols and enforcement when necessary, but carrying out arrests, which implies a functioning system of justice and correctional facilities, and a monopoly on violence must be done in accordance with a commonly accepted standard of justice to avoid perceptions of bias. PSOs must strive towards achieving all of these goals in tandem, most of which are not traditionally military-oriented functions to begin with (Brzoska, 2006).

Without adequate security, including an observable reduction in internecine violence, and an ability to establish a representative, capable, and trustworthy national defence force, the legitimacy of a PSO may be jeopardized. Such an endeavour requires Security Sector Reform (SSR) in coordination with civilian agencies and authorities, to the satisfaction of all ethnic groups—particularly marginalized groups that may have less incentive to submit to inegalitarian authority, and act as spoiler groups—implying functioning, fair, and preferably democratic, state institutions. Again, this is yet another function for which PSOs are not traditionally well-suited (Brzoska, 2006).

Aside from the technical challenges associated with striving towards the accomplishment of mandated objectives without the requisite experience, comes the issue of generating sufficient local buy-in of the objectives themselves. First and foremost, PSOs must ensure that an appropriate balance is drawn between involving representatives

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from all relevant ethnic groups, in order to mitigate appearing biased in favour of one group or another, as already mentioned. Naturally, this provides opportunities for spoiler agents to appropriate reconciliation efforts for their own ends, including hindering DDR and SSR processes, or the establishment of institutions that run contrary to their corporate interests (Brzoska, 2006). This is simply a reality that must be confronted by PSOs, forcing commanders to determine when it is, and is not, appropriate for PSOs to look the other way for the sake of a “bigger picture” pursuit of peace, and when it is appropriate to confront spoiler groups and exclude them from particular peacebuilding processes (Brzoska, 2006).

All peacebuilding efforts must be promoted, planned, coordinated, and executed with local buy-in, and with the necessary time investment to ensure that no effort is rushed or conducted improperly. Nevertheless, given that PSOs are inherently transitional in nature—in that they are not intended to substitute indigenous forms of government forever—there is a tacit understanding that PSOs will not always be in the picture (even though many PSOs have been in operation for decades with no end in sight as of the time of this writing).

Despite this imperative, however, PSOs rely on donor country investment, including TCCs, for their work, which leads to three particular problems: First, external ‘investors’ want to see a return on their investment before continuing to commit funds to a PSO, as support for such investment diminishes over time. Second, PSOs may be tempted, given the first problem, to hasten their effort in order to report promising results to engender the support they need to carry out their work. That is, satisfying the ‘investor’ may take precedence over satisfying the ‘client,’ in a somewhat transactional approach to

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the problem of peacebuilding in PSOs. Third, the local population may resent foreign-directed timelines and criteria for success, and thereby reject them—along with the PSO itself—as forms of external interference in domestic affairs (Brzoska, 2006).

The literature is fairly consistent in terms of recognizing the dangers of such a transactional approach to contemporary PSO peacebuilding efforts. Weinstein (2005) suggests that foreign interference in endogenous forms of state- and peacebuilding hinders such development by eroding their legitimacy in the face of resentment against forced efforts. Fortna and Howard (2008) go further than Weinstein, in arguing that peacebuilding efforts on the part of PSOs may hinder peace negotiations, as the diminishment or removal of the threat of violence orients parties towards maintaining a status quo rather than pursuing an ultimate peace, democratization, or even political independence.

Marten (2004) altogether rejects the utility of PSO peacebuilding endeavours by stating simply that PSOs lack the necessary expertise to carry out such functions and should therefore focus on purely military aspects of a mandate. Talentino (2007) on the other hand, does not oppose peacebuilding efforts as part of PSO mandates, but rather considers it vital to have the local population determine the metrics associated with identifying which peacebuilding activities are worthwhile, and how success is evaluated, in order to mitigate the risk of exogenous models of peacebuilding running counter to the interests, needs, and desires of the local population. Overall, there is a broad consensus that local considerations should, in an ideal world, trump external considerations whenever possible to ensure the requisite legitimacy of the proposed efforts, and a greater likelihood of successful implementation.

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1.13 - External Challenges for PSOs: Spoiler Agents

When considering the hindrances of PSOs, mandate vagueness has been a problem for decades, which has only been compounded by the complexities of second-generation PSOs. Yet when considering challenges to PSO legitimacy on the ground, the greatest concern is not simply a lack of legitimacy in terms of having a PSO not being taken seriously, but rather the repercussions that can arise through spoiler agents that seek excuses not to abide by a PSO's mandated aims, or by reconciliation processes that are seen to run contrary to the interests of the spoiler agents' perceived, or real, constituent base.

Mac Ginty (2008) considers spoiler agents to be armed groups of individuals, and/or organizations, that represent certain religious, ethnic, or other corporate groups that may have legitimate grievances against other ethnic groups or the state itself. Given this understanding, spoiler groups deem their collective interests to be better served through the perpetuation of violence as compared to any negotiated settlement, or peacebuilding endeavour, for a variety of reasons that vary from scenario to scenario. For this reason, spoiler agents oppose any initiative, which could diminish their relative power or influence vis-à-vis perceived, or real, competitors or enemies in a given society. This certainly pertains to DDR and SSR efforts which would directly impact their relative hard power compared to similarly armed spoiler agents, or even the state itself (Brzoska, 2006).

Such opposition is characterized by a deep suspicion of the state, and rival groups, over fears surrounding what the state would do to the constituent community in the absence of the spoiler group's relative power, especially if there is no reciprocal

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disarmament requirement for state authorities (Babbitt, 2006). As Mac Ginty (2008) puts it, there is a concern that the state will not meet the ‘needs’ of the group the spoiler agents claim to represent, unless spoiler groups maintain their relative leverage by means of armed force.

According to Borer (2006), generally speaking, spoilers are often supported by states that have a stake in a given conflict, typically regional neighbouring states, as a proxy force to undermine peace negotiations or peacebuilding processes for their own particular policy objectives. Such neighbours are referred to as “bad neighbours” (Borer, 2006), and are impossible for PSOs to contend with since they exist outside of their AO, and enjoy their own sovereignty and military capacity. Such situations are deliberately sewed by “bad neighbours” in order to exacerbate conditions of internecine violence, and general social conflict, as this creates a set of circumstances that make it easier to recruit members and motivate armed action that serves the perceived, or real, reciprocal interests of both the “bad neighbour” and the spoiler agent.

Yet not all spoiler agents are alike, in that they differ in their commitment to violence and willingness to negotiate. For our purposes, we will illustrate Borer’s (2006) four types of spoilers, which most commonly confront PSOs around the world:

- *Dealers* – spoiler agents that are prepared to negotiate terms under sufficient circumstances;
- *Opportunists* – those who participate in nonviolent peacebuilding activities, but reserve the right to return to violence if necessary;
- *Mavericks* – those motivated more by personal considerations rather than political considerations (i.e., prestige, influence, financial gain, etc.); and

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- *Zealots* – those utterly committed to upending any peace endeavours or peacebuilding activities through any means necessary, also known as “total spoilers” (Mac Ginty, 2008, p. 113).

It is important to recognize that spoilers can go through phases where they occupy one of these four forms depending on several factors, including internal cohesion as a group and the particular policy solution directed at alleviating the concerns, or addressing the needs of, the spoiler group, or their constituent base through some form of incentivization (Borer, 2006). However, it should be noted that such negotiations are ill-suited for PSOs to perform on their own, as they lack the power, authority, and expertise to negotiate society-specific conditions for peace, and are not prepared for traditionally civilian areas of service delivery.

As Brzoska explains:

Due to its substantial resources and organizational capacity, the military often takes the lead in security-related issues in post-conflict situations, including issues of security sector reconstruction and reform. As security sector reform entails the use of methods and activities not generally common to the military, this constitutes, in many cases, a stretch of the capabilities and capacities of military organizations, in addition to claiming territory traditionally covered by development agencies. On the other hand, development agencies generally have little experience, and often limited inclination, to deal with security institutions or to develop programmes for security sector reform such as police reform or the design of laws for security sector institutions (Brzoska, 2006, p.8).

When dealing with spoilers, regardless of their position within the spectrum of commitment to a given cause, there is a tension between excluding and including spoilers in PSO-oriented peacebuilding activities, with different scholars taking different approaches to the problem. Neumann (2007) argues that spoiler groups should have their stated purposes and ideological aims taken at face value, particularly when confronting

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religiously-oriented groups as their immaterial needs are typically the least amenable to compromise.

This does not mean that they are entirely inflexible or unopen to compromise, but rather that a calculus has to be taken, including a measure of risk, to assess whether the particular spoiler group in question is pragmatic in modulating its use of violence in the face of overwhelming consequences, or if the group lacks such self-control. The determination of the utility of entering into dialogue or negotiations with such groups rests on this assessment, especially if such groups can be splintered internally by exploiting ideological fault lines where some members want to negotiate, while others wish to remain intransigent (Neumann, 2007).

However, excluding them can impact the legitimacy of a PSO in the eyes of their grassroots constituents and motivate such groups to agitate against any and all peacebuilding activities that exclude them, especially in dialogue efforts aimed at affecting a negotiated peace agreement (Saunders, 2003). On the other hand, Zartman (2008) argues that an overly eager willingness to include spoilers in peacebuilding efforts, especially as such motivations may emerge as an incentive to placate particularly violent spoiler groups from engaging in violence, may discredit the involvement of actors committed to nonviolence, thereby inadvertently incentivizing violence and empowering those willing to use violence and disempowering those committed to peaceful means of dialogue and negotiated settlement of disputes, thereby diminishing the credibility of the overall peacebuilding process(es).

Generally, when considering the presence and impact of spoiler groups, understanding their motivation is critical in all contexts, otherwise it is unreasonable to

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expect a positive outcome without taking such considerations into account. According to Kelman (1996, 1998), it is critical to understand the core form of identity affiliation of a particular spoiler group, be it religious, national, ethnic, or so forth, including a need for the real or perceived antagonist to recognize the legitimacy, needs, fears, and desires of that particular spoiler group (or at least, that of the constituent base it purports to represent). Such a recognition may elicit a reciprocal recognition by the spoiler group towards their real or perceived enemy, opening the door to an improved set of relations in the future.

According to Weiner, Sharon, and Morrison (2010), there are conflicting perspectives as to whether, if at all, UN or non-UN PSOs can adequately contend with spoiler groups, as there has been little novel innovation in the field on this subject. However, Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2015) posit that non-UN PSOs, such as those carried out by NATO and the AU, have no appreciable impact on peacebuilding endeavours where they are deployed.

However, Brzoska (2006) adds that security considerations, given their urgency, naturally take up more of the focus of PSOs; not only because they are better suited to such matters, but because they are more necessary. Yet, even if PSOs could provide both humanitarian and military support to the local population, it is almost impossible to do so while maintaining the perception of impartiality from all stakeholders, and the postponement of peacebuilding efforts in order to contend with security-related issues emanating from spoiler groups, or otherwise, may itself diminish confidence in a PSO's ability to deliver on its mandate, and its subsequent legitimacy. Therefore, it can be observed that the expectations placed upon PSOs do not necessarily correlate to their

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capabilities, and this can have serious consequences for a PSO's success by virtue of its design right from the outset. In many scenarios there is no ideal course of action, and UN PSOs are caught between two or more difficult choices with similar consequences.

1.14 - Internal Challenges for PSOs

While external challenges to PSO success are myriad, the design of PSOs in the context of a politicized UN bureaucracy brings forward an entirely separate set of challenges to contend with. In particular, there is a perpetual disconnect and contradiction between the relative weights afforded to a UN-provided mandate, and the respective national defence doctrines and policies of the respective TCC contingents comprising a PSO. In sum, when a UN mandate runs contrary to the national and/or foreign policy of a PSO national contingent, these contingents will ensure that their mandated objectives accord with their home country's objectives and policies before taking action. Importantly, if there is a contradiction in terms, the home country's perspective wins out (Murphy, 2012). As can be expected, this has significant ramifications for a PSO's effectiveness, responsiveness, willingness to undertake particular tasks, and intra-operational cohesion.

Aside from an *a priori* de-prioritization of a PSO's mandate, there are also significant disparities between TCC contingents in every imaginable way, ranging from the quality of training and equipment, level of pay, their respective working conditions, whether or not a soldier is a volunteer or a conscript, work culture, and definitions and beliefs concerning what constitutes a threat, victory, the definition of the enemy, what constitutes conflict, peace, and other doctrinal issues which make up the norms informing

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the outlook of the different military contingents (Ruffa, 2008; Murphy, 2012). This is a very important consideration since such variances influence the degree of motivation different contingents have pertaining to assigned tasks, and informs the way in which war *ought* to be conducted from their unique vantage points (Cassidy, 2004; Ruffa, 2008).

Although, such disparities may not always be as important as doctrinal differences between various military contingents. For example, while Christman, et al. (2006) suggest that the higher the concordance on such matters in a PSO, the greater the degree of operational success and inter-contingent collaboration, and vice versa (Christman, et al., 2006). Ruffa (2014) argues that the opposite may be the case, as different levels of experience, national defence doctrine, and so forth, matter more on the ground than simply having analogous forms of training and equipment between militaries. Nevertheless, in terms of performance, it can generally be observed that better training and equipment can at least provide better results *when* required, rather than the reverse, which inherently impedes mission effectiveness and interoperability between contingents.

Another element of intra-PSO discord concerns the increasing trend of Western countries providing an ever-diminishing amount of international peacekeepers to UN PSOs around the world (Tardy, 2011). Today, militaries of developing countries form the bulk of TCCs around the world (White, 2013), but continue to be made to feel inferior to better trained, and better equipped Western militaries, as well as disrespected in terms of lacking commensurate influence over PSO decision-making processes, despite incurring an increasing share of the risks in the field (Tardy, 2011). Such sentiments and attitudes also poorly impact social cohesion within PSOs, correspondingly impacting performance in the field. Again, given that the UN lacks its own standing force and relies upon the

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voluntary contribution of troops from Member States—excluding the United States and Russia—the UN accepts the aforementioned disparities as an inescapable fact of PSOs as it has little alternative recourse (Smith and Boutellis, 2013).

1.15 - Is it Working? Assessing UN PSO Performance

Thus, we can observe that intra-PSO and extra-PSO challenges simultaneously converge to create a complicated tangle of issues affecting a PSO's effectiveness. This is not to suggest that there is no utility to PSOs, as we have seen above that research suggests their utility *despite* the many obstacles they face in the field. However, what further complicates matters for the UN is that it lacks an agreed upon measure to assess UN PSOs.

Contemporarily, even in the formation and ongoing deployment of a PSO, and despite having 15 active PSOs around the world today (UN, "Current Peacekeeping Operations," n.d.), the UN still lacks a clear set of criteria for measuring the success of its PSOs (Sigri and Başar, 2014), largely due to the fact that PSOs look different depending on where they are deployed, while also being required to fulfill a myriad of tasks both explicitly stated, and implicitly implied, in their respective mandates (Maley, 2012).

Simply put, to determine the merit, worth, value, or significance (Patton, 2012) of a PSO requires a systematic, objective, and ongoing evaluative methodology that can determine the extent to which an existing or completed PSO is fulfilling its objectives in terms of both peacekeeping and peacebuilding—not only by measuring it against its mandate, but against the expectations put upon it—utilizing reasonable and measurable metrics both for the purposes of PSO-specific analysis, and to extrapolate towards lessons

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learned for PSOs more generally (De Coning and Romita, 2009; Garb, 2014; Sigri and Başar, 2014). While all methodologies possess strengths and weaknesses, any evaluative approach that is at least verifiable and empirical on the basis of an understood metric by evaluators, relevant stakeholders, and UN PSO personnel, is a superior arrangement to having no standardized metric whatsoever (Druckman and Stern, 1997; Gilligan and Sergenti, 2006; Schumacher, 2007), which is currently the case (Sigri and Başar, 2014).

Furthermore, from an ethical perspective, a reliable and replicable evaluative model of PSOs is essential given that improvements derived from the data gathered from such evaluations can very likely contribute to improved PSO personnel and civilian safety in ongoing and future PSOs (Lewis, 2004; Maley, 2012). However, as is the case with PSO mandates, so too are any evaluative endeavours politicized by the UNSC and Member States (and sometimes PSOs themselves), which accounts for the vague and uneven approach taken to PSO evaluation within the UN, as well as difficulties in evaluating less tangible elements of a PSO's work.

For instance, the UNSC and influential Member States may be deliberately vague in their approach to evaluating a PSO's performance in order to (de)emphasize success or failures depending on particular policy interests (Whalan, 2012). PSOs are also interested in emphasizing their successes in order to secure continued funding and subsequently portray that sustained funding flow as an indicator of a mission success in a cyclical and self-perpetuating fashion (De Carvalho and Aune, 2009). This is especially the case given the phenomenon of "PSO Fatigue" where the expense and risk of PSOs make it increasingly difficult to attract TCCs (Meharg, 2009)

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By way of example, as will be illustrated in detail below, UNIFIL's successes were often exaggerated to the point where its consistent renewal on a six-month basis was merited, largely at the request of the Lebanese government (Barak, 2007), despite evidence that it was unable to perform its mandate in large part. Such an approach can signal that a PSO is performing well and can be utilized to entice TCC contributions when portrayed positively (Meharg, 2009). By definition, such an approach is a form of preordination, which runs contrary to any credible evaluation (Maley, 2012). While the 2008 Capstone Doctrine encouraged greater honesty and transparency in PSO reporting (UN, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," 2008), in order to ameliorate against overly optimistic reports, there is little indication that this practice has been widely adopted.

Additionally, from a technical standpoint while the UN may measure a PSO's success by simply lining up its successes in the field in accordance with its mandate in a checklist-like manner (Meharg, 2009), De Carvalho and Aune (2010) suggest that measuring improvements in intangible achievements, such as improvements in morale, or local support of the population, and even tangible elements such as providing physical security cannot always be directly linked to the actions taken by a PSO solely, making it difficult to evaluate the *causal* verses the *correlational* aspect of a PSO's performance.

There is also a legitimacy gap in evaluations which fail to take into consideration the criteria that would be acceptable to not only the UN, PSO personnel, and concerned Member States and TCCs, but also the parties to the conflict and the local population, with all of the technical difficulties such a comprehensive evaluation would inherently entail (Diehl and Druckman, 2010), including having to have input in the design and

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implementation of an evaluation model (De Carvalho and Aune, 2009). While assessing perceptions of a population is difficult, it is all the more necessary in peacebuilding and CIMIC contexts, where determining the level of legitimacy of a PSO enjoys among the population it serves is essential, as is determining whether a PSO's achievement of its mandate is recognized as a positive outcome by that same population, and understanding the reasons for any discovered discrepancies (De Carvalho and Aune, 2009).

Further complicating matters is the fact that a PSO cannot be evaluated in isolation to the overall UN institution that supports its work in the field, including DPKO, DFS, the UNSC, UN Secretariat, and so forth, making a rigorous evaluation of a PSO a Herculean task (De Carvalho and Aune, 2009; Meharg, 2009; Sigri and Başar, 214). Thus, as the UN lacks a comprehensive set of evaluative criteria concerning PSOs, it relies on “several assessment mechanisms for peacekeeping operations” (Sigri and Başar, 2014, p. 394), involving a dizzying array of intra-UN agencies with convoluted reporting relationships (Patrick, 2015), and all with different focuses and different evaluative metrics.

What generally occurs within the UN, aside from a line-by-line assessment of a PSO compared to its mandate—which is problematic for the reasons elucidated above—is a more business-like approach examining the value of a PSO in accordance with its budget allocation:

In order to ensure the best effectiveness, performance of UN departments and programmes were assessed with a results-based budgeting measurement tool. The logic behind the results-based budgeting methods is to compare actual results with previously established quantifiable indicators of accomplishment and to determine whether budgeted resources of departments are linked to their goals. However this method lacks some characteristics to be an assessment tool of peacekeeping operations. Research showed the difficulties in developing proper indicators of

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achievement as well as their vagueness. The lack of coordination between agencies and the UN is another deficiency (Sigri and Başar, 2014, p. 394).

Provided an understanding of the constraints associated with current methods of evaluating UN PSOs, scholars tend to agree that a PSO should be deployed only following the establishment of a mandate- and criteria-specific evaluative framework by which to measure a mission's "success" and "failure," involving the utilization of a commonly understood definition of both among all of the relevant stakeholders, while simultaneously recognizing that it is likely impossible to entirely satisfy the desires of all stakeholders (Schumacher, 2007; De Carvalho and Aune, 2009; Meharg, 2009).

While a lack of definitional consensus can negatively impact buy-in by one or more stakeholders, it is possible to design evaluations that are malleable enough to be altered as necessary over the course of a PSO's deployment, in relation to changes to its mandate, troop strength, and other dynamic and unpredictable environmental factors that are out of a PSO's control, and therefore, should not be evaluated on a static basis (Lewis, 2004; Schumacher, 2007; De Coning and Romita, 2009; Meharg, 2009).

This flexibility can therefore provide a more realistic method of evaluating a PSO's contribution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding rather than attempting to attribute a typically illusory absolutist quality to a PSOs activities (Schumacher, 2007; De Carvalho and Aune, 2009). Such evaluations have been referred to as "good enough" evaluations, and have become increasingly common when evaluating UN PSOs both internally and through third party evaluators (Lewis, 2004; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN, 2012), as they enjoy the unique benefit of circumventing politicized interests when an absolute standard of success or causality is no longer expected.

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Yet such an approach does not eliminate the challenges associated with the pressure placed upon evaluators to produce actionable outcomes and favour certain forms of data over others that can be more easily contended with in terms of policy and hands-on action in the field. As Meharg writes:

There is much political pressure on organizations who report to their donors, governments, and constituencies to have strong arguments supporting effectiveness. When politicians have the choice between using statistics or narratives, they expound the numbers when related to short-term effectiveness (30 insurgents killed; three wells dug; 243 girl children attending school; 1.5 million immunized against polio) (Meharg, 2009, p. 6).

Such an approach to reporting will be demonstrated with our UNIFIL case study below, but it is a fair point to consider again, due to the difficulty in quantitatively assessing intangible peacebuilding achievements, which are now an intrinsic part of UN PSOs, while also having to take into account producing favourable evaluative reports in order to secure political and financial support (De Carvalho and Aune, 2009; Meharg, 2009).

Provided with an understanding of the origin, development, evolution, execution, and evaluation of UN PSOs, coupled with their strengths and challenges, we can turn our attention to UNIFIL as a case study for discussion, and explore how the aforementioned shortcomings of UN PSOs have applied to the operation since its creation in 1978. However, understanding the conflict environment that UNIFIL finds itself mired in requires a brief discussion of Lebanon as a society, and its most significant spoiler group, Hizballah, as such an understanding is crucial to establish the context—and subsequent scenario-specific challenges—that have affected UNIFIL, and continue to affect UNIFIL, before exploring the PSO's history and performance in the field over the past four decades.

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1.16 – Conclusion

As can be observed, there exists a plethora of literature on the phenomenon of PSOs as institutions of not only military means, but also as peacebuilding agents, demonstrating a marriage between peacekeeping theory and peacebuilding theory which has been inseparable for nearly three decades. There is no scholarly consensus on how PSOs are deployed with the exception of a universal recognition that it is, in one way or another, a political process by the UN Security Council, that has both positive and negative impacts for PSOs around the world.

However, PSOs have struggled tremendously in dealing with both internal challenges, largely a product of PSO design and implementation as a very product of this political process, as well as external challenges—particularly spoiler agents, vague mandates, and inappropriate models of peacebuilding utilized in a particular context, among other reasons—which hinder PSO legitimacy in the eyes of many. Coupled with insufficient and highly politicized evaluations of PSOs, there is much left wanting in the institution of PSOs as they are currently formed, evidenced further by the UN’s repeated efforts at refining PSO doctrine time and again.

With this in mind, it is important to contextualize our discussion of UNIFIL, prior to any examination of Israeli perspectives on the PSO, with an understanding of how it was formed, deployed, mandated, and the operational environment in which the mission functions—and has functioned—considering Lebanon’s political and social history both prior to UNIFIL’s deployment, up until the contemporary period. As such, we turn our attention to UNIFIL’s historical context and explore the opportunities and constraints that affect the mission’s mandate on the ground.

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CHAPTER TWO: SETTING THE CONTEXT

2.1 – Introduction

Provided an understanding of the PSO as an evolving institution within the UN, that has practical ramifications for the world, especially in contexts where they are deployed and intervene in ongoing conflicts, we can explore the context within which UNIFIL specifically operates to appreciate the case-specific opportunities and constraints that affect the mission. Therefore, no contextualization would be complete without examining the historical, political, and social context of Lebanon, including its southernmost region border northern Israel, to illustrate the complex factors that UNIFIL faces.

To facilitate this understanding, we explore Lebanon’s history, and the origins of its sectarian-based political system and the power imbalance this has produced in Lebanese society. We will then examine how these imbalances affected demographically weaker communities, particularly Shiite Muslims, and led to feelings of resentment and estrangement from the broader society, resulting in radicalization and the rise of Hizballah, Lebanon’s most significant spoiler group.

Further, the role of regional neighbours influencing domestic-political processes in Lebanon, including the financing, arming, training, and facilitating of Hizballah’s militant activities in southern Lebanon—and throughout the country—is illustrated to portray the effect that “bad neighbours” have on the exacerbation of conflict within Lebanon, between Israel and Hizballah across the frontier between Israel and Lebanon, and of course, on UNIFIL itself.

This then, leads to a discussion of how UNIFIL was ultimately designed and deployed to the conflict zone, the circumstances of its deployment, and the external

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challenges it has faced and continues to face on the ground. In particular, attention is drawn to the implementation of UNIFIL—at first—as a “first-generation” PSO in a non-traditional context, where the conflict was (and is) not “ripe” for resolution. Finally, aspects of UNIFIL’s internal challenges are explored as an overview to a more detailed discussion surrounding the UN Secretary-General’s reports on UNIFIL’s performance in the field in a subsequent chapter.

2.2 – Setting the Context: A Brief History of Lebanon and its Discontent

Contemporary Lebanon is a young state, having achieved independence from France on November 23, 1943 (Hamzeh, 2004). Historically, Lebanon referred to a *region* dating back to antiquity, but was well-known for being a remote and underserved and underpopulated region of the Ottoman Empire, characterized by various—and often competing—confessional sects that vied for power, influence, and ingratiation towards local Ottoman authorities (Naor, 2015).

The first semblance of political autonomy offered to the residents of this region was in the form of a consociational power sharing model of governance under ultimate Ottoman control, whereby the region was subdivided into six districts in accordance with the corresponding six major confessional groups in the area, on the basis of demographic strength, favouring the Maronite Catholics, Greek Orthodox Christians, Greek Catholic Christians, Sunni Muslims, Shi’a Muslims, and the Druze in descending order. The model itself was accepted in principle, but dissolved as a product of internecine conflict fomented by French support for restive Maronite elements, and British support for restive

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Druze elements, in an effort to undermine the Ottoman Empire for rival imperial gains. (Zahar, 2005).

This led to a transition by the Ottomans towards a system of proportional representation on the basis of confessional size, which succeeded until France successfully conquered the Lebanon region following the First World War, subsequently ousting the Ottomans. Following the French victory, France moved quickly to expand the region, encompassing territory from neighbouring Syria, which subsequently—and consequently—expanded the population of both Sunni and Shiite Muslims in the new borders of French Lebanon. Intercommunal fighting broke out as confessional groups vied for power given the nature of the demographic balance, which hitherto favoured Christians, but now reached near parity between Christians and Muslims (Zahar, 2005). The French had now inherited the same problem that had previously plagued the Ottomans, and sought similar political solutions to remedy these emergent conflicts.

To that end, in 1922 the French instituted a form of elite-based representative governance, whereby elites from the respective confessional sects of Lebanon would liaise with the French High Commissioner on behalf of their respective communities, in what became known as the *Lebanese Representative Council*. However, despite the fact that the Council would be the last form of imperial governance imposed upon the subjects of Lebanon until the attainment of Lebanese independence (Hamzeh, 2004), the system itself was fraught with conflict, as allegations of favouritism and corruption abounded between various confessional sects (Zahar, 2005).

It was following independence that an endogenous—albeit unjust—form of government emerged in an effort to deal with the practicalities associated with the

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historical grievances of the various confessional sects in Lebanon, as well as the realities of Lebanon's expanded boundaries. In an attempt to quell the newfound country's internecine discord, the various sects settled on the *National Pact* of 1943, which committed the country to a series of particular principles that all sects were to abide by:

- Committing to the sovereignty and independence of the new country;
- Committing Lebanon to political neutrality;
- Rejecting the largesse of foreign powers and protectors;
- The permanent affixation of a six-to-five ratio of parliamentary seats favouring Christians over Muslims, based on the last national census of 1932 (Zahar, 2005);
- The permanent allocation of the presidency, military, and parliamentary veto power to Christians;
- The permanent allocation of the position of Prime Minister to a Sunni Muslim; and,
- The dispensation of all remaining ministerial portfolios to remaining confessional sects on the basis of descending importance on the basis of their proportional size in accordance with the 1932 census (Zahar, 2005; Gambill, 2007).

Unsurprisingly, this “National Pact” was negotiated on the basis of uneven power enjoyed by the demographically superior aggregate of Christian communities, followed by the Sunni Muslim population, to the detriment of all other confessional sects in Lebanon, most pronounced of which were the Shiites who remained the smallest of the sects at the time of the census (Zahar, 2005).

In addition, as each confessional sect was historically cantonized in specific districts throughout the country, the Pact operated on the assumption of there being

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limited mobility between various sects into different parts of the nascent state, an assumption which was increasingly challenged as Lebanon transitioned from a primarily agricultural-based economy to one focusing on the service sector. With this economic transformation came economic disruption—and opportunity—by way of internal migration for the Shiites who were historically overrepresented in the agricultural sector.

2.3 – Unmet Needs, Bad Neighbours, and the Rise of Hizballah

Significant Shiite migration from their traditional areas of relegation in southern Lebanon proceeded apace during the 1950s, disrupting the traditionally cemented balance of the primarily Christian neighbourhoods of Lebanon, where work opportunities were more abundant (Zahar, 2005). While this migration began as a trickle, the trend increased more dramatically throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was based in southern Lebanon (and were armed by Syria) (Zahar, 2005) began clashing regularly with Israeli forces across the Israel-Lebanon border, impacting mostly Shiites who form the majority of the citizens in the area. This state of affairs, coupled with the eruption of Lebanon's civil war in 1975 caused many Shiites to move northward in search of safety and opportunity.

The Shiites were met with discrimination throughout the country, not only in the sense of being economically and politically disenfranchised (Hamzeh, 2004), but by becoming internally displaced within their own country. A sense of collective resentment was increasingly fomented under the recognition that not only had the increase in their demographic size over the decades not been translated into political power—due to the official affixation of power as per the National Pact—but the awareness of this lack of

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influence translated tangibly into resentment against the Lebanese state for all but ignoring the defence, development, educational, economic, social, and other needs of Shiite neighbourhoods in the south.

This sense of collective discrimination based on the unmet political, economic, religious, and other interests and needs of the Shiite community by the Lebanese state, encouraged the formation of endogenous Shiite-specific institutions to combat state-sanctioned discrimination and institutions. As such, the Shiites became increasingly alienated from the Lebanese state, feeling less affinity for Lebanese identity, and a greater affinity for their Shiite religio-cultural identity (Black, 2008; Mac Ginty, 2008; Power, 2011), which was perceived to be the differentiating factor that formed the basis upon which they were being discriminated against (Black, 2008).

As this sentiment began to solidify, the Shiite community began to radicalize and rally around their shared *religious* identity during the civil war period (Black, 2008), and increasingly considered the use of violence as a form of addressing both their perceived, and real, discrimination at the hands of the state (Power, 2011). This represented a marked difference from the historically secular-oriented support given to the Shiite-oriented political party representing communal interests, the Amal party, which opted for peaceful and secular approaches to improving communal welfare within the status quo (Shanahan, 2005). The less organized and less powerful Shiite community did not enjoy the same force of arms as the other sectarian militias operating throughout the country during the Civil War, and were therefore often at the mercy of more powerful actors.

The “fortunes,” so to speak, of the Shi’a community in Lebanon would change dramatically four years into Lebanon’s civil war. In 1979, an “Islamic Revolution”

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transpired in the neighbouring Shiite-majority country of Iran, which then became the “Islamic Republic” of Iran, when a popular left-wing revolution was coopted by clerical forces to establish a state based on Shiite interpretations of Islamic law. This new state’s domestic and foreign policy was modeled after the revolutionary ideology of the new clerical leadership’s “Supreme Leader,” Ayatollah Khomeini. The appearance of a self-confident, Shiite-dominant country emerging in the Middle East, unabashedly advocating for religious ideals proved attractive to many Lebanese Shiites, subsequently dividing the near-monopoly on representation hitherto enjoyed by the Amal party.

Thus, we can see that the Shiite community, caught as it was between powerful non-state military forces that cared little for their welfare, and a Lebanese state that was largely indifferent to their plight, felt disproportionately impacted by the repercussions of the Lebanese Civil War between 1975 and 1989, as well as the Israeli invasions and subsequent occupation of Lebanon from 1982 to 2000, providing the impetus for the radicalization of a significant segment of the country’s Shiite population (Hamzeh, 2004).

Those who remained within the traditional approach to community advocacy remained with the Amal party, while those who took inspiration from the clerics of Iran and their revolutionary ideology, broke away from the party to form a separate party—“Islamic Amal”—which was later renamed as “Hizballah,” or the *Party of God* in 1982 by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, the party’s spiritual leader (Shanahan, 2005).

The division within Lebanon’s Shiite community extended beyond merely considering which party could better represent community interests domestically. Islamic Amal was unique in that its members pledged allegiance to the Ayatollah Khomeini, and committed itself to an evangelical mission of exporting Iran’s Islamic revolution around

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the world, beginning with Lebanon (Khashan, 2013). In return for this allegiance, Iran provided Hizballah with all of its military, financial, logistical, and ideological support, and was able to maintain a significant and highly strategic foothold in the Mediterranean, and particularly the Levant, using Hizballah as a proxy military force against Israel (Hamzeh, 2004; El Ezzi, 2012).

As such, and in violation of the National Pact, the Shiites for the first time in their history, enjoyed a foreign benefactor that supplied it with the military, financial, ideological, and other modes of support it had never been able to claim (Karmon, 2003). The Shiites—at least those aligned with the Iran-backed Hizballah Party—were now a force to be reckoned with in Lebanese politics, and would establish absolute dominance among the Shiite community within a decade.

Importantly, the support received from Iran was made readily available through the positive relations that were enjoyed between Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic (Karmon, 2003), which shares the longest—and extremely permeable—border with, and has direct influence over, Lebanon. The Syrian Assad regime had always considered Lebanon to be rightfully part of Syria, given that parts of what became independent Syria on October 24, 1945 were subsumed into present-day Lebanon when the region fell under French dominance. As such, Syria, to the extent possible, endeavoured (and continues to endeavour) to maintain significant influence over Lebanese political affairs with a high degree of success. When Lebanon's civil war broke out in 1975, Syria used its influence to establish a pretext to occupy the country claiming its forces were there to keep the peace; an occupation which only came to an official end in 2005 (Zahar, 2005; Zisser,

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2007), although it is largely understood that Syrian intelligence agencies operate widely throughout Lebanon to this day.

The friendship between Iran and Syria seems odd at first glance, as the former is ethnically Persian and staunchly Islamic in orientation, while the latter is avowedly secular and Ba'athist (Arab nationalist) in orientation. However, this has rarely been an issue for the two states, as other factors weigh considerably higher than those two aspects in their relations. Historically, the Assad family emanates from the Alawite sect of Islam, which is not only a heterodox derivative from the root faith of Shiite Islam, but shares the unfortunate fact with Shiism, that both sects are viewed as heretical by the majority mainstream Sunni Muslims in the region, including bitter collective memories of persecution when in positions of weakness. Moreover, the highly influential Lebanese Shiite cleric, Imam Musa al-Sadr, declared that the Alawites are part of the Shi'a Muslim community (Totten, 2011) which gave theological sanction to the two seemingly persecuted Muslim minorities in the region to set aside less relevant differences.

Aside from this historical reason, practical concerns come to bear as well. Both Syria and Iran are ideological enemies of the State of Israel, and Syria serves as a direct and reliable conduit by which Iran can exert its influence and interests in the Mediterranean. Moreover, it was former Syrian President, Hafez al-Assad, who offered Ayatollah Khomeini asylum in 1978 following his expulsion from Iraq; an offer that was ultimately refused in favour of France, but a gesture for which Khomeini was always grateful (Von Maltzahn, 2015).

Following the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, given the precarious relationship both Iran and Syria enjoyed with the United States (and much of the Western world),

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both states shared concerns over what ramifications, and actions, the coalition forces in those countries would pose to them. Both states feared (and continue to fear) US military intervention and the impact it may have over their political dominance (Pan, 2006). This shared trepidation brought the two states closer together as a counterweight to both real and perceived threats emanating from US foreign policy. As a trump card, one thing both states enjoy in common is the use of Hizballah as a counterforce to any and all actors that could challenge their interests in the region.

As Iran's military proxy force in Lebanon, Iran can exert political influence within Lebanon, while also engaging in military conflict with Israel without endangering its own troops, and without risking direct retaliation against targets within Iran stemming from cross-border attacks (Karmon, 2003) (although recently Iran has engaged in direct attacks on Israel, albeit from within Syrian territory) (Times of Israel Staff (a), 2019). Moreover, Hizballah is able to gather intelligence on Israeli maneuvers, and carry out other functions that give it unique leverage, and political influence in Lebanon, that otherwise would not be enjoyed by the Iranian and Syrian regimes.

Similarly, Syria benefits from Hizballah's role as a proxy force by claiming that its ability to regulate weapons transfers to Hizballah—which it officially denies—could be made to cease in exchange for Israeli concessions and return of the Golan Heights captured in the 1967 War, and without incurring Israeli retaliation in the face of those attacks (Karmon, 2003). More importantly, however, Hizballah acts as a “spoiler” agent within Lebanese politics, and can be activated at the request of Syria (with the tacit permission of Iran, as the two nations' interests are largely aligned) to ensure that policies

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not according with Syrian interests are either exceedingly difficult, or impossible, to legislate.

However, Hizballah is more than only a proxy force of the Iranian and Syrian governments, and a mere spoiler agent operating in defiance of the State of Israel. It is also a massive social force in Lebanon that is extremely popular among many sectors of Lebanese society for a variety of reasons. It is indeed a terrorist organization, yet it is also a legitimate political party that represents most Shiite Muslims on affairs that are of broader interest than internecine fighting or anti-Israel activity. As such it is necessary to consider the history, breadth, and depth of Hizballah in the context of exploring UNIFIL operations in the area to better understand what opportunities and challenges exist in contending with Hizballah on the ground.

Concerning Hizballah, it is a matter of fact that Hizballah is indeed ideologically aligned with, and financially sustained by Iran, and serves as a military proxy force for the Iranian regime, which limits its ability to act autonomously, despite claims to the contrary by Hizballah (Neumann, 2007). Nevertheless, given the pragmatic understanding of how Hizballah is perceived to be an instrument of a foreign government, the organization takes great pains to portray itself as a nationalistic, Lebanese-centric organization that is the “resistance” arm of the state so as to mitigate claims of dual loyalty to Iran and Syria (Bassedas, 2009; Ben-Ari, 2010).

To that end, Hizballah downplays its relationship to Iran whenever possible, and directs attention to its broad governance activities, ranging from the provision of public schooling, hospitals, charitable organizations, and even waste removal services (Harik, 2004; Simon and Stevenson, 2010), making Hizballah the largest employer in Lebanon

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after the government itself (Jureidini, et al., 2007). Nevertheless, while it emphasizes its Lebanese character and loyalty to Lebanon, it has never abandoned its perceived right to possess arms and to act against any agent it deems necessary in securing its interests and objectives (Bassedas, 2009), nor has the organization relinquished its revolutionary Islamic ideology.

However, it is impossible ignore the fact that part of Hizballah's unique influence in Lebanon is predicated precisely on the fact that it is the sole non-state militia to possess such a degree of military might that it rivals that of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) (Harel and Isacharoff, 2008), which is met with suspicion by much of the Lebanese public. This is precisely the factor that has allowed it to successfully pursue political legitimacy in Lebanon, including significant parliamentary representation (Aran, 2012). In fact, it is noteworthy to mention that in 2017, Lebanon passed an electoral law requiring proportional representation in the Lebanese parliament for the first time in its history, which in the most recent 2018 elections, resulted in Hizballah enjoying the *best* electoral performance relative to any other party in Lebanon (Hubbard and Saad, "Lebanon's Elections Boost Hezbollah's Clout," May 7, 2018). This popularity, coupled by the fact that the Shiite population in Lebanon now represents the largest single confessional sect, and broadly supports Hizballah (Harel and Issacharoff, 2008), demonstrates the organizations ongoing and sustainable appeal in Lebanon.

Therefore since its creation in 1982, with the ouster of the PLO from southern Lebanon, Hizballah became the most significant spoiler group operating against Israel (and the SLA), operating heavily within UNIFIL's AO, up to and including the Blue Line, and beyond. For decades it has committed itself to the destruction of the State of

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Israel, and has utilized asymmetric warfare against Israel, and other enemies both within Lebanon and abroad, including suicide bombings, guerrilla warfare, the taking of hostages, and so forth (Hamzeh, 2004), and has attacked both the LAF and UNIFIL when it found it necessary for its purposes. Furthermore, while allegations of corruption within Hizballah exist, and setting aside its well-documented use of terrorism—or the threat thereof—Hizballah enjoys an image of relative integrity as a political party, and is respected for possessing a strict military discipline and code of conduct (Gambill, 2007).

It is with this understanding of Hizballah—a political, economic, social, religious, and military juggernaut within the Lebanese state—that we can look at UNIFIL’s history with the proper contextual lens, and more readily comprehend the situation UNIFIL has found itself in since 1978 up until the contemporary period, with all of the concomitant consequences that entails.

2.4 - The Birth of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon: The First Iteration

UNIFIL is the Middle East’s largest PSO to date (Murphy, 2012), having numbered some 2,000 troops since its debut, to around 13,000 troops since 2006. UNIFIL was deployed on the heels of nearly a decade of cross-border attacks along the Israel-Lebanon border between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. In March 1978, following a spate of cross-border attacks, the Israeli government responded on March 14 by launching *Operation Litani*, entailing a limited invasion of southern Lebanon with the purpose of rooting out the PLO from the area, and preventing future cross-border attacks (Hamzeh, 2004).

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Immediately following Israel's invasion, the Lebanese government lodged a complaint with the UNSC criticizing the invasion, and citing its lack of responsibility for PLO-conducted attacks emanating from its territory. Following consultations with both the UN Permanent Representatives of both countries, the UNSC immediately issued United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425 which:

1. *Calls* for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries;
2. *Calls* upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory;
3. *Decides*, in light of the request of the Government of Lebanon, to establish immediately under its authority a United Nations interim force for Southern Lebanon for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, the force to be composed of personnel drawn from Member States;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council within twenty-four hours on the implementation of the present resolution (UN, S/RES/425 (1978), p. 5). (italicized emphasis in original)

In sum, and quite astoundingly, aside from demanding an immediate cessation to hostilities and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, an “interim force” was to be deployed within *24 hours* of this resolution in order to facilitate the confirmation of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Lebanese government in reasserting sovereignty within its territory. UNSCR 426 (1978) further committed the United Nations to reviewing the continued need for the force on a six-month basis, to be terminated at the discretion of the Lebanese government, or that of the Security Council (UNSCR 426 (1978)).

In accordance with this mandate, UNIFIL was to operate solely on the Lebanese side of the border (Poulligny, 2006) and had a “traditional,” or “first-generation” peacekeeping role to simply separate the IDF and the PLO, confirm the subsequent

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withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon (thereby restoring “international peace and security”) and to assist the government of Lebanon in regaining its sovereignty over the *whole* of Lebanon, as well as disarming extant armed elements between the Blue Line and the Litani River (Miller, 2010). What is also unique here is that the government of Lebanon was not technically the party hostile to Israel, yet a state-centric “first-generation” PSO was established to intervene between Israel and the PLO for the sake of facilitating the enhancement of official Lebanese governmental sovereignty and authority.

The force was initially comprised of nearly 4,000 troops, emanating from seven countries: Fiji, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Ireland, Norway, and The Netherlands (Miller, 2010), reaching approximately 6,000 in accordance with its augmentation via UNSCR 427 (1978). Unusually, under UNIFIL’s mandate, the mission was to be implemented within 24 hours, and to be able to function—unrealistically, given that it could not credibly deter or counter the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), or any other armed elements on the ground—as a military unit, especially when considering the first-generation PSO principles which informed UNIFIL’s mandate (Nachmias, 1996), and the obvious military disparities between the TCCs in question.

The unusual reasoning behind these elements of the mandate emanated from the United States under the Carter administration, which disapproved of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and sought to convey its political will in intervening in the conflict by demonstrating the ability to rapidly deploy a UN force to the area. Importantly, this was done despite intra-UN protests against such a hastily organized deployment due to the

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complexities present within Lebanon (to be discussed below), and the hindrances these could pose to the nascent PSO (Nachmias, 1996).

With this in mind, the first SG report to the UNSC on the implementation of UNSCR 425 (1978) stipulated the three “essential conditions” for the Force to be effective, including having the full confidence and backing of the UNSC in carrying out its mission, the full cooperation of “all parties concerned,” (UN, S/12611, p. 1) and the ability “to function as an integrated and efficient military unit” (UN, S/12611, p. 1). While it will be demonstrated that none of these parameters have been sufficiently met in the course of UNIFIL’s deployment, a crucial caveat within the report has been a particularly vexing problem for the mission since its inception until the contemporary period:

UNIFIL, like any other United Nations Peace-keeping Operation, cannot and must not take on responsibilities which fall under the Government of the country in which it is operating. These responsibilities must be exercised by the competent Lebanese authorities. *It is assumed that the Lebanese Government will take the necessary measures to co-operate with UNIFIL in this regard.* It should be recalled that UNIFIL will have to operate in an area which is quite densely inhabited (UN, S/12611, p. 2) (italicized emphasis added)

However, Lebanon has always lacked the capacity to meaningfully cooperate with UNIFIL, necessitating the PSO’s creation and intervention in the first place. Additionally, at the time, and in contradiction to traditional peacekeeping values, Israel never consented to UNIFIL’s deployment, which hindered the mandate’s requirement to engender the “cooperation” of all concerned parties, let alone enjoying the de facto cooperation of Syria or Lebanon in any meaningful manner, owing especially to the latter’s extraordinarily weak security apparatus (Barak, 2007).

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Moreover, UNIFIL was in no way equipped to navigate the labyrinthine and arcane world of allegiances enjoyed by different confessional sects and their respective armed militias (MacQueen, 2006) within Lebanon. Thus, Israel complained at the time that UNIFIL violated the principle of *impartiality*, and acted as a support force for the Lebanese military (Nachmias, 1996). However, Israel quickly, yet grudgingly, committed to cooperating with UNIFIL, despite its reservations about the operation, as Miller illustrates:

From the outset Israel had insisted that the creation of UNIFIL was unnecessary and warned that the main test of UNIFIL's success or failure would be its capacity to "ensure peace and security in the area", though it did promise cooperation with the UN force in "every phase of their deployment" (Miller, 2010, p. 388).

This point would be proven four years after UNIFIL's deployment, when following a PLO-orchestrated hijacking and murder of 34 Israeli civilians aboard a bus in 1982 (Weiner, et al., 2010-2011), Israel invaded in what became known as *Operation Peace for Galilee* with 60,000 soldiers expanding up from the Blue Line all the way until the capital Beirut (MacQueen, 2006), beginning its 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon from that day until Israel's unilateral withdrawal on May 24-25, 2000 (UN, "UNIFIL Background," n.d.).

There is general agreement, including by the UN itself as will be made clear below, that even prior to Israel's invasion and occupation of Lebanon—but certainly both during and afterwards—UNIFIL was unable to carry out its mandate with the exception of secondary and tertiary duties, as both the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), its proxy force the South Lebanon Army (SLA) (also known as the *de facto forces* DFF), and the entire array of armed elements operating in southern Lebanon ranging from Hizballah to the

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various Palestinian militias (Eisenberg, 2000), easily overwhelmed both the LAF and UNIFIL.

Nevertheless, since its creation, it is noteworthy to point out that despite Israel's formal lack of initial consent, it has utilized UNIFIL's mediation and negotiation services over the years (including to this day) as it has served as a go-between and neutral space for all of the parties of the conflict to meet, as necessary, to discuss issues of mutual concern along the Blue Line (Nachmias, 1996). Thus, in this regard, UNIFIL has been of benefit to both parties. Despite not being a constituent element of its original mandate, such measures are appreciated by both Lebanon and Israel—evidenced by their regular utilization of UNIFIL's mediation role over the decades—and can be considered an aspect of UN PSO peacebuilding endeavours.

However, logistical issues stemming from UNIFIL's hasty deployment, coupled with the aforementioned issues of intra-PSO disparity and lack of social cohesion, have plagued the mission from its very foundation. Initially, not only was the force rapidly deployed, but it was comprised of a polyglot force made up of national contingents, all of whom spoke different languages, or English to varying degrees of fluency (Nachmias, 1996).

Put simply, the contingents had considerable difficulty in developing common plans of action, organizational structures, effective communications, and they lacked common equipment standards. Nachmias illustrates this dilemma succinctly:

The assorted peacekeeping battalions tried unsuccessfully to establish themselves as a consolidated formation along the major crossing points over the Litani River. While attempting to do this they faced attacks from all of the parties to the conflict, including the Israelis, the Lebanese, the PLO and splinter terrorist groups. *The besieged and ill-equipped peacekeepers could not even claim partial success in any one of their original missions.* While it is true that Israel withdrew

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its forces from Lebanon in June 1978, the reasons it did so had less to do with UNIFIL than it did heavy diplomatic pressure from the US (Nachmias, 1996, p. 15). (italicized emphasis added)

The rapid deployment of UNIFIL resulted in a lack of proper capacity, training and equipping of UNIFIL personnel to meet the demands of conflict that typified the Lebanese context. Moreover, UNIFIL lacked, and continues to lack, strategic support from UN Headquarters in New York, and has suffered from mandate overstretch as its tasks grew, while the requisite resources needed to meet those tasks did not necessarily follow suit. Some of these deficiencies can be attributed to the under-resourcing of staff at UN headquarters to deal with UNIFIL, and other PSOs around the world (Nachmias, 1996), along with the general overloading of PSOs with non-military peacebuilding tasks in accordance with revised UN peacekeeping doctrine over the years.

In fact, Nachmias (1996) explains how Israel's 1978 withdrawal had little to do with UNIFIL, which is substantiated by the fact that over the course of the following four years, PLO cross-border attacks continued from within UNIFIL's AO, which resulted in Israel subsequently re-invading Lebanon in *Operation Peace for Galilee*, thereby successfully ousting the PLO from the area (Andersen, et al., 2001), and occupying southern Lebanon for the next eighteen years (Kertcher, 2014), either with its own forces, or with the aid of the "DFP" or Israeli proxy force, the SLA Christian militia (UN, Lebanon—UNIFIL Background, n.d.). Thus, from the period of 1982, until Israel's withdrawal in 2000, it was plainly obvious that UNIFIL had failed in its mandate as its AO was under direct occupation of Israeli/DFP forces for that entire period.

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2.5 – Conflict “Ripeness”

By the UN’s own admission, throughout the period of Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon, coupled with the fact that it coincided with Lebanon’s then ongoing civil war which began in 1975 and only formally ended in 1991, UNIFIL focused its efforts on what elements of the mandate it *could* achieve, such as limited forms of civilian protection, and humanitarian assistance provision (UN, Lebanon—UNIFIL Background, n.d.), which ultimately cast doubt on the PSO’s legitimacy in the eyes of many observers (Murphy, 2012). Nachmias points out that while UNIFIL has been successful in improving the humanitarian situation among the civilian population within its AO, this actually magnifies the fact that a PSO cannot succeed in a conflict which is not “ripe” enough for resolution (Nachmias, 1996).

While there, its peacekeepers have faced assaults from various political, ethnic and religious groups and endured great loss of life. It is clear that mandates should be carefully considered before being implemented and that the appropriate resources are available to ensure that the job gets done properly. Where peace is non-existent and the belligerents are committed to resolving their disputes through armed conflict, the UN should not implement measures such as peacekeeping in a vain attempt to end the fighting (Nachmias, 1996, p. 15).

This “ripeness” requires an incentive for the parties to resolve a conflict in a manner that satisfies the security needs of both (or more), but in its absence, allows for UNIFIL to merely provide security without forcing a mutual reckoning with the root causes undergirding the conflict (Jett, 1999), creating a deadlock and support for the status quo.

According to Burgess and Burgess (2010), what is required to remedy such a deadlock is a “ripening” of a conflict by establishing a mutually hurting stalemate where a negotiated settlement, achieved through dialogue, is used to dispel common motivators

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for continuing a state of conflict. Such motivating conditions include a lack of popular will to negotiate with a given party; a belief that one party can achieve victory over another, or continue to deny the other party's legitimacy; as well in situations where there is a desire to equalize power; or a conflict that is values- or needs-based. One can add to this in the context of UNIFIL, that since UNIFIL takes on the risks on behalf of the LAF, there is little incentive in taking on those responsibilities if they can be avoided. Regardless, while a fulsome discussion of the methods necessary to achieve such a ripening of conflict is beyond the scope of our discussion, it is worth noting that PSOs are expected to fulfill even this role, adding a phenomenal burden to an already onerous task.

Thus, we can see that UNIFIL is substantively hindered by virtue of the fact that while a PSO is aimed at separating belligerent parties in an effort to promote dialogue that leads to a negotiated peace, there was never any such process underway to begin with between Israel and the PLO, Lebanon, or Hizballah, as well. In a sense, UNIFIL has become yet another *voluntary* participant in the conflict without being able to deal with the reality that it has faced on a daily basis for over four decades.

2.6 – Disparate Military Cultures and their Effect on UNIFIL

Yet we have also seen the detrimental impact that intra-PSO disparities in terms of capabilities, equipment, military culture, and even the ability to communicate can have on the effectiveness of an operation. We see these issues affecting UNIFIL as well, but we must also consider the longstanding impacts such disparities have on its operation to explain how—independent of external factors that hinder UNIFIL's success—the UN's own design and deployment of UNIFIL has become one of its greatest obstacles.

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Overall, the different national contingents within UNIFIL operate differently—even under an identical mandate, and with similar resources, when applicable—as their behaviour is determined by their interpretation of their operational environment for a variety of reasons, including past experiences in Lebanon, or with peacekeeping in general in other contexts (Ruffa, 2014). Interestingly, and somewhat counterintuitively, Ruffa (2014) presents some surprising research suggesting that the greater the similarity between contingent capabilities within UNIFIL, the *stronger* the differences in their operational approaches tend to be, but without providing an obvious reason as to why this may be the case.

Moreover, historical association or involvement in Lebanon tends to colour a contingent's behaviour, mostly based on historical experiences. For instance, due to France's colonial history in Lebanon, coupled with its involvement with UNIFIL since 1979 and its higher rate of casualties compared to the Italian contingent, which has only operated in Lebanon since 2006, France has a higher threat perception than Italy. Similarly, since South Korea, which deployed troops to UNIFIL in 2014 as part of its first ever involvement in an UN PSO, also has a higher threat perception than other contingents with more experience in Lebanon—including the French—as it is highly reticent about taking on casualties and it is new to the world of international peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Ruffa, 2014).

This variance in the threat perceptions of UNIFIL contingents informs how they operate in the field to a great extent. For instance, while the French and South Korean contingents liaise, coordinate, and jointly patrol regularly with the LAF, and operate using armored vehicles, the Italian and Ghanaian contingents do not have meaningful

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relationships with the LAF, and prefer to operate in light vehicles or on foot (Ruffa, 2014, 207). Similarly, in terms of force protection—including securing the base, protecting soldiers on patrol, and the maintenance of personnel, weapons, and equipment—French and South Korean contingents are more security conscious than the Italian and Ghanaian contingents (Ruffa, 2014).

Further, such variances extend into the realm of CIMIC operations, where different contingents operate under discordant philosophies, and accord different levels of importance to such activities. The Italians provide Italian language classes, mine risk education, as well as reconstruction activities to the south Lebanese public, which the Italians relate well to the public's interest, and can open doors for local civilian employment with UNIFIL in the future (in a way demonstrating the perception that there is very little that is “interim” about UNIFIL). The Ghanaian contingent provides water access, dental and veterinary services, and participates in interdenominational religious services with both Christian and Muslim Lebanese citizens. On the part of the South Koreans, they offer Taekwondo classes to those interested in their own area of deployment within UNIFIL (Ruffa, 2014).

In contrast, the French are comparatively uninterested in CIMIC operations, with the exception of supporting existing schools through the provision of computer hardware, internet access, and other logistical items and services, preferring to focus primarily on demining operations (Ruffa, 2014). Importantly, the contrasting approaches to CIMIC by the different TCC contingents is not merely an endogenous factor to the contingents once on the ground, but is a reflection of the national military policy of those countries. The French and South Korean CIMIC agents operating in southern Lebanon were specifically

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trained for the task, while the Italian and Ghanaian contingents received no specific training, despite providing such services in an enthusiastic manner (Ruffa, 2014).

Such differences in operational attitudes and behaviour cannot solely be explained merely by differences in resources, given that even among contingents with near-identical resources (i.e., the French and Italian contingents) there is no symmetry in behaviour (Ruffa, 2014). According to Ruffa (2014), social constructivism offers an explanatory window into this type of behaviour:

the operational environment was constructed by its own members on the basis of four indicators: (1) the perceived threat level of the mission; (2) how the concept of the enemy is constructed; (3) the adaptation of the organization to new missions, peacekeeping in particular; (4) how reference documents were understood...how the four armies [sic] relate the present mission to their experiences, the organization they belong to, and the norms they are embedded in (Ruffa, 2014, p. 210).

Interestingly, Karlsrud (2016) also suggests that the very norms that influence PSO contingents, both positively and negatively, are often fed back up into the UN Secretariat, and then influence UN decision-making over time, as such norms become accepted over the long haul and are translated into policy.

As mentioned above, perception of threats and enemies influence how contingents operate, and are informed heavily by historical experience. Interestingly, there was substantial variation on perceptions of who the “enemy” is in the field among the French, Ghanaian, Italian, and South Korean contingents, Hizballah is perceived to be the *least* threatening actor in UNIFIL’s AO today (Ruffa, 2014) (which runs contrary to SG reports on UNIFIL that will be explored below). The Italians perceive no specific enemy or threat to their area of operation, while the Ghanaians acknowledge that such parties exist but that they are not a specific threat to their contingent. The French, given their

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complicated history and relative unpopularity in the country due to their imperial involvement in Lebanon, as well as the fact that they have been attacked in Lebanon when operating under the Multinational Force in the 1980s, and throughout their contribution to UNIFIL have a much higher threat perception, and were the most combat-oriented of the contingents.

What is interesting in this case, is that this threat perception on the part of the French contingent is higher than the Ghanaian perception, despite the fact that both contingents have suffered roughly the same amount of casualties over the course of their involvement with UNIFIL over the years (Ruffa, 2014). Thus, we can see that experiencing casualties in and of itself, while it can be a contributory factor to increased vigilance and risk aversion, is not necessarily the only factor that is to be considered in understanding how different military contingents behave. In sum, the behaviours of the different TCC contingents affect how much of, and to what extent, a mission's mandate is pursued within a PSO, which causes uneven applications of force, intra-PSO discord, and difficulties in evaluating the success of a PSO as a whole.

Yet again, the vagueness of mandates themselves is a paramount problem for PSOs in general, and UNIFIL in particular. The vagueness of peacekeeping mandates, coupled with different interpretations of Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) and national military doctrine and other policy documents certainly complicate matters. When referencing the UN resolutions relevant to the mission, UN rules of engagement, national military doctrine, or their respective national white papers on defence, different contingents placed different emphases on different documents (Ruffa, 2014).

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Trends determine that those countries with limited (South Korea), or negative (French), experiences in Lebanon gravitate towards national military doctrines and national white papers on defence over UN documents, as they tend to be more definitive and demonstrate a trust in the national chain of command compared to the distant and opaque UN DPKO and PSO-specific Force Commander (Ruffa, 2014). Such differences have direct and important impacts on how contingents react in the field and identify threats when taking offensive or defensive action is permitted in accordance with the UN rules of engagement. As Ruffa (2014) relays:

For the Ghanaian unit, the rules of engagement allowed the use of force when either Hezbollah or the Israeli Defence Force were shooting, against civilians, other Ghanaian soldiers, other hostile parties, or other UNIFIL units. They connected it with their past memory: “we use force when it is needed, as we have always done, since 1979.” In contrast, the Korean unit homogenously allowed the use of force only when Hezbollah is shooting against a Korean soldier. Again, past experiences emerge: “we do not want to risk, we are so inexperienced.”

The French unit understood the possibility of using force only when the Israeli Defence Force or Hezbollah were shooting: “of course we are in a peace enforcement, the threat is everywhere, here the situation can be tricky, it has always been.” Again the French soldier refers to the past experience of the army in Lebanon. While the Italian unit’s responses were more diverse, they tended to allow the use of force if Hezbollah is shooting at them but mainly in the qualitative part, they referred to the positive previous experiences. “We want the population to keep loving us, as it has always been.” While according to the [United Nations Headquarters] UNHQ, force is allowed under threat or imminent threat against UNIFIL soldiers and noncombatants, each army stressed a particular aspect of this general rule (Ruffa, 2014, p. 215).

As can be observed, past experiences shape the perceptions of these contingents which influence their behaviour in the field. These different behaviours have various (un)observable consequences. Depending on perceptions of threats in the field, this could limit the degree to which contingents will (or will not) engage with the public, and operate in a primarily military fashion rather than in CIMIC roles. With regard to the

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latter, hostile parties in southern Lebanon, especially Hizballah, have apparently duly noted the operational styles and preferences of the contingents.

For instance, the Italian commitment to “even-handedness” between Israel and Hizballah, coupled with a strong desire to be liked by the local population (Calulli, 2014), has likely contributed to the fact that in Italian areas of operation, Hizballah has been found to concentrate weapons arsenals (Ravid and Stern, 2008). This has had a concomitant impact on local perceptions regarding UNIFIL II’s effectiveness, which is not viewed favourably, either by Hizballah, local southern Lebanese constituents, or Israel (Ruffa, 2014).

Overall, the mission is not very well perceived by the local population. In comparison to UNIFIL I, that gained the trust of the Southern Lebanese, UNIFIL II is seen as a tool for a US-led initiative to support Israel. On the other hand, the Israeli press often accuses UNIFIL II of being pro-Hezbollah. Similarly, according to a Hezbollah member, UNIFIL II is “useless and gives us time to rearm and train against Israel” (Ruffa, 2014, p. 217).

Thus, we can see that whether spoken or not, when UNIFIL troops consider what constitutes their most significant threats, perceptions vary, but all of them consider the threat to emanate from non-state militias operating in UNIFIL’s AO. This has been a longstanding challenge for UNIFIL since its inception, and is worthy of consideration in conjunction with the overall context of Lebanon’s history, civil war, and the general political, social, and economic conditions which characterized the atmosphere of UNIFIL’s AO both in 1978 and the contemporary period.

2.7 – UNIFIL on the Ground

As can be observed thus far, the problem of non-state militias having influence over a PSO’s operation is endemic throughout the history of peacekeeping operations,

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including UNIFIL. Prior to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, Israel was allied with what would become the SLA (also known as the *de facto forces* (DFF) at the time) and it used the "DFF" to combat non-state militias hostile to Israel *within* Lebanese territory. UNIFIL has always been aware of the presence of such forces, but due to the mandate it operated under prior to UNSCR 1701 (to be discussed below), its personnel were limited to using force only in self-defence, and could not reasonably work to disarm such militias.

At the time, UNIFIL did not recognize the DFF as a legitimate force in Lebanon (Muller, 1994). However, the DFF was a fact on the ground, as well as a tenacious fighting force—and spoiler group—that operated from a perspective of legitimate grievance against the rival Palestinian militias—notably the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—which was operating and launching attacks against Israel, and the Lebanese state, from within southern Lebanon, adjacent to villages from which DFF/SLA members emanated.

This fighting became particularly ferocious following the eruption of civil war in Lebanon, which was largely a product of competition between sectarian communities over relative political, social, and economic influence in the country, including a desire to redistribute this power away from the traditional Christian-centric locus of influence, upon which Lebanese society tended to gravitate, emerging from the National Pact of 1943 (Muller, 1994).

Throughout the civil war, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) itself manifested symptoms of the country's internecine fighting, and began splintering along sectarian lines. Major Sa'ad Haddad, a Maronite Christian officer in the LAF opposed the

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elimination of the National Pact, as well as the presence of the PLO in the country. Haddad's disdain for the PLO was exacerbated when as a condition of the 1969 "Cairo Conference" where Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser urged Lebanon to allow the PLO to operate autonomously against Israel from within Lebanese territory, the Lebanese government acquiesced and signed an agreement with the PLO cementing Nasser's provision into law. As a result, Haddad left the LAF, as the LAF was forced to accept the presence of the PLO on Lebanese soil, and specifically in areas densely populated with Lebanese Christians, leading him to form the DFF with military support from Israel, and acting as a domestic militia opposing the PLO in southern Lebanon (Muller, 1994).

As soon as UNIFIL arrived on the scene in 1978, the DFF was already well-established and opposed UNIFIL's presence given its mandate to disarm non-state militias. Although UNIFIL was powerless to stop the DFF in any event, UNIFIL was prevented from mediating compromises with them given that the Lebanese state did not recognize the DFF's legitimacy, which aggravated tensions between the DFF and UNIFIL (Muller, 1994). Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon in March, and subsequent withdrawal in June of that year, the IDF turned to the DFF to act as a proxy force in southern Lebanon, specifically against the PLO and other Palestinian militias (Muller, 1994).

The United Nations Secretary-General Brian Urquhart condemned this "hand over." He subsequently traveled to Lebanon to speak with Israeli and Lebanese authorities on the matter. The only tangible result of these negotiations was an agreement to deploy a small LAF contingent to aid UNIFIL in southern Lebanon, which failed to arrive as they were intercepted and attacked by the DFF. UNIFIL then, despite Lebanese

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governmental reservations, convened meetings with the DFF, the IDF, and the Lebanese army, under UNIFIL auspices, in an attempt to reach a ceasefire agreement, which ultimately failed. However, from this point forward, limited contacts with the DFF, UNIFIL, and the Lebanese government continued (Muller, 1994).

It is noteworthy to mention that while Israel supported the SLA, the two did not always see eye-to-eye on all matters within southern Lebanon. In instances where Israel sought improved cooperation with UNIFIL, the SLA disagreed and failed to see UNIFIL as a legitimate force in the area. This demonstrates that the SLA was not operating entirely under Israeli tutelage, and had some leverage in its relationship with the country (Muller, 1994).

Following Major Haddad's death in 1984, a retired LAF General, Antoine Lahad, took control of the DFF and transformed it into a regular army with Israeli military support and training, renaming the force as the South Lebanon Army (SLA) (although it continued to be regularly—although not exclusively—referred to as the DFF in the SG's official reports on UNIFIL to the UNSC). By this time, the amount of SLA fighters increased from 2,400 to 5,000 soldiers, comprised of mostly non-Christians, including Sunni, Shiite, and Druze soldiers. At this point, contacts between the SLA and UNIFIL became more regular (Muller, 1994).

From UNIFIL's perspective, while it had to deal with the actors on the ground regardless of the limitations they placed on the PSO's ability to carry out its mandate, it nevertheless maintained that Israel had no right to transfer its vacated territory to the DFF/SLA. However, Israel claimed that since no specific provision existed within UNSCR 425 and 426 regarding to what entity territory can be handed over to, this was

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not regarded by Israel as its problem, rather it was Lebanon's. Further, Israel doubted UNIFIL's ability to protect its northern border from infiltration, which left UNIFIL (and the UN generally) and Israel in a political stalemate, albeit while officially recognizing Lebanon's territorial integrity (Muller, 1994).

However, the issue of UNIFIL making strange bedfellows with non-state militias began at the very outset of its deployment. Less than a year into UNIFIL's deployment, Israel was complaining about PLO activity within UNIFIL's area of operation. The issue was that UNIFIL was sealed from the areas in which the PLO was operating because they lacked the ability—for one reason or another—to engage and disarm the PLO in any meaningful manner. Israel complained that the “peace” generated by UNIFIL actually served to strengthen the PLO and allow them to “regroup” and carry out attacks without fear of retaliation (Miller, 2010), and that UNIFIL had “reconciled itself to the presence and activities of the terrorists in its own area” (Miller, 2010, p. 389).

Israel used this pretense on many occasions to enter UNIFIL's AO to both protect or militarily support the SLA when engaging with or defending against the PLO. This caused tensions with UNIFIL, as it was seen as a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and also a threat to UNIFIL personnel, as the SLA often attacked UNIFIL when it felt that it was an obstacle to its objectives (Miller, 2010). In fact, the actions of the SLA on one specific occasion, whereby SLA forces killed two Irish soldiers, had negative impacts on Israeli-Irish bilateral relations for decades (including up until the current period), as the SLA was widely recognized as a proxy force of the IDF.

Miller suggests that such souring of relations actually increased the diplomatic support among the Irish public for the Palestinian cause against Israel (Miller, 2010),

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especially as the SLA was viewed as the primary threat in the Irish area of deployment within UNIFIL at the time. Israel retorted, time and again (and not without justification in many cases) that UNIFIL's failure to prevent PLO attacks and infiltration of Israeli territory forced Israel to take proactive military measures to secure itself (Miller, 2010).

It can be observed that right from the outset, UNIFIL was not only serving as an interpositionary force between the IDF and the PLO, with all of the inherently associated risks of being caught in the cross-fire, but it was now threatened by all parties in the conflict to one degree or another. All parties attacked UNIFIL depending on what extent UNIFIL was interfering in their strategic objectives. UNIFIL lacked *de facto* legitimacy among all of the parties involved. Interestingly, UNIFIL seemed to favour certain actors over others, despite the fact that all actors violated the terms of UNSCR 425 (1978).

In particular, Miller (2010) suggests that the PLO was viewed relatively positively by UNIFIL, despite its continuous attacks against Israel, as the PLO sought to ingratiate itself towards the PSO in order to curry favour. As Miller explains:

Yasser Arafat [founder and leader of the PLO] had welcomed the establishment of UNIFIL in 1978 both as a way of pressuring Israel to halt its operation to crush PLO forces in southern Lebanon and also as an opportunity to draw the international community (in particular the UNSC and the various troop-contributing nations) into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and place the international spotlight on the Palestinian cause.

This was a prescient strategy and Arafat was prepared to go to major lengths to *appear supportive* of that UNIFIL role. In March 1978 he met UNIFIL commander Emmanuel Erskine in Beirut and agreed to order a PLO ceasefire in clashes with Israel in border areas. This was the first time that Arafat had committed himself to a ceasefire to which Israel was a party and the symbolism of this caused several senior Fatah officers to challenge his decision (all of whom were removed from their positions of influence or forced out of Lebanon). Again, in June 1979, the PLO gave a commitment to UN secretary-general Kurt Waldheim that it would not initiate any military action against the IDF or Lebanese militias inside the UNIFIL area (Miller, 2010, pp. 393-394). (*italicized emphasis mine*)

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At face value, it would appear that UNIFIL had enough legitimacy to merit these concessions from the PLO. However, as the PLO's subsequent actions proved, Arafat's words were not to be trusted. As Miller continues:

In reality, the PLO did not honour its various commitments to UNIFIL to any great extent but Arafat's promises had the desired effect and led Ireland's UN representative to inform the UNSC that the PLO had "pursued a policy which has for the most part kept such [infiltration] activities in check" (Miller, 2010, p. 394).

What is disappointing is that UNIFIL, and other UN Member States, were ready to accept—whether out of resignation, necessity, or genuine belief—the word of the PLO, despite it taking no tangible steps to commit to such terms of nonviolence. This can be considered an example of bias, where favouring one side can embolden that actor to carry on behaving in a preferred manner, while souring relations with other parties who observe this to be a betrayal of UNIFIL's professed commitment to impartiality. For Israel, it was a concerning development that eroded its already weak faith in UNIFIL's ability—and willingness—to intervene on Israel's behalf when necessary.

On June 2, 1982, Israel's ambassador to Britain and Ireland was assassinated by Abu Nidal's Black June group, which led the Israeli Cabinet to authorize retaliatory strikes against the PLO in Lebanon (even though the Abu Nidal Organization was actually a splinter group from Arafat's PLO). PLO reprisals against northern Israel resulted in over 500 shells landing in the country. These attacks, coupled with the horrific murder of Israeli civilians alluded to above, led Israel's then Minister of Defence, Ariel Sharon, and Rafael Eitan, the Chief of Staff of the IDF to propose an invasion of Lebanon that would push back PLO bases out of firing range of northern Israeli communities (Miller, 2010).

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The plan put forward claimed that only an invasion of a mere 40 kilometres into Lebanon would be sufficient, and would require only a day or so to conduct. By June 5 the Israeli cabinet approved the plan, *Operation Peace for Galilee*. In reality, however, and by the Israeli government's own admission the day after its approval, it was revealed that the purpose of the mission was to expunge the PLO from Lebanon entirely (Miller, 2010).

In response to this declaration by Israel, the UNSC condemned Israel's invasion, which angered Israel for its lack of any specific reference to PLO attacks against Israel or its actions within the borders of Lebanon (Miller, 2010). This episode was one among many which demonstrated the antagonism that Israel had (and has) towards the UN for its perceived—and often real—bias against Israel. A bitter exchange ensued between Noel Dorr, then Irish ambassador to the UN who led the condemnation of Israel's invasion at the UN, and his Israeli counterpart Yehuda Blum, where the former accused Israel of being disproportionate in their military responses to PLO provocations, with the latter retorting that he resented such “bizarre bookkeeping attempts” (Miller, 2010, p. 395).

Dorr, in a heated argument 10 days later, unintentionally critiqued the capabilities of UNIFIL by stating that “there is a limit – an obvious limit – to how far a UN peace-keeping force can be brushed aside by superior military forces, treated with contempt and still retain credibility” (Miller, 2010, p. 395). Indeed, this has been the crux of the problem for UNIFIL since its original deployment up until the current period; its lack of credibility in the face of an impossible mandate.

Provided our understanding of the constraints facing UNIFIL given the preponderance of armed elements that have always existed in its AO, coupled with the

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historic experience of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, and other factors preventing its mandate fulfillment, it is important to understand how the UN itself, expressed through the SG report to the UNSC over the years, have perceived UNIFIL's performance in relation to the facts on the ground. An exploration of these perspectives are instructive in relating to Israeli perspectives on UNIFIL's performance as well, to determine where there are similarities and differences, and where such reports, along with the available literature on UNIFIL and UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding interconnects with these perspectives to ascertain what Israeli civilian and military personnel think of UNIFIL at the grassroots level.

We begin our exploration two years prior to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, as UNIFIL was widely recognized as ineffectual under Israeli occupation, but also to understand its circumstances in the years immediately prior to Israel's withdrawal behind the Blue Line. Our review of SG reports will then proceed beyond the period of withdrawal until the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War, followed by a discussion of the "UNIFIL II" era of the PSO subsequent to the augmentation of UNIFIL's mandate with UNSCR 1701 up until 2017.

2.8 - Conclusion

Broadly speaking, it can be observed that UNIFIL was deployed into a situation that is very untenable, and has lacked the mandate, capability, and political will on the part of the parties necessary to contend with any of the actors engaging in conflict in its AO. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that UNIFIL has often been in a position where it was required to cooperate with, or ingratiate itself to the very actors it was deployed to

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disarm and intervene against. However, we have seen that in terms of offering humanitarian assistance, the mission has performed in a laudatory manner, to which it is rightly credited, despite the fact that this was not the main historical priority of its mandate. The consequences of UNIFIL's deployment, which was done in haste, and on the basis of political considerations are fairly apparent, as are the consequences of the conflicting military cultures between and among various contingents comprising UNIFIL.

Our discussion illustrates UNIFIL's performance, strengths and challenges in the context of a PSO that had operated almost entirely in a period characterized by Israeli military presence and occupation in the area. What is unique about this period is that UNIFIL *de facto* failed in every aspect of its mandate—a failure not attributable to UNIFIL itself—by virtue of the fact that its mandate was unrealistic in the face of the IDF's overwhelming military might, the presence of the SLA, Hizballah, and other militant organizations, all under the rubric of an ongoing civil war for the better part of this period.

To better understand the state of UNIFIL's performance after Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, we review the UN Secretary-General reports on UNIFIL and ascertain the PSO's perspective, as communicated by the mission's SRSG to the Secretary-General for the period immediately prior to Israel's withdrawal, until 2017 to illustrate how the mission and the UN viewed their own performance, strengths, and constraints, and the relationship UNIFIL has enjoyed with the parties to the conflict.

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CHAPTER THREE: UN REPORTING ON UNIFIL TO THE UNSC

3.1 – Introduction

With few exceptions, the Secretary-General submits biannual reports on UNIFIL's performance to the UNSC for review every six months, basing the contents of the report on information provided by the PSOs, SRSG, and Force Commander. These reports contain information about the numbers of violations from both sides, significant incidents of concern for the specific reporting period, trends that have improved or deteriorated, as well as administrative information surrounding troop strength, financial information, and the various humanitarian tasks and other pieces of information that are deemed relevant to report. These reports are intended to inform the UNSC of UNIFIL's status on the ground, its strengths, challenges, requirements, and general information that serve to inform whether or not the PSO should be renewed or ended, in consultation with the relevant parties (particularly Lebanon).

A comprehensive review of these reports is important for several reasons. First, it provides the official UN position on UNIFIL's performance over the years, indicating the merits of UNIFIL, while also revealing telling information about how the UN perceives the conflict, the mission's operations, and the influence of neighbours and actors, including both states (Iran, Syria, and Israel, in particular) and spoiler groups (Hizballah, SLA, and various Palestinian and other militias). These reports supplement the available literature and allow us to consider this unique body of knowledge independently of analyses offered by past researchers. To this end, a review of these reports will allow us to better delve into the subject of UNIFIL's performance and triangulate the data with the perspectives of the study participants elsewhere in this study.

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We begin our review and analysis by examining the two years prior to Israel's withdrawal to provide a pre- and post-description of circumstances on the ground immediately prior to Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, as the period immediately following the withdrawal can be considered the first time that—aside from the ongoing presence of armed militias in southern Lebanon—UNIFIL was not directly confronting a professional state military within its AO since the period between 1978 and 1982. The mindset of both UNIFIL and the UN's perspective on the situation on the ground during this period is instructive for both contextual and practical purposes, as will be made clear.

3.2 – Secretary-General Reports to the UNSC on UNIFIL's Performance, 1998-2000

Approximately two years prior to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, the situation exactly 20 years after UNIFIL was deployed was not meaningfully improved in terms of the fulfillment of its mandate. In the first six months of 1998, 249 armed operations against Israeli forces, and their proxy forces in southern Lebanon were carried out within UNIFIL's AO. This excludes over 197 operations that were carried out north of the Litani River outside of UNIFIL's AO, most of which were carried out by Hizballah (UN, S/1998/53). In response to such attacks, the IDF, which was occupying much of UNIFIL's AO—either directly or by proxy—since 1982 at this point, routinely employed a wide array of its military means to carry out its defence policy, including the conduct of pre-emptive artillery strikes and long-range patrols even north of the Litani river.

Interestingly, as the DFF was seen as an Israeli proxy—with much, although not total, justification—the report for this period referred to many of the strikes and bombs as

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being “IDF/DFP” attacks, synonymizing the two forces, even when certain DFP attacks were conducted independently of IDF direction. This is interesting to note, as within a decade, there is no similar equivocation with the Lebanese State/Hizballah despite allusions by the Lebanese government in later years that the LAF and Hizballah are essentially the same force. Israeli and Lebanese civilians on both sides were injured or killed during this period, with little UNIFIL could do to intervene (UN, S/1998/53).

UNIFIL relegated itself to particular functions, such as patrolling and monitoring its observation posts and checkpoints, maintaining contacts with the parties to the conflict, and deploying to villages to “provide a measure of protection to villages and to farmers working in the fields” (UN, S/1998/53, p. 3). UNIFIL also engaged in demining activities, CIMIC operations outside of disaster relief efforts, including the distribution of educational materials and equipment to schools, providing supplies and services to orphanages, and the provision of social services to Lebanese citizens, derived from TCC donations and other resources. Moreover, UNIFIL coordinated humanitarian matters with the Lebanese government, various UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and others, all of which was on top of similar work it performed to supplement that of the Lebanese government, as an intermediary administrative body between Lebanon and the Israeli-controlled area (ICA) (UN, S/1998/53).

Ultimately, however, UNIFIL was unable to secure any commitment from either side to respect its AO or its mandate, and often had its positions used as launching points for attacks against the IDF/DFP, or were utterly disempowered by an overwhelming Israeli military presence (UN, S/1998/53). For instance, Hizballah fighters had harassed and attacked UN personnel and vehicles, and unidentified armed elements went so far as

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to bomb a UN position under construction in the area, demonstrating a lack of regard for UNIFIL personnel and their mandate (UN, S/1998/53). On the part of the Israelis, the level of military and administrative effort committed to southern Lebanon demonstrates the sheer feebleness of UNIFIL in carrying out even a modicum of its mandate. As reported by the SG at the time:

Within the Israeli-controlled area (ICA), Israel continued to maintain a civil administration and security service. The infrastructure in ICA (road system, electricity, water supply, public buildings) continued to be improved, primarily owing to aid provided by the Government of Lebanon. However, ICA remained economically dependent on Israel, where more than 2,000 of the inhabitants go to work every day. IDF/DFP carried out sporadic search operations in several villages in ICA and made several arrests. IDF/DFP and its security apparatus on a number of occasions restricted the movement of its inhabitants (UN, S/1998/53, p.3).

Given that at the time, the totality of the force comprised a mere 4,468 troops (UN, S/1998/53), it would be impossible to even consider confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security, and assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area, to be a realistic objective. By its own admission, UNIFIL recognized its inability to effectively fulfill its mandate, but considered the contributions it was able to make in terms of providing stability and protection for Lebanese civilians to remain worthwhile endeavours in and of themselves (UN, S/1998/53).

Mere weeks later, the conflict between combatants was significantly exacerbated (UN, S/1998/652), and both “armed elements” and the “IDF/DFP” had been hostile to UNIFIL personnel. Armed elements stopped at a UNIFIL checkpoint and opened fire at UNIFIL personnel, and threatened personnel on a separate occasion. Separately, but during the same period, an IDF/DFP armoured personnel carrier damaged a UNIFIL

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checkpoint after attempting a forced entry, while in yet another incident, IDF/DFP personnel threatened to open fire at UNIFIL troops monitoring their activities.

Again, this demonstrates that up until this point, no semblance of UNSCR 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) had been able to be satisfied. Previous commitments by the IDF/DFP, Hizballah, and other armed elements to respect the jurisdiction and operability of UNIFIL had been ignored at will (UN, S/1998/652). Yet where UNIFIL was unable to make progress, it is apparent that efforts were rededicated to those arenas, such as in CIMIC and demining operations (UN, S/1998/652).

An interesting development transpired during this period, which alluded to Israel's desire to withdraw from Lebanon entirely, which was fulfilled two years later. In 1998, the Israeli government announced its intention to comply fully with UNSCR 425 (1978), in exchange for "appropriate security arrangements" (UN, S/1998/652, p.4) to be negotiated with Lebanon. However, the Lebanese government rejected any negotiation process that premised Israeli withdrawal on any tenet not expressed in UNSCR 425 (1978), and was willing to negotiate solely on the basis of UNSCR 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and other subjects surrounding the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, in concordance with Syria's views on the subject, given Syria's tremendous influence (and occupation) within Lebanon.

As the conflict intensified between the parties over the following year (UN, S/1999/61), UNIFIL reported having done "its best to prevent its area of operation from being used for hostile activities and to defuse situations that could lead to escalation" (UN, S/1999/61, p. 2), but it was unable to prevent any exchanges of fire. Hizballah, which was referred to as "the Islamic Resistance" (S/1999/61, p.2) at this point in the

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SG's reporting, was able to launch at least 80 rockets into northern Israel causing injuries to Israeli civilians.

The IDF/DFP often retaliated by conducting arrests in the ICA and jailing individuals at the ICA-run Al-Khiam prison, while also expelling others from the ICA altogether (UN, S/1999/61), and had at one point apparently ordered personnel at a particular village to fire at UN vehicles - a matter which was "resolved through negotiations" (UN, S/1999/61, p. 2). UNIFIL again obtained commitments by both IDF/DFP and Hizballah not to operate near UNIFIL positions, but characterized violations of this commitment as "slippage (UN, S/1999/61, p. 3)," even though incidents of violations *increased* after obtaining those commitments.

What is being illustrated here is that developments on the ground appear to have taken place despite UNIFIL's presence, demonstrating that for both armed elements and the IDF/DFP, UNIFIL appeared to be more of a nuisance than an obstacle. Moreover, while honestly relaying it challenges, the SG's report tended to downplay the severity of such violations. This is important to consider even in the context of Israeli withdrawals or attempts at negotiation with Lebanon on security matters, insofar as they appear to be independent of UNIFIL's work or contributions to security or CIMIC operations in the field.

For instance, in the latter half of 1999, the DFP withdrew from the town and surrounding area of Jezzine, within UNIFIL's AO, thereby returning full control of the town, including its surrounding area, to the Lebanese authorities which was deemed an important milestone, and appeared to be a good faith gesture that was part of measures taken prior to Israel's full commitment to withdraw in May 2000, as even the SG

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observed (UN, S/1999/807). However, in the same breath, the SG reported that incidents of armed elements attacking UNIFIL positions, operating in villages, and firing at villagers actually *increased*, and cross-border shelling by Hizballah into Israeli territory did not cease (UN, S/1999/807). Israeli civilians suffered injuries, deaths, and shock at the hands of such attacks, which were overwhelmingly conducted by Hizballah (UN, S/1999/807).

Moreover, both IDF/DFP and Hizballah continued to restrict UNIFIL's movements and attack UNIFIL positions, while also exchanging attacks resulting in combatant, UNIFIL personnel, and civilian deaths (UN, S/1999/807). Yet again, UNIFIL received assurances that such attacks would cease from both the IDF and Hizballah, but to no avail (UN, S/1999/807). At this point, the SG sought to express his concern on the matter for the public record, stating that:

UNIFIL did its best to limit the violence and to protect the civilian population. However, its ability to do [sic] is dependent on the parties. Regrettably, too often the commitments the parties have made in this regard were not honoured by their personnel in the area of operation. That UNIFIL was itself targeted and a member of the Force was killed and others were injured must be strongly condemned. The international status and security of United Nations personnel must be respected, as has been stressed repeatedly by the Security Council (UN, S/1999/807, p. 5).

With optimistic resignation, the SG also reiterated what became a common theme in future UNIFIL reports that despite UNIFIL being "prevented from implementing the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 425 (1978)" (UN, S/1999/807, p. 5), the mission nonetheless contributes to the stability and protection of civilians in the AO. In the late period of 1999 and January 2000, there continued to be hundreds of frequent exchanges between Israel, Hizballah, Palestinian factions, and others, as well as continued Israeli air raids and naval patrols. This is still the period prior to Israel's

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redeployment of its troops to the Israeli side of the Blue Line, and where armed elements continued to utilize artillery, rockets, antitank missiles, and other offensive military equipment and ammunition far beyond UNIFIL's personal arsenal. Amongst the heavy fighting, UNIFIL was relegated to providing only a measure of support to the local population, and the parties to the conflict, who themselves failed to cooperate with UNIFIL:

In its area where it is deployed, UNIFIL continued its efforts to limit the conflict and to protect the inhabitants from the fighting through its network of checkpoints and observation posts, an active programme of patrolling, and continuous contacts with the parties. The Force was also deployed as necessary, to provide a measure of protection to villages and to farmers working in the fields (UN, S/2000/28, p.2)

In addition to providing civilian protection where possible, humanitarian and CIMIC operations became an increasingly greater portion of UNIFIL's daily functions, and constituted a significant proportion of their work, despite having their mandate provide little basis for such work:

UNIFIL continued to assist the civilian population in the form of medical care, harvest patrols, water projects, equipment or services for schools and orphanages, and supplies to social services and needy people. Such assistance was provided from resources made available by troop-contributing countries. UNIFIL medical centres and mobile teams provided care to an average of 5,000 civilian patients per month and a field dental programme treated approximately 200 cases per month.

UNIFIL also assisted the Government of Lebanon in transporting and distributing supplies to villages in the Israeli-controlled area when they faced shortages owing to restrictions imposed by the IDF/DFF. UNIFIL cooperated closely on humanitarian matters with the Lebanese authorities, United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations and agencies operating in Lebanon. On 21 December, UNIFIL facilitated and provided logistic support for an ICRC operation to retrieve the bodies of the Islamic Resistance members killed in the past fighting (UN, S/2000/38, p.3).

Further, UNIFIL continued to cope with Israeli restrictions of movement and ongoing threats to UNIFIL personnel both from IDF/DFF forces and Hizballah and other

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non-state militias, and despite receiving commitments from both sides not to operate near UNIFIL positions, according to the SG report for this period “these commitments were frequently broken by the personnel of both sides” (UN, S/2000/28, p. 3), resulting in frequent protests to the IDF/DFF, the Lebanese government, and the respective armed elements. However, despite—at this point—being in operation for 22 years without successfully achieving its mandated objectives in accordance with UNSCR 425 (1978), the SG’s report to the UNSC for this period reiterated the value of UNIFIL to the region, and recommended its renewal at the Lebanese government’s request:

While UNIFIL continues to be prevented from implementing the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), its contribution to stability and the protection it is able to afford the population of the area remain important. I therefore recommend that the Security Council respond positively to the request of the Government of Lebanon and extend the mandate of UNIFIL for another period of six months, until 31 July 2000 (UN, S/2000/28, p. 5) (italicized emphasis added)

While broadly, the SG reports on UNIFIL to the UNSC have been fairly honest in recognizing and communicating on the challenges of UNIFIL in the field, including stating where it has failed in achieving its mandate, and in all fairness to the many obstacles which are—in any reasonable analysis—not the fault of the mission itself, there has often been a tendency to evaluate UNIFIL within six-month mandate renewal periods. The problem with this approach is that it allows for a presumption that the situation in the field may improve in the subsequent six-month period, producing a somewhat myopic approach to assessing UNIFIL, and thereby failing to adequately determine what its long-term capabilities, weaknesses, needs, and so forth truly are, so as to augment its mandate accordingly. When explored over time, however, it is plain to see

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that this approach has contributed to UNIFIL's failure to deliver on a promise made by the UNSC in 1978.

Thus, to a great extent, the "goalposts" of success for UNIFIL were engineered to reflect and emphasize what successes UNIFIL *could* achieve, even if those "successes" were not articulated in its mandated objectives. However, in the coming months, a sense of optimism was fostered around UNIFIL's future ability to perform its functions more readily, when Israel formally notified the SG of its intention to cooperate fully with the United Nations and withdraw from Lebanon by July 2000, in compliance with UNSCR 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) (UN, S/2000/322; UN, S/2000/460).

At this point, representatives from the Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian, and Jordanian governments, along with Palestinian militias, other non-state factions, and the Arab League were consulted on the proposed Israeli withdrawal through the United Nations. It was determined that for the purposes of Israeli withdrawal, the parties would assist the UN in identifying a "line" for the purpose of confirming compliance with UNSCR 425 (1978) that would "be without prejudice to future border agreements between the Member States concerned" (UN, S/2000/460, p. 2). The line that was mutually agreed upon between Lebanon and Israel was a modified version of the line established in the Israeli-Lebanese General Armistice Agreement of 1949 (UN, S/2000/460).

However, soon after making this agreement, the Lebanese position changed—in coordination with Syria—stating that the Shab'a Farms adjacent to Lebanon's border with Syria (and Israel) would also be claimed as Lebanese territory, despite there being no reliable evidence of the territory belonging to Lebanon, but much indicating it belonged to Syria. The Syrians, nevertheless, buttressed Lebanon's claims, and Lebanon

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produced a map to this effect, dated from 1966 alleging that the Shab'a Farms were, indeed, Lebanese territory (UN, S/2000/460).

Yet contradictory evidence was produced by the UN demonstrating the dubious nature of the claim—a position it maintains to this day—all the while recognizing the Shab'a Farms as territory occupied by Israel, regardless to which country the territory belongs, and that any future border negotiations between Israel, Lebanon, and Syria must be determined in the future. To this point, without prejudicing the outcome of negotiations between Israel, Lebanon, and Syria as to the status of the Shab'a Farms, the UN was quick to clarify that the “Blue Line” does not constitute a final “border” between the countries. According to the SG’s report of May 22, 2000:

On 15 May 2000, the United Nations received a map, dated, 1966, from the Government of Lebanon, which reflected the Government’s position that these farmlands were located in Lebanon. However, the United Nations is in possession of 10 other maps issued after 1966 by various Lebanese government institutions, including the Ministry of Defence and the army, all of which place the farmlands inside the Syrian Arab Republic. The United Nations has also examined six maps issued by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, including three maps since 1966 which place the farmlands inside the Syrian Arab Republic (UN, S/2000/460, p. 3)

On this basis, the SG’s report determined:

On the basis of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces of 31 May 1974 and its Protocol concerning the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which included maps initialled by Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, the Shab'a farms fall within the scope of the area of operations of UNDOF. The area coming under the mandate of UNDOF has remained unchanged until the present time. *It follows that in adopting resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), the Security Council could not have included as part of the UNIFIL area of operations an area, which had already formed part of the UNDOF area of operations.*

It is worth noting that, notwithstanding the conflicting evidence to which I have alluded, and whatever the present understanding between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, these farmlands lie in an area occupied by Israel since 1967 and are therefore subject to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338

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(1973) calling for an Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory. (UN, S/2000/460, p. 3) (*italicized emphasis added*)

It is possible, given our understanding of Syrian influence in Lebanese affairs that the claim that Israel continued to occupy *Lebanese* territory could have possibly been a tactic to permit the utilization of Hizballah as a Syrian proxy force against Israel to pressure Israel into making concessions concerning the return of the Golan Heights to Syria. The reason for such speculation results from a particular point that was made within the SG's report that not only is there insufficient evidence, and no written documentation save for a single map produced *after* an agreement was reached on the Israeli withdrawal, indicating Lebanese entitlement to the Shab'a Farms, but that the armistice line agreed to by the parties was undisputed for the first 22 years of UNIFIL's operations, including by both Israel *and* Syria, making this claim not only sudden, but unprecedented, as the maps in the UN's possession were hitherto unquestioned by the parties (Mandel, 1996; UN, S/2000/460).

With these matters aside, in preparing for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, it was understood that the Lebanese government would fully commit to guaranteeing the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel, including its freedom of movement in former ICA territory, and "resume the normal responsibilities of a State throughout the area" (UN, S/2000/460, p. 5). In fact, the air of optimism at the time was such that there was a sense that UNIFIL was nearing its completion as a PSO in Lebanon and that the Lebanese government would be up to the task of extending its authority and sovereignty throughout its southern region:

The Government of Lebanon has informed the United Nations that it will re-establish local civilian administration functions in the area previously occupied by Israel. This will include the assumption of law and order functions through the re-

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establishment of civilian police forces. The United Nations cannot assume law and order functions, which are properly the responsibility of the Government. The Lebanese armed forces should ensure that all national territory falls under the effective authority of the Government. *With these actions by the Government of Lebanon, UNIFIL would complete its mission in Lebanon* (UN, S/2000/460, p. 5).” (italicized emphasis added)

Planning began for enhancing the CIMIC work of UNIFIL together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to begin the work of reconstructing southern Lebanon, while also calling for an increased military investment in UNIFIL, in order to monitor and confirm the withdrawal as necessary, but relying on TCCs to use their own national assets. Interestingly, the SG stated that its desire to see an appropriate and durable end to the PSO is motivated by the fact that, “[t]he United Nations feels a special duty to the people of Lebanon to do everything in its power to ensure that resolution 425 (1978) is implemented fully and unconditionally” (UN, S/2000/460, p. 7), which is a statement that one can interpret to almost flirt with a particular bias in favour of one country over another, as Israel certainly expected there to be a “condition” approximating a cessation of hostilities guaranteed by the Lebanese government, against its northern frontier.

However, while the terms of compliance to Israel were clear in terms of what was expected, as well as what was expected of Lebanon with respect to UNSCR 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), the SG made direct appeals to both Syria and various armed elements “and Member States having influence over them” (UN, S/2000/460, p. 7), to fulfill certain obligations in accommodating the Israeli withdrawal and a full return of sovereignty to the Lebanese government; particularly in preventing the outbreak of violence, making incendiary statements, and cooperating with the Lebanese government in extending its authority throughout its territory (UN, S/2000/460). Finally, the SG

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seemed to conflate the Israel-Lebanese conflict with the broader Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflict by referring to the resolution of all of these conflicts, in accordance with UNSCR 425 (1978), 338 (1973), and others to be the UN's "ultimate, common objective" (UN, S/2000/460, p. 8), a theme which was frequently alluded to in subsequent reports over the years.

All things considered, by the end of May 2000 the UN had confirmed the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, with UNIFIL formally transferring copies of the map of the withdrawal line to both the Governments of Lebanon and Israel (UN, S/2000/590). It was noted that the Israeli withdrawal not only occurred much sooner than the anticipated July deadline, but took place under fire from armed elements in the ICA, prompting many SLA members to flee into Israel (UN, S/2000/718). The period immediately prior to Israel's withdrawal was characterized by several exchanges of fire between IDF/DFP/SLA forces, including attacks against Israeli civilian targets in the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shemona (UN, S/2000/718).

Despite these conditions, Israel complied with UNSCR 425 (1978), the prisoners held at the Israeli-controlled Al-Khiam prison were freed by locals on the day of Israel's withdrawal, and UNIFIL confirmed in June that the SLA had disbanded, with some members and their families escaping to Israel, while others had been turned over, or had voluntarily surrendered to local authorities (UN, S/2000/590). Lebanon immediately began modestly resuming government functions in the area, including the deployment of some police and state security professionals to the area, establishing police stations and roadblocks, as well as deploying customs officials to intercept the trade in illegal goods (UN, S/2000/590).

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However, the Lebanese government rejected the UN's claim that Israel had fully complied with the withdrawal requirements set forth by UNSCR 425 (1978), as it continued to reiterate its position that the Shab'a Farms remained occupied Lebanese territory, despite UN objections surrounding a dearth of cartographic and international legal evidence to that effect. Moreover, Lebanon also claimed that Israel must withdraw from the entirety of the Mount Hermon area, release all hostages and detainees in Israeli prisons, as those arrested were detained during the period of Israel's occupation of Lebanon, and that Israel disconnect all water-related infrastructure and equipment from the Lebanese portion of the Hasbani River (UN, S/2000/590).

Israel's position on its withdrawal was that the Blue Line was not the final border between Israel and Lebanon (and Syria), and Israel rejected the notion that UNSCR 425 (1978)'s withdrawal line extended east of the Hasbani River, while further opposing Lebanese complaints about particular border alterations in accordance with positions on the map that originated in the 1950s, far before UNIFIL's deployment to the area, or Israel's occupation of the country. Israel nevertheless acceded to four particular withdrawal line modifications in order to expedite the withdrawal process.

Moreover, Israel specifically called out both the Lebanese and Syrian governments as responsible for ensuring "the complete cessation of all hostile activities against Israel" (UN, S/2000/590, p. 6) and to allow for the full deployment of UNIFIL, and the full resumption of sovereignty in the area to the Lebanese government. For such an end to be achieved, however, Israel maintained that, "all the parties involved" (UN, S/2000/590, p. 6) needed to establish and maintain peace on the ground in order to "re-

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energize” (UN, S/2000/590, p. 6) the peace processes with both Lebanon and Syria (UN, S/2000/590).

For UNIFIL’s part in this post-withdrawal scenario, armed elements continued to be present in the area, and minor exchanges between such elements and the IDF continued over the border, especially at the Fatma/Metula gate area. Minor violations of the Blue Line were reported on both sides, as the IDF technical fence and patrol tracks crossed into Lebanese territory on several occasions, and some Lebanese farmers were cultivating land on the Israeli side of the line (UN, S/2000/718).

Cross-border attacks continued across the Blue Line, and armed elements continued to hinder UNIFIL patrols and operations (UN, S/2000/718); although improvements were made in relations between UNIFIL and Lebanese security agencies, as well as with the IDF by establishing a constant link between the two sides through an agreed upon liaison arrangement where violations of the withdrawal line could be brought to the attention of either side, as necessary.

Practically speaking, the preponderance of UNIFIL’s effectiveness lay in the efforts it exerted providing humanitarian assistance in the form of delivering food and water, medical and dental services, and assisting in the return of some SLA members and their families from Israel to the Lebanese authorities (UN, S/2000/590). At this point—tinged as it was by optimism—it was believed that UNIFIL would remain in place temporarily up until Lebanon fulfilled its commitment to re-establish sovereignty in the south. UNIFIL also committed itself to establishing a “Regional Mine Action Coordination Cell” to enhance mine awareness education in southern Lebanon following the Israeli withdrawal, which was informed by partial mined area maps provided to

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UNIFIL by the IDF, and in coordination with UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Lebanese National Demining Office, as well as establishing a liaison mechanism with "all actors in south Lebanon" (UN, S/2000/718, p. 4) in "close coordination with the national authorities" (S/2000/718, p. 4), indicating cooperation and coordination with spoiler groups in the area.

However, mere weeks following the Israeli withdrawal, Hizballah began reasserting itself in the vacuum left by the IDF/DFP/SLA in the area, dashing any hopes that UNIFIL may soon withdraw from the region, and that the LAF would become a force to be reckoned with in southern Lebanon. This problem was augmented by the fact that UNIFIL was unable to secure the military reinforcements it had requested to expand its patrols in former ICA areas (UN, S/2000/718).

Additionally, the SG's report on UNIFIL's performance and the situation on the ground included contradictory information that exaggerated the positive impacts of UNIFIL's work. For instance, when speaking about the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal, the report for the period from 17 January to 17 July 2000 concluded:

I note, in particular, that the fighters of the Lebanese resistance conducted themselves in a controlled manner that deserves to be acknowledged; *there were no acts of vengeance as they reclaimed the area vacated by the Israeli forces* (UN, S/2000/718, p. 5) (italicized emphasis added)

Yet elsewhere in the same report, the SG writes: "There were a number of serious incidents, among them the assassination on 30 January of a senior commander of the de facto forces in his home village of Dibil" (UN, S/2000/718, p. 1). In fact, a year later, the SG reports would relay instances of harassment against former SLA members who had

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returned home to southern Lebanon after serving sentences in prison, or after receiving ostensibly overly lenient treatment by Lebanon's military court (UN, S/2001/714).

Despite this contradiction, the SG reiterated their earlier optimism by suggesting that “[t]here is a good chance to achieve in the coming months the objectives of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and for UNIFIL to complete the tasks originally assigned to it’ (UN, S/2000/718, p. 5). Such a “good chance” was believed to be on the horizon despite the increased presence of Hizballah in the area. At this point, future violations of the Blue Line were often characterized as “minor violations” despite being regular and frequent in nature, and demonstrating a lack of effective Lebanese sovereignty, along with UNIFIL’s persistent inability to disarm Hizballah and other armed elements in its AO.

In fact, in the period between July and October 2000, in one particular incident, UNIFIL requested that Hizballah abandon a post it had established in the area, but was met with the response that the Lebanese government had permitted them to operate there. This was conveyed to the Lebanese government but had no bearing on Hizballah’s behaviour until it willingly left the post on October 7th. Moreover, daily incidents of stone throwing, throwing bottles filled with hot oil at Israeli soldiers and civilians, followed by IDF rubber bullet fire at violent protestors continued, with UNIFIL unable to intervene in even such comparatively minor incidents (Barak, 2007).

UNIFIL urged Lebanese authorities to take necessary measures to prevent such agitation, but to no effect, until the LAF responded to prevent demonstrations, following the aftermath of a major demonstration involving 500 Palestinians and their supporters in connection to the Second Intifada which broke out in October 2000, in which a crowd

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attempting to cross the Blue Line were repelled by the IDF, resulting in the death of 3 demonstrators, and the injuring of 20 others. Again, these were considered “minor” in nature, as was a separate attack that was carried out by Hizballah on October 7th, whereby three Israeli soldiers were kidnapped in the Shab’a Farms area in a planned attack aimed at exchanging soldiers for some 19 Lebanese prisoners still held by Israel. The attack involved the firing of mortars and rockets at “all Israeli positions in the area” (UN, S/2000/1049, pp.1-2). Israel retaliated with air strikes against certain vehicles following the incident and resumed daily high-altitude aerial flights over Lebanese territory.

Despite the Lebanese government having deployed a “Joint Security Force” of 1,000 LAF soldiers and other elements of its Internal Security Forces to southern Lebanon to areas vacated by the IDF/DFP, and maintaining a strong presence at Naqoura to be closer to UNIFIL’s headquarters, the SG recognized that in reality, the Lebanese government had abdicated its authority to Hizballah, using the excuse that it refuses to protect the border until a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel is achieved; a policy that directly breaches UNSCR 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

The SG’s observations demonstrate the breadth of Hizballah’s control, and Lebanon’s acquiescence to the organization, immediately following Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon, and its direct consequence for UNIFIL personnel:

near the Blue Line the authorities have, in effect, left control to Hizballah. Its members work in civilian attire and are normally unarmed. They maintain good discipline and are under effective command and control. They monitor the Blue Line, maintain public order and, in some villages, provide social, medical and education services. On several occasions, Hizballah personnel have restricted the Force’s freedom of movement.

The most serious incidents of this kind occurred after Hizballah’s operation on 7 October, one on the same day, the other four days later. In both, Hizballah forced UNIFIL personnel at gunpoint to hand over vehicles and military hardware they had found on the terrain. UNIFIL protested all such

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incidents to the Lebanese authorities...The Government of Lebanon has taken the position that, so long as there is no comprehensive peace with Israel, the army would not act as a border guard for Israel and would not be deployed to the border...UNIFIL so far has not been able to persuade the Lebanese authorities to assume their full responsibilities along the Blue Line (UN, S/2000/1049, p. 2)

It should be noted that some observers recognize that allowing Hizballah to establish control and provide needed services serves to ingratiate Hizballah to the general public, creating an incentive for southern Lebanese citizens to join the organization and support it politically and militarily, further undermining Lebanese sovereignty and the legitimacy of UNIFIL as a force tasked with disarming Hizballah and similar non-state militant organizations operating between the Blue Line and the Litani River (Hultman, et al, 2013).

Yet again, despite there being no appreciable redeployment of LAF personnel to the south, in accordance with Lebanon's official policy of refusing to deploy troops to protect its side of the Blue Line in southern Lebanon, the SG's report stated optimistically that in spite of these challenges "there has been tangible progress" (UN, S/2000/1049, p. 3) in the implementation of UNSCR 425 (1978). Nonetheless, this optimism was coloured by a diplomatically worded rebuke of Lebanon's intransigence, with an observation by the SG suggesting that:

I believe that the time has come to establish the state of affairs envisaged in the resolution. This requires, first and foremost, that the Government of Lebanon take effective control of the whole area vacated by Israel last spring and assume its full international responsibilities, including putting an end to the dangerous provocations that have continued on the Blue Line. Otherwise, there is a danger that Lebanon may once again be an arena, albeit not necessarily the only one, of conflict between others (UN, S/2000/1049, p. 3)

Therefore, we can see that during the period immediately prior to, during, and following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, the optimism that characterized the end of

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Israel's occupation of Lebanon, the disarming of the SLA, and the perception that UNIFIL may finally be decommissioned, was dashed by the fact that the mandated aims of UNIFIL rely more on the state actors on the ground—and the cooperation of armed elements that have no incentive to cooperate with UNIFIL or the Lebanese government—than on any actions that could have, or can now, be taken by UNIFIL to affect change in its AO.

3.3 – Conclusion

The period immediately prior to, and following Israel's withdrawal, was one marked by a misplaced optimism that flew in the face of conditions and developments on the ground. On regular occasions, UNIFIL personnel were harassed, attacked, and prevented from carrying out their duties by both IDF/DFF, Hizballah, and other armed elements, and lacked the capacity—and the political will on the part of the Lebanese government—to disarm armed elements and facilitate international peace and security and the return of sovereignty to the Lebanese government.

We can observe tremendous Syrian influence over Lebanese decision-making, which further exacerbated the situation, coupled with an expansion of Hizballah into areas vacated by the IDF/DFF following Israel's withdrawal. While the SG admitted to the obstacles preventing UNIFIL's operational effectiveness, there was an exaggeration of the merits of the operation based primarily on its successful monitoring, observing, liaising, and humanitarian functions, and a diminishing of the fact that there was an increase in violence during this period.

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We turn our attention to the period between 2001-2006 to demonstrate how this brief period of optimism was ultimately replaced by an outright pessimism, informed by an ever-worsening situation on the ground following Hizballah's aggressive and total expansion into southern Lebanon that could not be ignored, which led to an escalation of violence ultimately resulting in the outbreak of the most deadly war between Israel and Hizballah since 1982.

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CHAPTER FOUR: UN REPORTING ON UNIFIL, 2001-2006

4.1 – Introduction

The five years following the end of Israel's 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon were characterized by an increase in violence and border violations along the Blue Line, despite the initial—and short-lived—optimism of the post-withdrawal period. This period was characterized by an emboldened Hizballah that served the population of southern Lebanon as an indigenous social and military force competing with the Lebanese state for influence. That influence was all but assured considering that the Lebanese government abdicated authority to Hizballah, posing a strategic problem for UNIFIL.

UNIFIL was confronted with a highly trained and highly-motivated militia force that expanded its military bases within UNIFIL's AO with impunity, threatening—and delivering on those threats—UNIFIL personnel on a regular basis. What is made clear below is the extent to which circumstances in southern Lebanon deteriorated, and how they impacted UNIFIL's credibility as an interpositional PSO between hostile parties.

4.2 – Secretary-General Reports to the UNSC on UNIFIL's Performance, 2001-2006

In the years between Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon and the 2006 Second Lebanon War, there were no reporting periods that did not cite either minor or major violations of the Blue Line, and the violations are far too numerous to fully illustrate here. However, SG reports continuously acknowledged that the primary violator of the Blue Line on the Lebanese side during this period had been Hizballah. Beginning in 2000, Hizballah was very quick to assume control over southern Lebanon, and began attacking IDF and civilian targets across the Blue Line on a regular basis, including with the use of

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roadside bombs, gunfire, rockets, and other methods, much of which was in proximity to UNIFIL positions (Eisenberg, 2000). Such provocations regularly provoked Israeli forces to return fire, conduct air violations and/or attacks from its air force against Hizballah targets, on an almost daily basis (UN, S/2001/66).

What was heralded as an era with the potential for peace following Israel's withdrawal became the precise opposite when the Lebanese government not only refused to deploy its troops to the Blue Line, but doubled down on its refusal by officially endorsing Hizballah's "resistance" against Israel until it withdrew from the Shab'a Farms, despite Lebanon's commitment to abide by UNSCR 1310 (2000), which committed both Israel and Lebanon to respect the Blue Line as defined by the UN. Specifically, since November 2000, Lebanon "asserted that the Blue Line is not valid in the Shab'a Farms area and has claimed the right to use every means, including force, against Israeli forces occupying it" (UN, S/2001/66, p. 2), thereby rejecting the UN's assessments regarding the status of the farms (Harik, 2004).

The Lebanese government continued to allow Hizballah to operate in the south and did not deploy near the Blue Line save for a token force of 1,000 Lebanese administrative, police, security, and army personnel (Eisenberg, 2000), allowing Hizballah to provide social, education, waste removal, and medical services to south Lebanon's citizens in lieu of an absentee state presence, save for minor investments in its civil administration, military, police, and health and social welfare presence in the former ICA areas (Harik, 2004).

As such, Hizballah also increasingly interfered in UNIFIL's operations, relegating UNIFIL to continue to the degree that it could as a liaison between Israel and Lebanon,

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engaging in demining activities, providing CIMIC-related services in coordination with UNDP, ICRC, and others, and even directing focus towards *fundraising* efforts on behalf of Lebanon, searching for donors for capital-intensive social welfare projects in its AO (UN, S/2001/66); a task far and beyond what is typically expected of a UN PSO, and certainly beyond its mandated objectives.

The SG report pertaining to UNIFIL for this period expressed frustration over the situation in several directions, including towards the parties to the conflict themselves, claiming that the deliberate attacks against Israel in the Shab'a Farms, coupled with Israel's at times allegedly "overly harsh response" (UN, S/2001/66, p. 3), only served to exacerbate the situation. Moreover, as had been expressed even prior to Israel's withdrawal in previous reports, UNIFIL continued to operate with insufficient funds, as outstanding financial contributions owed to UNIFIL totaled over \$126 million dollars since the PSO's inception in 1978 (UN, S/2001/66). However, the greatest source of frustration was directed towards the Lebanese government for deliberately shirking its commitments and sovereign duties in extending its authority into south Lebanon, with the SG stating that such action necessarily:

implies that the Government of Lebanon asserts its effective authority and maintains law and order throughout its territory up to the line identified by the United Nations. That is its right and duty, consistently upheld by the Security Council and paid for with the lives of United Nations soldiers. I hope very much that the Government of Lebanon will reconsider the position...in the [sic] light of its commitments and of the decisions of the Security Council (UN, S/2001/66, p. 3)

The SG drove the point home further, by suggesting that this attitude on the part of the Lebanese government was the primary reason why only two out of three of UNIFIL's mandated objectives could, somewhat, be said to have been accomplished:

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Of the three parts of its mandate, UNIFIL has essentially completed two. It has confirmed the withdrawal of Israeli forces and assisted, *to the extent it could*, the Lebanese authorities as they returned to the area vacated by Israel. UNIFIL functions in close cooperation with those authorities and no longer exercises any control over the area of operation. *UNIFIL cannot, of course, compel the Lebanese Government to take the last step and deploy its personnel down to the Blue Line* (UN, S/2001/66, p. 3) (italicized emphasis added)

The situation at hand led to the SG to admit that UNIFIL had essentially become “an observer mission” (UN, S/2001/66, p. 4), in that “UNIFIL now focuses on the remaining part of its mandate, the restoration of international peace and security” (UN, S/2001/66, p. 4) by focusing primarily on maintaining the ceasefire, patrolling and observing the parties to the conflict for any violations, and maintaining close contact with them with the aim of correcting violations when they occur (UN, S/2001/66).

Despite being a de facto observer mission, however, the SG continued to recommend that UNIFIL’s tasks be carried out by both armed and unarmed observers and infantry soldiers (UN, S/2001/66; UN, S/2001/423), and to be supported in their observer role with the augmentation of 51 unarmed observers lent from UNTSO (UN, S/2001/423), which was subsequently supplied to the PSO. The optimism demonstrated earlier in the year 2000 seemed to diminish with the SG’s recognition that “[i]t would appear that the need for the United Nations to perform such functions will continue to exist in the foreseeable future” (UN, S/2001/66, p. 4).

4.2.1 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL, 2002-2003

The investment provided did nothing to enhance UNIFIL’s effectiveness given Lebanon’s intransigence, Hizballah’s comparative military strength and its state-sanctioned performance as a “surrogate” (UN, S/2001/714, p. 2) for Lebanon’s civil

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administration, coupled with Israel's continued violations of the Blue Line, whether justified or not. Cross-border attacks continued over the reporting period of 21 July 2001 to 16 January 2002, at which point the SG was particularly severe in their criticism of Israeli air incursions over Lebanese airspace, stating that, "[t]hese incursions are not justified and cause great concern to the civilian population, particularly low-altitude flights that break the sound barrier over populated areas" (UN, S/2002/55, p. 1), and that "no violation can justify another" (UN, S/2002/55, p. 1).

Notwithstanding this particular critique leveled at Israel, UNIFIL noted several Hizballah breaches of the Shab'a Farms area, and the launching of 18 missiles, and 94 mortar rounds at Israel during the reporting period, resulting in various IDF retaliations (UN, S/2002/55). In fact, during this reporting period, Hizballah *grew* in strength and force distribution within UNIFIL's AO, which was condemned by UNIFIL and seen as a natural result of Lebanon's refusal to deploy near the Blue Line or assert its authority:

In this vacuum, Hizballah increased its visible presence near the line through its network of mobile and fixed positions. In August, Hizballah established a presence adjacent to Ghajar, a village straddling the Blue Line with two thirds on the Lebanese side and one-third on the Israeli side. Confrontation in this area has thus far been avoided owing to the restraint shown by both sides. Hizballah also continued to extend social, medical and educational services to the local population in areas near the Blue Line (UN, S/2002/55, p. 2). (italicized emphasis added)

Given this state of affairs, UNIFIL continued to carry out demining and CIMIC operations, with the benefit of being provided new information about additional minefields in southern Lebanon from the IDF (UN, S/2002/55). However, despite such a truncated role for UNIFIL, it was believed that the PSO "will continue to contribute towards stability in southern Lebanon by monitoring and observing along the Blue Line" (UN, S/2002/55, p. 4), all the while recognizing a concomitant "need for United Nations

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political and diplomatic support for the parties to establish lasting peace and security” (UN, S/2002/55, p. 4).

In 2002, the situation did not improve in UNIFIL’s AO, as another volley of unprovoked attacks by Hizballah against Israel numbered in the thousands, with 1,246 reported mortar rounds, 28 katyusha rockets, 11 surface-to-air missiles, 152 anti-tank missiles, and hundreds of rounds of small arms fire were directed by Hizballah forces against IDF positions in the Shab’a farms over a period of less than one month. Israel retaliated with some 1,108 rounds of artillery and mortars, 142 air-to-surface bombs, 118 tank rounds, 17 missiles, and hundreds of rounds of arms fire. The ensuing battle resulted in an IDF tank round impacting within 50 metres of a UNIFIL position, causing damage but no injuries (UN, S/2002/746).

This volley of attacks was of secondary concern to an infiltration from Lebanon into Israel near the northern town of Shelomi, where five Israeli civilians and one IDF soldier were murdered. Israel complained to UNIFIL that the perpetrators, two of which were killed by Israeli forces, emanated from Lebanon, but a UNIFIL investigation determined that this claim was “inconclusive” (UN, S/2002/746, p. 1). This incident was followed by a flurry of hostile activity by Hizballah, and various Palestinian armed elements firing katyusha rockets, and small arms fire at the Israeli towns of Kiryat Shemona, Avivim, and the Israeli side of Ghajar village. The exacerbation of conflict motivated UNIFIL to personally intervene with the parties on the ground, and it attracted the concern of the “Quartet on the Middle East” to call on all parties to demonstrate restraint and halt all attacks (UN, S/2002/746).

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In particular, the SG called on Lebanon to condemn and prevent such violation's as it was the ultimate local authority responsible for ensuring peace, order, and security within its sovereign territory. Under international pressure given the severity of the violence, the Lebanese government maintained its earlier position that it considered the "resistance" to be legitimate in the Shab'a Farms area, yet it nevertheless augmented its Joint Security Force and enhanced patrolling and the installation of new checkpoints and military presence in southern Lebanon, excluding the Shab'a Farms (UN, S/2002/746). Israeli air incursions continued, and were condemned by the SG, as was Hizballah anti-aircraft fire and "retaliatory" strikes against Israeli civilians and civilian structures (UN, S/2002/746).

However, despite the LAF's "show of force," UNIFIL noted that Hizballah was continuing to consistently strengthen its presence in its AO, both militarily and in terms of governance structures, which translated into very bold behaviour on the part of Hizballah in terms of its interactions with UNIFIL troops, including assaulting UNIFIL personnel:

In the most serious incident, on 4 April about 15 Hizballah personnel forced an Observer Group patrol south-west of Kafr Shuba to stop at gunpoint and assaulted the observers with rifle butts, injuring three, one seriously. When a UNIFIL patrol intervened, one soldier was also injured. Hizballah retreated shortly after the UNIFIL Force Commander contacted Lebanese officials. This incident was protested strongly to the Lebanese authorities by UNIFIL and by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations (UN, S/2002/746, p. 3)

It should be noted that despite the strengthened presence, this incident encouraged some UNIFIL TCCs to withdraw from the PSO (UN, "Lebanon—UNIFIL Background," n.d.). Thus, it can be observed that without any credible deterrent threat from either UNIFIL or the LAF, Hizballah was able to operate relatively unimpeded within

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UNIFIL's AO, diminishing the military credibility and intended deterrent effect of UNIFIL following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. Paradoxically, the only domain where UNIFIL was flourishing was in its CIMIC role, which was—again—far and away beyond its original mandated purpose.

UNIFIL's CIMIC operations continued handily, and even resulted in the signing of a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) between UNIFIL and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, stipulating that UNIFIL troop contributors will “contribute to the development of vocational training centres, promotion of modern agricultural practices and provision of improved health care to the people of the south” (UN, S/2002/746, p. 3), which was clearly reflective of the changing peacekeeping doctrine in the post-Cold War era. CIMIC operations were believed to be of critical importance in improving local attitudes towards UNIFIL over the years (UN, S/2010/352).

Such a focus, such as it was divorced entirely from UNSCR 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) demonstrates the limitations placed upon UNIFIL in terms of its deterrence and enforcement capacity by Lebanese intransigence, and Hizballah's behaviour as a “total spoiler” in southern Lebanon. This not only diminished UNIFIL's credibility in the eyes of southern Lebanon's citizens, and other observers, but also Lebanon's legitimacy as a Member State of the UN:

The commitment by Hizballah to the launching of hostile attacks across the Blue Line, and the Lebanese Government's unwillingness to fulfil its commitment to ensure full respect for the Blue Line, contravene Security Council decisions...I would note that respect for Security Council resolutions is the most basic requirement of international legitimacy for any Member State (UN, S/20002/746, pp. 4-5)

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In the reporting periods of 2003, despite a few occasional instances where the LAF was “more active, intervening at their own initiative when there were threats to security in the area” (UN, S/2003/38, p. 2), by and large the Lebanese government maintained its position that it would not deploy near the Blue Line, which allowed Hizballah to not only continue visibly operating both militarily and socially, even adjacent to UNIFIL positions, but also to make “improvements and new construction of field fortifications” (UN, S/2003/38, p. 2). Moreover, Hizballah even increased the amount of anti-aircraft guns, including one in proximity to a UNIFIL post, but it was eventually removed after much protest by UNIFIL (UN, S/2003/728).

In 2003, UNIFIL’s requirement for observer support resulted in UNTSO’s “Observer Group Lebanon” establishing a rear headquarters in Tyre (UN, S/2003/38), whereby UNTSO aids UNIFIL in liaising with local government officials and community leaders on PSO-related affairs (UN, “UNTSO Operations,” n.d.). Both forces, working in tandem, reported a high degree of Israeli air incursions, breaking the sound barrier, as well as Hizballah anti-aircraft weapons firing into northern Israeli villages, but could do little to stop either (UN, S/2003/728).

4.2.2 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL, 2004-2005

Throughout 2004, Israeli air incursions, cross-fire exchanges between Israel and Hizballah, as well as attempted infiltrations into Israel resulted in civilian and military deaths on both sides of the Blue Line (UN, S/2004/50; UN, S/2004/572), and UNIFIL was used as a “referee” of sorts, in investigating competing claims. For instance, following exchanges between the IDF, Hizballah, and the Popular Front for the

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Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), including Hizballah sniper fire that killed two Israeli soldiers (UN, S/2004/572/Add.1), a cycle of exchanges broke out over a period of three days in May, resulting in the firing of three smoke rounds into a UNIFIL position, as well as a mortar round near a separate UNIFIL position from IDF positions. When seeking to explain what was happening, Israel and Lebanon had different perspectives.

Lebanon explained that Hizballah's attacks against Israel were precipitated by an IDF patrol crossing the Blue Line, while the IDF claimed that Israel's crossing the Blue Line was precipitated in reaction to a detonated booby trap planted by Hizballah the night before the attack. UNIFIL undertook an investigation, but was unable to confirm or deny any of the claims (UN, S/2004/572). Nevertheless, we see that UNIFIL posts are regularly in close proximity to exchanges, and often deliberately so, as they provide cover for both Hizballah and various Palestinian terrorist organizations. In fact, according to the SG's report of 21 July 2004, three to four rockets were launched at Israel from within 500 metres of UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura, which resulted in Israel's retaliation in the vicinity of Beirut—for the first time since its withdrawal in 2000—against PFLP-GC targets (UN, S/2004/572).

Overall, we see a pattern of constant Blue Line violations emanating from Lebanon against Israel, be it by Hizballah primarily, or Palestinian elements, civilians, shepherds, and so forth, much of which can be observed by UNIFIL, but to which little satisfactory reaction is met, including reactions to the establishment, enhancement, and expansion of Hizballah posts along the Blue Line and adjacent to UNIFIL positions.

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The lack of movement on the part of Lebanon and UNIFIL in disarming and challenging Hizballah has likely contributed to the popularity of Hizballah as the provider of much-needed services in the south, coupled with their de facto governance and military capacity in the area. In fact, on May 23, 2004, the first municipal elections held in southern Lebanon resulted in most municipal seats being awarded to Hizballah, further demonstrating, and possibly cementing, their legitimacy in the area (UN, S/2004/572).

While Lebanon continued its official policy of intransigence, Israel also hardened its position concerning aerial incursions, stating “that there would be overflights whenever Israel deemed them necessary” (UN, S/2004/572, p. 3). On a more positive note during this period, however, UNIFIL provided logistical and security assistance to the ICRC in the German-brokered exchange of deceased prisoners between Israel and Hizballah (UN, S/2004/572, p. 4). This was an important milestone, not because it demonstrated good will between Israel and Hizballah—this is far from being the case—but rather because it demonstrates that the Lebanese government was not the actor deemed to be the legitimate representative in transferring the bodies; Hizballah was treated as a stand-alone actor.

This reality is not lost on UNIFIL, as reflected in the SG’s concern—tinged as it was with misplaced optimism—surrounding the exercise of authority by the Lebanese government, and the need to have state-led economic rehabilitation and development in southern Lebanon:

The whole of southern Lebanon, including all villages in the formerly Israel-occupied zone down to the Blue Line, successfully took part in municipal elections. The free exercise of the democratic process is a universally acknowledged marker of stability. *It is also a clear assertion of the exercise of authority by the Government of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon also demonstrated its capacity to exercise its authority through the activities of the*

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Joint Security Force. Nevertheless, events demonstrated that further efforts were required to maintain calm in the south and to halt violations of the Blue Line, especially violations of the ceasefire.

I reiterate the Security Council's call for the Government of Lebanon to extend measures to ensure the return of its effective authority throughout the south, including the deployment of Lebanese armed forces, and to do its utmost to ensure calm. *I urge the Government to exert control over the use of force on its entire territory* (UN, S/2004/572, p. 6). (italicized emphasis added)

And when speaking of economic development and rehabilitation:

I wish to stress the need for an intensified focus by all concerned on the rehabilitation and economic development of the south....In this respect, I urge the Government of Lebanon and the international donors to bolster their efforts. The United Nations remains strongly committed to assisting Lebanon in its economic rehabilitation of the south (UN, S/2004/572, p. 6).

In sum, despite the consistent lack of progress in establishing UNIFIL's ability to fulfil its mandate, coupled with Lebanon's continued unwillingness and inability in exerting any meaningful influence in southern Lebanon, the call for Lebanon, and others, to "bolster their efforts" can be seen as both a form of resignation on the part of the SG, as well as a much-needed reiteration of what must be done in order to substantively affect change on the ground.

4.2.3 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL, 2005-2006

However, such efforts on the part of Lebanon never materialized, and in 2005, the political situation in Lebanon drastically deteriorated with the assassination of Lebanon's Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, causing widespread unrest in Lebanon. The UNSC adopted UNSCR 1595 (2005) establishing a United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC) to explore the circumstances surrounding the assassination. The Commission's report concluded that the Syrian government was very likely linked to the suicide bombing that killed both him and 22 others in the attack

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(Kerry, 2013), and was likely executed by Hizballah, resulting in the issuing of four arrest warrants (Bennett-Jones, 2011), despite Hizballah's denial of any involvement and blaming the attack on Israel.

Additionally, the UNSC adopted UNSCR 1614 (2005) reiterating Lebanon's requirement to "fully extend and exercise its sole and effective authority throughout the south, including through the deployment of sufficient numbers of Lebanese armed and security forces, to ensure a calm environment throughout the area, including the Blue Line" (UN, UNSCR 1614, 2005, p. 2) and reminding Lebanon to "exert control and monopoly over the use of force on its entire territory and to prevent attacks from Lebanon across the Blue Line" (UN, UNSCR 1614 (2005), p. 2).

As already mentioned, in response to this, Lebanon located its army liaison office at Naqoura near UNIFL headquarters, and proposed a force of 1,000 LAF troops to operate alongside UNIFIL as a "joint security force" (UN, "Lebanon—UNIFIL Background," n.d.), but was unwilling to actively engage Hizballah in direct combat (Harel and Issacharoff, 2008). This is very much a practical concern, as engaging Hizballah may spark a civil conflict with the Shiite population (Harel and Issacharoff, 2008), and it is no secret that both LAF and UNIFIL forces have been attacked whenever they have challenged Hizballah in the field.

Hostilities along and across the Blue Line continued to escalate rapidly in the years following Israel's withdrawal, and took a particularly precipitous turn in the year prior to the outbreak of the 2006 Second Lebanon War. In 2005, Hizballah and various Palestinian militants launched rocket and roadside bomb attacks against IDF positions and Israeli civilian targets, which prompted a cycle of Israeli retaliatory attacks, one of

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which resulted in the death of an UNTSO observer, which the SG believed was deliberate on account of the personnel clearly wearing UN insignia and blue berets (UN, S/2005/36), although Israel denied this. UNIFIL was able to deescalate the situation by establishing contact with the IDF and Lebanese military authorities, resulting in a public commitment on the part of Lebanon to prevent such attacks in the future (UN, S/2005/36).

However, in a surprising development, Hizballah had launched a drone into Israel over the town of Shelomi, which then re-entered Lebanon and fell into the sea near Naqoura. This not only represented a technological improvement for Hizballah's military capacity, it also demonstrated the first time that both sides violated the Blue Line via air incursions (UN, S/2005/36). Hizballah also continued to establish "several new positions and observation points" (UN, S/2005/36, p. 3) which had not only produced obvious impediments to extending Lebanese sovereignty and disarming non-state elements in Lebanon, but even impeded humanitarian demining efforts, as UNIFIL was able to remove the majority of landmines posing a direct threat to life and limb south of the Litani River, excluding "where political and military obstacles to demining have impeded progress" (UN, S/2005/36, p. 4).

The new situation on the ground in the post-ICA environment, coupled with the challenges UNIFIL faced in pursuing its mandate, resulted in the UNSC issuing UNSCR 1583 (2005), which reiterated the "interim" nature of UNIFIL, and its completion of two-thirds of its mandate, with the exception of "restoring international peace and security," and explicitly expressed, among other things:

its intention to review the mandate and structures of UNIFIL at the end of the present mandate and requests the Secretary-General, following

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appropriate consultations, including with the Lebanese Government, to include in his report recommendations in this regard, taking into account the prevailing situation on the ground, the activities actually performed by the Force in its area of operation and its contribution towards the remaining task of restoring international peace and security (UN, S/RES/1583 (2005), p. 3)

DPKO conducted a review of UNIFIL's deployment concept and troop strength, as well as its current role in Lebanon assessed against its mandate and the situation on the ground to ascertain what, if any, adjustments needed to be made to the PSO. Surprisingly, and despite the SG's own observations previously, the assessment determined that the status quo merits UNIFIL's continued presence (over the next six months), and that it has the adequate resources to perform its mandated tasks, especially as a liaison between Israel and Lebanon:

Through their coordinated activities, UNIFIL and the Observer Group have the ability to investigate and verify operationally sensitive issues, establish liaison with the parties to the conflict and thereby reduce tensions and incidents on the Blue Line. It is important to note that there are no formal links between the Governments or defence forces of Israel and Lebanon. UNIFIL is therefore the principal source of liaison on military matters between the countries.

In the assessment team's view, UNIFIL, in conjunction with the Observer Group, has the appropriate size, capabilities, structure and deployment to undertake its tasks in a professional and efficient manner in accordance with its existing mandate and regional conditions and it maintains adequate capacity and flexibility to respond to its probable tasks over the next six months (UN, S/2005/460, p. 6).

Ironically, throughout this period, relations between the IDF and UNIFIL soured, likely due to Israeli frustration with *increased* Hizballah and militant activity across the Blue Line, that resulted in both military and civilian casualties. The proximity from which many of the attacks occurred to UNIFIL posts exacerbated matters. For instance, on June 29, 2005, a group of Hizballah fighters had crossed the Blue Line and engaged in an exchange of fire with IDF positions in the Shab'a Farms area that reverberated into an aerial bombing and IDF artillery fire on Hizballah targets, resulting in deaths on both

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sides. On July 12th, Hizballah fighters positioned themselves within 10 metres of a UNIFIL position and engaged in small arms fire at IDF positions. The following day Israel conducted several air incursions into Lebanese territory (UN, S/2005/460). This situation incensed the Israelis, and throughout the period between June 29 and July 12, the IDF restricted UNIFIL's patrol access:

From 29 June to 12 July, UNIFIL experienced continuous restrictions by IDF on its use of helicopters, including for patrolling the Blue Line, and was not able to fly east of the United Nations position near Ghajar village. Also during this period, the IDF Liaison Officer for the Northern Command indicated to the UNIFIL Senior Adviser that, in future, IDF would limit its cooperation with UNIFIL in the Shab'a farms area (UN, S/2005/460, p. 3).

During this period, both Israeli *and* Hizballah air incursions took place, with Israel sporadically flying over Lebanese airspace, and Hizballah having launched a second drone into Israeli territory (UN, S/2005/460). However, of particular concern was the LAF's *reduction* of forces in and around Naqoura and UNIFIL headquarters in early June 2005, which signalled a degree of surrendering of this territory to Hizballah:

the status of the Lebanese Army presence at an outpost in the Naqoura fishing harbour was reduced from permanent to occasional. Lebanese authorities stated that the planned measures were part of an overall redeployment of the army throughout the country as a result of a reduction in its troop strength from 60,000 to 40,000 troops.

Ten days later, Hizballah set up a new checkpoint of its own on the road from Naqoura to the border with Israel at Ras Naqoura in the vicinity of the southern entrance of UNIFIL headquarters. Hizballah took over traffic control on this road and prevented civilian movement to the border (UN, S/2005/460, p. 4) (italicized emphasis added)

Only following protest by UNIFIL did the Lebanese army reconsider its redeployment, and Hizballah subsequently dismantled its own checkpoint. This was especially concerning since the proposed reduction came following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, and the withdrawal of the Syrian military from

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Lebanon in April 2005. The concern, then, surrounded Lebanon's ability to fulfill its obligations under UNSCR 425 (1978) while undergoing a reduction in the size of its military presence in the area of UNIFIL's AO.

Nevertheless, in every reporting period since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon five years prior, the Lebanese security forces have been unable and/or unwilling to contend with Hizballah in any meaningful way. Hizballah has consistently and increasingly "maintained a visible presence near the Blue Line with its permanent observation posts, temporary checkpoints and patrols, carrying out construction work to fortify and expand some of their fixed positions" (UN, S/2005/460, p. 4). Moreover, much of this was in close proximity to UNIFIL positions, posing a risk to personnel and equipment, and continued apace despite UNIFIL raising objections over Hizballah's activities with Lebanese authorities (UN, S/2005/460, p. 4). Hizballah has increasingly become emboldened enough to also deny UNIFIL access to patrol routes, and threaten UNIFIL personnel (UN, S/2005/460).

The primary responsibility for "stability" in southern Lebanon, in the estimation of the SG, lies with the Lebanese government, insofar as its inability or unwillingness to disarm Hizballah only further strengthens the organization and puts UNIFIL at risk:

Stability in the area depends largely on the Government of Lebanon exercising its authority over all of its territory, however that level of authority and control remains limited. The Lebanese Army is deployed in areas at a distance to the Blue Line and the Joint Security Forces and Gendarmerie units conduct some mobile patrols and maintain some check-points in the area of operation.

These circumstances make it possible for Hizballah forces to be visible close to the Blue Line, to maintain posts that are sometimes immediately adjacent to IDF and UNIFIL positions and, at times, to carry out attacks across the Blue Line. (UN, S/2005/460, p. 8) (italicized emphasis added)

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The SG reiterated the UNSC's call for Lebanon to "make strong efforts to return its full and effective authority throughout the south, including the deployment of Lebanese armed forces, and to do its utmost to ensure calm" (UN, S/2005/460, p. 8), as well as to "exert control over the use of force through its entire territory and to prevent attacks from Lebanon across the Blue Line" (UN, S/2005/460, p. 8).

However, during the period of July 22, 2005 and January 20, 2006 the security situation in UNIFIL's AO only continued to deteriorate, as the heaviest exchange of fire between Hizballah and the IDF since Israel's withdrawal was followed by daily cross-border violations, further Israeli air incursions and small arms fire across the Blue Line at Hizballah targets, and even a large infiltration of Hizballah fighters into the Israeli side of Ghajar village, where Hizballah attacked the Mayor's office, and IDF troops, resulting in the death of four Hizballah fighters and the injuring of a civilian (UN, S/2006/26).

The proliferation of armed groups, as well as planned and/or executed attacks against Israel near UNIFIL positions and patrol routes became endemic during this period. Hizballah, PFLP-GC, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and (possibly) Al-Qaida all launched separate attacks over the course of several weeks, hitting civilian homes in Metula and Kiryat Shemona. These attacks provoked Israeli retaliatory fire into Lebanon, which on several occasions, were directed close to UNIFIL positions (UN, S/2006/26) (and likely positions of armed elements as well).

Also, a banana plantation approximately 1.5 kilometres north of UNIFIL's headquarters in Naqoura was discovered to be hiding two 122-mm rockets with a 12-kilometre range, mounted on ramps and set to timers ready to be fired towards Israel, which were subsequently dismantled and removed by the LAF (UN, S/2006/26). For its

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part, UNIFIL was able to broker *very* temporary ceasefire agreements and an exchange of the body of a Hizballah fighter via UNIFIL and the ICRC (UN, S/2006/26).

Despite the fact that the LAF would not deploy along the Blue Line in accordance with the Lebanese government's policy against such a deployment for the aforementioned reasons, the Lebanese Army Liaison Office moved its headquarters from Qana to Naqoura in order to be co-located with UNIFIL to enhance coordination to a limited extent. This development was met with a proposal drafted by then UNIFIL Force Commander, Major General Alain Pellegrini, and the SG's Personal Representative for Lebanon, Geir Pedersen, in consultation with the Lebanese government and military to aid the LAF in deploying to the south (UN, S/2006/26).

In particular, UNIFIL's Force Commander proposed a plan to make it easier, and to incentivize, the Lebanese government to send forces to the south by suggesting improving coordination between UNIFIL and the LAF, and establishing a 'joint planning cell' composed of both UNIFIL and LAF members to co-draft a detailed plan for Lebanese redeployment to the south (UN, S/2006/26), although it was never implemented. Obviously, UNIFIL was becoming increasingly desperate for a solution in the face of an ever-deteriorating security situation in southern Lebanon, and it was all the more frustrated with Lebanon's continued refusal to deploy near the Blue Line in any substantive manner, especially as "[c]ontrol of the Blue Line and its vicinity seems to remain for the most part with Hizballah" (UN, S/2006/26, p. 4).

In fact, the desire to deploy a credible joint-LAF and UNIFIL force in southern Lebanon became all the more pressing—despite not materializing—in the months leading up to the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War, as SG reports on UNIFIL indicated that Hizballah

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had continued to fortify positions near UNIFIL positions and all along the Blue Line unimpeded, and even denied access to UNIFIL's freedom of movement (UN, S/2006/26), which is indicative of a cumulative and longstanding trend in southern Lebanon:

Under such circumstances, Hizbollah has maintained and reinforced a visible presence in the area, with permanent observation posts, temporary checkpoints and patrols. It carried out construction work to fortify and expand some of its fixed positions, demined the adjacent areas, built new access roads and established new positions close to the Blue Line. Some Hizbollah positions are in close proximity to United Nations positions, posing additional security risks to United Nations personnel and equipment. This situation has not yet been rectified despite repeated objections conveyed by UNIFIL to the Lebanese authorities (UN, S/2006/26, p. 4)

At this point since UNIFIL's deployment, Hizballah's presence along the Blue Line reached its height, to the extent where it engaged in attacks on the Israeli side of Ghajar, which constituted the heaviest exchange of fire between Hizballah and the IDF since Israel's withdrawal. UNIFIL itself noted that there was a need for an enhanced security presence around the Lebanese side of the village, and urged the Lebanese government repeatedly to deploy troops to accommodate this need, reiterating the offer of a joint planning cell to carry out such tasks (UN, S/2006/26).

As can be gleaned repeatedly from UNIFIL's own reports, relayed to the UNSC via the SG on a consistent basis since 1978, UNIFIL had been unable to fulfill its mandate to any substantive extent due to factors almost entirely out of its control, including the "two-thirds" of its mandate, as Israeli air raids occurred at will, and armed elements operated freely in UNIFIL's AO up until this point. Despite the measured optimism expressed in many of the SG's reports to the UNSC on the prospects of UNIFIL's work, calamitous events in 2006 were to shatter such hopes entirely.

4.3 - Conclusion

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In the years immediately following Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, UNIFIL was faced with a dramatic, and seemingly unprecedented proliferation, expansion, and militarization of Hizballah in its AO, including at positions immediately adjacent to UNIFIL posts. Moreover, Hizballah had become the *de facto* government in southern Lebanon, providing much-needed medical, humanitarian, social, education, and other services in lieu of the Lebanese government, and with the tacit—if not official—approval of the state.

Despite UNIFIL's and the SG's expressions of frustration with the LAF's lack of presence along the Blue Line, there was little the PSO could do against an emboldened militant organization such as Hizballah. There was no feasible way for UNIFIL to limit the increase in border violations and violence against Israel by Hizballah, or any Israeli retaliations or pre-emptive operations into Lebanese territory. Again, aside from the PSO's noted utility in providing liaison functions between the parties to the conflict, as well as CIMIC and humanitarian aid to the served population in its AO, UNIFIL's credibility suffered as a result among both the population it served, as well as in the eyes of the Israeli government. Unfortunately, UNIFIL's credibility would be diminished further with the outbreak of the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War.

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CHAPTER FIVE: THE ISRAEL-HIZBALLAH WAR & ITS CONSEQUENCES

5.1 – Introduction

The culmination of tensions along the Blue Line over the previous years between Hizballah and Israel came to a head with the outbreak of the largest war between the two parties since the 1980s. The outbreak of war in 2006 was a direct result of the expansion of Hizballah's strength and influence in the vacuum formed by Israel's withdrawal in southern Lebanon, and the inability of UNIFIL—and the unwillingness of the Lebanese government—to effectively challenge and disarm Hizballah.

We will examine the circumstances leading up to the outbreak of war, as well as how UNIFIL conducted itself throughout the course of the 34-day conflict. Additionally, the response of the UNSC in augmenting UNIFIL's mandate following the cessation of violence will be explored, as well as how the best of intentions in supplying UNIFIL with improved capacity and latitude in carrying out its mandate hardly translated into measurable gains on the ground.

It will become apparent how bad neighbours, particularly Iran and Syria, exploited internal sectarian divisions and a weak Lebanese government, to support Hizballah and Palestinian militants in their attacks against Israel and targets within Lebanon itself, much to the chagrin of the UN, and to the detriment of UNIFIL's mission.

5.2 – Outbreak of the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War

On July 12, 2006, the “relative calm” associated with the 2000-2006 period, compared to decades of Israeli-Lebanese conflict prior to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon came to a thunderous halt, when Hizballah terrorists launched rocket attacks

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against Israeli towns in Israel's north, and conducted a simultaneous infiltration across the Blue Line in an attack on an IDF patrol, resulting in the killing of three Israeli soldiers, and the kidnapping of two others (UN (DPKO), UNIFIL Background). As in prior attacks in 2000 following Israel's withdrawal, the objective was to trade IDF hostages for Hizballah personnel serving sentences in Israeli prisons (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2006).

In Hizballah's estimation, Israel was expected to react in a measured way as it had in the past, and likely rely on international mediation to resolve the issue and facilitate an exchange of prisoners. However, Israel responded to the attack by launching aggressive military strikes against Hizballah targets and strategic civilian infrastructure across Lebanon, including the runways at Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, various sea ports, the Beirut-Damascus highway and other roads connecting Lebanon to Syria, and many Hizballah positions within UNIFIL's AO, engaging its air, naval, and ground forces in a limited invasion of southern Lebanon, in an ultimately futile effort to prevent Hizballah's kidnapping of the soldiers (UN, S/2006/560). As in the past, UNIFIL was relegated to performing its CIMIC operations, to the extent possible, including evacuation operations (UN, S/2006/560), but was limited in other aspects of its mandate aside from observing "violations" (UN, Lebanon—UNIFIL Background, n.d.).

This act marked a turning point in what was the most serious conflagration between Israel and Hizballah in decades, with Israel having apparently lost its patience with Lebanon, Hizballah, and UNIFIL. By way of illustration, on the night of the attack by Hizballah, Israel warned UNIFIL that any personnel operating near the Blue Line

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should expect to encounter IDF weapons fire, and that any ceasefire agreement would be predicated upon the return of the captured soldiers.

Three days later, the IDF informed UNIFIL that it would establish a “special security zone” between 21 villages along the Blue Line and the Israeli technical fence, warning the PSO that *any* vehicles found in the area would be attacked by the IDF (UN, S/2006/560). While UNIFIL expressed its concern to the Israeli government that such a policy would limit UNIFIL’s ability to carry out its mandate and support evacuations of UNIFIL positions within the zone, this complaint fell on deaf ears. The full fire and fury of the IDF’s response to Hizballah’s attack was surprising to UNIFIL (and Hizballah), and had a significant impact on UNIFIL’s freedom of movement. For example:

Repeated IDF airstrikes [sic] have also hit the city of Tyre and its residential areas, where about 150 United Nations personnel and their dependants live. Despite repeated requests to Israel by the Force Commander, General Alain Pellegrini, and United Nations Headquarters, bombing of the Tyre pocket has continued. On 17 July, one building in which a UNIFIL international staff member and his family were residing, was hit and collapsed. The staff ‘member [sic] and his spouse remain unaccounted for.

A UNIFIL search-and-rescue effort had to be called off owing to damage to the roads, which made the transport of heavy equipment from the UNIFIL engineering battalion near Al Hinniyah to Tyre impossible. United Nations personnel and their dependants have since gathered at the United Nations Rest House hotel in Tyre. Following the declaration of security phase three, which calls for the evacuation of non-essential staff and their dependants, preparations are under way for the relocation of UNIFIL dependants and non-essential staff from Tyre (UN, S/2006/560, p. 3)

UNIFIL was confined to their positions, including bunkers, throughout significant periods of the fighting, and was almost completely incapacitated in terms of carrying out its ground and air patrols in its AO. An estimated fifty percent of southern Lebanon had left villages in the south, and several UNIFIL positions had been hit by IDF fire in the following days, with some UNIFIL soldiers sustaining injuries from the attacks.

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However, it is unclear from the SG's report if it considered the attacks to be directed at the myriad Hizballah positions located near UNIFIL positions, or if they were deliberate attacks against UNIFIL (UN, S/2006/560). While UNIFIL reported on incidents that they protested to both sides, it seems likely—even by UNIFIL's estimation—that Israeli strikes against UNIFIL were more likely to be incidental rather than deliberate:

In the course of the exchange of fire, UNIFIL recorded a number of cases of IDF firing close to UNIFIL positions...in the general area of Hula...in the vicinity of Alma ash Shab, and patrol base Hin of Observer Group Lebanon. Position 8-32 suffered significant material damage as a result of a brush fire ignited by the IDF fire.

UNIFIL also recorded a number of incidents of Hizballah small-arms fire from the vicinity of the same United Nations positions. These incidents are of serious concern because they endanger the lives of United Nations personnel and property. UNIFIL strongly protested the incidents to both sides (UN, S/2006/560, p. 5). (italicized emphasis added)

As a matter of fact, in instances where joint UNIFIL-LAF forces attempted to investigate suspicious properties, they were met with aggression by “civilians,” and had incurred damage to UN property as a result. Subsequently, it was discovered that the particular property was ploughed over and covered with earth, indicating to UNIFIL and the LAF that suspicious activity was (and is) indeed occurring in the AO, and that both potential arms smuggling and the removal of existing weapons in the area must be more robustly challenged (UN, S/2009/119).

Without prejudicing the need for both Lebanon and Israel to cooperate with UNIFIL, it is plausible to ascertain that Israel's overwhelming employment of force was due to a cumulative series of attacks against its northern frontier, daily violations of the Blue Line, ongoing protests at the border involving the throwing of stones and other projectiles at Israeli civilians and military personnel, persistent Hizballah attacks against Israeli positions, including civilian and military targets, coupled with attacks by the

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PFLP-GC in the Bekaa Valley, all culminating in the July 12th attack, which was not prevented, and went unanswered, by both UNIFIL and the LAF.

Moreover, it was observed that Hizballah positions that were damaged or destroyed in previous exchanges with Israel prior to the outbreak of war, were being reconstructed along the Blue Line without any impediment, and that Hizballah was going so far as to search UNIFIL vehicles and confiscate equipment, requiring the assistance of the Lebanese government to rectify such situations (UN, S/2006/560). Fewer scenes could have diminished UNIFIL's credibility more than such examples of the PSO's futility in confronting Hizballah.

The situation was so dire for UNIFIL that there was even consideration of withdrawing the PSO altogether given the restrictions placed upon it by the intensity of the Second Lebanon War:

The hostilities between Hizbollah and Israel since 12 July have radically changed the context in which UNIFIL is operating. In the current environment, circumstances conducive to United Nations peacekeeping do not exist. Facing a situation where the Force is restricted from carrying out even basic activities, such as the ability to resupply its positions and to conduct search and rescue operations on behalf of its personnel, *how can it fulfil its mandate under Security Council resolution 425 (1978)?*

In the current circumstances, with constant firing along the Blue Line, where roads and bridges and other critical infrastructure throughout its area of operation have been destroyed, and where its freedom of movement is continuously impeded, UNIFIL cannot resume its work in a meaningful way. A cessation of hostilities will be essential for this to be possible (UN, S/2006/560, pp. 8-9) (*italicized emphasis added*)

With such a grim outlook on the situation on the ground at that point in time, the typical renewal period of six months was not recommended by the SG, but rather:

Today, in a situation where a return to the status quo ante does not appear feasible and with a view to providing the Security Council the time required to consider all possible options for future arrangements in South Lebanon, I instead recommend

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that the Council should extend the mandate of UNIFIL *for a period of one month* (UN, S/2006/560, p. 9) (italicized emphasis added)

The overwhelming consequences of the short conflict were very likely the catalyst for such pessimism, as not only did UNIFIL personnel lose their lives, but the total Lebanese casualty rate included nearly 2,000 people having lost their lives, and over 4,000 injured, including 48 LAF soldiers, and anywhere between 250 to 500 Hizballah fighters, and an estimated \$4 billion dollars in total damages. Israel suffered 43 civilian and 116 IDF soldier deaths, some 3,000 civilians incurring injuries, and 300 homes sustaining damage or destruction by Hizballah rockets. Furthermore, some half a million Israelis were internally displaced, and the economy suffered \$500 million dollars in lost revenue, reconstruction costs, and military expenditures (UN, Lebanon—UNIFIL Background, n.d; BBC, “Middle East Crisis,” 2006). Additionally, Palmiere, et al., (2008) suggest that over seven percent of Israelis experienced post-traumatic stress disorder from the conflict.

However, despite the recommendation by the SG, with the cessation of conflict on August 14, 2006, UNIFIL remained on the ground indefinitely, and remains in its AO to this day. The UNSC sought to give UNIFIL the means to confront such an outbreak of hostilities in the future and “enforce” its mandate more robustly with an added set of tools and permissions at its disposal. Thus was born “UNIFIL II,” the unofficial title given to UNIFIL as it inherited an augmented mandate a mere three days prior to the end of the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War.

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5.3 - Responding to the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War: The Birth of “UNIFIL II”

To reiterate, the 34-day conflict resulted in “hundreds of deaths and injuries on both sides” (UN, S/RES/1701 (2006), p. 1) as well as “extensive damage to civilian infrastructure and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons” (UN, S/RES/1701 (2006), p. 1), and the death of four UNIFIL peacekeepers, earning a sharp condemnation by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (UN Press Office, 2006).

While the UN SG sought a one-month technical review to determine the feasibility of UNIFIL’s continued existence (UN, “August 2006 Monthly Forecast,” 2006), the UNSC opted to react to the escalating conflict rapidly by adopting UNSCR 1701 (2006) on August 11, 2006—three days prior to the cessation of hostilities—to augment UNIFIL’s ability, in addition to its existing mandate, to perform a series of functions and to enjoy particular benefits, including:

- Increasing UNIFIL’s force strength to a maximum of 15,000 troops;
- Monitoring the cessation of hostilities;
- Accompanying the LAF in its deployment throughout southern Lebanon and the Blue Line;
- Coordinating UNIFIL’s activities with both the Lebanese and Israeli governments;
- Providing humanitarian assistance to civilians in southern Lebanon;
- Assisting in the voluntary and safe return of IDPs; and
- Assisting the LAF in re-establishing its monopoly on violence in southern Lebanon (UN, S/RES/1701 (2006));

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UNSCR 1701 (2006) provided an expansion of UNIFIL's troop composition, but also formally included humanitarian assistance as part of its mandate, and called on UNIFIL to—at Lebanon's request—aid the government in preventing arms smuggling and in securing its borders. Additionally, and most importantly, UNIFIL was given permission to use greater means of force in pursuing its mandate:

Acting in support of a request from the Government of Lebanon to deploy an international force to assist it to exercise its authority throughout the territory, *authorizes* UNIFIL to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces and as it deems within its capabilities, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind, to resist attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council, and to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and, without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (UN, S/RES/1701 (2006), pp. 3-4) (*italicized emphasis in original*)

Additionally, given the broad recognition of Syrian influence over—and interference in—Lebanese affairs, and its role in supporting Hizballah and other non-state militias in Lebanon, the UNSC passed UNSCR 1559 (2004) and UNSCR 1680 (2006), as a way to pressure Syria (and also signal to Iran) that supporting non-state militias and thereby hindering the sovereignty of Lebanon would not be tolerated. The resolutions also called for a complete withdrawal of all foreign forces, including Israel, but most specifically Syria.

UNIFIL's robust mandate made it the UN's first PSO to formally deviate from the "first-generation" model of PSOs, as it included enforcement provisions that approximated Chapter Seven PSO missions, becoming a "Chapter 6 and ½" PSO containing elements of both first- and second-generation PSOs (Murphy, 2012). UNIFIL became unofficially dubbed as "UNIFIL II" conveying a new mandate, with a new set of

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skills and strengths. These provisions included investments in military equipment to ensure it was prepared for its tasks, including the establishment of a Maritime Task Force with naval patrol boats and auxiliary equipment to aid in monitoring Lebanon's coasts for arms smuggling (Murphy, 2012; Weiner, et al., 2010-11), as well as equipment to carry out forensic investigations and defensive countermeasures, including electronic jamming against explosive devices, and unmanned aerial vehicles with intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities (UN, S/2008/135).

Interestingly, the original design of the mission was to be a Chapter Seven mission, but the Hizballah parliamentarians rejected this, as it directly threatened their organizational and political interests (Makdisi, 2011). However, even with its extant force augmentation, our discussion will demonstrate, by way of reference to SG reports to the UNSC from 2006 onwards, that UNIFIL's new mandate and force augmentation have had little effect on realities on the ground.

Upon deploying UNIFIL II, the SG was expected to provide a preliminary report on the PSO's success for the period of August 11 to 17 2006 (UN, S/2006/670). Both Israel and Lebanon accepted their obligations under UNSCR 1701 (2006), but only a day after the agreed upon cessation of hostilities there was an exchange between the IDF and Hizballah along the central portion of the Blue Line, resulting in the death of four Hizballah fighters. Several days later on August 16th, there were reports of further IDF fire into Lebanon, as well as a group of 100 non-state militia members entering into areas vacated by the IDF on August 17th (UN, S/2006/670). It was difficult to convey any sense of genuine control over the AO in such a brief period of time.

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However, there was one major diplomatic development that emerged in the aftermath of UNSCR 1701 (2006) and the cessation of hostilities, in that for the first time in over a decade, both the IDF and the LAF met via UNIFIL auspices at a tripartite meeting to coordinate their deployment and withdrawal plans on August 14th. On August 17th, and 20th, a second and third meeting took place in which the LAF conveyed its intention to substantively deploy the LAF near the Blue Line, and extend its authority in areas being vacated by the Israeli forces. The SG characterized this development as a “significant and historic step” (UN, S/2006/670, p. 12) by the Lebanese government.

At these meetings, the IDF agreed to provide maps indicating the locations of its forces for the purpose of a rapid, but phased withdrawal behind its side of the Blue Line, as well as providing additional maps showing mines and other ordnance in those same areas (UN, S/2006/670). The process went smoothly as both governments were genuinely committed to preventing further violent conflict.

Therefore, with Lebanese buy-in officially obtained for the first time since Israel’s 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon, UNIFIL II was designed to provide “a rapid and massive injection of additional forces” (UN, S/2006/670, p. 4) in order to aid the LAF in fully deploying to the south and extending its authority, once and for all, over all of Lebanon. However, it became apparent that the LAF was woefully underequipped—generally speaking—to perform such a function even with the supposed will to do so, as the LAF lacked even the most rudimentary pieces of requisite equipment. As the SG relayed:

The initial phase of the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces to the south has shown that significant support is required to carry out the process quickly and effectively. The requirements conveyed to the UNIFIL Force Commander include petrol, oil, spare parts, bottled water, tentage items, personal kits, small arms ammunition, camp items, generators, tyres, batteries, prefabricated office accommodation stores and a wide range of communication equipment.

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I urge Member States in a position to do so to support requests from the Government of Lebanon in addressing those requirements so as to avoid any delays in the tactical deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces. For its part, UNIFIL is already providing as much support as it can within its limited means (UN, S/2006/670, p. 4).

The UN was now seeking international support for both UNIFIL's troop enhancement, as well as the LAF's own capacity to defend its territory in order to roll out "UNIFIL II" in a series of three phases. The first phase involved the ability to re-establish UNIFIL and LAF positions in southern Lebanon following the Israeli withdrawal in a way that could prevent "attempts by forceful means to disrupt the process" (UN, S/2006/670, p. 5) alluding primarily to Hizballah. The second phase, was to draft the PSO's concept of operations, or "new robust rules of engagement" (UN, S/2006/670, p. 5) to better "cater to the additional tasks and authority assigned to UNIFIL in resolution 1701" (UN, S/2006/670, p. 5), particularly the enhanced use of force in pursuit of the mandate (UN, S/2006/670). The third and final phase involved assorting the necessary equipment and troop strength in order to actualize the first two phases (UN, S/2006/670).

To achieve these phased objectives, the SG gave a unique dispensation to the UN Secretariat to fast-track administrative, financial, and human resource processes to encourage and simplify deployment processes for TCCs and civilian support staff (UN, S/2006/670), which required a significant commitment of resources to UNIFIL that was already limited in investment, especially in light of the massive CIMIC efforts that were underway in Lebanon in the aftermath of the war (UN, S/2006/670).

Surprisingly, and somewhat contradictorily, the SG was clear to indicate that UNIFIL would not actually enforce UNSCR 1701 (2006), in lieu of a "political process,"

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which begged the question to what extent UNIFIL would “enforce” any element of its mandate on the ground. As the SG stated pertaining to UNIFIL II:

A reinforced UNIFIL is not going to wage war on any of the actors in the theatre. It is not expected to achieve by force what must be realized through negotiation and an internal Lebanese consensus. Nor can a reinforced UNIFIL be a substitute for a political process. That political process, however, will need the kind of help, assistance and confidence that only a robust peacekeeping presence can provide, in support of the Government of Lebanon and its efforts to exercise its authority effectively throughout its territory (UN, S/2006/670, p. 13).

Thus far, it can be observed that despite possessing an augmented mandate, the *will* to utilize adequate force—or receiving the requisite capacity to be able to deliver such enforcement on the ground—was already dismissed in favour of a vaguely defined “political process” that was nowhere in sight. In a sense, the contradiction between the efforts of traditional peacekeeping, focusing as it once had on specifically military tasks, and the preference of peacebuilding efforts that emphasize nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, have actually juxtaposed each other, almost nullifying UNIFIL’s utility in its entirety from contributing to changing the facts on the ground regarding Hizballah and other armed elements impeding Lebanese sovereignty, authority and international peace and security south of the Litani River and along the Blue Line with Israel.

5.4 - Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL II, 2007-2008

Following the 2006 Israel-Lebanon War, and despite UNIFIL’s augmentation and the deployment of the LAF near the Blue Line, armed elements continued to operate in southern Lebanon. In a particularly serious incident, members of Fatah al-Islam, a Palestinian militant organization, carried out an attack against UNIFIL’s Spanish contingent (Chassay, 2007), killing six peacekeepers, all in the context of ongoing

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political strife within Lebanon between the March 8 and March 14 Coalitions, which were essentially representatives of Lebanese nationalist, and pro-Syrian political party coalitions, the former of which enjoyed the support—both political and military—of Hizballah (UN, S/2007/392; UN, S/2007/641).

Throughout this period, UNIFIL observed a proliferation of organizations, mobilization, and military training among active armed elements in Lebanon (UN, S/2007/641). During the latter months of 2007, the March 14 Coalition Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem was assassinated, allegedly by Syrian intelligence, in a car bomb that resulted in the death of six others and injuries to dozens of civilians, demonstrating a serious deterioration of the security situation in Lebanon.

Fatah al-Islam was pursued in relation to the attack on the UNIFIL contingent by the LAF, but the perpetrators of the attack were not immediately found. In the interim, (attempted) attacks by Fatah al-Islam against UNIFIL forces increased, as the organization used remotely detonated explosives against UNIFIL positions. Other planned attacks were uncovered by the Lebanese authorities, resulting in the arrest of Palestinian militants planning attacks on UNIFIL, which according to the SG “highlight the danger posed to UNIFIL by radical armed elements within the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon” (UN, S/2007/641, p. 2), to which, surprisingly, “Lebanese security agencies do not have access” (UN, S/2009/566, p. 10).

In terms of positive developments, however, of significance was the establishment of a “Strategic Military Cell” (SMC) for UNIFIL at the United Nations headquarters, in addition to its Maritime Task Force, with the aim of streamlining decision-making in the field without resorting to frequent consultation with DPKO (UN, Comprehensive Review

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of the Strategic Military Cell (A/61/883), 2007). Improvements were also made in terms of the LAF's liaison and coordination with UNIFIL, and even with Israel via UNIFIL serving as an intermediary. Nevertheless, this did not translate into improved relations between the countries, as Israeli air incursions over Lebanon continued almost daily, despite protests by UNIFIL and anti-aircraft fire at Israeli Air Force (IAF) planes by the Lebanese army. Israel defended its overflights as necessary until its abducted soldiers were released by Hizballah, "and the measures set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006) are implemented in full" (UN, S/2007/641, p. 3).

Importantly, UNIFIL was able to secure cooperation by both the LAF and the IDF in terms of visibly marking positions on the Blue Line, and cooperation by the LAF specifically in attempting to intervene against violations of the Blue Line emanating from southern Lebanon (UN, S/2007/641). Encouragingly, the LAF improved its liaison and patrol coordination with UNIFIL, co-located its checkpoints with UNIFIL checkpoints, and conducted periodic reviews of its operation with UNIFIL to enhance interoperability (UN, S/2007/641).

5.4.1 – Limited Security Regimes

Moreover, the continued monthly tripartite meetings between the LAF, IDF, and UNIFIL demonstrated a Limited Security Regime (LSR) as there was agreement between both countries over the need to cooperate, albeit in a limited sense, solely on security issues but without establishing formal diplomatic ties. By definition, an LSR is a bilateral security arrangement between two countries exclusively within the domain of "security" concerns (Barak, 2007). Jervis (1982) considers such regimes to be beneficial to the

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extent that principles, rules, and norms applied by one country in context to another, will be reciprocated in kind, giving such regimes utility even in the absence of a formal peace treaty between two countries.

As such, the SG's description of these tripartite meetings support their characterization as an LSR between Israel and Lebanon:

The regular tripartite meetings (...) have become an important mechanism, building confidence between the two parties, both of which show a strong commitment to these proceedings, which aim to address key security and military operational issues, prevent incidents and violations and enhance liaison and coordination arrangements. The complexity of the issues on the agenda, however, makes progress in formulating common understanding at times incremental and slow (UN, S/2007/641, p. 4).

The importance of this development, nearly 30 years after UNIFIL's creation is premised on Barak's (2007) suggestion that LSRs may lead to peace between nations at war down the road, as they can serve as a first step towards building mutual trust and confidence. This is the case because an LSR demonstrates a hitherto obscured set of nominally common values in the analyses or opinions of the antagonists in the best of circumstances, or at the very least, an LSR may merely maintain the status quo without any future progress in the worst of circumstances. Yet nevertheless, LSRs demonstrate a commitment to a nonviolent "status quo" as preferable to a violent one, which is a positive value and net gain in and of itself.

Historically speaking, there is scant evidence to suggest that LSRs can commonly lead to such positive outcomes, owing to the fact that few examples exist of LSRs around the world. Some scholars have pointed to an LSR existing between Israel and Syria (Mandell, 1996), and between Israel and Egypt (Barak, 2007), insofar as prior to Israel's peace treaty with the latter, and ongoing (albeit stalled) negotiations with the former,

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there were tacit “security-related” arrangements between the countries not to attack each other directly, or to forego violence altogether. However, given the recent hostilities between Israel and Syria (Abu-Nasr and Ackerman, “Israel Hits Back at Iran and Syria as Border Region Boils,” February 10, 2018) the correlational and causal merits of LSRs in the Syrian example may not be as convincing. Moreover, it would appear that LSRs can only feasibly enjoy long-term success in environments where countries possess a monopoly on force (Barak, 2007).

5.5 - Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL II, 2007-2008

For UNIFIL at this point, at the very least, such an LSR has benefitted the PSO by fostering greater levels of cooperation and coordination with both the Israeli and Lebanese governments. This has happened in tandem with significantly increased LAF patrolling alongside UNIFIL, and proactively confiscating and destroying all arms and ammunition found within southern Lebanon (although not engaging Hizballah directly) (UN, S/2007/641). Furthermore, UNIFIL and the LAF began to hold joint training exercises and workshops, including naval exercises, but the LAF continued to suffer a shortage in much-needed military equipment (UN, S/2007/641), as well as having a lack of monopoly over violence within its territory, as compared to Israel (Barak, 2007).

For Israel’s part, the IDF and UNIFIL established a hotline between UNIFIL’s Force Commander and the IDF’s liaison office for UNIFIL housed in the northern Israeli city of Tzfat (Safed). UNIFIL requested a liaison office to be established in Tel Aviv at the Israeli Ministry of Defense headquarters, but the Israeli government did not fulfill this

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request (UN, S/2007/641), as Israel saw no need for a second office outside of Tzfat (UN, S/2009/119).

Given the specifically humanitarian elements of UNIFIL's mandate, for the first time in UNIFIL's history, the SG reported on UNIFIL's increased implementation of community projects that received funding directly through UNIFIL's budget, as well as initiatives to maintain good relations with the local population which according to the SG, was "critical if UNIFIL is to successfully implement resolution 1701 (2006)" (UN, S/2007/641, p. 6). Such initiatives included the deployment of CIMIC units, as well as military community outreach units to foster improved relations with southern Lebanese citizens (UN, S/2007/641).

However, the picture is not as heartening as may be depicted in such preliminary reports. During this period, just over one year since the 2006 War, Israel had already complained to UNIFIL that Hizballah had rebuilt its military presence and capacity largely north of the Litani River—outside of UNIFIL's AO—but also within UNIFIL's AO—to a degree that exceeded its capacity prior to the war, including the possession of missiles with 250 kilometre ranges, and shore-to-sea capabilities (UN, S/2007/641). Intelligence estimates suggest that not only does Hizballah maintain arms caches north of the Litani River, but it also has long-range missile batteries aimed at Israel (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre, "Further Evidence of Hezbollah's Military Activity," n.d; Schneider, 2010).

Israel claimed that the transfer of weapons to Hizballah occurs over the Syrian-Lebanese border, by way of Iran. Surprisingly, the Lebanese government agreed with Israel's assessment, requesting more information to better contain border breaches and to

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enforce an arms embargo, while the Syrian government denied any involvement (UN, S/2007/641). UNIFIL did not deny these allegations, but conveyed that Israel had not provided UNIFIL with specific intelligence to substantiate these allegations “due to the sensitivity of its sources” (UN, S/2007/641, p. 5).

In the context of Syria’s withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, there appeared to be a commensurate increase in militant organization and mobilization along the Syrian-Lebanese border, as the Syrian government facilitated the growth and operability of various organizations, including the PFLP-GC, Fatah al-Islam, and Fatah al-Intifada, as a way to maintain an exertion of influence in Lebanese affairs. According to UNIFIL, these organizations enjoy “de facto control over the border at the expense of Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and is another illustration of the need for Lebanon to ensure full control over its borders” (UN, S/2007/641, p. 8), demonstrating Syrian malfeasance towards Lebanon and the use of proxy forces from within its territory to affect policy interests in its former Lebanese stronghold.

In reaction to this situation, the Lebanese government recommended the implementation of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team, involving the country’s primary security agencies, including LAF and the Internal Security Forces, and the Customs and General Security Service (UN, S/2009/566) to improve interagency cooperation and intelligence sharing with the aim of securing the border with Syria, and improving surveillance, control, and prevention of illegal crossings, drug and weapons smuggling, and so forth.

Syria maintained that minor border disputes prevent full cooperation with Lebanon, but that they are committed to its resolution through bilateral negotiations with

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the Lebanese government, which had already taken place in the recent past. However, Lebanon denied at the time that any of the meetings that transpired between Syria and Lebanon pertained to border determination (UN, S/2007/641). Despite such assertions by Syria, the SG himself implored Syria to control its borders with Lebanon in accordance with paragraph 15 of UNSCR 1701 (2006), and even mildly rebuked both Syria and Iran as the particular Member States who have a “key responsibility” (UN, S/2007/641, p. 15) in preventing breaches of the border and respecting the arms embargo.

Contradictorily, however, UNIFIL’s new “robust” mandate is truncated by a new position taken by the SG suggesting that the disarmament of Hizballah and other militias should, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006): “take place through a Lebanese-led political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon” (UN, S/2007/641, p. 7); a statement which precludes any meaningful “enforcement” on the part of UNIFIL.

In 2008, the situation was not particularly better for UNIFIL, as the PSO itself became the target of assassination attempts by various unidentified armed elements, and continued violations of the Blue Line including rocket attacks, and cross-border infiltrations continued throughout the year. There were also reported instances of IDF patrols pointing their weapons at UNIFIL soldiers, including with the use of infrared lasers, and the use of small arms fire at a minefield warning sign near a UN mine clearance team close to the Blue Line. Israel was committed to investigating the incident, and disciplined the offending soldier, but the danger to UNIFIL personnel continued (and continues) to persist. And again, Lebanese civilians in its AO obstructed on occasion UNIFIL’s freedom of movement (UN, S/2008/135), while Israeli overflights continued

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over Lebanon, as well as its presence in Ghajar village, in violation of UNSCR 1701 (2006) (UN, S/2008/135).

The “LSR” relationship between the IDF, LAF, and UNIFIL continued nonetheless in the form of tripartite meetings that remained “a crucial mechanism to build confidence between the parties” (UN, S/2008/135, p. 5), and joint patrols between the LAF and UNIFIL continuously improved over the period (UN, S/2008/135). However, in spite of these enhanced patrols, there was actually an increase in the number of “armed civilians,” characterized as hunters and shepherds, near the Blue Line, despite a ‘hunting ban’ that was in effect near the Blue Line, precisely to prevent agitation by the IDF. Additionally, despite confiscating and destroying weapons once encountered, the LAF and UNIFIL seemed to never run into any actual armed elements at such sites. This has raised the suspicions of Israel, which provided hitherto withheld intelligence to UNIFIL, maintaining that:

Hizballah is significantly rebuilding its military presence and capacity, *inside the UNIFIL area of operations*. At times, the Israel Defense Forces has provided UNIFIL with information about locations in the UNIFIL area of operations, in which it claims that these activities are taking place. UNIFIL, in collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, immediately investigates all such claims if sufficiently specific information is received.

To date, it has found no evidence of new military infrastructure in the area of operations. Israel also claims that Hizballah has adapted its modus operandi in order to conceal its activities from UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, and has relocated its operations mainly to urban areas. UNIFIL has observed that its operational activities are on occasion being closely monitored by unarmed civilians. However, UNIFIL constantly changes its patrolling patterns to maintain the highest level of effectiveness (UN, S/2008/135, p. 6). (italicized emphasis added)

Specifically, Israel claimed that at the time, Hizballah possessed 30,000 short- and long-range rockets, deployed both outside and inside of UNIFIL’s AO. Hizballah did not deny possessing such weapons, but did deny its presence within UNIFIL’s AO (UN,

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S/2008/135). To its credit, UNIFIL admitted that armed elements continue to exist, and confront, UNIFIL and Israel in its AO, and that LAF's overstretch prevents it from adequately enforcing UNSCR 1701 (2006). Nevertheless, UNIFIL claimed not to have observed any of the assertions that Israel has made (UN, S/2008/135).

This is certainly a bizarre development insofar as Hizballah activity in its AO is all but certain, and appears to be recognized by the SG given that Hizballah has made public statements "that point to breaches of the arms embargo, in serious violation of resolution 1701 (2006)" (UN, S/2008/135, p. 15). This recognition was further reinforced by specifically rebuking Iran and Syria in relation to Hizballah's activities, yet again:

All Member States in the region, *in particular the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran*, have a key responsibility in this regard. Such violations risk further destabilizing Lebanon and the whole region (UN, S/2008/135, p. 15). (italicized emphasis added)

Nonetheless, despite being unable to accomplish UNSCR 1701 (2006)'s mandate, UNIFIL carried on with its CIMIC operations, including maintaining regular contact with local community leaders and authority figures and even producing television programming, photographic exhibitions, magazines, and other public relations material, in a continued effort to engender confidence and good relations and support among the local population (UN, S/2008/135). Relatively speaking, and despite the ongoing violations of the Blue Line, UNIFIL's efforts appear to have been recognized by the IDF insofar as the effects of the PSO "are also felt in northern Israel and acknowledged by the Israeli authorities" (UN, S/2008/135, p. 14).

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5.6 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL II, 2009-2010

Following Lebanon's parliamentary elections in 2009, UNIFIL bemoaned the fact that Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias continued to operate throughout Lebanon, in league with Syria, both directly and through its continued influence in the country in contravention of UNSCR 1559 (2004), which calls for the strengthening of Lebanese sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity under the sole and exclusive authority of the Lebanese government. In spite of the fact that for the first time, Lebanon and Syria established full diplomatic relations on May 7, 2009, as per UNSCR 1680 (2006), and having exchanged ambassadors later that month (UN, S/2009/330), Syria still refused to delineate a common border with Lebanon, and continued to aid spoiler groups in the proliferation of weapons among armed elements in Lebanon (UN, S/2009/542).

Weapons caches were found throughout UNIFIL's AO, along with rockets aimed at Israel set to timers and positioned 140 metres away from a school compound were uncovered by joint UNIFIL-LAF patrols in the area. Rocket strikes against Israeli towns in the north continued as well, as well as minor violations of the Blue Line from both sides, including an Israeli-Lebanese drug smuggling operation (UN, S/2009/119).

The situation was worsened by the admittedly porous nature of the Syria-Lebanon border, which allowed for the Damascus-based PFLP-FC and Fatah al-Intifada forces located along the border region between both countries to come and go at will, from which point attacks against Israel have been launched, resulting in Israeli retaliations (UN, S/2009/542). Further, the permeable border has allowed for the relatively new phenomenon of the Hamas terrorist organization actively penetrating and recruiting within Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon (UN, S/2009/119).

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In fact, by October 2009, there was an admission of increased and sustained activities of both Hizballah and Palestinian militias operating in southern Lebanon, as beneficiaries of the porous Syria-Lebanon border (UN, S/2009/542). Moreover, following increased Lebanese patrols of its border, Syria fortified its military presence along the border, claiming it was merely “to prevent smuggling and sabotage” (UN, S/2009/119, p. 10). The SG certainly did not believe this in his report on UNIFIL’s performance for the period, as he issued a sharp reproach toward the Syrian government, when speaking of the bases operating along the Lebanon-Syria border:

I call upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle these military bases, as agreed upon in the National Dialogue, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, *which has influence on these groups*, to support fully efforts in this regard. I regret the *unwillingness* of the Syrian Arab Republic to engage on the issue as conveyed to my Special Coordinator by senior officials in Damascus on 11 February (UN, S/2009/119, pp. 15-16). (italicized emphasis added)

Oddly, while acknowledging the ongoing and emboldening activities of various militia groups in Lebanon, the SG stated in his March 2009 report to the UNSC that “UNIFIL has provided a strong deterrent to the resumption of hostilities and has laid a foundation on which a process towards achieving a permanent ceasefire can and must be built” (UN, S/2009/119, p. 14).

While speaking of “deterrence,” however, the SG report later in 2009 not only condemned Hizballah’s continued military independence from LAF, but called on it to comply with UNSCR 1559 (2004), and to cease obstruction of UNIFIL and LAF patrols in southern Lebanon, and to dismantle its infrastructure that is used to house weapons, as well as Hizballah’s use of civilian vehicles and personnel dressed in civilian attire (UN, S/2009/542; UN, S/2009/566). Related to that, Hizballah was also condemned for openly admitting that it militarily supported Palestinian militias (UN, S/2009/542). Hizballah

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itself had even boasted of having the greatest arsenal of weapons since its formation in 1982, and that it will remain armed for as long as “the State and the army are not capable of protecting the country” (UN, S/2009/330, p.9).

These same Palestinian militias continued to operate despite committing to disarmament through the 2006 National Dialogue process calling for the disarmament of Palestinian militant organizations *outside* of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon (UN, S/2009/542), illustrating the deepening crisis in Lebanon surrounding the ongoing proliferation of militias in southern Lebanon and throughout the country, rather than the opposite. It should be illustrated that the National Dialogue process aimed as it was to propose a national defence strategy for Lebanon involving the disarmament of Palestinian militias outside of Palestinian refugee camps, *de facto* excluded Hizballah as it was part of the proposal verification process itself (UN, S/2010/565).

One particular problem concerning UNIFIL’s ability to confirm the existence of weapons in its AO is that determining the extent of their existence is difficult for UNIFIL, as its mandate prohibits UNIFIL from searching private homes and properties “unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location” (UN, S/2009/566, p. 7). Given this constraint, all such cases are referred to LAF, which cannot always be relied upon to engage Hizballah or other militant groups effectively, if at all. This has naturally been a cause for concern for the Israeli government, which has communicated that this caveat is precisely the means by which Hizballah has been able to obscure its activities in UNIFIL’s AO (UN, S/2009/119).

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The SG took this opportunity to again call on Hizballah to disarm for the sake of enhancing Lebanese sovereignty and monopoly over violence, and called on "all parties, inside and outside of Lebanon, to halt immediately all efforts to transfer or acquire weapons and to build paramilitary capacities outside the authority of the State" (UN, S/2009/542, p. 8), referring specifically to "[r]egional parties that maintain close ties with Hizballah" (UN, S/2009/542, p. 8) as having a particular duty in encouraging—and influencing—Hizballah to be more cooperative with such demands.

Such calls have had little currency among non-state militias, such that in late October 2009, unidentified armed elements fired rockets in the direction of Kiryat Shemona in Israel, prompting the IDF to warn UNIFIL of an impending retaliation with artillery fire towards the launch site, coupled with subsequent Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) overflights in the area; actions which were condemned by UNIFIL as unnecessary for self-defence (UN, S/2009/566). Israel continued to maintain that such operations would continue citing an "alleged lack of enforcement of the arms embargo" (UN, S/2009/566 p. 5). UNIFIL was fair in suggesting that while it cannot confirm that the arms embargo has been violated, it was most certainly a possibility (UN, S/2009/330).

Yet despite the near-constant violations of the Blue Line, and even the uncovering of an alleged Israeli spy network operating in Lebanon, the tripartite LSR relationship continued steadily, and after three years, Israel conveyed the strike data related to cluster bombs used in the 2006 War to UNIFIL (UN, S/2009/330), and work continued towards clearly delineating the Blue Line, with both LAF and UNIFIL taking measures to inform the local population about its location (UN, S/2009/566). Although, the extent of Israeli

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and Lebanese water borders for the sake of naval and fishing operations remained a subject of dispute (UN, S/2009/566).

A portion of these information campaigns also constituted UNIFIL's ongoing CIMIC operations, which according to the SG report of 2 November 2009, became increasingly necessary to win over hearts and minds in several areas where UNIFIL was less popular (and prone to stone throwing and other forms of harassment) (UN, S/2009/566). Outreach activities were believed to be critical in communicating UNIFIL's and LAF's role in southern Lebanon, and in defusing tensions while maximizing public support (UN, S/2009/119), but it continued to remain a challenge in the years ahead.

By 2010, it became increasingly difficult for UNIFIL—after operating for four years since its augmented mandate—to plausibly deny Hizballah's violation of the arms embargo in its AO, as a joint LAF-UNIFIL patrol uncovered 250 kilograms of explosives, leading Israel's Permanent Representative to the UN to express growing concerns, both to the UNSC and the SG, claiming that Hizballah had planted these explosives, which were potentially provided by either Iran or Syria (UN, S/2010/105). Moreover, the Israeli government considered the Lebanese government to be “fully responsible for all such violations and any resulting implications” (UN, S/2010/105, p. 8), as Lebanon has “not taken meaningful action to combat illegal weapons transfer [sic]” (UN, S/2010/565, p. 11).

Despite claiming that no evidence of new weapons entering the area has been produced, UNIFIL increased the frequency of its joint patrols with LAF, with LAF enhancing its force presence and conducting searches on suspicious individuals and vehicles, and UNIFIL began providing on-the-job CIMIC training to Lebanese military

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personnel (UN, S/2010/105). However, it appeared that the more aggressive—albeit to an extent that was limited in facing the actual threat from Hizballah—UNIFIL and LAF became, the greater the reaction from “civilians” in its AO. While UNIFIL patrols continued to increase, reaching 10,000 a month by late 2009 and early 2010 (UN, S/2010/105; UN, S/2010/193):

A handful of the patrols were temporarily stopped by local civilians (...) In one serious incident (...) a group of civilians temporarily obstructed the movement of a UNIFIL foot patrol in the area of Bint Jbeil (Sector West). The patrol leader asked three civilians to delete photographs that they had taken of the patrol and noted their vehicle’s licence plate number when they refused to do so.

Subsequently, the civilians mobilized a crowd of around 50 persons, some carrying baseball bats and steel bars and one armed with a knife, who blocked the patrol’s movement. UNIFIL personnel fired three warning shots into the air, at which point the civilians moved back some metres and, after further discussions, dispersed (UN, S/2010/105, pp. 4-5).

There were several such instances, some resulting in UNIFIL personnel injuries (UN, S/2010/352). Support in such instances from LAF either arrived after the assailants dispersed, or not at all, likely due to the Lebanese government’s continued official support of Hizballah. According to the SG’s report for 26 February 2010:

the Government of Lebanon asserts the right of Lebanon, through its people, army and *resistance*, to liberate or recover the Shab’a Farms, Kfarshouba Hills and the Lebanese part of the occupied village of Ghajar and to defend Lebanon against any assault and safeguard its right to its water resources, by all legitimate available means (UN, S/2010/105, p. 8). (italicized emphasis added)

Meanwhile the government of Lebanon simultaneously claimed that it remained committed to abiding by the terms of UNSCR 1701 (2006), which roundly contradicts this very assertion. In fact, Hizballah aside, in the four years since UNSCR 1701 (2006)’s adoption, Hizballah *and* various Palestinian militias continued to encroach on Lebanese sovereignty by way of Syria, with Palestinian militia leaders openly calling on Palestinians to resist any attempts by the Lebanese government to dismantle militia bases

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operating on the Lebanese side of the Lebanon-Syria border (UN, S/2010/105; UN, S/2010/565).

During this period, the aforementioned review of UNIFIL was completed, recommending a continuation of its function as a tripartite meeting mechanism between the IDF and LAF, as well as enhancing its presence and functional capacity along the Blue Line owing to increased activity by armed elements. Furthermore, despite past efforts, the report reiterated the need for stronger cooperation between UNIFIL and LAF, with an eye towards transferring all security and military functions to LAF in the south, as well as improving and evaluating the function of UNIFIL's joint Maritime Task Force with LAF (UN, S/2010/86).

The findings of the report were endorsed by the Lebanese Council of Ministers on September 21, 2010; committing itself to formalizing a strategic dialogue mechanism to jointly analyze and assess military requirements on an ongoing basis in accordance with set evaluative benchmarks (UN, S/2010/565). The reiteration of the need to transfer all state functions to the Lebanese government was reinforced by the concern of the SG that UNIFIL's presence cannot be utilized to maintain the status quo indefinitely (UN, S/2010/105).

However, despite a half-hearted commitment to deploying to the south, and citing official support for Hizballah as a "resistance" force against Israel, there was an acknowledgement by the Lebanese government that it was unable to prevent Lebanese civilians from attempting to cross the Blue Line, especially in areas considered by the population to be occupied by Israel. Thus, the status quo was to be maintained by LAF in all practical terms.

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Tensions subsequently increased between Lebanon and Israel in the latter half of 2010 when Israel claimed that Hizballah had been provided Scud missiles by Syria, as the latest military enhancement of the organization besides its ongoing caching of arms, and construction of military structures within UNIFIL's AO and beyond (UN, S/2010/352). The security situation continued to deteriorate as Palestinian militias proliferated and emboldened activities against both LAF and UNIFIL personnel, including planning attacks on UNIFIL forces on several occasions.

Moreover, at this point the SMC established in 2007 was disbanded (UN, S/2010/352) due to its ineffectiveness and the manner in which it exacerbated intra-PSO relations between contingents (Hatto, 2009). Originally, the SMC was a French initiative to create a cell that would serve as an advisory body for UNIFIL independent of DPKO, so as to be more responsive to UNIFIL's requirements in the field (Hatto, 2009; UN, Comprehensive Review of the Strategic Military Cell, 2007).

In addition to being an independent advisory body, the secondary aim of the SMC was to encourage well-trained, typically Western nations, to become TCCs by selling the fact that the burdensome impacts of DPKO on PSOs in the field would be mitigated by providing New York with advice from the field, for the field. However, given that individual contingents failed to rely on either the UN, or the SMC, when it came into conflict with their respective national defence doctrines, coupled with the fact that TCCs from non-Western countries were entirely excluded from participating (Murphy, 2012), caused tremendous resentment between those who were "in" and "out" of the SMC within UNIFIL, lead to the SMC's ultimate collapse.

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Aside from frictions within UNIFIL between 2007 and 2010, tensions came to a head between Lebanon and Israel along the Blue Line following years of ongoing cross-border violations, and air incursions from both sides, when LAF fired upon IDF personnel working on the technical fence demarcating the Blue Line. This exchange further spurred spoiler group activity and further impediments to both LAF's and UNIFIL's freedom of movement (UN, S/2010/565). Such activities raised the concern by the SG of the "marked rise of political tension in Lebanon and by recent challenges to the authority of State institutions by representatives of Hizbullah and some of its allies" (UN, S/2010/565, p. 15).

5.7 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL II, 2011-2015

The emboldening of Palestinian and Hizbullah operations within UNIFIL's AO (and elsewhere in Lebanon), as well as the mobilization of 'civilians' operating against both LAF and UNIFIL came to a head on May 15, 2011, when 8,000 – 10,000 demonstrators, most of whom were Palestinian, but included members of Hizbullah and Palestinian militant organizations, protested at the technical fence along the Blue Line. Despite attempts by LAF to prevent a breach of the Blue Line, some 1,000 protestors attempted to cross the fence, and attacked IDF positions, provoking IDF fire that killed 7 'civilians' and injured 111 others. Overall, 4 IDF and 70 LAF soldiers were injured in the melee, along with one UNIFIL soldier (UN, S/2011/406).

Yet despite this, the SG's report suggested that Israel's firing of live rounds was not justified as it "was not commensurate with the threat to Israeli soldiers" (UN, S/2011/406, p. 3). Israel justified its response by indicating that its request for protection

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on the Lebanese side of the border, either from LAF or UNIFIL *prior* to the demonstration was ignored:

During the tripartite meeting on 11 May and in bilateral contacts with UNIFIL, the Israel Defense Forces had warned that they would not tolerate interference with the technical fence, crossing of the Blue Line, or threats to the forces. Prior to the demonstrations, UNIFIL reinforced its positions in the area. *UNIFIL did not deploy its troops on the ground during the incident, based on the assessment of the Lebanese Armed Forces and a request to avoid close contact with the demonstrators so as not to potentially aggravate the situation.*

With the exception of a request for UNIFIL to carry out helicopter patrols to monitor the situation from the air, *the Lebanese Armed Forces did not ask for UNIFIL assistance. While the Israel Defense Forces called on UNIFIL to intervene on the ground once the demonstrators reached the technical fence, the Lebanese Armed Forces insisted that UNIFIL stay away from the demonstrators to avoid additional friction* (UN, S/2011/406, p.3) (italicized emphasis added)

Israel had subsequently decided to prevent farmer's access to olive fields south of the Blue Line within Israeli-controlled territory, which had previously been agreed to on an informal basis, as a result of concerns over infiltration (UN, S/2011/406).

Further demonstrating the deteriorating situation, just over a week after this incident, UNIFIL personnel were struck by a roadside bomb planted on a highway, injuring six soldiers and two civilians (UN, S/2011/406). At the time, the Lebanese government was forming after the collapse of a National Unity government, coupled with an influx of some 4,000 refugees from Syria following the start of the Civil War in that country, adding considerably to Lebanon's political turmoil (UN, S/2011/406).

Critically, the first reported instance of weapons smuggling was provided by the SG's report on July 1, 2011, stating that LAF had arrested an individual attempting to smuggle a rocket from the eastern section of UNIFIL's AO. These developments, coupled with the overall inability of Lebanon to secure its border with Syria was reported

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to have a negative impact on donor countries that committed financial resources to improving Lebanese security measures (UN, S/2011/406).

Following these incidents, LAF decided to forbid demonstrations south of the Litani River declaring it a restricted military zone, while UNIFIL simultaneously improved its presence in the area. However, at this point, tensions were high between Lebanon and Israel, and IDF military movements and operations occasionally crossed the Blue Line as well, as even shepherd movements were observed with extreme suspicion. Both the IDF and LAF were reported as pointing weapons at each other throughout the 2011 reporting period, and IDF weapons were directed at UNIFIL positions as well on several occasions (UN, S/2011/406). UNIFIL movements inside the AO were also subject to impediments and intimidation, with cameras, GPS equipment, and maps being stolen by “civilians” in the area, while on patrol (UN, S/2011/406).

Throughout 2012 and 2013, the situation in southern Lebanon deteriorated further in conjunction with the ongoing violence along its border with Syria, resulting from the Syrian Civil War. The rate of Syrian refugees flooding into Lebanon exceeded 300,000, most of whom were receiving aid and other forms of assistance from the Lebanese government. Simultaneously, various armed elements continued to launch rocket attacks against Israeli targets from within UNIFIL’s AO, resulting in near daily air incursions by the IAF. Despite UNIFIL patrols exceeding 10,000 per month, with ten percent of those involving close coordination with LAF, several patrols were either deliberately blocked by civilian vehicles aiming to limit access, or were met by violence and subsequently were subject to search and seizure of various pieces of UN property and equipment before being allowed to pass (UN, S/2013/120).

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Additionally, the SG had strong words against the continued Syrian influence in Lebanon, especially as Syria had refused to delineate a common border with Lebanon and utilized this opaqueness to facilitate spoiler groups from within Lebanon to aid Syria in its civil war. As the SG relayed:

The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to pose serious challenges for the security and stability of Lebanon. The lack of progress in delineating and demarcating the Lebanese-Syrian border is no justification for the serious and repeated violations of Lebanese territorial integrity, which have caused death, injury and material damage to property. I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cease all violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). (UN, S/2013/120, p. 13)

Particularly, the SG expressed concern over Hizballah's proactive role in aiding the Syrian government in fighting its civil war, which ran the risk of inviting retaliatory action that would be detrimental to Lebanon as a whole:

The reported involvement of certain Lebanese elements in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is contrary to the policy of disassociation adopted by Lebanon. I note with grave concern reports of the Tal Kalakh incident involving Lebanese nationals and of further deaths of Hizbullah members fighting inside the Syrian Arab Republic. The dangers for Lebanon of such involvement and indeed of continued cross-border arms smuggling are obvious. I call upon all Lebanese political leaders to act to ensure that Lebanon remains neutral in respect of external conflicts consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration (UN, S/2013/120, p. 13).

In the summer and autumn of 2013, LAF reported on arms smuggling across the Lebanese-Syrian border, corroborating earlier Israeli claims (UN, S/2013/120; UN, S/2013/560). At this point, the sectarian nature of the fighting in Syria had spilled over into Lebanon with armed elements within Sunni and Alawite neighbourhoods of Beirut engaging in violence, as well as attacks against Shiite neighbourhoods following Hizballah's admission of involvement in the Syrian civil war (UN, A/2013/381). The Syrian military launched several attacks into Lebanon in support of sympathetic armed

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elements, resulting in several deaths. At this point, the LAF was more strained militarily and politically than it had been since the 2006 Second Lebanon War, and decreased its presence in UNIFIL's AO to contend with security issues elsewhere in the country (UN, A/2013/381).

Within the span of a few months, the rate of Syrian refugees had dramatically increased to over 500,000 individuals, compared to only 27,000 a year prior (UN, A/2013/381). During this period, both Lebanese ground violations of the Blue Line, and Israeli overflights abounded, including the utilization of fighter jets, which were necessary—according to the IDF—to deter alleged smuggling operations along the Syria-Lebanon border. Moreover, despite UNIFIL's and the SG's objections, Israel indicated that it planned to reinforce its security infrastructure around the Israeli-controlled Ghajar village, citing similar reasons. Additionally, Hizballah rocket and other attacks against Israel continued over the summer and autumn months, and IDF operations intensified both in southern Lebanon—including limited ground incursions—as well as north of UNIFIL's AO (UN, S/2013/650).

In one particularly strange incident, however, UNIFIL had observed a high-density explosive blast and sought LAF permission to investigate. However, LAF refused to allow UNIFIL to investigate the blast site, despite the blast radius indicating there was evidence of a high amount of explosives. Nevertheless, the relevant report makes no mention as to why LAF refused access, but indicates limits to LAF's cooperation with UNIFIL (UN, S/2013/381).

Frustratingly, despite claims by LAF that arms smuggling was indeed occurring via its border with Syria, UNIFIL restated its position that it does not proactively search

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for weapons, and has found no evidence of “new” weapons in violation of the arms embargo within its AO, implying that while arms smuggling may be occurring, it cannot presume—nor explore the possibility—that such smuggling occurs under the PSO’s very nose:

In coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL remains determined to act with all means available, within its mandate and the rules of engagement, to address cases where specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons within its area of operations. UNIFIL does not, however, proactively search for weapons in the south. UNIFIL is not authorized to enter private property unless it possesses credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location.

To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor has found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces command continued to state that it would act immediately to stop any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions (UN, S/2013/181, p. 6).

This contradictory position was further reiterated by the SG’s forceful condemnation of Hizballah and Syria’s utilization of Hizballah as a proxy force for its political ends:

I note also with deep concern, new developments with regard to the involvement of Lebanese citizens in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, including Hizballah’s acknowledged participation in and commitment to such fighting, threats by external actors to bring their fight to Lebanon in response to Hizballah’s involvement and calls from inside Lebanon to engage in jihad in the Syrian Arab Republic. The implications of these developments for Lebanon’s stability, and indeed for the region, are serious. I have consistently opposed the transfer of arms and fighters from outside the Syrian Arab Republic to either side inside the country (UN, S/2013/181, p. 13).

The deteriorating situation resulted in increased violations of the Blue Line by the IDF and concomitant hostility by LAF with several standoffs between the two forces being reported. Civilians in the AO increasingly harassed UNIFIL patrols, often in large mobs, requiring LAF escorts to extract UNIFIL from particularly dangerous situations.

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However, between 2013-2014, the ongoing civil war in Syria now escalated matters dramatically within UNIFIL's AO to an extent that no mandated aims or capabilities could sufficiently contend with.

Over the course of the Syrian civil war, the IDF had been striking targets in Syria to prevent attacks from its frontier with Syria—entirely separate from UNIFIL's AO—while also seeking to deny arms smuggling into Lebanon destined for Hizballah. Concurrently, Hizballah, as well as the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), had sent fighters to assist their allied Syrian Assad Regime in maintaining control over the country. This conflict, however, as was made clear above, did not stay within the scope of international borders.

In 2015, following an Israeli strike in Syria that killed an Iranian officer and six Hizballah fighters, Hizballah launched several anti-tank guided missiles from within UNIFIL's AO at an IDF military target near the Shab'a Farms, killing two soldiers and injuring several other IDF personnel and Israeli civilians. Israeli retaliatory fire killed a UNIFIL peacekeeper (UN, S/2015/147). However, given the essentially civil war-like conditions in both northern and southern Beirut where confessional fighting was breaking out once again in relation to the Syrian civil war, as well as the proliferation of various terrorist organizations by way of Syria, including the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) (UN, S/2014/784), LAF could hardly deal with any of the matters at hand. Compounding this problem was that since 2013, the Syrian refugee population had ballooned to over 1 million people—a disastrous burden for a country that numbers 6 million—in a mere four years.

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UNIFIL patrols were increasingly experiencing assaults, thefts, and threats to personnel, with little in the way of being able to defend themselves against “civilians.” Several illustrative examples of the degree to which such escalation has occurred are helpful in demonstrating how difficult UNIFIL’s task had become, and how futile its efforts have been in “enforcing” its mandate. Moreover, the following examples—all from the same reporting period—illustrate how it is very likely that those individuals characterized as “civilians” in these reports, were anything but:

On 30 December, in Ramyah (Sector West), a UNIFIL patrol was assaulted by a group of approximately 15 civilians bearing pistols and a twin-barrel gun, after they had been observed violating the Blue Line by climbing on a Blue Line barrel. The group removed some UNIFIL equipment. UNIFIL vehicles arriving to provide reinforcement to the patrol were blocked about 100 metres away by another group of around 20 civilians, armed with pistols, knives and sticks.

One man who was trying forcefully to enter a UNIFIL vehicle threatened a peacekeeper by holding a knife to his throat, while others threatened the patrol with pistols. UNIFIL fired a warning shot, upon which the mob dispersed from the scene. To date, the equipment has not been returned (UN, S/2015/147, pp. 4-5).

A second example relays the organization involved in attacking UNIFIL, indicating that the mission’s movements are quite likely tracked by hostile agents in the PSO’s AO:

On 23 January in Marwahin (Sector West), two armed men in civilian vehicles overtook and blocked a UNIFIL military police vehicle and used their pistols to repeatedly hit the vehicle, demanding a camera that they alleged the UNIFIL personnel had used. More vehicles, carrying approximately 15 men, most of them armed, arrived at the scene. As the UNIFIL military police officer attempted to call UNIFIL headquarters, the group snatched his cell phone, ransacked the vehicle, cut the radio wire and stole a number of items, including a radar speed gun, a camera and a cell phone. UNIFIL protested these incidents to the Lebanese authorities and requested that all incidents be investigated and their perpetrators held accountable (UN, S/2015/147, p. 5).

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A third example demonstrates how UNIFIL is also unable to prevent petty theft, which had become a common occurrence in the years following the 2006 Second Lebanon War:

UNIFIL patrols encountered four instances of aggressive behaviour. On 21 November, a group of seven youths threw stones at the vehicles of a UNIFIL patrol at Majda Zun (Sector West). On 8 December, the leader of a UNIFIL patrol was approached in Hallusiyat Al Fawqa (Sector West) by a group of civilians who took away his GPS device. The device was later returned to UNIFIL. On 28 December near Ayta ash-Shab (Sector West), a GPS device was snatched from a UNIFIL patrol by two men passing on an unregistered motorbike.

On 20 January, a military laptop used for navigational purposes was stolen from a UNIFIL patrol during a confrontation with a group of civilians near Yatar (Sector West). The Lebanese Armed Forces intervened and escorted the UNIFIL patrol out of the village.

And finally, UNIFIL access to patrol routes and sites appear to be easily blocked with limited resistance: The Force's freedom of movement was obstructed on two additional occasions. On 28 November, a UNIFIL foot patrol was denied access along a road close to Majda Zun (Sector West) by three civilians in a vehicle with a satellite phone. On 29 December, a UNIFIL vehicle patrol was denied access along a road close to Ash Sh'aytiyah (Sector West) by a group of civilians in cars and on scooters (UN, S/2015/147, p. 5).

Increasingly, as had not been the case in the past, the IDF and the LAF had direct exchanges of fire more frequently, requiring UNIFIL to act as an intermediary to deescalate the situation, which was done effectively in each account (UN, S/2015/475). However, ongoing Israeli air incursions in response to what it claimed were Hizballah's military build up, continuously raised tensions between the two governments. Israel alluded to the fact that since this build up on the part of Hizballah was transpiring unabated, despite Hizballah publicly admitting to building up its arsenal, that this situation would lead to an "inevitable future war" (UN, S/2015/475, p. 5).

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5.8 – Secretary-General Reports on UNIFIL II, 2016-2017

The LAF continued to be overburdened with the consequences of the Syrian civil war and its effect on internecine fighting which was raging across the country, but particularly in central and northern Lebanon, yet it benefited from the stabilization of the Syrian refugee population (UN, S/2016/572). However, despite increased UNIFIL patrols in its AO, the situation in southern Lebanon deteriorated further as “civilians” continued to prevent UNIFIL from carrying out its tasks, continued to steal equipment from personnel on patrols, and engaged in attacks against UNIFIL personnel, vehicles, and property (UN, S/2016/572). Furthermore, more standoffs occurred directly between the IDF and LAF over disagreements regarding construction around the technical fence on the Blue Line, as well as the more common daily violations of the Blue Line, including fire against IDF targets and Israeli overflights and retaliatory fire (UN, S/2017/201).

In a shocking development, the Lebanese government ordered UNIFIL to permit Hizballah to conduct a tour of the Blue Line for international media outlets, as it ostensibly enjoyed government approval. The SG report for 21 June 2017 reads:

On 20 April 2017, Hizballah conducted a tour for Lebanese and international media in part of Sector West of the UNIFIL area of operations, including along sections of the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces notified UNIFIL less than an hour before the media tour started, stating that Lebanese Armed Forces personnel would be on the ground.

The notification did not include reference to any Hizballah involvement. UNIFIL saw the media group on three occasions and encountered it twice in different locations, including close to the Blue Line. As a UNIFIL patrol attempted to stop the convoy, a senior representative from the Lebanese Armed Forces insisted that the group be permitted to pass, given that the tour had been approved. Another UNIFIL patrol, which was providing security for the ongoing tripartite meeting, stopped the convoy from moving closer to the United Nations position in Ra’s al-Naqurah (UN, S/2017/591, pp. 1-2).

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Moreover, UNIFIL believed this tour to be part of a Hizballah propaganda piece, including the use of unauthorized weapons in direct contravention to UNSCR 1701 (2006), on the part of both the Lebanese government and Hizballah:

While UNIFIL personnel did not observe unauthorized armed personnel when they encountered the media group, a UNIFIL investigation, based on reliable media reports and information gathered, found it credible that unauthorized personnel and weapons had been present in the area of operations during the event, most likely as part of a staged display of combatants in an orange grove, at a point on the road between Naqurah and Alma al-Sha‘b (approximately 5.5 km from the Blue Line). The presence of such unauthorized personnel and weapons constituted a violation of resolution 1701 (2006) (UN, S/2017/591, p. 2).

Bizarrely, following the incident, the Lebanese government, led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri, as well as the Lebanese Minister of Defence, Yacoub Sarraf, and LAF’s Chief of Staff, General Joseph Aoun visited the Blue Line the following day to reiterate their commitment to UNSCR 1701 (2006) (UN, S/2017/591). This was followed by a separate incident indicating Hizballah activity in “civilian” domains for military purposes, when the Lebanese government vouched for a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was engaging in sabotage along the Blue Line:

Through tripartite forum discussions and bilateral engagement with UNIFIL, Israel raised the issue of “suspicious” individuals in civilian attire, alleged to be Hizballah operatives, conducting “reconnaissance” of areas south of the Blue Line. UNIFIL observed and closely monitored individuals taking photographs of areas south of the Blue Line and the work of an environmental non-governmental organization (NGO), “Green without Borders”, operating in the area.

On 20 June, the Permanent Representative of Israel referred to that organization as conducting illicit activities and violations on behalf of Hizballah...UNIFIL verified the credentials of the NGO with the Lebanese authorities and received official confirmation of the organization’s proper accreditation and environmental purpose. *On 29 August, UNIFIL observed that members of the NGO had tampered with barbed wire near a Blue Line marker and referred the issue to the Lebanese authorities to prevent such incidents from reoccurring* (UN, S/2017/964, p. 23). (italicized emphasis added)

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Thus, it had become a preeminent concern for Israel that the Lebanese government, or influential elements within the government, was turning a blind eye—or possibly aiding and abetting—efforts to target Israeli military and civilian targets from within UNIFIL’s AO, operating in such a fashion as to exploit the deficiencies in UNIFIL’s mandate; a concern that the Israelis had expressed many times in the past. This became all the more concerning as Lebanon’s President, Michel Aoun himself, lauded Hizballah’s “resistance” against the State of Israel, coupled with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizballah’s rhetoric suggesting its military capacity is as strong as it has ever been, and that there would be no safe place in in Israel (referred to the country in its entirety as “occupied Palestine”) “in the event of Israeli aggression” (UN, S/2017/964, p. 22).

As can be seen, while UNIFIL has historically performed laudably in terms of its CIMIC and demining operations, as well as its ability to monitor violations of the Blue Line over the years, it has not been able to contend with the more massively powerful constellation of forces operating within its AO. In fact, it would appear that the greater the mandate UNIFIL enjoyed, the more aggressive the spoiler groups in the area became against the PSO, further undermining its credibility in the eyes of many Lebanese, international observers, and certainly the Israelis. While both the Lebanese government and the Israeli government have openly expressed the value they imbue in UNIFIL’s ongoing existence and operation, despite periods of strained relations between UNIFIL and both governments, the fact of the matter is clear that UNIFIL—for all of the reasons mentioned above—is not up to the tasks assigned to it by the UNSC.

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5.9 – Conclusion

It becomes obvious that in the period during the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War, and over the following decade, UNIFIL could count only the most minimal of successes in the pursuit of its mandate, faced as it was with a preponderance of barriers to its operation in the field. On a positive note, UNIFIL remained functional in terms of its humanitarian provision to south Lebanese citizens, with the sole exception of being limited in this capacity during the 2006 War. Additionally, UNIFIL served—and continues to serve—a vital LSR function between Israel and Lebanon, which is a significant achievement in its own right.

However, on balance, UNIFIL was unable to enforce its mandate within its AO at all. In fact, the opposite was true during this period, as Hizballah further expanded and fortified its positions and directly confronted UNIFIL on several occasions, while other militant organizations have gained a foothold in the area. Hostilities continue unabated, the porous border with Syria coupled with the Syrian refugee crisis afflicting Lebanon and Syrian and Iranian interference in domestic affairs, have all taken a toll on UNIFIL's already weak efficacy. Moreover, UNIFIL is limited by its mandate in terms of what it can do regarding investigating claims of arms smuggling in its AO, is in no position to prevent militant or Israeli violations of the Blue Line, and has on more than one occasion been stymied by the Lebanese government in carrying out its functions.

We also see that intra-PSO problems, such as divisions between contingents and a commensurate lack of cooperation, evidenced by the SMC debacle, demonstrate that overall, UNIFIL has not enjoyed an environment that is conducive to the enforcement of its mandate, requiring as it does the cooperation of the Lebanese government, the good

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will of Lebanon's neighbours, and the requisite force to actively engage and disarm armed elements challenging the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. For the UN as an institution, the most glaring issue facing UNIFIL—and all PSOs—is the failure of UN doctrine to accommodate political and operational realities on the ground. Remedying this problem has been a concern plaguing the UN for decades, and how the UN deals with this issue merits our attention.

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CHAPTER SIX: REALITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF UN PSO DOCTRINES

6.1 – Introduction

Our review of the SG reports to the UNSC candidly illustrates the trials and tribulations of UNIFIL, both in its initial and augmented iterations. The focus of those reports revolved around the challenges and opportunities affecting UNIFIL in the context of its mandate and operation on the ground. That is, it focused on reporting how UNIFIL operated in accordance with its mandate, without speaking to the specifics of the doctrines that informed its mandate in the first place.

To address doctrinal issues confronting UNIFIL, which remained unstated in official UN reports, we discuss UNIFIL's manoeuvring in the field to accommodate the realities it faced, coupled with the development of specific PSO doctrines that, in theory, offered UNIFIL and other PSOs around the world the supposed—although ultimately lacking—doctrinal support necessary to carry out their duties. We conclude by demonstrating how these doctrines have been insufficient in alleviating the external and internal challenges that UNIFIL faces, owing to their vagueness, inapplicability, and other factors that are unaccounted for in contemporary PSO doctrines.

6.2 – Assessing UNIFIL's Mandate Against its Capabilities

Logistically, a challenge for UNIFIL (both then and now) is that its enhanced mandate still conflicts with the various interpretations applied to the text by the various contingents within UNIFIL, informed as they are by their own national military doctrines to which contingents tend to defer (Murphy, 2012; Ruffa, 2014). Moreover, aside from the typical calls for the cessation of hostilities, creating demilitarized zones between the

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Blue Line and the Litani River, among other specifics, UNSCR 1701 (2006) lacks any clear direction as to how this is to be achieved, including the clear division of labour expected between LAF and UNIFIL, resulting in confusion between contingents within UNIFIL, and a tendency towards risk-aversion due to uncertainty (Murphy, 2012). For instance, given the twin realities of Hizballah's military might, and the fact of the matter that even the IDF has been unable to extinguish its presence from within Lebanon, makes the prospect of a UNIFIL-led effort to do so entirely preposterous, and beyond the scope of their abilities, even with the cooperation of LAF.

Moreover, the insistence on LAF-led efforts in disarming Hizballah is in and of itself a problem given that not only does Hizballah enjoy widespread political legitimacy among a significant proportion of the Lebanese public, but that efforts to disarm Hizballah have resulted in attacks on LAF, UNIFIL, and even domestic terrorism (Hamzeh, 2004; Ben-Ari, 2010), while also failing to consider the fact that the majority of LAF recruits are Shiites, Lebanon's fastest growing and largest confessional sect, many of whom are politically sympathetic to Hizballah (Jureidini, et al., 2007). In fact, in the four years following the 2006 war, the vast majority of Lebanese Shiites supported Hizballah, with some estimates measuring support as high as 85 to 94 percent of the Shiite population (Henkin, 2014), especially in southern Lebanon (Murphy, 2012).

As we have also seen above, the Lebanese government—whether out of conviction (Makdisi, 2011) or duress (Harel and Issacharoff, 2008)—has refused to act on disbanding Hizballah, and recognizes it as a legitimate resistance force against Israel (Makdisi, 2011). The Lebanese government uses certain pretexts to justify its position, including Israel's presence in the Shab'a Farms (and other territories claimed by

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Lebanon), Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace, the continued imprisonment of Lebanese citizens in Israeli prisons (Makdisi, 2011), as well as a final resolution to the Palestinian refugee question affecting Lebanon, and pressure from Lebanon's Syrian and Iranian benefactors, among other more secondary issues (El Ezzi, 2012).

As such, Hizballah is the *only* Lebanese militia group that is not bound by the terms of the 1991 Ta'if Accords, which ended the Lebanese Civil War, requiring all non-state militias to surrender their arms to the state. Again, for one reason or another, despite operating as a *de facto* parallel military and government to the Lebanese state, Lebanon has provided diplomatic cover to Hizballah in the past. In one instructive example, with the UNSC's adoption of UNSCR 1701 (2006), and the UNSC's previous call for "all remaining foreign forces" (UN, S/RES/1559 (2004), p. 1)—alluding to Syrian military and security agencies operating in Lebanon, Hizballah, and Palestinian militias—the Lebanese government, through its UN representative, came to the defence of Hizballah uniquely, stating boldly, and somewhat surprisingly, that:

There are no militias in Lebanon. The Lebanese national resistance appeared following the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory and will remain as long as the Israelis occupy parts of Lebanon (...) The resistance forces exist alongside the Lebanese national forces; our military authorities determine their presence and their size according to our needs. The authority of the Lebanese State extends over all of Lebanese territory except the Israeli occupied areas (quoted in Makdisi, 2011, p. 9).

Not only does such a position essentially nullify UNIFIL's mandate, insofar as the Lebanese government appears to refuse to disarm Hizballah or "act as a border guard for Israel" by adequately deploying its military forces near the Blue Line, but claiming—albeit dubiously—that LAF and Hizballah coordinate military affairs and are integrated into a national force, would essentially mean that UNIFIL's efforts to disarm Hizballah

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are moot, as well as its efforts to disarm any other armed elements as there are “no militias in Lebanon” from the perspective of the Lebanese government, not to mention the fact that such statements disincentivize Hizballah from even considering disarmament (Makdisi, 2011).

However, suggesting that the justification for Hizballah’s “resistance” rests on the need for Israel to meet certain demands betrays the fact that Lebanon does not view Hizballah as synonymous with LAF. Moreover, following the 2006 war, Lebanon had indeed deployed its forces near the Blue Line for the first time since the 1970s (El Ezzi, 2012; Sakr, 2013), indicating that the marriage between LAF and Hizballah is more myth than reality, despite the fact that the deployed force is nowhere near sufficient to disarm—or even militarily confront—Hizballah.

Further, Hizballah has been steadily and aggressively growing and arming itself since the end of the 2006 War (Blanford, 2008; Eran, 2008), independently of LAF—in that there is little indication of LAF providing arms and state resources to Hizballah’s military—reaching an estimated force composition of 2,500 active personnel and an additional 25,000 reserve fighting force as of 2013, along with a bevy of heavy military hardware including missiles, rockets, mortars, artillery, unmanned aerial vehicles, ultra-light aircraft, and a host of other offensive and defensive military equipment, such as armoured personnel carriers provided by both Iran and Syria (INSS, “Military Balance Files,” 2015), as well as establishing arms caches and explosive pits within UNIFIL’s AO (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Centre, “Further Evidence,” n.d.), and establishing long-range missile batteries just north of UNIFIL’s AO (Schneider, 2010).

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The fact that such brazen re-armament has taken place even after the disastrous consequences of the 2006 Second Lebanon War indicates that not only does UNIFIL not enjoy the full support and cooperation of the Lebanese government in disarming Hizballah (Weiner, et al., 2010-211), but there is little motivation on the part of LAF in confronting Hizballah, which may often be a product of LAF support for the organization, either officially, or due to the overwhelming pro-Hizballah sentiment among Shiite members of LAF. As Haddad explains utilizing an example of French UNIFIL soldiers on joint patrol with LAF:

On operations the quality of cooperation with the LAF depends on the mission tasks. Patrolling together in the middle of south Lebanon or observing Israel from this area has been unproblematic for the French soldiers. Cooperation is more problematic in sensitive tasks such as patrolling the Lebanon-Israel border or searching for hidden weapons.

In addition, there is what French soldiers called the 'Hezbollah factor,' meaning that working with the LAF is affected by the latter's supposed ties with the Shi'i Muqawama (Hezbollah Resistance) (Haddad, 2010, p. 574). (italicized emphasis added)

Recognizing this reality, even with an augmented mandate under UNSCR 1701 (2006), the political, social, and military context on the ground makes it impossible for UNIFIL to confront Hizballah without risking alienating government support, endangering civilian lives, as well as those of UN personnel. On the contrary, UNIFIL must establish generally harmonious relations with Hizballah to a reasonable extent in order to facilitate the humanitarian component of its new mandate, while engendering the trust of civilians that generally support Hizballah as well (Murphy, 2012). Paradoxically, UNIFIL now relies on the generosity and goodwill of the very organization it was tasked with disarming in cooperation with the Lebanese government, which has committed itself to ensuring Hizballah's "resistance" continues unimpeded.

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6.3 – UNIFIL’s Credibility Gap

As can be observed through our discussion, UNIFIL has been placed in an impossible position since its first deployment in 1978. For the first four years of its existence, UNIFIL was plagued by cross-border attacks between the IDF, the PLO, and other militant factions operating within its AO, only to then be rendered essentially useless for 18 years following Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon between 1982-2000. Following Israel’s withdrawal, UNIFIL was of little utility in preventing hostilities between Israel and Hizballah up to and including the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War, and continues to struggle with its mandate until the contemporary period. At no point did UNIFIL’s mandate, or political, military, financial, and logistical capabilities provide it the leverage necessary to fulfill its mandate, which is the fault of the UNSC, and the parties on the ground, more so than it is the fault of UNIFIL personnel on the ground (Murphy, 2012).

UNIFIL’s credibility has been harmed by the decision to deploy, and sustain, the PSO in a conflict zone that lacks the ripeness for peace, armed with a vague mandate, plagued by the machinations of powerful regional actors, a lackadaisical commitment on the part of the Lebanese government to aid it in its mandate—despite repeatedly requesting UNIFIL’s renewal every six months (Barak, 2007) for over 40 years—the free and brazen operation of Hizballah and other non-state militias in its AO, the inability to prevent IDF/IAF incursions into Lebanese territory, albeit enjoying uneven levels of support from the very population that UNIFIL is tasked with defending and aiding on the ground. UNIFIL has simply never been equipped with the tools necessary for the tasks

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assigned to it, nor have the parties to the conflict truly desired the outcome that UNIFIL was intended to facilitate.

Additionally, we have seen intra-UNIFIL obstacles to performance ranging from poor inter-contingent cohesion, including feelings of superiority on the part of Western contingents vis-à-vis non-Western contingents; limited inter-contingent contact and interoperability; the aforementioned problems of variant threat perceptions; lack of a common language in some cases; differences in training and equipment; reliance on national security doctrines; particular approaches to security and operational preferences in the field, which vary themselves from contingent to contingent; and the sectorization and siloed approach of different national contingents in different zones of operation within UNIFIL's AO (Haddad, 2010).

Thus, it is apparent that UNIFIL has failed in accomplishing its mandate due to a combination of internal and external factors, although it should be reiterated that the internal limitations are largely a product of the external design of PSOs on the part of the UNSC. Just as UNIFIL was unable to prevent Israeli invasions and subsequent occupation of Lebanon, so too has it been unable to prevent aptly-armed, trained, and motivated non-state militias—primary among them Hizballah—given the “reality of its predicament” (Murphy, 2012, p. 399), as “it was not an instrument of the Lebanese Government or a replacement for the Lebanese Army” (Murphy, 2012, p. 399).

Despite successes in monitoring and reporting on ceasefires, deescalating conflict, acting as an intermediary between the parties, protecting the civilian population, performing aggressive and lifesaving demining operations, and admirably providing humanitarian assistance and CIMIC operations in its AO:

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The peacekeeping force had no option but to accept the reality of its predicament, ‘without the mandate or firepower to do more, UNIFIL found itself in the unenviable position of watching rockets and shells fire back and forth overhead, while on occasion falling victim to direct hits itself’. The real shame is that the Security Council did nothing to change this, and that UN forces were sidelined to fulfill a role essentially as witnesses and protestors to violations of international humanitarian law (Murphy, 2012, p. 399).

As can be seen, UNIFIL had not only fallen victim to its own deficiencies in pursuing its mandate, resulting from inadequate military and logistical investments by the UN and TCCs, but also due to the very environment in which it operated, which included a well-trained, highly-motivated, and well-armed non-state militia force that zealously guarded against any interference in its operations or affairs. Moreover, the doctrines which strove to govern how UNIFIL—and other PSO’s—carried out its mandate was also a strong contributing factor to UNIFIL’s operational woes, to which we turn our attention to explore in greater detail.

6.4 – The Failure of UN PSO Doctrine

UNIFIL began as a hastily deployed PSO into a conflict zone that was ill-suited for a “first-generation” model of peacekeeping which characterized the operation until its augmentation in 2006. Moreover, even with the advent of “new” peacekeeping doctrines, such as those espoused in the UN’s 2009 *A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping* (known commonly as the “New Horizons” process)—intended as it was to offer increased latitude when militarily confronting spoiler groups, and to entice TCCs to provide troops under the pretext that their soldiers would be permitted to adequately defend themselves (Tardy, 2011)—any discussion of “robust” mandates fall flat in the face of the aforementioned obstacles confounding UN PSOs, as the mere permissibility to use force when necessary does not offer sufficient mitigation

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against the real and perceived risks facing TCCs and their respective contingents within UNIFIL, as well as PSOs around the world (Tardy, 2011).

More recently, the 2015 *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace – Politics, Partnership and People* report (known also as the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations), has recognized that “changes in conflict may be outpacing the ability of UN peace operations to respond” (UN, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace*, 2015, p. vii), and points to a specific problem that has been made very clear over the years:

Too often, mandates and missions are produced on the basis of templates instead of tailored to support situation-specific political strategies, and technical and military approaches come at the expense of strengthened political efforts. In the face of a surge in demand over the past decade, the Organization has not been able to deploy sufficient peacekeeping forces quickly and often relies on under-resourced military and police capacities. Rapidly deployable specialist capabilities are difficult to mobilize and UN forces have little or no interoperability.

Secretariat departments and UN agencies, funds and programmes struggle to integrate their efforts in the face of competing pressures, at times, contradictory messages and different funding sources. UN bureaucratic systems configured for a headquarters environment limit the speed, mobility and agility of response in the field. These chronic challenges are significant but they can, and should, be addressed (UN, *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace*, 2015, pp. vii-viii).

However, while the diagnosis illustrated in this report is well-known, it demonstrates a parroting of previous reports, with four “shifts” required to remedy the existing shortcoming in PSOs around the world, including an emphasis on political rather than military solutions to conflicts; an embrace of the concept of ‘peace operations’ to encompass the full spectrum of resources available at the UN to successfully design and implement case-specific missions; a commitment to greater collaboration with regional organizations; and a new orientation for the UN Secretariat to become more focused on

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what is needed in the field rather than considering what is palatable at UN Headquarters (UN, *Uniting Our Strengths*, 2015).

The assumption made by such doctrines concerning using “all necessary means” or in utilizing all of the UN’s resources as necessary to engage in “robust peacekeeping” (and even peacebuilding), *assumes* that the UN can deliver overwhelming force against one or more antagonistic parties in situations where this is simply required in order to carry out a mandated task. According to the UN’s own definition of “robust peacekeeping;”

Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict. By contrast, peace enforcement does not require the consent of the main parties and may involve the use of military force at the strategic or international level, which is normally for Member States under Article 2(4) of the Charter, unless authorized by the Security Council (UN, “Capstone Doctrine,” 2008, pp. 34-35).

Even the New Horizon’s definition of robustness, as “a political and operational strategy to signal the intention of a UN mission to implement its mandate and to deter threats to an existing peace process in the face of resistance from spoilers” (UN, *A New Partnership Agenda*, 2009, p. 21) does little to answer the question of “how” this can be applied in the face of overwhelming spoiler group power. Ironically, such “robustness” can only be applied, then, where the UN is the greater military force (Tardy, 2011), and only if the party to the conflict *allows* the PSO to contend with spoiler agents within a given conflict zone. Tardy (2011) refers specifically to the case of Lebanon and Hizballah in demonstrating the problems associated with the idea of “robust” peacekeeping:

The full backing of the host state is crucial, in particular when confronting spoilers...when spoilers are either the state itself or resistance groups such as Hezbollah, then the very feasibility of robustness is at stake...altering the nature of peace operations through the adoption of a more openly robust posture is

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likely to lead to unpredictable counter-reactions—concerning host acceptance, spoilers’ behaviour, impacts on local actors, and even TCC motives and behaviour.

Robustness may deter some spoilers, but it may also induce reactions or new forms of disruption that would not have appeared in the absence of robustness. Faced with a robust military force, politically motivated groups may change tactics or areas of operations in a way that will further complicate the robust approach...although robustness is presented as a solution, there may be cases where it is part of the problem (Tardy, 2011, p. 163).

Again, the implication in this definition is that if the consent of the main parties is not required, and the use of force can be readily brought to bear using “all necessary means,” then the UN would need to have the corporate capacity to subdue the armed elements, or military power, in question. However, without the backing of the state, the use of overwhelming force itself may escalate the conflict with the spoilers doing more harm than good, especially in the context of Lebanon, as Hizballah is an official political party in Lebanon. Therefore, aside from theatres of conflict where this may indeed be possible, robust—or second generation—peacekeeping cannot realistically be applied in the case of UNIFIL giving the overwhelming military might of both the IDF and Hizballah. Thus, UN peacekeeping doctrine is of little utility in theory if it cannot be applied practically.

A possible solution to the problem posed by “robustness” in UN peacekeeping is if PSO activities can be coupled with political strategies and tactics that would affect the broad-based legitimacy enjoyed by Hizballah, and other spoiler groups in similar contexts around the world, or by exploiting political weaknesses in a spoiler group organization or operation in order to maximize the effect of robust peace enforcement in a given theatre (Valensi, 2015).

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Masters and Laub (2014) have pointed out that Hizballah's embroilment in the Syrian civil war since 2011 on behalf of the Assad Regime—its Syrian patron—has embittered a significant proportion of their Shiite constituents who fear that prioritizing Hizballah's weapons routes (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2013), and willingness to invest blood and treasure to defend the regime, has illustrated its greater degree of loyalty to Iran and Syria than to Lebanon, as its detractors have claimed since Hizballah first formed in 1982 (White, 2013).

However, Hizballah's detractors are not likely the same people that support or vote for the party, limiting their influence on its behaviour, operating as they do outside of Hizballah's constituent base. In addition, much of these considerations are speculative and require a confluence of events to form perfectly in order for peace enforcement in such contexts to bear fruit. If that is the case, it can hardly be said that UNIFIL can contribute to enforcing its mandate, unless a "perfect storm" of conditions are set out for it to do so.

6.5 - Conclusion

What becomes clear when considering the doctrinal challenges of the UN, coupled with the internal and external challenges facing UNIFIL, is that the more things change, the more they remain the same. We have seen the frequency with which new doctrines have been developed in the UN, intended admirably to accommodate the changing nature of conflict around the world, but ultimately to little effect. Moreover, the insurmountable strength of UNIFIL's combined "external" enemies in the field makes it impossible to even consider meaningful military enforcement of the mandate, especially

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when compounded with UNIFIL's "internal" challenges ranging from poor inter-contingent cohesion, language barriers, training and equipment disparities, different motivation levels, operational preferences, and varied SOPs that are employed in siloed fashion.

Having thoroughly reviewed the historical context, theoretical framework, and official UN literature pertaining to UNIFIL, we direct our focus to the methodological approaches utilized in this study to ascertain the perspectives of Israeli participants regarding UNIFIL's performance since its creation in 1978, up until 2017.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND FRAMEWORK

7.1 – Introduction

The selected methodological approach utilized in this study is hybrid in nature. Qualitative and in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and data analyzed inductively, utilizing Systematic Ground Theory (SGT), coupled with a comparison of participant data to the available academic and gray literature on peacekeeping and peacebuilding theory, as well as UNIFIL's historical performance.

The logic behind this approach is elucidated below, and revolves around an effort to limit the researcher's bias by relaying the participant's perspective in context, to the greatest possible extent, and to further hone in on the accuracy of the interpretation of information by comparing this data to findings in the available literature and relevant policy documents through triangulation. Thus, an empirical approach to deriving conclusions from the data is likely to emerge without relying heavily on the subjective biases of the researcher. We discuss the specifics about how this was accomplished in detail below.

7.2 – Methodological Approach: Systematic Grounded Theory (SGT)

GT is a qualitative method of inquiry derived from the field of sociology which premises that raw data gathered from individuals focusing on particular experiences unique to the participants, can be consolidated into explanatory theories of behaviour and perception, through a process involving the identification and isolation of common themes and points of departure relative to an aggregate of a sum of interviewees (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of this method is to identify common behaviours that result in particular processes, and is

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therefore, particularly well-suited to research endeavours where information on a given subject is limited or entirely embryonic (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally invented GT as a method designed to avoid the perceived pitfalls of sociological inquiry at the time, which overwhelmingly favoured quantitative research in pursuit of the development of theories to explain societal behaviour. It served as a challenge to the norm at the time, insofar as it sought to demonstrate the utility of qualitative research—although not at the expense of quantitative research—in developing applicable theoretical frameworks as well (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Serving as a response to past conventional methodological practice, GT seeks to address the methodological shortcomings associated with the sociological testing of “grand theories” at the expense of analyzing under-theorized phenomena that may have been of equal or greater importance; that is, placing emphasis on the subject or participant’s perspectives rather than attributing a participant’s perspective to a societal phenomenon from the outset through direct observation. However, those researchers who wished to engage in this novel form of inquiry were concerned about having their research disregarded as insufficiently rigorous, and therefore invalid. As such, sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed “grounded theory (GT)” as a methodological response to this problem, utilizing the approaches described below.

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7.3 – Employing Systematic Grounded Theory (SGT)

GT is both inductive and deductive in its approach, and allows for new theories to be generated from qualitative data that is buttressed by field notes, interview transcripts, and other sources, in a rigorous fashion that is intended to rule out bias or over-reliance on one particular source of qualitative data. In this approach, the researcher develops a significant set of concepts related to a given phenomenon through a review of a substantial amount of qualitative data, subsequently “coding”—or determining patterns—and recoding concepts into smaller and smaller categories that make it simpler to digest the information intellectually.

Furthermore, such coding helps differentiate between causal and contributing factors to a given phenomenon, so that means-ends confusion is limited and erroneous findings are eliminated—or at the very least—mitigated against. Such a process compels the researcher to study qualitative material in a manner which limits the application of their own personal biases on to the data; rendering it more objective than has previously been the case, when in the pursuit of “grand theories,” an end was presumed, and research was conducted to test the applicability of a given phenomenon to an already accepted theoretical framework.

This very process of data collection spurs further theoretical sampling as insights are gained and new data is required to answer previously unforeseen questions, in order to formulate an appropriate answer for a given question. Thus, information is “saturated” to the point where a new case-specific theory can be developed that will be stronger and more quantifiable upon independent analysis by other parties. Hence, the research becomes more credible and exhaustive as a result of this approach. Only data that can be

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supported with evidence will be kept, any data that is only supported with inference data will be disregarded through the coding process.

As a corollary regarding elites, it should be noted that in an effort to balance the need for transparency and confidentiality within this research process, the redaction or obscuring of sensitive information, including through the use of pseudonyms was utilized to protect their anonymity. As much information as possible will be divulged to the reader through the provision of coded information so that the robustness of the study is not overly compromised by the need to safeguard participant identities. Relatedly, in some instances involving elite testimony, official documentation or other peer-reviewed research may be relied upon as they offer greater transparency, but this problem is not unique to GT alone, and can be overcome by engaging in topic saturation and triangulation (see below) to supplement any narrative provided by the relevant elites.

Thus, all qualitative data gathered in the course of this study was rendered through a GT coding process, as described above, in order to allow for a succinct picture to emerge from a wide variety of data sources. The information was corroborated through triangulation with official documentation, in order to garner quality responses that address our research questions. In sum, themes emerged inductively from the data.

GT includes various techniques which were employed throughout the course of the study, including:

1. Qualitative, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (mentioned above), including (potentially) elites within UNIFIL;
2. Snowballing; and
3. Triangulation;

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These research techniques were selected on the basis that they best suit the purpose of addressing our central research questions. Provided below is a rationale for their selection, the intended preliminary interview questions that were used throughout the research endeavour, as well as a discussion of both the ethical and special considerations unique to this particular study. This section concludes with a tentative timeline and a note on the study's significance to the Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) literature.

Over the past four decades, GT has branched into three major schools of thought, which incorporated elements from other methodological schools of thought, resulting in a distinct division between contemporarily available approaches to GT. The first school of thought remains true to the original vision of GT described above. The most recent school of thought is that of *Constructivist Grounded Theory* (CGT), which posits that the researcher must aim to preserve the specific meaning that participants attribute to their own experiences, as a way to best convey the data provided to the researcher.

However, as per much literature critical of constructivism, the primary flaw of this approach—at least for the purpose of our study—is that this prevents the researcher from identifying patterns of thought or behaviour, as all forms of meaning must be mediated solely through the participants. In other words, if the researcher is unable to interpret meanings or identify trends from various interviewees, no cross-comparison can be made, which inevitably prevents the development of a cogent explicative theory of a given phenomenon. The endeavour becomes more oriented towards relaying information provided rather than wrestling with the implications of that information (Charmaz, 2006).

The first school of thought to emerge out of GT is known as *Systematic Grounded Theory* (SGT), and is similar to GT in that it seeks to achieve the same objective of

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establishing a novel theoretical framework from new and raw data gathered on a relatively unexplored subject. The primary distinction between GT and SGT surrounds the latter's emphasis, which is absent in the former, of the utility of reflexivity on the part of the researcher to eliminate bias when gathering data from participants. SGT takes the qualitative method further than originally designed, insofar as it provides more latitude for the participant to inform meanings of the data than preferencing a privileged role to the researcher as the sole interpreter of the data, without going as far as CGT in downplaying the interpretations of the researcher to a far greater extent (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

To that end, SGT operates on a series of principles, which will be elucidated below:

1. Data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously;
2. Data is subsequently codified, and then categorized, through an iterative comparative process;
3. Theories are developed, and refined, as more data is collected, analyzed, and subsequently codified and categorized;
4. The above three steps are supplemented with the use of field notes on the part of the researcher, to identify overarching categories or themes emerging from the data;
5. Relationships between these overarching categories are identified;
6. Continued gaps are identified, and the above 5 steps continue until gaps can be remedied;

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7. Upon completion of the above six steps, a theory is developed, which can be supplemented by the use of other modes of inquiry (Charmaz, 2006).

In sum, SGT uses a “systematic” approach to gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to ensure that data categorization is grounded in the data itself, while also taking into consideration the perspectives and interpretations of both the participants and researchers, and was the school of GT utilized in this study.

It should be noted, however, that the above steps are not always sequential, but can happen simultaneously in some cases, and are iterated repeatedly as new data emerges to refine the emergent theories. This allows for a systematized theory to emerge from the data, while limiting researcher bias, insofar as new data can force a modification of a theory as categories/emergent themes are increasingly challenged. If new data corroborates the existing categories, then it demonstrates the validity and explicatory power of the theory and can only be modified if new data emerges to substantively challenge the emergent theory (Creswell, 2012). The actual process of data analysis encompasses three phases: *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selecting coding*.

7.3.1 - *Open Coding*

Open coding refers to the determination of patterns, or key themes, that emerge from the data immediately after the first interview onwards. For instance, if someone mentions that they felt “fear” over a given phenomenon several times, the concept of “fear” is assigned as a “code” to be catalogued and numbered in terms of frequency. This coding demonstrates the recognition of a pattern of behaviors or thought processes that emerge endogenously from the participants themselves.

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Throughout the open coding process, the concepts or themes that emerge from the qualitative interviewing process determine the next series of questions that are asked to the future cohort of participants within the study until a point of “saturation,” occurs where similar answers are provided by various participants demonstrating that a point of questioning has been exhausted (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). To achieve this outcome, data is obtained through audio-recorded interviews and subsequently transcribed and analyzed and cross-compared with data from other research participants (as well as the same participant as new ideas and theories come to the mind of the researcher during the course of an interview) allowing broad themes to emerge (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Interviews are also supplemented with field notes written by the researcher during and after each interview capturing information such as body language, tone, emphasis, and other pertinent information (Strauss and Corbin, 1998)

This cross-comparative method is a defining feature of all GT schools of thought (Charmaz, 2000), and is a process, which is iterated by the researcher until all data is sufficiently compared and broken down into digestible categories so as to inform future rounds of questions and assemble a cogent understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

For instance, using the example of “fear” from Participant A, we see that if a particular question elicits a code of “fear” from the participant, but the same question elicits a code of “hunger” from Participant B, this would indicate that a refining of the question leading to these codes, or a saturation of data over the course of multiple interviews, would be necessary to determine if this code is indicative of a pattern, an

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outlier, or some other consideration to be determined through the process. Once this process is sufficiently completed, data can then be “axial coded.”

7.3.2 - Axial Coding

After completing open coding on a set of data, the second step is *axial coding*, which refers to the aggregation of “open codes” into umbrella “categories” for easier digestibility and to determine overarching themes that are linked between various participants. This stage begins to give interpretive meaning to the trends identified through the open coding process, and illustrates links between different categories. For instance, if “fear” is linked to “war” we can begin to demonstrate an emergent theory that armed conflict, and its concomitant consequences, lead to fear for one’s safety and security.

All of the keywords here could in and of themselves be coded further into higher degrees of specificity and precision. In essence, axial coding involves narrowing in on specific categories that were developed in the open coding process. At this stage, categories—not codes—are examined to determine relationships to other categories that have emerged as well, and consolidation happens where necessary (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Once this stage is complete, the researcher engages in *selective coding*.

7.3.3 - Selective Coding

Selective coding is the final stage in the data gathering and interpretation process within SGT, whereby the aggregate categories are analyzed and transformed into a coherent theoretical framework that is intended to explain the meaning behind the codes

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and categories themselves (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2012). What the categories mean, and how they relate together in a causal or correlational fashion to develop what becomes the “theory” of the explored phenomenon, as the categories are “integrated” into a *central category* to achieve this outcome (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The central category is the fulcrum upon which the phenomenon is best explained and is predicated on its prevalence and reiteration throughout the total data set gathered by the researcher (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

Upon establishing a theory evident from categorization of the open and axial coding process, and the supplementation of this information with reflexive field notes, the researcher works to validate the theory against any inconsistencies within the theory. That is, a thorough review of the categorization process is carried out to ensure that the influence of research bias is as limited as possible, and that the theory can stand up to scrutiny by a third party observer (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

If inconsistencies are found to hinder the utility and explicative strength of a theory, this may indicate either a dearth—or even a glut—of information which may require further data gathering through the coding process, or a need to engage reflexively and determine if particular categories are misleading, or irrelevant, or ascertain whether there may be an insufficient number of codes within a given category to support the theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In sum, inconsistencies require different forms of remedy depending on what caused the inconsistencies to emerge. Overall, the SGT methodological is one rigorous tool that was employed in this study, but like any and all methodological instruments has both strengths and limitations, the latter of which must be mitigated against to a reasonable extent.

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7.4 - Special Considerations and Risk Mitigation

For any methodology, including SGT, to be of value in generating novel data to any useful degree of confidence, it is essential for the implementation of that methodology to be as reasonably free of bias as possible. Thus, it is essential to admit that SGT allows for the *subjective* interpretation of data on the part of the researcher in addition to what is provided by the participants. However, as illustrated above, the writing of reflexive field notes, coupled with the filtering of data through the coding and categorization process, is intended to allow the researcher to stay true to the meaning ascribed to the data by the participants, while limiting the researcher's own influence, and was employed during this study.

For instance, emotional reactions such as laughter, smiling, delaying an answer, and other body language and physical cues were noted during the interviews in relation to the question asked that elicited that response. Such feedback from reflexive memo writing was incorporated into the transcripts, which informed the expression of the results emerging from each interview. Specific measures taken to mitigate researcher bias will be elucidated upon in the "Research Design" section below for specific examples and explanations.

7.4.1 - Utility of SGT in Answering the Central Research Question

To the best knowledge of the researcher, the topic explored in this study is the first exploratory inquiry into Israeli perspectives surrounding the performance of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). As such, the "ground up" nature of SGT allows for a rigorous, yet simple to execute, method of inquiry that is ideal for

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exploring a hitherto under-researched phenomenon. Moreover, the SGT approach gives voice to the participants, but grants flexibility to the researcher in order to ascribe broader meaning to the aggregate data gathered from multiple participants in pursuit of a cohesive theoretical framework (Cooney, 2010). This approach, coupled with other methodological approaches (to be discussed below) serves to strengthen the validity of the study's findings and open the door for future research on this novel subject.

7.5 – Semi-Structured Interviews in an SGT Framework

This research endeavour is qualitative in nature, in that it gathered subjective data from participants, in terms of their perceptions, perspectives, and experiences, in an effort to allow for a conveyance of rich description regarding UNIFIL operations from the perspective of the relevant stakeholders. In the words of Amy Busby, “[q]ualitative research aims to enhance our understanding of social processes by studying actors in their natural setting, paying attention to contextual factors and seeking to understand phenomena and actors on their own terms; the *emic* perspective” (Busby, 2011, p. 7). Semi-structured interviews allowed for participants to freely express their knowledge, perspectives, beliefs, conceptions, and understandings (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006).

The interviews conducted ranged on average between 45 to 75 minutes in length, but all were scheduled with at least 1-to-2 hours in mind, so as to provide adequate time for the interviewees/respondents to discuss and reflect on their perspectives surrounding UNIFIL without feeling pressed for time. The conduct of the interviews was ethnographic to an extent, in that it facilitated the participant's subjective insights and meanings that they ascribed to their perspectives and experiences (Busby, 2011; Lederach, 1996). In

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other words, the participants were treated as the subject matter experts and were permitted to convey information, as they personally perceived it to exist in their socially constructed reality.

7.6 - Interviewing Elites: Methodological Considerations

The research design of the study was crafted considering the potential involvement of elite participants that had operated, or continue to operate in hierarchical and bureaucratic settings such as governments and militaries, particularly the IDF and UNIFIL. Mitigating against some of the risks associated with elites, being individuals holding privileged positions within a power structure, and who may therefore have unique influence over the information that is presented, or withheld from the researcher, is critical (Busby, 2011). Given the unavoidable reality that this study sought to engage such stakeholders that operate, or have operated, in a hierarchical and bureaucratic atmosphere, the study was designed to consider the pitfalls associated with interviewing elites, such as issues arising around command structures, reporting relationships, power dynamics, and issues of confidentiality. Given that elites are essentially individuals who hold a privileged position within a society (or organization), who in a research context have significant control over what information is—and is not—accessible to the researcher (Busby, 2011, pp. 9-10), this would have to be consciously factored into the limitation of the study.

Moreover, elites tend to want to protect their privileged status, and may be reluctant to impart information that could reflect negatively on themselves, or the

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organization, which could in turn jeopardize their position. As such, there were several considerations taken into account surrounding the risks associated with elite participants:

- Elites may convey ideas that further their personal or organizational agendas (Kezar, 2003);
- Elites may exaggerate their roles or value when relaying information (Berry, 2002);
- Elites may withhold data in an attempt to censor information, or censor information relayed by other people if their identities are known to them (Busby, 2011);
- Elites tend to have limited time and do not trust researchers easily (Fontaine-Ortiz and Inomata, 2006);
- Any study interviewing elites necessarily requires mitigation measures against the aforementioned risks (Berry, 2002) including doing as much background research as possible and establishing trust with prospective elite participants prior to engaging them in a study (Mikecz, 2012).

While the study was designed with these considerations in mind, it became clear that securing the participation of elites was difficult given the nature of the study. IDF and UNIFIL personnel approached to participate in the study either did not respond, or refused to participate as they were either concerned over having their identities revealed, or they were not permitted to participate by their chain of command. As such, no “elites” as defined above were interviewed as part of the study.

However, as would have been the case with elites, all other participants were approached from a position of respect and recognition of the researcher’s own

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positionality as an external researcher. I established preliminary contact with the participants in order to introduce myself, the nature of the study, engender trust and comfort between myself and prospective participants, and in order to agree to norms of behaviour, and clarifying the scope of the discussion and the rights and obligations of the researcher and the participant (Mikecz, 2012).

Pre-study contact was essential in establishing rapport and trust prior to any formal conduct of interviews, for the very purpose of ensuring openness and transparency in the research relationship (Busby, 2011), and to meaningfully bond with the interviewees. Additionally, all participants were made aware of the fact that the research relationship between the researcher and the participant could be continuously (re)negotiated throughout the process to ensure a positive working relationship and continued participation, the terms of which were made clear in the “Invitation to Participate in Study (Participant Invitation)” provided to all participants (see Appendix 1).

7.7 - Triangulation

Triangulation, or the combination of multiple methods in the study of a given phenomenon, was employed in tandem with the aforementioned approaches. For instance, throughout the process, the researcher consulted the available literature on PSOs, UNIFIL, and official UN documentation in an effort to supplement the data gathered from other methodological techniques used in this study. This approach allowed for a robust comparative analysis of the data gathered with the academic literature, gray literature, and the data derived from the SGT process, in an effort to limit incidents of

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bias that could have normally resulted from an over-reliance on participant-derived data in isolation.

As such, triangulation serves as a way to critically engage with the gathered data and make use of multiple sources of information independent of the data provided solely from the participants themselves. Provided our understanding of the theoretical approaches used in this study, as well as the rationale for their use, the specifics of the study's design and its implementation are discussed below.

7.8 - Research Design, Implementation, and Significance

The purpose of this study is to generate a novel exploration of Israeli stakeholder (and UNIFIL personnel) perspectives of UNIFIL's performance since its creation in 1978 up until 2017. The potential significance of this research centres around the fact that despite an abundance of research on UN peacekeeping in the Middle East, including specifically on UNIFIL, there has been little attention afforded to how UNIFIL is perceived from the perspective of Israel's citizens, despite having direct interface with, and impact on, the lives of Israelis for over four decades. Given this relationship, there exists a noteworthy gap in the available literature on UNIFIL and its impacts on Israeli society and security, which this study aims to rectify as an exploratory and preliminary step towards future research on the subject. The inclusion of UNIFIL perspectives is not in and of itself a new undertaking, as studies exist exploring UNIFIL's self-perception (Ruffa, 2008, 2014; Haddad, 2010; Calculli, 2014), but despite not being possible as stated above, was believed to be a worthwhile contribution to an otherwise more novel study.

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With this aim in mind, the study sought to accomplish at least three direct outcomes—along with the revealing of supplemental data which cannot be predicted from the outset—including:

1. An understanding of grassroots Israeli civilian and military perspectives (and UNIFIL personnel perspectives, where possible) on UNIFIL's performance between 1978-2017, in order to inform a richer understanding of UNIFIL's mission and its impact outside of its mandated AO;
2. An understanding of Israeli perspectives on what UNIFIL can, if anything, do to improve its operation by those most directly impacted by its operations; and
3. To contribute to the existing academic literature on the topic, so as to enhance UN peacekeeping design, deployment, and operations in the future, both in the context of UNIFIL and elsewhere.

To this end, the central research question of the study asks:

What are the perspectives of the Israeli civilian and military populations regarding UNIFIL's performance between 1978-2017, and how can this data be used to inform positive change within UNIFIL?

The central research question will inform this study, which is the first of its kind exploring Israeli perspectives on the performance of UNIFIL between the years of 1978 and 2017, and serves as a significant contribution to the existing gap in the available PACS literature.

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7.9 - Candidate Recruitment

The question itself requires a unique candidate profile in order to most satisfactorily answer the inquiry. All candidates for the study had to be at least eighteen years of age at the time of their participation in the study, and satisfy at least one of the criteria below:

- Have lived in Israel's "Northern District" at any point since March 19, 1978;
- Have served, or are serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) (or UNIFIL) along the Israel-Lebanon border, or within Lebanon itself, at any point since March 19, 1978; and
- Have served, or are serving with UNIFIL in any capacity since March 19, 1978.

Candidate selection was limited to this set of criteria as a way to narrow the focus of the study to the Israeli citizens that would be most impacted by the security situation along the Israel-Lebanon border. Residents of Israel's Northern District, which for the purpose of the study extends from Israel's Haifa district eastward to Israel's border with Jordan, and all the way up until Israel's borders with Lebanon and Syria, including the Golan Heights, and those who have served in the context of conflict in northern Israel and/or Lebanon, were surmised to possess unique insight on the security situation compared to Israelis living in more central or southward regions of the country, and having had no combat experience in the north/Lebanon to supplement their perspectives. Additionally, a caveat was made to allow UNIFIL personnel to be recruited in order to gather their impressions as well, so as to further supplement the data and strengthen the study through the triangulation process. However, as mentioned above, no UNIFIL personnel were ultimately recruited for participation in the study.

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The researcher's "Invitation to Participate in Study (Participant Invitation)" was distributed through a variety of local, national, international, academic, Israeli and Jewish organizations, explaining the purpose of the study, and a complete description of how the study would be conducted, what is involved as a participant—including their rights, and the researcher's obligations to them, and so forth (see Appendix 1)—which were distributed by these organizations through their membership lists, with their permission.

The letter contained the researcher's contact information, and that of the researcher's Research Supervisor, Dr. Sean Byrne, so that interested parties could contact the researcher or the supervisor directly and express any interest, concern, or feedback. The researcher also leveraged personal networks in the Jewish and Israeli expatriate community in Canada (and elsewhere) to garner participant interest. While the researcher had also considered the possibility of travelling to Israel, and elsewhere, to engage in field research and in-person interviews with prospective participants, various circumstances made this unfeasible during the course of the study.

Interested participants reached out to the researcher either through my University of Manitoba student email address, as listed on the Participant Invitation, or through other means of contact depending on the level of familiarity those individuals had with the researcher, or their own personal preference, including establishing contact through social media or private email. All participants had preliminary discussions with me prior to their involvement, and before reiterating the information clarified in the Participant Invitation and other documents. After understanding the specifics of the study, and expressing an interest to formally participate, an agreed upon meeting time and method (e.g., Skype, telephone, in-person, etc.) was selected, and the requisite documents were signed and

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submitted to the researcher. Research sites included participants' homes, whether in person or through Skype or telephone, or the researchers' home office.

All participants completed a consent form (see Appendix 2) and participant questionnaire (see Appendix 3) requesting demographic information, and were informed that their interviews would be conducted in an audio-recorded, semi-structured fashion ranging from one-to-two hours in length, although this timeframe was not mandatory. Additionally, all participants were informed of their right to provide feedback at any point during, or after the interview, as well as to withdraw from the study at any point entirely without consequence or prejudice prior to the publication of the research findings (formal submission), and to avoid any questions they felt uncomfortable answering. Any participant choosing to withdraw for the study would immediately have their data expunged from the study as well. However, no participants requested to withdraw from the study.

As mentioned earlier, interview times varied from participant to participant. Participants were also given the opportunity to request a copy of their transcripts and the preliminary findings of the study, and those who chose this option were supplied with the relevant materials as soon as it became available. Interviews were audio-recorded on a password encrypted device, with access available only to the researcher. No other individual had access to the device, or its encrypted password, during the course of the study. The device was kept in a locked location with access available only to the researcher.

All participants were referred to using the letter "P" for participant, and an associated number, ranging from "P1" to "P20," as pseudonyms to mask their identity.

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Any identifying information, such as a participant's name, involvement in a particular event, or any statement made that could reveal their identity was obscured, omitted, or presented as a summation of ideas.

Moreover, to further ensure the identities of participants remain protected, all demographic information provided was also obscured within the study, with any information being presented as an aggregate so that no reader can discern the specific identity of any particular participant.

Upon completion of the interviews, participants were offered the opportunity to provide feedback to the researcher, which if relevant, was incorporated into the study, and influenced the direction of future interviews. Each participant was asked to suggest a subsequent individual(s) they would recommend the researcher could be put in contact with through the participant's personal network, as part of the "snowball" sampling method used to garner further participants.

The researcher relayed to the participants that no identities needed to be divulged, and that they could convey the researcher's interest in speaking to other prospective participants if they were reciprocally interested, at which point contact would be established, as appropriate. On some occasions, names of actual individuals were given to me along with phone numbers or email addresses, with the permission of the participants in question, allowing the researcher to reach out and recruit further participants. This method of snowballing was particularly helpful, as individuals tended to shy away from the researcher's initial approach of relying on the Participant Invitation to garner sufficient interest. In total, 20 participants were recruited for the study.

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7.10 - Candidate Profiles

Out of the 20 participants, 15 were male, and 5 were female. All participants identified as Jewish, with 14 identifying as Ashkenazi, 4 as Sephardic, 1 as Ashkenazi and Sephardic, and one as Kavkazi (Hebrew for the “Caucasus region”). Half of the participants (10) had served militarily with the IDF, either in Lebanon or in proximity to the Blue Line, while the other half had either served elsewhere or had not served in the IDF at any point. The vast majority of participants (17) had lived in Israel’s north, while the remaining 3 participants had lived elsewhere but served in the area, or in Lebanon. Again, no UNIFIL personnel were interviewed in this study.

7.11 - Ethical Considerations

Prior to all interviews, as well as at the beginning of each interview, participants were verbally reminded of the purpose of the study, and to the fact that their participation was entirely voluntary and confidential, as per their consent form, which was relayed to them prior to every interview. They were also informed that the research being conducted was approved by the University of Manitoba’s Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board, and that the researcher had completed the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics*.

Through the consent form, all participants were made aware of the inherent risks associated with participation, particularly the potential—albeit slight—risk of experiencing distressing emotions due to the necessary engagement in difficult topics, including participation in military operations, and/or experiences of conflict as either a civilian, member of the IDF, or member of UNIFIL. The researcher committed to

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providing participants with locally available psychosocial resources in their respective areas, should the need arise, but no participants requested such services or expressed any distress to the researcher.

7.12 - Preliminary Research Questions

In SGT, as theory emerges from the “ground up” so to speak, the first cohort of participants were asked a set of questions which informed new questions to be asked to separate participant cohorts until the point of saturation within the threshold of the required participants. The first set of questions, which were the main guiding questions of the study, were as follows:

1. Please share your thoughts regarding the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
2. Please tell me about your experience in whichever of these apply:
 - a. Serving in Lebanon with the Israel Defense Force (IDF);
 - b. Serving along the Israel-Lebanon border with the IDF;
 - c. Living in Israel’s “Northern District” during any of the conflicts with Lebanese militia organizations as a civilian;
 - d. Serving with UNIFIL.
3. If applicable, please describe your experiences with UNIFIL.
4. What, if anything, should UNIFIL be doing differently?
5. What is your perspective on UNIFIL’s strengths and challenges?
6. Who would you recommend I speak with to better understand UNIFIL’s performance?

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These questions were selected precisely for their generality, given that they would likely spur broad responses in some cases which could be further refined through probing questions that would emerge uniquely and organically, varying from participant to participant. Those probing questions then generated subsequent questions, which became formally incorporated into future interviews, establishing themes that emerged after the SGT coding processes via the *constant comparative method*, whereby these same sets of questions and the data derived from them were constantly compared with new data to rule out irregularities and determine common themes.

For instance, following the seventh interview, a new set of *particular* questions emerged out of the unique and context-specific probing questions, as general themes became clear through the iterated open, axial, and selective coding process. These questions were:

1. What is UNIFIL doing in the north?
2. What should(n't) UNIFIL be doing?
3. What role or impact do regional neighbours have on UNIFIL's operations?
4. What actors do you feel are the greatest hindrance to UNIFIL?
5. How do you feel about the security situation in Israel's north?
6. What impact does the security situation in the north have on Israelis and/or yourself?
7. Do you feel that the UN is, or is not, biased against Israel?
8. How do you think UNIFIL personnel perceive Israel?
9. Does Israel hinder or help UNIFIL's work?
10. Does Lebanon hinder or help UNIFIL's work?

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11. What more should Israel be doing to secure the north?
12. Should the UN be keeping the peace along the border?
13. Is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict separate or related to the Israel-Lebanon conflict?
14. Where do you see yourself on the political spectrum?
15. What would an ideal situation be along the Israel-Lebanon border?
16. Do you feel confident, or not confident, in the IDF's ability to protect Israel's northern region?
17. How do you feel about the Lebanese public?

Not all questions listed were asked in each interview, as on many occasions, participants would answer a line of thought prior to having been asked. However, all questions were oriented to garner rich and detailed information that would contribute to a robust answering of the study's central research question.

7.13 - Illustrating the Coding Process

For the sake of illustration, we provide an example of the open coding process to clarify how the three coding stages—open, axial, and selective—were directly applied to a line of transcript text used in the study. The open coding process requires a line-by-line analysis of the participant transcripts in order to determine what themes emerge from the “ground up,” which is then constantly compared, re-compared, and refined until a common theme, or “selective code” is established. For instance, we have two lines of text from P4:

Well, I know that the UNIFIL was created just to be between two countries, just to monitor and avoid clashes. But I consider this a little bit biased, or not a little

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bit; I consider it biased, because the reports of whatever they do are always in favour of the Lebanese, or Arabs, or Muslims. And most of the time, it is against the Jewish nation.

When conducting an “open coding” of the text, particular codes that distinguish themselves as instructive of the participant’s perspective that is of significance to the central research question are identified. For illustration purposes, the key areas appear underlined:

Well, I know that the UNIFIL was created just to be between two countries, just to monitor and avoid clashes. But I consider this a little bit biased, or not a little bit; I consider it biased, because the reports of whatever they do are always in favour of the Lebanese, or Arabs, or Muslims. And most of the time, it is against the Jewish nation.

Here alone, we see there are four “open codes” that can be identified within the three sentences. The parts of the sentence highlighted are the “open codes” which are interpreted into axial codes that refine the open codes into more easily expressed themes.

These axial codes would take on a look such as:

1. UNIFIL’s role is to monitor and avoid clashes between Israel and Lebanon;
2. UNIFIL is biased against Israel;
3. UNIFIL prefers the Lebanese, or Arab, or Muslims over the Jewish nation.
4. UNIFIL is mostly opposed to the Jewish nation.

This open and axial coding is repeated over and over again, for each and every sentence of each and every transcript, and compared over and over again until the emergent themes are “saturated” by the data. “Saturation,” refers to the reappearance of common themes over and over again, to the exclusion of other themes, indicating that a subject has been explored exhaustively. These open codes are amalgamated into axial codes, which are then amalgamated into “selective codes,” in their final form of

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expression for the reader. This final form of coding makes data interpretation clearer and more easily digested and understood by the reader. Therefore, in this example, the “selective codes” that emerged from this process, among others, include:

1. *Perception of UNIFIL’s role* – that is, what the participant believes UNIFIL’s role to be, whether rightly or wrongly.
2. *UNIFIL is biased against Israel* – the participant expresses a perception that UNIFIL is biased against Israel.
3. *Civilizational conflict* – Arabs, Muslims, and Lebanese people are viewed aggregately when considered in opposition to the “Jewish nation.”
4. *Antisemitism* – connected to the third code, where in this regard, there is a relationship in the perception of the participant between what motivates UNIFIL’s perceived bias in favour of the civilizational conflict against the Jewish nation.

What can be observed, at least in part, is that through a repetitious “distilling” of the data, one can use SGT to extract the core aspect of meaning attributed to each participant’s perspective that enhances reliability (in that the perspective remains faithful to the participant’s expressed ideas and worldviews), validity (in that themes are determined in relation to not only one interview, but a series of interviews that reach the point of saturation and force the researcher to challenge assumptions and revise theories, as necessary), while allowing for the researcher’s own subjective analysis to give depth to the data, especially through corroboration via triangulation

7.14 - Conclusions

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The study employed SGT as a well-suited qualitative methodology utilizing open, axial, and selective coding to draw out themes from a set of novel data surrounding an exploratory subject. The study was conducted in tandem with a literature review on peacekeeping and peacebuilding theory, a contextualization of this theory with the specific attributes and history of UNIFIL and its performance through a combination of peer-reviewed and gray literature, and further buttressed by a historical contextualization of Israel-Lebanon relations, and other theoretical considerations, in order to triangulate the data and avoid issues of bias, or contradictions in the findings. With this in mind, we can review the results gathered from the qualitative interviews, compare and contrast the data with the available literature, and convey the subsequent findings of the study, and identify directions for future research.

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CHAPTER EIGHT: ISRAELI PERSPECTIVES ON UNIFIL, 1978-2017**8.1 - Introduction**

Participants relayed a very broad and rich set of data, as they were given the opportunity to express their perspectives openly in line with the questions presented in this study. As such, the answers given had significant overlap, but key themes emerged nonetheless, which have been separated into separate chapters for conceptual purposes and ease of reading. What was relayed in the course of the interviews very early on was a questioning of UNIFIL's particular role, or roles, in its AO. Participants varied significantly in their understanding of UNIFIL's history, objectives, and impact; a reality that was determined by the participant's background and socialization in Israel, and elsewhere.

Our discussion explores the differences and similarities between participants, while identifying the common themes that emerged through a distilling of the research questions utilizing the SGT methodology.

8.2 – Israeli Perceptions of UNIFIL's Role

When discussing this particular category with participants, it was at this stage of discussions where the perceived role of UNIFIL was illustrated to the researcher, along with general perceptions of its utility, personal interactions the respondents had with the PSO, and with their impressions as to how well the PSO was performing in its duties, including what the strengths and weaknesses of the operation were from their perspective. Few participants understood the operation's mandate as dictated by UNSCR 425 (1978), 426 (1978), and 1701 (2006), but they possessed a generally good and intuitive

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understanding of what the mission was *supposed* to be doing. For instance, as Participant 1 (P1) made clear speaking in reference to UNIFIL's initial rationale for deployment:

At the time it looked to me like [UNIFIL] was supposed to be between the Israelis and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] that was in southern Lebanon. And they were supposed to be basically controlling the two sides. To keep it safe. So that was my understanding. I think they are supposed to report everything they see.

They then immediately expressed an understanding of the limitations that affected UNIFIL's ability to accomplish this particular task:

I know it wasn't always the case. I know that there were incidents where they didn't do their job for whatever reasons. I think part of it is that they didn't have the equipment to deal with it, to actually safeguard the line, because the nature of the area. You know, it's almost impossible to actually 100 percent keep the ceasefire. I mean, they've been there now for thirty, forty years.

Implicit in this statement is not only a realization that UNIFIL lacks the resources to deal with its mandated task(s), but that the mandate itself is almost "impossible" to achieve, even after having been in operation for decades. With that realization, however, comes an element of frustration and exasperation with the perceived futility of UNIFIL's presence in the area:

I think from the Israeli perspective they were placed there to pacify the war...but I don't think they actually did anything more than show a force of the United Nations. You know, "we are here to keep the peace" - it has been proven many, many, many, many times that the UN cannot stop the ammunition coming from Syria to Hizballah. And this is one of the things that Israelis have always been suspicious of the UN; that they can't do their job. And that's, I think, one of the reasons that Israel went to southern Lebanon to take care of it, because nobody else does it for them.

This shortcoming on the part of UNIFIL is often interpreted as a lack of capacity, a lack of motivation, incompetence, or sometimes a deliberate tactic out of bias against Israel, or a fear of coming under attack, and having no stake in the conflict itself. This latter point is particularly salient for Israelis who seem able to forgive the other elements

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constituting UNIFIL's failure but consider having no stake in the conflict to be a primary contributory cause to UNIFIL's inability to secure the area:

But basically you are foreign soldiers, a paid soldier. I think they get paid well, but they are on somebody else's land that doesn't really affect their families. It's a job for them. I don't think they will actually risk their lives to keep the agreement. If there is any problem they will back away. I don't think they will actually engage in any military action. I guess, I think they will shy away from conflict they come across.

Others, such as P3 shared similar sentiments questioning the motivation of UNIFIL personnel on the ground:

You're going back home to Ireland or you're going back home to England. You're just collecting a paycheque to some respect. I don't think there's too many people who serve in UNIFIL who are altruistic, or go there because of some kind of a higher calling. If I am a soldier, that's my job. I get paid. I just want to stay safe and I want to go home and see my wife or my kids. I mean, really what is their interest in being there? They have no long-term interest in being there...UNIFIL is just a temporary person that comes and goes, you know? And that's the thing; how it's treated on both sides...

Some participants were largely indifferent to UNIFIL insofar as they viewed them as useless or detached from reality, or hostile to Israel as they were synonymized with the UN generally; an institution which did not enjoy the trust of *any* of the participants, which is a significant finding that is discussed below in further detail. For instance, P2 felt that UNIFIL "serves the interests of other nations, not Israel. It's part of the general nonsense of the UN, but for us Israelis, it doesn't help at all." This indicates not only that UNIFIL and the UN are viewed as part and parcel of each other, but also that there is little faith in either institution as serving the interests of Israel—which in the context of the question—was providing security along the Israel-Lebanon border, and by extension to Israel's northern region.

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P2 went so far as to say that when he did see UN personnel, either on the Israel-Lebanon border, or in the Golan Heights with UNDOF, he felt that when they would enter Israel to go shopping or for vacation, they had “no really strong connections or interactions with the people that live in these areas” and that “they were basically part of the scenery.” P3 echoed similar sentiments, warning of the dangers of not having a solid connection with, and understanding of, the cultural dynamics in the region, especially concerning Lebanon:

If you don't speak the Arabic language, if you don't live in their culture, if you don't live their life, if you don't eat their food, if you don't celebrate their holidays, if you are not immersed in who they are, there is no way you can fully understand their way of thinking, their way of living and their way of doing things. And there is no way you can have a lot of influence on them. And at the end of the day it's all about influence. You've got to be able to fully immerse yourself in that to be able to make any kind of change or influence, and I think that's a big problem for UNIFIL.

P3 even identifies this lack of influence as the “biggest problem” UNIFIL faces.

When elucidating on the issue of UNIFIL's perceived lack of cultural competence in its AO, P3 forcefully relayed what they considered to be consequences for UNIFIL's interaction with locals in the area, as well as with Israelis:

They went into a whole different society that you don't understand, that fears you; doesn't know you. You try to speak to them in English instead of Arabic. I mean it's a shit show. And the same for UNIFIL. How many people who are a part of UNIFIL really speak Arabic? Not too many. And then you're going to have agitation. How many of them speak Hebrew? How many of them understand the lay of the land? How long does it take them to learn the lay of the land? To learn who all the players are, and in that process, how much freedom does that give to manoeuvre themselves around and get away with things because it's taking a learning curve to figure out the lay of the land because you're not part of that lay of the land?

More robust information on the specific shortcomings, as well as strengths, of UNIFIL emanated from those Israelis who had direct experience with UNIFIL personnel

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while serving in the IDF, either in Lebanon itself or along Israel's northern frontier. It was through these interviews that *specific* information was provided as to what was behind both UNIFIL's strengths and weaknesses as a longstanding PSO in the area.

P3 had significant military experience dealing with UNIFIL as they regularly crossed the Israel-Lebanon border in the 1980s and 1990s, and dealt directly with UNIFIL personnel at various crossing points. P3 felt that there is "merit in having an international force in the area of southern Lebanon to try and mitigate the hostilities between Israel and the terrorist groups," and supplementing this point by saying "it's always better to have some eyes than no eyes" in the area.

You have to have some mechanism of control to some extent and I think for Israel it serves a better purpose. It gives you some legitimacy when something happens to be able to act or do something, because you always go first to the UN or UNIFIL and say "this is happening, that's happening, are you guys not going to do something about it?" And then when that doesn't happen you have almost permission at that point to act because if they are not going to stop it, you are not going to sit there and let something happen that's going to be counterproductive or feel insecure, right?

However, ultimately, P3 was frustrated with UNIFIL's inability to prevent hostilities and its perceived preference to merely observe and report on hostilities, which they attributed to a lack of motivation out of concerns for self-preservation and (un)conscious bias against Israel, including a double standard placed against Israeli security measures compared to the actions of Hizballah and other spoiler/terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon, which is partially attributed to elements of antisemitism. As P3 relayed:

The problem is that the UN force, UNIFIL in this respect, does not have any real bones, or merit, or jurisdiction to really stop anything from happening. It's more of an observer than they are actually an enforcer. And in that respect, it's useless. It's like me and you go birdwatching. Watching the birds and not doing anything else.

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I believe that there is bias that is either conscious or unconscious when it comes to the deployment of any kind of a security force, when it comes to any of Israel's borders with any of its neighbours. And I think the bias stems from the way the UN is made up and the disproportionality in the UN; the overwhelming power that the Arab states have there.

I mean when those forces are in Lebanon and they are threatened by Hizballah, you know, at the end of the day you are selfish in some ways too, so you are not going to go out of your way to do things that are going to harm you right? And a lot of the time you find this with UNIFIL that that's what happens, right? Like I said, an observer on the sidelines that writes reports and tells you what happened, and tries to be a judge and jury all at the same time. But at the end of the day they enforce nothing.

See a terrorist doesn't have to worry about its image. They can do whatever they want and that's the expectation of everybody. But then there is a higher level of expectation of a democratic country, and then it seems to me there's an extra layer of expectation from the Jewish State, because of "you guys should know and remember what happened in the Holocaust, then you guys should be much more humane in your approach and maybe somebody else's right." And it's a double standard that exists and permeates the UN, and permeates, I think, to some degree UNIFIL as well.

What subsequently emerged in discussion with P3 is a measuredly sympathetic recognition that UNIFIL is beholden to powers that are far more influential in the region, particularly regional and international countries with stakes in the conflict, which influences their (in)ability to fulfill their mandate whether willingly or unwillingly:

Again, they are very limited in what they are capable of doing. They are limited in what they are willing to do, and you've got to try and work with whatever you've got there, right? But at the end of the day, you know, I think UNIFIL can only – they only have so much power on both sides. But they are really a smaller player in a much bigger game.

However, upon further reflection, P3 admitted that despite obstacles to UNIFIL's mandate that were out of the mission's control, they felt that UNIFIL had an interest in curtailing Israeli defence requirements, although this may occur (un)intentionally depending on the context. They felt that this was an aspect of an overall UN bias against Israel, which trickled down to influence the operation on the ground, which contributed to

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the participant's lack of faith in UNIFIL, generally speaking. Specifically, when discussing UNIFIL's inability to prevent border infiltrations into Israel, P3 stated that:

UNIFIL couldn't stop it. I mean what are they going to do? That was part of the joke about UNIFIL. Even when we were up in Metula the [northernmost municipality in Israel] along the Israel-Lebanon border, you know, like who are they? It was more lip service than anything else. It was more to curtail...Israel's opportunity to do what Israel needs to do to defend itself, you know? Rather than really being a force that is objectively there, and is there for both sides, and treats everybody equally and fairly.

Elaborating further, this "curtailing" according to P3 was again a product of the perceived overall UN bias against Israel. That is, UN bias against Israel trickled down and influenced UNIFIL's perceived bias against Israel, and for that reason, the UN itself is ultimately accountable for any failures within the PSO, as its mandate reflects the UN's biased perspectives against Israel. From this perspective, UNIFIL cannot be assessed separately from its parent organization:

Israel was always seen as the heavier hand, right? And it's because of the whole image of a powerful country using its weaponry, and it's you know, "poor whoever" who are using rudimentary weapons, or whatever it is, right? And you know, this whole analogy that people try and put between the two is part of the problem. And the problem partly stems from, I think, the UN and some other things. I think UNIFIL, being part of the UN, you know, it's what you know from where you served.

I think UNIFIL does what the UN mandates it to do. So I think the better question is what should the UN mandate UNIFIL to do differently than what it currently does.

Despite such challenges, however, UNIFIL is broadly perceived as a PSO that offers utility to Israel, even if in diminished fashion because it serves as some form of buffer and observation mechanism that offsets Israel's security requirements to a limited extent, thereby preventing it from needing to involve itself militarily more than it already does on occasion. Thus, when asked how Israel's security situation would fare in UNIFIL's absence, P3 responded:

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In the short-term it would not be to the benefit of Israel because Israel would have to find some kind of mechanism to buffer, even though there is no real buffer; let's be honest. I mean Hizballah has posts, like **right** at the border, and this is supposed to be an area where UNIFIL has full control, and UNIFIL is technically—according to the mandate—supposed to tell them, “no you take that down, you are supposed to be over there.” But it doesn't happen. So that is part of the problem with UNIFIL.

But not having them there, I think, would, in the short term, be more difficult for Israel because Israel would have to find other mechanisms to deal with what happens. It will increase the level of tension. It will cause Israel to resort to doing similar things to what it's doing in Syria to try to further back—move back—the enemy so to speak. So I don't think it would benefit anybody to remove it. I think the benefit to everybody would be to improve it. And to improve it would have to come from the Security Council having some teeth and putting some mandate in place. (emphasis in original)

Therefore, we can observe that despite a clear understanding of, and frustration with UNIFIL's shortcomings in terms of fulfilling its mandate, the participant views UNIFIL's continued presence to be of greater advantage than its potential absence, while ultimately attributing UNIFIL's failures to the impositions placed upon it directly by the UN, and specifically, the UN Security Council, in addition to any aforementioned obstacles that prevent UNIFIL from carrying out its functions.

Thus, what is borne out of this discussion is an understanding of UNIFIL possessing shortcomings in fulfilling its mandate, but ascribing motive or reasoning to these failures which either accord to worldview, personal experience, personal investigation into the matter, or some combination of these. The concept of the UN's bias against Israel, however, was consistently and prominently illustrated by all but one of the participants—from all sides of the political spectrum—even if there were differing degrees of optimism as to how Israel and the UN and/or UNIFIL can relate to each other in the future, or regarding the merits to UNIFIL's continued presence. Yet elements of this perceived animosity by the UN towards Israel appear to be influenced partially by

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“civilizational” considerations, characterized particularly as a conflict between Israel as a Jewish State and the broader Arab-Islamic world.

8.3 - Civilizational-oriented Perspectives on the UN and UNIFIL

The civilizational considerations at play among participants relates largely to a perceived bias against Israel emanating from the Arab and Muslim majority states that typically vote against Israel at various UN forums, which are often believed to have a concomitantly deleterious impact on UN institutions, including UNIFIL. For instance, P4 believes that UNIFIL is biased against Israel, as a product of the extending influence of the UN itself, which is oriented towards the Arab-Islamic world, in their opinion. They state:

Well, I know that the UNIFIL was created just to be between two countries, just to monitor and avoid clashes. But I consider this a little bit biased, or not a little bit; I consider it biased, because the reports of whatever they do are always in favour of the Lebanese, or Arabs, or Muslims. And most of the time, it is against the Jewish nation.

We can see that not only does this participant perceive a bias on the part of the UN, but like other participants, considers there to be a bias against Israel on a civilizational basis within the Arab-Islamic world, which bears out its consequences within UN forums, including UNIFIL. There is a subtext of antisemitism being a motivating factor here as the basis of the perceived discrimination UNIFIL directs against Israel, characterized as bias against the “Jewish nation.”

However, as the participant continued in their critique of UNIFIL, we see—yet again—an equivocation between UNIFIL in particular, and the UN in general, which is a common theme among the participants interviewed in this study. As P4 continued:

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(...) first of all is the amount of Arab nations that are part of the UN and part of the Security Council, or part of the things; and second, the pressure those people—54 countries I think they are...the pressure that they put, or single out Israel as the aggressor of whatever thing they can imagine. If Israel has to defend itself for any terrorist organizations they don't say anything, and say nothing when terrorists shoot or fires missiles against Israel, but start claiming like crazy when Israel defends itself.

It should be noted, however, even where one could fairly conceive of the existence of such a UN bias, the claim that UNIFIL does not report on cross-border attacks or violations directed towards Israel is not entirely accurate. Consistently since 1978, all available Secretary-General reports to the Security Council concerning UNIFIL have documented even minor border violations, if and when those attacks came to UNIFIL's attention. Incidents that Israel reports to UNIFIL, which are not directly observed by UNIFIL personnel, are also subsequently investigated, even if not thoroughly or due to impediments emanating from its mandate, the Lebanese government, Hizballah, or other armed elements in UNIFIL's AO.

However, this critique is really being levelled at the UN, which is evident from the way P4, and other participants, criticize the UN's disproportionate focus on Israel, while seemingly—and somewhat unjustifiably—minimizing or ignoring attacks on Israel from its various frontiers. It should also be pointed out that among all of the participants, only two had specific understandings of the differences between the UNSC and the UNGA, as well as the other bodies that encompass the UN. Most participants view the UN as a monolith and do not parse any specific differences between the different authoritative bodies that make up the UN as a whole. Nonetheless, even those that understood these technical differences did not differ from the mean, and considered UN bias to be a systemic problem, which is discussed below.

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When exploring UNIFIL's inability to prevent cross-border attacks to any measurable degree, as well as its incapacity—for whatever reason(s)—to confront Hizballah, participants conveyed the impression that despite what meagre value it may have, it is essentially useless in securing the area. As P4, similarly to P3, argues:

UNIFIL does nothing. If Israel weren't as powerful as it is, UNIFIL is negligible just to do anything. So, there are not any buffers. They don't create buffer zones. They are there because of a political decision. They are basically useless.

The futility of the mission from P4's perspective is not only a product of UN institutional bias against Israel, but also of a lack of motivation and overt concern with self-preservation on the part of UNIFIL personnel on the ground; a theme commonly echoed by many participants. Some have even suggested that UNIFIL seeks to ingratiate itself to Hizballah out of concerns for self-preservation:

The moment the UN stops being biased against Israel, that could be the day at least, the UNIFIL can do something—let's say more equal; more balanced—between the two sides. What they can do? Well first of all, if they are balanced and equal on both sides, they can just be a **real** buffer zone and contain, let's say, any aggression for one of each part. But what I see is that UNIFIL gets along with the Lebanese or Hizballah counterparts, just not to get angry with them or get Hizballah against them, because they really know that the Hizballah has no limits in killing them or doing whatever. (emphasis in original)

I think that because the political decision just to look good and just to be politically correct, they are there just to show the world that the UN cares. But they are there. Nothing else. They are there and they don't have any function in the real world. Like the Queen of England. She's there because she's there. She doesn't have anything to say to the government. It's the same. So they do nothing. This is a joke. This - it's a political thing to show the world they care.

Such examples demonstrate that there is a broad consensus among the participants surrounding UNIFIL's futility in carrying out its mandate, even if *specifics* of the mandate are not commonly understood but generally inferred. In particular, participants relayed that at minimum, UNIFIL should be attempting to prevent cross-border attacks as much as possible, and report accurately on what military activity is happening along the

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Blue Line. However, some participants relayed more striking personal experiences they had vis-à-vis UNIFIL, which soured them on the mission as a whole.

P6 served in the IDF along the Israel-Lebanon border between 2001-2004. His personal observation of UNIFIL activity during this period had a profound impact on him, which he relayed to the researcher with forceful condemnation:

I'll never forget one of the incidents. I was looking through binoculars and our night vision, seeing a nightmare. Hizballah terrorists were going with huge equipment on their backs on top of a high mountain. Underneath it was a UNIFIL post, and seeing this **with our own eyes** how they're going up on top of a high hill, we knew exactly the next morning, the next day, we should be experiencing incoming fire, and incoming rocket fire. And there is **nothing** we can actually do about it. We needed to actually wait until they actually strike us first in order to respond. (emphasis in original)

And seeing with our own eyes that there had been a lot of activities of Hizballah going back and forth from near, or by, the UNIFIL post, we actually have there; showed us that they have **complete irrelevance** to the, I guess, the activities of Hizballah in the region. And being able to, you know, have better positions in the areas and contain more weapons, more equipment during this time. This is what we would know first hand, by being there. And yeah, the following day we had rockets, missiles, or fire towards our post and towards this area. It's called the Har Dov, in the area specifically. (emphasis in original)

A significant key point of which the participant was aware of, is that the “Har Dov” area is also known as the Shab'a Farms, which Lebanon, Syria, and Hizballah, consider disputed territory with Israel, albeit in contradiction to UN Security Council resolutions rejecting this line of reasoning as discussed elsewhere in this study. Hizballah, as noted earlier in this study, uses Israel's continued presence in the territory to justify its attacks against the country; and indeed many of Hizballah's posts—by the UN's own admission—are immediately adjacent to UNIFIL posts.

Nevertheless, the damning report of Hizballah operating within line of sight of UNIFIL posts reinforced the participant's conviction that UNIFIL has “complete irrelevance” to the situation on the ground. Moreover, such experiences were apparently

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commonplace during their years of service in the north and proved to him that Hizballah had been allowed to strengthen brazenly under UNIFIL (and Lebanese government) auspices:

Many times you would see at different posts throughout the entire northern part of Israel and south Lebanon, we'd see posts with UNIFIL and seeing that, you know, we would check what is happening in that area, and we would see many times Hizballah officers or anybody that's involved with Hizballah would walk around that area with their flags, or having their demonstrations sometimes, or showing their presence, and they [UNIFIL] had **no effect whatsoever** in that region. And the fact is that we know today that Hizballah has more missiles than most European countries put together. And that's basically where things are at today. (emphasis in original)

(...) They're [UNIFIL] not keeping anything because the fact is that Hizballah has armed themselves up to the teeth **times ten** what they had before the Second Lebanon War [of 2006]. (emphasis in original)

(...) Hizballah is making all this money also from drug trafficking, it's also a known proof....This is also one of the things we'd look into during our night shifts, for any smuggling going through the borders, so this is also a known thing about what was happening in south Lebanon **with UNIFIL in place**. (emphasis in original)

So during the time UNIFIL was actually in place, we know for a fact that Hizballah was not only being, getting all this equipment and weapons, they were actually **hiding it** in civilian areas—specific and strategic areas—like schools and hospitals and mosques, so we know those for a **fact**, Lebanon, or the UNIFIL, is not doing **anything** to prevent missiles or launching pads coming out from specific strategic civilian areas. (emphasis in original)

So this is all happening while UNIFIL is actually sitting in place, **not having any power whatsoever**. (emphasis in original)

Additionally, P6 expressed frustration with the Israeli military policy of not firing unless fired upon, as this guaranteed, from the participant's perspective, that they would come under unjustifiable personal risk of death or injury from Hizballah fire or rocket attacks. While this policy may be in place, it is evident from SG reports to the UNSC on UNIFIL, that on several occasions since Israel's withdrawal, there has been IDF fire directed across the Blue Line, which UNIFIL has considered unjustified. However, with the exception of incidents where the IDF subsequently disciplined soldiers for violating

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the Blue Line, the IDF has always maintained that it only discharges weapons when necessary.

Interestingly, the rationale for this Israeli military policy of non-initiation of attack, according to P6, was due to humanitarian concerns over UNIFIL personnel and Lebanese civilian safety, coupled with concerns over Israel's international reputation. This is significant as the widely perceived and relayed phenomenon of UN bias against Israel seems to have tangible impacts on its defence policy, which fosters a modicum of resentment among Israelis, albeit with an understanding as to Israel's unique limitation as being "singled out" for international opprobrium in its conflict with its neighbours. As P6 relays:

We **actually have to wait** until they [Hizballah] actually struck first, and we can't do anything about it because: one, the UNIFIL are in that position, and second, if we strike, and do what's right by protecting ourselves by striking at them first, then a whole new international aspect of, what could turn into, I guess, a political or diplomatic crisis of Israel striking now in Lebanon. That's why we have to be waiting for us to get struck first in order for us to respond. So it's a bit shocking, the reality that we're living in. And even though we are protecting Israel's north, there's not much we can actually do as something we know is for sure going to be happening, and we cannot take actions there in our own hands. We literally have to wait as **sitting ducks** sometimes, and once that actually happens, only then we can start acting accordingly. (emphasis in original)

It's an Israeli political policy. Again, the army does what it's told from the Defense Ministry, but that's been the policy, yes. And that has been the policy for many years, that we cannot strike until we get struck first, because if we strike first, then a whole diplomatic episode can erupt, blaming Israel for doing this, for doing that.

(...) And politicians on the Israeli side are so proud of the "resolution" they were able to "find" with the UN! The "ceasefire." But through this time [sarcastic laughter]—and this is the main threat to Israel today—in terms of Iran and its arms of Hizballah that are able to contain a lot of equipment and missiles that are deliberately hidden behind, and under, civilian areas. And that's the main concern today. (emphasis in original)

Thus, we can observe that from this participant's perspective, not only is the insecurity of Israel's north a product of UNIFIL's futility in the face of obvious Iranian-

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facilitated Hizballah activity against Israel, but it is simultaneously a product of perceived Israeli reticence in pre-emptively striking Lebanon to prevent attacks for fear of international condemnation, specifically from the UNGA and UNSC. What is more, P6 considers such attacks to be inevitable and ongoing, as they are supported by Iran, requiring more significant military action to defend the State of Israel in lieu of UNIFIL's inaction, especially as such military build-up on the part of Hizballah appears to be ignored by UNIFIL. This last point reflects the ongoing Israeli complaints to UNIFIL that Hizballah is using civilian homes and infrastructure to hide and transport weapons, which UNIFIL has admitted is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Importantly, the participant understood Hizballah's recognition of Israel's policy in this regard as being something it can exploit to inflict further damage on Israel, as this gives Hizballah the "upper hand," because Israel, unlike Hizballah, is held to a higher double standard of behaviour, an idea which was echoed by both P3 and P4, among others. When prompted more specifically on their perceptions surrounding possible UN bias against the State of Israel, P6 conveyed stark emotion in expressing the obviousness of UN bias towards the country, which they felt contributes to the ambivalent attitude UNIFIL has towards Hizballah's attacks against Israel. P6 provided several *prima facie* arguments in favour of his suggestion that the UN is institutionally biased against the State of Israel:

It's **not even an opinion, it's just a fact** that you take. You know the different councils at the UN. It's the Human Rights Council in Geneva, it's at the Security Council, and you compare the resolutions against Israel to any other country in the world—nothing, **nothing**—even compares. I just have problems with the latest results. The latest results in the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council...here it is: "condemnation to be adopted today," this is on November 20th, **November 20th!** "Condemnation to be adopted today over next month at the UN General Assembly: Israel, 20; Iran, 1; Syria, 1; North Korea, 1; Myanmar, 1;

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U.S., 1; Algeria, 0; China, 0; Iraq, 0; Pakistan, 0; Qatar, 0; Saudi, 0; Somalia, 0; Turkey, 0; Venezuela, 0; Zimbabwe, 0.”

So, [sarcastic laughter] this is something that, there is no reason to be, it's not even an opinion, it's a fact that bodies sitting in these councils and in the countries sitting in these bodies—it's much easier putting all the focus on Israel; condemning Israel, when all the other horrific acts of crimes against humanity, and violations against human rights are being completely ignored. It's something to be taken into account here. (emphasis in original)

When you get a perspective of comparing Israel's acts to any other country that should be much more condemned and compare how much they have been focused on, that's basically what shows if you're biased against Israel. That's always, I think, the rule when you get a broader perspective of other countries. When Israel is being the only democracy in the Middle East, comparing it to **horrific** countries that get **no focus whatsoever** at the UN, or in no common nation compared to Israel, is a double standard. (emphasis in original)

Countries themselves that violate the crimes against humanity or violations—huge violations of human rights—and they are sitting in these councils having what to say is **ridiculous**. Most of the countries at the UN are not democratic countries, and that's a major problem that we have. (emphasis in original)

Nobody actually, nobody raising up their finger, and all this focus put on this little conflict that we have—**nothing even compared** in terms of numbers, in terms of **sizes, nothing that could be compared**—to other world conflicts. And the fact that there is no focus, or enough focus in these areas, but only on Israel, is an outrage. It's outrageous! (emphasis in original)

Therefore, it becomes clear that the participant considers the entire edifice of the UN to be biased against Israel, further compounding the other evidence so far presented that this appears to be a very common Israeli perception of the UN's attitude toward Israel. The lack of confidence in UNIFIL's ability, coupled with the UN's intransigence toward Israel, then, leads Israel to have to pursue its own security objectives in lieu of UNIFIL's ineffectiveness. Yet, despite UNIFIL's tremendous inadequacies from P6's perspective, he considers it to have only a single useful quality, which favours Hizballah, in that it is merely “keeping things on hold” until an inevitable conflict with Lebanon (specifically, Hizballah) breaks out again:

Currently they aren't helping at all the situation. They are just keeping everything on hold, and giving and being able to give the opportunities for Hizballah to keep

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on, you know, having and making their positions, and building up their military capabilities like no other country in Europe, and combine them together. So that's the bottom line. And they have not been efficient at all except in keeping things on hold, and preparing for the next war, which is going to be much, much more heavier on both sides. Much more severe.

Everybody understands, **everybody** understands. It's not a question of 'if,' it's a question of 'when' is the next, you know, when's going to be the next third war with Lebanon—a Third Lebanon War. (emphasis in original)

And this war is going to be different than we ever knew about because their capabilities, and having more strategic weapons and equipment. This is why Israel was bombing Syria through Iran, through Syria, to Hizballah, with more strategic weapons as the main threat...there have been **hundreds** of retaliations by the [Israeli] air force in Syria, targeting Iranian shipments in Syria towards Hizballah; strategic shipments that was going to Hizballah **and** Syria. (emphasis in original)

With all of these matters considered, P6 believed that for UNIFIL (and the IDF) to be effective they need the support of the “free world” to be able to operate offensively and aggressively, albeit with the proper training and consideration for the protection of Lebanese civilian life, and to operate in civilian areas where Hizballah deliberately hides itself and its equipment and weapons. Regardless, despite recognizing that this will be an immensely difficult goal to achieve, the participant nonetheless felt that if UNIFIL were able to enforce its mandate in accordance with UNSCR 1701 (2006), it would be of utility:

They [UNIFIL] should be...getting and giving the backup from the UN for the countries that do care about the value of life and human rights. They should be getting the **power** to actually **combat**, and for the reason they are actually being; for the reason they are actually there. In terms of giving them guns, if it's a resolution, I forget the number, I think it was 1701...so the fact that Hizballah is violating that **every single time**, they should have the power to, you know, to go to overcome that, overcome those obstacles.

You have Hizballah violating these; the resolutions themselves. They should be going **after them**. This is why they **should** be there, and have the power to do so. And have the backup of the free world to be fighting this. And this is the reason why they are there, and not just sitting there as puppets not doing too much. (emphasis in original)

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P7 had direct experience with UNIFIL personnel, and a thorough understanding of the operation from his professional *and* military service experiences with the PSO, while serving in the IDF and in other professional pursuits. They were cautiously optimistic in their analysis of UNIFIL, while remaining cognizant of its deficiencies. They firmly believed that it is better to have UNIFIL in place despite their assertion that “they are not doing their job in terms of implementing the Security Council resolutions that brought them there,” in that they nevertheless prevent “unwanted escalation,” to some extent. Specifically, P7 stated that senior IDF officers at military stations along the Israel-Lebanon border—some of whom had direct experience dealing with UNIFIL on a regular basis—relayed the positive benefits of UNIFIL’s presence in the area:

Examples that they provided me of where they consider interaction with UNIFIL useful, led me to the belief that having them there is better than not having them there. And some examples of this are, in case the fence there is damaged, or something needs to be rebuilt, that having UNIFIL there to make sure that any Israeli activity to that end is not perceived by the other side as an invasion. That is sort of a de-escalating and risk-mitigating effect. And I think that in those terms, preventing the unwanted escalation because of misinterpretation of activities by the other side. That, I think, is the key added value to UNIFIL.

I think UNIFIL has been successful in that, in de-escalating and preventing unnecessary escalation. What they have not been effective is in the disarmament clause of the resolution.

Additionally, P7 considered UNIFIL to be “slightly more effective than other peacekeeping operations” around the world given that its mandate—at least since the implementation of UNSCR 1701 (2006)—gave UNIFIL operational flexibility by permitting the different contingents within UNIFIL to retain a level of autonomy from centralized PSO decision-making via DPKO that is not typically enjoyed by other PSOs elsewhere. As P7 relayed:

Some forces, particularly the French and Italians there, are operating outside the sort of command and control structure that the UN has in other parts of the world;

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in other peacekeeping missions where there's really a command and control structure. And here the French and Italians, and I believe some of the other peacekeepers as well, did not fully report (...) had a high level of autonomy vis-à-vis other peacekeeping missions, which I think, gave them more flexibility to respond and do things that they would have been only under the UN—the initial UN command and control structure.

This particular insight is telling, in that it presupposes a structural problem with the design and implementation of UN PSOs around the world as being too heavily bureaucratized and centralized, allowing the participant to judge UNIFIL as *more effective* to the degree that it is effective in comparison to other PSOs on the basis of a flawed design emanating from the UN itself.

This was not stated explicitly, but rather inferred from the researcher as they pointed out that the autonomy afforded uniquely to UNIFIL via UNSCR 1701 (2006) was exploited by some contingents more than others (namely the French and the Italians, among others) as a way to circumvent the “UN command and control structure” which was perceived as a hindrance to successful PSO implementation in scenarios elsewhere around the globe. This insight is interesting considering the many extra- and intra-PSO challenges discussed earlier in this study, especially surrounding how PSO success is determined, and the relative autonomy that different contingents enjoy which unevenly impacts the accomplishment of UNIFIL's mandated objectives in the field. Nevertheless, P7 was more optimistic, given his understanding of the technicalities of the PSO, of UNIFIL's positive effect on the ground compared to other participants.

Importantly, P7 realized that the various contingents that comprise the totality of UNIFIL differ significantly in their motivation, which resulted in the French and Italians being more enthusiastic in exploiting the opportunities available through this unique form of autonomy within UNIFIL, which corresponds to research findings in the existing

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literature on UNIFIL. They were careful to suggest that while UN peacekeeping, as an institution, appears to have a “reputation of being not very effective,” it is an unfair assessment when one considers the core objective PSOs around the world are meant to achieve:

I think it is unfair to say it’s ineffective. I think that UN peacekeeping anywhere is effective in a core task, which is cessation of hostilities. I think that’s the core task. I think peacekeeping is less effective when it comes to the parts of the resolution that deal with state-building; that deal with disarmament; to deal with any kind of enforcement. But in its core task of cessation of hostilities, I think that peacekeeping is quite effective.

As we have observed elsewhere from other participants, the idea that UN PSOs are effective at interpositioning themselves between the parties to a conflict to monitor the cessation of hostilities, is relatively well accepted. However, few Israelis consider this to be a sufficient element of a PSO *separate* from the need to enforce some sort of continued peace, especially in consideration of UNIFIL’s mandated objectives. Yet the impossibility of UNIFIL’s mandate, which has been amply illustrated both in this study and elsewhere, according to P7, is a product of the political considerations and negotiations between and among UN Member States; a separate finding that is corroborated by a preponderance of literature on UN PSOs and peacekeeping theory. In a telling consideration, P7 stated that:

I’ll give you a nice quote you can use: The less international countries care—regional or global countries care—about a country where the UN mission is operating, the more the UN gets done. And the more regional countries, or other world powers care about a country where the UN is operating, the less the UN gets done.

When prompted to elaborate on this point, P7 clarified:

Because, the fact that the UN is a political body means that Member States write the agenda. And the fact that the UN is ultimately not very confrontational in its own activities, that is one of the reasons why if there is a strong pushback, let’s

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say, from Syria, Iran, United States, Israel, who have conflicting interests on what the UN should be doing, it limits the ability of the UN to sort of control the agenda. While in a country where there is very little international interest, the UN becomes sort of the biggest player in that arena.

So if you have a country that has relatively low GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is very little international attention for it, the UN might not necessarily **solve** the problems, but the UN will be a very big player in the decision-making in the country, because it brings a lot of development aid....The link for that country with the rest of the world goes through the UN. The UN can, in New York, brief Member States and so on, so that's where the UN has a lot of influence. When you look at a country like Lebanon, where there are so many regional and global powers and countries that have an interest, it limits the freedom to manoeuvre for the UN.

Here we see many ideas packed into several sentences. The impression that P7 has surrounding the efficacy of UN PSOs is proportional to the *lack* of interest UN Member States have surrounding the conflict in which the UN is intervening.

This perspective is consistent with the perspectives of Gilligan and Stedman (2003) and Mullenbach (2005), who argue that conflicts which are less complex are more attractive for the UN to become involved in, as they present less challenges in terms of obstacles in the field, as well as political obstacles within the UNSC and UNGA. This line of thinking is also critical in terms of modulating the expectations Israelis have of UNIFIL ever being effective if indeed it is perceived that the large amount of international interest in Israel-Arab affairs negatively impacts the ability for the UN to provide the appropriate amount of resources, wherewithal, and political support for UNIFIL to carry out its duties.

Moreover, two of the specific countries mentioned as having a particular “conflicting” set of interests versus Israel, namely, Syria and Iran, seem to be universally recognized among all participants as the real “bad neighbours” impacting the security situation along the Israel-Lebanon border via their proxy force, Hizballah. This

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recognition is an “open secret” that is accepted by Israelis of all walks of life and along the span of the political spectrum, making it a critical point of discernment in the data. Yet despite this reality, P7 believes that there is no feasible alternative interpositional force to the UN, including NATO, because “there is no political will to do that,” and “there is no feasibility element there,” even though they admit that in theory NATO “can be more effective than a bunch of Fijian peacekeepers.”

UNIFIL’s failure to attend to the disarmament element of its mandate is one aspect of the “general negative feeling” Israelis have towards UNIFIL, according to P7, but the underlying reasons for Israeli hostility to the UNIFIL is more complex than that. P7 posited that Israeli hostility towards the UN stems from political reasons, which subsequently funnels down in terms of perception to UNIFIL automatically as an extension of the UN, independently of its perceived (in)efficacy. For instance:

Well, I think that the United Nations in Israel - there is a very strong bias against the United Nations in general.

I think that the way UNIFIL is viewed now is better than how it used to be viewed during the previous UNIFIL [pre-UNSCR 1701 (2006)] in the 80s and 90s. I think that Israelis have a general negative feeling towards the UN, and that trickles down to UNIFIL. But I think that what drives the negative perception of the UN and UNIFIL is not what UNIFIL’s actually doing; it has to do with the voting record at the United Nations (...) I think that the amount of resolutions that are passed against Israel is what I think leads Israelis to have a negative perception of the UN and **that** trickles down to UNIFIL. (emphasis in original)

I don’t think that UNIFIL’s actions are by itself pushing Israelis to view it negatively.

I think that the bias that Israelis have towards the UN comes from the fact that the General Assembly, and the bodies of the UN, that are influenced by all Member States have a tendency to overemphasize issues with Israel, and I think that is what’s leading public opinion in Israel vis-à-vis the UN. And I think that does—the bias among Member States—does have an impact on what priorities the UN sets and where they focus their resources and so on.

There appears to be some justification to this perspective as other participants seldom distinguished the UN from UNIFIL, and most criticized UNIFIL’s activities in

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tandem with lamenting the UN's institutional bias towards Israel in various forums such as the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. It is fair to suggest that for most of the participants there appears to be no meaningful distinction between the UN generally, and UNIFIL specifically. However, despite this cogent recognition, P7 felt that there was nevertheless an actual bias at the UN against Israel, which was informed as an expression of the will of Member States and not a product of a deliberate structurally-embedded and systemic form of institutional discrimination. P7 explained:

There's a majority of countries that espouse certain views vis-à-vis Israel, and I think that the lack of a majority of allies for Israel to support it makes it very easy for a lot of resolutions to be passed against Israel. So, I think it's not the UN. It's not the way the UN is structured. I think it's that because of history, because of Cold War history, there is a coalition—a caucus—of countries that vote together on certain issues, and within that caucus there's a few very strong proponents of passing resolutions that condemn Israel. I don't think that the UN, as a forum where these countries come together, are at fault. I think it's just the politics of these Member States.

However, P7 felt that the anti-Israel bias at the UN does not impact UNIFIL *per se* as it receives its mandate from the UNSC and carries it out independently of the discussions that occur in the aforementioned UN forums, and that “UNIFIL should be judged on the basis of that mandate.” To its credit, according to P7, UNIFIL has complained about the Lebanese government's inability to facilitate disarmament in its AO in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, which is indeed true, so it is doing its part in that regard and cannot be faulted for filling in the gap that is meant to be filled by the Lebanese government.

P7's intuition surrounding the idea that the general feelings of negativity towards the UN, and UNIFIL, are not informed by any specific knowledge or experience with UNIFIL is certainly true for a set of the participants who relayed their points of view to

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the researcher. However, some participants had direct negative interactions with some UNIFIL personnel who expressed their hostility towards Israel. P8 had a series of particularly negative encounters with several UNIFIL personnel who, in their opinion, expressed undue hostility towards Israel in conversation with them:

Personally, I don't like them. I had a really bad experience with them. When I talked to them, or had any type of contact with them in Israel. Not because they are bad people, but just because their approach is not on the Israeli side. This is what I feel - It's not that they have done something wrong, or did really bad things, it's not like that. But all the time they tried to verbally protect the other side—the Palestinian side—so I could understand that even though they serve, they should be in the middle. They should not be on **any** of the sides. (emphasis in original)

It was very clear that they actually chose their side and they would prefer to protect the Palestinian side and not the Israeli. Obviously, they should be in the middle and should protect. But if they could, they would choose another side, and they made that very clear.

(...) Maybe they don't want to fight, maybe they just don't like Jewish, I don't know. But I really don't care because what I really care about is what they do, and what they don't do. They don't really protect our side. And this is what is really important thing to me.

It's just a bad approach, but again, it doesn't mean that all of them are like that. I talked to maybe three or four people. Maybe they don't all think this way.

These interactions happened on three separate occasions in the Negev desert, and twice in Haifa with different members of the UNIFIL PSO on each occasion, and always in a casual setting. P8 believed that they were willing to express their true positions on the conflict because they were out of uniform at the time, and that they may have had a lack of motivation to defend the Blue Line, be motivated by antisemitism, or possess some other reason that P8 could not essentially identify from the conversations they had with them to dislike Israel.

Nevertheless, what is striking in P8's relaying of information is that on the three separate occasions, each pertaining to different members of UNIFIL, they openly expressed hostility towards Israel. P8 also seemed to (un)consciously lump the

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Palestinian Arabs with Lebanese Arabs together which again indicates a “civilizational” perception to the conflict between Israel and her neighbours; a theme which was iterated both in their particular case, as well elsewhere with other participants, as alluded to above.

P8 also questioned the efficacy of UNIFIL for the Lebanese people, which they felt is equally as inadequate despite their perceived siding with the Lebanese public over the Israeli public. Here they directly attribute this perception to a lack of motivation on the part of UNIFIL over concerns of self-preservation:

I think they just don't want to fight. Like, if somebody takes me and asks me to protect somebody that I don't even care about, I am not sure I would do something like that. Their people, really, I don't think they like being there. Because it's dangerous—nobody wants to die. But, I think they prefer to choose the other side. Again, if it comes to the point that they need to kill somebody, I am not sure they will do something.

P8 supplemented this critique by referencing a non-specific incident he recalled hearing about to demonstrate UNIFIL's disutility: “they escaped when Hizballah began this fight. I don't remember when it was when they killed two Israeli soldiers; they basically did nothing. They just left. Escaped.”

8.4 - Findings

From the perspectives shared by participants thus far, several themes emerge from the data, including:

- Participants have a general, although often non-specific understanding of UNIFIL's role;
- UNIFIL's mandated objective are unrealistic and impossible to achieve;
- Hizballah exploits UNIFIL's weakness;

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- UNIFIL is bogged down by a vague mandate;
- UNIFIL is perceived to be unmotivated and unable to fulfill its duties;
- UNIFIL lacks the cultural understanding of the region; and
- Israel's conflict with Hizballah—and its neighbours is civilizational—and not readily amenable to intervention by UNIFIL.

Participants relayed a sound understanding of UNIFIL's mandate to the extent that it was obvious that UNIFIL was intended to be an interpositionary force between Israel and Lebanon. Broadly, this function was accepted as positive by most, except when UNIFIL's presence was believed to have impeded IDF operations. Nonetheless, while participants, with few exceptions, could not cite the specific mandated objectives that UNIFIL was tasked with accomplishing, they had a strong (and correct) intuitive sense that the mission was there to essentially protect the border and prevent hostilities on both sides.

However, it was also clear to the participants that UNIFIL had an impossible mandate as it was in no way equipped to contend with Hizballah. It was seen as a "joke" right from the outset, as not only is Hizballah a force to be reckoned with for even conventional militaries—such as the IDF—but there were even reports of Hizballah posts immediately adjacent, often as close as can possibly be, to UNIFIL posts, demonstrating in stark terms UNIFIL's inability to challenge, let alone disarm, Hizballah. Further, this was perceived to be a deliberate strategy of Hizballah to mitigate Israeli retaliation or pre-emptive fire, as Israel is reticent about firing near UNIFIL positions unless absolutely necessary.

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Participants relayed a further corollary to this perception, in that they were often certain that UNIFIL's unwillingness to prevent cross-border hostilities emanating from the Lebanese side was due to a preoccupation with self-preservation in the face of the threat posed by Hizballah. Interestingly, while Ruffa (2014) suggests that of the contingents she studied, Hizballah was viewed as the *least* likely threat to UNIFIL personnel, the opposite perspective was borne out through SG reports on UNIFIL, and the prevailing literature illustrating Hizballah as the *de facto* government in southern Lebanon.

With much justification, participants were correct in their assessment, which requires only a cursory level of inquiry to confirm, as the establishment of Hizballah posts near UNIFIL posts has been a longstanding complaint of UNIFIL to the LAF, and duly reported on a regular basis over the years by the SG reports to the UNSC. Indeed, it is regularly admitted by many observers that Hizballah easily overpowers UNIFIL, including by both UNIFIL's (and Hizballah's) own admission, especially given the constraints placed on UNIFIL's ability to engage, defined as it is in real terms by the national defence policies of UNIFIL's respective contingents.

Participants also expressed concern over Hizballah being able to exploit UNIFIL's weakness to further its operations against Israel. As was demonstrated earlier in this study, both UN reports allude, and academic literature confirms, this to be the case. For instance, Ruffa (2014) stated that Hizballah activities were greatest in Italian areas of control within UNIFIL's AO. Accordingly, the reason for this was due to the fact that the Italian contingent is influenced by a contingent-specific approach to its operations in Lebanon, aiming to ingratiate itself to the locals and remain as

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popular as possible. This approach makes it easier to serve a period of deployment as a technique to build rapport, and also reduces the likelihood of being attacked by Hizballah, or other armed elements in the AO.

However, this very approach betrays the Italian contingent's predisposition to conflict avoidance, which signals to Hizballah that it can operate relatively freely within Italian areas of deployment without fearing that it will experience any interference. This has proven to be the case given that much of the arms caches attributed to Hizballah—not surprisingly—have been found in Italian areas of deployment. This is a curious, yet not coincidental, outcome of such a policy, and such instances have been a source of frustration for Israelis.

This also further highlights the consistency between the literature on areas related to the conflict in the region, and participants' own perceptions and understanding of UNIFIL's shortcomings in confronting Hizballah and other armed elements within its AO. Again, as we have seen before, this perspective on the part of participants is a fair assessment of the situation in UNIFIL's AO by way of the fact that aside from the varying levels of latitude afforded to Hizballah by different UNIFIL contingents, UNIFIL's mandate prevents it from investigating private homes unless there is a credible and immediate threat to life and limb; and they do so only with the permission of and coordination with the Lebanese military. Since the confluence of these factors is seldom available to UNIFIL (in fact, on several occasions the Lebanese military interfered in UNIFIL investigations, as we have seen), Hizballah is very likely exploiting the situation to its advantage.

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Participants, particularly one, astutely perceived UNIFIL's mandate to be deliberately vague, owing to the fact that the interests of various states, including the United States, Iran, Israel, Syria, and others have a vested interest in limiting (or enhancing) UNIFIL's relative strength for their own strategic purposes.

For instance, the permission for UNIFIL to take "all necessary action," as per UNSCR 1701 (2006) did little to clarify matters about when the force could actually be used owing to reluctance on the part of Force Commanders in the field seeking to avoid unnecessary risk-taking, and the contradictory national defence policies of the various UNIFIL contingents which took precedence over mission-specific rules of engagement. This type of vagueness essentially hindered any meaningful action on the part of UNIFIL in many instances, especially when one considers the need for UNIFIL to coordinate its operations with LAF, which had been a reluctant, if not recalcitrant, partner for UNIFIL in the field ever since the mission was first deployed to the AO.

This state of affairs was not only consistently reiterated in SG reports to the UNSC, as well as explicitly illustrated by one of the participants with unique knowledge of the institution of UN decision-making and PSOs, but the academic literature corroborates the fact that in situations with high—and contradictory—levels of interest among competing states, UN PSOs tend to suffer from vague mandates, and diminished operational flexibility .

For instance, Gilligan and Stedman (2003) and Mullenbach (2005) argue as such when discussing PSOs more generally, by suggesting that the complexities of the political situation facing Lebanon precludes any heavy investment into UNIFIL's

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mandate, or its enforcement, with all of the concomitant consequences such an approach has on the efficacy of the mission.

Additionally, further complicating matters is that the joining of all of these factors together gives the impression that UNIFIL is unmotivated in its duties—which is difficult to confirm one way or another—but seems to depend on the various contingents and their specific approaches to the mission. Nevertheless, Israeli participants doubted the motivation *and* ability of UNIFIL to carry out its mission, and felt that since UNIFIL was not fighting its own fight, as it had no stake in the conflict; a common theme that was reiterated over and over again during the various interview processes.

Another quite important finding is the degree to which participants expressed the belief that UNIFIL lacks the necessary cultural competency to effectively operate in the AO. For instance, while UNIFIL operates on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line, its personnel seldom speak Arabic, and are in fact separated even from other contingents on a linguistic basis in many cases. Moreover, the high turnover rate for troop contingents is believed to negatively impact the operation's ability to establish longstanding roots in Lebanon, even if "on paper" the PSO has been in place since 1978. While it is fair to suggest that UNIFIL may benefit from a significant indigenous cohort of civilian support staff who speak Arabic, which can aid UNIFIL's functioning and communication in the field, it is indeed also fair to suggest that UNIFIL possesses little cultural competency in relation to the Israeli side of the Blue Line.

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For example, participants with experience dealing with UNIFIL personnel in one capacity or another stated that their communication with UNIFIL personnel was conducted in English. UNIFIL's lack of knowledge of Hebrew, or of the political situation and history of the State of Israel was believed to hinder the appreciation of UNIFIL personnel for Israel's unique security circumstances. Such language, and cultural barriers were believed to clearly impact the ability of UNIFIL personnel and IDF personnel to be able to form meaningful working relationships (with the exception of those UNIFIL members that had positive predispositions towards Israel), and hindered UNIFIL's appreciation for Israeli security concerns.

Participants emphasized the divisive nature of the linguistic barriers, along with perceived political bias and direct hostility on the part of many UNIFIL members towards Israel as problematic. This was seen as another contributing factor to UNIFIL's overall ineffectiveness, which had a cascading effect that built upon other expressions of dissatisfaction with the PSO, including the above-stated perception of a lack of motivation, professionalism, and/or ability on the part of UNIFIL to carry out its mandate.

Finally, there was an overall impression that UNIFIL, while being of some utility, has no real role in the area, especially in accordance with mandated objectives. There was a very broad perception that UNIFIL's role was too limited by external or internal factors to be of any substantive use, and that the conflict between Israel and Hizballah was far too grand in scope for UNIFIL to be an effective barrier. Generally speaking, participants felt that the conflict with Hizballah along the Blue Line—among other armed groups—was part of a broader longstanding “civilizational”

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conflict between Israel and the Arab-Islamic world, with Israel being the unwitting victim against an overwhelming onslaught from surrounding hostile nations and proxy forces.

While Israel's relations with its Arab neighbours is far too complex to explore within the scope of this study, it is clear from the data that most participants are dismissive of the UN—including UNIFIL as a PSO—based on a widely perceived notion that the UN is both useless in preventing, managing, or solving the conflict between Israel and Hizballah, or any of its other contemporary enemies, or is inclined to favour political forces that are antithetical to Israel. This notion was elaborated in more depth in later interviews as data became increasingly saturated, but was evident immediately from the first interview onwards. As such, UNIFIL is viewed as an extension of the UN, and considered to be of little effect for reasons both endogenous to UNIFIL itself, and part of the perceived systemic bias at the UN which is believed to inform UNIFIL on the ground.

While we have seen from the literature that UN PSOs do tend to generally promote positive effects wherever deployed more often than not, this does not necessarily translate to success in every case, with UNIFIL being a clear example of such an exception. Thus, we can observe that Israelis are generally correct in assessing UNIFIL as a failure, even if the reasons for its failure are not always entirely understood or appreciated.

However, it is necessary to ensure that a distinction is made between the UN and UNIFIL, which is seldom the case among most participants, as the two are related, yet not synonymous with each other. As UNIFIL receives its mandate from the UNSC, it

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has no bearing on any UN-related functions other than its specifically mandated tasks, and has no influence in international forums that are perceived to be the epicentre of anti-Israel activities in the eyes of many participants.

As such, UNIFIL can be separated from the UN institutions in question while still providing latitude for the possibility that UN positions on the Israeli-Palestinian, or Arab-Israeli conflict(s), *may* possibly, but not *necessarily* influence individual UNIFIL members and their attitudes towards Israel in one way or another. That being said, it is important to critically distinguish between the UN as an umbrella institution, and UNIFIL as one of its PSOs, as the two are related yet not congruent, despite perceptions to the contrary.

Thus, overall, we can observe that the above findings demonstrate widely-held perceptions of Israeli participants from all walks of life that appear to be fairly congruous despite representing participants of various ages, life experiences, and levels of familiarity with UNIFIL, demonstrating a striking confluence of opinion on UNIFIL's performance.

8.5 – Conclusion

Participants expressed strong opinions about the UN and UNIFIL, demonstrating a general understanding of the mission's role and function, but doubting its efficacy or that of its mandate. UNIFIL was seen as an insufficient agent in confronting Hizballah, which in turn, actually exploits UNIFIL's presence for its own strategic purposes. For participants at this stage in the interview process, UNIFIL's role on paper was clear, but the actual day-to-day function it served was seen as opaque since it was not able to

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deliver on its stated objectives. This perception served as both a bewildering and frustrating realization for the participants.

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CHAPTER NINE: PERCEPTIONS OF (IN)SECURITY AND ISOLATION**9.1 – Introduction**

Participants conveyed perceptions of insecurity living or serving in northern Israel, with some participants even stating that they recognized the dangers of the north while serving there, despite living in central Israel. In other words, northern Israel has a reputation for being a more dangerous region of the country than central Israel, where the majority of the population resides. In this chapter we explore Israeli perceptions of security, how they feel about the security situation in the north, and what common themes emerge.

Additionally, and related to perceptions of insecurity, were themes surrounding perceived international isolation in the diplomatic sphere. Participants regularly conveyed the notion that they felt internationally isolated for unfair diplomatic reasons, which was also seen as contributing to UNIFIL's inability to properly provide security along the Blue Line. Such views and others are illustrated throughout the chapter, and are elaborated upon in the findings section below.

9.2 – Political Bias, Israeli Perceptions of Security, and UNIFIL's Contribution

Aside from their personal experiences and anecdotal information, another element, which contributed to P8's negative perceptions of UNIFIL, is the impression that Israelis receive from the Israeli media. While P8 admitted that the Israeli media may influence his perception, he believes that UNIFIL's performance—for better or for worse—has been portrayed accurately in what he has consumed from Israeli televised

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news programmes, radio broadcasts, and newspapers. For example, regarding his perception of UNIFIL's performance:

I really don't think they do anything positive. I can talk about at least one thing that happened in Lebanon when Hizballah killed two Israeli soldiers. They [UNIFIL] basically escaped. They did nothing. They sit there, but basically they do nothing. Maybe I am influenced by Israeli newspapers, and radio, and TV - maybe. But, this is what I could feel.

Again, I would love to really talk about it too much because whatever I can say, I can't rely on what I could hear from TV, right? So it's not really - I have never had this experience by myself with them. It's just news and whatever I could read about them. Basically, it was that there was a conflict and they really should have protected them; Israel's side as well, but they did nothing.

Therefore, it is possible to see that there is a confirmation of P8's impressions of UNIFIL personnel by linking their personal experiences speaking with UNIFIL personnel, to an existing milieu which—rightly or wrongly—has a negative relationship with, and/or perception of, the UN and UNIFIL. A third component of this impression, however, is a theme that is common among other participants as well, which is the idea that the world—including the UN as an expression of global attitudes—is broadly hostile to Israel.

This assumption is borne out implicitly and explicitly by P8's suggestion that Israel does a poor job explaining its position to the world at large, which contributes to its diplomatic woes. This inability to demonstrate Israel's legitimate security concerns and courses of action in pursuit of its security needs, results in the portrayal of Israel as the aggressor rather than the victim of violence from its neighbours, including the Palestinians, which are often synonymized:

So, I think that most of the people in our world, they choose to be on the Palestinian or Arabic side. It's a fact. So again, we can talk why. It's about how Israel presents information about what is happening now, but the important thing is that everywhere, most people they actually think that the Israeli side is the aggressive side. And they actually try to kill and do bad things to the other side.

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The Arabic side is “nice,” “polite,” “and they just try to protect themselves.” They are kind of fighters of freedom, and just want to protect themselves. This is the common opinion. Most people think like that. So, if somebody needs to choose a side, obviously they will go with this opinion. Again, we can talk about why nobody cares why. I just know that people think like that.

And again, the reason for this supporting the perceived “underdog” phenomenon, according to P8, is due to an automatic bias against Israel around the world which stems from several factors: (1) the international mainstream media (MSM) portrays Israeli policies and actions unfairly and deliberately in a poor light; and (2) weak Israeli public relations (PR) campaigns. These factors combine to produce an effect on UNIFIL, whereby its personnel become hostile to Israel in accordance with the commonly held global position on Israel conveyed through the international MSM:

Just because the common approach in our world—how people think—what they think about Israel, what they think about the conflict. I think more than ninety-five percent of the world’s population will choose the Arabic side.

It’s because I think the Israeli side, they don’t show what actually is going on there because of several reasons, but their information is not presented properly.

Nobody actually knows what is going on there. It was always like that. It always made me sad to see what’s happening there. How they [the international MSM] take and use, and they just convert one hundred and eighty degrees, and they show really strange things.

P8 posited that the MSM influences prospective UNIFIL soldiers before they deploy to the region, creating an *a priori* bias against Israel for many of the soldiers sent to serve:

When people that have no idea where is located Israel, and what is going on, when they see such things they just believe that, and it’s actually including the soldiers. Because before they came to serve this organization they were citizens who had access to media, which impacts the perception. And the media was bad about Israel. It’s just part of their mindset.

(...) it is an information war that Israel is losing. They don’t know how to present themselves. And I can say as a former Israeli citizen that they think that really everybody knows the truth. That everybody really knows what is going on, and there is nothing to express and nothing to explain, because this is obvious.

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Yes, they are trying to kill us and we are trying to protect ourselves, isn't that obvious? But no, it isn't obvious because nobody really knows about that. I try to explain that, but this is really scary because it's unbelievable.

(...) I remember in 2006, in the Second Lebanon War, there was a very sad story that a little boy stayed with his grandmother in their apartment, and during the bombing, the rocket just entered to their apartment, so the grandmother actually lied on the boy. It killed the grandmother. But when you read about that in Western news, like CNN, it was just about Hizballah trying to protect themselves from Israeli aggression. So, they shoot the rocket "accidentally" - they made some kind of damage to the house. They didn't even **talk** about the fact that they killed a woman. This is how the world presents things, and this is why, I think, these soldiers really are against Israel - just because of what they hear and what they see. (emphasis in original)

The implication here is not only that Israel is portrayed as an aggressor by the MSM, but that the perceived anti-Israel default position of most of the world informs the way the media portrays Israel, which then reinforces the very bias that is underpinning the reporting in the first place in a cyclically reinforced fashion. This in turn influences international opinion on Israel, negatively, which impacts the perceptions absorbed by UNIFIL personnel who are recruited to the PSO on various service rotations.

What compounds the issue, is Israel's apparent lack of awareness that its own position on its security measures is not readily accepted as obvious to the rest of the world, and insufficient attention and effort is directed towards correcting this approach to conveying Israel's position via a sufficient public relations and diplomatic strategy. Therefore, UNIFIL personnel are a product of their respective environments from their originating countries, which are by and large anti-Israel in accordance with P8's perception of general global attitudes towards Israel.

Yet, despite these challenges, and the exasperation echoed by this participant as well as regarding UNIFIL's perceived animus towards Israel and its general ineffectiveness, P8 feels that UNIFIL still serves a purpose. For P8 the issue is about a

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matter of will, not a matter of capacity or knowledge, but the PSO cannot be expected to actually *solve* the conflict—which is also a common conception—because the conflict it operates in is remarkably intractable, especially for spoiler groups such as Hizballah, which is viewed by P8 as being religiously motivated to continue the fight against Israel. This perspective concurs with both Neumann’s (2007) suggestion that religiously motivated spoiler groups are the most difficult to contend with, as well as Borer’s (2006) definition of a “total spoiler,” that is virtually impervious to ideological moderation.

As such, while UNIFIL is seen here as having the potential to do more than it does, it cannot meaningfully contribute to the cessation of conflict, which is consistently considered as an inevitable fact of life for Israel by most participants in the study. As P8 expressed:

I would like to see them acting and doing something, so potentially they can. You couldn’t see anything like that until now. Because, for example, they are located on the Israeli and Lebanon border. Everyone knows that Hizballah has tunnels just under there, but they don’t care because they don’t see them on the surface. So they do nothing. Potentially they can. They have the equipment, they have the knowledge, they know what to do, but they don’t want or don’t care. I don’t know. But potentially yes, I believe they can dig or put some barriers and really do what they are supposed to do and divide the two groups of people. But they don’t do it.

It’s a real war. A lot of people have died because of it, and a lot of people are going to continue to die. These are two sides and literally they want to kill each other. This is what is really happening there. It’s nothing about being peaceful or good. It’s a terrible war and there is a lot of hate on both sides. I think that there is no simple solution for that. And I don’t think UNIFIL can really play a role there.

For the other side, it’s a religious thing, which is much more terrible because for Israel’s side, they are not as religious as the Arabic side. When it comes to religion, it becomes very dangerous. I don’t think if you compare religious fanaticism and UNIFIL, that UNIFIL can do anything. Really, it’s like a tsunami. It will flush them.

Here we see a civilizational aspect to the conflict as well, insofar as separate worldviews inform the response to the conflict that both Israelis and Hizballah have.

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There is a tacit understanding by participants that “Lebanon” is not the actual party to the conflict; rather it is Hizballah, which is religiously-oriented and the only significant actor carrying out attacks motivated at least in part by a religious commitment to fighting Israel, albeit from Lebanese territory.

When asked if P8 would like to share anything with the researcher that was not specifically asked, they expressed specific sentiments alluding to their worldview, and the origins of that worldview. They relayed that, as a former Soviet citizen growing up outside of a “Western” mindset, this upbringing impressed upon them that the conflict between Israel and the Arab world—of which Hizballah is one element—is civilizational, and that Israel’s Western orientation hinders its ability to readily combat the threat from the Arab world. In other words, the Soviet worldview was more akin to the Arab worldview, which views compromise, or Western liberal values, as a form of weakness.

Additionally, they reiterated their stark belief that conflict is inevitable; religion of all stripes is problematic; and that the conflict is ultimately one that is zero-sum in the grand scheme of things, with negotiation on the part of Israel being fraught with risks and being ultimately unfruitful against a seemingly uncompromising and implacable enemy. Moreover, they asserted that given that Hizballah, and “religious Arabs” in general, hold particularly religious convictions—predominantly on the part of Muslims—these convictions present insurmountable obstacles that form the crux of the conflict confronting Israel and her neighbours on a societal level:

I know that we, as Russian speakers come to Israel from the former Soviet Union. We see things differently, because whoever was born in Israel, it’s more about Western behaviour and how Western people see things. And I think it’s one of the roots of the problem because they talk to Arabs like Western people. And Arabs—religious Arabs—they literally see that it’s a weakness how the Western people try to treat them. It’s not that they are **bad**. It’s just a different approach.

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But their approach is so different from the Western approach that the gap is so huge that there is no way to talk to them. So, all this Western attempts to talk to the other side, I don't think it works.

Really, I don't think it's possible to solve it without a lot of people dying. Or there is another, which is to get rid of religion on both sides. Because I have never seen anything with people who think like me—even on the Arabic side—I can talk to them if they are not religious. It's very easy to talk to them and communicate. In Haifa, for example, we have a lot of religions. We have a lot of Arabs who are Christians and you can become friends with them. But when it comes to Muslims, it's very critical to them to take a lens back. It's a very religious thing, and very violent thing. So, I think the whole Western approach that Israel tries to use with this religious thing doesn't work. It cannot work. It's impossible. Either you use more violence and kill them, or they kill you.

But still, I think this is the root of the problem. I think Israeli Zionists they are very, very Western. Too Western for the Middle East.

Given P8's assertion that Israel's Western orientation is actually an obstacle for Israel in terms of pursuing peaceful ends, and the way it engages in conflict, it is not surprising to notice his lack of faith in UNIFIL's ability to prevent Hizballah from attacking Israel to a meaningful extent.

Some participants were entirely unsure what UNIFIL's purpose was, operating on the presumption that preventing cross-border hostilities was not part of its mandate. For instance, P9 lived in Haifa, Israel's largest city in the Northern District, for most of his life and experienced missile fire from the north, requiring him to seek shelter at various points in his life while living in the city. When speaking of those instances, P9 quipped, “so, if there is any peacekeeping force up there, where were they?,” pointing out that there were attacks against Israel “right from the border.” Interestingly, P5 also had no opinion on the matter, relaying that from her perspective, UNIFIL is not even worth discussing since its ineffectiveness is self-evident.

P9 admitted that he is somewhat neutral in his opinions about UNIFIL, as it left no real impression on him despite seeing its vehicles in Israel on occasion. In effect, the

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participant was suggesting that UNIFIL's tangible impact on the security situation had been so negligible in the north as to not register in his consciousness as an entity worthy of consideration. However, he felt that despite UNIFIL's neutrality, or impartiality in terms of its work, that the mission is biased against Israel, alongside the UN generally, which we have identified as a very common theme among the participants in this study:

I'm pretty neutral about it, because again they have been pretty neutral. It's not like they've left some impression on me. They don't go up in the news, you just don't hear about them. That's all. You see them every now and then. You see a UN car on the roads in Israel, but that's it.

I think they're trying to be impartial, but it's hard to because the UN is not neutral, or not as neutral as they claim to be. They **do** have a specific stance towards, or I would say **against** Israel. That's what I think. (emphasis in original)

I would guess that, it's probably because they are under the impression that Israel is a conqueror. They just took all the lands by force, which is not completely true, to say the least, because the UN is the one that actually helped in the creation of the State of Israel. So there is a certain bias here.

The Secretary-General. They almost always speak against Israel. Or, I wouldn't say against; it could be a little bit passive-aggressive, because it's like they don't do much, but they complain about things that they can't intervene to prevent, and it's been passive-aggressive too. It's what I've heard is mostly against Israel.

Thus far, it becomes apparent that for participants, UNIFIL's role is intuited to a fair extent, but the mission itself is viewed as largely ineffectual, as well as biased against Israel. Its ineffectiveness is, to a certain degree, considered an explanatory factor for the bias against Israel from the perspective of participants. However, this is not the final word on the matter for participants, as this perceived bias does not necessarily negate its utility for Israel's security, as is discussed below.

9.2.1 – Perceiving the UN and UN PSOs as Futile (but Useful)

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We see in this instance that P9 lumped UNIFIL and the UN together and posited that UNIFIL's impartiality is compromised by the UN's bias against Israel, which is *believed* to impact UNIFIL negatively. There is also a subtext of linking the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into the broader conflict between Israel and Hizballah in Lebanon, insofar as the participant inferred that the "bias" at the UN concerns lands conquered by Israel either in the 1948 War or the 1967 War, which would not include Lebanese territory (independent of any Lebanese or Syrian claims surrounding the Shab'a Farms). This is clear because the lands referenced here in terms of "the creation of the State of Israel," can only refer to the 1947 UN Partition Plan and its associated resolution, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, calling for the partition of British Mandate Palestine into a Jewish and Arab State on November 29, 1947 (UN, S/RES/181(1) (1947), which did not include any territory that constitutes contemporary Lebanon.

When prompted about what he thought UNIFIL's role is, P9 expressed genuine bewilderment:

I would most likely ask "what exactly is their job there?" "What are they impactfully doing there?" Okay. You wake up in the morning, put the uniform on, but "what exactly do you do?" "How does your day look?" Because I'm trying to understand what **exactly** they are doing there, because I don't know. (emphasis in original)

I would say maybe, I don't know, watching. Well, they're not watching the border because it's not their job. See, I don't know what they're doing there, because we have the IDF watching the border.

At this point we see another common theme among participants, in that they tend to perceive the IDF positively and attribute positive security developments to the IDF almost entirely, if not entirely. UNIFIL is not generally considered to be a force of substantive preventive value in terms of preventing cross-border attacks to the degree that some participants, such as P9, did not even consider that to be their function (despite the

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fact that it is *indeed* part of their function, as is monitoring the border). As such, when speaking on the subject of border infiltrations, which UNIFIL is supposed to prevent to the best of its abilities in conjunction with the LAF, the participant credited the IDF (not unjustifiably, however) for preventing such infiltrations:

Well, infiltration is usually under control most of the time. We have—the IDF has—people who are, whose job is to actually watch the border through cameras, and other forces. In regard to the UN force, I don't know. I really don't know.

Yet, as with most other participants, the UN was nevertheless viewed as valuable, with a potential role to play, particularly in peace enforcement:

I think there is a role for them to play there. One thing is to create sort of, a DMZ—demilitarized zone—and just have **them** there. So, it's like a neutral zone. You get the Lebanese above it, Israel below, and there should be a strip; a clean strip there. Maybe the UN is then controlling and actually using **force** to enforce the neutrality of that zone. (emphasis in original)

And when speaking about the direction of the application of that force, the participant indicated it should be “for both sides, if need be.” It was at this point that the researcher inquired about the specific experiences the participant had with the security situation in the north, in order to learn about his outlook on security and the effect of (in)security on his life. It was conveyed to me that the individual had experienced rocket fire quite a few times directly emanating from Lebanon via Hizballah fighters. The tension and atmosphere of the attacks became clear:

Yeah, it began the first time I remember, began around 2008 I think it was. It was night time, evening time, and there was out of the blue, a siren that one of the rocket alarms of Israel, and everyone just rushed in the building in the area. Just rushed to the shelters. Usually down in the [apartment] building, or to the stairs, the building stairs. And you just start hearing bangs. The missiles hitting the ground. Since these missiles—it's not even missiles—it's rockets, homemade rockets, so they're very inaccurate. They just fire them in an intention to hit the civilian population. And these rockets hit houses, they hit schools, they hit, you know, one of them hit the Haifa court; killed seven people that day.

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Yeah, all the sirens, then you rush to the shelters again. And my parents' apartment is on the side of the mountain facing north, so you can actually see the rockets coming.

You could actually see them in the sky, see them falling in the sea. All the splashes, yeah.

I asked P9 what effect these attacks had on Israelis, to which he responded that it only created a "certain feeling of discomfort," but then provided a vivid example of a disturbingly close call that affected his friend and friend's family:

It's, you see those things coming. One of them actually dropped in the street just below [their apartment]. A friend worked with me at the time, it dropped right outside his house, and they had, yeah, they had to move because the rockets came with a payload of iron balls, or orbs, or spheres. Yeah, from metal, and explodes and everything just flies to cause more damage, especially to people. So their windows actually had round holes [laughter].

I noticed that when the P9 was relaying the story, he would gently laugh or chuckle when talking about the rocket attacks or other attacks which came up as examples. This was done in a way that was humorous, and I could understand that it was not a shrugging off of the seriousness of such attacks because it was almost indicative of the commonality of such scenarios in northern Israel. Other participants as well seemed to indicate their experiences in a calm and matter-of-fact manner, as if to suggest that such attacks go without saying. It enhanced the researcher's contention that conflict in Israel is normalized to an extent whereby there was no reasonable expectation on the part of participants for a total cessation of violence from the north, regardless of UNIFIL's presence or otherwise.

While most participants *hoped* to see a total cessation of violence in the future, few *expected* this to be the case. Along this vein, the participant hoped to see "peace and quiet" as the ultimate goal in the north, but expressed this sentiment with a chuckle, almost as if it was a hope that would not be met at any point in time in the near future.

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P10 had mixed feelings about the UN and UNIFIL in that he felt that the UN as an institution was biased against Israel and that there was “not much hope” in the UN having a positive attitude towards Israel. However, similar to P7, this did not trickle down to UNIFIL, even if many Israelis believed that to be the case. Concerning their feelings surrounding the futility of the UN, P10 cited his vivid experience as a child with the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Egypt prior to the 1979 Israeli peace treaty with Egypt and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and also learning, or absorbing certain attitudes towards the UN from “the background”—or their social surroundings in Israel—about UNEF’s operations, and the UN more generally:

So, you’re growing up, and in the background - and then you enlisted, and then you join the military, and you say: “useless.” Like, as Abba Eban said “Um-Shmum,” I mean how do you translate “Um-Shmum,” meaning useless United Nations in a sense. And to Israel, it’s like one of those, you know, what else they used to say: “as soon as it starts pouring, the umbrella got lost, or the umbrella got folded” or something like that. You’re describing the effectiveness of the United Nations.

In this quotation, the participant is citing a well-known adage that was actually attributed to David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, who wrote off the UN by using the pejorative “Um-Shmum.” *Um* is the Hebrew word for the UN, while “Shmum” is a dismissive suffix, similar to a colloquial dismissal of something or someone using a mocking rhyme, such as “rules shmules,” or referring to someone as “Joe Schmoe.”

The example of the umbrella metaphor exemplifies the idea that UNEF was akin to an umbrella which is folded closed as soon as the rain starts, indicating the impression relayed by P10 that once there was a threatening situation for UNEF personnel, they

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would close up, or escape the danger, rendering them as “useless” as a closed umbrella in a downpour of rain.

This experience, coupled with the influence he received from the social background in Israel which was hostile towards the UN, solidified the participant’s confidence in the IDF as a necessity borne out of an understanding that the UN—and the world at large—will “never” be on Israel’s side, so Israel must always rely on itself for its own defence.

(...) And just the effectiveness is sort of like, the world is never going to be on our side. We’re out to defend ourselves, and again with this like “can’t you see **my** side of the story?” Never mind the other side. So, it’s like, you kind of look at them thinking [demonstratively tilts head quizzically]. (emphasis in original)

However, P10 was sympathetic to the challenges facing UNIFIL on the ground, attributing much of the difficulties it faces to unrealistic mandates and insufficient communication between the personnel on the ground in Lebanon and political decisionmakers at DPKO in New York. Specifically, P10 felt for the troops who are trained to be soldiers, but are asked to refrain from using armed force even when necessary merely for reasons of political expedience. Moreover, P10 seemed to consider UN bias against Israel to be independent of UNIFIL operations, which is impacted more immediately by policies made by DPKO:

The whole refugee relief operation, in which the United Nations creates just one for the Palestinians [United Nations Works and Relief Agency], which is another story that now Israel is trying to get everyone to pay attention to...but in a sense, separate. Because you’re asking professional soldiers to refrain from using armed forces, right?

And, divide, so, “one,” but yet somewhat not connected to the overall mission, as sometimes the policies that are written, way back in New York, right? At the UN headquarters, right? Somewhat of a disconnect—lack of communication—between the people on the ground and the decisionmakers all the way in the United States.

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What was interesting about the comment concerning the use of force here is that the participant had experience with both UNIFIL and UNDOF, which he often confused as the same force. The nuances and differences of UNIFIL's and UNDOF's mandates were not typically understood by most participants, including former IDF personnel, except for those individuals tasked with dealing directly with the personnel of the respective UN PSOs. As such, and in accordance with the general tendency to agglomerate all UN missions as part and parcel of the UN itself, participants would sometimes cite shortcomings of UNDOF and attribute it to UNIFIL, or vice versa.

For instance, P10 had served militarily at different points during his mandatory military service in the Golan Heights, where UNDOF operates, *and* Lebanon at the early stages of UNIFIL's deployment. The participant interchanged stories about interacting with both PSOs, and offered similar critiques of both together, focusing especially on the personnel's lack of motivation or stake in the conflict:

Every so often we actually had to move our tanks because the United Nations force in the Golan Heights would do what they called "the count." How many artillery, how much of this and how much of that. And I would remember, like "Here we go." This is one of those vivid memories—the blue helmets—so we're kind of moving out of base into some open fields, so when we count we're maybe just an inch over the, sort of...demilitarized zone...and I mean what are you **doing** here? Kids from Denmark, from Sweden, sometimes from Senegal. What are you doing here? Like do you even understand the weight and the seriousness? (emphasis in original)

Similarly, when speaking about UNIFIL in Lebanon:

And before you know it, now we're engaged with the southern Lebanese militia and General Haddad, and it's like the UN is coming and "Okay guys, here we go again." You have to pick sides. Like, in my head, I'm thinking that "your job is to try and separate and to move people a distance. But you don't see who is the good and who is the bad; what's evil and what's, who is on the other side..."

You speak, here and there, you know, because you cannot avoid not talking to a white jeep that parked, and somebody in charge coming and talking to a higher rank, and "how you doing?," some broken English. You communicate.

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And I...remember being in the Golan Heights, or in Lebanon at the time, and it's like "what are you doing here, kid?" "I mean, I'm fighting for my life, and **you?! You're** earning a salary, and it's like, here is the "effectiveness" when you have nothing personal invested in this. You just do your job as described." (emphasis in original)

Just, you know, as a person in uniform, right? Like, you can relate to a lot of things, but my mission is to save my life and the life of the country. For them, it's just a mission overseas, and when you have time off, this is what you do, you go and drink, passing time, you know? Like, there is no emotional investment, right?

We were almost like, there was some arrogance. **We** were the professional soldiers. **You're** just sort of like kids in costumes, so to speak. You have no authority—mostly not carrying a gun—which is another issue, right? Or, I'm sure they're armed, but not allowed. Right? [referring to UNDOF interchangeably with UNIFIL] (emphasis in original)

Like, our mission, we know exactly what we're doing there, right? And many, actually most of the people served in the northern units were **from** the north. Some of them literally from Kfar Yuval, Metula, from Kiryat Shemona, from the kibbutzim or moshavim. They're heavily invested, right? (emphasis in original)

We can see that the particularities of UNIFIL and UNDOF are immaterial to P10, which is a common thread among many participants. For them, if conflict is not prevented, it diminishes the utility of a mission existing along any of Israel's frontiers for any stated purpose, including observer missions. Moreover, we can observe once again the idea that UN PSOs surrounding Israel, from UNEF, to UNDOF, to UNIFIL are perceived to suffer from a lack of motivation or as having no clear stake in the conflict, that prevents them from carrying out their mandate in the opinion of a preponderance of participants, even if the differences between, and specifics of, those mandates are not entirely understood.

Ultimately, this filters down into a lack of trust in the UN's ability to intervene to the benefit of Israeli security interests, which paradoxically, does not seem—yet again—to take away from the value afforded to UNIFIL given the proper context. For instance, the participant was keenly aware of the political weakness of Lebanon and the

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tremendous influence of Iran and Syria in the area—something that was recognized by most of the participants quite clearly. As P10 relayed, there would need to be some form of enhanced enforcement on the part of UNIFIL—which would require UN political will and financial investment, as well as a mind towards preventing mission overstretch which strains the ability of TCCs to provide troops to ever-burgeoning UN PSOs around the world, coupled with simultaneous diplomatic efforts between Israel and her enemies for UNIFIL to be considered more successful:

I think it goes beyond, because Lebanon to me, it's the end of the wire. The spool is actually Tehran or Damascus. So while having boots on the ground, partitioning and blocking some kind of you know, exchange of fire even just at the southern Lebanese peninsula, like from the Litani down to Israel was just enough, you know? You couldn't trust [the UN to intervene].

I think they can if there is enough [soldiers]. If there is enough, but again I'm not a General.

The diplomacy is just to try to contain the fire, because Hizballah is not a good news to world peace, and the same with Hamas. I mean, as Syria and Iraq evolve, we understand.

Is it doable, by the way? Do we have the budget? Does the UN have the budget, or enough countries **willing** to send soldiers to literally, **physically** separate between? (emphasis in original)

Just being there. Being there. Being in your face. "Okay, I'm a peacekeeper here with a mission to prevent conflict. Or to stop it. Dead stop. What are you [Hizballah] going to do? Walk over me while I'm standing there?" So this is not Martin Luther King, or Gandhi-peaceful protest. It's like, "I'm telling you my arms are across my chest and I'm not moving. Now what are you going to do about it?" Like, literally to prevent this in your face, but are you going to walk over me? Well now we're still trained soldiers, right? And if there is enough troops.

Now it's tough, because UN force keeping is spread thin by, now how many conflict zones we have in the world? I don't know. Many.

Similarly to P9, P10 believed that a demilitarized zone would be an ideal interim arrangement prior to a formal peace treaty. Yet concerning the actual political will necessary to allow UNIFIL to succeed militarily, P10 felt that large powers that have a stake in the conflict may interfere in such prospects for political purposes, or exploit

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systemic UN biases against Israel from particular Member States. This perspective is akin to the comment provided by P7 who suggested that the more international powers are interested in a given conflict the less likely a PSO is to succeed in that environment:

I think the will is influenced...So, I'm saying the will is there, with the Russia veto, I'm sure they're picking sides. So, I'm sure the delegates are only in favour, but when you have such powers, and now China on the rise, the Iranians, we see all the resolutions against Israel. You can see a one-sided United Nations, right?

Thus, we see a return to a concern over perceived UN biases against Israel, which is attributed here, as elsewhere with other participants, to a civilizational divide between Israel and the Arab-Islamic world, which tends to operate as a voting bloc against Israel at various UN forums. Yet as alluded to above, this state of affairs, from the participant's perspective, does not negatively influence UNIFIL, as they attribute a lack of resources to be the primary obstacle to UNIFIL. Therefore, when prompted on what accounts for the perceived bias against Israel at the UN, P10 responded with a focus on the Arab-Islamic voting bloc which influences anti-Israel decisions within various UN forums:

The same bias that created UNRWA for the Palestinians way back, and it's still in existence. And I think that, whatever, you know? It's for generations to come. So you're considered a refugee—a Palestinian refugee—even if you're a great great-grandson of an original refugee who left Israel or Palestine in 1948. So there is a bias. I think there is enough countries where Islam is the dominating religion, who are like, Indonesia. Far East.

What interest do you have other than showing the Iranians...like they are not, just like the Turkish are not, they are Muslims, not Arabs. What is their shared interest? It's the solidarity between Muslim countries. The Muslim "brotherhood" [not the Muslim Brotherhood organization, but actual fraternity in this instance] voting together time and time and time again.

Additionally, similarly to P8, P10 believes that Israel has a poor public relations strategy, which opens it up to unfair criticism:

Israel can do more in the PR not done by Israelis or people on mission, meaning the Jewry in the Diaspora. We have an Evangelical Church in the United States

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that is very much pro-Israel, for their very own reasons, but you need people to advocate for Israel.

It should be noted that a contradiction is made here in that the participant identifies a lack of motivation on the part of foreign troops constituting UNIFIL because they have no discernible stake in the actual conflict itself, yet nonetheless, deems UNIFIL to be valuable and motivated by “good will,” prevented from its work by the fact that the UN, as an institution, does not dedicate the appropriate resources to the PSO, while also circumventing biased voting blocs at the UN. This contradiction has been expressed elsewhere by other participants as demonstrated above, but is indeed a common perspective among participants, indicating a general willingness to tolerate a less than ideal UN force rather than having no such force operating in the area.

For P10, they were more optimistic in what can be achieved, and saw the utility of UNIFIL in spite of its shortcomings:

This is coming in good will. I think they **truly** believe that if they choose to station UN troops in a conflict zone they are there to do the job (...) I think we need more boots on the ground, like literally some kind of barrier to keep the two sides from (...) and then the diplomacy will satisfy both. Regardless of the Hamas Charter or the Hizballah Charter, the destruction of Israel. To me it's words. Symbols can change, words can change, the charters can change. (emphasis in original)

Better to have the UN there. Even one is better than none.

Yeah. Some post, some ‘thing’ to say we’re “we’re watching, we’re looking, we’re taking records. We know who started.” Like, sometimes it comes down to - I remember in the media, “who shot first?” And then you ask the observers, right? “Who shot first? Who crossed the border? Who did what?”

At this point, P10 indicated his frustration over specifically the “who shot first” issue, recalling personal experiences he, his family, and his friends have experienced concerning rocket attacks from all directions while living in Israel—both today and in the

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past—and frustration at Israeli overtures for peace which have not been reciprocated by Lebanon. Again, as elsewhere with other participants, P10 had confidence in the IDF and believed it is doing what it can to secure the north given its constraints. He believed that Lebanon is too beholden to Iranian and Hizballah influence to meaningfully challenge their interference in domestic-political affairs, which is an understanding that is echoed by the SG reports to the UNSC, as well as the available literature. As P10 stated:

The rockets and the shelling from the Syrian and Jordanian side [in the past] - I know people my age who grew up in bomb shelters **exactly** the way we see it right now in the southern border of Israel. It used to be Katyushas shelling Kiryat Shemona in the Upper Galilee for many, many years. Many people my age – younger - who grew up, you know, literally living in bomb shelters, going out at night. (emphasis in original)

I know many people on a personal level who grew up in this environment where you—we—experienced bomb shelters only during the Six Day War, because the Jordanian air force managed to do a few raids towards Netanya, which is nearby. And so we spent, I think in total during that week period, two nights. It was in Grade 4, in the bomb shelters. I remember being woken and one night we went to sleep in a bomb shelter because the chances were that the Jordanians will try and raid again. And actually there was the odd one or two bombs that fell near Netanya, and near our kibbutz in some open field.

As far as refraining from any clashes in the northern border, I think Israel is doing as much as Israel can.

I think the way that the government sort of took one step back, and just tried to quietly detain. Israel is doing its part.

We have now twice entered Lebanon and engaged in a conflict there. Israel withdrew. Ehud Barak, it was the first thing he did. He took Israel out of Lebanon, right? We're doing our part to bring peace to the area. What are you doing on **your** side? (emphasis in original)

I think the Lebanese right now, with the influence of Hizballah, the amount of money that is pouring in (...) The Hizballah is buying Lebanese voters. And I think that they're taking a huge risk allowing this arsenal to be built, you know? Shielding yourself by the use of children and women.

The experiences that P10 personally underwent did not transpire in northern Israel, but during his military service in and along Israel's frontiers with Syria and Lebanon, he learned about the specific challenges that northerners experience, both in the

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1970s, 1980s, and today. In particular, he noted that Israelis living in the north tend to live in a state of perpetual anxiety over security threats:

Also, during military service, we used to patrol the border as part of our duty, and on reserve [duty], even more so. And you've seen what it's like to be a civilian on the border, regardless if you live in a city, a moshav, a kibbutz, in a community, and you're on guard even when you may perceive as a quiet period. It's never a quiet period, because every so often, you know, you could never rest assured that "ah, tonight it's going to be a quiet one," or not, or is there going to be another attempt to infiltrate, or another kidnapping, another attempt to come by sea, by air, on foot, right?

So, is this, you go to sleep but you're alert at the same time, right? And when you walk at night, you know, it's like something is always there. You're watching. You're listening. You're wondering, you know? You know that you just found tunnels [underground from Lebanon into Israel], so the northern community—the people—say, "we can hear digging, we can hear construction work at night." Now finally, I guess, right? It's a big (...) but they find out what is there. For every one we find there's another that we're still looking for...A **lot** of anxiety. Yeah. (emphasis in original)

We can observe that the UN and UNIFIL are not only largely synonymized, but that the two separate UN PSOs operating along Israel's northern frontier—UNIFIL and UNDOF—are often confused for each other. Both have separate mandates, as the former is an enforcement mission, while the latter is an observer mission, yet are perceived as similarly deficient in the performance of their respective mandates, which are not clearly differentiated from each other.

Nevertheless, this lack of efficacy on the part of UNIFIL contributes to the ongoing "anxiety" expressed by participants about Israel's insecurity, which is attributed to a very particular set of actors: Hizballah, and its state benefactors of Iran and Syria. Lebanon itself, is not perceived as a significant threat, if at all, to the security of northern Israel; a theme that enjoyed a consensus among all participants in the study.

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9.2.2 – Hizballah, Iran, and Syria (not Lebanon) are the Operative Threats to Israel

Overall, assuming that UNIFIL had the military wherewithal to confront Hizballah, P10 believed that this would provide sufficient grounds to put pressure on Hizballah to accept a simultaneous diplomatic solution, but that would be difficult given the stranglehold that Hizballah has on Lebanese politics. Thus, military pressure is critical in this regard to weaken Hizballah politically, in order to create the necessary leverage to force it to negotiate a peace agreement. However, along that vein is the recognition that it is also quite common among participants that the real problem is not Lebanon itself. In fact, participants tended to be indifferent to Lebanon and did not view it as a material threat or problem for Israel. Rather, Hizballah was consistently identified as the single most serious threat emanating against Israel from the north by all but one of the participants:

Really the issue is Hizballah, it's not Lebanon, and I think if tomorrow somebody would take this **cancer** and just remove it. If somehow a revolution in Iran, the way it turned over from the Shah, they'd reverse course; Hizballah and Hamas will be ready to collapse completely, and then the relationship between Israel and Lebanon will be going back to where we were. Try to, without taking sides, hoping that the Christians and the Muslims, and the Druze find a way to coexist, because really (...) the balance is interfered by Hizballah from my perspective. I think almost any politician would say this is **the** issue there. It's not the minorities can't agree on some coexistence, right? (emphasis in original)

P11, a resident of Haifa, felt overall that the security situation in the north is “very safe” but admitted that this is due only to IDF vigilance and effectiveness, and that conflict in the north is inevitable: “I feel very safe. I worry that when things do eventually blow up, Haifa would be a target because it is the largest city in the north, and because we have the navy and army base.” Moreover, the respondent believed that Israelis may not be getting the full picture of how dire the security situation in the north may actually

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be, since the Israeli government tries to deal with things quietly until it becomes impossible to prevent the public from knowing:

I think eventually in the world there will be a war there. I don't know if it will be in my lifetime. At this point it seems very calm. But it also seems like there is a lot going on that Israel has been able to put to rest under the radar that isn't going well, or is going to start increasing. I feel like, in a way, we're almost like pre-, like, before Iran became an issue and there are just minor issues where you could tell that they were doing stuff, and Israel already had people involved in putting things away. And then you had to get to a point where they got too big, and then things publicly became an issue. And I wonder if Lebanon has the opportunity to be like that. But right now I don't feel like there is an issue.

I think a lot of people feel that something is brewing, but that we're in a time of peace.

This relates to an earlier contention the researcher had derived from the preponderance of data gathered from participants that the notion of "security" in Israel differs greatly than in other democratic countries. There is very little expectation that there will be a total cessation of attacks against Israel by one or more of its neighbours, or agents operating from those countries, which translates into a highly relative notion of "security." Thus, it makes sense for an individual to consider her or his life to be "very safe" in northern Israel, while accepting the inevitability of violent conflict in the future, only if the baseline feeling of safety is informed by a notion of security that is already less secure than other Western democratic countries.

With this in mind, P11's opinions surrounding the efficacy of UNIFIL in preventing cross-border hostilities was positive overall. However, the basis for this opinion was the fact that they had not heard otherwise, and knew little about the specifics of UNIFIL, coupled with their confidence in the IDF's ability to protect Israel's north. Again, however, P11 seemed to fatalistically believe that "Israel is always going to be

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surrounded by enemies,” and that a total cessation of violence against Israel by its neighbours is unlikely:

At the very least, they're doing a good job of keeping it [cross-border hostilities] out of the public eye. Whatever is going on, if there is something going on, it is not a big deal to the public, which to me, Israel is always going to be surrounded by enemies, and it's always going to have to defend itself. But at least if we can keep the other nations, and make it as quiet as possible, to me that's a win.

In the context of Lebanon, P11 identified Hizballah and Iran as the problematic actors within the country, but like many other participants did not consider Lebanon itself to be a particular problem for Israeli security, and felt that it is “normal” to have a few border attacks here and there, which is not considered particularly problematic for many Israelis, but just a normal aspect of life. Nevertheless, the participant felt that given the embeddedness of Hizballah within Lebanese society, the Israeli and Lebanese people view each other with suspicion:

I think it's sad. I have never been to Lebanon, but I know Lebanese people. Its people, they are very friendly, caring people. The problem is they have people in their midst who still want war. So even though they are very friendly and caring, they have to be looked at as a prospective enemy, and I think they have been trained to see us as a prospective enemy. Which to me is very sad because it goes against the Arab nature.

The few instances we have had have been handled immediately. There have not been many attacks. Whatever peacekeeping methods they are using seems to be working. Even in times of peace, traditionally, Israel has people infiltrating the border trying to carry out terrorist attacks.

It's not a reflection of the people surrounding the border, it's a reflection of single individuals who get past. But the Lebanese border to my knowledge - we have not had that issue, which tells me that something good is happening there that is preventing it, because even in times of peace, even if Lebanon was one hundred percent pro-Israel, you would still have that. Those single outliers who want to attack and they have not been able to, which shows we're doing something.

The discussion was veered back to the UN and UNIFIL, and the researcher asked the participant if she felt whether or not there was a UN bias against Israel either at the

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broader UN organizational level, or within UNIFIL specifically, or some combination, and the participant very quickly responded in the affirmative, with the following explanation:

There have been more ordinances against Israel and how they treat people than any other country, despite serious obliterations of their people, and the wars in Africa. Well, I guess that's not Israel. There are many nations that are in crisis and the government is virtually decimating their people, and Israel's treatment of Palestinians is the top concern.

More specifically, when considering what accounts *for* the bias that they perceived to permeate the UN vis-à-vis Israel:

I think it's underlying antisemitism. I don't think we ever got rid of antisemitism. I think it's still there. I think antisemitism, and then from the Palestinian perspective, and I don't think the Palestinian perspective is what is leading the UN to bias. I respect the Palestinian perspective—and the Palestinians—there is no way they could ever see Israel as an authentic entity that deserves to exist because we took their land. But I don't think the UN is using that as a legitimate reason to be anti-Israel. I think they are letting biases from underlying, historic biases, take over.

To be clear, the participant suggested that antisemitism is what causes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be a top concern for the UN over other seemingly more pressing crises around the world, and not the converse:

I think they are keying into the conflict and trying to use it to their benefit, but I don't think that they are taking action against Israel because of the conflict. I think the conflict complements their already existing bias.

P11 expressed sympathy over international concern regarding Israeli treatment of Palestinians, but felt that the realities on the ground still did not merit the disproportionate attention afforded to this particular conflict at the UN, and that the UN will always be biased against legitimate Israeli defensive measures due to their stated reasons above:

The way we treat Palestinians is wrong. And I think that there is a lot of legitimacy to what people see in the conflict, and how people look down on Israel.

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But I don't think that necessitates the amount of focus the UN has put on it, and that shows bias, even if there is truth to that problem.

I think that if, God forbid, there was an outbreak and there was an attack on that border, and Israel retaliated, it would be Israel's fault regardless. Earlier this year, we had a few missiles, but it wasn't Lebanese, it was from Syria, and even then it felt like that whole region. A defence on Israel's part is going to look far worse than an attack on the other side.

Again, P11 expressed the common perception of Israel being besieged by its neighbours and an uncaring international environment that is hostile to Israel on a variety of grounds and that applies a double standard to Israel. However, participants were particularly confident in the IDF's ability to defend the border, even if they did not expect a one hundred percent success rate.

Participants appeared to view the IDF's efforts as being sincere and that it was doing the most it can to secure the north. What is interesting in this instance is that P11 felt that UNIFIL was doing a good job in enforcing the border, while also recognizing that attacks have still occurred over the Lebanese border—albeit she had little knowledge of UNIFIL—but nevertheless derived her own interpretation of its success by virtue of her experience and understanding. It appears that the general “understanding” in Israel that the impossibility of a complete cessation of violence against Israel creates a relativized concept of “security,” which consequently lowers the threshold of expectation placed upon both UNIFIL and the IDF.

The participant also admitted that there is a persistent atmosphere of anxiety and hypervigilance in Israel as the society is often mobilized and prepared for an attack from the north at any moment, which has both positive and negative effects on Israeli society:

I think the more I talk about it with people, the more people have already planned. I know in Haifa we made a law where apartments, and I think most of Israel did it, where you have to add a bomb shelter onto every apartment. But Haifa did it immediately. So we already have, they have already done all of the buildings, so

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we are already prepared. And to me, that amount of preparation is slightly worrisome for people that can't get their act together usually.

I think there is generalized anxiety, and I think that it's very reflective...and I think it's very interesting to see the impacts it has on the people, and why it's such a happy people because you have that constant anxiety of war, that the little things can't possibly be on your radar (...)

I think the bigger issue is that Israelis are very prepared for it, but also, I don't know, it destroys the society while also bringing it together, which is what you would expect.

Thus, we begin to see very familiar themes surrounding participant perceptions of UN bias, the “chronic security condition (CSC)” affecting Israel's northern region (and more broadly), whereby conflict is seen as “normal” and “inevitable” and informs expectations surrounding how secure Israel can realistically be despite its best efforts, and how Israelis react to the ever-present threat of violence against the country. We can also observe the extent to which UNIFIL is perceived to have (dis)utility in preventing conflict with Hizballah, and how it is the IDF that is viewed as the sole guarantor of Israeli security on the ground.

9.2.3 – Considerations Regarding IDF-UNIFIL Relations

One particular participant served in the early 2000s in a position that involved daily contact with UNIFIL personnel, which offered a particularly unique perspective on their perception of UNIFIL's effectiveness and overall utility in the north. P12 was generally satisfied with the work of UNIFIL, insofar as the expectations they had of the personnel was tempered by a realistic outlook concerning its capabilities as a PSO, and also the differences that exist among and between the different national contingents that comprise the operation.

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At the time, along the western sector of the Blue Line where IDF soldiers served, they had regular interaction with UNIFIL's Fijian and Indian battalions. They relayed that with some battalions there were better relations than with others, but that in terms of their daily interactions, the relationship overall was positive. However, the Fijian battalion (FIJIBATT) was seen as particularly friendly towards Israel and motivated to fulfill UNIFIL's mandate to the greatest extent possible:

There were about three forces, three different forces at the time that I served, and the closer branch were the Fijian battalions that really took offence and guarded our part of the territory. They kind of felt themselves, like—this came from **them**—they felt like the were they thirteenth Zionist tribe. So they were **very, very Zionist**, and they did their own—on their own accord—their mission for the UN, but they were protective of the Israeli border. Meaning if they saw anybody coming up to the border from Lebanon, they would sometimes use force....as much as their mandate allowed. And, they were very nice to us, very nice about it. (emphasis in original)

This was certainly an interesting anecdote concerning the relationship they had with members of UNIFIL's FIJIBATT, but broadly speaking, when interacting with any UNIFIL personnel, P12 described the interaction as mostly that of reporting and relaying any concerns or issues on a near-daily basis, while also ensuring that UNIFIL civilian personnel living in the Israeli town of Nahariya could cross the border to their places of work at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura. However, interlaced with this discussion of the typicality of daily interaction with UNIFIL, there was recognition that there were very frequent incidents of "contact" between Israel and Hizballah, despite UNIFIL's presence:

Like, if there was anything that happened on our side of the border, or anything that kind of changed, or any incidents across, we would liaise with the opposite office of UN workers. And we would speak with them regularly; just whenever anything, whenever an incident happened on the border, whenever our border was lit up with, you know, "contact," we would convey to them what happened. And this happened a lot.

And our side, on our part of the border, which is the western part—the most western part of the whole northern Israeli border—this was mostly because

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when our border was lit up with an incident, it was also closed down, which affected UN civilians in their offices in Naqoura, meaning they couldn't go home, or they were caught—not especially in the crossfire—but on the way too [back to their homes in Israel, or on the way to their offices in Lebanon].

Furthermore, UNIFIL would liaise with the IDF when it was concerned about any of its troop movements as well, and the IDF would work to alleviate concerns and provide UNIFIL personnel with answers, both through its contact with UNIFIL patrols and also through its liaison office with UNIFIL in Tzfat:

Most of the battalions that we met all over the border—we had another office in Tzfat that had a different part of the UN [UNIFIL] to converse with—so, any kind of movements over on our side of the border, UN forces might call our office and ask about them. If there were tanks moving along the border, and there were concerns about them, they would call us and ask us about it. We would call the tank operators and we could speak to them and ask them what's happening. And we could convey an answer to them. So the contact was very, almost day-to-day.

There were a couple of attacks, a couple of border movements, nothing that was out of the ordinary. We had contacts at the, you know, our fence would be alarmed—maybe two to three times daily—and our base was just at the border. That means the whole base would jump to attention and head out into, you know, the bunkers and stuff like that. Not for fighting, but like, to protect, but also for fighting. Not us, especially, but just to protect the border. There **were** some crossings. Some crossings, you know? Hostile crossings. There were some over the years (emphasis in original).

In one particular example relayed to me by P12 where UNIFIL expressed concerns about Israeli military movements in the field, she explained how an IDF tank commander would repeatedly direct the tank's main gun at UNIFIL forces because they enjoyed looking through its scope at the UNIFIL forces. Needless to say, UNIFIL forces were nervous about this and relayed their concern to their IDF counterparts asking for clarification and for the tank operator to cease pointing the main gun towards UN forces, which the IDF obliged:

The commander of the tank liked to look at the UN forces [laughter] through the scope, but the scope was actually the canon, right? So [laughter], he would like to look at them, but the UN forces would...they would call our liaison office and tell

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us, “he’s doing it again.” And we would call that commander and ask him to please stop. “I’m just looking at them.” “No, please stop that.” And we had a good relationship, so we could ask them to make him not make hostile movements.

This demonstrates an awareness of the importance of preventing any perceptions of hostilities from the IDF’s side, and the importance placed on reassuring UNIFIL personnel that the IDF had no hostile intentions against its personnel.

Therefore, broadly speaking, there was the tacit recognition that while P12 was generally satisfied with UNIFIL personnel with respect to how they carry out their duties, there appeared to be no expectation that they prevent all of the cross-border attacks—even if that is their mandated task in conjunction with the LAF—as it was taken for granted that these attacks from Lebanon were par for the course, and could not be entirely eliminated by UNIFIL.

It turned out that upon further consideration during the interview, P12 felt that UNIFIL was actually more of an observer force than a peace enforcement mission which influenced their perspective on UNIFIL’s performance and mandate, similar to the perspective relayed by P3, and a sentiment echoed in previous SG reports on UNIFIL’s performance. When asked directly if they felt that UNIFIL was an effective force in securing the north, P12 disagreed, and even relayed the fact that members of FIJIBATT lamented this fact as they were particularly motivated to perform well as a contingent, but that the participant did not think that was UNIFIL’s role:

I don’t think they were an effective force, because, like on their side of the border, the Fijians would tell me “we cant do anything more than this,” “we can’t really protect, we can’t really enforce this border, we can’t show force more than what we do,” and basically **they** said they felt a little ineffectual because their mandate could not allow them proper **military** action. (emphasis in original)

That said, it’s not their **job**. They’re peacekeepers, they’re not fighters for Israel. So, it’s not exactly **their** job, but they did just hold ground for their part of the border, which was very nice for us. And, I do believe their work, the UNIFIL

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civilian people, and their other work in Lebanon, improved the lives of people who live there. (emphasis in original)

The Fijians who would have liked to defend our border were at the spot where they could. Honestly, they did not have the weapons, and you know, military force to **do** stuff, so. And also, that's not their mandate. Their mandate is peacekeeping... (emphasis in original)

Interestingly, despite having an above average understanding of, and interaction with, with UNIFIL personnel, P12 was under the impression that UNIFIL does not have the mandate to enforce peace along the Blue Line, but this is not the case. UNIFIL does indeed have the mandate to do just that, in conjunction with the LAF, where appropriate, but also on their own accord to the most practicable extent possible. Yet there is a common perception that it is the IDF's duty to protect the border, therefore UNIFIL was believed in this instance to serve either an observer function, or little to no purpose at all from the perspective of many participants. This perspective is remarkably common across a broad section of Israelis with a different set of worldviews and experiences, indicating a broader trend.

Nevertheless, P12 retained their perspective that UNIFIL was useful in the liaison functions it performed, independently of its inability to fulfill the enforcement aspect of its mandate. Significantly, P12 lauded UNIFIL's CIMIC efforts as being of benefit to the Lebanese citizens towards which those efforts are directed, and brought this point up unprompted. They also expressed sympathy for the Lebanese people living under Hizballah control, which further reinforced two commonly understood themes among the participants: (a) the Lebanese public, per se, is not the "enemy" or primary problem affecting Israel's security; (b) Hizballah is the main security obstacle to Israel emanating from the north (and that barring overwhelming force, UNIFIL cannot stop Hizballah).

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...Hizballah was a **terrorist** force that did not get the approval of the civilians living there. So, there was nothing really that the UN forces could do, and there was nothing the civilians could profit from, because this was not military action from one side to the other. (emphasis in original)

However, given that UNIFIL, even prior to UNSCR 1701 (2006)'s augmentation of the force, was supplied with military equipment that was sufficient in at least engaging more aggressively against Hizballah forces, even if not towards a complete disarmament or dismantlement of the organization, this understanding coupled with P12's earlier suggestion that some battalions—particularly FIJIBATT—were more friendly towards Israel than others, begged the question for the researcher as to what the participant believed was substantively different between the relations Israel enjoyed between members of FIJIBATT and other battalions within UNIFIL, and what accounted for UNIFIL's inability and/or unwillingness to actively engage Hizballah.

P12 said that, "It's a little bit like hidden hostility. Nothing out in the open, but very hidden hostility." Moreover, P12 indicated that this hostility was the product of an anti-Zionist ethos that affected the *will* of those particular contingents, unlike the will of FIJIBATT to engage Hizballah, despite Hizballah's overall military superiority vis-à-vis UNIFIL:

Okay. Most of UNIFIL were **not** willing. They were—first of all—this was not what they signed up for. The individuals, this was not what they signed up for. Secondly, Indian battalions and maybe Italian battalions that were up there, did not believe in Israelis. I mean, they did not believe in our force, or things like that. Things are just down from our interaction from the Lebanese border. So, they were a little—I don't want to say antisemitic—but a little bit anti-Zionist at the time. And that's fine, that's what **they** thought. (emphasis in original)

When asked to speak more about what P12 felt was the cause of this anti-Zionist sentiment, the respondent shared a perspective that was expressed by P8 and P3 that these were sentiments that may have been absorbed in their home countries, but P12 qualified

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this by suggesting that they thought these views were likely to have been absorbed living among the Lebanese, who like most people in the Arab world, are anti-Zionist, and may have passed on resentments to UNIFIL members over Israel's occupation of Lebanon from 1982-2000:

I **do** believe that people in south Lebanon feel retaliations. And they feel a lot of resentment from occupational times, or just from the time the Israelis were there. And their feelings are, you know, it's their right, in my opinion. But I **do** feel the hostility is one-sided, and the other [Israeli] side is defensive. (emphasis in original)

A lot of time when we met these people, a lot of the time we had an impression that they were just anti-Zionist. Like, this was something that they came with from home. My own impression, like, if you want to bring that down a little, is that they lived among the Lebanese. And I honestly don't know what went on in Lebanon while the Israeli army was occupying there. Like, it wasn't a huge occupation, but still they **were** inside Lebanon for a long time... (emphasis in original)

So, I do know that they—you kind of adapt to the way of thinking for where you're sleeping. Like, so I **do** think that now, whatever they hear from the Lebanese civilians, or the Lebanese that they live amongst, is kind of—**would** become their perspective, and I think that's natural. (emphasis in original)

It should be noted that P19 argued that the UNIFIL staff that live in Israel are likely more "pro-Israel" than "pro-Lebanese" from their experience, which may demonstrate a corroborating factor to this frame of thinking on what influences UNIFIL personnel in terms of their outlook on Israel, but more research would need to be done in the future to better demonstrate or falsify this suggestion.

Concerning combatting Hizballah as well, P12 understood this to be UNIFIL's greatest challenge, in that Hizballah operates asymmetrically, and UNIFIL would have a difficult time confronting them, because they blend into the civilian population, live among the people in southern Lebanon, and UNIFIL essentially has the impossible task of patrolling and intervening in Hizballah operations:

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Yeah, but again, the Hizballah forces, you know, they're probably not all like "bad guys" running around with knives all the time. Like, they have a common enemy they don't like. They're part of the village, I guess.

[UNIFIL's] greatest challenge is basically that the armed forces that you talked about are not "forces." They are individuals, or homegrown—I wouldn't say "terrorists"—but with very little weaponry, with very little armour and stuff like that. Like, not a lot of guns, not a lot of things. The individuals in the south that relate to Hizballah and relate to the cause can actually attack the border.

And with the Fijians, with the UN forces in mind, they can't really do anything about it. Like, they would ask them to stop, they would ask them to stop **again**. They could not **really** block an attack, or not—like they would alert and stuff like that—but they could not really use force to stop an attack. And because there are a lot of individuals living in the south, this was, like, a great challenge. (emphasis in original)

Moreover, another challenge that is posed for UNIFIL is that the LAF itself could not carry out the functions expected of UNIFIL, so the burden is deemed too great. It is recognized that UNIFIL *is aware* of much of what is going on, but simply cannot sufficiently intervene. By way of example, and akin to P6's comment about brazen drug trafficking along the border, P12 had this to say:

The army of Lebanon would not, you know, have a problem with UNIFIL, so much as the individuals who lived there [southern Lebanon]. And the Fijians would...the whole, the UN forces...around the borders, they would not just encounter terrorists. They would encounter drug dealers. Drug traffickers who were moving product along the borders. And they - what could they do? [laughter]. Like they're not a drug trafficking force. So their problem is actually **enforcing** the no armed zone. (emphasis in original)

On this point, P12 believed that Israel is of greater assistance to UNIFIL than Lebanon in that it has a monopoly on violence within Israel, while Lebanon's sovereignty is weakened and challenged by Hizballah's non-state military presence in southern Lebanon. They phrased it by saying that:

There's a strict army on one side, that you know, does what it's told, and individuals on the other side that do what they like. It makes their job easier on our side [laughter], but harder on **their** side. (emphasis in original)

And on a higher level, our commanders would also have scheduled meetings with some of their commanders to work out any issues...to help the UN

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forces above the border. So, I do feel like they were very helpful in that, and there were more than two bases of the UN liaison for the IDF... So, I do feel like [the IDF] was giving the most help that it could.

Overall, P12's personal experiences with UNIFIL led her to believe that on balance, UNIFIL is a good force to have in the area, especially as a deescalating body between two countries that have longstanding hostility towards each other, similar to P7's perspective on UNIFIL as well, which was also garnered from unique knowledge of the mission:

I believe the force is very good there. I believe I'd rather converse with a second, like, a third party, than with the Lebanese army or anyone else, because that allows for **peaceful** talks, and not for anything that might instigate "contact" between the two countries. But I feel that one side is hostile, maybe the Israeli side is also hostile, like if you're fighting there for a long time. (emphasis in original)

This is a fair point, especially as the ongoing monthly tripartite meetings between Israel, Lebanon, and UNIFIL, have proved to be fruitful as an LSR that fosters a modicum of mutual understand and respect in the shared domain of security concerns. However, as appears among other participants, there is a contradiction between perceptions of its value, with most saying it is better to have UNIFIL there than to not have it there—even if there is broad discussion about what needs to be done to enhance UNIFIL's effectiveness—and the recognition that UNIFIL may nevertheless be broadly biased against Israel, alongside the UN more generally, even if there are sympathetic personnel members within the operation to Israel's security concerns. Moreover, UNIFIL is perceived as being an occasional obstacle to Israel's ability to defend itself from attack emanating from southern Lebanon:

I do know that the Israeli **notion**, like the public's notion, is that the UN is hostile towards Israel. (emphasis in original)

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I **do** think they're indifferent to Israel's - I do think the UN is indifferent to Israel's right to defend itself. But, more than a few UN officers and workers, and military personnel, were very friendly to our cause. So, they were just like a drop in the water. But yes, I **do** think UNIFIL is kind of blocking Israel's way to defend itself. (emphasis in original)

I **do** think the buffer works there, but it's poor. So that's the only thing that's wrong here. But anyway, Israel defends the border by not only standing at the border and, like, shooting down or shooting at people who come to the border. I guess they could take action if they see, like, a lot of big military or big terrorist units who come to the border. And they [IDF] would **not** cross over, obviously. They would not cross and instigate anything. (emphasis in original)

Thus, we can see that while UNIFIL is broadly viewed as ineffective, and is comprised—at least on certain deployment rotations—of contingent members that are both sympathetic and hostile to Israel, there is still an appreciation for the functions it performs well. There is even a degree of sympathy for UNIFIL among some participants, as it is understood that its mandate and capabilities are unrealistic and insufficient for what is expected of the PSO. There is a tacit understanding that UNIFIL's relations with Israel and Lebanon are substantively different, as the former has strong systems of accountability and a monopoly on violence within its boundaries, while the latter lacks both elements. This accords with the literature, and the SG reports to the UNSC on UNIFIL's performance, which regularly laments Lebanon's governmental and military weakness in the face of Hizballah and other non-state militias operating throughout the country.

9.3 – Findings

Overall, we can observe several themes that emerged from participants regarding insecurity and isolation:

- A high degree of anxiety and tension, fearing an attack at any moment;

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- A high level of confidence in the IDF's ability to secure the north;
- A perceived lack of motivation and/or ability on the part of UNIFIL to fulfill its mandate;
- A conflation between UNIFIL, the UN, and other UN missions operating in the region;
- A perception of a prevalence of antisemitism at the UN and around the world;
- Israel's failure to enhance its own image and adequately convey its security challenges to the world; and,
- The influence of bad neighbours and spoilers on Lebanese affairs, and that Lebanon is not the enemy, per se;

The themes that most commonly repeated themselves surrounded the perceptions of anxiety, constant worry about safety and security, hyper-vigilance, the mobilization of society to contend with warfare, and so forth. Participants expressed the various ways in which behaviour was changed to accommodate the need to alleviate the perception of perpetual threat, or to prepare for the worst-case scenarios. These findings bear out the fact that fears over the lack of safety and the way these anxieties impact participant worldviews, not only has had psychological and behavioural impacts, but also how UNIFIL's lackluster performance contributes to this condition in Israeli's north. In particular, UNIFIL's failure is seen to be evidence of a general failure on the part of the UN in dealing with Israel in a fair manner in the diplomatic sphere, which compounds negative perceptions surrounding security into a cumulative feedback of stress and anxiety, which will be discussed in greater detail below. These novel findings highlight the unique psychological survival tactics

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Israelis use to cope with the ongoing safety issues they encounter, and the changes in their behaviour to cope with, and normalize this chronic state of being.

However, despite the ways in which behaviour was changed to accommodate the need to alleviate the perception of perpetual threat, or to prepare for the worst-case scenarios, given as it is that participants did not expect a complete cessation of hostilities due to the normalization of constant warfare with Israel's neighbours—particularly with spoiler groups, such as Hizballah—participants expressed a generally high degree of confidence in the IDF's willingness and ability to contend with any and all threats that face Israel's north.

In particular, this confidence was due to the fact that Israel has a conscript army, including many northerners fighting for their very communities and their very lives, which provides a level of motivation that was believed to be unique to the IDF. This is another key finding that further demonstrates a common component of consensus among participants, namely, confidence in Israel's military resources, capabilities, and personnel. It was emphasized by various participants that, in spite of the security challenges facing Israel's north, the IDF's readiness and willingness to protect Israel's northern territory gave participants a measure of hope and confidence in confronting any and all threats emerging over the border with Lebanon.

Needless to say, this perspective of the IDF was almost the exact opposite of how UNIFIL was regarded by most participants. While this was iterated earlier, and throughout discussions with all of the participants, UNIFIL was not generally believed to have sufficient motivation to contend effectively with Hizballah. This perceived lack of motivation emerged from a variety of different lenses. On the one

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hand, there was a recognition that the burden is simply too great for UNIFIL, even if there was a sufficient degree of motivation to fully disarm Hizballah and other armed elements within its AO in a best-case scenario, given that Hizballah is recognized as being a homegrown, popular, and well-armed actor in southern Lebanon.

UNIFIL's lack of adequate resources and mandate, as well as a lack of cooperation from a very weak and unmotivated Lebanese government and Lebanese military—which has good reason to fear Hizballah—further diminishes UNIFIL's credibility in the eyes of participants. Thus, we can see the emergence of a more sophisticated understanding of UNIFIL's impediments in southern Lebanon, which nevertheless did not translate into an excuse for UNIFIL's failures.

The data overwhelmingly conveyed that there is little UNIFIL is perceived to be able to do, aside from acting as somewhat of a buffer between Israel and Hizballah, which is believed to further erode any extant level of motivation in favour of self-preservation when facing an implacable and better trained and equipped foe such as Hizballah. As such, the frustration that was relayed by participants, especially when communicating instances of being able to observe UNIFIL posts immediately adjacent to Hizballah posts, only served as incontrovertible evidence that UNIFIL is not a serious player in the conflict. Such perceptions were coupled with a cynicism towards a perceived lack of professionalism on the part of UNIFIL, as its contingents were often critiqued as being paid soldiers merely collecting a paycheck, and not wanting to risk their lives since they had no stake in the outcome of the conflict, unlike the IDF and Israel's citizens.

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Moreover, there was frustration directed towards UNIFIL as a product of its existence in the AO, and not particularly due to its actions, in that by virtue of simply being adjacent to Hizballah positions, the IDF was often unable to engage Hizballah militants out of concern for the safety of UNIFIL personnel, in addition to politically-oriented fears of negative international diplomatic and media attention in the event that any UNIFIL personnel were harmed in such exchanges. It is understandable then, how if the average participant perceived UNIFIL to be mere paid soldiers with little regard or interest in fighting for the area, that their confidence in UNIFIL would be limited, and commensurately, their overall trust in the PSO as well.

This finding accords with the literature suggesting that where the local population loses faith in a PSO, or considers it to lack credibility on the ground, it is difficult for a PSO to regain that local confidence among the served population. While Israel is not technically where UNIFIL is located, UNIFIL's mandate involves dealing with Israel as a conflict stakeholder, and involves regular contact with IDF personnel, and Israeli civilians on occasion. Thus, while not being embedded in Israeli society to the extent that UNIFIL is embedded in Lebanese society by virtue of operational proximity, it is apparent that UNIFIL's failure in the eyes of Israeli stakeholders has had a tremendously negative impact on UNIFIL's image south of the Blue Line.

However, it should be pointed out that the utility served by UNIFIL, specifically as a liaison between Israel and LAF, was seen as a positive function that warranted the continued presence of UNIFIL in the area. For instance, it was recognized that UNIFIL has acted positively as a deescalating agent between Israel and Hizballah, by acting as a third party between Israel and Lebanon, which lack formal relations

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outside of very limited security coordination via UNIFIL on matters pertaining to the Blue Line, and general security matters.

Therefore, and somewhat ironically, we see that participants held perspectives that were both highly condemnatory towards UNIFIL, while also being laudatory when it was perceived that UNIFIL's actions merited praise. Thus, while participants were outspoken in their critique of the PSO, it was not done in a dismissive fashion, but only to the degree where perceptions of UNIFIL's futility appeared to merit such critique.

Interestingly, as we have seen from the literature, this is the same position taken by the Israeli government towards UNIFIL. Israel had initially opposed the creation of UNIFIL, considering it to be unnecessary and a possible impediment to Israeli security interests. Over the decades, Israel has also complained about UNIFIL's futility, and had on more than several occasions over UNIFIL's four decades of operation, even had tense relations with the PSO over both perceived—and real—failures on its part to pursue its mandate. However, notwithstanding such critiques, the Israeli government has lauded the liaison functions of UNIFIL, which it has enjoyed in the form of a now-longstanding tripartite meeting mechanism that allows Israel to enjoy an LSR with LAF (and by extension, the Lebanese government). Thus, while more can be said about the specifics of Israel-UNIFIL relations, we can observe a relative consonance between the perspective of the Israeli government and participants, as to the potential benefits of UNIFIL's continued operation in the area.

From this point, it was also clear that the various UN PSOs in the region, particularly UNIFIL and UNDOF, given their close proximity via the region between

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Lebanon and the Golan Heights straddling both Israel and Syria, were regularly conflated as the same force. On such occasions this resulted in erroneous attributions of action or inaction to the wrong PSO, which is part and parcel of the general disdain that Israelis feel towards the UN as a whole, due to the diplomatic and political issues that inform the acrimonious relationship Israel has with many UN bodies and particular Member States. As such, with few notable exceptions, UNIFIL, UNDOF, the UN, and UN PSOs in general were viewed as basically “the UN” as a whole, and vice versa.

In particular, we can observe that the critique concerning UNIFIL’s failures in fulfilling its mandate, were directed at the specific shortcomings surrounding its inability to confront and disarm Hizballah and various Palestinian militias over the decades. This is crucial to consider given that most participants, when probed on this matter, made it clear that these spoiler groups were the tangible and credible threat to Israel, as opposed to the Lebanese government “proper,” per se, which was reiterated forcefully in later interviews.

This demonstrates that while Israelis recognize that from a “civilizational” perspective, Israel’s neighbours may not generally be sympathetic to Israeli security interests, policy objectives, or even its legitimacy, for a variety of reasons, they do not feel any existential or immediate threat from Lebanese citizens or the state directly. This recognition of which entities constitute a threat reveal that for most participants there is no zero-sum impression of the conflict between Israel and its neighbours. They perceive specific threats emanating from specific actors. In terms of specifically malign states, participants almost exclusively identified Iran and Syria as being

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Israel's main antagonists, in particular, and in that order. One participant uniquely identified Russia as Israel's primary global enemy, but even so, only because it is closely allied with both Iran and Syria, in particular.

In sum, we can observe that Israelis feel that Israel's overall reputation within the UN, and around the world, is negative, particularly as it pertains to critiques of Israeli policy against the Palestinians, its neighbouring countries, or due to rejectionist anti-Zionism or antisemitism altogether. For some, this is further frustrated by what is perceived to be a failure on Israel's part to improve its image through an effective public relations campaign, as participants felt that Israel is victimized by the world on the diplomatic front, all legitimate criticism notwithstanding. This negative attitude towards Israel is believed to inform the behaviour and attitudes of UNIFIL personnel as they are considered to be influenced by negative portrayals of Israel via the MSM in the contingents' respective home countries, as well as through the influence of specific UN Member States that drive the agenda within the UN on Israel.

Such factors are subsequently believed to impact the motivation of UNIFIL personnel, in that they are not willing—as well as not able—to lessen or prevent hostilities along the Blue Line, in addition to other factors which contribute to UNIFIL's perceived lack of motivation, such as self-preservation, as discussed earlier. The hostilities that participants speak of, however, are particularly those carried out by Hizballah, and some Palestinian militias, and not the Lebanese state itself, which is largely viewed as weak and ineffectual in confronting Hizballah, and lacking any semblance of control in the area. Iran and Syria are viewed as the true

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influential players concerning Hizballah, and UNIFIL is therefore unable (and subsequently unwilling) to truly contend with the threat to Israel, with few exceptions.

When relating participant perspectives concerning Iran, Syria, and Hizballah being the most hostile enemies of the State of Israel, we see that the literature bears this out, and that Lebanon as a state is of no particular threat to Israel's security. Israel has had no major (although several minor) altercations with the LAF directly, and virtually all cross-border attacks emanating from Lebanon have been the result of one militia or another over the decades.

It is well established both by academic, gray literature, and the multitude of SG reports to the UNSC that both Iran and Syria are seen as actors with influence over Hizballah, as well as Lebanese domestic politics. This again is something that was well-understood by the participants, and was consistently relayed over and over again, demonstrating a strong understanding of what actors do—and do not—constitute a threat to Israel's northern frontier.

Ultimately, these various findings add a deeper understanding of the Israeli perspective—on the individual level—to the existing literature, and provide insight on the cultural impacts that Israelis face as a product of the conflict between Israel and Hizballah. It is possible at this stage to obtain a sense of how Israelis living in northern Israel view a PSO that operates mere metres away from Israel's frontier. Participants spoke vividly about their own unique upbringings, encountering situations often with little notice that required swift action and self-protection in light of dangers emanating from Lebanon. The perceived roles, actions, and responses to

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various situations by both the IDF and UNIFIL, contributed to the shaping of their perceptions, allowing us to critically assess these perceptions and experiences, and how they accord with reality, and their influence on participant behaviour and understanding of UNIFIL's performance, and its effect on their lives.

9.4 - Conclusions

We observe that in terms of the Israeli participants' perceptions on the role of UNIFIL and its contributions to Israeli security in the north, the diagnosis of most participants—although with varying degrees of nuance—is resoundingly negative. Participants are generally aware of UNIFIL's presence along the northern border, but see no tangible improvement in the security situation in northern Israel, save for the actions taken by the IDF when necessary. For the participants, it was clear that the IDF is the country's security guarantor, and not UNIFIL, and that any aspect of the PSO's mandate whereby it is required to disarm Hizballah, restore international peace and security, and facilitate renewed Lebanese sovereignty, has not been met to any acceptable standard.

The UN and UNIFIL, among other PSOs, are seen as extensions of the same organization, and informed by the same worldview of hostility towards Israel, Jews, and Zionism that many participants attribute to the UN. While some participants recognized that there is a difference between the UNSC and the UNGA and the myriad agencies and PSOs that operate under the UN flag around the world, even the most charitable of views and understandings surrounding the complexity of the UN did not insulate against a general critique that the UN is institutionally biased against Israel for various reasons, and that this could have impacts on the PSO's functions and motivations in the field (among other contributory factors). This perceived bias against the State of Israel is also

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seen as partially a product of Israel's own failure to convey its political messaging in an adequately convincing manner to a foreign audience.

Participants also clearly expressed how recognizing the perpetual threat of violence in Israel's north contributed to certain behaviours designed to ameliorate the risks, which took a toll on their every day lives. The "threat" itself was believed to emanate from Hizballah in particular, with the support of Iran and Syria, but not the Lebanese State itself, despite the fact that attacks against northern Israel originate from Lebanese territory. Lebanon's government and military are viewed as weak and at the mercy of Hizballah's overwhelming political and military influence in the country.

Building upon these impressions, subsequent discussions lead us to explore specific participant notions on the consequences of their perceived levels of (in)security living in Israel's Northern District. These discussions provided further, and often personal and specific details, ranging from how Israelis respond to (in)security in Israel's north, to how Israel's perceived international isolation—informed by the presence of a widely believed phenomenon of anti-Zionism and/or antisemitism around the world, among other factors—contributes to this perception. The implications of these perceptions surrounding UNIFIL, and beyond, are examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TEN: THE SUBJECTIVE IMPACT OF CONFLICT IN THE NORTH**10.1 – Introduction**

Participant perspectives on the subjective impacts of (in)security in Israel's north demonstrate how UNIFIL is viewed as ineffectual, evidenced by the continuation of violence along the Blue Line, and beyond. However, there is still a general consensus among participants that UNIFIL is better than nothing at all. Such a position is informed by a shared sense of the inevitability of conflict with Israel's neighbouring states, particularly with spoiler groups such as Hizballah.

Our discussion explores how conflict is “normalized” to the point where it has psychological, economic, social, academic, and political impacts—that is—it impacts all spheres of life. This normalization, however, is attributed not only to the geopolitical neighbourhood within which Israelis find themselves, but also to the perception that the world—represented by the UN, hostile Member States, and the international MSM—turns a blind eye to Israel's security plight. This perspective is discussed as being informative of the lumping of the UN and UNIFIL together, as an institution that is inherently hostile to Israel.

How Israelis cope with the security situation varies from individual to individual, and demonstrates unique differences, but significant levels of similarities in terms of outlook and the prospects for a cessation of violence in the future, despite having individuals come from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences with UNIFIL and IDF service in northern Israel and/or Lebanon.

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10.2 – Measured Expectations of UNIFIL’s Performance

Upon considering P12’s previous sentiments, it becomes clear that while they evaluated UNIFIL’s function positively, they openly perceived a broad anti-Zionist bias among a significant proportion of UNIFIL personnel, as well as an indifference to Israeli security concerns, and the PSO’s inability to prevent attacks. This was evidenced not only by examples of border infiltrations and ongoing rocket attacks, but given the fact that Israel has responded to large scale military movements on the part of Hizballah in southern Lebanon, even during P12’s own period of military service. Additionally, the comments demonstrated confidence in the IDF’s defensive capabilities, and commitment to acting appropriately when conducting warfare.

Concerning P12’s ideas concerning *why* UNIFIL personnel were often so indifferent to Israeli security concerns, barring the notable few exceptions mentioned above, the participant was unable to understand what motivated this perceived animus:

I don’t know why it happens. I really don’t understand why that would be. Coming from the Israeli side about, like, being in defence and stuff like that, it’s like, I understand, we are **defending** the border. We’re not - we don’t want terrorists coming over. And the other side is the **hurtful** side. It’s not a defensive strategy on the other side. So, what accounts for that, it’s like. It’s unfathomable. I can’t even think of why you would not, like, want to defend somebody who’s in defence of himself. (emphasis in original)

At this point in our interview, I wanted to gauge how the security situation in northern Israel impacted P12 directly, as well as their perception of how Israelis are affected more broadly by the current state of affairs. P12 relayed examples of how these conflicts tend to produce a constant state of tension in northern Israel, similar to P11, P10, and others, as well as intra-Israeli discord between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, and how the situation has impacted them, and their family, personally:

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I used to live in Haifa, and that would be very far from **daily** contact. So, whenever there was a real conflict that missiles and things were shot over, that's where I would feel it in my hometown. In the border itself, I do feel their infiltrations. I would not say daily, but **weekly**. I do know that people there, not only have to, but they do carry weapons with them. Like, just for day-to-day to go work. And they're **proficient** in using them. And, they are the actual, like, **defenders** of the north - the people who live in Rosh HaNikra, in the kibbutz's all over. They're in the line of fire, basically. (emphasis in original)

Yeah, I feel it's very touchy. I feel there are touchier times. I feel it's very loaded. It's very loaded, like most of the time I don't feel very secure at the north.

One of the rockets that hit in Rishon Lesion [a city in central Israel] hit a building next to my brother's house where he was, instead of being in a safe room, he was recording it with a video camera [laughing], and when you hear the drop—when you hear the hit—your heart sinks because you know he was **so** close and **near it**, and that impacts you very, very traumatically. (emphasis in original)

In Haifa, just when I was finishing with the prep school before university, there was a missile landing just like, almost in the town square. And we could go there and find little beads of metal that were scattered and were, like, ruined the house, like after the missile dropped. And, being impacted is not just like seeing ruins, or being tense for that time. I think that year that I was in prep school, my whole testing sequence was rescheduled towards the end of the summer, or towards the end of hostility because we didn't know when it would end. So that was a whole, like **month** that I finished, like, studying the material [laughter] but I could not, like, take the test to use it, and, so that was, like, impacting me in the academics a little. (emphasis in original)

When I worked as a [server] that means that, clients weren't coming in. It means that we couldn't work or make as much money as we could. Because there were alarms, you know, when the missiles go up in the air, alarms go up and we have to go into some kind of safe house, you have to go to some kind of safe room, and that just means that there are a lot of people who are **not** going out there. People who are not, like, living their life to the fullest at that time. (emphasis in original)

Basically it's the tension of we don't feel persecuted. We don't feel like we're being hunted or something, but we do feel, like, we have a right to be there, and people are attacking [laughter] civilians for it, people are attacking **us** for it. And, it's not nice. (emphasis in original)

[Northern Israelis] have a contingency for an attack.

Here we have a similar piece of relayed information that mirrors P1's point about having lived in the north and serving in the "civil defence" of Israel outside of his formal military role. Many in northern Israel feel perpetually anxious about security breaches and brace themselves for worst-case scenarios on a regular basis, by being trained on the

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operation of personal firearms and carrying those firearms on a daily basis in the event that personal defence is required.

It is also apparent that the feeling of tension, or fear surrounding impending attacks not only affected P12's personal sense of security, but is echoed throughout the broader Israeli society, even beyond northern Israel, as bomb shelters are common—and even mandated by law—and there is a concomitant impact on all areas of life, including social, economic, and academic consequences associated with cross-border attacks from Lebanon (and elsewhere).

In fact, P12 had briefly lived outside of Israel in the United States in their youth, and remembered even at an early age how the feeling of “tension” dissipated as a result of leaving the country. Additionally, the participant expressed the fact that the cumulative impact of this constant state of tension, coupled with fears over the consequences of war in Israel, was a contributing factor to the participant's decision to emigrate to Canada. There is perpetual worry over the safety of family, children, and the unpredictability of attacks. Moreover, there is an understanding that the long-term psychological ramifications of living in such an environment can be damaging:

We spent the Gulf War in Israel, and right after that was done, we had a charter to work in the States when I was **very** young, when I was in elementary school. And even as a child, even as an eleven year old, I could feel the tension dissolve when you're out of Israel. There's a tension there. There's something that's over your head the whole time you're there. (emphasis in original)

You might have, like, your Dad or someone else, go off and you would be worried for them, obviously, but your job was to keep yourself...and to mind the people around you. Same for terrorist attacks that you can't really, you know, those come out of nowhere [laughter]. But it is hanging attention over your head the **whole** time you're there, and it's a good reason to leave. It's a very good reason to leave. Not because you're worried for yourself, but now we have a kid and we don't want him to grow up with that tension, like it's something that, you know, we're **ruined** for already. But him we don't want that for. And also, **personally** I know a lot of people in Canada send their kids to Israel for – a lot of

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Jewish people in Canada – send their kids to Israel for the IDF, and that’s not something that I would do. That’s not something I would like to do, not even if I **were** living in Israel. (emphasis in original)

When speaking specifically about the consequences that such conflicts have on intra-Israeli Jewish-Arab relations, as well as whether there is a link between the conflict Israel has with Hizballah in the north and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, P12 felt that the two conflicts cannot be meaningfully separated as it is civilizational in nature. The conflict is seen in totality as one between Jews collectively and Arabs collectively, and there is mutual hostility in many cases:

I don’t think it can be dealt with separately, because living in the specific town of Haifa, I can tell you that it’s like a field of wildfire. Because when something happens anywhere in Israel, it instigates hostility all over. In the town of Haifa, if there are shootings or happenings in the south or in the north, there is, like, **open hostility** towards the local Arabs who live there, who live amongst us, who have businesses. And that doesn’t mean, like, people beating up on people. That means just, you know, not going into their coffee shops, and not going into their businesses. That’s **one** way of doing it. But, whenever there were a few incidents of open hostility, of open violence inside our town, inside our ‘wadi’, that there were not shootings, but throwing rocks, like stopping movement of people [from] the Arabs from inside. The local Arab community. (emphasis in original)

And I would not say it’s like the women and children who were there...the Arab community did attack from inside, in the past ten years you would not hear about, like, everywhere, but it does happen when things are a little over the border, when there is big hostilities over the border, when there’s retaliation with our fighters, or anything like that. Like, it’s not just the Palestinians—that’s what I’m saying—what I’m saying is that it’s not **only** the Palestinians and the north border and the south border who are fighting each other. It is also the people who live **inside** the cities, so they’re all, the notion of knowing that your “brother” is in need, yeah, they’re all connected. (emphasis in original)

P13 was particularly forceful in his impressions of UNIFIL, by arguing that they have “outlived their usefulness” and going so far as to suggest that, “they’re probably aiding Hizballah, wittingly or unwittingly.” However, P13 agrees with P7 that its greatest utility is immediately following a ceasefire, but that this is not a sufficient reason to have UNIFIL in place:

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...They were only useful as a presence for after a ceasefire....So having them there right after a ceasefire is important, because, you know, it keeps both sides quiet and behaving. But other than that, I think they are allowing Hizballah to hide, just like they're allowing Hamas to hide too; to keep their weapons in their facilities. Probably using their facilities to allow shipments of their weapons to go, kind of "duty free." Obviously, I have no concrete proof of this, but I mean, I think the writing's on the wall.

But, I think they're just, they're aiding. I don't know. I can't really pinpoint proof without actually being there and point it out, like just "this, this, and this," but I just firmly believe they are aiding and abetting.

As elsewhere among participants, UNIFIL is aggregated along with other UN agencies more broadly, as P13 referenced concerns over United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) buildings in the Gaza Strip being used to house Hamas weapons caches in recent conflicts with Israel. Yet from the perspective of the participant, the reason for the "(un)witting" support of the UN against Israel stems from an institutional bias against Israel, which he believed was perpetuated deliberately at UN-run schools in East Jerusalem, as well as a UN school for children of foreign diplomats (which does not appear to exist any longer):

Even when I lived there, the UN schools even, like in Jerusalem; it seemed like the children that go there, you know, a lot of them are children of foreign dignitaries, or foreign whatever. They all seem to have a very anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian attitude. When talking to these kids when they're not in school, and thinking what do they all have in common is that attitude. Where are they getting it from? Probably that school...The UN School.

Interestingly, aside from the well-established trend of an institutional UN bias being perceived by participants, there have been recent complaints over UNRWA-run schools, including in East Jerusalem, concerning their course materials. In October 2018, the Jerusalem municipality said it would close all UNRWA-run schools in the city by the end of the current school year (Times of Israel Staff (b), 2019). For P13, when asked what accounts for why UNIFIL—or the UN more broadly—turns a blind eye to

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Hizballah, the immediate answer was not one surrounding UNIFIL's capacity, but was clearly elucidated as being motivated by global antisemitism and a global left-leaning ideological prejudice against the State of Israel:

Well, the easy answer would be "Jew hatred." But that, I mean that's a pretty **bold** finger to point, you know? But I mean, even CNN reported, you know, some serious polls that 1 in 4 Europeans don't like Jews. And that's just **Europe**. The UN itself doesn't like Jews. I mean, I don't think they're **blind**. I think they're racist. I think, I mean how many anti-Israel resolutions have been adopted just in the last couple of months versus the rest of the world. And what's going on in Israel versus the rest of the world. So, I mean I think they're getting their [UNIFIL] direction from the UN, which is, you know, a **highly** antisemitic organization. (emphasis in original)

The UN was founded on protecting the people from war, and it's not. It's just protecting some people's interests from other people's interests.

I think it's pretty well, like, all of them against us. All of them, be the UN, be it with their peacekeepers, or their body; the left and the left-leaning figures.

Along this line of thinking, the participant was asked how he believes UNIFIL perceives the State of Israel, which again demonstrated a linkage between the UN in general and UNIFIL in particular, as the UN bias against Israel—vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—was woven into their response, in addition to a reiterated belief in a widespread global antipathy to Jews:

The collective Jew. I think everybody who is not Jewish views Israel as the collective; ultimately deep down—okay, fine not **everyone** who is not Jewish—but a **majority** view Israel as the collective Jew. Why else would Israel be being held to impossible standards when Israel defends itself? It's, I mean, you know as well as I do, that any conflict between Israel and Gaza, or Israel and southern Lebanon, the only time the mainstream media starts picking it up and reporting is when Israel retaliates. (emphasis in original)

Again, we can observe the synonymization of UNIFIL with the UN more broadly, and the perception that UNIFIL is negatively influenced by the UN's institutional bias against Israel—and in this case, overt antisemitism—to divest itself from Israeli security concerns when carrying out its duties. Moreover, the participant viewed UNIFIL itself as

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a monolith, similar to most other participants who were unaware (with few exceptions) that different UNIFIL contingents approach their mandate with disparate rates of seriousness and commitment, and that they then fulfill their objectives within the context of other extant constraints. There is also a reference to the belief that the international MSM is inherently biased against Israel and Jews. Many of these ideas have featured prominently in participant answers, as has been demonstrated thus far.

However, regarding UNIFIL's lack of motivation in pursuing its mandate from P13's perspective, it becomes apparent that a separate consideration comes into play, in that not only is UNIFIL aware of Hizballah's military build up, but is deliberately averting its gaze from Hizballah activity, in order to enhance self-preservation and avoid confrontation, especially since—and in spite of—the implementation of UNSCR 1701 (2006), this build up has been visibly observable under UNIFIL auspices:

It's just that, it's **happening**. I mean, it's not like this hasn't been visually demonstrated. It's not like it hasn't been visually demonstrated in the past. (emphasis in original)

If they do what they're actually supposed to do - I mean, if they're actually truly there to keep the peace, and truly there to, I think, you know, I think it's Resolution 17-something or other, about not allowing Hizballah to arm, it's there in the UN resolution, which they're allowing to **happen** right under their nose. I mean, I think right now, Hizballah has missiles that can hit Tel Aviv. It says they do. (emphasis in original)

What is telling here is that P13 immediately identifies Hizballah as the greatest threat to Israeli security in the north (and elsewhere), without prompting, in accordance with the other participants in the study, and shares P6's frustration with UNIFIL ignoring Hizballah posts adjacent to its own. This demonstrates an intuitive understanding that Lebanon per se, is not a particular problem for Israel, but rather Hizballah, which is seen

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broadly as having inordinate influence in Lebanon at the expense of its sovereignty, and enjoying the support of both Iran and Syria. As P13 relays:

They're [Hizballah] able to breach the border. The more high tech we get to protect our northern border, the more innovative they're getting in ways to breach it. I mean it's the tunnelling. I can only imagine how many tunnels we **haven't** found. And it's **scary!** Because it's not like they're trying to breach a border because life is better for them. They're actually tunnelling there to cause trouble. To kill people. To hurt people.

(...) I think Iran and Syria are basically calling the shots on what's going on as far as Hizballah's concerned. I think that it's, you know, Lebanon, I feel bad for the, just the regular people there, because every time they rebuilt, it's getting, you know, they're caught in the middle (...) We're not fighting against **Lebanon** when we go and bomb Hizballah. We're fighting against **Iran**. We're not, you know, we're not fighting the Lebanese army. They're pretty well staying clear of everything. When we have boots on the ground and there's fighting in the streets, we're going against Hizballah, we're not fighting against the SLA, or the Lebanese army, or the Druze army, we're fighting against Hizballah. (emphasis in original)

Lebanon just happens to be, unfortunately, where Hizballah is launching their attacks from, and where the battlefield, or battle arena is. That's where it's all been fought. You got to feel for them. They didn't ask for it.

Therefore, while it is clear that the participant views Hizballah—and by extension its Iranian and Syrian benefactors—and not the Lebanese state as the primary threat to Israeli security in the north, the participant is in fact sympathetic to the Lebanese plight vis-à-vis Hizballah's influence in the country, but nevertheless also views the conflict between Israel and Hizballah as civilizational, believing that collectively, many Lebanese support Hizballah's attacks against Israel even if they are not directly involved in planning or executing Hizballah's attacks, on the basis of an internalized pan-Middle Eastern antisemitism.

You know, one-on-one, I think they are all fantastic, wonderful people. But you know what? It seems when you put them all together, they hate Jews. You know what I'm saying? So, one-on-one—and I think I can say that with most of the Middle East—one-on-one, fantastic fucking people! **Great** people! They'll give you the last piece of rice off their plate. They'll give you the last apple out of their

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fridge if they think you're hungry. But you lump them all together and they want; they hate Jews! (emphasis in original)

All things considered, when asked if UNIFIL serves a contemporary function along the Israel-Lebanon border, the participant believed that they do not, save for their presence only after ceasefire agreements, as they are not actively keeping the peace despite being required to do so. Instead, the participant believed that an actual buffer zone should be created by the IDF using more aggressive military tactics, as necessary, and even suggested that UNIFIL hinders Israel's security objectives by obfuscating what is really happening on the ground, and even possibly aiding Hizballah agents:

We're given the impression: "don't worry, we got this, everything's fine, everything's fine, don't worry." But meanwhile, it's **not** fine" (emphasis in original)

[Israel] have to think of ways to work around the UN....They have to consider that if they're going to go in and do something kind of quietly, they have to step around the UN, because the UN, you know, could, if you ask me, the UN could very well be in cahoots with the people that we're going out to capture or kill.

When asked what more Israel could do in the area, P13 believed that Israel was doing all that it can because it cannot control what happens on the other side of hostile frontiers with either Lebanon or Syria:

I think the Israeli military is doing the best job it possibly can given the circumstances to protect the north. They can't build [a wall or fence] to block Syria, and Syria won't stand in the way of anyone circumventing that wall, so.

Thus, again, we observe a high degree of confidence in the IDF's ability and willingness to defend itself and its citizens, even if it is impossible to offer one hundred percent protection to Israelis in the north, which is not an expectation expressed by any of the participants in the study. Yet, concerning what role Lebanon should play in ensuring peace and security along the Blue Line, and in UNIFIL's AO, the participant had much

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more to say pertaining to the weakness of the Lebanese state in asserting its sovereignty due to the persistence of Iranian, Syrian, and Hizballah influence:

Lebanon's a mess! Lebanon? Everybody wants. It's a little, tiny—even smaller than Israel, I think—piece of pie (...) and I think that Iran got involved via Syria, and I think that then, well Hizballah is basically an Iranian foreign agent, and that they were trained by Iran in Syria to wreak havoc in Lebanon, and ultimately wreak havoc on Israel. And that's what kind of exactly what happened. Plus, you got all the different sects of Muslims that aren't necessarily sympathetic to terrorism, or sympathetic to Hizballah, but they all are fighting to get **their** piece of the pie. It's kind of like Vietnam and Cambodia. (emphasis in original)

Unlike other participants that tend to view Lebanon as utterly helpless in confronting Hizballah, despite having sympathy for the plight of the Lebanese government in being unable to meaningfully confront Hizballah, even independently of UNIFIL, P13 ultimately holds the Lebanese government accountable as it is the state's responsibility to assert its sovereignty and prevent wars with Israel, with all of its concomitant consequences; a position that has been officially accepted and reiterated by the UN itself since 1978:

Screwed if you do, screwed if you don't. With the Lebanese government, they got to be talking about preventative security. And again, it's easier said than done. This is why I'm not the Lebanese Prime Minister, but they got to stop. If they know what's going to happen, if they know what's going to happen if they allow Hizballah to build power, build arsenals, and strengthen under their noses, they **know** they're going to attack Israel, and they **know** what that's going to bring. So they've got a decision they've got to make. Is Hizballah capable of finishing Israel off? Yes or no? If yes, then if they really hate Israel, and they want to see Israel gone, then okay. Fine. Then they got to go all in with Hizballah. (emphasis in original).

The participant continued:

But if **not**, right? If they don't think that Hizballah has a chance of ultimately wiping out the collective Jew, then they've got to ask themselves: "What is it doing for us to allow them to attack Israel from our country, and then have Israel retaliate and set us back hundreds of years every time they do?" So, if they really want to protect their people, they've got to round up Hizballah, and either execute them or banish them. And not allow Hizballah, just like we don't allow alt-right

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groups like the KKK to build power or strengthen themselves in **our** land. (emphasis in original)

We need for Lebanon to step up and start cracking down on Hizballah; not allow them to operate in **their** country. Tell them: “If you want to fuck with Israel, do it out of Syria. Do it out of, fucking Iran. But get out of Lebanon. You’re not welcome here. Like, we’ve had enough of you.” (emphasis in original)

It was around this point that P13 volunteered his belief, without prompting that: “I mean ultimately, I think war is coming,” demonstrating the commonly held position among participants that war is inevitable, and likely to occur in the near future. When asked to describe what she believed was around the corner in terms of conflict, the prospective conflict imagined was couched in “civilizational” terms extending beyond the parameters of northern Israel and southern Lebanon:

Well, if the Arabs play their cards right, it’s going to be a multifront war. The Arab leader who defeats Israel will be a **legend** in the Arab world. Like, his name will be known from now until eternity. He will be the Arab Jesus. Like, he will be the second Muhammad. But I don’t think they get along with each other either. And I don’t think they can unify and get their shit together well enough to attack. But what I think is going to happen—it’s just a matter of time before Israel and Hamas go at it—that’s going to happen before Hizballah. (emphasis in original)

However, despite this thinking, when asked what his ideal situation in the north would look like, they answered simply that such a situation would be “peace” including mutual relations between Israel and Lebanon, and that such a possibility is not beyond the pale of consideration given historical precedents with other Arab countries, notably Egypt and Jordan, and including Israel’s burgeoning contemporary relations with many Gulf Arab and North African Muslim majority states, demonstrating a cautious optimism for the future:

One day, yeah. If Israel and Egypt made peace, right? Like, what happened before the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, it was the US-Russia Cold War. Like, it was at any moment you’re going to explode. So, if Israel and Egypt can make peace, and that peace has lasted for almost 50, or 40 years? Then I think, that any peace with any nation is possible.

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P13 was also spoke of a *positive* impact that the conflict in the north has had on Israelis, believing it is the catalyst for a general optimism in the country that gives Israelis a unique perspective on life:

So, we're not in Kansas anymore. In Israel, they live their life like there might be an attack tomorrow. Not in fear, but they live life. They don't let that stop them from living their life. In Israel, especially now, they're enjoying the best of the best. The best food, the best technology—the best, the best—they're at a point right now, and no matter what happens in their, or near Gaza or up north, they live life. They, it's like they **insist** on living their life! The 11th commandment: "Thou Shalt Live Your Life." (emphasis in original)

The unique juxtaposition between persistent trepidation at the prospect of cross-border attacks and the exuberance of daily life as a result of this condition is a very interesting theme that has emerged from the data as well, although it has been relatively understated. The idea expressed here is that Israelis thrive in their country despite the threats they experience on the one hand, while others consider emigration due to the anxiety such a situation places on an individual and their family. Naturally, different individuals cope with circumstances in different ways.

However, a "third option" emerged when speaking to P17, a resident of central Israel who had served in northern Israel and Lebanon with the IDF, who spoke about his family's contingency plans and emergency drilling practices in the event of missile attacks either from Lebanon or from Gaza, which ranged from seeking shelter in their apartment, to temporarily having his spouse and child leave for Canada where their spouse enjoys dual citizenship. As P17 relayed to the researcher:

Every time something happens in Gaza or in the north, I usually look out the windows of my house, and I understand "okay this, I'm facing south and not north, so this time I'm a bit more protected than if it's from Gaza."

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The direction of my apartment are facing south, so if a missile would be launched from Gaza, I'm more exposed. If a missile will be launched from the north I am a bit more protected.

And my kid son is facing south, so whenever there is tension with Gaza, I'm—we're—you know, always alert and always, and when something happens we make sure that we understand what is going on, or we're, you know, practicing. We have conversations about that. Me and my [spouse]. I mean, we, you know, when something happens...

If something happens, "you go open the door, I will bring the boy," we will go to—usually go to the staircase—that's what we're supposed to do. So we have discussions about what we **should** be doing, or who does what if something happens. (emphasis in original)

And my [spouse] and I had a conversation yesterday over the phone that if something happens with Hizballah...I think it would be better if they will fly to Canada and I stay here...temporarily...you know, but for a kid there is no point in staying here if something like that happens.

So, because we don't have a bomb shelter in our apartment—our apartment was still before '92—'92 was when all apartments include bomb shelters inside the apartment. We don't have that so we can't. If something really serious happens, we can't stay in our apartment, so I think that you know, the best way to go would be to go to Canada temporarily. But it's something that is being discussed and something that - and Israelis are again, really aware of the fact that something **will** happen with Hizballah, and it won't be easy. (emphasis in original)

Not only is there another reiteration of the anxiety that is felt across Israeli society about the looming threat of attacks, but we see yet again references to the inevitability of conflict, and a similar impression brought up by P6 that the next inevitable conflict with Hizballah will be much more difficult, under the recognition that Hizballah has demonstrably strengthened since the last major conflagration with Israel in 2006, under UNIFIL auspices. However, for P17, UNIFIL's failure to achieve its mandate was not surprising given their experience and perception of the mission.

The participant served along the western sector of the Israel-Lebanon border, including in Lebanon itself prior to, and including, Israel's 2000 disengagement from Lebanon. They had seen UNIFIL personnel several times during their service, but had no interaction with them at the time, nor did anyone in their battalion as far as they knew. In

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fact, the PSO was viewed as simply ‘being there’ but having no impact whatsoever on the IDF’s behaviour:

We didn’t interact at all with the UN in those days. We knew they were there. We knew that if something happens they don’t have any power to stop it, or they won’t intervene at all. So, they were there, but other than that, they didn’t have any influence on how we behaved or what we did.

We knew that they don’t have any power. They were just another player on the board, but without any effect on the game itself.

A key phrase here that was picked up on by the researcher was “they won’t intervene at all,” indicating a measure of will to *choose* not to do something when the mission should be doing something. When asking P17 to elaborate further on this point, they conveyed the belief that they, and their colleagues, “knew” that UNIFIL did not like them, and that UNIFIL personnel were unwilling to do their job rather than being simply incapable, indicating a degree of malice on the part of the PSO. This impression was borne out particularly because of the overall negative impression of the UN, *in general*, and UNIFIL by extension, in Israeli society, which other participants had mentioned as well:

The force there, we knew they don’t like us.

I think that first of all, it’s something that you come with. Meaning that it’s some sort of an opinion or prejudice. I don’t know the best way to describe, but it’s something you join the army with in terms of culture, and in terms of whatever you – from how we grow up. And that’s one thing. And the second thing is that you have to understand that they are there for a reason, but they are not doing their job. So, the only option is that they don’t want to do their job, and they obviously make sure that the peace is being quiet, is being something like that.

Again, the participant here believes that the failure in achieving UNIFIL’s mandate, at least in ensuring there is “peace” along the border, is due to a deliberate shirking of the PSO’s duties. When asked why he thought that this is the case with UNIFIL, there was a perception that UNIFIL personnel have no stake in the conflict, and

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are only motivated by monetary considerations, while Israelis and the IDF are motivated by the need to preserve their lives. Thus, there is no difference between being unwilling or incapable of performing their mandated tasks, as “from the Israeli point of view, if they can’t do their job, than they are not willing to do their job.”

The oft-repeated notion that UNIFIL has no impact on the security situation, and is not only incapable, but unwilling—even if it were to have the capability to do something—was seen as a perception that is derived from the ether of being an Israeli, similar to P8’s contention, in that one is constantly exposed to criticism of the UN from all directions in Israeli society. This perception is both informed by, and reciprocally influences, Israeli anxieties about their security situation, and is compounded further by a Jewish-oriented perception that the world cannot be relied upon to protect Israel—and by extension—the Jewish People, owing to the millennia-old history and legacy of antisemitism. Along this line, the term “Um Shmum,” was used again, this time by participant P17:

I think that, that’s something I remember also knowing as a kid, or when I grew up. Meaning that although they’re here, although historically there are some even votes at the UN that some people remember to this day in Israel. Still the “Umm Shmum,” meaning that they don’t have any influence on what’s going on here is something that’s being said, being spoken in conversations. And you hear that, and you take that, and ask, ask you know, a Jewish person.

There is also the – I don’t know – something in the back of your mind that everyone is against us, or that we are supposed to stick to our own plan, or something like that, and nobody else will protect us and we have to protect ourselves also, is very something that we grow up here in terms of living in Israel, and they’re here, but they don’t have any influence on, on what’s going on here.

Similar to P10, even when speaking about UNEF forces along the Israel-Egypt border, P17 said that while that border is far less tense than the north, Israelis know that if something was to happen, the UN/UNIFIL would not help, so most Israelis do not even

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care if they are there or not; UNEF, and the UN PSOs around Israel in general, according to P17, barely register in the cognition of most Israelis:

I also served a year and a half in the army on the Egyptian border, and my interaction with UN forces were, I used to meet them more then. I met them in the north and also there. It's a completely different border, a completely different atmosphere, but I had several conversations with them there and they're nice people in terms of meeting people. That's always interesting. But, you know, again they were there, we were there, the Egyptians were there, that's pretty much it. Nobody cares about them being there.

We knew that if something will happen. It's all, first of all in terms of the Egyptian border, they won't be there. But we knew that they won't attack us, but they won't prevent anything. So they're there, they're just there.

P17 nevertheless considers the Israeli critique of the UN to be justified on the basis of certain actions taken on the part of the UN, including the failure to implement UNSCR 1701 (2006), as well as a particular scandal, which dramatically impacted the already negative perception Israelis have of the UN and UNIFIL:

I think that was something that started a process, started something that affected Israelis a lot. And, pretty much everything that is going on now, and not specifically now, but also in Lebanon and following the 1701 Resolution in the UN, there is nothing being kept, specifically in the moment. That the UN is supposed to regulate that.

I think that, first of all, the Second Lebanon War, the way it started, and that the UN saw—and also if I'm not mistaken—that Hizballah were dressed as UN soldiers. I think that was something that started a process; started something that affected Israelis a lot.

The particular story in question was an instance where Hizballah fighters attacked and killed IDF troops across the Blue Line after having obtained UNIFIL uniforms and a UN vehicle, which due to its insignia escaped the suspicion of the targeted IDF soldiers. When it became known that a video tape of the incident existed, Israel demanded a viewing but was initially refused by the UN, until such a point that a viewing was negotiated, but the identities of the attackers was obscured.

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This entire affair confirmed the UN's bias against Israel for many Israelis—if confirmation was necessary—including P17, in that they consider Israel's treatment at the UN to be worse than other countries, similar to the perspective shared by P6, including those meriting far more attention from the various UN bodies that examine international conflicts and focus on the protection of human rights. Further, P17 felt that UN bias against Israel has been worsening, especially as he perceived the UN to be turning a blind eye whenever Israel is the victim of conflict or terrorism:

But in terms of Lebanon, and more than that, everything is going on now in Gaza that, was like, you hear now that any kind of operation that either the Israelis use that Hamas is using the UN – UN shelters in Gaza – or Israelis are bombing UN shelters and then the UN is pretty much attacking the Israelis – that is something that has happened **several** times already. So that I think is even more influenced on the way Israelis see things. (emphasis in original)

More than that I think that whatever is happening at the Human Rights Council in the UN that are always condemning Israel in some sort of way, although they are, whatever they think here, that they are okay with whatever is happening in Africa, or Syria, or Russia. But we are getting more focus than other countries. The fact that Israel, in terms of culture, in terms of education, and councils that you hear all the time that they are banning Israel, or whatever, every – a lot of things you hear are happening in the UN. I think that it is getting worse, the way Israel is perceived in the UN in the last 10 years more specifically.

(...) Israelis perceive the UN, that it's the worst place ever.

Interestingly, P17 believed that Israeli relations with the UN might improve if progress is made with respect to solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and may also help Israel combat Hizballah by removing the security threats posed from Gaza and the Palestinian Territories. As such, we see here a perspective which delinks the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Israel-Hizballah conflict, while also recognizing that there *is* an element of interconnectedness between the two, but that these are subservient to intra-Islamic conflicts between competing Sunni and Shi'a communities within the Arab-Islamic world:

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I don't think something can change between Israel and the way the world perceives Israel until we solve or make any progress with the situation with the Palestinians. And because the UN is a reflection of what's going on in the world, I don't think nothing can change until there will be some progress between Israel and the Palestinians.

Of course I think it will improve the situation with Hizballah if there will be some sort of progress with the Palestinians; in several ways, meaning that if let's say we don't have to invest that much military power in Gaza and we can focus, with Egypt and Jordan, and there is peace, so number one: we can focus our army in one place and not be spread around the place. And also, I think that it's in our ability to influence what's going on in Lebanon if we had the support of the Sunni countries. That is also something that's a process that is happening now. But, of course, we can't be in a real relationship with the Sunni countries until we solve the situation with the Palestinians or make progress.

I think that the fact that Lebanon and Hizballah, and the main – or the controlling group which is the Shi'a – I think that is something that has an impact on the way that Palestinians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Saudi Arabians look at Iran and Lebanon.

However, unlike many other participants, P17 was relatively unique in separating UNIFIL from the UN in terms of responsibility for anti-Israel hostility within various UN forums, and does not consider UNIFIL to be *particularly* anti-Israel, arguing that their lack of influence on the conflict with Hizballah may give the impression that they are actively anti-Israel, but the hostility towards Israel truly emanates from the UN itself.

Moreover, similar to P7, despite a recognized bias against Israel at the UN, P17 felt that the average Israeli impression of the UN is “a bit more extreme than what I think” albeit admitting that the “situation is for sure not good.” They share the same perspective as P7 regarding the UN as a “microcosm” of countries around the world, but did not excuse away the bias that this generates against Israel. Nevertheless, P17 placed very little stock in UNIFIL on the basis that the PSO cannot reasonably confront Hizballah militarily or in terms of motivation, since UNIFIL has no personal stake in the conflict:

They're here, but they don't have any influence. But they're not against us.

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If we want to be specific with UNIFIL, it's only a matter of power; meaning only a matter of having the gun force to really control what's going on there. And, Hizballah is much more trained and equipped with whatever they need. And UNIFIL are - they are getting paychecks. They are in a place in the world, very far away from home. I don't think they even have the **motivation**, or skills, or equipment to deal with the situation. (emphasis in original)

I think that in order for them to really have the option to make sure that this area is quiet and—first of all—it's not about UNIFIL, it's about the UN option to be involved in Lebanese politics, because there is no way to restrain Hizballah, only from being on the surface – meaning only on being in southern Lebanon. So, with all the respect to UNIFIL, I don't think the solution is with them. And, that's I think that's number one.

In fact, P17 was far more blunt in his impressions of the UN's inability to foster and maintain peace along the Israel-Lebanon border, all the while preferring UNIFIL to no force whatsoever, and remaining ultimately hopeful that a mutually agreed upon, and necessary, third party can one day be identified and fruitfully involved in creating the conditions for peace on the ground:

The way things are at the moment in terms of the UN position in southern Lebanon, specifically in the way things are between Israel, more specifically, Israeli society with the UN, there is no way they can play a role in bringing the peace, or keeping the quiet; I'm not talking about peace, peace is a big word, but keeping things quiet. And so at the moment, no.

But, hopefully, if things change, and also things change in the way Israelis perceive the UN. So, I think that Israelis will hope that they will be involved, or, or a third party. I would say it like that. I don't think it has to be the UN, but a third party **has** to be involved, being on the surface. (emphasis in original)

I think that the mistrust between both sides is that strong, or deep, that both sides if to keep quiet won't trust each other, if they really want to keep things quiet. And the third party will need to be somebody both sides trust. And at the moment, I don't know what will happen with Lebanon, but here nobody trusts the UN. So, I don't know who can it be, but I think that Israelis will prefer if someone **will** be there. (emphasis in original)

Yet, considering the participant's position on UNIFIL's futility in achieving its mandate vis-à-vis disarming Hizballah, the long-term solution in this regard for P17 was directed towards eliminating Iranian influence in Lebanon, recognizing the effect of Iran as a bad neighbour that provides the lifeblood for Hizballah: "we need to be able to

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influence on Lebanese politics. Make sure that Iranians aren't involved there." However, the participant did not know how this objective would be achieved as Hizballah is believed to control the Lebanese government in any respect:

At the moment, Hizballah is part of the Lebanese politics, and as we see it here, it's – of course there are different opinions there – but if the Hizballah is pretty much the main military force in Lebanon, they are the ones who are controlling the country. So, Lebanese government, with all due respect, and whatever they want to do, and can do, doesn't really matter.

Yeah, so whatever the government of Lebanon wants to do, or can do, doesn't really matter. Someone else is controlling the country...the Lebanese government doesn't really matter.

Upon establishing that there are no contemporary prospects for a long-term solution that could bring peace to either Israel's north, or Lebanon, the conversation turned towards exploring how the security situation in Israel's north has impacted the life of the participant, as well as Israelis broadly speaking. The themes discussed were familiar to other participants, focusing on the belief that war is inevitable, that the war will be more difficult than in the past—"a long and painful war"—as well as a general sense of tension, anxiety, and trepidation for those living not only in northern Israel, but throughout the country itself:

So, I think that everybody knows that what's going on now is quiet, but there is a lot of tense, and people - so I think that everybody are ready for Lebanon War Number 3, and everybody are sure that it will happen, it's only a matter of time.

Everyone knows that the next war with Lebanon will be a completely different ball game from having a round with Gaza, and with Lebanon it will be much more serious than that. And so everybody knows it will happen, I think, that's my opinion. They know at some level that it will happen, it's only a matter of time, and it won't be easy **at all**. And Hizballah are much more capable and have more support than Hamas. (emphasis in original)

P14 who served with the IDF in *Operation Peace for Galilee* in 1982 expressed his impressions of UNIFIL in stark terms, stating that in the 33 days he served in

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Lebanon, particularly in the area of Nabatieh, he had never once encountered UNIFIL on the ground, which to him, speaks of the PSO's past and present relevance to the conflict with Hizballah:

The lack of information I have is also showing the importance of this UNIFIL unit, because I never saw them. I crossed the border of Lebanon in the area of Metula. I served in the area of Nabatieh, including the very town of Nabatieh. And I never saw anyone from the UNIFIL. I saw the Israeli army, the local people, and uh, Christian army. But never UNIFIL. So that says something.

When asked why he felt that UNIFIL was so absent during their period serving with the IDF in Lebanon, he gave several reasons in which he believed accounted for UNIFIL's failure in pursuing its mandate. He believed that it was out of concern for self-preservation coupled with an overall lack of motivation and stake in the conflict, and that the UN was more interested in creating the impression that it is helping the situation rather than doing what it takes to make a difference, which it is *unwilling*—but not incapable—of doing out of fear of raising the ire of Hizballah (or Islamic Amal, at the time). Additionally, UNIFIL's purpose was not particularly clear to the participant, insofar as he stated that it is not possible to keep any peace between two antagonists that are still at war:

They didn't want to risk their lives, and they didn't want to change something. They were like, um, like toys.

Nobody even thought to be serious, and to do something in this direction, or other direction. Nobody (...) They were not involved in anything.

It depends on their governments, and the United Nations, or their policy. They should not to come there at all. It doesn't change about what I think, but, nominally, it was, like, their presence was, like, showing the world that they **are** there. Or, they put them being involved with big and serious power, but they didn't want to do it, and their soldiers were not interested to risk their lives. Coming from Philippines, I don't know from where, and to fight for something they don't know what for. (emphasis in original)

If, the parts of the two sides of the border, they don't want peace, you cannot keep it. It's impossible, I think, to keep the peace.

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If they wanted to do something they would do, but they didn't want because they were, let's say, afraid to do something.

Importantly, when asking the participant to clarify if he considered UNIFIL to be deliberately shirking its duties, he responded that, "they deliberately don't see anything. Anything that if it's against Israel, they don't see it." At this point, the researcher sought to determine whether or not the participant considered this to be something affecting specifically UNIFIL itself or the UN, or both. When this question was posed to the participant, he responded with an assertion indicating the belief that the UN is institutionally biased and irrational when it comes to Israel due to antisemitism, and he compared the UN to a "madhouse:"

I would tell them that they're very good people. And I like them very much. And I want to be friend of them, because if you are in a madhouse, you cannot speak otherwise with sick people. You can only speak: "Yes, you are Napoleon." It is completely irrational desire that, very simply, they are very jealous. They're very jealous. They feel that to be a Jew, a Jew is a **huge** privilege that they never can reach. Why to be a Jew is such privilege? They don't understand. But they feel it. I call it "Judeophobic." But I don't care what word to choose. (emphasis in original)

Suffice it to say, P14 had little confidence in UNIFIL being able to perform any function of merit, but unlike all other participants in this study, he had similarly limited confidence in the IDF's ability to secure the north; attributing Israel's security accomplishments to either sheer luck, or "miracles." In particular, where the participant did have confidence was among the professional element of the IDF, but he seemed to show disdain for Israel's general body of conscripts and its reserve force, which he considered to be either poorly trained or unmotivated:

All the wars were ending by something that you cannot explain why. There are, let's say, 200,000 very trained and serious soldiers. All the rest is – pity on them – these are not soldiers, this is a mob of occasional people that were given to hold the gun, and they are useless. So, each time we win a war, nobody can explain

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why. Nobody. Even the pilots are showing miracles of work in the sky. Even the commandos are very high quality, but the Syrian commandos are not less quality, even sometimes higher quality. You never can **really** explain why Israel is existing 'til today. [Laughter] It's impossible to understand logically. (emphasis in original)

(...) Let's say 30 percent, are very high-quality soldiers that know their job. Trained well. All the rest, like 70 percent, are fifth degree quality, not first, not second, nothing.

Some people are very patriotic, and they look for it from the age of seventeen to join the army, and to give the best. And some—especially older people—they don't care too much. They want to look at the watch, and when the 30 days end [reserve duty period for most IDF reservists], they want to go home.

P14 felt that no adequate forces currently exist to ensure that the north is secure and therefore, no entity could guarantee such an outcome. The northern region of Israel is “very unsafe” and has always been so from the perspective of the participant. However, the participant did believe that Israel was doing everything it could within its power to protect the north, so there was—at the very least—confidence in the will of the IDF to function to the best of its ability. However, he felt that the mode of asymmetric warfare used by Hizballah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza, makes it impossible to defend the country in its entirety. Therefore, when asked what more, if anything, Israel should be doing to protect its northern frontier, P14 responded:

What they are doing now. They are trying to develop new weapons. The last few days I read about new lasers that can shoot. By the way, in the south in Gaza, Hamas they have new – how to explain it in English – you know, a lot of pipes that shooting at once, but not a rocket, how do you call it? How can you stop it with your anti-rockets? You cannot stop it. Once you get, like, maybe hundreds of rockets. Now these rockets will go through. The same probably has Hizballah. How did they get another this, mortars, I don't know. How can – they made them themselves, or what? But what Israel government is doing is probably all that do now. But they not, they cannot do everything.

Naturally, after ascertaining the participant's perspectives on UNIFIL and the UN, and Israel and the IDF, they were asked how they felt about the Lebanese public, their

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influence on the conflict, and what role the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does, or does not, play in the Israel-Hizballah conflict. The participant felt that the two conflicts were separate from each other, in that, save for Hizballah's preponderant influence in Lebanon, Lebanon would otherwise not be hostile to Israel—especially under Christian influence—demonstrating a separation between Hizballah as Israel's enemy, and the Lebanese people more broadly. In fact, the participant viewed Lebanon as essentially being held hostage to Hizballah, and are therefore unable to pursue a path towards peace with Israel:

But Lebanon by itself, except Hizballah and the Shi'a areas that are closer to Israel, Lebanon itself has nothing against Israel. I'm talking about the Christian army. The Christian army is very weak. **Very weak**. They can fight for their own Christian people. But they will not for Israel, and they won't fight **against** Israel. But they are very few. Maybe 100,000 Christians. (emphasis in original)

Maybe it's more separate than the same. Yeah.

I think what they feel they will never tell you. They will feel what they're told to feel by stronger powers.

(...) Really the Christians are very friendly to Israel. But they afraid to even to speak half a word about it.

When asked to convey what constitutes the greatest threat to Israel from the north, the participant gave a surprising response unique to all other participants, but the reason for this response meshed well with the common perspectives expressed by other participants:

The **biggest** threat is the **Russian** army; most dangerous enemy of Israel. Most dangerous superpower that was already trying to destroy Israel in the past....Greatest threat, yeah. Iran, Syria, Iran, Hizballah, Iran; and Russia is the **biggest** threat. Because this is the source of their existence! To destroy Israel is the **dream**. (emphasis in original)

Thus, we see the participant's recognition that Iran, Syria, and Hizballah are interconnected, and are backers of Hizballah, while albeit is the direct threat to Israeli security, is nevertheless believed to be supported substantively by Russia. It should be noted that the participant had grown up in the former Soviet Union during his formative

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years, which the researcher believes heavily influenced this unique worldview. Other participants emanating from the former Soviet Union did not express such a perspective when asked the same questions.

P16 shared similar sentiments to P14—among others—by suggesting that not only is UNIFIL able but unwilling to perform its duties, but that the reasons for this stem from institutional antisemitism throughout the UN which influences the PSO, in conjunction with a general lack of motivation on the part of UNIFIL's personnel. Additionally, P16 believes that UNIFIL actively sides with the Lebanese over the Israelis, which is symptomatic of the UN's perceived overall bias towards Israel:

I, simply, let's say this – on one side it's good that they're there, but on the other side they are not there for good purposes, to protect Israel, or – they close their eyes to what the other side does, do you understand? They close their eyes. They **don't care**. They are very much against Israel. But they put them there kind of like how you place a guard, you understand? To guard, but not really care what will happen. They're there on the border, they earn a salary, but they don't care at all. My feeling is that they do their work, but they are on the side of the Lebanese more than on the Jewish side, Israel. (emphasis in original)

Because how can it be that all that they do on the other side, and they close their eyes on **all** of what they see? How can you explain this? (emphasis in original)

I think, first of all, they don't care about Jews. They don't like us. You understand? They don't like us. For me, if let's say something happens from our side, the side of **our** soldiers, they will stop us. They won't let us do anything. But from the **other** side – the proof is what happened two weeks ago. What happened two weeks ago, it's not the first time this happened, not the second time either. They always do this. They almost cross the border, coming with their weapons and everything. What are they [UNIFIL] doing? They do nothing. (emphasis in original)

They **can** help, but they don't **want** to. They don't see? During the over 20 years I lived in Israel, you think I didn't see what happens at the UN? They laugh in our faces. There is no justice. No justice. UNIFIL – what do you want? They will do what they want. What do you expect from a little child whose father is like this? What do you want to see from these soldiers, if their bosses are worse than they are? They are the same garbage, excuse my phrasing. (emphasis in original)

[The UN and UNIFIL are] Exactly the same. Exactly the same. There is no difference at all.

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When considering what accounts for this state of affairs, P16 believed that the UN, and by extension UNIFIL, were beholden to Muslim influence at various UN forums via its Arab-Islamic majority Member States. Through this, and the belief that Muslim “aggression” is not met with a sufficient and commensurate response on the part of Western or “Christian” nations, which emboldens these actors, and creates fear among the perceptibly meek and non-confident Christian-majority nations of Europe, results in the subsequent ‘succumbing’ of Europe to Islamization. In sum, the only way to deal with the Muslim nations, from the participant’s perspective, is to demonstrate “strength” by use of force, as necessary to generate an adequate deterrent effect. We again can observe a civilizational attitude towards the security situation confronting Israel—both in the north and elsewhere—as well as a perception of being besieged and/or hated by the non-Jewish world:

Muslims are a nation – Arabs are the same thing – Muslims are a nation that understand **strength**. When confronted with strength, they give respect, you understand? And now, who sits in the UN? All of the Christians. They are afraid, you understand? They see that Muslims; they are screwed up completely in the head. For you to give respect, you have to also be screwed up in the head as well, you understand? As soon as you raise your fist – see where I was born and raised – if you want respect, first of all give **me** respect. (emphasis in original)

And, it’s clear, they [the UN] are afraid from the Arabs. They are afraid but they don’t understand that in 30 years max, there won’t be a Europe at all. There won’t be a Europe. It’ll be a Muslim Europe. And they are afraid from them, but they are screwed up in the head, and don’t understand what is happening.

First of all, from a practical side the Muslims have oil. From the other side, they are afraid of them. Even look at what is happening in Europe. Before we arrived in Canada, every year I would travel to Barcelona, or Germany. I was in France, and believe me, I curse the day that I was there. You walk in the streets and you don’t see a single French person, only Arab restaurants. Only Arabs are sitting around in Marseilles. Only Arabs, you understand?

After everything you did giving them respect, and putting Israelis and Israel down, you got what you deserve. And we’ll see what happens – exactly what’s happening now, you understand? That’s what’s happening here.

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There isn't anything to do, there isn't anything to do. I know. The world is against us.

When discussing the international oil trade, the participant pointed out that Iranian oil revenues fund Hizballah, which is only possible because the world is “addicted” to oil. For the participant, Israel's only saving grace in this perceived civilizational conflict, is that it is willing to use force to defend itself, in order to generate the necessary fear from the Arab-Islamic world to act as a deterrent against fighting Israel:

Everyone is fighting with Israel and getting hit hard by us; terrorists get hit hard by us. What, do you think they like us because we have a peace treaty with Egypt? With Jordan, peace? No. Because they are **afraid!** You understand? (emphasis in original)

The idea of establishing deterrence through the use of force was also an idea echoed by P14, in that he argued that all of Israel's neighbours want it to disappear, but only those actors that believe they can actually *accomplish* that objective regularly attack it. The difference between P14 and P16 in this regard is their confidence in Israel's ability to create the requisite deterrence, with the latter being more confident than the former. As P14 stated:

The regional nations are the ones who want Israel to disappear. But they think about their abilities. And lots of them who are not able to do it, they're passive, more or less. The people that are thinking that they are able to do something, they're not passive. Hizballah today has **120,000** rockets [the number is actually closer to 130,000 (Shaikh and Williams, “Hezbollah's Missiles and Rockets,” 2018)]. Some of the rockets are already precise rockets. So, they are not passive. They will attack Israel when they can. The very moment they decide they are able to do it, they'll do it. Maybe, God forbid, tomorrow.

However, the precise need for perpetual deterrence against seemingly implacable enemies produces anxiety, tension and a sense of insecurity for Israelis. Not only is this state of affairs normalized for Israelis—part of every day life—but according to P16, led

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them and their family, among other Israelis, for similar reasons to P12, to emigrate to Canada:

I mean, myself and my family, and while this is not nice to say – but I came here to Canada only so my son won't serve in the army.

I think that Israelis, let's say, there isn't a week that goes by that I don't talk to friends or family, or my daughter. And I watch the news every day. **Every day** I watch. If I hear that something happened, God forbid, in the areas where my daughter lives in Netanya, my little sister in Be'er Sheva, my sister in Hadera... We call immediately. They respond: "Don't worry. You're watching the news. We don't feel anything here." You understand? They have already become accustomed to the situation.

To tell you something – if they had known that there would be peace on all the borders of Israel. Believe me. 99 percent of the Russians and Israelis that came here would return to Israel. **99 percent!** The first would be me. Nobody came here because there – from the people that I know – none of them came to Canada because the general situation there was bad. All of them came here because they fear for the future. What will happen? When will it end? Their children will have to be conscripted to the army. And there is no end to this, you understand? From all of the people I know, 99 percent would return, but to return now is not easy. Why? Because let's say their children are grown up and are already in university, and got married, and now you yourself can say "their children are no longer responsible." (emphasis in original)

Everyone who leaves, leaves because of this, yes. But, even the economic situation there isn't easy. Houses there cost a lot. To rent isn't easy. To buy isn't easy. You understand? And they, well now, there are two reasons: economic reasons and security reasons. You understand? But everyone who came here left, believe me, due to security reasons. If this was solved, everyone would return. **Everyone.** You could ask, like me, 100, 99 would have told you that none of us would have come here even, what was lacking for us there?

Living in Canada, P16 expressed a dissipation of the tension that they experienced living in Israel, akin to the sentiments expressed by P12:

From a "soul" perspective, it's quiet. I, ptu ptu ptu [knock on wood], my children's futures are in their hands. Go get an education! It's in their hands. They don't have to be a professor. They can pursue a profession. Be a mechanic, electrician, electronics' technician. You be whatever, it's all in your hands. You don't have to be a working donkey. Everything is in your hands. And from the perspective of my "soul" it's easy for me here. I'm not afraid to speak Hebrew. I'm not afraid to say that I'm a Jew. You understand?

I am proud of the fact that I am a Jew. I don't care if someone looks at me because of that. I don't care. I'm not afraid of anyone. In Israel I wasn't afraid. I

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was born with Muslims. I wasn't afraid of anyone. But when you grow up, and your children grow up, you become old! You're afraid for them, you worry about **them**. That's why we brought them all here. (emphasis in original)

We can observe that the notion of having to demonstrate strength by force, from the perspective of P16, emerges out of an anxiety over the consequences that may result from *not* having a sufficient defence ready. This mode of thinking is not only a product of the participant's perspective on Israel's security requirements, but also emerges from their own personal upbringing in the former Soviet Union—particularly as a Jewish citizen growing up in the Muslim-majority Caucasus region—where they learned a principle that before your enemy strikes you, you “must strike them first” because the “first always wins.” This perspective is coupled with a separate theme expressed by the participant that was common to other participants, that the next war with Hizballah is not only inevitable, but will be much harder than previous wars:

So right now when they talk about security, it's better for Hizballah to slowly, slowly bring forward missiles, or to strengthen there, and for us to pre-emptively strike them. To enter and clean the place out. We will pay a high price for this, but at least we'll then know “that's it, we're done with this.”

But there are a lot of things that we simply don't know. In terms of what I see – the next time it won't be an easy war. It won't be like it was before, a month and a half. It will be more than last time when all of the citizens were evacuated to Eilat, to the Dead Sea. It won't be like that, you understand? And anyway, you don't know 100 percent what kinds of weapons they have. But, it is for **sure** that tomorrow, or the day after, they will have more weapons. So maybe it really is worth it to warn the entire world first, and then to strike them. (emphasis in original)

You need to give them strike him **first** and hard because they weren't expecting it. The same thing with Israel. Israel needs to, like now Bibi [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] is doing, warning the whole world – telling the whole world – look at what they are doing. Look at what your UNIFIL soldiers are doing on the **border! They don't do anything!** They dug 4 tunnels already. UNIFIL knew about this. **They don't do anything!** (emphasis in original)

We need to warn them – to tell Lebanon's citizens that in the next war we will erase you along with Hizballah because you let them control their missiles in **your** buildings. Know that we are warning you – warn them the way we warn in

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Gaza before strikes. But here this is a country already. It's not Gaza. It's autonomous. It's a country. There isn't anything to do, there isn't anything to do. I know. The world is against us. The world is against us, but the coming war will be a **very** bad war compared to our previous wars with Lebanon. (emphasis in original)

Certainly. I am certain there will be a war. There will be many dead on Israel's side. I am **sure** about this. The missiles they will launch against Israel – despite Israel's efforts to fortify bunkers made of concrete or steel – these won't help, because their rockets will knock down entire buildings. These are rockets that go 300 or 400 km, not like Qassam rockets from Gaza. For this I think that Israel needs to attack them and destroy their buildings. No need to think about the European reaction. (emphasis in original)

Maybe I'm wrong about this. Maybe I don't know. But this is what I think. The coming war – I hope I'm wrong, I hope I'm wrong – because all of my family is there, and Israel is my country, even though I was born and grew up – but our country is Israel. I very much care.

As can be gleaned, the participant spent much time expressing his concern over the coming conflict with Hizballah, which produced not only fears for his family, but a feeling of insecurity which engendered a desire on the part of the participant for Israel to pre-emptively strike at Hizballah in order to mitigate the severity of the coming conflict. Similar to P8, he considered Israel's Western orientation to be a liability in its inevitable future conflict with Hizballah. This reinforced the sense of siege, and being surrounded by enemies, that the participant felt as an Israeli assailed by Hizballah, and also Hamas along the Gaza Strip. Taken together, when confronting these challenges, the participant lamented a perceived weakness in Israel's military approach towards its enemies:

The Arab world scares me. The Arab world scares me. But the thing is that they are afraid of the strong. They give respect to the strong. To our fortune, they fear Israel. They are afraid. But what is lacking on our side, is that in order to show the world how tolerant we are, we are willing to screw over Jews to help Arabs, or Christians, or whoever. But first of all we need to worry about our Jews. In difficult times, a Jew will be on your side, not an Arab and not a Christian.

P16 attributes this approach on the side of Israel's "Jews" to a trait they ascribe to global Jewry, which is a tendency to be accommodating to the needs of others and

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tolerating ill-treatment before considering their own needs. This is believed to be exploited by various countries to either ignore Israeli interests in favour of their own, or to support terrorist organizations that target Israel, if it serves some national interest, as is the case with Russia according to the participant:

Even Russians know it wasn't Israel. But, simply, like they say in Hebrew: "The Jews are flexible." You know what, say what you want, but in a month we'll talk because we have interests. Nothing we can do.

But Russians are also similar enough to the UN. They say that Hizballah is not a terrorist organization. Hamas is not a terrorist organization. You understand? But what can you do? They also have interests. Someone with interests with Arabs, what do you say?

Upon ascertaining the worldview of the participant, the discussion turned towards his feelings about a variety of interrelated factors including the Lebanese population, their relationship to UNIFIL and Hizballah, and what more could be done to remedy the problems caused by Hizballah to Israeli security. Interestingly, while previously mentioning their fear of "Arabs" as a collective, the participant was able to clarify the specifics of those fears vis-à-vis the Lebanese population.

Similar to P14, and others in this study, he felt that the problem was not with Lebanon or the Lebanese per se, but specifically with Hizballah—and broadly speaking—a problem with the generally widespread Arab-Islamic hostility towards Israel. Nevertheless, P16 displayed some contradictory tendencies where on the one hand they expressed the fact that they "hate Arabs," but then seemed optimistic that the average Lebanese citizen—especially Christians—as well as the average Palestinian would be open to positive relations with Israel:

There's a difference between this and Lebanon's citizens, when you are considering the Muslims and the Christians. The Christians certainly would want Israel to get rid of Hizballah. For sure they'd want this.

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If there was no Hizballah you wouldn't need the UN there. You understand? Why is the UN there? Because we have a problem not with **Lebanon**. We have a problem with Hizballah **in** Lebanon. Believe me, we don't need any UN forces there if there wasn't Hizballah there. I think the Christians for sure would want Israel to strike them. Just like how even in Gaza, the average citizens would want Israel to get rid of Hamas. They want peace with Israel. They want to work in Israel. They want lives like they enjoyed in the past, you understand? Arafat came and flipped everything over. He flipped over their lives, he flipped over their lives. (emphasis in original)

We drank coffee together, we had friendships between each other. Friends. And that is truly what was. The younger generation don't remember this, you understand? But the older generation in their 30s, 40s, 50s, they remember this.

Remarkably, and as discussed when exploring perspectives of participants throughout this study is the degree to which participants would not typically portray their day-to-day lives as being characterized by a situation of persistent conflict—or at least the threat of conflict—and only recognized it after discussing their experiences either living or serving in northern Israel, and elsewhere in the country. Additionally, while the consequences of the conflict were nevertheless clear, the situation seemed to become so normal as to cause individuals to adapt to the state of affairs. In one interesting interview, P18 stated that they were almost entirely oblivious to the UN before moving to Canada, despite living in Metula, Israel's northernmost city on the border with Lebanon.

Well, I mean I heard about it when I was in Israel of course. And of course, I was quite little at the time, you know. But, it wasn't something that we would discuss a lot in Israel. We don't discuss the UN really so much. We only discuss the Israeli army, and Israeli politics. And Israeli politics usually doesn't touch as much on the UN. It's really an outside, you know, third party, really, that's not discussed even in Israeli media, really.

I never heard so much, I actually heard about it **a lot** when we immigrated to Canada, I started actually to hear about the UN, about this whole thing, you know. So I got more information about it when I actually, when I started living in Canada than when I was actually in Israel. In Israel, really, the IDF really **guards** it, and this is what we know about the border. (emphasis in original)

(...) The whole operation really, because as an Israeli, it wasn't even like, it didn't even feel like the UN was part of that. We never talked about that. It's kind of a different entity. It was in Canada when I actually **discovered** about the UN so much. (emphasis in original)

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What was interesting in this response was the idea that the UN features marginally in Israeli political discourse—as it actually features quite prominently in Israeli mainstream media—but also the fact that the participant immediately intuited that UNIFIL is supposed to protect Israel’s northern border, but it is the IDF that accomplishes this task. Picking up on this, the researcher asked the participant if he felt that the IDF performed well in protecting the border. He responded with laughter, saying: “I think it does a *great* job. I think without the Israeli army guarding it, that there wouldn’t be any border. It will be smashed by the other side.” He elaborated on this by demonstrating a high degree of confidence in the IDF stemming from the IDF’s motivation in protecting the country against hostile forces:

I mean they have a lot of people there, they have a lot of soldiers that go there, and they serve. Perhaps they could have even more, but they might have more casualties, you know, bringing more people. But, in terms of **maximum**, I think Israel is doing maximum that it can do. You know, even moving **beyond** maximum, because again, they have to protect themselves, you know? It’s really why the army was created. (emphasis in original)

The participant remembered seeing UN positions and personnel throughout northern Israel and across the border, but was convinced of their ineffectiveness, which they put forward more gently than other participants:

Like I said, I grew up with the Israel doing it. The IDF really. And we always **saw** them doing it. Even when I was traveling, and my friends now that **served** there, okay, I know that Israel was doing it, okay. But the UN? You know, I mean, maybe on **paper** it does a good job. In reality, I think Israeli, IDF really guarding it much better. Yeah. (emphasis in original)

And also, like, you know, the Israeli media, and how we lived there, you know, you **see** it, okay? I mean, it’s, you know, nobody said: “Oh, the UN today fixed this and that.” You know? It’s that the Israeli army went in and fixed it, okay? (emphasis in original)

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When expressing why he felt that UNIFIL was lacking in its ability to fulfill its mandate, the participant believed that it surrounded a lack of stake in the conflict, but he was careful to distinguish this from a lack of motivation, which was unique, although not altogether clear in terms of distinction:

Well, you know, I think, you know, first of all, I see the UN in there it's been a political – you know – they **have** to be there, okay. It's kind of their responsibility, but in reality, the IDF, they guard themselves. I mean this is, this is, if not the IDF, there's nobody there, really, okay? The IDF is, you know, they have to – the reason why we have IDF today is that they have to guard Israel, okay? They do it for themselves, okay? Somebody comes to the UN that they have their job, it's their titles, they were **hired** to do it. The IDF was not **hired** to do it. The IDF is there to protect themselves. To protect **Israelis**. You have to protect **yourself**. (emphasis in original)

I don't think they lack motivation, it's just, only an Israeli, you know, can understand the situation there. Somebody who is from the outside, okay, is there as, you know, you're hired to do it, you do it.

Honestly, I don't think, I don't think they are **allowed** to think anything. Israel is there, and there to protect its side. I don't feel they should have an opinion either way. Because again if they have an opinion they have to go to one side or the other. It's, they can't choose sides. (emphasis in original)

I mean I think they're trying to. I don't think it's always working, okay? With again, each side might push, you know, to their side. And if something happens sometimes. But I think they do their best in terms of to protect their identity of being in the middle. Their position.

What was fascinating about P18's perspective on UNIFIL, and the UN as well, was that despite believing the PSO to have no stake in the conflict, or any tangible effect on securing the Israel-Lebanon border, he felt that the UN was not “completely” biased against Israel, in that it is forced to take a middle ground position between any parties to any conflict. Moreover, he believed that UNIFIL tries its best to remain neutral. Therefore, the UN has a positive role to play in mediating global conflicts, including the conflict between Israel and Hizballah to the extent that that could ever be possible. In his words, the UN is the “right actor” for such an intermediary and interpositionary task, and explains why in detail:

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I mean you know they have to be in the middle. You know? I think it's their responsibility, and I don't think they can go one side or the other. It's, you know, they stand for being "in the middle," that's why we have the UN to be in the middle, a negotiator, you know. In the middle of conflict, you always have to be somewhere in the middle. You can't have this middle, going to the one side or the other side, okay? They have to be in the middle. The UN is always in the middle, and they have to, you **have** to have it, okay?

Because you need to trust somebody, and somebody to sign the paper, you know. It's that, you know, it's that lawyer almost that's in the middle that you need to have, okay? And they can't **choose** really, a side. And we always hope that they won't choose a side, even though I may want them to be on our side, but in reality we want it to be on one side—in the middle—okay. That side is the middle. That's why we have the UN. (emphasis in original)

Thus, establishing the participant's perspective on the UN and the IDF in protecting Israel's north, he felt that when considering the Lebanese government, it must take measures to "protect their people" specifically "from themselves." In terms of obstacles to the Lebanese government, P18 believed that regional neighbours contribute to the conflict by educating their respective populations to hate Israel, including Lebanese society itself. With respect to Israel, P18 believed that Israel wants to pursue a just peace with Lebanon and its other neighbours, but it is all too often confronted with implacable enemies that are more concerned with the destruction of the Jewish State than reaching a mutually satisfactory accommodation with it, which makes it impossible for Israel to attain conditions of peace:

To be honest I think they contribute to the conflict by bringing **hate** more to the conflict. And I feel they are educating their selves, their own people, to hate, okay? I don't think the whole hate. In fact, as being a Canadian now, I've met a lot of Lebanese actually, you know? A lot of people would come to me and say "I'm from Lebanon." "I'm Israeli." We're neighbours. And they were always nice to me and I know them until today. We're very friendly, and the problem is they run away from there. They run away because – I don't know if their society **wants** them to be friendly with **Israel**. (emphasis in original)

Sometimes you know, it's better to **hate** than to **love**, okay? Because if you love, then things might get better, but if you hate, you know, they get their way. And unfortunately, they don't always choose love, you know. It's true that Israel **does** want peace, but again, you have to come into a solution of, you know,

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you can't say: "I **hate** you, I want to destroy it, I want to **wipe** you," okay? And if in that conflict it's always been like that – "I hate you, I want to wipe you," okay? We have to come to some middle grounds, and Israel I think went to middle grounds **very** often, okay?

Israel gave their own territory just to **get** to the middle ground, yet you have to get to 50/50, you know? You can't just say "I want 100" and that's it. That's was always the **view**! They want 100 percent! They want 100 percent of you, that's it. And I think the offer always needs to be 50/50, or at least, I don't know 60/40, you know? But even if it's 60/40, or even 70 you know and 30, okay? That 30 have to **agree** with them, okay? And some agreement, but it doesn't happen. And they keep **saying** it! And I'm talking about some countries close to Israel, like Lebanon. I'm not saying Saudi Arabia, they just want 100 percent. They hate you and they want to destroy you. They don't want to sit and talk. And get into a resolution, you know? (emphasis in original)

Israel **does** want to get into a resolution, they want to get into that middle ground, because for Israel it doesn't work. It's the money – people – Israel doesn't want to invest in military so they can continue fighting, okay? The other side unfortunately. They want to invest in war, they want sometimes war sometimes, and in some situation, war is better, okay? They can make money on war too. And they do make money on war. (emphasis in original)

We can observe a common trend among participants here: an integration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, characterized by the "Land for Peace" formula, with the Israel-Hizballah conflict, which does not primarily revolve around a land dispute, save for the Shab'a Farms/Har Dov area (and Ghajar village). P18 associated the two conflicts by suggesting that they are connected, especially as terrorist groups operating in both contexts "all kind of share the same hate" and "the same foundation."

When asked why the participant felt that neighbouring countries, Hizballah and other groups want to destroy Israel from his perspective, he responded by saying that it comes down to a few things, including jealousy over Israel's many accomplishments, but mostly due to visceral antisemitism against Jewish self-determination in the Jewish People's ancestral homeland of Israel:

They just hate. You know? Pure hate. You know? I, it's not professional, there's no, it's not like they're going to make money off of it, you know? It's just hate, okay? They don't see the potential in it, okay? The good potential. It's not like

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you know, they want Israel because they want the factories, they want this, they want the companies, okay. They want to put their name on it, okay. Often people like something, you know, the grass is green and they want that grass, so they go over there to fight, they get the grass. They don't want the grass, they just want to wipe it, okay? And wipe against the people that live there, you know? They don't want the people, the **Jews** that live there. (emphasis in original)

And often we **see** it. But I mean Jews, I think antisemitism, it plays a **huge** role in it, yes. Plus, I think, you know, Israel started because of Jews, okay? And that's why they say that "because of Jews," you know? (emphasis in original)

Because of the Jewish People around the world, they decided we need to have Israel, okay? And also, the history in the land as **Jews**. Okay? Not as anyone else. As a Jewish nation, okay? And I think that's why we call it the State of Israel. Because of the Jewish - because you can't put Israel without "Jewish." You know? It is not just another country, you know?" (emphasis in original)

Considering the participant's belief that Israel's neighbours are by-and-large intractable when it comes to recognizing Israel's right to exist, coupled with their previous residence in Metula—one of the hardest hit Israeli towns from Hizballah rockets—I wanted to gather their impressions about the security situation in Israel's north. The participant shared several harrowing experiences that they experienced in their early childhood years living in the north which they characterized as personally traumatic, and also, very normal in the area for other Israelis:

I don't think it's 100 percent safe because, you know, in the past, we've seen when things happen, okay? In history, okay? I grew up with, you know, with missiles right above my head – I could see it. Close like that. I mean, until age of 10, you know, I still had the **shock**. I grew up in the *miklat* [bomb shelters], okay? You know, the bomb shelter, okay? I grew up like that, okay? So, I was being there, okay? I heard it, like, the **sound** of that, I think **today**, until **today!** You know I have it, I remember that sound, okay? You know, bombs, okay. And it's just, I remember walking with my Dad, okay, outside, I could see the missiles just flying over my head, you know? I actually **saw** it, okay? The bombs, you know? Houses exploding, okay? Not my house that exploded, but nearby I heard the noise, it's something you can't forget, you know? I basically lived in a war, okay? (emphasis in original)

It was near, I think, I can't remember the exact years, but there were years where it was very often, okay? And then it was at some point where it was quiet. But again it was coming back. It's never disappeared, you know? It was still coming back, you know, the missiles, yes.

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And that's why you know, it's like, in the north we have *miklat* in every house. My **house** had a *miklat*! We had a safe room, you know. (emphasis in original)

Aside from the sheer damage caused by such attacks to municipal infrastructure, not to mention the devastating psychological impacts such attacks have on citizens, there was also the economic disruption and frequent internal displacement that added upon the stress experienced by the participant and his family whenever they had to escape a barrage of attacks from Hizballah over the border:

Well it's all – I mean psychologically first, but financially, for example my parents have always run a business, okay? When something is happening they'd have to close the store, for example, okay? When you close your store for a whole week you don't make money, okay? You either, you know, during that time we went to go to some other cities, okay? Like, it's economic, of course!

We had to, I mean we have family all over Israel, you know? We used to go a lot to Haifa, a lot to Haifa, you know. Sometimes we'd go to Tel Aviv, but mostly we'd come to Haifa, we have a lot of family who live there. And yeah, we have to gather around away from that.

Having such experiences, the researcher sought to gauge how the participant felt about prospects for peace, or at least a cessation of conflict in the north. To such questions, the participant was remarkably optimistic, although he was clear that there were cultural barriers between Israel's intractable enemies, and Israelis in general that hinder any such prospects. He felt that peace is "definitely possible" but by no means "guaranteed." Referring specifically to Hizballah, P18 questioned their ability to empathize humanely with Israelis, and believed that until they can, there are no prospects for peace on the horizon. As P18 expressed:

I think, I don't think any nation around the world do what they [Hizballah] do. Because **enough!** Us aside, even, it doesn't matter, you know. I mean, parents always care for their kids, okay? They will never harm – it doesn't matter how bad you are, or horrible you are. You could be a horrible person, the kids are always going to be first. They won't do anything bad for their kids. Even in **animals** it's the same thing, you know?

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Animals always protecting their kids, okay? It's a **natural** thing. It's part of the nature, okay. They [Hizballah] don't **have** it, you know? I think, sending your kids, you know, to kill somebody, just for the sake of, you know, the **idea**, okay, it's (...). (emphasis in original)

But ultimately, he believed that all things considered, both sides are still “human beings” and “can still come together.” For the participant, Israel has extended its hand in peace, but is waiting for Hizballah—and other enemies—to take up its offer of peace.

Therefore, we can see that participants feel as if Israel is misunderstood internationally and unfairly maligned, owing to a constellation of factors including a perceived institutional bias at the UN, coupled with an international MSM that disproportionately focuses on Israel, while being surrounded by hostile nations, and highly motivated militias—notably Hizballah—intent on causing as much harm to Israel's north (and beyond) as possible. Such perceptions influence Israeli behaviours and perceptions surrounding their security, and contribute to a sense of anxiety, tension, and fear that becomes acculturated into a normal part of every day life, that often goes unrecognized unless spurred by emergencies, or when solicited by way of discussions on the subject of Israeli perceptions of security in the country.

10.3 - Findings

While there is indeed overlap among the perspectives expressed in earlier chapters, a greater emphasis is placed on several key perspectives surrounding UNIFIL and Israeli perspectives on the PSO and the consequences of its (in)effectiveness along Israel's northern frontier with Lebanon, including:

- The normalization of conflict in northern Israel;
- Attacks are inevitable and part of life in northern Israel;

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- The interruption of everyday life as a result of insecurity in Israel's north;
- The impact of northern insecurity on Jewish-Arab relations within Israel;
- Feelings of besiegement as Israelis live in a hostile part of the world;
- A lack of faith in UNIFIL's ability to deliver on its mandate; and
- Perception of the UN's futility and bias towards Israel.

What can be observed from sentiments expressed by participants is that the threat of violence from Hizballah, and other armed elements operating in proximity to the Israel-Lebanon border, has tangible psychological and material impacts on the lives of Israelis that influenced not only their perspectives on UNIFIL, but very significantly influences how they make decisions about their everyday lives. Importantly, the very fact that conflict is normalized in Israel and incorporated as a reality into everyday life makes the threat of violence a mundane element of life in Israel akin to other considerations, or typical errands and long-term planning people incorporate into their daily routines.

For instance, while we see that the conflict has negatively impacted business owners, this is something that is accepted as a reality and coped with to the best of the ability of Israel's northern citizenry. However, it has also been demonstrated that many Israelis leave Israel specifically due to the insecurity of living in the country, while others choose to remain and even arm themselves in order to contend with any potential threats to their safety. For participants, it was very clear that this state of affairs serves to demonstrate the disutility of UNIFIL in preventing hostilities along the Israel-Lebanon border, which is a perspective that was shared by all participants, regardless of any favourable views they may nevertheless retain regarding UNIFIL.

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Thus, we can see the tangible impacts of the “tension” and “anxiety” that participants felt on their professional and family lives, such as it is evident that all participants coped with the reality of this insecurity in one way or another. There are also social consequences within Israel to the “inevitability” of conflict, and the manner in which Israeli society reacts to preparing for conflict, and engaging in conflict along the northern border with Lebanon.

On the one hand, it was relayed that due to Israel’s longstanding conflict with its Arab (and non-Arab) neighbours—including Iran and Syria, both of which are “bad neighbours” in the context of Lebanon—as well as the Palestinians, many buildings in Israel are equipped with bomb shelters, and there are often emergency drills that are practiced to prepare for these eventualities. Israelis also arrange their own contingency plans to protect themselves and their families, with some going so far as to migrate to other areas of the country during periods of conflict, to temporary leaving the country during times of war, or emigrating to a separate country entirely.

Before exploring this point further, it should be noted that there was some recognition among some participants that although Israel is justified in the measures it takes to protect itself from Hizballah and other threats originating from Lebanon, the measures it has taken—and continues to take—can in fact cause the Lebanese public to consider Israel to be a “bad neighbour” in addition to Syria and Iran.

SG reports condemning Israeli overflights into Lebanon, as well as resentment against Israel (and its former proxies) stemming from its former occupation of southern Lebanon between 1982-2000, certainly contribute to such a perception on the part of many Lebanese citizens. This point is important to emphasize to the extent that no participant

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used this example to justify Hizballah attacks against Israel, but only to demonstrate an empathetic understanding of Lebanese perspectives on Israel, even if they disagreed over the characterization of Israel as a bad neighbour. However, participants were clear in stating that Israel did not seek to intervene in Lebanese affairs as a goal in and of itself—unlike Iran and Syria—thereby qualifying Israel’s bad “neighbourliness” on occasion to motives of necessity rather than malice.

However, internally, within Israel, there were examples given as to how conflicts along the north—as well as other frontiers with Israel’s neighbouring countries—often engender discord between Jewish and Arab Israelis, ranging from a temporary form of communal self-segregation during times of conflict, to low-level nationalistic violence in the streets of Haifa, and other areas where Jews and Arabs live together in greater numbers. There is also a recognition among participants, although not universally so, that any conflict with Lebanon can be conflated—rightly or wrong—with the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, regarded as it is by most participants as Israel’s most iconic conflict from which all other conflicts involving Israel stem, to one degree or another, which alludes to the perceived “civilizational” nature of the conflict between Arabs, as a collective, and Jews, as a collective.

While a better functioning UNIFIL could not very likely prevent this phenomenon from occurring, it could most certainly alleviate the tensions and anxieties felt by Israelis over fears of cross-border attacks, demonstrating both limits and opportunities for UNIFIL in an ideal scenario. Conversely, however, participants also expressed how the experience of anxiety strengthens the bond between each other, as the psychological realization that conflict is both inevitable and possibly fatal, causes Israelis to rally

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around each other so that they go about their lives “like there might be an attack tomorrow.”

There is a juxtaposition here between a pessimistic fatalism that gives birth to a seemingly paradoxical optimism, which can be viewed as a positive outcome of an otherwise negative situation. This is buttressed by a widely held perspective that the UN itself, along with most of the world, is hostile to Israel and cares little for its welfare, or that of its (particularly Jewish) citizens. This appears to be a common point of view, which solidifies the identity of Israelis who otherwise come from very different walks of life and political dispositions, and contributes to the “normalization” and “inevitability” of conflict in both northern Israel, and elsewhere in the country.

To this end, it is important to note that the UN and UNIFIL are not typically separated from each other in any meaningful way in the eyes of most participants, with few notable exceptions. Those notable exceptions are typically found among those with direct experience engaging with UNIFIL personnel. This perception is due to an inherited anti-UN bias that is a product of the ether of living in Israel, which has had a tumultuous history at the UN, coupled with personal reflections from unique vantage points and experiences, as well as the Israeli MSM and political establishment, which tends to be critical of the UN as an institution. In fact, several participants acknowledge the potential influence that the Israeli MSM and anti-UN atmosphere may have had on their thinking, but few consider such influences to be sufficient in tailoring their unique perspectives on the matter. In other words, Israelis were convinced that there is sufficient evidence in the UN’s (and UNIFIL’s) practices that would warrant such a perspective on the part of Israelis.

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Due to these factors, coupled with UNIFIL's well-documented (and self-admitted) failures in pursuing its mandate for all of the reasons stated above, many participants reiterated their equation of UNIFIL in particular with the UN more generally, viewing the UN as one single institution that behaves in a singular fashion, and is institutionally hostile to Israel. Others nullified UNIFIL's utility almost entirely, going so far as to suggest that the UN, UNIFIL, or any other PSO operating along Israel's borders barely register in the minds of Israelis to any significant degree, which is a result of both UN fecklessness and hostility towards Israel in tandem. Interestingly, some participants knew little about which UN PSOs were operating along Israel's borders—including UNIFIL—yet had strong opinions about their respective levels of efficacy that mirrored those of participants with more knowledge or experience with UNIFIL, demonstrating the internalization of a generally hostile attitude to the UN for reasons *other* than UNIFIL's specific shortcomings.

Moreover, again with few exceptions, this perceived hostility on the part of the UN is seen as being not only essentially a dogmatic position of the UN, but that the UN itself—outside of its perceived position on Israel—is seen as being of little value in terms of offering any form of protection or justice to Israelis, as participants did not see any meaningful reason to not hold the UN to account for UNIFIL's failures.

While the critiques pertaining to UNIFIL's failures are fair to the extent that it cannot be denied that UNIFIL has been unable to achieve any substantive element of its mandate other than monitoring violence along the Blue Line, the attribution of particular forms of malice to UNIFIL were often overstated, or inaccurate reflections of reality.

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For instance, the notion that UNIFIL actively aids and abets Hizballah, or is antithetical to Israel, was expressed on several occasions, yet can be countenanced by a few important facts. First, different contingents operate along different SOPs, and often have very different threat perceptions or rules of engagement that are largely in accordance with their national defence doctrines, often at the expense of the PSO's mandate. Therefore, it is indeed difficult to suggest that there is a consensus among UNIFIL's contingents on being hostile towards Israel in particular, given that UNIFIL is a unified PSO in name only. Additionally, some participants stated directly that some personnel were indeed very supportive of Israel (while others expressed the opposite view) demonstrating that there is no uniformity within UNIFIL on the matter, but that officially within its mandate, there is no instruction that directs personnel to operate to Israel's detriment.

Instances of collusion with Hizballah, as mentioned above, pertained to specific troops from specific contingents, but not in response to any directive from UNIFIL. While, indeed, there were political issues that emerged from such episodes between UNIFIL, the UN more broadly, the IDF, the LAF, and so forth, the original transgressions that flared tensions between these actors were seldom attributable to UNIFIL as the instigating actor.

Additionally, while it is most certainly true that UNIFIL has been unable to disarm Hizballah, or dismantle posts immediately adjacent to UNIFIL positions, and have had to subsequently ingratiate itself to Hizballah in order to carry out CIMIC functions in its AO, at the very least, it is unfair to suggest that such failures on the part of UNIFIL are a product of hostility towards Israel. We have seen from various SG reports to the UNSC

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that UNIFIL is often—although not always, as we have seen that contingent preferences are instrumental in such cases—motivated to carry out its mandated objectives, but is stymied by its own doctrinal and mandate limitations, the lack of cooperation by LAF which is often *necessary* for the carrying out of certain functions, and may, therefore, otherwise readily dismantle Hizballah posts in its AO if a perfect constellation of factors were set in place that benefited the operation.

While this can only be speculated upon, instances of UNIFIL being harassed and attacked by armed elements, including Hizballah, for the very reason that its personnel were carrying out its mandated objectives at least provides a measure of purchase to the suggestion that UNIFIL is not—in its entirety—unmotivated in performing its duties. In certain cases, it is fair to suggest that indeed there is a lack of motivation, as the examples provided by participant's demonstrated clear cases where UNIFIL personnel had avoided confrontation, or were more concerned with self-preservation than engaging a given enemy.

However, it is unlikely that UNIFIL is entirely motivated by malice in not fulfilling its duties. Its external and internal operational constraints are far more likely to be at fault than the proclivities of particular contingents towards the State of Israel, even though such cases are indeed a factor that is worthy of consideration and one that should be remedied within UNIFIL to gain a measure of confidence among Israelis living in proximity to the Blue Line and in Israel's Northern District.

Even upon considering the critiques provided by most participants, it is important to recognize that there was a near-consensus that it is better to have UNIFIL in place rather than not in order to benefit from the services it *can* provide, including its liaison

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functions, monitoring and intelligence sharing with the IDF, and conflict de-escalation functions. In that respect, there is a modicum of appreciation for UNIFIL, which betrays an understanding that UNIFIL cannot be “all bad” despite its shortcomings.

This recognition has also been borne out in the literature, as scholars seem to enjoy a fair consensus in perceiving a positive utility for PSOs wherever they are deployed, even if their mandated objectives are not achieved in their entirety (Ruggeri, Andrea, Han Dorussen, et al., 2017). Situations on the ground rapidly change, and do so continuously over the life of any PSO, which requires evaluation and re-evaluation of a PSO’s mandate and performance over a regular period of time to determine what is—and is not—working in the field. While the literature demonstrates that more needs to be done in terms of evaluating PSOs, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that even where mandates fail to be fulfilled—such as with UNIFIL—there is often still a degree of utility that makes the continued investment of both blood and treasure into the institution of PSOs a worthwhile endeavour.

10.4 – Conclusions

Therefore, overall, it can be observed that Israelis have a qualified lack of trust in both the UN and UNIFIL for similar reasons, being both practical and emotional. The UN/UNIFIL is seen as being unable to protect Israel to any extent, and broadly biased against Israel, but still worth having in place as it provides some benefits that would otherwise be absent. However, the insufficient provision of security, coupled with the IDF’s own inability to provide total security to Israel’s north, among other factors, leads to a situation in which northern Israelis feel daily trepidation about the possibility—and

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inevitability—of Hizballah attacks against themselves and their families. This reality has both short- and long-term societal impacts that is both negative and positive, material and psychological, and in sum, significantly impacts the quality of life of Israel's northern citizens.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSIONS**11.1 – Introduction**

In this chapter, we distill the findings from the literature review, and qualitative data gathered throughout the study to present the study's overall key findings. Eight major themes have been identified, each of which are unique, yet interrelated with each other to form a logically consistent presentation of themes that is represented in a model (see Figure 1 on p. 372), which illustrates the manner in which both individual worldviews, and experiences in the real world, simultaneously influence each other to construct a social reality that determines participant perspectives on UNIFIL, the UN, and notions of (in)security in northern Israel.

The chapter concludes by positing particular limitations in the study as well as possible future directions for research on the subject, both of which could be employed in tandem to build upon the novel literature concerning Israeli perspectives on UNIFIL's performance in this study, and other related subjects.

11.2 – Overall Key Findings

As discussed in the methodology section of this study, the categories identified in the axial coding process were further refined into "selective codes" whereby categories were aggregated into themes that demonstrate an illustrative model that reflects an answer to our central research question. The eight identified themes, or "selective codes" were derived by using the *constant comparative method*, which was a step iterated throughout the open and axial coding processes, to provide the following insights from the data. Each selective code is elucidated upon below:

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1. **UNIFIL is largely synonymous with the UN** - Israeli perceptions of the United Nations tend to influence their perception of UNIFIL. UNIFIL is therefore secondary to the broader UN, and viewed as an offshoot of the UN as an international organization. For the participants, there is no meaningful difference between the two, although they are not viewed as entirely analogous.
2. **Experiences and influences determine interpretations of UN/UNIFIL utility** - Israeli perspectives on the UN and/or UNIFIL are informed by their worldview, but that worldview is a product of personal experiences leading them to certain conclusions, or impressions they have from external influences, or a combination of both. Broadly speaking, Israelis view UNIFIL differently depending on their worldview, but all participants consider it to be largely ineffective in fulfilling its mandate.
3. **Israelis feel besieged** – Participants, without exception, expressed a perception of bias by the UN against the State of Israel, as well as by most countries around the world, and the international mainstream media (MSM). The reasons provided for this perceived bias varied from participant to participant, but tended to hit on similar themes from people of all walks of life, particularly the themes of anti-Zionism or antisemitism.
4. **The conflict between Israel and her neighbours is civilizational** – Israelis tend to view Israel as a liberal outpost in a region that is decidedly illiberal, and conglomerate Arabs as a single nation, albeit within different political boundaries.

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As such, many participants spoke of Arabs as a whole, whether referring to Lebanese, Palestinian, or other Arab populations in the Middle East. The impression was given that Arabs want Israel to disappear, and that the conflicts that befall Israel are ultimately due to a collective Arab rejection of Israel's right to exist, and a rejection of liberal Western values, loosely defined.

5. **Israelis tend to differentiate between Hizballah and Lebanon, and recognize the broad influence of Iran and Syria over Lebanese affairs** – Participants seemed to differentiate between Hizballah and the Lebanese public. While they were not under the impression that the average Lebanese citizen views Israel positively, they were under the impression that Hizballah is able to leverage a position of power and influence within Lebanese society and politics by means of the threat, or use, of force against any dissent to its policies or actions. As such, the operative conflict from their perspective is between Israel and Hizballah specifically—albeit emanating from Lebanese territory—but not with the Lebanese state itself, which is viewed as being hostage to Hizballah and its benefactors, Iran and Syria.
6. **Conflict is normalized and seen to be “inevitable” in Israel** – Participants, either implicitly or explicitly, considered a state of conflict to be “normal” insofar as there was no expectation for there to be a complete cessation of hostile activity from Lebanon, or any other border region with a neighbouring Arab state. With the exception of an ideal situation where true positive peace is achieved in the

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future, the most Israelis seemed to hope for was a reduction of hostilities to the absolute minimum.

7. **Israelis are confident in the Israeli security establishment and feel that it behaves morally** – Israelis expressed confidence in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Israel's security apparatus, in doing what it could to prevent and respond to cross-border hostilities in northern Israel and along the Blue Line. Certain criticisms of Israeli policy were illustrated as well, but few of those critiques rendered Israeli efforts in securing the northern region of the country to be futile.
8. **Participants differed on their desired “best case scenario” outcome** – Participants all agreed that a cessation to hostilities would be the ideal, but how such an outcome would arise and/or how it would look varied considerably between participants.

Provided our understanding of the major themes that have emerged from the data, we explore how these perceptions relate to each other and to the literature, and what implications these findings have for UNIFIL, those affected by the conflict along the Israel-Lebanon border, and future research on the subject of UNIFIL's performance and its impact on Israeli citizens.

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11.3 – Discussion*11.3.1 – UN-UNIFIL Synonymization*

Regarding participant perceptions of the UN as an institution, there was a remarkable degree of consensus in the belief that the UN is systemically biased against the State of Israel. However, the reasons for this bias varied from person to person, but were nevertheless a sentiment that was expressed without any equivocation, again—and significantly—across the political spectrum. The reasons given for the UN’s bias against Israel varied among the participants, but they maintained at least one or a combination of the expressed reasons, which included:

- A consistent voting pattern by Arab-Islamic countries that are hostile to Israel at the UNGA;
- Global antisemitism that manifests itself at various UN forums;
- Vestiges of Cold War politics where countries traditionally vote against Israel in accordance with the preferences of particular, and more powerful state benefactors;
- Israel’s lack of allies compared to its enemies, which amounts simply to an unfortunate numbers game at UN forums which are adverse to Israel’s interests; and
- Israel’s failure to adequately communicate its legitimate security concerns.

Interestingly, aside from one participant, the participants did not seem to consider that Israeli policies, be it vis-à-vis the Palestinians, neighbouring Arab states, or some other consideration were sufficient grounds to account for this perceived UN bias against Israel. Moreover, the one participant that did mention this possibility qualified their belief

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by suggesting that even when considering any legitimate critiques against Israeli policy—in their case, referencing the conflict with the Palestinians—the UN’s critique is still unfair and disproportionate. Thus, we see a remarkable consensus among participants regarding the perception that the UN—as an institution—is broadly biased against Israel.

Additionally, for most participants, the UN and UNIFIL were seen as synonymous. For instance, many participants would lament the UN’s voting record on a tangential note that began with a discussion specifically surrounding UNIFIL. While it is true that UNIFIL and the UN cannot be separated from each other entirely, the political forums of the UN—while responsible for the creation, mandating, and maintenance of PSOs around the world, including UNIFIL—have a different “global” perspective than is likely to be the case with UNIFIL contingents, or even TCCs, which often are motivated by far more local, and even “national” concerns, as discussed earlier in this study. Nevertheless, participants did not generally parse these specific differences since they are either unknown or viewed as immaterial in the grand scheme of things, while in other instances, it would appear that the equivocation between the UN and UNIFIL is justified on the basis of specific experiences.

It was extraordinarily common for participants to lament UNIFIL’s preference for the “Arabs” versus Israel, and then allude to the lopsidedly anti-Israel voting patterns at the UN General Assembly and UN Human Rights Council, among other forums, as evidence that UNIFIL, *specifically*, is biased against Israel. While UNIFIL has little to nothing to do with how UN Member States vote in any of these bodies, it is viewed as an *extension* of a body—the UN—that is hostile to Israel, giving the impression that UNIFIL must therefore *necessarily* be hostile to Israel as well.

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Nevertheless, the Israeli perception of UN bias against Israel is influenced by a civilizational worldview as well in that when preference for “Arabs” is mentioned, it is done in a way that aggregates all Arabs together as a civilization at odds with Israel, the Jewish State. This is not to suggest that the participants claimed that Arabs operate as a single entity based on ethnicity—far from it, as participants were careful—almost entirely—to differentiate between Christian and Muslim Arabs, demonstrating a unique trepidation of the *Arab-Islamic* world, rather than specifically the “Arab” world alone. In that *Arab-Islamic* world, Iran—a non-Arab country—featured most prominently as Israel’s greatest neighbouring threat, followed only by Syria, as both support Hizballah and are ideologically hostile to Israel’s legitimacy. In sum, participants felt that the Arab-Islamic world held inordinate political sway at various UN forums, and thereby usurps UN institutions, diminishing its democratic legitimacy in the eyes of *all* of the participants.

A second theme that emerged along this vein is the UN’s disproportionate focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Often when discussing UNIFIL, or the conflict with Hizballah, the conversations with participants veered towards both *that* specific context, but also the conflict with the Palestinians (and even some mention of intra-Israeli Jewish-Arab discord). This again, demonstrated a “civilizational approach” where conflict with Israel’s Arab neighbours is viewed as various fronts of the same “war.” Not all participants expressed this sentiment, but many did to the point where it became a probing question in order to determine the participant’s worldview.

Several participants acknowledged a widespread anti-UN bias in Israeli society that is reflected not only in the general social discourse of the country, but also expressed on

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Israeli television news programmes, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and so forth. Israeli society is very forthright in its critique of the UN, and feelings of victimization by its institutions. In fact, on January 1, 2019, Israel, alongside the United States, announced its official withdrawal from the United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), protesting the organization's perceived bias against Israel (Ahren, 2019). In sum, the UN was viewed with disdain by most participants, and perceived to be systemically biased, even if not by intent, than in effect. Those with a more charitable view of the UN still believed that there was indeed a bias against Israel all the same, resulting in a broad consensus on this perspective.

As participants illustrated their perception of a direct equivalence between the UN, and UNIFIL, it became clear that this belief was generally premised on a lack of knowledge about the UN as an organization. As illustrated earlier, the UN is not only an umbrella organization that houses a massive bureaucracy focusing on a myriad of issues around the world, it is also a forum for Member States to engage in discourse and enact international policies and resolutions that, at least technically, apply to those very Member States.

However, provided the generally hostile experience Israel has historically had with the UN, the institution—including its offshoot agencies—most participants see the UN and its subsidiary entities as one and the same. Those participants that recognized the differences were either specifically educated on the subject of the UN through postgraduate study, or had personal professional experiences in the IDF or otherwise that made this point clear, although even in these circumstances, some individuals were less forgiving in their analysis of UNIFIL's failure and attitude towards Israel. For the

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average participant, however, there was no appreciable difference between the PSO itself and the UN as a broad, multilateral institution.

This synonymization, however, had practical impacts on how participants conceived of UNIFIL, by transferring the perceived UN bias against Israel at the UNSC, UNGA, UNHRC, UNESCO, UNRWA and other forums against UNIFIL. This led to a misattribution of UNIFIL's failure to that of motivation—in some cases, but not all—that could otherwise have been attributed to well-documented doctrinal and design failures emanating from the PSO creation process by the UNSC and UN Secretariat. Thus, while the failures of the PSO are well-known, many participants perceived these failures to be a product of UNIFIL's own actions, or inactions, rather than being institutional in nature.

Therefore, notwithstanding the legitimate critique levied against UNIFIL for particular deviations from its mandate, or concerning its general inability to function as mandated, it is noteworthy to observe that part of the struggle to “buy-in” to UNIFIL emanates from ignorance rather than substance to some degree. This has political implications to the extent that such impressions feedback into Israeli perceptions of reality, and reinforce the belief—rightly or wrongly—that the UN is indeed biased against Israel, and therefore has influence over UNIFIL's actions, whereby it fails to take action that benefits Israel as a product of this very bias.

11.3.2 – UNIFIL's Utility as a Function of Personal Experience

Personal experience with UNIFIL varied significantly between participants, with some observing UNIFIL personnel at a professional distance, while others had direct contact with UNIFIL personnel, either in a capacity with the IDF, or personally in other

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contexts. Perspectives included feeling that some contingents—notably the Fijians—were very supportive of Israel and had excellent relations with the IDF, while others noted that other contingents were either hostile or indifferent to Israel and the IDF. Yet others suggested that they had no strong feeling about UNIFIL since they were merely part of the “scenery.”

As participants were expressing their perspectives gathered from memory at different times ranging from 1978 until 2017, it is clear that in many instances the ebb and flow of relations between the IDF and UNIFIL may have impacted these relations. For instance, we can garner from SG reports to the UNSC on UNIFIL’s performance that in the period during Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon, relations between UNIFIL and Israel were indeed tense, especially as the Israeli-allied DFF/SLA regularly attacked UNIFIL personnel over the years, and it was well-known that they were a proxy force for the IDF. That is not to say that all DFF attacks against UNIFIL were ordered by the IDF, but the association between the two certainly soured relations at various points over an 18-year period, which would have a natural impact on UNIFIL’s feelings towards the IDF and Israel itself.

There was also a recognition that UNIFIL personnel may be influenced by their surroundings, garnering anti-Israel views through their discussions and interactions with local southern Lebanese citizens who are generally very hostile to Israel, and are within living memory of Israel’s presence in the country, its support for the SLA, and so forth. This may very well have a contributory impact on some contingents’ perspectives towards Israel, just as it was suggested that those UNIFIL civilian personnel that lived in Nahariya may actually be more supportive of Israel’s position. There is no hard and fast

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rule here, and no evidence other than conjecture on this matter—as many factors may influence one’s perspective on any given matter—but there appears to be anecdotal evidence that different contingents viewed Israel and Lebanon either positively or negatively, depending on the time period, the particular contingent, and a host of other factors.

However, even those with the most positive of experiences dealing with UNIFIL admitted that indeed, among a significant cohort of personnel, there was a seemingly “anti-Zionist” bias, but could not qualify this belief with specific cases. Nonetheless, this did not bode well for the overall assessment of the aggregate of participants concerning UNIFIL’s motivation or efficacy in the field. While it was appreciated that UNIFIL still served a purpose acting as a buffer and liaison between Israel and Lebanon, few had the impression that aside from specific contingents here and there over the years, that the mission as a whole is overly concerned with Israel’s welfare.

What is interesting about these perspectives is that to the extent that UNIFIL has been able—even by Israel’s own admission—UNIFIL has performed admirably in terms of liaison functions, and even in sharing information with Israel at tripartite meetings, or at the liaison office in Tzfat. Israel has appreciated this cooperation and benefitted from it, and even reversed its original position that UNIFIL had no purpose, to enjoying its relationship with UNIFIL, within reason. It is clear that Israel has at times been very disappointed with UNIFIL, but that does not appear to be unique to Israel, as UNIFIL has faced the ire of all of the parties to the conflict.

This in and of itself demonstrates that to a large extent—and despite its challenges—UNIFIL has attempted to remain faithful to its mandate with few exceptions.

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While personal perspectives pertaining to Israel among members of UNIFIL personnel may indeed be either hostile or cordial, SG reports reflect that UNIFIL does regularly observe, report, and condemn violations against Israel across the Blue Line, and has worked with the IDF to delineate the Blue Line and do what it can within reason to defend the Blue Line. This is recognized by some participants, to be sure, but for many there appears to be a wholesale dismissal of UNIFIL—albeit with some justification—as a mere observer force that cannot prevent hostilities against Israel.

11.3.3 – Participant Perceptions of International Besiegement

Participants of all stripes expressed the impression that Israel stands virtually alone in the world. They recognized that Israel does have international allies, but that those allies are miniscule in comparison to its enemies. In particular, as has already been made clear, the UN was seen as a forum in which the manifestation of international hostility by many Member States takes form, and influences the international diplomatic discourse on Israel in the perspective of most participants.

Such anti-Israel sentiment, again, is not informed by critiques of particular Israeli policies—particularly toward the Palestinians—but rather a manifestation of antisemitism and/or anti-Zionism, denying Israel’s legitimacy as a Jewish State. The perceived near-universal international consensus on Israel, according to most participants, is therefore a product of animus that is external to Israel itself. Several participants lamented Israel’s inability to leverage its own narrative in the public domain to better explain its policies, security situation, and right to exist in the international MSM, claiming that Israel needed

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to do more in this respect, so as to combat anti-Israel sentiment being expressed around the world.

Others believed that nothing could be done to change this fact since such sentiment is a product of political wrangling within various forums, especially as a vestige of Cold War politics between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the need for smaller states to ingratiate themselves to larger states that are hostile to Israel, or antisemitic/anti-Zionist in orientation, particularly in the Arab-Islamic world. This perception feeds into UNIFIL again, as any hostile action, inaction—both real and imagined—is seen by many participants as a product of the anti-Israel biases that affect UN institutions.

While according to some observers, it is true that there is a disproportionate focus on Israel at the UN in comparison to other countries, often due to the very real hostility of particular UN Member States, influential members of the UN Secretariat, and organized country blocs (UN Watch, *The United Nations and Antisemitism*, 2018), there is no direct influence between these blocs and the mandate given to UNIFIL. In fact, UNIFIL's mandate requires that there be a cessation of hostilities across both sides of the Blue Line, explicitly including the need to respect Israeli sovereignty and security. Additionally, Israel has diplomatic relations with most countries in the world, exceeding over 160 countries to date, which hardly indicates diplomatic isolation outside of the UN (Ahren, 2017).

It would appear that the perception of Israel's diplomatic isolation is a product of the oft-repeated hostilities Israel has with its neighbours, coupled with anti-Israel advocacy that takes place within various UN institutions. However, the full picture of

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Israel's diplomatic relations demonstrates that it has steadily increased its relations with countries around the world—including the Arab-Islamic world—and appears to be continuing this trend as of the time of this writing.

We can observe then, that there is a perception of “siege” among many participants, expressed as a concern over Israel's unfair treatment compared to other countries in the world, and the belief that this hostility informs the beliefs and practices of UNIFIL personnel, even if this is not borne out with evidence from the literature.

11.3.4 – The Conflict between Israel and Hizballah is “Civilizational”

A commonly expressed perspective among participants was that the conflict between Israel and Hizballah is “civilizational” between Jews, and particularly Muslims (who in most cases happen to be of Arab ethnicity in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict). To an extent, this can be perceived accurately in the sense that Hizballah has dubbed itself a revolutionary “Islamic” party that is also Lebanese in origin. In that sense, Hizballah's opposition to Israel is predicated on an Islamic-oriented ideology that finds theological fault with Israel's existence, rather than over a particular policy issue.

However, aside from Hizballah itself, the conflict with Hizballah was typically viewed in long-term perspective, whereby all of Israel's wars and conflicts with its neighbours since its establishment in 1948, were seen as the continuation of the “same war” to annihilate Israel and destroy the Jewish People. Participants also tended to maintain that Israel is a liberal, democratic country that is oriented towards Western ideals and values, while Arab and Islamic countries tend to be illiberal and maintain more

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specifically Islamic and religiously conservative values that run contrary to those of most Israelis.

While it is fair to suggest that Israel and its Arab neighbours differ greatly in terms of their political and legal systems, with Israel having a bona fide democracy compared to many countries in the Arab-Islamic world, the perceived “civilizational” nature of the conflict seemed to be tangential to the discussion on UNIFIL, but appeared so many times in conversations that it merited unique attention.

Broadly speaking, discussing the particular elements of this perspective is beyond the scope of our study, but it is instructive in informing what Israelis seemed to fear. The idea of an implacable religiously-oriented enemy was seen as more dangerous than a nationalistically-oriented foe, since many participants pointed out that if peace was possible with both Egypt and Jordan, than it is possible with others, save for those with extremist religious views who seemed implacable.

As per Borer’s (2006) and Mac Ginty’s (2008) discussions on spoilers—particularly *zealots* or *total spoilers*—we can see that there is some truth to the matter, which translated into unique trepidation on the part of participants when considering prospects for peace with Lebanon, when Hizballah would stand in the way of any such venture. Thus, while viewing the Arab-Islamic world as rejectionist of Israel overall, there appeared to be a recognition that if certain “players” were not able to influence matters on the ground, it would not be beyond the realm of reason to imagine a scenario where peace could be pursued more fruitfully.

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11.3.5 – Hizballah, Iran, and Syria are the enemy. Lebanon is not.

It was very clear that Israelis perceived Hizballah as the enemy and not Lebanon, per se. Iran and Syria were widely recognized as “bad neighbours” who support Hizballah and interfere in Lebanese politics, something widely recognized in the available literature and by the UN’s own admission over the years in its various SG reports on UNIFIL to the UNSC. While Israelis were under no illusion that Lebanon’s population is supportive of Israel, there were indications that peace would be possible with Lebanon if Hizballah was not an obstacle, given that there is no recognized proclivity for conflict between the two countries.

Interestingly, according to the literature, and the Lebanese government’s own public statements on the matter, there appears to be no meaningful difference between Hizballah and the Lebanese government for all intents and purposes, as the Lebanese state has regularly defended—and possibly facilitated—Hizballah’s political and military activities over the years. However, as Harel and Issacharoff (2008) have posited, this may be due more to the fact that Hizballah uses its force of arms to cajole political gains from otherwise unwitting political parties and elected officials in Lebanon, rather than due to a genuine endorsement of Hizballah’s policies and military campaigns against Israel, as suggested by Makdisi (2011).

I am inclined to favour Harel and Issacharoff’s assessment by way of reasoning that insofar as Lebanon has committed to “disarming” Hizballah on the condition of Israel withdrawing from the Shab’a Farms, even if the state backtracks on that commitment at some future juncture for pragmatic reasons, it indicates at the very least a cognitive differentiation between the Lebanese “state” and Hizballah, with the former

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“allowing” Hizballah to act as the “resistance” to Israel. This presumes that Lebanon could conceivably—even if unwisely for domestic-political reasons—withdraw this support and challenge Hizballah politically and militarily.

Aside from speculation, it would appear that since Hizballah has not been incorporated officially into the LAF, this further demonstrates an arms-length relationship where there is no complete trust, if at all, between the official state institutions of Lebanon and Hizballah. As such, it would appear that the study participants recognize this to be the case as well, and rightly consider Hizballah to be holding Lebanon’s political system hostage.

11.3.6 – Conflict is “Normal” and “Inevitable” in Israel

Participants unanimously expressed the fact that conflict, or the threat thereof, is “normal” in Israel. It is considered to be part of everyday reality, just like the rising and setting of the sun. Israelis recognize the necessity of military service, which is a right of passage for most Israeli citizens. The fact that attacks will, and do, occur at Israel’s frontiers—particularly northern and southern Israel—is a foregone conclusion. Moreover, the *inevitability* of conflict is taken for granted, as Israel is perceived to be surrounded by motivated enemies that possess an unbridled hatred for the country and its (Jewish) citizens.

This factor is important in that it conveys a predisposition that Israelis have to being “prepared” without letting the “security situation” dictate all aspects of life. Nevertheless, the impacts of conflict are omnipresent, in that buildings regularly have bomb shelters, major facilities such as schools, universities and hospitals practice

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bombing drills, and there is always the nagging feeling of “when will it happen?” Many participants mentioned how they felt a constant tension or anxiety while living in Israel. Some were able to specifically alleviate those feelings by visiting or emigrating to other countries. Several believed that this feeling of insecurity was a sufficient reason to move, especially as the security situation impacts intra-Israeli Jewish-Arab relations, business prospects, academic careers, family life, and so forth. Many feared death from terrorist attacks, or being killed during military service.

As such, while conflict was perceived to be “normal,” in reality it is anything but when relativized compared to other democratic countries. This was not lost on the participants, many of whom felt that living in the north is unsafe by outside standards. However, such a perspective was seen as more of a luxury in the way of thinking of people who live outside of Israel. In northern Israel particularly, due to the frequent cross-border attacks over the years, Israelis are regularly internally displaced due to Hizballah rocket attacks, as they seek refuge elsewhere in Israel. Some northerners carry weapons and serve in a civil defence force outside of their regular IDF service. Overall, it is clear that conflict is undoubtedly an everyday element of life in Israel, and something that must be accounted for on a daily basis.

11.3.7 – The IDF is Israel’s Best Guarantor for Security in the North

It is abundantly clear that participants—while generally supporting its continued presence—roundly rejected the utility of UNIFIL in its ability to achieve its mandated objectives, appreciating only its more auxiliary functions, including its liaison functions, among other minor tasks it carries out in its AO. All participants, to varying extents, felt

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that the IDF was a strong guarantor of security for northern Israel and expressed confidence in its capabilities.

However, some participants argued that even the meagre functions that UNIFIL does perform well are beneficial to the IDF, as it removes one additional task that the IDF would be required to do had UNIFIL not been deployed in the area. Others argue the opposite, suggesting that while UNIFIL acts as a buffer force between the antagonists, it serves to impede Israel's freedom of action when necessary. Additionally, even though the IDF was lauded as being the best-suited and most motivated actor in protecting Israel's northern frontier, no participant expected Israel do any more than it could, which *did not* include a complete cessation of hostilities or infiltration attempts across the Blue Line. All of the participants had very tempered expectations, which were characteristic of the "normalization" of the security situation in northern Israel (and elsewhere in the country).

What is interesting about this perspective is not that the IDF is better equipped than UNIFIL to respond to and prevent attacks, because this fact is not even denied by the UN itself. Instead, the idea that UNIFIL impedes Israeli freedom of movement is interesting, given that according to various SG reports, Israel conducts near-daily air incursions into Lebanese territory, and has done so for decades. While UNIFIL argues that these are counterproductive, and Israel retorts by suggesting that they are necessary to monitor arms smuggling, and the movements of and other militant organizations, in lieu of UNIFIL's inability to do so, the reality is that UNIFIL can do very little to stop Israel's freedom of movement.

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Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon in 1982, as well as limited invasions in the 1990s and the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War evidenced this. What such sentiments instead seem to reflect is an understanding that Israel has restrained itself—for one reason or another—from invading when some participants felt it would have been beneficial, specifically in confronting Hizballah. However, any such suggestion aside, UNIFIL is not able to prevent any Israeli military movements either on land, air, or sea.

11.3.8 – Participant Perspectives on the “Best Case Scenario” for Northern Israel

Participants were generally surprised by questions surrounding what the best-case scenario for Israel's north would be in an ideal situation. When asked, most participants had to stop and take a moment to consider their response. Most suggested that a best-case scenario would be a cessation of conflict, or less ambitious ideas including improved military capacity to deal with threats, and other pragmatic considerations. Ironically, only a handful of participants stated that the best-case scenario would be full diplomatic relations between Israel and Lebanon, with no conflict or prejudice, and the ability to travel freely back and forth between countries.

It appears that for many participants, the very prospect of a complete positive peace with Lebanon is so far from what is believed to be attainable, that this prospect did not enter their imagination when thinking of such a scenario. Again, for many northern Israelis, or those who have served in the north and/or in Lebanon, it would appear that the reality of the current situation limits this imagination, and is deemed too unworthy of consideration. We can therefore see what the impacts of long-term conflict can have on the psychological, social, and political well-being of those embroiled within its confines.

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11.3.9 – Self-Reinforcing Perspectives on UNIFIL

From the findings gathered through the course of the researcher’s interviews with the participants, a pattern of behaviour emerged whereby Israel’s “chronic security condition” (CSC), coupled with both Israeli perspectives of the UN, and of UNIFIL—which more often than not were aggregated together—combined to (re)produce the participants’ social reality concerning UNIFIL and their relationship to it. However, the opposite was true as well, insofar as the participants’ individual experiences, biases, exposure to Israeli, and other MSM, and perception of besiegement, among other factors, influenced their perspectives on Israel’s CSC, the UN, and UNIFIL. Illustrating this phenomenon is Figure 1 below.

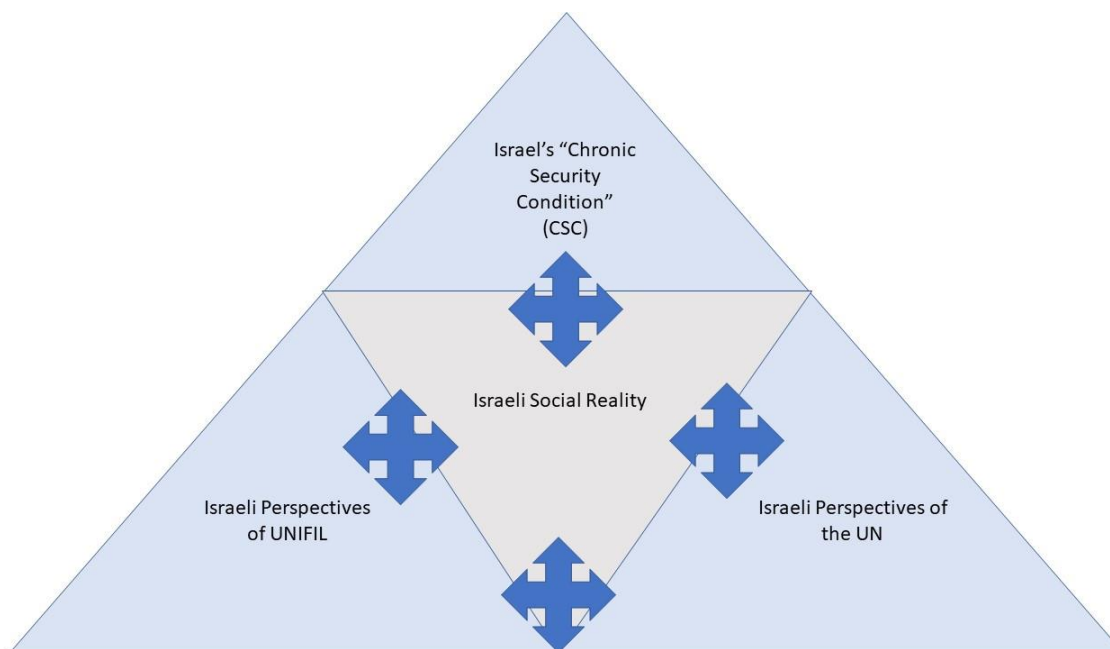


Figure 1: A Self-Reinforcing Feedback System of Context-Based Information.

Figure 1 above illustrates the way in which all four elements expressed in this model are influenced by each other. Participants with positive experiences tended to view UNIFIL more positively compared to those that had negative experiences, which

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subsequently influenced—even if only to a moderate degree—their respective perspectives on UNIFIL’s utility, how the UN functions, the prospects for peace and security in northern Israel, and so forth. While we have spoken about each element of this model in our discussion above, we briefly elucidate how these factors impact social reality for the participants, and its qualitative impacts.

11.3.10 - Israel’s ‘Chronic Security Condition’ (CSC)

At the apex of the pyramid is the theme of *Israel’s Chronic Security Condition* (CSC) which is a term coined here to refer to the set of emotions, reactions, and associated mindsets that were expressed by participants vis-à-vis Israel’s security situation, particularly—but not exclusively—in the north. As evidenced throughout the discussion of participant results, it became clear that most participants recognized that Israel’s northern frontier is highly volatile and insecure, even if Israelis have become used to living in such precarious circumstances.

Moreover, this CSC is therefore, “chronic,” borrowing from its medical connotation, insofar as the “security condition” of Israel is something to be “managed” and not “solved” from the perspective of most participants. While hope for an ideal and “positive peace” was expressed, it was not viewed as likely, or even the most viable solution to pursue given all contemporary considerations concerning Hizballah, which is perceived—rightly so against all available evidence—to be a total spoiler. This state of affairs mingles both perceived and actual reality together in contradictory ways, which nevertheless, inform the attitudes, ideas, and behaviours of the participants.

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For instance, all participants had either personal experience with, or had connections to someone who had, suffered the consequences of conflict in the north, either through military service or by consequence of attacks emanating from Israel's northern frontier with Lebanon. These experiences manifested in several ways depending on the participants, with certain participants holding several of the perspectives, or experiences, listed below simultaneously:

- Feeling generally unsafe;
- Fear of being killed or kidnapped by infiltrators;
- Wanting to emigrate for fear of safety;
- Feeling a constant “tension” or “anxiety” living in the country;
- Never knowing when the next attack is coming;
- Believing that conflict is “inevitable;”
- Not wanting children to serve in the IDF out of fear for their safety;
- The enemy is implacable;
- Israel is besieged by enemies;
- The world is largely antisemitic and anti-Israel;
- Having personally been affected by rocket attacks or border infiltrations;
- Having been personally attacked while serving in the IDF;
- Having to be armed while residing in northern Israel;
- Believing that the conflict is civilizational between “Western-oriented” Israel and “anti- or non-Western Arabs (particularly Muslims);” and,
- Israel is perpetually mobilized for war and/or safety (i.e., bomb shelters in many buildings; security drills in hospitals, etc.).

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The CSC phenomenon produces a dichotomy within Israeli society with both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, Israel enjoys the status of having some of the happiest citizens in the world, as the country overall is rated by the UN's 2018 *World Happiness Report* as the 11th happiest country on Earth (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, 2018). On the other hand, you have most northerners, and most Israelis who do not live in the north, recognizing that safety in Israel is "good" but only relative to their expectations. That is, compared to other democratic societies around the world, where constant warfare is not a daily issue, Israelis consider themselves to be generally safe, but recognize that they are not safe in accordance with a typically understood standard expected by most people in the Western world. In other words, the notion of "safety" in Israel comes with the expectation of "inevitable conflict" on some front, at one point or another. In sum, all things considered, Israelis see themselves as a besieged minority in the Middle East.

Moreover, decades of conflict and failed overtures for peace, from the Israeli perspective, have led to a pessimistic worldview surrounding the prospects for peace, or a cessation of conflict in the near, or even distant future. This is not to suggest that there is no merit in any expressed cynicism on the part of participants, but rather to suggest that this worldview, even if and when justified, feeds into the above-stated perspectives whereby a lack of hope is expressed that informs the outlook of most participants on the prospects for peace in the north, and of course, UNIFIL's role in achieving that peace.

What is more, is that the "bleakness" expressed is actually not solely pessimistic in that it does not breed resignation on the part of most participants. Most are resilient in their attitudes and have a high degree of confidence in Israel's ability to prevail against

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terrorism, again by “managing” the conflict as much as possible, both through the IDF and through diplomatic approaches. Therefore, and somewhat surprisingly, Israelis from the left to the right of the political spectrum differed little in their assessment of both Israel’s CSC, and their impressions of UNIFIL.

11.3.11 – Social Reality and Israeli Perspectives of UNIFIL

Given our understanding of participant perspectives of Israel’s CSC, participant impressions of UNIFIL tended to be primarily negative, but with a surprising caveat: the vast majority of participants believed that despite the PSO’s shortcomings, it was still better to retain UNIFIL’s presence than to relinquish it from the area. In sum, while participants differed in their knowledge of the PSO, their feelings regarding UNIFIL’s successes and failures in achieving its mandated objectives, and if and how UNIFIL would need to improve to meet their expectations, UNIFIL was still perceived to be—at the very least—a necessary evil in the area.

Overall, most participants felt that UNIFIL did not meaningfully contribute to preventing cross-border attacks against Israel, preventing Hizballah and other non-state entity militias from operating in its AO, or in assisting the LAF in extending its authority—and by extension, Lebanese sovereignty—to the south of Lebanon. The reasons attributed to these failures varied among the participants, with some holding several perceptions simultaneously, including:

- UNIFIL lacks the capacity to fulfill its mandate;
- UNIFIL lacks the will to fulfill its mandate;
- UNIFIL is broadly biased against Israel because most TCCs are anti-Israel;

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- UNIFIL is not motivated to carry out its duties;
- UNIFIL has no stake in the conflict;
- UNIFIL is too concerned with self-preservation, and avoids conflict whenever possible;
- UNIFIL is an extension of the UN, which is systemically biased against Israel;
- UNIFIL, like the UN, holds Israel to a double standard; and,
- UNIFIL allows Hizballah to strengthen militarily.

Most participants, including some with direct experience interacting with UNIFIL, did not have a precise understanding of UNIFIL's mandate, but gathered major elements of the PSO somewhat intuitively. However, at first, there were some generally counterintuitive perspectives on UNIFIL's performance when asked to express their initial thoughts or knowledge about the PSO. Some participants expressed positive elements of the mission, and believed that it was operating well, despite later expressing what they viewed as its shortcomings. Additionally, some of the shortcomings that were expressed, such as preventing cross-border attacks, were excused given that a few participants mistakenly believed this to not be part of UNIFIL's mandate. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, most participants ultimately attributed positive value to UNIFIL in spite of its shortcomings, and stated that:

- It is better to have some form of PSO rather than nothing along the border;
- They are trying as hard as they can given their constraints;
- Even merely reporting or observing is preferable to nothing;
- They act as a buffer between Israel and Hizballah;

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- They prevent Israel from needing to carry out more military operations than necessary; and,
- If UNIFIL fails, it at least justifies Israeli military actions, when necessary.

Therefore, participants appeared to be relatively fair-minded in their approach to UNIFIL, insofar as they intuitively recognized that UNIFIL, whether it is (un)willing and/or (un)able to fulfill its mandate, offers at least a modicum of strategic benefit to the State of Israel, both militarily and diplomatically. So there emerges a contradiction in the overall aggregate perspective of the participants: on the one hand, UNIFIL's utility is assessed on the basis of the above-stated points, even while on the other hand, it is widely recognized that UNIFIL *cannot* adequately prevent cross-border attacks against Israel, or even meaningfully confront Hizballah. However, as we have demonstrated, there is a logical consistency in this apparent contradiction.

However, few participants expressed a genuine belief that UNIFIL is the *best-suited* player to provide Israel with security. In that respect, the IDF was certainly viewed with a high degree of confidence by most participants, regardless of where they sat on the political spectrum, but participants did vary as to the expectations they had of UNIFIL which would make it of contributory utility to Israel's security pursuits.

Some felt that if UNIFIL had sufficient capacity, it could overcome any limitations in terms of motivation and/or concerns over self-preservation in confronting Hizballah. Others felt that UNIFIL's bias would always prejudice it against Israel, but it nevertheless serves as an existing—albeit flawed—buffer between Israel and Lebanon. However, none ultimately called for its absolute abolishment from the area, marking a significant recognition of at least its limited utility.

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Remarkably, the study provides examples both to UNIFIL's credit *and* detriment, with both tending to lead to a critique of UNIFIL, albeit to differing degrees. For instance, those with direct face-to-face experience with UNIFIL appreciated some of the more supportive, or even pro-Israel sentiments, expressed by particular contingents of UNIFIL. Others reported having good days and bad days with UNIFIL personnel, attributing it more to the proclivities of particular individuals that had to be dealt with from time to time.

Yet others provided scathing indictments of UNIFIL, providing testimony that could be interpreted as not only willingly allowing, or turning a blind eye to Hizballah, when they were operating in direct proximity to UNIFIL posts, including launching attacks against Israel, but arguing that the only benefit UNIFIL has provided to anyone in the area, is to Hizballah, either by providing them with a strategic buffer against Israeli retaliation, or by aiding and abetting them through the PSO's deliberate reluctance in enforcing the arms embargo in its AO.

Therefore, regardless of the severity of the critique levelled against UNIFIL, and notwithstanding the broad acceptance among participants of UNIFIL's value compared to the alternative, no participant expressed wholehearted trust in the PSO in fulfilling its mandate. In fact, it was a foregone conclusion that UNIFIL would not be able to fulfill its mandate, barring some dramatic military investment that would require the requisite motivation to fulfill its duties, which was believed to be a utopian hope. There was also a tacit understanding that if the IDF cannot cease the hostilities levied against it by Hizballah, then UNIFIL certainly cannot even approximate the necessary force required to undertake such an endeavour.

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However, most participants believed that for UNIFIL to enjoy a higher degree of legitimacy in the eyes of Israelis, it must at least undertake disarmament operations, or else face up to the criticism. To the credit of some participants, however, criticism was really levelled against the UN, because the UN was accused of devising machinations that deliberately keep UNIFIL's mandate weak and vague to accommodate regional players with competing interests; namely, the Iranians and the Syrians.

Ultimately, however, UNIFIL is viewed as ineffective in pursuing its mandate, with the possible exception of monitoring the cessation of hostilities, when applicable, observing and reporting on violations, performing liaison functions between Israel and the LAF, and carrying out its CIMIC and demining tasks in Lebanon. Importantly, however, with few exceptions, UNIFIL was viewed *synonymously* with the United Nations as a whole, which not only feeds into the participants' perception of UNIFIL as a consequence, but into the participants' perception of Israel's CSC, as well, in accordance with our illustrative model.

11.3.12 – Social Reality and Israeli Perspectives of the UN

Regarding participant perceptions of the UN as an institution, there was a remarkable degree of consensus in the belief that the UN is systemically biased against the State of Israel. However, the reasons for this bias varied from person to person, but were nevertheless a sentiment that was expressed without any equivocation, again—and significantly—across the political spectrum. The reasons given for the UN's bias against Israel varied among the participants, but they maintained at least one or a combination of the expressed reasons, which included:

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- A consistent voting pattern by Arab-Islamic countries that are hostile to Israel at the UNGA;
- Global antisemitism and anti-Zionism that manifests itself at various UN forums;
- Vestiges of Cold War politics where countries traditionally vote against Israel in accordance with the preferences of particular and more powerful state benefactors;
- Israel's lack of allies compared to its enemies, which amounts simply to an unfortunate numbers game at UN forums which are adverse to Israel's interests;
- Israel's failure to adequately communicate its legitimate security concerns; and
- Disproportionate critiques against Israel, even if some critiques are justified.

Interestingly, aside from one participant, the participant's did not seem to consider that Israeli policies, be it vis-à-vis the Palestinians, neighbouring Arab states, or some other consideration were sufficient grounds to account for this perceived UN bias against Israel. Moreover, the one participant that did mention this possibility qualified their belief by suggesting that even when considering any legitimate critiques against Israeli policy—in their case, referencing the conflict with the Palestinians—the degree of the UN's critique was still unfair and disproportionate. Thus, we see a remarkable consensus among participants regarding the perception that the UN—as an institution—is broadly biased against Israel. Additionally, for most participants, the UN and UNIFIL were seen as synonymous. For instance, many participants would lament the UN's voting record on a tangential note that began with a discussion specifically surrounding UNIFIL.

While it is true that UNIFIL and the UN cannot be separated from each other entirely, the political forums of the UN—while responsible for the creation, mandating, and

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maintenance of PSOs around the world, including UNIFIL—have a different “global” perspective than is likely to be the case with UNIFIL contingents, or even TCCs, which often are motivated by far more local, and even “national” concerns, as discussed earlier in this study. Nevertheless, participants did not parse these specific differences since they are either unknowns or viewed as immaterial in the grand scheme of things, while in other instances, it would appear that the equivocation between the UN and UNIFIL is justified on the basis of specific experiences.

A separate theme that emerged along this vein is the UN’s disproportionate focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Often when discussing UNIFIL, or the conflict with Hizballah, the conversations with participants veered towards both *that* specific context, but also the conflict with the Palestinians (and even some mention of intra-Israeli Jewish-Arab discord). This again, demonstrated a “civilizational approach” where conflict with Israel’s Arab neighbours is viewed as various fronts of the same “war.” Not all participants expressed this sentiment, but many did to the point where it became a probing question in order to determine the participant’s worldview.

Several participants acknowledged a widespread anti-UN bias in Israeli society that is reflected not only in the general social discourse of the country, but also expressed on Israeli television news programmes, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and so forth. Israeli society is very forthright in its critique of the UN, and feelings of victimization by the UNSC, UNHRC, and UNGA in particular. In fact, on January 1, 2019, Israel, alongside the United States, announced its official withdrawal from the United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), protesting the organization’s perceived bias against Israel (Ahren, 2019) In sum, the UN was viewed with disdain by most

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participants, and viewed as systemically biased, even if not by intent, than in effect. Those with a more charitable view of the UN, still believed that there is indeed a bias against Israel all the same, resulting in a broad consensus on this perspective.

Is it therefore, quite observable that the perceptions of Israelis—whether or not they accord with reality—inform their perspective on the UN, UNIFIL, and Israel’s security situation, which then serves to reinforce those very perspectives unless challenged by contrary evidence. This understanding has implications for how UNIFIL is perceived independently of its actual (in)actions, but which has been built upon both real and perceived failures in the field. As this has translated to the UN, coupled with the longstanding resentment many Israelis hold towards the UN, only serves to further ossify perspectives reinforcing beliefs surrounding Israel’s diplomatic status, security situation, and the efficacy and degree of bias expressed of both the UN, and UNIFIL, which we have seen has significant influence on belief and behaviour for participants.

11.4 – Limitations

Considering the study’s limitations, several elements could be improved to expand on future research. First, given that only 20 people were interviewed for this study, there was no representative sample size by which to garner a more accurate reflection of an eligible pool of participants. While I was limited in terms of time and resources to carry out such a large study, it would have strengthened the findings to have a more representative sample size.

Second, the study did not secure the perspectives of non-Jewish Israeli citizens, which may (or may not) have added a unique level of nuance and refinement to the data

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collected, particularly regarding some of the findings expressed by participants that came from a specifically Jewish-oriented perspective (i.e., discussions of intra-Israeli Jewish-Arab discord). Moreover, given that most Israeli Arabs live in Israel's Northern District, and some have family links to Lebanon and Syria, it is very possible that this population would have unique insights into UNIFIL's performance.

Third, while initially UNIFIL personnel were sought out to participate in the study, it was difficult to recruit active UNIFIL, or even IDF, personnel as the sources that were approached were unable to speak while still serving in their military capacity. Moreover, due to time constraints, it was difficult to seek out former personnel to participate in the study. I should note, however, that in retrospect this may have been beneficial to the study, as it narrowed the focus to a unique cohort—Israeli participants—that have otherwise not had their perspectives expressed on this topic. There have been studies on UNIFIL perspectives already conducted (Calculli, 2014; Ruffa, 2008, 2014; Sakr, 2013), so this may not have been as limiting as previously thought.

11.5 – Future Research

To date, there has been no rigorous study of the perspectives of Israelis having lived in northern Israel, or having served in northern Israel and/or in Lebanon, regarding the performance of UNIFIL. As such, this exploratory study is designed to be a first step towards further research on this topic, but it is by definition deficient due to the dearth of the available literature that could be drawn upon on this topic. Therefore, to buttress this foundational study, future research on the matter may include several focuses.

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First, a comparative exploration of Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Jewish perspectives on the security situation in Israel's north, and UNIFIL's contribution to protecting Israel's borders would be ideal. Israel's Arab minority is concentrated predominantly in the country's Northern District, and is religiously diverse. While they undoubtedly bear the same consequences as the Jewish residents of the region, given their minority status in the country, coupled with uneven socioeconomic development in the country, they may readily have different perspectives on the conflict that are worth exploring.

Second, as there is a need to offer UN PSOs—being the most widely recognized and respected peacekeeping institution in the world—theoretical and practical options to improve the delivery and execution of PSOs around the world, including UNIFIL, future research should be directed towards meaningful PSO doctrine development. For instance, exploring options for Israelis and Lebanese citizens to inform UNIFIL-specific PSO doctrines, would be particularly interesting. This could act as a corollary to future research that emphasizes the need for mission-specific doctrines versus broad and overly generalized doctrines that do not universally apply realistically to PSOs around the world. It is my hope that this study can add at least a modicum of momentum in such a direction, especially as universalized PSO doctrines have been seen to be problematic when applied to very case-specific conflict scenarios.

Finally, given that only 5 out of the 20 participants in the study were women, a gender-specific, or possibly gender-parity study could potentially yield interesting results on Israeli perspectives on UNIFIL, and may generate unique findings. While this study did not find appreciable differences that could be accounted for on the basis of sex or

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gender, with a large enough pool of candidates, different trends could possibly emerge, especially if the SGT methodology is utilized in subsequent studies.

The road to future research may include many paths, but it is my hope that future inquiry on UNIFIL will take into account the Israeli perspective as well, as the consequences borne out by Israelis in the ongoing conflict along the Blue Line merits deeper and more serious attention, for the benefit of both UNIFIL, Israelis, Lebanese, and UN PSOs around the world.

11.6 – Conclusion

This study sought to explore a hitherto unexplored, yet simple question: What are the perspectives of the Israeli civilian and military personnel populations regarding UNIFIL's performance between 1978-2017, and how can this data be used to inform positive change within UNIFIL? The importance of the question was rooted in the fact that UNIFIL has been operating on Israel's doorstep for some four decades, but no research has taken place exploring how a population affected by the operation feels about its function, consequences, and impacts.

To remedy this gap in the literature, the study employed a qualitative research model, based on Systematic Ground Theory (SGT), in-depth semi-structured interviews, and triangulation with available literature on peacekeeping and peacebuilding theory, Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) literature on conflict resolution, evaluation theories, and a variety of other rigorous forms of inquiry to seek an answer to this question. Moreover, the study explored the UN's own perspective on UNIFIL, examining decades of official UN reports on the PSO, in order to better understand the mission from the

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perspective of the body that commissioned, and continues to commission it to this day. The findings provided demonstrate a unique and rich set of perspectives that were informed by subjective experiences that relayed real-world impacts and effects on people's lives.

For the first time, as an exploration of the topic, the study offered a glimpse into how Israelis feel, react, consider, and behave in accordance with their personal attitudes towards security in northern Israel, and the impact UNIFIL has had on Israel's northern security. It is my hope that future research will delve deeper into this question and go beyond a relaying of the perspectives of Israelis affected by conflict in northern Israel, but rather, to begin seeking ways to improve the situation armed with at least a modest initial inquiry into this novel subject. Furthermore, I am optimistic that the lessons derived from such inquiries can be of benefit not only in consideration of UNIFIL, but to UN PSOs around the world, as the lessons drawn from this examination of UNIFIL can be applied towards the betterment of other PSOs around the globe.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Invitation to Participate in StudyUNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

November 15, 2017

Title of Study: In the Eyes of the Beholders: Assessing Israeli Stakeholder Perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) between 1978-2017

Principal Investigator: Ran Ukashi, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Manitoba

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Sean Byrne, Director, Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, University of Manitoba

Dear NAME,

I, Ran Ukashi, am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Faculty of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. I am inviting you to participate in a research study which will explore Israeli stakeholder perspectives on UNIFIL's performance since its creation in 1978. The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Sean Byrne, Sean.Byrne@umanitoba.ca, Director of the Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice at the University of Manitoba (204-474-7979). The title of my research is *In the Eyes of the Beholders: Assessing Israeli Stakeholder Perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) between 1978-2017*. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to:

- Sign a consent form
- Complete a brief demographic survey (approximately 5 minutes)
- Participate in an audio-recorded, semi-structured interview (approximately one 1-2 hours)
- Review and provide feedback regarding your interview, if you choose. All feedback will be immediately accepted and incorporated into the analysis process (approximately 30 minutes).
- Review and provide feedback on preliminary research findings, if you choose (approximately 30 minutes).

Additionally, immediately following your interview, you will receive a feedback form with more information about the project, as well as the PI's, and advisor's contact

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information should you have any questions, comments, or concerns. All feedback will be accepted and incorporated into the analysis process. To participate in the study, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Have lived in Israel's "Northern District" at any point since March 19, 1978;
- Have served, or are serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) along the Israel-Lebanon border or within Lebanon itself at any point since March 19, 1978.
- Have served, or are serving with UNIFIL in any capacity since March 19, 1978.

Your participation in this study is entirely confidential and voluntary, and will require the signing of a consent form to be provided should you respond to this invitation. The consent form will clarify all of your rights, and the responsibilities of the PI throughout the conduct of the study. Accordingly, this research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If at any point, you have any ethical concerns about this project you may contact the university's Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122, or by email at humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

I thank you very much for your interest and look forward to your participation. If you choose to accept this invitation, please respond to this email at your earliest convenience, and I will arrange a preliminary interview to discuss the study's objectives and answer any and all questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ran Ukashi
Ph.D. Candidate, Peace and Conflict Studies
University of Manitoba

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Appendix 2. Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

**Faculty of Peace and Conflict
Studies**

St. Paul's College, 70 Dysart
Road
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-7273
Fax (204) 474-8828

Research Project Title: In the Eyes of the Beholders: Assessing Israeli Stakeholder Perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) between 1978-2017.

Principal Investigator: Ran Ukashi, umukashr@myumanitoba.ca, Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Peace and Conflict Studies.

Research Supervisor: Dr. Sean Byrne, Sean.Byrne@umanitoba.ca, Director, Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This study examines Israeli stakeholder perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) – a longstanding UN peacekeeping operation operating along the Israel-Lebanon border, and within southern Lebanon – specifically from those Israeli citizens that have either resided within Israel's "Northern District;" served, or are currently serving with the Israel Defense Forces along the border, or within Lebanon, at any point between March 19, 1978 and 2017; or have served, or are serving in any capacity with UNIFIL since March 19, 1978.

This study is exploratory in nature and aims to fill a gap in the literature regarding Israeli perspectives on the mission's operation and effectiveness over the years. The data gathered from participants is intended to allow for open-ended Israeli perspectives on the matter, so as to identify particular themes and trends that will emerge from carrying out many interviews with a diverse set of Israeli citizens and other stakeholders. The data is meant to supplement existing information on UNIFIL, in order to provide new and in-depth knowledge on the matter. The Principal Investigator (PI) of this study is Ran Ukashi, a Ph.D. Candidate in the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Peace and Conflict Studies, under the supervision of the faculty's director, Dr. Sean Byrne. The PI has

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completed the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics*.

The participation criteria for this study requires that all participants are at least 18 years of age, and have either: (1) lived in Israel's Northern District" at any point since March 19, 1978; (2) served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) along the Israel-Lebanon border, or within Lebanon at any point since March 19, 1978; or have served, or are serving with UNIFIL in any capacity since March 19, 1978. Participants will be asked to engage in semi-structured interviews lasting between one-to-two hours in duration. Preliminary interviews will be set up as well in order to answer any questions or concerns participants may have, prior to engaging in the formal interview process. The interviews will be recorded using the audio record function of an iPad Air Tablet device. All participation is confidential, and the use of pseudonyms will be employed for all participants. Additionally, should any information of a particular event directly expose the identity of a specific individual, a summation of ideas will be utilized instead to guarantee participant confidentiality. The information gathered will be secured as an encrypted file, on a computer that will be stored in a locked location, accessible only to the PI and the thesis committee, until the completion of the study. While the researcher will do everything possible to maintain participant confidentiality, there is a small risk that participants could identify other participants' based on the experiences and perspectives shared.

The study will involve discussions with participants regarding potentially difficult topics, including but not limited to, topics surrounding their participation in military operations, and/or the experience of conflicts overall as either military personnel or civilians. As such, should any counselling services be required by participants, at their own request, the researcher will provide them with available psychosocial resources within their area.

Following the completion of the data collection for this study, participants will be debriefed, and provided with a feedback form. Participants will be permitted to offer their comments, questions, and concerns, which will be used to verify the information and ensure its accuracy. Within 30 days of the completion of the study (June 2019), a brief summary (1-3 pages) of the findings will be provided to all participants through a medium of their choosing (e.g., email or via post). All confidential data gathered from participants will be destroyed following the dissemination of the findings no later than March 31, 2021.

If participants wish, they may refer participants to participate in this study. Participants may refer other potential participants by sharing the investigator's contact information with potential participants.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Should you choose to withdraw from the study at any point, and for any reason, you may do so verbally, or in writing. Additionally, should you wish to participate in the study, but choose not to answer a particular question(s), you are free to do so. Withdrawal from the study, or refusal to answer particular question(s), carries no negative consequences for the participants

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whatsoever. No information gathered by participants who wish to withdraw will be used without their written consent.

No reader will be able to determine the identities of participants. The demographic information provided will be obscured within any publications. The demographic information will be aggregated so that the reader can know participants' background as a whole, but this information will not be included in the body of any paper along with individual information. Nowhere in the text of any publication will participants' information be shared in such a way that their identity could be identified.

In the results section, where I will describe participant demographic information, I may include the following information: a statement of the number of individuals of certain backgrounds, age groups, military ranks (assuming no individual rank is singled out, if so I will abstain from including this rank), years of service, and the number of military personnel versus civilians.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way. This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

I give permission for this interview to be audio-recorded.

Participant's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Researcher's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Request for Copy of Transcript:

I am interested in seeing a copy of my transcribed interview, as well as summary of demographic information. I would like Ran Ukashi to send me a copy of this to me shortly after it has been transcribed. I will expect it to be ready approximately one month after my interview. I will be able to comment on the transcript for accuracy and to provide additional information, if necessary, within (approximately) 30 days from when I received my copy.

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- I would prefer NOT to receive an interview transcript.
- I prefer to receive my interview transcript via email: address
- I prefer to receive my interview transcript hard copy: address

Request for Copy of Preliminary Findings:

I would be willing to look at the preliminary findings from this report and to discuss my impressions with Ran Ukashi. I understand that Ran is interested in knowing whether his findings adequately reflect the experience of the participants (as a whole).

- I prefer to NOT to receive a summary of the findings.
- I prefer to receive my summary of the findings via e-mail: address
- I prefer to receive my summary of the finding via hard copy: address

I have read and understood the above, and I agree to participate in this project.

Participant's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Researcher's Signature _____ **Date** _____

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Appendix 3. Participant Questionnaire**Participant Questionnaire**

Please circle the answer that best describes you.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>
<u>Options</u>	
1. What is your sex?	Male Female Transgender Prefer not to answer
2. What is your age?	18-25 26-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 or over
3. What is your religion?	Jewish Muslim Christian Druze Samaritan Other: <hr/> Prefer not to answer
4. What is your ethnic background? (Circle all that apply)	Ashkenazi Sephardic Mizrahi Arab Palestinian Bedouin Druze Circassian Ethiopian Russian Other: <hr/> Prefer not to answer

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5. What is the highest level of education you have attained? Primary School
 Secondary School
 Technical College
 Undergraduate
 Graduate
 Doctoral
 Seminary Ordination
 Other: _____
 Prefer not to answer
6. What is your current place of residence (please state municipality and country)?
7. If you served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), please answer the following:
- Year of enlistment: _____
 - Years of service: _____
 - Military unit(s): _____
 - Rank at time of discharge: _____
8. If you have served with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), please answer the following:
- Years of enlistment: _____
 - Years of service: _____
 - Capacity (Please select all that apply):
 - Civilian Personnel, Lebanon
 - Military Personnel, Lebanon
 - Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York, USA
 - Department of Field Support, New York, USA
 - Please describe your role in any of the above capacities:

9. If applicable, where in northern Israel and/or Lebanon did you serve with the IDF?
 (Please also state length of time in years)
10. If applicable, where in northern Israel have you lived? (Please also state length of
 time in years).

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Appendix 4. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

- Beginning of Interview -

Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening,

Thank you for your participation. My name is Ran Ukashi, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. My doctoral study, in which you are a participant, seeks to explore Israeli and UNIFIL personnel perspectives on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)'s performance since its creation in 1978 until the contemporary period. This study is the first of its kind in terms of gathering the perspectives of Israeli citizens who have lived, are serving, or have served militarily in proximity to the Israel-Lebanon border, and Lebanon itself since UNIFIL was first deployed to the region.

Of note, the data from this interview will generate the first ever study examining how Israelis perceive UNIFIL, and what their experiences have been living in Israel's Northern District since UNIFIL was deployed with a partial mandate to prevent cross-border hostilities between the two countries. The research findings of this study will fill a gap in the available literature on the topic that will hopefully spur future research addressing Israeli perspectives on the subject.

This interview will take approximately one (1) hour to complete, but can be extended to two (2) hours if time permits. After the interview, you will be given a feedback form that will allow you to provide feedback or ask questions at any point, of myself. You will also be given the option of reviewing the forthcoming transcription of this interview, as well as the preliminary findings once they become available at the end of the research phase of this study, and provide any feedback. Your feedback will be immediately incorporated into the transcripts to ensure that what you convey to me in this interview is as accurate and reflective of your perspectives as possible.

I would also like to reiterate that participation in this study is voluntary up until the point of the final publication of the research findings. You can therefore withdraw at any point and for any reason without prejudice or consequence. You can omit any information you feel uncomfortable sharing, or refuse any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. Further, should you wish to withdraw from the study, you will be asked simply to express this either verbally, or in writing, and your withdrawal will be effective immediately. Your information will not be used unless you provide written permission that your withdrawal does not impact the use of the information you have provided. Otherwise, it will be assumed that your withdrawal includes the dismissal of the information you have provided. Again, you can withdraw at any time, and for any reason, up until the publication of the research findings.

Your confidentiality and anonymity will be safeguarded through the use of pseudonyms, and the removal of identifying information from the transcripts. Again, you will have the option of reviewing these transcripts so that you can contribute to the safeguarding of this

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information as well. Quotes from this interview may be used in the findings section, but those quotes will have identifying information removed. Additionally, quotes which could directly link you to particular events or circumstances may be expressed as a summation of ideas, using neutral terms in order to obfuscate your identity.

Finally, you have the right to ask questions about the project, explore your rights as a research participant, or seek clarification at any point during the interview, or afterwards.

One further point, the questions I will be asking here are designed to spur your personal recall and experiences of events. From your answers, other questions will emerge, which will vary from person to person – since no two people have the same experiences – but will still remain focused on the central research question we are looking to answer. These questions are just a guide, and you can feel free to answer as you please, and include as much or as little detail as you feel gets your point across.

With that, assuming you are comfortable with these terms, we can begin the interview.

1. Please share your thoughts regarding the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
2. Please tell me about your experience in whichever of these apply:
 - a. Serving in Lebanon with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF);
 - b. Serving along the Israel-Lebanon border with the IDF;
 - c. Living in Israel's "Northern District" during any of the conflicts with Lebanese militia organizations as a civilian;
 - d. Serving with UNIFIL.
3. If applicable, please describe your experiences with UNIFIL.
4. What, if anything, should UNIFIL be doing differently?
5. What is your perspective on UNIFIL's strengths and challenges?
6. Who would you recommend I speak with to better understand UNIFIL's performance?

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Appendix 5. Participant Feedback Form**Participant Feedback Form**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.

This study explores Israeli stakeholder and UNIFIL personnel perspectives on the performance of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) between 1978 and 2017, and as such, your personal insights and experiences are invaluable to this end.

I invite you to freely share any and all feedback you may have, including questions, critiques, or any comments you feel would aid me in pursuing my research aim, or additional information you feel is pertinent to the study. All feedback provided will be incorporated into the study, and will safeguard any and all confidential information provided.

Additionally, towards the end of the study, you will be provided with a preliminary copy of the research findings prior to its publication, and afforded a final opportunity to provide additional feedback, if you so wish.

Should you have any questions, concerns or additional feedback, please feel free to contact me at any time. My email address is umukashr@myumanitoba.ca.

Sincerely,

Ran Ukashi