The Occupation Era: UNIFIL reporting

UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) the multi-national force deployed in Southern Lebanon since 1978, submits reports on its work to the UN Security Council. These reports document detailed activities with extensive conflict data and maps throughout the occupation era. The reports also provide a glimpse at the variety of circumstances in which civilians were killed and injured within the occupied zone's UNIFIL area of operation (only), which overlapped to varying degrees with territory referred to as the "Israeli-controlled area" or "ICA."

As these reports were filed by international military personnel serving in the very midst of the conflict, their data can be viewed as credible and authoritative. Objectivity, if limited, is perhaps (given the undeniable influence of the US on the UN) skewed in favour of the Israeli forces. UNIFIL reports are available at http://unbisnet.un.org by entering the document reference number, as noted below. You are highly encouraged to read them carefully in order to observe the hands-on reporting of the occupation and resistance. A photo gallery dating back to 1948 (with the influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon) is available online.
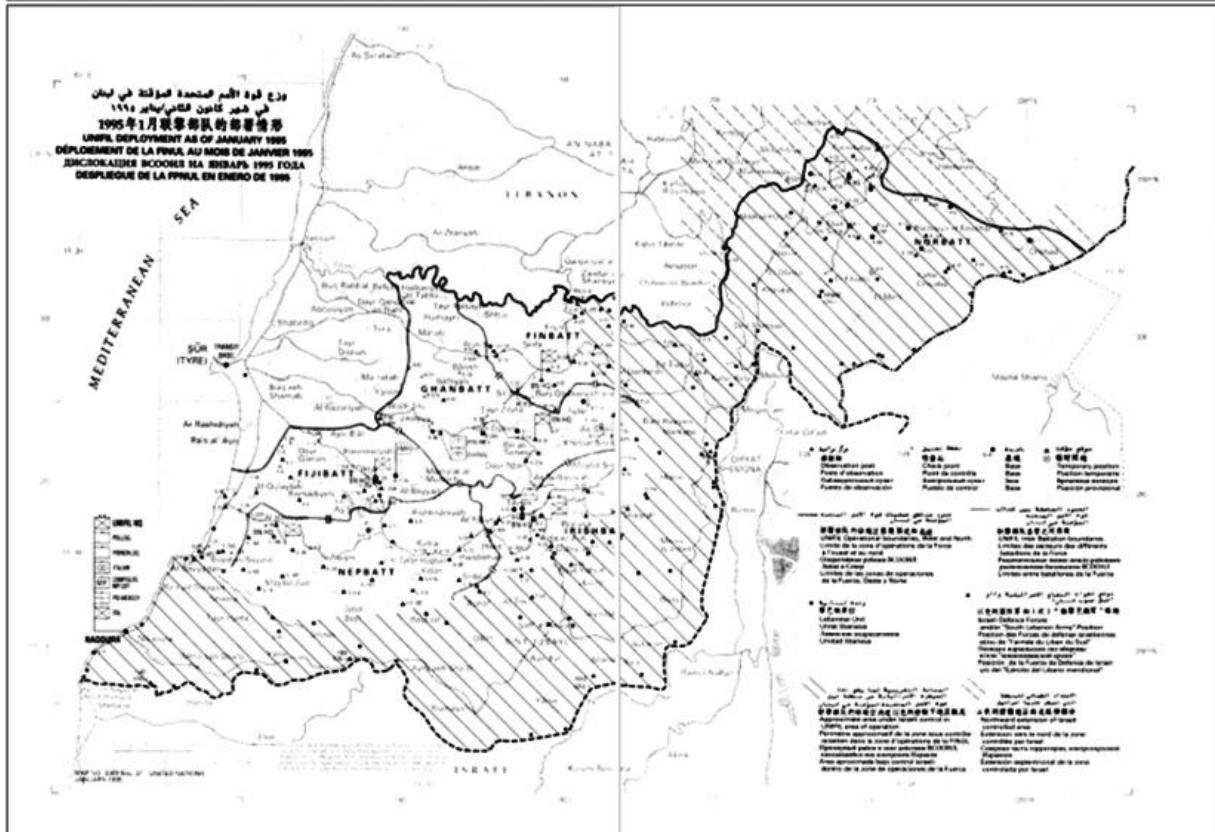
UNIFIL consistently reports violent, intimidating conflict: house demolitions, expulsions, abductions, arrests, enforced recruitment into the SLA, unprovoked and indiscriminate shelling and artillery fire. In addition to extensive data on military operations, you will also discover facts that have seldom if ever been reported in popular media, for example the forging of Israeli civil administration (licenses, taxes, vital certificates and so on) and security services (police and customs) in the occupied territories, a fact which substantiates the intent to absorb these communities as Israeli.

The following excerpt is a sample description within a UNIFIL Report, this from the period of 21 July 1994—20 January 1995; the map shows Israeli occupation extending northward up to Ouardiye, eastward beyond Shebaa to the eastern border.

<u>Situation in the area of operation</u>

12. Israel continued to control in southern Lebanon an area manned by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the de facto forces (DFF), the so-called "South Lebanon Army". The boundaries of the Israeli-controlled area (ICA) have not been clearly defined but are determined de facto by the forward positions of IDF/DFF. It includes territory adjacent to the armistice demarcation line, parts of the Fijian, Nepalese, Irish, Ghanaian and Finnish battalion sectors and the entire Norwegian battalion sector, as well as sizeable areas to the north of UNIFIL's area of operation. Within the area of operation, IDF/DFF manned 69 military positions, as shown on the annexed map. The map also indicates where ICA extends beyond the limits of UNIFIL's area of operation.

13. Within the ICA, Israel maintained, in addition to DDF, a civil administration and a security service. Movement between the ICA and the rest of Lebanon was strictly controlled; crossings were closed frequently. The ICA remained economically dependent on Israel. An estimated 3,000 jobs in Israel were held by Lebanese from the ICA. Access to such jobs was controlled by DFF and the security services. There were again reports of forced recruitment to DFF, including the recruitment of persons under the age of 18.

The following are random examples of specific illustrations of the occupation era. Consider, for instance, UNIFIL's reported abuse of civilians in 1995:

> "During the month of November, IDF/DFF demolished around 20 civilian house in Bayt Yahun village, located in the ICA where it overlaps with the Irish battalion sector. The occupants of the destroyed houses, generally elderly people left behind to care for the properties, were compelled to vacate their homes at short notice, and in some cases houses were demolished with personal

effects still in them. Those who were thus made homeless sought shelter in abandoned buildings in other parts of the village, where they live under very difficult conditions, in some cases sharing their quarters with livestock. UNIFIL has protested this matter to the Israeli authorities. Since November, a few families living in Rshaf, near the south-western corner of the Irish battalion sector, have been forced by IDF/DFF to spend the nights in abandoned houses near an IDF/DFF position in another part of the village, evidently to shield that position from attacks. After consulting with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNIFIL raised this matter with the Israeli authorities, with a view to having them end this practice, which is in contravention of international humanitarian law." (S/1996/45)

Or this from earlier in 1995:
"On 8 July, an IDF tank fired fléchette anti-personnel shells towards a house in Nabatiyeh Fawqa, killing three children and wounding four others. The next day, rockets were fired into Israel; no damage or casualties were reported." (S/1996/575)

Or this from 1993:
"During the [six-month] reporting period, there were 242 instances of firing by IDF/DFF at or close to UNIFIL positions. This is an increase of 67 over the number mentioned in my previous report. A number of firings were unprovoked from any source but the purpose of the firings was clearly directed close to UNIFIL positions. Deliberate firing close to the Force's positions has been the subject of frequent protests to the Israeli authorities." (S/25150)

Or this from 1992:
"In responding to such [resistance] attacks or initiating action themselves, IDF/DFF employed artillery, mortars and tanks. Frequently, they fired into villages. Majdal Silm (6 and 19 February, 10 and 11 March), Ghanduriyah (13 February), Qabrikha (9 February, 11 March), Kafra (20 February), Tallusah (10 March), Frun (18 June, 18 July) and Yatar (13 July) were targets of such firing. On 11 March following the death of a member of the DFF in a roadside bomb explosion, UNIFIL observed seven villagers being forced to walk in front of a DFF mine/bomb-clearing patrol between Tallusah and a DFF position, both just outside the Irish battalion sector." (S/24341)

Or this from 1991:
"In a particularly tragic incident on 19 November 1991, IDF/DFF made an incursion into the UNIFIL area at Majdal Silm; they kidnapped four men and demolished two houses, injuring two women and three children; a 10-year-old girl who pleaded with the DFF personnel not to abduct her father was shot dead." (S/23255)

Or this from 1986:
"IDF and SLA personnel fired frequently from their positions in the 'security zone'. In a number of cases fire was directed at civilians travelling along roads or working in fields. On 10 May, IDF in their position overlooking the Akiya bridge fired two tank rounds at two pedestrians on the road to Frun, killing one and wounding the other. On 13 May a farmer was killed by small arms fired from an IDF position north-west of Shama. On 9 June, nine tank rounds were fired from the IDF position northwest of Shama, killing a man and two girls who were walking at a distance of about 1,500 metres from the IDF position. Three more civilians were wounded in the same incident." (S/18164)

Or this from 1984:

"There were a number of incidents when IDF, entering villages to search and arrest, were violently resisted by local inhabitants. IDF reacted at times by firing, which resulted in casualties. A serious confrontation occurred at Marakah on 12 May 1984, in which IDF fired shots and used tear gas. One girl was shot and injured and evacuated to the UNIFIL hospital for treatment. On 11 June, Israeli personnel in civilian clothes and driving civilian cars enterd Burj Rahal and opened fire when the villagers demonstrated against their presence. One man was killed and another wounded. On 27 June, IDF entered Marakah firing shots and began demolishing houses. During this incident four local inhabitants were injured; 119 men were arrested. Similar incidents occurred in other villages." (S/16776)

Or this from 1980:
"On 18 August, UNIFIL reported a marked increase in the presence of troops and vehicles of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) throughtout the enclave and in particular in the area of Al Khiam. At about 2015 hours on 18 August, the IDF and the de facto forces (Christian and allied militias) started shelling Beaufort Castle and the surrounding areas; this shelling continued until about 0400 hours on 19 August and about 700 rounds of artillery were fired. At about 0230 hours on 19 August, six IDF jets dropped about 12 bombs on Beaufort Castle. Whilst the shelling and bombing were in progress about 200 IDF troops conducted an operation in the area of the villages of Arnun and Kafr Tibnit. As soon as the Commander of UNIFIL learned of the attack, he protested to the Israeli authorities. . . . At 0515 hours on 19 August the IDF and de facto forces resumed shelling of the Beaufort Castle and Arnun areas north of the Litani. . . . On 20 August, between 1130 and 1330 hours, 32 IDF jet aircraft dropped a total of 180 bombs in the Beaufort Castle, Yuhmur, Arnun, Kafr Tibnit and Kafr Rumman areas. About 250 rounds of artillery were fired by IDF/DFF between 1000 hours and 1200 hours on targets in the Arnun and Beaufort Castle areas. . . . " (S/14118)

Or this from 1979:
"A practice resorted to by the de facto forces with increasing frequency is the kidnaping of civilians inside the UNIFIL area of deployment, as well as threats to villages, especially in the Irish and Dutch battalion areas. In a typical recent incident, leaders of six villages were summoned to meet a representative of the de facto forces on 27 November. They were served with an ultimatum to sign, by 2 December, a document calling for the withdrawal of UNIFIL from certain of the villages. An Israeli Defence Force (IDF) officer was present during part of the meeting. On 4 December, the village of Yatar was shelled, resulting in the destruction of a house and the wounding of a small girl. Again, on 7 December, leaders of the same six villages received a letter from Major Haddad [leader of SLA], summoning them, under threat of force, to meet him, with a view to discussing arrangements for their joining his 'Free Lebanon'. In the event, the village leaders refused to meet Haddad and asked instead for UNIFIL protection, as did the Government of Lebanon. In that connexion, UNIFIL reinforced its presence in the area and was in immediate contact with all concerned, urging restraint. Despite those efforts, on 8 December, the de facto forces subjected the villages of Haddathah, Tibnin, Haris and Yatar to mortar fire, which resulted in the wounding of four civilians, one of them seriously." (S/13691)

Or this from earlier in 1979:
"On several occasions, Israeli forces, alone or accompanied by de facto forces, undertook incursions into the UNIFIL area. . . . On 17 August, Israeli soldiers entered the village of Shaqra in the Irish battalion area of operation and demolished two houses. On 20 August, approximately 30 IDF personnel penetrated to a depth of 200 metres into the Norwegian area of operations in

the vicinity of Kafar Chouba. They were intercepted and stopped by UNIFIL and, following negotiations, they withdrew. On 22 August, a force of about 50 IDF soldiers made an incursion into the village of Brashit in the Irish area of operation, destroying two houses. When an Irish patrol attempted to halt the incursion, some IDF elements fired at the patrol. On 13 September, there was an incursion carried out by approximately 13 IDF soldiers west of the village of Chebaa in the Norwegian area of operation. As regards the area controlled by the de facto forces, IDF personnel were frequently observed crossing into Lebanese territory." (S/13691)

Or this from 1978:
"There have been a few cases of firing at or near UNIFIL positions in the eastern part of the eastern sector from positions of the Israel Defence Force on Israeli-occupied Syrian territory. Also on 27 December, the village of Chebaa came under machine-gun fire from such a position. . . . On 31 December two Israeli patrol boats fired at locations in the sothern end of the Tyre pocket, using rockets and heavy machine-guns. . . . On a number of occasions, UNIFIL has observed the presence of Israeli military personnel on Lebanese territory, either alone or together with elements of the Lebanese de facto armed groups. In addition to the instance of mine-laying described in my interim report (S/12929, para. 12), Israel Defence Force personnel has been seen manning checkpoints and positions, transporting water and supplies, constructing positions, observing the impact of shelling across the Litani River etc." (S/13026)

The terminology used by UNIFIL throughout the occupation era is noteworthy. Opposition to Israeli and SLA forces ("de facto forces" or "DDF") is consistently referred to as "resistance" to an "occupation." Reference in reports prior to 1993 is consistently made to "Lebanese resistance groups" or "armed elements/armed resistance groups," with occasional designation of "the PLO," or "Palestinian groups," or "the Shiite organization, Amal." After 1993, the stock phrase becomes "armed elements who have proclaimed their resistance against the Israeli occupation." Resistance work continues to be attributable to many groups, with "Hizbullah" first mentioned in 1996. Other groups then continue to be noted as carrying out resistance work as well. UNIFIL does not use the pejorative terms discussed in Chapter 9 of *Outsider's Inside View*, but consistently refers to these entities as "fighters," "armed elements" and "resistance groups."

The reports provide a narrative of occupation within UNIFIL maintained areas; the reports confim that additional territory outside of UNIFIL jurisdiction was also controlled by Israeli military. Early reports do not as routinely tally civilian deaths as do the reports later into the occupation era. Many reports allude to unspecified casualties and describe only the "more serious incidents." These figures do not take into account those (1) who were abducted and subsequently disappeared, (2) who died while incarcerated in Israeli prisons, or (3) who died of mundane causes that proved fatal due to the severe restrictions of the occupation.

UNIFIL fatalities from March 1978—January 2015 total 308 persons: 291 troops; 2 military observers; plus 8 international and 7 local civilians working with UNIFIL. See current figures at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/facts.shtml.

Time period of report and reference number
19 March 1978 S/12611
23 March 1978 S/12620
02 April 1978 S/12620/Add. 1

08 April 1978 S/12620/Add. 2	
17 April 1978 S/12620/Add. 3	
05 May 1978 S/12620/Add. 4	
13 June 1978 S/12620/Add.5	
19 March 1978—13 September 1978 S/12845	
14 September 1978—18 November 1978 S/12929	
14 September 1978—12 January 1979 S/13026; S/13026/Corr.1 (date correction)	
13 January 1979—08 June 1979 S/13384	
19 April 1979 S/13258	
19 April 1979 S/13254	
9 May 1979 S/13308	
9 June 1979—10 December 1979 S/13691	
11 December 1979—12 June 1980 S/13994	
11 April 1980 S/13888	
18 April 1980 S/13888/Add.2	
13 June 1980—11 December 1980 S/14295	
12 December 1980—12 June 1981 S/14537	
21 August 1980 S/14118	
16 March 1981 S/14407	
16 June 1981—10 December 1981 S/14789	
11 December 1981—3 June 1982 S/15194	
16 February 1982 S/14869	
25 April 1982 S/14996	
4 June 1982 S/15163	
4 June 1982— 10 June 1982 S/15194/Add.1	
11 June 1982—13 June 1982 S/15194/Add.2	
18 June 1982—13 August 1982 S/15357	
18 August 1982—14 October 1982 S/15455	
19 October 1982—13 January 1983 S/15557	
19 January 1983—12 July 1983 S/15863	
13 July 1983—12 October 1983 S/16036	
13 October 1983—9 April 1984 S/16472	
10 April 1984—9 October 1984 S/16776	
10 October 1984—11 April 1985 S/17093	
12 April 1985—10 October 1985 S/17557	
11 October 1985—9 April 1986 S/17965	
16 December 1985 S/17684	
10 April 1986—17 June 1986 S/18164	
17 June 1986—10 July 1986 S/18164/Add.1	
11 July 1986—11 January 1987 S/18581	
18 September 1986 S/18348	
18 September 1986—13 October 1986 S/18396	
14 January 1987 S/18581/Add.1	
12 January 1987—24 July 1987 S/18990	

25 July 1987—22 January 1988 S/19445	
5 October 1987 S/19175; S/19175/Corr.1 **(date amended)**	
4 December 1987 S/19318	
23 January 1988—25 July 1988 S/20053	
26 July 1988—24 January 1989 S/20416	
24 January 1989 (map) S/20416/Add.1; S/20416/Add.1/Corr.1	
27 January 1989 (addendum) S/20416/Add.2	
25 January 1989—21 July 1989 S/20742	
22 July 1989—25 January 1990 S/21102	
26 January 1990—24 July 1990 S/21406	
25 July 1990—22 January 1991 S/22129	
25 July 1990—22 January 1991 (addendum) S/22129/Add.1	
26 July 1990 (addendum) S/21406/Add.1	
23 January 1991—20 July 1991 S/22829	
21 July 1991—21 January 1992 S/23452	
29 November 1991 S/23255	
22 January 1992—21 July 1992 S/24341	
22 July 1992—22 January 1993 S/25150	
23 January 1993—20 July 1993 S/26111	
21 July 1993—20 January 1994 S/1994/62	
21 January 1994—20 July 1994 S/1994/856	
21 July 1994—20 January 1995 S/1995/66	
21 January 1995—19 July 1995 S/1995/595	
20 July 1995—22 January 1996 S/1996/45	
22 January 1996—20 July 1996 S/1996/575	
7 May 1996 (18 April 1996) S/1996/337 + annex	
21 July 1996—17 January 1997 S/1997/42	
18 January 1997—16 July 1997 S/1997/550	
17 July 1997—15 January 1998 S/1998/53	
16 January 1998—15 July 1998 S/1998/652	
16 July 1998—15 January 1999 S/1999/61	
16 January 1999—15 July 1999 S/1999/807	
16 July 1999—15 January 2000 S/2000/28	
22 May 2000 S/2000/460	
16 June 2000 S/2000/590	
17 January 2000—17 July 2000 S/2000/718	

Reports are available at http://unbisnet.un.org by entering the document reference number, as noted above. Also searchable by key word.

UNIFIL maintained an active, though reduced, presence in Lebanon from 2000—2006. A detailed summary of the "situation in the area" during this period is documented as "UNIFIL background," with links to original reports. See http://unifil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1501#para6.

UNIFIL increased its presence following the July 2006 War. Pertinent documentation and full reports are located at "UNIFIL Documents." http://unifil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1506.

Serving as corroboration of the UNIFIL reports, numerous UN General Assembly and Security Council reports also feature detailed descriptions of Israeli aggressions against Lebanon during the occupation era, searchable at http://unbisnet.un.org. Example: "Letter dated 10 January 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General" (A/54/703, S/2000/11, 11 January 2000), an 18-page statement detailing constant Israeli bombardment of Lebanese villages throughout December 1999.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY   SECURITY COUNCIL
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Agenda item 43
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Letter dated 10 January 2000 from the Permanent
Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government and further to our earlier letters
concerning Israel's attacks on southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa and the
arbitrary practices against the civilian inhabitants in which it engages on a
daily basis, I have the honour to notify you of the series of such incidents
that took place in December 1999.

1 December 1999

Between 0530 and 0600 hours an Israeli gunboat off Mansuri fired several
bursts of medium-weapons fire in all directions.

At 1430 hours the collaborators' militia directed several bursts of medium-
weapons fire at the westernmost neighbourhood of Arabsalim from the Suwayda hill
position. A civilian vehicle was hit.

Between 1520 and 1540 hours Israeli occupation forces fired seven 155-mm
artillery shells at outlying areas Sribbin and Haddatha from the Tall Ya'qub
position.

At 1715 hours the proxy militia fired four 81-mm and 120-mm mortar shells
and directed several bursts of medium-weapons fire at the outskirts of Bra'shit
from Ba'lul hill.

At 1825 hours the proxy militia directed several bursts of medium-weapons
fire at the easternmost neighbourhood of Kafr Tibnit from the Burj hill
position.

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