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# al-janoub

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**UNIFIL**  
magazine



## What brings us together

# UNIFIL-PIO launches its first ever radio program

## “Salam from the South”

Every two weeks a new 10-minute episode of “Salam from the South” is broadcast in Arabic on: Al-Risala, Sawt El-Mada, Voice of Lebanon and Voice of People.

The program brings voices of the people of south Lebanon, with their views on UNIFIL activities and their outlook relating to peacekeeping in their midst.

To know more about UNIFIL, its role, mandate and activities, tune in to our broadcasts.

You can also listen to our radio/video programs, find online versions of *Al-Janoub* magazine and more on our website <http://unifil.unmissions.org>

Join us on the airwaves or listen to us on our website. Comments and suggestions are welcome.



# Salam



# from the South

# What brings us together

At the turn of the fifth year of UNIFIL's mission under UN Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), some serious developments came as a reminder of why UNIFIL is here: what brought the peacekeepers thousands of miles away from their homes and why the people of south Lebanon welcomed them in their midst – what brings us together.

Almost four years of unprecedented calm in south Lebanon was rudely shaken on 3 August by an exchange of fire between the Lebanese and Israeli armies at El Addeisseh causing tragic loss of lives for the first time since 2006. Even as UNIFIL prevailed on the parties to stop shooting and engaged them in efforts to ensure this remained an isolated incident, the fundamental fact underlying UNIFIL's mission was amply evident: that cessation of hostilities is contingent on the parties respecting their obligations to maintain it; UNIFIL's deployment as well as liaison and coordination efforts facilitate the parties in discharging this responsibility, but the onus remains on each party as UNIFIL cannot act on their behalf.

UNIFIL has been deployed on the request of the government of Lebanon and given a mandate that draws from a Lebanese decision to undertake specific measures to enhance security in the south. Most significant of these was the decision of the government of Lebanon to deploy the Lebanese army in the south and UNIFIL was mandated by the Security Council specifically to assist the Lebanese army in carrying out its vital tasks.

Everyone in south Lebanon knows what has been achieved through this partnership of the two forces. The cliché that "public memory is short" does not apply to southerners – they do not forget. They could not: they are the ones who suffered the most through the wars and destruction of the past. The improvements that their own army in partnership with UNIFIL has brought about since 2006 are felt most by those who live their daily lives in the south.

The people also know what the peacekeepers have done to protect and assist them through these years since 1978 even at grave personal risk, including the ultimate sacrifice made by close to 300 peacekeepers who have laid down their lives in the line of duty, the highest number for any UN peacekeeping mission anywhere in the world.

The 'new strategic environment' established by the joint deployment of UNIFIL and the Lebanese army has in fact been built on the foundation of the deep-rooted relationship that had grown between UNIFIL and the people of south Lebanon over the three preceding decades. One has to be part of the landscape in the south, like UNIFIL is, to appreciate this unique relationship in its full dimensions. We know, and respect, the essence

of this relationship and we do not allow any surface currents to affect the fundamentals that underlie this bond.

To be sure there are differences, as there is bound to be in any human interaction with those we share our daily lives with. There can be misunderstandings on occasions, not the least due to language or cultural barriers, or often due to unfounded rumours. The people know full well that UNIFIL is here for a job that it must do and yet the resulting disruptions in normal daily life can be an irritant. The fundamentals of our relationship being strong, we are able to address these issues in our direct interactions with the people. This is happening as part of the everyday dynamic between UNIFIL and the southerners, out of the eyes of the media, too sedate to be of news value.

That is until there are public protests as happened end-June-early-July: then cameras roll and photos are flashed across the world. On this particular occasion some commentators went to the extent of declaring a "southern intifada" against UNIFIL, portraying a crisis disproportionate to the realities on the ground. Then reality struck back: not so much in what UNIFIL or the Lebanese leadership said, but in the voices of the south – the people, their mayors, mukhtars and religious leaders – all reaffirming their strong support for UNIFIL's presence and mission.

Ultimately, we know that we are here because the people want us here, we could not be otherwise; and the people know that our presence is beneficial for them. Even disagreements or misunderstandings when addressed serve to firm up this relationship. This co-existence that circumstances have bestowed on us manifests in multifarious human interactions that are beneficial to all, whether the people or the peacekeepers. It is not about material give and take, as some interpret UNIFIL's assistance projects to be, but about sharing towards better life conditions in south Lebanon that we all partake of.

This issue of *Al-Janoub* explores some aspects of these unique impulses that tie UNIFIL to the communities. And yet 'what brings us together' is hard to script in its true dimensions or to unbraided from the fabric of the expansive social dynamics of south Lebanon of which UNIFIL is a part.

**Neeraj Singh**  
Editor-in-Chief

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### Disclaimer

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# UN Security Council extends UNIFIL's mandate



The UN Security Council, acting on the request of the Government of Lebanon, on 30 August 2010 unanimously decided to extend the present mandate of UNIFIL for a period of one year until 31 August 2011.

The mandate of UNIFIL and its tasks are determined by resolution 1701. There has also been a Lebanese consensus supporting UNIFIL's mandate. UNIFIL's mission, deployment, concept of operations, the activities of its forces and rules of engagement will remain unchanged. This applies equally to all UNIFIL contingents that operate under singular UN command exercised on the ground by the UNIFIL Force Commander.

In its resolution 1937 adopted 30 August 2010, the Security Council brings focus on key issues that define the way forward for UNIFIL's mission:

First, it calls for further enhancement of the cooperation between UNIFIL and LAF, noting that their deployment helped to establish a new strategic environment in southern Lebanon and welcoming the expansion of coordinated activities

between the two forces that has been achieved so far.

The Security Council makes several significant assertions in this context, calling upon member states to assist the LAF to enable it to perform its duties in line with resolution 1701, welcoming the deployment of an additional LAF brigade in the south recently and calling on the Government of Lebanon to further increase the LAF deployed in southern Lebanon.

Second, the Security Council clearly underlines the responsibilities of the parties towards the implementation of resolution 1701. All parties are strongly called upon to respect the cessation of hostilities and the Blue Line in its entirety, and to cooperate fully with UNIFIL. UNIFIL can facilitate, but cannot act on behalf of, the parties.

Third, the Security Council again said the parties have to abide scrupulously by their obligation to respect the safety of UNIFIL, and to ensure that UNIFIL is accorded full freedom of movement.

This renewal represents a strong

expression of the international community's support for UNIFIL's mission and its determination to stabilize the situation and strengthen security in south Lebanon.

Now, as we move into the fifth year of our mission under resolution 1701, the parties must build on the progress that has been made so far. The tremendous resources and support we continue to receive from the international community, the prevailing Lebanese consensus on our deployment, our positively evolving strategic partnership with LAF, the support and understanding of the people of south Lebanon and the continued commitment of the parties to the cessation of hostilities – these are all pillars to which our success is pegged. We must make it stronger.

The Security Council and the Secretary-General urged all parties to fully cooperate with the UN to make tangible progress towards a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution and emphasized that more work remains to be done by the parties to advance the full implementation of resolution 1701.

**Neeraj Singh**



# Open letter

## from UNIFIL Force Commander to the people of south Lebanon

08 July 2010

In the name of peace and the United Nations, which all of us are proud members of, let me enter into your lives and take some minutes from your valuable time in order to share with you my thoughts. I would like to express my feelings on what UNIFIL is doing in Southern Lebanon, how we do it and why.

As a peacekeeper, as a soldier, as a man of peace, as a person who deeply loves this people, I would like to address some words to you in a spirit of total sincerity from the most profound depths of my heart. It is in our hearts that we share the strong human bond that has developed between us peacekeepers and you the people of south Lebanon through all these years of wars and destruction that we have suffered together, and it is in our hearts that we feel the pain of anything that goes contrary to this relationship we so cherish. I want to speak directly to you, without intermediaries, so there are no misunderstandings, no manipulation, no misled interpretations, through this open letter reaching you through Lebanese media.

As you all know, some recent incidents have cast a shadow on the positive environment in which UNIFIL peacekeepers have been working, in close coordination with the Lebanese army, for your safety and security. We are fully aware of the problems military operations in civilian areas may cause to the people. Whereas we take all possible measures to mitigate inconveniences to the people, there may still be problems you may face. The way to deal with those problems is to discuss them directly with UNIFIL, as we have always done in order to find amicable solutions, not by obstructing the work of peacekeepers or by beating

them. In that spirit, let me explain to you what UNIFIL is doing on the ground.

There are almost 12,000 soldiers and more than 1,000 civilians in UNIFIL. All of us give the best of our daily efforts to protect the lives and property of the population between the Litani river and the Blue Line. We are working alongside the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Lebanese Government. We are fully aware that there has been a protracted and multifaceted conflict; we are aware that you have suffered too often the devastating effects of war. Therefore we came here from our distant countries at the invitation of the Lebanese government to perform specific tasks requested by the government and authorized by the UN Security Council with the aim of restoring security and stability for the people of south Lebanon.

UNIFIL forces are deployed in southern Lebanon to accomplish the mandate of UN Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) after the war in 2006.

All UNIFIL personnel operate under my command and they have received strict orders to undertake the assigned mandate with full respect for the culture and traditions of the population that is hosting us; full respect for private property; full respect for the privacy of daily life in the streets of the villages; full respect for the desire of the population

not to be photographed. Our soldiers have received clear orders not to take pictures unless absolutely necessary for operational reasons; clear orders not to use tracked combat vehicles where there is possibility of damage to public or private infrastructure; clear orders to repair any damage so done and to talk to the local authorities and the communities to clear any misunderstanding that may arise from our actions. This is evident from the fact that the UNIFIL troops have shown utmost restraint when confronted by agitated civilians and always tried to explain to the people what they are doing and to diffuse tensions with the help of the Lebanese army.

Overall I expect the peacekeepers to act in a fully professional, objective and transparent manner and give their best in ensuring security and protection for the people, and accomplishing the mission without interfering in the daily lives of the Lebanese citizens. Above all, my troops are required to work in close coordination with the Lebanese army and particularly when undertaking any sensitive tasks.

Those are my orders; those were also my orders when I was Sector East Commander in UNIFIL during December 2008 to April 2009. Let me tell you, I was really joyful during my first tenure in Lebanon; you won my



Photo by: Mohammed Zaatari

heart to the point I promised to come back in any way, either as a tourist or, as is now the case, as UNIFIL Force Commander.

Today I am here again, with new responsibilities but with the same goal, which is to make possible that all men and women in UNIFIL stay alongside you; with our presence and what we represent in the world we contribute to your protection, providing stability to a part of Lebanon which has suffered a lot. As your guests, the welfare we enjoy in our days here is a product of the efforts of all of you: you, the people of south Lebanon, the soldiers in the Lebanese army, the leaders in the Lebanese government and in the municipalities where we operate, as well as the UNIFIL personnel. We can be proud to say that the last four years have been the calmest period southern Lebanon has seen in many years. It is not only me saying that, I have heard it from the Lebanese authorities too. And you can see it in the new infrastructure that is being built, as well as the new small businesses growing all along this area.

UNIFIL works in close cooperation with the Lebanese army and we ensure that all our activities are fully coordinated. This coordination does not imply that every one of the 350 daily patrols that UNIFIL does can be physically accompanied by the Lebanese army. The Lebanese army has primary

## **Implementation of resolution 1701 and the operations of UNIFIL aim to ensure that stability prevails in this area and that the people of the south feel secure and protected to live their lives in peace and with a sense of future.**

responsibility for security and law and order in the area. On its part, UNIFIL, with its significant capability, is patrolling the area of operations, monitoring the cessation of the hostilities, and assisting the Lebanese army. UNIFIL is also conducting coordinated patrols and has set up collocated checkpoints with the Lebanese army at key locations within its area of operations. Permanent checkpoints are established by the Lebanese army to stop and search passing vehicles.

Implementation of resolution 1701 and the operations of UNIFIL aim to ensure that stability prevails in this area and that the people of the south feel secure and protected to live their lives in peace and with a sense of future. Sometimes these activities may cause some disturbances, but in any case there will never be any hidden agenda behind those actions. Our presence in Lebanon, far from our homes, has no other purpose than helping you to live in

peace, contributing with all our means to your protection and the stability of the area. The peacekeepers always try to do their utmost to assist and protect you; at the same time UNIFIL's existence would have been hard without your strong support.

With this letter I would like to ask for your understanding and continued collaboration to help us undertake our difficult mission. UNIFIL contingents have periodic rotations, lasting from 4 to 12 months, so it is always possible that some mistakes be made, but always with the best intention of ensuring security and stability in the area.

I hope this letter would be useful for a better understanding between us of our common objective, so we all can work together for peace in south Lebanon.

With my best wishes,

**Major General Alberto Asarta Cuevas**  
UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander

# Making a difference:

## UNIFIL development projects help southern communities

UNIFIL troops live and work closely with the people of south Lebanon. So it comes as no surprise that the close relationship has developed over the years into what amounts to family ties. And it's no wonder that assistance becomes like a family obligation or a moral duty.

UN Security Council resolution 1701 of 2006 did not specifically require that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon provide aid to the local population in its Area of Operation, nor is UNIFIL entrusted with assistance that is the job of other specialized UN agencies. But the human interaction between UNIFIL and the local population has evolved over the years, particularly in the last four years since UNIFIL was expanded, into specific work and development projects that made a difference in the lives of people.

Be it a power generator, the resurfacing of a school playground, equipping classrooms with computers or rebuilding a damaged wall, an auto mechanic's course or sewing and tailoring sessions, garbage collection, recycling or reforestation, the projects are small and their cost is modest. But they made an impact on improving the lives of the people across the area from the Arqoub hills in the east to the Mediterranean coast at Naqoura and helped solidify the bond between the troops and the local population.

The months of June and July 2010 have witnessed a rich succession of completion of Quick Impact Projects that were executed by UNIFIL.

A total of seven projects costing 132,000 dollars were inaugurated. Four of those projects were implemented in the eastern region of UNIFIL's Area of Operation in the villages of Kfar Hamam, Wazzani, Borghoz and Meiss al-Jabal. Another three were implemented in the villages of Aita al-Shaab, Marwaheen and Dhairah in

the Western sector.

UNIFIL Civil Affairs section, the civilian link between the people and the Blue Berets from various contingents, endeavours to strengthen the humanitarian relationships with the population through assisting municipalities, which are the local authority in the villages and towns. That assistance comes in the form of development projects aimed at improving the people's living conditions.

The duration of implementing these small-scale, rapidly implemented Quick Impact Projects does not exceed the three months after selection of projects, which are made in full coordination with the municipality concerned.

The budget for these projects is a modest half a million dollars annually. Complementing these are similar projects funded directly by nations participating in UNIFIL, with an annual outlay of about 5 million dollars.

Ryszard Morczynski, head of UNIFIL Civil Affairs section, outlined the projects' two main purposes: address some of the humanitarian needs of the population in the villages in the area of deployment of UNIFIL troops and, "to have a better contact with the population through those programs in order to have a better bonding with the local society."

Such projects, while considered small in size and cost, make a big difference in the lives of the people of villages south of the Litani River in terms of developing their production capacity in diverse areas.

More similar projects are being prepared in the next year in other villages in the framework of UNIFIL's continued strong efforts alongside the Lebanese army to maintain security and stability in the area.

Most of UNIFIL's humanitarian assistance projects are initiated from within the communities. They are facilitated by UNIFIL and troop-contributing countries to the extent possible and are always carried out through a consultative process with the benefiting community.

"We identify the problems together and together we solve it," UNIFIL Civil Affairs chief Morczynski told *Al-Janoub*, explaining how this exercise in itself brings UNIFIL closer to the population.

In the first years following the 2006 conflict, UNIFIL responded to the immediate needs of the people by facilitating access to basic services such as water and electricity. As the situation improved, the scope of humanitarian assistance was broadened to include capacity building projects.

While the focus of Quick Impact Projects is gradually shifting towards capacity building, UNIFIL continues with projects that facilitate access to basic services as well as repairing or reconstructing existing infrastructure wherever needed, such as repairing the courtyard of the Aita al-Shaab school.

UNIFIL's Humanitarian Assistance projects either take advantage of the skills available through our contingents or by funding training and equipment needs.



**UNIFIL implements projects to have a better bonding with the local population: “We identify the problems together and together we solve it”**

One of the latest projects in June and July is installing a hay mixer in the village of Wazzani, a small community that makes its living from agriculture and raising cattle. There, in the inauguration ceremony that included curtain raising of a plaque that showed UNIFIL funding for the project, the Mayor Ahmad Al-Mohammad along with senior UNIFIL officers pressed the button to operate the hay mixer amid applause from the people present. In a speech on the occasion that was followed by a reception, Mr. al-Mohammad praised UNIFIL and requested more assistance to the region. The cost was 25,000 dollars.

A few days later and a few kilometers east of Wazzani, the mayor of the village of Kfar Hamam Ali Fares and officers from UNIFIL inaugurated the completion of a project to build a floor for the town's clinic that consisted of three rooms, a kitchen and bathroom. That project cost about 23,000 dollars.

In a speech at the ceremony, Mr. Fares thanked UNIFIL for the initiative and praised the role it is playing in preserving security and stability in the south. After speeches by UNIFIL officers the villagers and UNIFIL joined in a reception that was an expression of the feelings of affection.

A few kilometers northwest of Kfar Hamam and amid a gathering of the people from the village of Borghoz the village's Mukhtar, Ismail Harfouch, and Mayor of the village of Kawkaba Dr. Salim Ibrahim inaugurated with UNIFIL Civil Affairs officers and officers from UNIFIL's Malaysian and Spanish contingents a project of a pre-fabricated complex that consists of a hall, kitchen and bathroom for multi-use on 50 square meters of land at a cost of 17,000 dollars. After

exchanging speeches, Dr. Ibrahim and an officer from UNIFIL's Malaysian battalion cut the ribbon, then the officer handed over the key and everyone joined in a cocktail inside the structure.

In the town of Meiss al-Jabal on the southwestern edge of UNIFIL's Sector East region, UNIFIL Civil Affairs section chief Morczynski and officers from UNIFIL's Nepalese Battalion delivered to the head of the Meiss al-Jabal Government Hospital Mohammad Qabalan a 22,000-dollar Hormone Analysis machine. A ceremony was held during which local speakers praised the role of UNIFIL in assisting the people of the area and in maintaining stability and peace.

Moving on to the Western Sector of UNIFIL's Area of Operation in the town of Aita al-Shaab, UNIFIL, in coordination with an institute that cares for children with special needs carried out a training course on sewing for 33 women from the village as well as from the villages of Kouzah, Rmeish, Beit Leef and Ramieh. At the end of the course, sewing machines, a generator and stationary needed for their work was provided. The project cost about 25,000 dollars and it resulted in securing work for trained women through which they earned income for their families.

A graduation ceremony was held at the factory where the course was held in the presence of UNIFIL Civil Affairs and officers from the Italian and Ghanaian contingents in addition to ones from the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces as well as mayors and mukhtars from the area. Speeches praised UNIFIL's role in that project which aimed at

developing the capabilities of the local people in order to improve their living conditions. The ceremony concluded with an exhibit of what the trainees produced during the course.

In the village of Dhairah southwest of Aita al-Shaab, the people celebrated along UNIFIL officers and officers from the Civil Affairs section the opening of a graveled road that leads to the public school and the main water reservoir of the village to facilitate access for teachers and students and ensure safety. This project cost about 7,000 dollars. While UNIFIL provided funding for the project it was implemented by soldiers belonging to the Portuguese engineering unit. The road opening was in the presence of officials from UNIFIL and the Mukhtar of Dhairah Mohammad Abou Samra and the director of the school. Students and other townspeople were among the crowd which attended. Mr. Abou Samra praised UNIFIL's work and this assistance to the people of the village.

Northwest of Dhairah in the village of Marwaheen, the people, local officials and UNIFIL representatives celebrated the inauguration of a science laboratory that UNIFIL provided to the public school at a cost of 22,000 dollars.

The school's principal, Hussein Shibli, saluted UNIFIL for its assistance and praised the role of its units in establishing stability and peace in the area. For their part, the students expressed their happiness with the project by offering special drawings showing their gratitude to UNIFIL and the good relationship that bonds the two sides.

**Sultan Sleiman** UNIFIL Civil Affairs



UNIFIL projects address some of the most pressing needs of the population and support local authorities while strengthening the links between UNIFIL and local communities.

Be it a course for children with special needs, construction of a community centre, repair of a wall or a sewing training, these projects have left their imprint on the lives of people in southern Lebanon.



# UNIFIL's economic impact

UNIFIL's tasks are well known: patrolling, monitoring the cessation of hostilities and ensuring stability in the Area of Operation in coordination with the Lebanese Army. But an important effect of UNIFIL's presence often goes unnoticed - that is the economic impact.

UNIFIL's footprints on the economy of Lebanon, particularly in the south, are immense. It can be felt everywhere in southern Lebanon. In addition to peacekeeping and patrolling, and on top of assistance in development projects, the mere presence of 12,000 troops and some 1,000 civilian employees in the south and the services they require is enough to boost the local economy.

One can feel such economic impact at the restaurant in the town of Marjayoun, at the food store in the city of Tyre and in small villages dotting the hills of south Lebanon.

From headquarters in Naqoura near the Blue Line, north up to the Litani River, UNIFIL's contribution to the local and national economies amounted to tens of millions of dollars annually.

Of UNIFIL's annual budget of around 550 million dollars, about 100 million dollars directly benefit the Lebanese economy, said UNIFIL Director of Mission Support Girish Sinha.

Around 20 million dollars a year is spent just for fuel. Lebanese firms execute many UNIFIL contracts and local contractors are awarded community and development projects.

"Every year, there are around 20 to 25 projects implemented by UNIFIL, with the money provided by the donors in the south to rebuild or reconstruct infrastructure, or to build schools, water-supplies or to bring in generators, or to rebuild roads in the south. To do that, we get money from donors and give it to local contractors to build this infrastructure," said Andrea Tenenti, Deputy Spokesperson for the Force.

There are other economic benefits for the local population such as training for organic farming, medical, dental and veterinary services. Since 2006, more than 130,000 Lebanese received health services for free, thus sparing money for them that could be spent elsewhere.

In addition, the presence of UNIFIL



alongside the Lebanese Army in a big swathe of land that has long seen conflict has ensured stability unprecedented in many years, which in turn instilled confidence that is conducive for economic growth and development.

"The positive relationship (between UNIFIL and the parties) and positive circumstances are the factors that enhance the economic progress," said Lebanese economist Ghazi Wazni.

Industrious Lebanese have turned the peacekeepers' needs for services, from food to laundry services, into good business opportunities in a region that traditionally relied on farming and fishing for a living.

Take for example Mingey Street, the main street outside the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura in the remote southern end of Lebanon. There, you can find souvenir shops, food stores, small restaurants, a commercial bank's branch, a dentist's office and even a small branch for a prominent Lebanese jeweller.

"I make a living out of this shop," said Mousa, who runs a food store on the street and looks after four families. "I have been selling to UNIFIL members for 25

years. I made not a penny from other sources. My children got married and had their own children and work with me. My parents are old now and I take care of them."

Lina, the salesperson at the local Naqoura store of a prominent Lebanese jeweller, talks about the first branch in the south. "Because of the camp, UNIFIL headquarters, we decided to open a branch next to it. Business is good. They like our jewelry and its design. People are visiting us ... They are encouraging us."

The demand for rental accommodation for UNIFIL's civilian staff in Tyre, the closest city to UNIFIL headquarters, has sharply raised the cost of property to rates closer to what people pay in the suburbs of the Lebanese capital of Beirut half way across the country.

Mohammed Bdeir is one of those who cashed in on UNIFIL's presence.

"We opened our hotel right after 2006," he said. "There was a need for such a hotel to accommodate the huge number of UNIFIL staff and journalists who came after the war."

**Yury Kushko** UNIFIL Public Information

# "Mingey Street"

## and the story behind a name



Every day in UNIFIL parlance the word "Mingey" crops up. There are Mingey men, Mingey shops, Mingey tapes, Mingey watches, Mingey food and Mingey barber. The list is endless.

"Mingey Street" is Main Street, where everything is in Naqoura outside the headquarters of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon.

Where did the expression originate from? In 1960, Belgian settlers were fleeing the Congo in large numbers and were anxious to convert their local currency holdings to hard currency. This illegal money exchange was conducted on the street corners of Leopoldville and Elizabethville. "Mingey" was the local dialect for "much", "many", "a lot of".

It's a scene and sound that became familiar to soldiers of the ONUC UN peacekeeping force deployed to the Congo during that period.

Then souvenirs of carved ivory and ebony appeared on that stretch. These were, of course, referred to as "mingeys". The traders who sold them became "mingey men", and when souvenirs were packed it was with nothing other than "mingey boxes".

In 1963, Irish peacekeepers were redeployed from the Congo to Cyprus as part of UNFICYP. They took with them enhanced skills in peacekeeping. They also took with them the name "Mingey".

Very soon Turkish Cypriot tailors were putting "Mingey tailor" signs outside their shops. Greek Cypriots also quickly adopted the word. It was in common use for 10 years in Cyprus until the Irish peacekeepers were sent to UNEF II in Sinai. Soon the "Mingey men" of El Arish and El Nagela came on the scene.

By the time the Irish came to UNIFIL in 1978 the word was being used by a second generation of Irish soldiers.

The peacekeepers were the first who used "Mingey" in everyday conversation, scarcely knowing that it was their fathers who had brought it back from Africa.

Almost immediately the "mobile mingey men" arrived in Naqoura where the UNIFIL HQ has been established, setting their

wares outside the gates.

As the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) became a more permanent fixture, more permanent shanties started to appear whose signs read "Genuine Lebanese Mingey Shop".

Naqoura, a sleepy fishing port and village in the remote end of Lebanon, has quickly expanded. Mingey shops cropped up outside the camp. A whole street existed and what could be more natural than to call it "Mingey Street".

Usage of the word developed into some kind of trademark, with "Mingey" attached to everything sold on the street outside UNIFIL's HQ walls in Naqoura. Even the famous traditional Lebanese dishes of Houmos and Falafel are called "Mingey Houmos and Falafel" on that street.

This is Mingey, believe it or not.

**Hassan Siklawi** UNIFIL Political and Civil Affairs

# Tyre beach tents

## an attraction in peaceful south Lebanon



**Dubbed the Lady of the Sea, Tyre has a love story with its neighbour, the sea.**

Tyre has long embraced the Mediterranean Sea. The sea significantly affects the peninsula, as it surrounds and overlaps with it. They go together and probably that is why the "City of Sands" relies mainly on the sea in the summer.

And Tyre's legacy was adopted by its people. Tyre's beach plays an important role in the pattern of entertainment for both the people of the city and the inhabitants of the surrounding areas. To them, it is a place for fun and entertainment; where people meet, exercise and enjoy sports. That's in addition to sunbathing and eating in a wide open space with free admission.

That explains why on Tyre's southern sandy coast, 49 tourist tents licensed as cafés and restaurants rise on its public beach.

What adds to Tyre's attraction is the peace and stability in southern Lebanon since 2006, the longest period of calm the region has seen in decades, and that can be credited to UN resolution 1701 and the deployment of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army in the region.

Tyre is within UNIFIL's Area of Operation and it is home to many of the peacekeeping force's national and international civilian staff and their families. It also attracts the thousands

of Lebanese expatriates who come for the summer to see family and enjoy their ancestral homeland.

"As soon as summer comes, I pack my stuff, bring along my plants and family to spend the summer season here on the beach," said Ismail Ahmed Ismail, the owner of Nasser Tent.

Ismail has been spending summers on the beach catering for his customers for the past 16 years. He said that his business depends upon local residents, particularly the expatriates. "For this reason, no doubt that the security and stability factor is the basis for increasing turnout," he told *Al-Janoub*.

Tents and cafés were set up in the summer to accommodate recreational activities, swimming and picnicking on the sandy beach, among the most prominent in Lebanon. Other entertainments include playing cards and backgammon. One should not forget also other spaces allocated for group sports such as football, handball and tennis.

Given the importance of the shore in the reproduction cycle of sea turtles, Tyre's southern coast was classified as a nature reserve, where they come ashore to lay their eggs.



Tourist tents started to pop up on Tyre's southern coast 25 years ago. At first, these individual initiatives reaped great success. Due to its growth, the Municipality of Tyre has enacted measures to regulate this important tourist sector.

On the western side of the city, you can find the rocky beach. It is called "The Camel" (Al-Jamal). People say that it was named after a rock in the water that looks like the camel's hump. There, you can find the finest species of fish.

"Turnout is directly linked to stability and the security situation," said Ibrahim al-Samra, a former sailor. He established his Captain Bob Café in 1991 in a place that is said to be where a Pharaonic port existed.

"Currently, we see a good turnout. Our visitors come from all across Lebanon. We are not relying on local residents. Those who come from remote areas are more beneficial to us because they dine here," he said during the summer.

"We have many kinds of fresh fish, grills of all kinds and Lebanese Mezze," Ismail maintained proudly. "We have visitors of all nationalities, including UNIFIL personnel and others," he added.

**Zeina Ezzeddine** UNIFIL Public Information

# “New Light” women workshop, a tailoring success in Aita al-Shaab

It's not haute couture, nor the coveted Parisian fashion designs. But for a group of women from a number of villages in south Lebanon, a sewing and tailoring workshop funded by UNIFIL in cooperation with the Association for Protection of Children with Special Needs in Aita al-Shaab was the opportunity that meant to them as much. So much that many want more and are asking UNIFIL to help to further enhance their expertise as they strike in business on their own.

It all started as an idea. Daad Ismael, head of the Association for Protection of Children with Special Needs in Aita al-Shaab, approached UNIFIL Civil Affairs section and the Ghanaian battalion of UNIFIL with a request for assistance in providing vocational training for women in the area.

She proposed equipping a sewing workshop and funding of a sewing and tailoring training for 35 women and girls from the villages of Aita al-Shaab, Rmeish, Al Qawzah, Ramyeh, Beit Leif and Debel. UNIFIL provided the 25,000 dollars to fund the project to equip a centre that belongs to the association with sewing equipment and a generator.

The association received numerous applications to participate in the training. The three-month training was funded by UNIFIL in cooperation with the association, which also contributed to the project. Fatima al-Sayyed, a sewing trainer from Aita al-Shaab, conducted the training.

Twenty-one women requested that an advanced course be offered so they could learn new sewing and tailoring techniques.

The association proposed that UNIFIL assist in providing the material for the advanced training, while it would cover the facility and the cost for the additional training. The 21 women are from the villages of al Qawzah, Ramyeh and Aita al-Shaab.

The women are members of families who work in farming. They hope the new skills would earn them income they could use to help their families. They are examples of the southern women who work hard and tirelessly, driven by hope and determination. They know they can be up to the task, have proven it and are now ready to contribute to their families' income.

Women in the south generally help out their families in agriculture and in taking care of the home and raising the children.

“Based on my experience as sewing trainer, I sit with the girls and women and listen to them,” says the trainer, Mrs. al-Sayyed.



“They tell me they want to be productive and contribute to help their husbands. They are confident and strong. So I followed up these women who wanted to develop and I'm working with them all day long so that they will be able to generate incomes.”

Mrs. al-Sayyed said the women need advanced sewing machines to help tailor more complex designs, and the team is working together to learn more.

“Now we have reached the stage of generating incomes: we are receiving orders,” she proudly said.

Mrs. al-Sayyed said she has named the workshop the “New Light”.

“I have been hoping for this workshop for 10 years, and when the project was realized, a new light shined and this light is nourished by the energy of all these women. It is also a symbol for a beginning of a light for more projects to come,” she said.

Georgette Saab, a housewife from al Qawzah, said she always wanted to learn a new skill in order to help the family.

“I did not get the chance to continue my higher education. Now, I feel like I can generate an income, even if it is a little one, but still it makes me feel better that I'm able

to help my husband.”

The women say the moral support of their families was instrumental in encouraging them to press ahead.

“Without this support we could not have done this training, because we are leaving our homes for long time to learn. They are encouraging us, and they believe in us,” said one trainee from Aita al-Shaab.

She said training workshops in hairdressing, knitting, crochet work as well as mosaic and glass work and drawing are needed.

Mrs. Ismael, the head of the Association, says she's been deluged with applications that she could not turn down. She has already provided the facility and expressed hope that she will be able to find sponsors for more sewing and tailoring training to meet the demand.

“This project succeeded thanks to them, to their determination and will,” she said of the women participants. “It will always be open to any woman who wants to do the same. It brings joy to me heart to see them happy. There are many others waiting in line, I hope they will also get the same chance. “

**Rola Bzeih** UNIFIL Civil Affairs

# Rmeish



## Rmeish, a serene town with a rich history

Rmeish is a serene town in the Bint Jbail area of Jabal Amel in south Lebanon. Sitting on an overall area of about 20 square kilometers, the inhabited part is only two square kilometers with an altitude ranging from 570 meters above sea level at its lowest point at Al-Marj to 735 meters at its highest point at the Church of Katmoun.

Some ruins found in the town point to groups of people who lived there in the Roman, Byzantine and Crusader times and nomad Arabs that settled there from time to time. But the first inhabitants of the Modern Age date back to the last decade of the 17th century. They settled between its eastern and western ponds, according to history teacher Joseph Jarjour.

The origin of the word Rmeish, as Jarour says, is derived from the word “remshay” in the Syriac language, which means “at sunset”. The reason the name was given to the town is related to its location, on the feet of hills, specifically at a spot which at sunset reflects at the bottom of the hill the shadow from the oak and terebinth trees at its top, but the town later grew in size to what it is today.

The Church of Katmoun is one of the oldest archeological sites in the town. But this historic landmark needs repair and rehabilitation now after damage caused over time and being in a border area away from the town's houses.

Rmeish has seen two main historical eras. The first one stretches from B.C. to the end of the rule of Maan Dynasty in 1687. The area came under the control of a number

of forces during the Roman and Byzantine eras as well as the Islamic Conquest, the Crusaders and the Ottomans.

The second stage is the one stretching from the Shehab Dynasty era during which Rmeish remained part of the Land of Bishara (Jabal Amel) till this day. But in the year 1920, when the British and French authorities began drawing borders, residents petitioned the mandate powers to remain in a Lebanon entity that was later declared.

There are tragic stops in Rmeish's history. Most prominent is when the army of the Ottoman Governor of Akka, Ahmed Basha, ransacked the town in 1797 because residents were considered supporters of his Shehabist rivals and assisted in the French siege of Akka (Acre).

There was also the great earthquake of 1837 that led to the death of 30 villagers, in addition to huge destruction. The death toll could have been higher had it not been for an evening Mass that drew people to the church's open courtyard.

Rmeish residents suffered immensely during the First World War from war and disease, and 80 of its villagers died as a result. Massive migration followed, with the port

of Haifa being the gateway for emigration primarily to Argentina.

In 1948, Rmeish assisted Palestinian refugees who fled north. In 1970, the area came under the influence of Palestinian guerrillas.

In 1975 with the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon, about 120 families of members of the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces from Rmeish returned to the town from various parts of the country. Rmeish fell under Israeli occupation in 1978.

Growing tobacco and public sector jobs in education and teaching as well as in civilian jobs in UNIFIL were Rmeish's main sources of income. After the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, many residents joined the Lebanese army and police. Some other residents found employment with UNIFIL.

Rmeish's population usually increases in the summer season. It has public and private schools as well as a branch for a university.

Prominent among its people was Major-General Francois Hajj, who headed the Lebanese Army's Operations Centre at the time he was assassinated in a 2007 car bomb in Baabda near Beirut.

**Sultan Sleiman** UNIFIL Civil Affairs



Rmeish is a southern town located just a few kilometres from the Blue Line. The population of Rmeish is roughly 6,000 people and the number rises to 10,000 people in the summer. Tobacco growing is the main resource for living in Rmeish.

Due to a shortage of water sources, the town suffers a water crisis, especially in summer, because there are no springs. There is only one artesian well (3-inch capacity) that distributes water to houses with an average of 3 to 4 hours every two weeks or 20 days, forcing residents to buy water (by tanker trucks from outside the town) to meet daily needs.

During the July 2006 War, Rmeish experienced a heinous tragedy for a period of 33 days. The town was suffering a massive shortage in food, water, electricity, medical supplies and medicines; yet, it hosted more than 25,000 people who had fled to it from the neighbouring villages and towns, especially from Aita al-Shaab, Yaroun, Bint Jbail, Ainata, Maroun al-Ras and Ain Ebel.

Most of Rmeish's houses were affected by the impact of heavy warplanes overflights that did not leave its skies, as well as by the rockets and artillery shelling, causing large cracks in ceilings and walls of the town's houses. This damage was amply demonstrated during

winter through leaking and humidity, in addition to the burning of the plantations of olives, wheat and tobacco that are the only resource for living for the people of the town.

During and after the war in 2006, UNIFIL provided fuel to power Rmeish's water supply and UNIFIL tankers distributed drinking water in the town.

The enhanced UNIFIL, which arrived in the area in 2006 in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1701 that provided for the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers hand in hand with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), helped to spread peace and tranquillity in the hearts of southerners along with their basic mission aimed at maintaining stability in this southern town so that its people can enjoy a normal and secure life after a long suffering.

Those peacekeepers shared their weal and woe with the people of southern Lebanon, including the inhabitants of Rmeish who highly respect them. As guests, they should be respected for their role in maintaining security, and they



should enjoy security and freedom of movement they need to perform the task entrusted to them by the Lebanese State and international community to the fullest.

In this sense, the Municipality of Rmeish urges UNIFIL to cooperate with the municipality in order to contribute to providing humanitarian and social services, as well as development projects, and would like to thank UNIFIL for its assistance in this field.

**Attorney Youssef Nasri Tanios** Mayor of Rmeish

# Lebanese schoolchildren get first-hand look at UNIFIL

Lebanese schoolchildren got a first-hand look at UNIFIL and its work during a visit to headquarters in Naqoura on 01 June 2010.

The visit by some 22 students, aged 12 to 15, from the National Evangelical Institute for Girls and Boys in Sidon is one aspect of civil interaction between UNIFIL and the local community. It was initiated at the request of the 150-year-old school, which is one of the oldest in south Lebanon.

Ahmed Al-Hussein had little information about UNIFIL before the trip. "I have learned how much UNIFIL is helping Lebanon and I've learned about the Blue Line and how important it is," the student said.

The students were accompanied by three teachers. They were welcomed at the headquarters in Naqoura on the Mediterranean coast in south Lebanon by Miss Rola Bzeih of UNIFIL's Civil Affairs and Mr. Andrea Tenenti, the Deputy Spokesperson representing UNIFIL's Public Information Office.

At the Director's Conference Room, Mr. Tenenti briefed the students on the UN in general and gave an introduction on UNIFIL and troop contributing countries. He also

explained the forms of assistance provided by UNIFIL to the local community.

Mr. Tenenti answered students' questions about UNIFIL, the situation in the south and the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1701.

"I was living in peace, but after this visit I knew how many people are working hard to maintain that peace and how much they help the people in the area," said student Hala Al-Wahid.

Major German Vincent, from Spain, representing UNIFIL's Civil Military Co-operation (CIMIC) unit, gave a presentation on the developmental projects executed by UNIFIL in its Area of Operation. He also explained the ways employed to fund these projects, in addition to the cultural projects and the awareness campaigns.

Three episodes of "Discover UNIFIL", a series produced by the Video Unit in UNIFIL's Public Information Office, were then featured.

Marie-Josée Kabrita saw in such visits an



opportunity for children to be educated about their surrounding, particularly in a region buffeted by conflict.

"Such visits are very important for them to know that there are people who are concerned about peace and there is international interest in maintaining the peace in the area," the English-language teacher said.

Music teacher Henriette Kozhaya said she was struck by the organization and discipline at UNIFIL headquarters. "What also drew our attention is that UNIFIL consists from many nations with many cultures and religions gathered for one task, which is maintaining the peace."

At the end of the visit, souvenirs from CIMIC were distributed to the students and a commemorative picture was taken.

**Jean Al-Alam** UNIFIL Public Information

## Market Day for Lebanese at UNIFIL Indonesian position

For one day in June, UNIFIL Position 7-1 shed its military status and donned a new look: an outdoor market for Lebanese villagers who came to display and sell their goods and in the process build good relations with the peacekeepers.

More than 20 shops in the surrounding community of Indobatt got the opportunity to sell and advertise their merchandise inside the UNIFIL position in Adshit al-Qusayr village on 13 June.

It's the second time Indobatt Market Day is held. The idea of the event was to get UNIFIL Indonesian troops involved in the local economy and contribute to it while strengthening the cultural understanding.

The Commanding Officer of the Indonesian Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Andi Predana Kahar, stressed in a welcome speech the importance of the active participation of every UNIFIL soldier in economic stability in the area.

The market day is an opportunity for traders in the Indobatt Area of Operation to sell their wares such as olive oil, chocolate, fruit, vegetables and other local products,



especially souvenirs from Lebanon.

Tony Elias, a trader from Ibl el-Saqi, said the market has a direct and valuable impact on selling and advertising products from local shops in the surrounding area.

The event took place to the live tunes of the Indonesian "Delta Coy Band", led by Captain Utju Syamsul.

**UNIFIL Indonesian Battalion**

## DISCOVER UNIFIL TV Series Broadcasts Continue

These 10-minute documentaries provide a special insight into UNIFIL's activities and especially its peacekeepers. 9 episodes are planned, 7 of which have already been broadcast on Lebanese TV stations: NBN, NewTV and Tele Liban. Each new episode is announced through 30-second promotions broadcast days in advance. If you missed an episode, you can watch them on youtube, facebook and our new UNIFIL website.



1  
NAGOURA  
CAMP



2  
MTF -  
SCIROCCO



3  
UNIFIL  
DE-MINERS



4  
THE BLUE  
LINE



5  
MTF -  
HESSEN



6  
ASSISTING  
COMMUNITIES



7  
PATROLLING



## Join us on the Internet

 **YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/UNIFILVIDEOUNIT](http://www.youtube.com/UNIFILVIDEOUNIT)

On our youtube channel you can watch the latest DISCOVER UNIFIL episodes and all of our other video productions, including "Journey Through UNIFIL with Rafic Ali Ahmad". Subscribe to our channel to be notified when we upload new productions.

 **Facebook:** page: **UNIFIL-PIO**

Our facebook page is specifically meant to announce UNIFIL's public information products. DISCOVER UNIFIL's latest episodes are all available in high quality video. Become a "fan" of UNIFIL-PIO (all capital letters) and be alerted the moment we upload a new episode. Tell us what you think by posting a comment and invite your friends to become fans.

 **UNIFIL's website - [unifil.unmissions.org](http://unifil.unmissions.org)**

Here you can read about UNIFIL's history, get all the latest information on the Mission and its current activities and check out our photo galleries or any previous edition of *Al-Janoub* magazine.

<http://unifil.unmissions.org>



# UNIFIL

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon



اليونيفيل  
قوة الأمم المتحدة المؤقتة في لبنان





...UNIFIL helicopters  
use capabilities in  
firefighting in south  
Lebanon