UN In Lebanon Demands Security Guarantees After Troops 'Threatened'

June 12, 2022

By AFP

Barron’s

<https://www.barrons.com/news/un-in-lebanon-demands-security-guarantees-after-troops-threatened-01655061907?tesla=y>

The UN's mission in Lebanon called Sunday for the country's military to guarantee the security of its peacekeepers, alleging personnel were "threatened" by armed men the day before.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has long been deployed in the country's south -- a stronghold of the powerful Shiite movement Hezbollah -- to maintain a barrier with Israel, as the two countries technically remain at war.

A routine UNIFIL patrol was confronted on Saturday by "a group of men in civilian clothes" near the Arab al-Louaize district in southern Lebanon, force spokesperson Andrea Tenenti said in a statement.

The men "threatened the soldiers and tried to take their weapons", he said.

"Attacks, threats and acts of intimidation against UNIFIL peacekeepers... are a matter of serious concern, and we call on the Lebanese armed forces to guarantee the safety, security and freedom of movement" of the UN force, he said in a statement.

Lebanese authorities have not commented on Saturday's incident.

UNIFIL was beefed up after a devastating month-long war in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah was the only faction allowed to keep its arms after the end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, and tensions between its supporters and UN peacekeepers are far from rare, although usually quickly contained.

UNIFIL is largely made up of contingents from European countries and has around 10,000 peacekeepers in Lebanon.