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HS L 179:101



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Middle East conflict 1958 - Aug. 6

Press Release

UNOGIL continuing to extend and intensify its activities

L 179: 101

UNITED NATIONS
Office of Public Information
Press and Publications Division
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

Press Release LEB/25
6 August 1958

UN OBSERVATION GROUP IN LEBANON CONTINUING 'TO EXTEND
AND INTENSIFY ITS ACTIVITIES'

(The following was received from a UN Information Officer with UNOGIL, Beirut.)

The United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon today made the following statement to the press:

"During the past week the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon has continued to extend and intensify its activities.

"In the Tripoli area, new substations have been established at Notre Dame de Fort on 31 July and Tel Abbas on 4 August. In north Bekaa, a substation was established at Baalbek on 29 July, a permanent observation post on the frontier at Mejidie (Kherouia) on the Marjayoun-Banias road on 30 July, and a substation at Deir Mimass on 4 August. Further stations are being established as additional personnel arrive.

"Patrolling is being actually carried out in all regions where United Nations observers are stationed. Even in the difficult Chebaa area to the southwest of Mount Hermon, some progress has been recorded in establishing contacts and reconnoitering sites for stations. Night patrols have been instituted, notably in the Bekaa valley and in the Chouf, and stations situated along the main roads are keeping logs of all vehicular movements.

"In some of the above areas, armed bands have engaged in lawlessness and there has been an absence of law and order. Establishment of the new posts and stations, and the carrying out of patrols in such areas by day as well as by night, has been possible only because of the firmness and tact of the observers, who have been working in the face of great difficulties and frequently serious risks.

"There have been several instances of firing in the vicinity of patrols, and of threats directed by armed men against the observers. United Nations airplanes and helicopters have been fired at from time to time and on occasion hit, but fortunately without much damage.

(more)

"Additional military observers are arriving in a steady stream. Five Danish, three Indian, four Italian, one Swedish and six Norwegian observers have arrived over the past week. Thus, the number of ground observers at the disposal of the Group has increased from 127 on 31 July to 143 on 5 August. A further six Canadian and five Irish observers are expected today.

"The present air crew strength has increased to 25 as the result of the recent arrival of three Swedish ground crew personnel. A further 10 pilots and nine mechanics are expected shortly.

"The necessary equipment has been ordered and some of it has arrived in advance of personnel to use it. Recently 50 jeeps were landed in Beirut and have formed a reserve, which is being drawn upon to provide additional observers with means of transport as they arrive. Camp equipment for posts on the frontier has been received in some quantity and the necessary radio communications equipment is arriving.

"A further eight Cessna aircraft and six helicopters are due to arrive within the next few days to enable more intensive air patrols to be carried out. The aim of the Group is to have air patrols on a 24-hour basis. In the meantime, a fault in the fuel system of one of the four Cessna aircraft at present at the disposal of the Group forced the pilot to make an emergency landing at Hammara, near the Rachaya-Masnaa road on the evening of 1 August. The plane was slightly damaged but has been recovered. The pilot was unhurt and was well received by the inhabitants of the village, who themselves placed a guard around the plane during the night and helped in loading it on a truck the following day."

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