

Bachelor Thesis

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL): Evolution of the mission in terms of human security.

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Introduction

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is one of the peacekeeping missions that has been most long-lasting, renowned and widely studied since the practice of these operations started in 1948¹. The purpose of this *Bachelor Thesis* is to analyse the evolution of the UNIFIL and to define to what extent the operation abandons, or fails to abandon, the precepts of classical security and takes on characteristics more typical of the doctrine of human security. Therefore, the research question is: Does the evolution of the UNIFIL meet the paradigm of human security, or does it remain framed in the precepts of classical security?

To answer the question above, this work is structured into three parts. The first is formed by the theoretical framework which explains and compares the characteristics of human security with those of traditional security. In the second part, the concepts exposed in the theoretical framework are used to analyse the approach of security which characterises the UNIFIL and its corresponding evolution. Finally, conclusions are given which cover the main ideas exposed in the paper.

¹ The first United Nations peacekeeping mission was created and sent to the new State of Israel in May 1948, under the name of United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

1. Theoretical framework

1.1. From classical security to human security

Since the end of the Cold War, a large part of discussions on international security have focused on trying to expand its definition and adapt it to a new, constantly changing world. Fruit of these efforts is the concept of human security, which gains importance with the publication of the *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*² and is characterised for situating the individual, rather than the state, as the object and referent of the security. Therefore, the state-centred (Westphalian) reality which had predominated until almost the end of the 20th century now coexists with a people-centred (or individual-centered) concept of security. This last approach is derived from the present conceptions over threats on security and the nature of the new armed conflicts³, which are the result of the great changes in the international context following the end of the Cold War (end of bipolar confrontation, substantial increase in internal wars linked to problems of development mainly co-played by non-state actors, the appearance of complex political emergencies related to the collapse of the economy and of the states, etc.)⁴.

Nevertheless, the consensus achieved by the promoters of human security relative to the status of the individual as the referent of security is not repeated when the threats from which it must be protected are considered. Two currents represent this lack of understanding which transversally affects the conceptualisation of human security. The broad view of human security, recognised as the original approach, is based on the precepts stipulated in the *UNDP Human Development Report* mentioned above. In this report, it is affirmed that human security must be applied and act in two different fields: in that of security, in which winning means eliminating the fear of violence; and in the economic-social field (development), where winning means satisfying the basic needs for humans to live with dignity. Japan is the main defender of this acceptance⁵, based on the individual's *freedom from want*, wagering on "the establishment of fair commercial relations, the fight against the unequal share out of wealth (ensuring the fulfilment of

² UNDP. (1994). *Human Development Report 1994*. New York: Oxford University Press. 243 p. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_1994_es_completo_nostats.pdf

³ MORILLAS, Pol. (2007). "Genesis and evolution of the expression of human security. A historical review". *CIDOB Journal of International Affairs*, 76: 47-58 (p. 49)

⁴ PÉREZ de ARMIÑO, Karlos. (2007). "The concept and use of human security: critical analysis of its potential and risks". *CIDOB Journal of International Affairs*, 76: 59-77.

⁵ In 1999, Japan established a trust fund under the authority of United Nations, which in 2001 would help to create the *Commission on Human Security*. Its main goals are based on verifying the concept of human security (before the interpretive differences of the different players supporting it) and on identifying a specific plan of action. The Commission, which was responsible for a very significant report which appeared in 2003, had no Canadian member.

minimal social and economic standards), combating authoritarian political regimes and guaranteeing respect for the fundamental freedoms".⁶ The limited view of human security amends the original concept and wagers on an approach which focuses fundamentally on violent conflicts and the humanitarian affairs derived from them. Limited human security, encompassed by the term of *freedom from fear*, is based on the elimination of the use (and of the threat of the use) of force and violence in people's daily lives. Canada, and to a lesser extent Norway, are the principal representatives of the reduced acceptance⁷, and act through policies of conflict prevention, civil protection in armed conflicts and participation in peace operations. They also become involved in other issues such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (1997) or the evolution and consolidation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and fight against short and light arms proliferation, drugs traffic, organised crime, and the use of child soldiers in armed conflicts.⁸

In order to establish a clear and concise theoretical distinction between the concepts of classical and human security and facilitate the later analysis, it is useful to consider the criteria set out by David Baldwin and to ask the following four questions (the first two of which are the most significant)⁹:

1. Security for whom? In other words, what is the subject that has to be assured? National or state-centered security is typical of the classical view. Individual or people-centered security is characteristic of human security.
2. Security for which values? From the traditional view of security, values such as political independence, national sovereignty or territorial integrity of the state are protected. However, human security covers a broad a range of values, from personal health or economic welfare to the environmental situation (always depending on whether it is considered from the broad or the limited standpoint).

⁶ MORILLAS, Pol., *Op. cit.*

⁷ In 1998, starting with the close collaboration between Canada and Norway in negotiating the Ottawa Convention of 1997 (which concluded with the signing of the Ottawa Treaty/Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), both countries founded the Human Security Network as a flexible framework of consultation and co-operation. Formed by 13 countries, its aims include the promotion of human security and human rights, the strengthening of humanitarian law, the prevention of conflicts and the fostering of democracy and governability. Japan declined the offers to join the network.

⁸ MORILLAS, Pol., *Op. cit.* (pp. 51-52).

⁹ BALDWIN, David, A. (1997). "The concept of security". *Review of International Studies*, 23(1): 5-26.

3. From what threats? The perceived threats will depend on the values which are considered worthy of protection. The classical view focuses on military aggressions from other states, whereas human security might take into account numerous threats such as: epidemics, economic crises or natural disasters in a broader approach, or all violence derived from the new international conflictivity (the role of the non-state players in internal conflicts and the phenomenon of terrorism being of particular importance), in its reduced focus.
4. By what means? Depending on the concept of security, the values to be protected and the perceived threats, there are diverse instruments: from military dissuasion in the classical view to promotion of human development in the broad view of human security.

2. Evolution of the UNIFIL and its approach to security

Until 1967, Southern Lebanon was a peaceful area mainly populated by Shiite farmers and Druze and Christian rural communities. However, since the Six-Day War¹⁰ and practically up to the present-day, prolonged conflict has characterised this part of the country. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)¹¹ first and Hezbollah afterwards are, along with the state of Israel, the main players to take into account (without forgetting the Lebanese Armed Forces, the official military of the Lebanese State).

2.1 The original UNIFIL (1978 – 2006)

On 15 March 1978, at the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War¹², the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) invaded the south of the Arab country in reply to a violent incursion by the PLO in territory of the Jewish state. As a result, thousands of Lebanese had to seek refuge in the poorest suburbs of Beirut, which was devastated by the war.¹³ Just hours after the invasion, the Lebanese government presented a strong protest to the Security Council against the Israeli military action, saying that it had nothing to do with the incursion of the Palestine command. On 19 March, the Council approved Resolutions 425

¹⁰ The Six-Day War was a conflict which brought Israel against an Arab coalition formed by Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Syria between 5 and 10 June 1967. At the end of the war, Israel had conquered the Sinai peninsular, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Eastern Jerusalem (including the Ancient City) and the Golan Heights.

¹¹ Settled in the south of Lebanon after the Six-Day War.

¹² The Lebanese Civil War started in the spring of 1975 and ended in early 1991, as stipulated in the Taif Agreement.

¹³ IRANI, George E. (2008). "Spain, Lebanon and the UNPFIL". *Work Document of the Elcano Royal Institute*, No. 21/2008

(1978)¹⁴ and 426 (1978)¹⁵, in which Israel was required to immediately cease in its military action and withdraw all of its forces from the Lebanese territory. The Council also chose to immediately create the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with the first troops arriving in the area on 23 March.¹⁶

The UNIFIL's mandate was brief, formed by three elements, but not easy to implement. The mission was created with the aim of¹⁷:

- Confirming the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon;
- Restoring international peace and security, and;
- Assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.

The UNIFIL formed part of the traditional peacekeeping operations and was a mission of observation and interposition characterised by the neutral deployment of multi-national forces with the consent of the parties concerned, with the objective of supervising the ceasefire and the withdrawal of troops in question, always avoiding the use of force unless in legitimate defence and as a last resort. The United Nation's mission in Lebanon, as was usual for the times in which it was deployed, was established within the principles of classical security. To demonstrate this, it is only necessary to answer the questions asked by David Baldwin, given above in the theoretical framework:

1. Security for whom? The subject that Resolution 425 (1978) and the corresponding mandate of the UNIFIL seek to protect is the Lebanese State. This is specified in the first section of the Resolution, where a call is made to “strictly respect the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries”¹⁸. Similarly, one of the objectives of the mandate of the UNIFIL (given in the third section) is that of “assisting the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area”¹⁹.

¹⁴ RES. 425 (1978) of the Security Council (19 March 1978). Available at: [http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/RES/425%20\(1978\)](http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/RES/425%20(1978))

¹⁵ RES. 426 (1978) of the Security Council (19 March 1978). Available at: <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/RES/426%281978%29>

¹⁶ UNPFI: United Nations Provisional Forces in Lebanon. (2014). *UNPFI Background*, Available at: <http://www.un.org/es/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/background.shtml> (Consulted: 15 November 2014).

¹⁷ RES. 425 (1978) of the Security Council, *Op. cit.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

2. Security for which values? Once more referring to the first section of the Resolution, the values to be protected are seen to be those of political independence and territorial integrity of the state.
3. From what threats? Undoubtedly, the main perceived threat is that Israel should fail to end its military intervention in Lebanese territories, with all of the consequences that this might have. In the second section of Resolution 425 (1978) Israel is called upon to “immediately cease in its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory”²⁰. Furthermore, and as has been discussed before, the first objective specified in the mandate of the UNIFIL is that of “confirming the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from southern Lebanon”.
4. By what means? 2,000 soldiers were deployed in the field and collaboration was sought of the Lebanese government, the Israeli government and the Palestine and Lebanese militias.

In the period between 1978 and 2006, clearly marked by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the neutralisation of the Palestine militias of the PLO and the subsequent appearance of Hezbollah as a source of resistance and confrontation, the UNIFIL gradually introduced some elements which would later form part of the precepts of human security (without giving up its idiosyncrasy and its task in accordance with a classical approach to security). “Apart from being an observer and fundamental vigilant to avoid continuous war, the UNIFIL helped the populations in the form of medical assistance, basic supplies and repairs of the damage caused by the hostilities, working closely with several international actors and the Lebanese authorities. In this sense, help was given to the residents who had left in the previous Israeli occupations to bring them back and half a million square kilometres of previously contaminated land was turned over to productive use after 2004.”²¹ This transformation of sterile land into productive land was largely due to the removal of landmines by the UNIFIL, which with the definitive withdrawal of the Israeli troops (in the summer of 2000) started up the Mine Action Coordination Centre for South Lebanon (MACC-SL). In approximately 5 years, more than 20,000 landmines were detected and destroyed in a facet of the mission clearly reminiscent of the Canadian, or limited, approach of human security.

²⁰ RES. 425 (1978) of the Security Council, *Op. cit.*

²¹ PADRÓS, Albert. (2007). “La expansión de las operaciones de paz de la ONU y el caso de Líbano”. *Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals*, 77: 203-226 (p. 213).

2.2 The extended UNIFIL (2006 – present day)

On 12 July 2006, after numerous slight violations of the withdrawal line (Blue Line), new hostilities broke out after Hezbollah launched several missiles at positions of the IDF and made several attacks in Israeli territory. Israel responded with attacks by land, sea and air against Hezbollah positions. In an exercise of excess, Israeli troops also directed their offensive against numerous infrastructures, bridges and roads in the south of Lebanon, not always within the area of operations of the UNIFIL²².

On 11 August 2006, through intense negotiation (due to the reticence of the United States), the Security Council approved Resolution 1701 (2006)²³, which demanded a total ceasefire between Hezbollah and the IDF. Furthermore, the UNIFIL was strengthened in so far as its mandate and troops in the field were increased (from 1,989 to a maximum of 15,000). In order to apply the Resolution, it was a necessary condition that hostilities should cease, something which occurred on 14 August with the signing of a complete ceasefire. “The Blue Helmets had to verify the complete ceasing of hostilities and help the government to restore its sovereignty in the south. The mission was gradually deployed after a certain initial slowness (rapid deployment is an essential part of the success of a peace mission). In February 2007 there were already more than 12,000 Blue Helmets deployed.”²⁴

The increased mandate of the UNIFIL of 2006, carried out in accordance with Resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), stipulates the following principles and elements²⁵:

- Monitor the cessation of hostilities;
- Accompany and support the Lebanese armed forces as they deploy throughout the South, including along the Blue Line, as Israel withdraws its armed forces from Lebanon;
- Coordinate its activities (the ones mentioned in the mandate) with the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel;
- Extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons;

²² IRANI, George E., *Op. cit.*

²³ RES. 1701 (2006) of the Security Council (11 August 2006). Available at: [http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/RES/1701\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=S/RES/1701(2006))

²⁴ PADRÓS, Albert., *Op. cit.* (pp. 214-215).

²⁵ RES. 1701 (2006) of the Security Council., *Op. cit.* (pp. 3 - 4)

- Assist the Lebanese armed forces in taking steps towards the establishment, between the Blue Line and the Litani river, of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL deployed in this area;
- Assist the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel.

It must be pointed out that the extended mission of the UNIFIL does not abandon its traditional origin, maintaining the importance of elements such as respect for state integrity and sovereignty. However, it does enhance the tendency of its predecessor, bringing significant changes and "allowing itself to be influenced" even more obviously by the doctrine of human security. Once more, by means to check, the four questions already mentioned must be answered to distinguish between classical and human security:

1. Security for whom? Resolution 1701 (2006) and the respective mandate of the increased UNIFIL stipulate two subjects to which protection has to be given. On the one hand, by reaffirming the fulfilment of the mandate stipulated in Resolution 425 (1978), the Lebanese State continues to be an object of protection. Furthermore, the increased mandate specifies the need to "extend its assistance to help ensure humanitarian access to civilian populations and the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons"²⁶. In this way, a second subject was introduced that needed protection, which was the Lebanese civil population. It is therefore seen that, on the basis of a traditional approach, the fundamental precept of human security is present.
2. Security for which values? The values of political independence and territorial integrity of the Lebanese State continue to be elements to be protected. However, other values, such as the welfare of the civil population and refugees of the area, are taken into account. A simple but pragmatic example of this new focus is the so-called Quick Impact Projects²⁷. These projects are intended to resolve the most urgent needs for the population and to support the authorities while the links are tightened between the UNIFIL and the local communities. These are small scale projects implemented rapidly which, more than replacing, complement the long-term development initiatives of other agencies and actors. Immediately after the end of the conflict in 2006, the focus of the Quick Impact Projects lay on providing access to basic ser-

²⁶ RES. 1701 (2006) of the Security Council, *Op. cit.* (p. 4)

²⁷ UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. (2014). *UNIFIL Civil Interaction*, Available at: <http://unifil.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=11581&language=en-US>

vices, particularly water and electricity, and repairs to roads and other key infrastructures.

3. From what threats? The principal perceived threats are the recommencement of the Hezbollah attacks on Israeli territory and the hypothetical actions that the IDF might take in Lebanese land. Therefore, threats are considered that come both from a non-state paramilitary group (more characteristic of the new international conflictivity and the "new wars"²⁸) and from a state.
4. By what means? In addition to the increase to a maximum of 15,000 soldiers, the functions of the UNIFIL troops are expanded. The resolution authorises the mission "to take all necessary action"²⁹ to ensure that its mandate is respected. Despite the vagueness of this provision, the main European countries involved in the UNIFIL reached consensus and offered the necessary military equipment for the achievement of the set objectives. Therefore, "the Blue Helmets can resort to lethal force to defend themselves and to protect the United Nations staff, the members of the Lebanese government and their escorted military officials, and humanitarian workers from hostile acts; to defend United Nations staff from attempted kidnapping; to prevent attempted kidnapping of members of the Lebanese government and humanitarian workers; and to protect the civil population from direct physical threat. The soldiers could also use force if an armed individual should refuse to put down his weapons, but not to defend buildings, installations or equipment".³⁰

A turn is therefore seen towards several of the precepts stipulated by human security doctrine. The civil population becomes a referent of protection and the use of force is authorised to protect them from direct physical threats (reduced concept of human security), and a non-state player becomes a key part of the conflict. There are also different initiatives promoted by the UNIFIL which are integrated in the broad concept of human security and therefore give continuity to a tendency which wagers on giving more priority to the welfare of the Lebanese civilians.

²⁸ KALDOR, Mary. (2005). "Old Wars, New Wars, and the War on Terror". Cold War Studies Centre, London School of Economics. London.

²⁹ RES. 1701 (2006) of the Security Council, *Op. cit.* (p. 4)

³⁰ PADRÓS, Albert., *Op. cit.* (p. 215).

3. Conclusions

The UNIFIL may be defined as a necessarily traditional mission each time more influenced by the doctrine of human security. At the time when it was deployed, it was characterised as a clear mission of observation and interposition. Today the protection of the Lebanese civil population must be assured even through the use of force (in the event of direct physical threat). This fact, however, could lead to erroneous interpretations. The UNIFIL must continue to maintain its traditional mission through a classical interpretation of security, as its main duty is to fight an underlying conflict between two states.

It must also be said that, at the same time, the UNIFIL faces challenges of classical security and modern conflictivity. If the mission is incapable of foreseeing and pacifying the more than probable future escalation of violence, it will once more be immersed in another conflict of bitter consequences. To avoid this situation, the UNIFIL should not only use traditional military resources, but must also play an essential role in the development of the Lebanese political arena (trying to understand and manage the role of Hezbollah), the reconstruction and economic development of the country, and carry out effective diplomatic work, all extremely complicated tasks and present in the principles of human security.

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