LEBANON-SYRIA BORDERS
2009 REPORT

GLOSSARY & ABBREVIATIONS

BERM
A fortifying level strip of ground or sand at the summit, side, or base of a slope

DEFINITION
The act of naming natural features, villages, cities, rivers etc.

DELIMITATION
The act of establishing the limits or boundaries of a place or thing

DEMARCATION
The act of creating a boundary around a place or thing

GPS
Global Positioning System

LIBAT
Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team

UNIFIL
United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon

UNSCR
United Nations Security Council Resolution

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lebanese-Syrian border, which is approximately 365 km long, has never been fully demarcated on the ground. The notoriously porous border is a source of contention between Lebanon and Syria for two primary reasons: First, the poorly defined border is conducive to Syrian incursions into Lebanon, a country which is struggling to free itself from Syria's negative influence and assert its sovereignty over all of its territory. Second, the no-man's land of the border region is a breeding ground for the smuggling of arms and persons and a source of terrorism. Therefore, Lebanon and Syria have been under substantial pressure – domestically, regionally, and internationally – to secure their common border.

Since Syria withdrew its military from Lebanon in 2005, impetus on defining the common border became a possibility. However, three years later, the border remains as ambiguous and permeable as ever.

Relying on information from the United Nations Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team Reports, an independently commissioned border fact-finding survey, implementation reports on relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, and up-to-date news articles, this report will show that as a result of the undefined border, Syria maintains a presence on Lebanese territory and that smuggling is rampant in the border region.

Specifically, the report finds that:

• Syria maintains a military and civilian presence on Lebanese territory: In northeast Lebanon, Syrian nationals occupy Lebanese villages and homes, Syria maintains checkpoints, and in some cases prevents Lebanese citizens from accessing their land; in the southeast, Syrians trespass into Lebanon and villages are under the authority of the Syrian military and pro-Syrian Palestinian militias.

• The Shebˈaa Farms remains a disputed territory in part because of the ill-defined border. The territory is recognized internationally as Israeli-occupied Syrian territory, but it is recognized by both Lebanon and Syria as Lebanese.

• Lebanon's four official border crossing points, *Arida, Aboudieh, Kaˈa,* and *Masnaˈa*, do not meet international standards. They are located far from the border, poorly equipped, and ill-coordinated. Their insufficiencies leave the border region ripe for smuggling.

• Smuggling is pervasive in the border region: In northeast Lebanon, unpaved roads and smuggling passages run across the border and persons can cross freely into Syria without passing through any official checkpoint; In the southeast, there are areas that are entirely under the surveillance of the Syrians and foreign militias, where weapons are passed to arm militias.

In late 2008, Lebanon and Syria made the historic decision to establish diplomatic relations for the first time. All parties should take advantage of this opportune moment to implement the following recommendations:

• Demarcate the border without further delay

• Formally transfer the sovereignty of the Shebˈaa Farms to Lebanon and withdraw all non-Lebanese Forces from the Shebˈaa Farms and nothern Ghajar

• Implement the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team's recommendations

• Improve security coordination and information sharing between Lebanon and Syria

• Respect the Recommendations of All Relevant UN Security Council Resolutions

I. BACKGROUND

Lebanon's borders were defined, demarcated and delimitated under the French Mandate in 1920, however upon achieving independence from France after World War II, Lebanon and Syria never established a formal boundary separating the two states. When the newly formed Lebanese and Syrian governments asked the French government for official information on their common border, it was revealed that almost nothing existed.[i]

As a result, Lebanon and Syria formed a joint border committee in the late 1950s to determine a proper border and settle some territorial disputes, specifically regarding the Sheb'aa Farms in the southeast of Lebanon. In 1964, upon conclusion of its work, the committee presented its findings to the two governments and recommended that the international border be reestablished consistent with its suggestions. But, neither Syria nor Lebanon adopted the committee's suggestion, and neither country took the findings to the United Nations to have new international maps established.

Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan conceded that "there seems to be no official record of a formal international boundary agreement between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic..."[ii] Because no official borders have been agreed upon since, the internationally recognized borders of Lebanon today are still those established by the French Mandate in 1920.
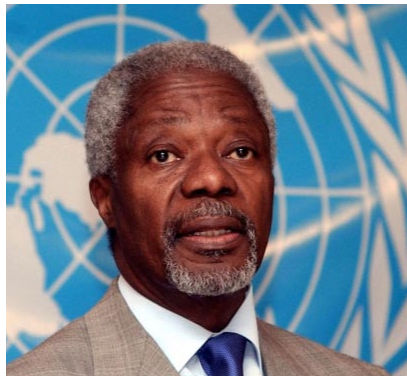
In 1975, Lebanon entered into a 15-year civil war during which its territorial integrity was violated by its neighbors Syria and Israel. By 1976, Syrian troops entered Lebanon, initially at the invitation of then Lebanese President Suleiman Frangieh, ostensibly to act as part of an Arab peacekeeping force. The Syrian presence in Lebanon transformed into a 29-year occupation, which contributed to Lebanon's civil conflict and lasted far beyond the signing of the Taif Accord which ended the civil war in 1989. During that period, Palestinian militias, Hezbollah, and other armed Arab groups established a presence in Lebanon. With Syrian approval, they set up camps and training centers and prevented the Lebanese authorities from enforcing law and order.

Recognizing that militias and the presence of foreign powers in Lebanon interfered with Lebanon's ability to exert its sovereignty over its territory, the UN Security Council issued multiple resolutions affirming the necessity of all powers to respect Lebanon as an independent, sovereign state.

In September 2004, the UN issued Security Council Resolution 1559 (UNSCR 1559), which called upon the Government of Lebanon to exert control over all Lebanese territory and reiterated its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders. UNSCR 1559 also stressed the importance of the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon. A few months later, on February 14, 2005, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri was assassinated. Because many Lebanese believe that Syria played a major role in Hariri's assassination, this tragic event and assault on Lebanese sovereignty inspired close to one million Lebanese protesters to gather in Beirut's Martyrs' Square on March 14, 2005 to demand the full withdrawal of Syrian forces and intelligence from Lebanon. On April 26, 2005, the Syrian army declared it had completed its withdrawal from Lebanon in line with UNSCR 1559, and on May 23, 2005, the UN released a report confirming that Syrian troops had withdrawn from Lebanon.

But the UN team that assessed the withdrawal was unable to conclude with certainty that all Syrian intelligence apparatuses had been withdrawn because "intelligence activities are by nature often clandestine".[iii] Additionally, the May 2005 UN report, which called for the demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border, noted that in Deir

Al-Ashayer, in the southeast of Lebanon, Lebanese citizens insisted that a Syrian base remained on Lebanese soil.[iv]

In August 2006 after the conclusion of a 33-day conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, the UN Security Council issued resolution 1701 (UNSCR 1701) calling upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and all entry points to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms or related material. Additionally, at a 2006 national dialogue meeting, Lebanon's top political leaders agreed on the urgency of demarcating the common border. However, because of strained relations between Lebanon and Syria, no substantial progress was made. [v]

As this report goes to print, the goals of UNSCR 1559 and UNSCR 1701 with regard to the demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border have not been satisfactorily met. There are still 17 non-delineated sectors along the common border winding through valleys or rivers with bushy banks.[vi] A May 2007 independent fact-finding survey commissioned by the New Opinion Workshop, based in Beirut, indicates that 460 km^2 of Lebanese territory is still under de facto Syrian control. The survey notes that hundreds of troops still remain in Lebanese territory, while there have been fresh Syrian incursions into Lebanon.

Similarly, an October 2008 report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team II found that Lebanon's borders remain penetrable and that UNSCR 1701 has not been fully implemented.[vii]
Furthermore, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted in the "Eighth Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559," there had not been significant progress in the delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian common border,[viii] and expressed his concern of "the general porosity of the Syrian-Lebanese borders that renders it easily penetrable." [ix]

Even as the Lebanese-Syrian border remains under dispute with Syrian troops, civilians, and possibly military intelligence remaining on Lebanon's territory, on October 15, 2008, the foreign ministers of Lebanon and Syria signed a memorandum to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. They expect to exchange embassy-level missions by year's end. The establishment of diplomatic relations represents a positive development – both on a practical and a symbolic level. However, as long as the Lebanese-Syrian border remains partially undefined and Syrians maintain a presence on Lebanese soil, Syria is essentially refusing to fully recognize Lebanon's sovereignty.

II. AREAS OF INCURSION AND OCCUPATION BY SYRIA AND ISRAEL

"[T]he positioning of [Syrian] troops and equipment [in Lebanon] reflects not only Syrian security concerns along its vulnerable western flank, but also a manifestation of the ruling Baath Party, which has never recognized Lebanon as an independent state."[x]
~Nicholas Blanford, Middle East correspondent for The Times of London, July 2008

Despite talk of normalizing relations between the two countries, commercial satellite imagery obtained by *Jane's Intelligence Review* from DigitalGlobe from December 24, 2006 through March 12, 2008 indicates an increase rather than decrease of equipment and activity at Syrian military bases on Lebanese soil.[xi]

a. North
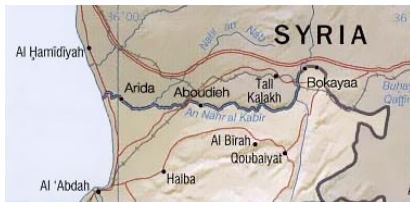
Under the French Mandate, Lebanon's northern border was defined as follows: from Nahr al-Kabir al-Janubi (starting from the Mediterranean) to Wadi Khaled and the height of Jisr al-Qamar.

The 2007 assessment by the independent fact-finding team found that Syria maintained a presence beyond this border.

Villages in the **Wadi Khaled** region (See Image A), specifically **Knais-**

Image A: Google image showing the villages in th Wadi Khaled regon pointed to by the black arrow

seh and **Hnaider** (centering around GPS coordinates: 34°36'38.72"N / 36°26'59.72"E.) which are historically delimitated and fixed, were fully occupied by the Syrian army at the time of the assessment.[xii] An August 2008 report confirmed that this area is still predominantly under Syrian influence.[xiii] (See Section IV for information on smuggling in the Wadi Khaled area.)

In the village of Hakar Jenin, which lies to the south of Nahr al-Kabir al-Janubi (GPS coordinates: Latitude 34°37'13.04"N / Longitude 36°10'27.05"E [GPS taken from Google as a rough estimate]), villagers reported that they saw Syrian bulldozers diverting the river bed to al-Hirish - Hakar Jenin, where the river splits in two. The land inside the delta belongs to Lebanese from the village of Amar al-Bikat. [xiv]

b. Northeast

The French Mandate defined Lebanon's eastern border as follows: from the summit of the hill separating Wadi Khaled and Wadi Nahr al-Assi, passing the villages of Maissra, Harba'ata, Hit, Abech, Fissan, to the altitude of the villages of Brina and Mitirba, to the north-east and south-east borders of the caza, or district, of North Baalbek and the borders of the cazas of Baalbek, Beka'a, Hasbaya and North Rashaya.

The village of Ka'a (GPS coordinates: Latitude 34°13'21.65"N / Longitude 36°32'13.46"E), which was historically delineated, demarcated, and defined,

was invaded by the Syrians in 1978, when they massacred more than 30 young men. The Syrians continued to occupy Kaʿa for 27 years and though they presumably withdrew from this area in April 2005, villagers of Kaʿa reported in 2007 that Syria maintains a presence, occupying over 15km[2].

Specifically, Lot No 7 of Kaʿa/Jiwar Maʿiya, which is co-owned by several residents of Kaʿa, is currently occupied by Syrian nationals. Archives and maps found in the municipality of Kaʿa show this property to be the subject of litigation with the Syrian govern-

ment. The title deeds and the certificates of registration prove the ownership of Lot No 7 by Lebanese residents of Kaʿa. Additionally, Lot No 43 of Kaʿa/Baʿayoun is owned by the Republic of Lebanon and according to Article 7 of the Lebanese Land Law, is the property of the Kaʿa municipality. A map that highlights the disputed area can be found in the archives of the Kaʿa municipality.

Furthermore, Syrian border guards have established an earth berm – a fortifying level strip of ground – deep in the village, adjacent to the border, allegedly to stop smugglers. (See Image B at right). The berm has prevented citizens and landowners from accessing their lands at Rajm al-Afrit, Nehmat al-Tahta, al-Makbara, Nehmat al-Fawqa, and Wadi Baʿayoun, particularly in the region of Kaʿa/ Baʿayoun. It has also created a situation in which Syrian citizens, under the protection of the Syrian Arab Republic and/or influential Lebanese officials are occupying huge areas north of the berms, where they carry out construction work, especially in Wadi Baʿayoun. [xv] (See Section III for information on the Kaʿa border crossing point and Section IV for information on smuggling passages in the region).

The village of Maarboun (GPS co-ordinates: Latitude 33°50′12.57″N / Longitude 36°11′26.88″E), located to

Image B: Google image of an earth berm erected by the Syrians inside Kaʿa area

Image C: Google image of Maarboun-Yahfoufa with yellow pins indicating the Syrian occupation.

the east of Baalbek, has been involved in a continuous and often violent 18-year dispute with village of Serghaya in Syria. The 2007 assessment found that parts of this area were still occupied by Syria, which was systematically annexing more land as part of what appeared to be an ongoing process of expropriation on the plains and hills of Maaraboun and Ham. (See Image C on previous page.) Furthermore, in Maarboun, the Syrian army has blocked the plain with earth berms, denying access to landowners and farmers (See 058 on Image C). Again, the only excuse offered by Syrians for building these berms – 2,800m inside Lebanese territory – is that they are necessary to prevent smuggling. [xvi]

To the northeast of Maarboun, the villages of **Yahfoufa** and **Ham** form a fertile agricultural area that extends from the north of Yahfoufa to the southern end of the plain at the northern border of the Syrian village Serghaya. As noted above, this area has been host to an ongoing border dispute with Syrian peasants, who, backed by the Syrian army, have seized Lebanese land extending north of Serghaya.

In 2007, the assessment team observed that the Syrian army had a checkpoint more than 1,600m inside Lebanese territory (see 055, 057 on image C on previous page). This checkpoint intercepted all Lebanese wishing to access their land. (See Section IV for more information on Syrian checkpoints in this area.) There was also a communication station on the hill overlooking the valley, while the land to the east of the plain (057) had

been exploited by the Syrians, making it impossible for Lebanese villagers to build a road to nearby Kalaa (056).

The villages of **'Arssal** and **Ras Baalbek** (Latitude 34° 4'27.76"N / Longitude 36°23'51.75"E, and 34°10'12.54"N /36°32'56.55"E) are internationally recognized as the fixed border between Lebanon and Syria, as demarcated by the French Army in 1934. Files documenting this demarcation can be accessed from archives at the French Foreign Ministry.

In spite of this, the areas of Houwarta, Darjet Khoshin, Khirbat Daoud, and Khorbat Unine have been occupied by Syrian peasants and soldiers who – ignoring the protests of Lebanese villagers and officials – have erected earth berms and confiscated land. (See image D below.)
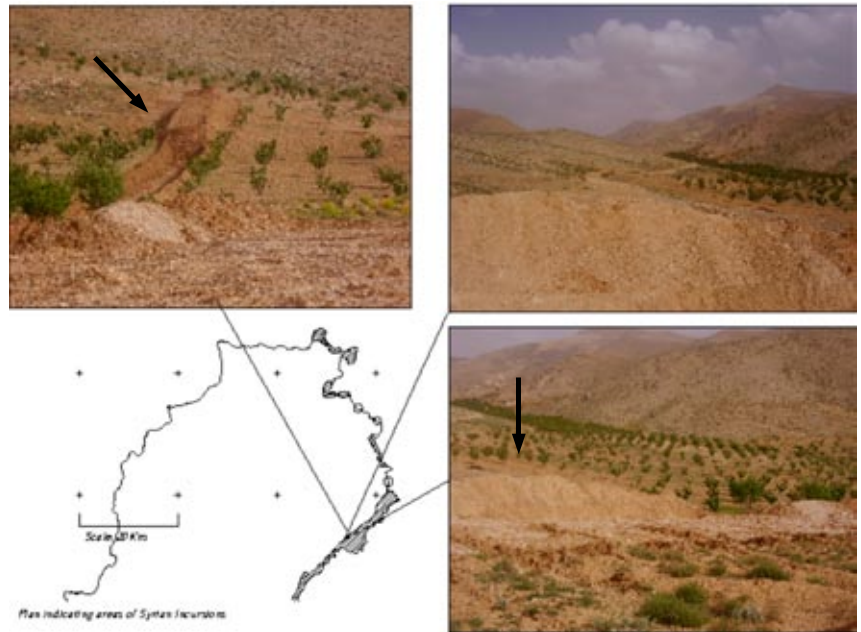

Image D: Earth berms erected by the Syrian Aamy inside Lebanese territory to deny the Lebanese farmers from accessing their lands and to put the area under occupation. This area is 5 km x18 km

Because the feud between the villagers of 'Arssal and the Syrians is over the ownership of the deeds, not over the sovereignty of the land, this is a clear case of Syrian occupation. [xvii] (See Section IV for information on smuggling passages in 'Arssal and

Ras Baalbek.)

In the village of **Toufeil** (GPS coordinates: Latitude 33°50'31.29"N / Longitude 36°22'4.07"E) the 2007 assessment noted that the Syrian army had erected an earth berm which runs 17km paral-

Image E: Google image showing part of the 17km earth berm near Toufeil (black arrows).

lel to the border inside Lebanese territory southward (See 064, 065, 06 in image E on following page) and northward (069, 070, 071). Additionally, the Syrians were occupying the outskirts of Toufeil (067, 068) taking advantage of the area's remoteness from other Lebanese communities as well as their proximity to the Syrian villages of Kania and Ma'aloula. In fact, there were no Lebanese police stations or army checkpoints in the area. (See Section IV for information on and smuggling passages in Toufeil.)

Villagers have testified to the fact that Syrians steal rocks from the historic Nimrod castle to the east of Ain Al-Jawze, while to the north, the farmers of Britel have complained of smuggling operations through the mountains. The Lebanese army only has checkpoints on the main road from Maarboun, Ham, and Nabi Sbat, and not through the highlands of these villages. [xviii]

c. Southeast
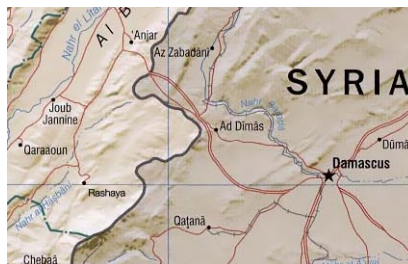
Under the French Mandate, Lebanon's southern border was defined as follows: the borders of the cazas of Tyre and South Marjayoun.

Perhaps the most disputed area of the Lebanese-Syrian border is in the southeast, where the Syrian military has a strong presence and where Lebanon intersects with both Syria and Israel. Because the border was never fully demarcated on the ground, it is unsurprising that there is disagreement over the sovereignty of the area in which Syrian troops are deployed and over the land which Israel occupies.

According to Nicholas Blanford, Middle East correspondent for *The Times of London*, "Lebanese maps and interna-

tionally recognised maps, such as those produced by the UN, confirm that the Syrian military outposts are located in Lebanese territory." However, Syrian military maps indicate that the bases are inside Syria because the delineation of Lebanon's southeast border differs significantly between Syria's maps and those of Lebanon and the UN.[xix] The villages of **Kfarzabad** (GPS coordinates: Latitude 33°47'13.04"N / Longitude 36° 0'35.44"E), **Ain Kfarzabad, Kossaya** (GPS coordinates: 33°48'11.08"N / 36° 1'49.43"E), **Hashmish**, and **Deir al-Ghazal** were historically delineated, demarcated, and defined, but in 2007, all were under Syrian occupation, except Kossaya which was occupied by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). The villages are 1,000m - 4,000m inside Lebanon in an area that was only accessible via Syrian checkpoints. The outlying areas also had a heavy foreign military presence.[xx]

The entirety of the **Rashaya** district, (delineated by the villages of Maysaloun, Mazraat, Deir al-Ashayer, and Halwa) with the outskirts of Deir al-Ashayer and other villages up until Kfarqouk were under Syrian occupation at the time of the 2007 assessment. The outskirts of the villages of Halwa and Yanta were under PFLP-GC control.[xxi]

Blanford confirmed in a July 2008 article that Syria continues to deploy troops in the remote and rugged hills north of the town of Rashaya al-Wadi. In Blanford's opinion, "The Syrian positions in Lebanon appeared designed purely as a forward defensive line in the case of any Israeli advance, and not

as conduits for weaponry smuggled from Syria to Hizbullah."[xxii]

The case of **Deir al-Ashayer** (GPS Coordinates: Latitude 33°33'24.63"N / Longitude 36° 0'34.81"E), in the Rashaya district, is of particular note. As of May 2007, there were approximately six Syrian military positions scattered over the hills and valleys along an old road that connects Deir al-Ashayer to Kfarqouk. Even after the UN formally verified that the Syrian troops had left Lebanon, it acknowledged that there was a discrepancy over the delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian border in this specific area.[xxiii]

On numerous instances (including but not limited to a 2005 letter to the Security Council and the 2nd and 5th semi-annual reports on UNSCR 1559) the UN Secretary-General singled out Deir al-Ashayer as a territory whose status remains unclear and needs to be addressed in a formal border agreement in order to guarantee the territorial integrity of Lebanon. Most recently on August 30, 2008, the Council of Ministers of Lebanon denounced the trespassing of Syrian citizens in Deir al-Ashayer reportedly to dig two wells on Lebanese territory. In the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, "This incident exemplifies the importance of the timely implementation of tangible measures towards the delineation of the border between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon."[xxiv]

Similarly, residents of **Kfarqouk** (GPS Coordinates: Latitude 33°32'44.83"N/ Longitude 35°53'29.73"E) have asserted that Syrians are stationed on

their farmland as well. Antoine Saad, a retired Lebanese army general and MP from the area, researched this issue and found 10 families from Deir al-Ashayer and Kfarqouk that own property in Lebanese territory under the military control of Syria.[xxv]

According to the 2007 assessment, the Syrians have also advanced towards the village of **Masna'a** (GPS coordinates: Latitude 33°42'8.47"N / Longitude 35°55'27.82"E), which lies east of the international highway dividing Lebanon and Syria. The fact-finding mission observed that the Syrian army advanced from the intersection of the village Birak al Rassass, which used to be considered the border point between Lebanon and Syria, and moved even closer to the Masna'a customs point. The mission observed that the Syrian army was 1,500m from the Lebanese customs point at Masna'a and not the 5,000m where it should be stationed. It was the same situation to the west of the highway, where the Syrian army had established checkpoints and where soldiers had positioned themselves behind earth

berms, ostensibly to prevent smuggling. The assessment found that the Syrian army was approximately 3,000m inside Lebanese territory.

Heading north from the Masna'a border crossing point along the border, the 2007 assessment team observed only two spots under Lebanese authority, which were the hills of Masna'a and Zira'a, both of which are which are directly to the northeast of the Lebanese customs checkpoint. (The first is 1,000m and the second is 1,900m in a straight line from the checkpoint.) These two hills can be accessed by 4WD vehicles, but one must pass through Syrian checkpoints occupying the hills directly facing them even though they are inside Lebanese territory. [xxvi]

d. Sheb'aa Farms and the Village of Ghajar

Possibly the best known of Lebanon's territorial disputes is the disagreement over the Sheb'aa Farms (GPS coordinates: Latitude 33° 17' 0" N/ Longitude 35° 42' 0" E), a 25 km^2

Lebanese and UN officers look at an Israeli military outpost as they study a map in the Bastara farm near the Lebanese-Israeli border on July 14, 2008. AFP PHOTO/ALI DIA

enclave composed of 14 farms located along Lebanon's southeast border between the Asal Valley, in the northern Golan Heights, and the Syrian-Lebanese border. This land is currently occupied by Israel, which captured it as part of Golan Heights in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Israel and the UN recognize the Sheb'aa Farms as Syrian territory to eventually be returned to Syria along with the rest of the Golan Heights as mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 242. But due to the fact that the Lebanese-Syrian border was never formally demarcated, even U.S. State Department officials and other experts concede that there are no precise boundaries to the Sheb'aa Farms area.[xxvii] In fact, during the mandate period, French officials often expressed confusion on the question of where the border lay, and in 1939, one official expressed the belief that the uncertainty over the area of the Sheb'aa Farms was sure to cause trouble in the future.[xxviii]

Lebanon, supported by Syria, asserts that this territory is part of Lebanon and therefore demands that Israel withdraw from it as it did from the rest of Lebanon's south in 2000. Residents of the nearby town of Sheb'aa, which is indisputably Lebanese territory, say that they and their ancestors had cultivated the Sheb'aa Farms for over 200 years before most Lebanese were evicted in 1967 by the Israelis. Documents from the 1920s and 1930s show that the local inhabitants regarded themselves as Lebanese, for example by paying taxes to the Lebanese government. [xxix]

The Lebanese Government even pos-

sesses title deeds showing Lebanese ownership of the farmlands in the disputed area, as well as other documents indicating that Lebanese governmental and religious institutions had held jurisdiction over the farmlands at various times.[xxx] The issue of this small enclave was largely forgotten during the 1980s and 1990s, because it was overshadowed by the fact that Israel was occupying much of Lebanon's south.

The question of the Farms' sovereignty was thrust onto the international stage in the months preceding Israel's May 2000 troop withdrawal from South Lebanon. On May 4, 2000, just before Israel was to begin withdrawing troops, Lebanon demanded that the Sheb'aa Farms be liberated in addition to the security zone in the very south of Lebanon. The Lebanese Government presented to the UN documentation proving its ownership of farmlands in the disputed area and it informed the UN that a joint Lebanese-Syrian border commission concluded in 1964 that the Sheb'aa Farms area was Lebanese land. Lebanon requested that the international border be redefined to reflect that conclusion.

But redefining the territory would require modifying the long-standing UN Security Council decisions on Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights and South Lebanon. Since the UN Security Council Resolution 425 (UNSCR 425), which called upon Israel to withdraw from South Lebanon, was issued in 1978, the Sheb'aa Farms, which were captured in 1967, couldn't possibly fall under the mandate of this

resolution. Thus, on June 16, 2000, the UN Secretary-General informed the UN Security Council that Israel had fully complied with UNSCR 425 by withdrawing from South Lebanon even though it had not withdrawn from the Sheb'aa Farms. The UN Secretary-General noted however, that the UN ruling does not preclude a future agreement between Lebanon and Syria over the Sheb'aa Farms.[xxxi]

The Syrian Government has verbally stated that the Sheb'aa Farms are Lebanese, but as is the case with the rest of the Lebanon-Syria border, it has been unwilling to commit to a formal border demarcation in the area[xxxii] and it has declined to provide the necessary documentation to the UN which would confirm Lebanese sovereignty over the land. In 1951, the two counties entered into an oral agreement transferring the land from Syria to Lebanon without notifying the UN or redrawing the map of the border. Because of the informal nature of this agreement, all internationally recognized maps mark the Farms as Syrian territory. Though recent statements by Syrian officials indicate that general border demarcation is imminent, Syria has also indicated that it is unwilling to demarcate the Sheb'aa Farms enclave, formally recognizing Lebanon's sovereignty over the territory, until Israel liberates the Golan Heights.[xxxiii]

The village of Ghajar also falls between the occupied Golan Heights and Lebanon's southern border. When Israel withdrew from South Lebanon in 2000, the village was split, with the

northern half of Ghajar internation-ally recognized as Lebanese territo-ry, and the southern half as Israeli. Israeli troops returned the northern half of Ghajar after the 2006 war be-tween Israel and Hezbollah. The UN Secretary-General cited the Israel occupation of Ghajar as a violation of UNSCR 1701 in his November 2008.

The UN is supporting negotiations for the transfer of nothern Ghajar once again to Lebanon. Specifically, UNIFIL drafted a proposal to fa-cilitate the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from the area. The Government of Lebanon accept-ed the proposal on August 22, 2008 on the condition that Israel agreed to the proposal within three months, but as this report goes to print, Israel has not formally responded to the UNIFIL proposal.[xxxiv] *Haaretz*, the Israeli daily newspaper, reported that the Government of Israel announced on November 19, 2008 that it would enter into ne-gotiations with the UN regarding withdrawing the Israeli military from

the northern half of Ghajar.[xxxv]

e. Syrian Troop Movements

In late 2008, Syria moved more troops to the Lebanese border presumably to deter smuggling of weapons and drugs, and as a response to fears of terrorist activ-ity. In August and September, 2008, Tripoli was host to a string of terror-ist attacks, leaving approximately 21 dead and 32 injured. Damascus also suffered from a car bomb attack in late September 2008, which killed 17.

Therefore, to better monitor the bor-der, Damascus sent 10,000 addition-al troops and tanks to its border with northern Lebanon in September and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad took part in a border drill held by the Syrian army. The Syrian troops were stationed near Lebanon's second-largest city, Tripoli, where Jihad-ist fighters are believed to have a strong a base of support. In the end of October, following a United States

raid near the Syrian village of Abu Kamal, five miles north of the Iraqi-Syrian border, Syria mobilized some 3,000 additional troops to the Leba-nese border.[xxxvi] Again, Damascus justified this move as a redoubled effort to "combat smuggling."[xxxvii]

III. BORDER CROSSING POINTS

*"The overall situation renders Lebanon's borders as penetrable as they were
one year ago during the first assessment."[xxxviii]*
-Report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team II, August 2008

As stipulated by paragraph 14 of UN-SCR 1701, in which the UN Security Council called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and all entry points to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel, the UN Secretary-General, in close liaison with the Government of Lebanon, dispatched the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) from May 27 to June 15, 2007. LIBAT, which was composed of border security experts, fully assessed the monitoring of Lebanon's official border crossing points with Syria and reported its findings and recommendations of the mission to the UN Security Council.

In the interest of assessing the implementation of the recommendations of LIBAT and updating the UN Security Council on the conditions of the border, a second assessment was carried out (LIBAT II) from July 15- 30, 2008. During this period the Team held talks with principal actors in the Government of Lebanon, the directors of the four agencies involved in border security (the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, General Security, and General Customs, collectively known as the Common Border Force) and their local commanders, stakeholders in the Northern Border Pilot Project (a border security project led by the German government), and representatives of donor countries. [xxxix]

LIBAT II visited all four official operating border crossing points: **Arida** (north of Tripoli along the coast), **Aboudieh** (north-east of Tripoli), **Ka'a** (at the northern edge of the Beka'a Valley), and **Masna'a** in the east (on the international highway). The Team also visited the border crossing point at **Bokayaa** (on the northern border) which is still being constructed. Statistics received from the offices of the Director of Customs show that Masna'a handles the largest number of incoming and outgoing vehicles daily, while Aboudieh handles the second largest, Arida the third largest, and Ka'a the least number of vehicles daily.[xl]

LIBAT II concluded that "even taking into consideration the difficult political situation in Lebanon during the past year, and notwithstanding the ac-

tivities of the Northern Border Pilot Project and the Common Border Force, the rate of progress and implementation of the recommendations of Team I has been insufficient. There are, at most, disconnected islands of progress but there has been no decisive impact on overall border security."[xli] Two weeks after the LIBAT II assessment, Lebanese and Syrian authorities announced at the conclusion of the Lebanese-Syrian summit held in Damascus on August 13-14, that they would revive the work of the joint committee for delineating the common border. [xlii] On November 10, 2008, when the Interior Ministers of Lebanon and Syria, Ziad Baroud and Bassam Abdul Majid, respectively, met in Damascus, they agreed to boost border controls and counter-terrorism coordination. [xliii]

The following section includes a summary of the findings of the two LIBAT assessments:

An Iraqi truck, parked at the Al-Arida border crossing between Syria and Lebanon. AFP PHOTO/HO/SANA

1. Arida

The Arida border crossing point is located near the coast northwest of the border with Syria and it is the only operating crossing point that is located directly at the border. LIBAT I found that the premises at Arida were squeezed into a small area, which is not large enough for trucks and cargo, and that premises of General Security and General Customs were outdated, poorly furnished, and insufficiently equipped. The Team reported a lack of vehicles, radios, equipment, scanners, cameras, and explosive detectors. Customs operations were not computerized, however the equipment donated by Germany for the detection of forgeries (DocuBox and document examination toolkits) was present and working.[xliv]

LIBAT II reported that the situation at the Arida crossing point differed little from previous reports. General Security and General Customs have not relocated to a more suitable location, though a new site has been identified and cleared. Once completed, the Team recommended that it be utilized in such a way as to facilitate a one-stop control system.[xlv]

2. Aboudieh

Aboudieh is the main border crossing point at the northern border receiving on average 123 trucks entering and 192 exiting per day and an average of 1,015 cars and buses in both directions. When LIBAT I first assessed Aboudieh, the team was very critical of the fact that its premises were situated approximately 1 km from the borderline, which made it possible for persons to enter into Leba-

non without passing through the official crossing point. There was a narrow road that picked up immediately after leaving the Syrian border and dropped off a few meters before reaching the Lebanese Customs advance post. Therefore, persons could cross the border without passing through the immigration check-in at the crossing point.[xlvi]

LIBAT II concluded that Aboudieh reflects the most visible changes since the first assessment. Most importantly, the border checkpoint now sits directly at the border, which makes it far more difficult for persons to evade checking in with customs before entering Lebanon. General Security and General Customs now share the same premises, "which fosters an integrated border management approach and the execution of a one-stop control." The new site is not completely functional yet due to lack of a power supply; however it should be fully operational by the end of 2008.[xlvii]

3. Ka'a

The Ka'a border crossing point is one of two along the eastern border with Syria, located approximately 10 km southeast of the city of Hermel. Similar

to Aboudieh, when LIBAT I visited the border crossing, the Team was concerned that the premises were situated approximately 10 km from the borderline. Lebanese Armed Forces staff checks for suspicious passengers and vehicles near the border line; however this is by no means an efficient or fool-proof way to catch persons who aim to enter Lebanon illegally.[xlviii] The LIBAT II team saw no changes at the Ka'a border crossing point and reported that according to Lebanese officials wth whom the team met at the site at the time there were no plans to move the site closer to the border.[xlix]

The LIBAT I team also noted that General Security at Ka'a was poorly equipped, lacking vehicles and radio equipment, and that inter-agency cooperation did not take place between General Security at the border crossing point and the Lebanese Armed Forces at the forward post or at customs. Additionally, cooperation between officials from the two sides of the border was nonexistent.[l] The LIBAT II reported noted no improvement

Syian border employees stand behind a closed gate at the Ka'a border post with Lebanon, 21 June 2007. AFP PHOTO/HASSAN JARAH

on any of these issues.

A foreign correspondent for the French newspaper, *Le Figaro,* Georges Malbrunot, noted in an October 2008 piece, "Smuggling Flourishes along the Lebanese-Syrian Border," that Kaʿa is used as a crossing point for illegal Iraqi immigrants and – most importantly – for Hezbollah. Malbrunot's report highlights the danger of having the official border crossing points so far from the actual border. He observed that locals regularly fool the Lebanese border guards by leading persons to the other side of the outpost where there are tents which are inhabited by a "shady population of Syrian workers and gypsies." Malbrunot points out, "It is worth mentioning that we are not yet in Syria: The border still lies 11 km away. The 3,000 inhabitants of this gray zone are fearlessly involved in all kinds of smuggling operations, from cigarettes conveyed over the Anti-Lebanon mountain range using donkeys, cement going to Iraq and spare parts of stolen goods, to drugs, clothes, diapers and, above all as winter draws near, fuel oil shipped secretly from Syria at lower prices."[li]

4. Masnaʿa

Masnaʿa is the main border crossing point at the eastern border and is the most important point for cross-border traffic to Damascus. Again, at Masnaʿa, there is the major problem of the distance between the checkpoint and the actual bor-

The Masnaʿa border crossing on May 14, 2008: Bulldozers reopened the Masnaʿa point that was closed in reaction to the shutdown by the militant group Hezbollah of the main road leading to Beirut's airport. AFP PHOTO/JOSEPH BARRAK

der- in this case 8 kilometers. An advance customs post is situated by the border and a Customs Brigade is responsible for ensuring that cargo and suspicious passengers are escorted to the official crossing point. However, Lebanese officials estimate that 3,000 individuals are living in villages situated between the borderline and the official crossing point, which complicates the matter of determining which vehicles are attempting to enter Lebanon illegally.

The LIBAT I Team observed that Masnaʿa's premises were highly unsatisfactory since the cargo area where trucks are located was not fenced and there was no infrastructure or equipment for the inspection of cargo. Even the Lebanese authorities acknowl-

edged that the flow of traffic and the logistics of the compound are inadequate. Additionally, General Security and General Customs at this border crossing point were in general poorly equipped, lacking sufficient vehicles, radio equipment and hand-held devices for detecting explosives, weapons, or concealed compartments.[lii]

LIBAT II noted that although the plans to move the checkpoint closer to the border were not carried out, an interim arrangement was made in which neighboring lands were purchased and the site was satisfactorily redesigned in the opinion of the Team. Additionally, a scanner unit was installed at Masnaʿa, which scans an average 30 trucks out of the approximate 200 that pass through the checkpoint each day.

Unfortunately, the Team saw no indication of how these trucks were being selected, nor did they observe any standardized risk assessment. In fact, it appeared to the Team that random selection is based upon the intuition of the General Customs officers alone. They concluded, "The entire location at Masna'a remains disorganized and highly unsystematic. It is possible to enter Lebanon without being properly checked by devising a route that circumvents this checkpoint."[liii]

5. Bokayaa

Although the Bokayaa border crossing point, located approximately 25 km east of the Aboudieh border crossing point, was due to be operational by July 2007, it was still being constructed when LIBAT II visited the site in July 2008. LIBAT II observed that the Lebanese officials at the site presented a promising plan and that the deficiencies highlighted by the LIBAT I team, including the distance of the crossing point from the border, were duly noted. Offices are to be installed directly at the border, which will enable General Security and General Customs to work closely together. The Team noticed that the Syrian authorities erected a new border crossing point on their side of the border.[liv]

LIBAT II concluded that, in general, Lebanon has not yet succeeded in enhancing the overall security of its borders in any significant manner. But UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted that the burden of securing the border does not lie solely upon Lebanon and that it is important that all states bear a responsability in abiding by the arms embargo called for in UNSCR 1701. Ban criticized Syria for continuing to deny any involvement in breaches of the arms embargo.[lv]

IV. UNOFFICIAL BORDER CROSSINGS & SMUGGLE ROUTES

"[F]or 50 years, the border between Lebanon and Syria hasn't really kept any-one out."[lvi]
-Anonymous Lebanese Diplomat in Beirut

While assessing the security of official border crossing points is certainly a worthwhile exercise, it is equally relevant to examine the unofficial passages that extend over the porous border that divides Lebanon and Syria, since this is where the bulk of smuggling occurs. The nature of the landscape and the lack of surveillance by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities makes the smuggling business of drugs, fuel, stolen cars and weapons a flourishing trading business- with weapons being the most critical and sensitive issue. Groups such as the PFLP-GC, Hezbollah, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Baath Party, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard are the beneficiaries of such trading. During the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, smuggling was directly supervised by the Syrian intelligence officers with the help of the groups mentioned above, creating a solid financial revenue.[lvii]

The May 2007 independent survey commissioned by the New Opinion Workshop examined smuggling routes on 60% of the border. The following is a selection of its findings:

1. Northeast

At **Horsh Sayed Ali** (See Image F at right), a highland of the town of Hermel, there were no legal crossing points, nor were there any Lebanese border guards present. Instead, the border was marked by the Zita water duct, which was paved making it easy to cross. Though the Lebanese authorities maintained no presence at Horsh Sayed Ali , the fact-finding team took note of some Syrian border guards on the Syrian side of the border.

Additional smuggling passages exist in the northeast, originating in **Msharfeh** in the north and passing through the highlands of **Ras Baalbek** and **ʿArssal**. Eventually they reach

Image F: Illegal crossing between Lebanon and Syria in Horsh Sayed Ali. People can freely cross border without any control and under the field vision of the Syrian Army.

the village of Younin, where there are numerous passages and an earth berm into which smugglers dig holes to facilitate the exchange of goods. These passages are in the highlands of al-Fakʿha and Wadi Martbaya, al-Akaba, Wadi al-Aawaj, and other locations in the ʿArssal area.

More illegal smuggling passages exist along a rugged, mountainous road from **ʿArssal** to **Toufeil**, specifically at Wadi al-Hawa, Wadi al-Nahassa, and Wadi al-Jamala, and southeast of Maarboun, where there is a 1km footpath linking Lebanon to the Syrian village of Serghaya.

Perhaps most threatening smuggling routes originate in the highlands of the villages of **Beit Mbarak, Massa, Yanta, Yahfoufa,** and **al-Nabi Sheet.** The outksirts of al-Nabi Sheet, which is a key village in the coordination of Hezbollah operations, is home to a Hezbollah military training camp, equipped with underground tunnels and three illegal passages in the area of al- Shaara.[lviii]

In the village of **Knaisseh** in the **Wadi Khaled** region, villagers freely pass between Lebanon and Syria on a daily basis without passing through any formal border crossing point, liber-ally transporting goods. Though they admit that their actions may be per-ceived as smuggling, the villagers de-fend the smuggling of cement, which costs less in Syria, to build a house, for example, as being harmless in comparison to the smuggling of arms, which occurs elsewhere on the border. According to Abou Louai, a resident of Knaisseh who buys tomatoes, bread, and diesel fuel on daily visits to Syria,

"Smuggling of arms happens in areas very known to the state, and it doesn't happen on small roads like this; it happens on large roads in front of everybody...But [the Lebanese government] won't do anything about it."[lix]

2. Southeast

In the southeast, the *Bir al-Hadid* passage can be reached by following a 6km unpaved, sandy road beginning at *Kossaya* and heading south to the top of the mountains villages of *Ain Kfarzabad* and *Kfarzabad.* The road splits midway, with one branch leading directly to the border and the other towards a PFLP-GC camp, at which point further progress is denied. The camp is 5km from the al-Hadid passage, but once the passage is reached, it continues to a Syrian camp with one route leading to the Maadar area and on to Jdeidet Yabouss in Syria, and the other to al-Zabadan also in Syria. Both are guarded by PFLP-GC militiamen on the Lebanese side and by the Syrian army on the Syrian side. Satellite images indicate smuggling passages through the mountains in this area (see image L), however access by foot was denied to the fact-finding mission.

The area north of the *Wadi Anjar hill,* is an ideal climate for smuggling. According to the 2007 survey, the villages of Kfarzabad, Ain Kfarzabad, Hashmish, and Deir Al Ghazal, were under Syrian occupation and the village of Kossaya was under the control of the PFLP-GC. This entire area is roughly 1,000m-4,000m inside Lebanese territory, but it cannot be accessed except through Syrian checkpoints. Since the hills (See 044, 045 on image H at right) are adjacent, the valleys in between are ideal for smuggling. Some are footpaths, while others can be crossed using 4WD vehicles, caterpillars (Syr 045, 047, 053) or big trucks, especially on the Kossaya and Reit roads (Syr 048, Syr 054). Some passages have rest and storage stations (Syr 046).

Also in the southeast, the *Wadi Anjar passage* links the village of Anjar to the Syrian village al-Kfeir, also known as Wadi Anjar. The Lebanese army closed this path with earth berms but other passages have been created in the absence of a permanent Lebanese army presence.

Image G: Google image showing the Palestinian camp on the mountain of Kossaya –Kfarzabad (yellow arrow). Black arrows depict what is thought to be tunnels dug inside the mountain

There is also an *unpaved road* starting in the middle of the village of *Souayri* stretching to the plains of Aita al-Fakkhar/Birak al-Rassass up to
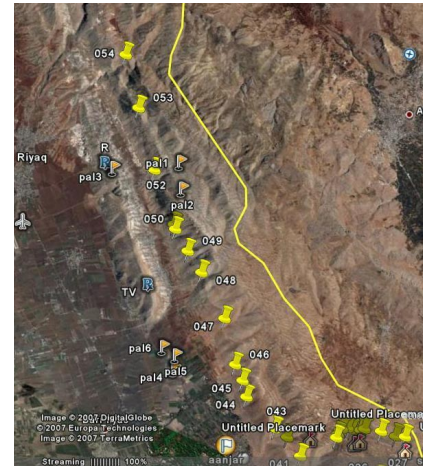

Image H: Google image of illegal passages in southeast Lebanon.

Jdeidet Yabouss in Syria. The hills of Aita al-Fakkhar are the scene of constant incursions by the Syrian military, as are the outskirts of the villages of Souwayri, Manara, and Aita al-Fakkhar. Although the Lebanese army has checkpoints on the hills overlooking these villages, the vast landscape and forests do not allow them to fully control the smuggling or the clandestine entry of foreign Jihadists via the highland passages.

Additionally, there is a *road* leading from *Aita al-Fakkhar* to *Yanta*, which splits at the quarry of Androas, with one branch, which is accessible to all cars, leading to Syria. In the outskirts of Yanta, there are many military camps present, such as the Kurdish camps south of *Helwe*, the PFLP-GC training camps (See Pal 12 & 13 on

the Image H on previous page) as well as observation points (Pal 18 & Pal 15), tunnels, and underground hiding places (Pal 14 & 10) and mountains (Pal 16, 17 & 19). This is an area that is outside the control of the Lebanese government and is open to the Syrian border.[lvi]

Malbrunot refers to this area as "the paradise of smuggling and guerilla activity on the border between Lebanon and Syria." As he puts it, "Located in the middle of nowhere, this village [Helwe] is composed of only a dozen houses and a few camps housing members of Fatah al-Intifada, a pro-Syrian Palestinian faction, manning small forts in the vicinity. This is still Lebanon, but it has been ages since the Lebanese army has last set foot in this Syrian enclave, from which the press is theoretically banned." A Western military expert asserted that the Palestinians use this as a hub for light weapons shipped in from Syria and distribute them in other refugee camps across Lebanon.[lxii]

Blanford concurs that this lawless region has resulted in the smuggling of weaponry. He states that "Hizbullah receives much of its armaments along the border in the northern Beka'a Valley adjacent to the Shia areas under the group's control."[lxiii]

In the "Eighth Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559,"Ban Ki-Moon highlights the threat that the militias around the border present and notes that a number of Member States have expressed their concern that weapons and fighters continue to flow across the Syrian-Lebanese border. He states, "the permanent presence of paramilitary infrastructures belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, which straddle the border, gives such groups de facto control of parts of the border."[lxiv]

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lebanon has taken impressive strides towards becoming a fully independent, sovereign nation and shaking off its image as a Syrian puppet state, as it was perceived during the 29-year occupation. Today, the two states are on the verge of exchanging embassies, a sign, many hope, that Syria has finally abandoned its vision of Lebanon as part of "Greater Syria."

But as this report reveals, realities on the ground suggest there is much more work to be done in butressing Lebanon's independence. Lack of clarity on the border and Syria's control of much of this region indicates that Syria has not wholly embraced Lebanon's autonomy. What's more, the ill-defined border has led to widespread smuggling, including the smuggling of arms to militant groups that operate in Lebanon under Syria's approval. Arms smuggling into Lebanon threatens the stability of the Lebanese state, jeopardizes regional security, and stands in the face of the international community.

Formally demarcating the Lebanese-Syrian border is not a panacea for all bilateral and regional woes, but it would be an auspicious development on three fronts: First, a well-defined border would serve to further consolidate Lebanese democracy by strengthening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state; second, a tightly-sealed border would increase regional stability by reducing the smuggling of arms and undercutting terrorism; and finally, a formal agreement between Lebanon

and Syria on the common border could open the door for other regional negotiations by building trust between two nations where it has been lacking. With the stakes so high, all parties should take advantage of the relative calm in the region and thawing of relations between Lebanon and Syria to push hard for the following reforms.

1) Lebanon and Syria: Demarcate the Border without Further Delay

In August 2008, the presidents of Lebanon and Syria agreed to resume the work of a joint committee to demarcate and delimitate the common border, however three months later as this report goes to print, the joint committee has yet to begin its work. Both countries say they anticipate exchanging embassies before the year's end, but the normalization of diplomatic relations is little more than a symbolic, empty gesture until Syria proves to be a willing partner in demarcating and delimitating the border. If the embassy exchange takes place as scheduled, efforts to formalize the common border must begin immediately, starting with the formation of the joint Lebanese-Syrian committee. It is encouraging that the interior ministers of both countries reaffirmed their commitment to setting up a committee to coordinate border security issues in early November; but as this report goes to print, no such committee has convened.

2) Syria and Israel: Formally Transfer the Sovereignty of the Sheb'aa Farms

to Lebanon and Withdraw All Non-Lebanese Forces from the Sheb'aa Farms and Northern Ghajar

Although the Foreign Minister of Syria has categorically supported the claim that the Sheb'aa Farms are Lebanese territory, Syria has also argued that demarcating the border cannot occur before Israel withdraws from the Golan Heights. Therefore, Syria has failed to submit the necessary documentation to the UN.[lxv] Defining the geographical boundaries of the Sheb'aa Farms while they are under Israeli occupation may present some technical complications, but this situation does not preclude Syria from providing the requested material to the UN so that the process can get started. Such an action would undermine rumors that Syria is deferring its responsibilities in resolving the Sheb'aa Farms dispute as a way to bolster support for Hezbollah. Once the Sheb'aa Farms are formally recognized as Lebanese, Israel should withdraw from this territory.

Per the UN Secretary-General's November 2008 report on the implementation of UNSCR 1701, Israel is in violation of UNSCR 1701 by positioning the IDF in the northern half of the village of Ghajar. Lebanon accepted UNIFIL's proposal to facilitate the Israeli withdrawal; however Israel's window of opportunity to endorse the agreement is just about to close as this report goes to print. It is a sign of progress that the Israeli government was discussing the issue as of late

November, but given that the Israeli presence in northern Ghajar is a clear violation of UNSCR 1701, the Israeli government is obligated to set a date for the pullout.

3) Lebanon:Implement the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team's Recommendations

The UN, the international community, and even the governments of Lebanon and Syria have recognized the need to tighten border security in order to deter terrorist attacks and the smuggling of weapons for militant groups. In certain areas, smuggling will decrease as a direct result of border demarcation. However, as the LIBAT assessments pointed out, smuggling occurs at the official border crossing points themselves. Therefore, the Lebanese government should begin implementing LIBAT's recommendations immediately. Certainly implementing some recommendations will require a favorable political climate and the donation of expensive surveillance equipment. But other recommendations, such as the establishment of an intelligence and analysis component within the multi-agency border control force and the streamlining of border security procedures are initiatives that the Government of Lebanon can begin implementing immediately.

4) Syria: Improve Security Coordination and Information Sharing with Lebanon

Legitimate security concerns under certain circumstances can necessitate the movement of Syrian troops to the Lebanese border, as was the case in the fall of 2008. But because of Syrian's 29-year occupation of Lebanon, Syrian troop deployment without coordination with authorities on the other side of the border is likely to raise suspicion that there are other, more sinister, motives behind such a move. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted in the most recent report on the implementation of UNSCR 1701, "the [September] deployment could have been better coordinated with the Lebanese Government so as to clarify its purpose from the onset and thus dispel any misconceptions in its regard."[lxvi] Unless the Secretary-General's criticism is heeded, future attempts by Syria to tighten border security will be interpreted as a barefaced disregard for Lebanon as a partner in fighting terrorism. Further, such actions will call into question Syria's respect for Lebanon's sovereignty and reverse any recent trust that has been built between the two nations.

5) All Parties: Respect the Recommendations of All Relevant UN Security Council Resolutions

In order for the demarcation of the border to be executed in a peaceful manner and for the recommendations of this report to have an enduring effect, it is vital that all parties respect the recommendations put forth in all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions regarding Lebanon and its neighbors, which are meant to produce a sustaining peace. In particular, parties should be mindful of UNSCRs: 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 520 (1982), 1559 (2004), 1655 (2006) 1680 (2006) and 1697 (2006), and 1701 (2006).

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