

Mr. Arjen Gerritsen, King's Commissioner,

General Major Ernst Dobbenberg, Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands

Mr. G.J. (Gert Jan) Gorter, Mayor of Zeewolde,

Mr. Ronald Bergkamp, chairman of the Dutch UNIFIL Association

Members of the Dutch UNIFIL Veterans,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the second time that I have the pleasure to celebrate with you the quinquennial reunion of your Association.

Unlike the previous celebration this one is occurring while Lebanon and the Middle East are witnessing, once again the horrors of war and destruction.

This is the umpteenth reminder of the vital importance of the Security Council role in peacekeeping and the need to strictly implement its resolutions.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, through you Ladies and Gentlemen, helped in monitoring one of these resolutions almost 50 years ago. Indeed the Dutch Army was among the first to send troops under the United Nations auspices in what would be known since by the acronym UNIFIL, United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon.

The UNIFIL is still operating in Lebanon and my Government fully supports its presence and valuable role in monitoring the resolution 1701.

I am sure that you agree with me, it became a bit funny to us, not to say cynical to use the term *interim* to a Mission that is lasting for more than 45 years.

Unfortunately, this so called *Interim Forces* will be needed as long as there is no peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel, and to achieve this peace Israel must withdraw from the Lebanese territories it is still occupying, namely: The Cheba'a Farms, the Northern part of El Ghajar village and the Hills of Kfarchouba.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Capital, The Hague, is proudly known as the Legal Capital of the World and any peace in the Middle East must be based on International Law whether in Lebanon by the withdrawal of Israel from the Lebanese territories or with regards to the Israeli Palestinian conflict which must be based on the two state-solution and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The credibility of International Law lies in its indiscriminate application.

Thank you

**H.E. Abdel Sattar Issa**

Ambassador of Lebanon to the  
Kingdom of the Netherlands