

Resolution 1559 (2004) Adopted by Vote

Of 9 in Favour, to None Against, with 6 Abstentions

The Security Council this evening declared its support for a free and fair presidential election in Lebanon conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence and, in that connection, called upon all remaining forces to withdraw from Lebanon.

By a vote of 9 in favour (Angola, Benin, Chile, France, Germany, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom, United States) to none against, with 6 abstentions (Algeria, Brazil, China, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation), the Council adopted resolution 1559 (2004), reaffirming its call for the strict respect of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout the country.

In a related provision, the Council called for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. It also called upon all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently with the Council for the full implementation of all its resolutions concerning the restoration in Lebanon of territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence.

Requesting the Council to withdraw its consideration of that resolution before the vote, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, Mohamad Issa, said that friendly Syria had helped Lebanon to maintain stability and security within its borders. Syrian troops had been deployed and redeployed at Lebanon's request, and had contributed to rebuffing the radical reactions emanating from repulsive Israeli actions. Also, the matter was purely internal and related to the upcoming presidential elections in Lebanon.

Asserting that the Syrian actions in the past week had made a "crude mockery" of the principle of a free and fair presidential electoral process, the United States' representative said the Syrian Government had imposed its political will on Lebanon and had compelled the Cabinet and Lebanese National Assembly to amend its constitution and abort the electoral process by extending the term of the current President by three years. Clearly, the Lebanese Parliament had been pressured, and even threatened, by Syria and its agents to make them comply.

Similarly, the representative of France, who, along with the United States, had introduced the resolution, worried that persistent serious interference in the political life of Lebanon might cause it to retreat from the objectives that had been reaffirmed constantly by the international community. That was why a rapid mobilization and a decisive reaction from the Council had seemed essential. By refraining to act, the

Council would have sanctioned interference in the internal affairs of another State. By acting in a robust manner, it was showing its confidence in Lebanon's future, which must include its full restoration of sovereignty, and not the intensification of interference.

Having abstained in the voting, China's representative said that respect for the principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs constituted a centrepiece of China's foreign policy and were principles of the United Nations. In adherence to those principles, he supported safeguarding the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon. But, the draft resolution touched on the question of the presidential elections in Lebanon, and such questions fell within Lebanon's internal affairs and should be decided by the Lebanese people themselves.

The representative of the Russian Federation said that, with tensions high in the region, any wrong step might exacerbate the situation and lead to a new focal point of instability. He had tabled amendments to the text, aimed at moving it towards the context of a Middle East settlement as a whole and preventing the document from being one-sided and from concentrating solely on domestic Lebanese affairs. His proposals would have improved the draft by making it more acceptable to Council members. Their lack of acceptance, however, had made it impossible for him to support the resolution.

Pakistan's speaker said he had also abstained, as the resolution was not consistent with the Council's functions and responsibilities. Moreover, there was no evidence of any urgent threat to peace. There had been no complaint from the country whose sovereignty and integrity the draft purported to uphold. On the contrary, the Lebanese representatives had communicated to the Council their opposition to consideration of the resolution. Besides, the text addressed the wrong threat. If there were a threat to Lebanon, that was well known and did not arise from Syria.

Explanations of vote were also made by the representatives of Algeria, Brazil, Chile, Angola, Philippines and Benin.

The meeting began at 7:38 p.m. and was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Resolution

The text of resolution 1559 (2004) reads as follows:

“The Security Council,

“Recalling all its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) of 19 March 1978, resolution 520 (1982) of 17 September 1982, and resolution 1553 (2004) of 29 July 2004 as well as the statements of its President on the situation in Lebanon, in particular the statement of 18 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/21),

“Reiterating its strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally territorially recognized borders,

“Noting the determination of Lebanon to ensure the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon,

“Gravely concerned at the continued presence of armed militias in Lebanon, which prevent the Lebanese government from exercising its full sovereignty over all Lebanese territory,

“Reaffirming the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory,

“Mindful of the upcoming Lebanese presidential elections and underlining the importance of free and fair elections according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence,

. Reaffirms its call for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon;

- Calls upon all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon;
- Calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias;
- Supports the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory;
- Declares its support for a free and fair electoral process in Lebanon’s upcoming presidential election conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence;
- Calls upon all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently with the Security Council for the full implementation of this and all relevant resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon;
- Requests that the Secretary-General report to the Security Council within thirty days on the implementation by the parties of this resolution and decides to remain actively seized of this matter.”