

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon
to the United Nations*

Ref:574/2017

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to the letter transmitted by the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations to your esteemed office on 2 February 2017 (Ref No, MI-SG-02022017)¹, wishes to protest against the said letter and to reiterate Lebanon's position with respect to its maritime borders.

The Government of Israel contends in its letter that Blocks 8, 9 and 10 which Lebanon decided to open for bidding on the occasion of its first offshore licensing round are located in maritime waters "that belong to the State of Israel". It also threatens that it "will not allow any unauthorized economic activities including, *inter alia*, the granting of rights by another State to any third party; exploratory activities, drilling or exploitation of natural resources in maritime areas in which Israel asserts sovereign rights and jurisdiction".

The Government of Lebanon objects to the contentions and threats of the Government of Israel and reaffirms that Blocks 8, 9 and 10 are located within maritime areas that belong to Lebanon. In this regard, the Government of Lebanon recalls the Lists of Geographical Coordinates for the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone between Lebanon and Palestine that were transmitted by the Lebanese Republic to the Office of the Secretary General on 14 July 2010² and 19 October 2011³, and which clearly place the above-mentioned blocks in areas that belong to Lebanon. We also refer to the two letters dated 20 June 2011⁴ and 3 September 2011⁵ that the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to object to the delimitation agreement entered into between Cyprus and Israel on 17 December 2010 and to the geographical coordinates of the northern limit of the exclusive economic zone claimed by Israel.

Pursuant to the rules of the international law of the sea, Lebanon has sovereign rights and jurisdiction for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources of its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. Therefore, given that Blocks 8, 9 and 10 are located within Lebanon's maritime zones, the Lebanese Republic has the right to conduct or authorize exploratory, drilling and exploitation activities in them. The Government of Israel is not entitled to interfere in any way whatsoever with the exercise by Lebanon of its sovereign rights and jurisdiction and is not allowed to conduct any economic activity in Lebanese maritime areas, notably in the so-called "Blocks 1, 2 and 3" unlawfully referred to in the "Israel Licensing Map" (updated in December' 2016) and which fall in their entirety within the territorial sea and exclusive economic zone of Lebanon.

In this respect, Lebanon wishes to respond to the Government of Israel's threats by reiterating its commitment to International Law and in particular to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea regarding the delimitation of its maritime borders.

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon would be grateful if this *Note Verbale* could be published in the relevant sections of the Ocean & Law of the Sea UN website as well as in the next Law of the Sea bulletin.

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

¹http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/communications/isr_nv_02022017.pdf

²http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/lbn_mzn79_2010.pdf

³http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/lbn_mzn85_2011.pdf

⁴http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/communications/lbn_re_cyp_isr_agreement2010.pdf

⁵http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/communications/lbn_re_isr_listofcoordinates_e.pdf

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