

UNIFIL Maritime Task Force Flagship Handover Ceremony

Speech by Brazilian Defense Minister Jaques Wagner at the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force Flagship Handover Ceremony

Beirut, September 14, 2015

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 1978, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon was created with the aim of maintaining stability during the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory and of working to secure international peace in the region.

The Maritime Task Force – the first Force of its kind to integrate a UN Peacekeeping Mission – was established in 2006.

Brazil initiated its participation at UNIFIL in February 2011, first with an Admiral and a Staff and after with a flagship.

Today's ceremony, which marks the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force flagship handover from Frigate "União" to Corvette "Barroso", provides a remarkable opportunity for us to be thankful and to reflect on the Brazilian participation in this mission.

By taking the UNIFIL MTF command, Brazil significantly contributes to the security of a strategic and sensitive area and acquires a distinct world vision, which allows us to better evaluate contemporary security threats and opportunities to act in future missions.

Since this Maritime Force has no precedents, the lessons learned from it and the experiences acquired might prove to be extremely useful to the United Nations while planning future missions of this nature.

To the brave "União"'s crew, which now ends its third participation in the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, I extend our greetings for the abnegation and tenacity demonstrated along this journey, despite the damages suffered since the end of its crossing to Lebanon.

I know well the strength of this ship, which has formed brilliant officials, like the current Navy Commander, along its 35 years of service and more than 2.500 days at the sea: "Union is strength!"

Corvette "Barroso", which now takes over the function of flagship, will continue the Brazilian participation in this peacekeeping mission, to fulfill the mandate given by the UN to our country.

Having been put out to sea for the 1st time in 2008, this vessel makes us very proud since it has been designed and built in Brazil and has such courageous crew.

The Corvette "Barroso" has already started its operations in the Mediterranean Sea starring a remarkable episode of humanitarian aid: almost a month after leaving Rio de Janeiro to take

its mission in Lebanon, it helped rescue 220 migrants who were trying to reach Europe's shore.

I am acquainted with the fact that search and rescue operations are part of the competent Brazilian Naval Force mission, but in the particular context in which the actions of the "Barroso" took place, they caused highly positive international impact.

Corvette "Barroso" diligently fulfilled an international obligation while meeting a rescue request.

But, once again, we could stress that there is a major difference in Brazil's performance: more empathy, professionalism and special care towards the population being hosted or protected.

The rescue episode has also reaffirmed values such as tolerance and inclusion, present in our national formation and deeply ingrained in the kind of action that characterizes ourselves.

I quote the words of the President of the Republic, Dilma Rousseff, in an article recently published in Brazil: "our country is a welcoming land, we are proud to be a people forged in diversity".

I convey my greetings by the readiness and hard work shown by the crew of Corvette "Barroso" and his Commander in this important and recent episode.

I am sure that the actions of this ship during its mission in UNIFIL will continue to inspire Brazil and the world in their invaluable endeavour for peace, with both the empathy and competence that mark Brazil's performance.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Brazilian peacekeepers who commit to build peace and serve this mission with the best spirit of giving and sense of duty.

It should be emphasized that your daily behavior as peacekeepers must continue to express the true vocation of our people to contribute to peace between peoples, promoting, thus, greater encouragement to our hopes for a better life for all.

During the many years of service it still has left, I hope Corvette "Barroso" will continue to honour the memory of the name it brings in its stern – the name of a great hero of the Brazilian people in the Riachuelo battle.

Finally, I wish that the legacy of the late Baron of Amazonas, Admiral Barroso, can be an inspiration to everyone on board – from this Corvette Commander, Admiral Brasil, to the most modern sailor – to fulfill their mission once more.

I say farewell and quote his famous exhortation:

"BRAZIL EXPECTS EACH ONE TO FULFILL THEIR DUTY!"

Atualizadas em 11/09/2015 às 8h57.