

UNHAS-tasks German air force end rotations from Cyprus.

During the period of the 60-day embargo on Lebanon, air traffic decreased by 90% and air cargo into the country by 95%. Even after the ceasefire was implemented and repairs at the airport allowed for limited traffic, only two commercial companies were initially entitled to fly into Beirut, and flights were focused on passengers.

On request from OCHA, the German government provided two air force Transall C160s tasked by WFP-UNHAS to provide airlift capacity between Cyprus and Beirut. The first flight took place on 22/8/06. The C160 operation reached a total of 39 rotations, providing transportation for 242 MT of humanitarian goods on behalf of Logistics Cluster common cargo transport users, including WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, ICRC and the Russian Embassy.

The situation in Lebanon has now stabilised, with 4,800 international troops currently deployed in support of the ceasefire, and the imposed air and sea blockade on Lebanon was lifted over 7-8 September. Airport repairs are ongoing and two runways are now fully operational: runway 16 for landing and runway 21 for takeoff. All these factors mean that commercial transport is returning to normal.

The last two German rotations therefore took place today (20/9/06) with cargo for WHO and Medecins du Monde. The aircraft will now be based in Pafos to support UNIFIL 2. The Logistics Cluster will continue to provide support for any final cargo due to arrive in Cyprus by commercial (surface) means.



German C-160 loading ICRC ambulances for transport to Beirut.