



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ITZHAK LEVANON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL**

BEFORE THE SECOND SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Response to the Report of the Mr. Philip Alston, Mr. Paul Hunt,
Mr. Walter Kälin, and Mr. Miloon Kothari
on their Mission to Israel and Lebanon
(A/HRC/2/7)

Geneva, 4 October 2006

Mr. President:

For more than four consecutive weeks this past summer, thousands of missiles packed with thousands of metal ball bearings were intentionally launched by the Hizbollah terrorist organization over Northern Israel. As the report of the four rapporteurs correctly describes, the conflict resulted from an unprovoked attack emanating from Lebanon and was fueled by missiles that were stored within Lebanon and were fired from its soil. The clear intention was to inflict death and suffering to as many Israelis as possible. Hizbollah's sinister plan to target Jews specifically was divulged by Hassan Nasrallah himself in an interview broadcast by Al-Manar TV station on 9 August 2006. (Quote) "to the Arabs of Haifa, I have a special message...I beg you and ask you to leave the city. [In] the past, your presence and your misfortune has made us hesitant in targeting this city. Please relieve us of this hesitation and spare your blood, which is our blood."

Mr. President:

We welcome the words of appreciation expressed by the rapporteurs for the fact that they enjoyed the full cooperation of my government. However, we found it troubling that the report makes no reference to the responsibility of Lebanon for acts of hostility prepared and perpetrated within its territory.

We are not aware of any Lebanese investigation into violations of the law of armed conflict by Hizbollah. Nor has this Council undertaken any investigation of perpetrators of terrorist activities—or of the continuous flow of military supplies from neighbouring countries to Hizbollah. This is unsettling given Hizbollah's recent threats to the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping force. Furthermore, this Council turns a blind eye when Lebanon takes no action to disband and disarm Hizbollah, in blatant disregard of the U.N. Security Council resolutions 1559, 1680 and 1701.

A military scholar who accompanied the rapporteurs on their mission to the region noted in an article published in the *Washington Post* on September 18, 2006, (quote) "because

Hizbollah is largely invisible, it is neither accurately assessed nor is it really held accountable for the war crimes it committed" (end quote). By ignoring the moral asymmetry of a terrorist organization that targets civilians—deceptively hiding launch sites among homes, mosques, schools and hospitals—and a state which acts in self-restraint, this Council creates much cause for self-reflection.

Mr. President,

It is the duty of this Council and its special mechanisms to portray an accurate picture of the conflict and all parties involved. However, the rapporteurs undercut any intended censure by making recommendations that Hizbollah further "train its fighters," somehow insinuating that it can continue to hold weapons and maintain an army. This gives the Hizbullah terrorist organization unwarranted legitimacy in the face of still standing U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for its disarmament.

Mr. President, Israel has provided the four rapporteurs its concerns regarding their report, in particular:

- 1) the report fails to refer to any Lebanese responsibility and makes recommendations solely to matters of reconstruction,
- 2) ignores UNSC resolution 1559 calling for all militias in Lebanon to be disarmed,
- 3) makes a troubling equivalence between the State of Israel and Hizbollah, a non-state terrorist actor.
- 4) directs recommendations to Hizbollah, giving unwarranted legitimacy to the organization.

In addition, Mr. President, I call on you and the Council to make an unequivocal call for the immediate release of the abducted Israeli servicemen.

Mr. President,

Israel completed the withdrawal of its forces from Lebanon a few hours before starting Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, this past Sunday, thus fulfilling its obligations under SC Resolution 1701. The Lebanese Army and UNFIL are deployed accordingly in South Lebanon. Full responsibility for the security, safety and tranquility of that region now lays completely on the shoulders of Lebanon.

With reference to Mr. Ziegler's report in order to give a better appreciation of his stance on the matter, I would like to quote two people: Hassan Nasrallah to Al-Safir newspaper on 9 April 2000. (Quote) "The Zionist entity is a cancerous growth which we should fight with courage and eradicate it from the roots." (end quote)..

An example of this unyielding prejudice is best shown in an interview Mr. Ziegler gave to *Al Akhbar*, a Lebanese newspaper, on 18 September 2006, the day of the opening of our Council's session. I ask your indulgence to quote the line in its original Arabic version: (quote) "I refuse to describe Hizbollah as a terrorist organization. It is a national movement of resistance. When all the diplomatic efforts to bring about the liberation of prisoners by diplomatic means have failed, I can understand Hizbollah when they kidnap soldiers [in order to] exchange them." (end quote). Members of the Council, judge by yourselves how much relevance to give to the report of a man who disavows a known terrorist group and advocates on behalf of their illegal activities.