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MEMO

Israel Taking Significant Steps to Prevent Casualties as Hizballah Hides Behind Civilians

The government of Israel is taking extraordinary precautions to prevent civilian casualties in Lebanon as it exercises its legitimate right to self-defense. Israel's military risks the lives of its own soldiers and eliminates the advantage of surprise every time it warns civilians about potential strikes. While Israel has expressed deep regret over the tragedy in Qana and all civilian casualties in Lebanon, Hizballah has launched thousands of rockets with the sole purpose of killing and terrorizing civilians, cynically using Lebanese civilians as human shields for its terror operations. The international community, led by the United States, must ensure the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559 if calm is to be restored in Lebanon and along Israel's northern border.

Israel goes to extraordinary lengths to prevent civilian casualties, often placing its own soldiers at greater risk as a consequence.

- Israeli forces have given up the element of surprise and put their own soldiers at risk by repeatedly warning residents of southern Lebanon, including Qana, through leaflets, phone calls and radio announcements to leave certain areas being targeted by Israel.
- Israeli pilots have aborted scores of operations that they felt would have caused inadvertent civilian casualties. Every Israeli pilot and soldier is instructed to withhold fire if he believes civilian lives may be at risk.
- Despite the increased risk to Israeli soldiers, Israel has used only a fraction of its air power, choosing instead to use limited incursions by ground forces to attack Hizballah targets as a way to minimize civilian casualties.

Hizballah deliberately operates from within civilian areas to launch rockets at Israel with the sole purpose of killing and terrorizing Israeli civilians.

- Hizballah has deliberately hidden its forces and weaponry in residential neighborhoods and villages in order to use the local residents as human shields. Hizballah launched more than 150 rockets from Qana prior to Israel's targeting of the area.
- U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland last week called on Hizballah to stop "cowardly blending ... among women and children. ... I don't think anyone should be proud of having many more children and women dead than armed men."
- Hizballah has launched **more than 4,000 unguided rockets and mortars** at Israeli towns and villages, indiscriminately hitting homes, businesses and other civilian buildings.
- Hizballah is firing Syrian-made rockets containing hundreds of metal ball bearings capable of ripping through steel. The ball bearings—regularly used in suicide bomber vests—serve no purpose other than maximizing civilian casualties.

Israel Acting to Prevent Casualties as Hizballah Hides Behind Civilians, *continued*

- Since Hizballah began launching rockets at Israel, more than one-third of the country has lived under constant threat of Hizballah attacks. More than 700,000 residents of Israel's northern communities are now living in bomb shelters, while 300,000 have fled to areas further south.

Israel is taking steps to allow humanitarian aid to reach Lebanese civilians.

- Israel suspended its air campaign in southern Lebanon on Sunday for 48 hours in order to allow residents to leave the area and humanitarian supplies to reach those in need. Dozens of trucks loaded with food and medicine have already left Beirut for southern Lebanon.
- Israel has allowed the Beirut airport and Lebanon's seaports to be reopened for the delivery of humanitarian supplies despite the possibility that Hizballah could use the humanitarian efforts as cover to rearm and resupply.
- In order to facilitate humanitarian supply convoys, Israel has allowed a senior U.N. officer into its military command center to coordinate in real time with Israeli officials.

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- U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for "the disbanding and disarmament" of Hizballah and demands that the Lebanese government deploy its military to take control over the southern part of the country.
- Implementing a cease-fire without disarming Hizballah will likely ensure a similar conflict at a time of Hizballah's choosing. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a cease-fire would not be sufficient "if that cessation of violence is hostage to Hizballah's next decision to launch missiles into Israel or Hamas' next decision to abduct an Israeli citizen."
- Any potential international force introduced into Lebanon can only serve an effective role if it has a clear and strong mandate to help the Lebanese government disarm Hizballah and prevent the terrorist group from rebuilding its military capabilities.

Basic Facts Summary

- Israel goes to extraordinary lengths to prevent civilian casualties, often placing its own soldiers at greater risk as a consequence.
- Hizballah has violated every rule of war by deliberately operating from within civilian areas—putting Lebanese civilians at greater risk—to launch rockets at Israel with the sole purpose of killing and terrorizing Israeli civilians.
- Israel is taking additional steps to allow for humanitarian aid to reach Lebanese civilians.
- The international community, led by the United States, must now ensure that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559 is enforced and the terrorist group Hizballah is disarmed.