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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 11 August 2006, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. DE ALBA (Mexico)

CONTENTS

REQUEST OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF ARAB STATES AND THE GROUP OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, TO “CONSIDER AND TAKE ACTION ON THE GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY ISRAEL IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THE QANA MASSACRE, THE COUNTRY-WIDE TARGETING OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF VITAL CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE”

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

REQUEST OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF ARAB STATES AND THE GROUP OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, TO “CONSIDER AND TAKE ACTION ON THE GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY ISRAEL IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THE QANA MASSACRE, THE COUNTRY-WIDE TARGETING OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF VITAL CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE” (A/HRC/S-2/1; A/HRC/S-2/L.1; A/HRC/S-2/NGO/1-7)

1. The PRESIDENT declared open the second special session of the Human Rights Council, which had been convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251 at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States and the Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.
2. Ms. ARBOUR (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the toll of civilian deaths and injuries in Lebanon and Israel, the massive displacement of populations and the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Lebanon required the intervention of the Human Rights Council to impress upon the parties to the conflict the urgent need to comply with their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. The Council should devote all of its efforts to bring about an immediate cessation of the hostilities in order to save lives, and to ensure justice for the victims and accountability for violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.
3. When carrying out military operations, all parties to a conflict were required to observe a number of fundamental principles. Those included distinguishing at all times between civilians and combatants; never making civilians the object of direct intentional attack; and not using civilians to shield military objectives from attack. Furthermore, the anticipated incidental loss of civilian life and damage to civilian property must always be proportionate to the pursuit of a specific military objective. Although belligerents were required to give advance effective warning of attacks that might affect civilian populations, compliance with that legal obligation did not relieve them from their other obligations under international law regarding the protection of civilians. Violation of those legal obligations could entail personal criminal responsibility, particularly for those in positions of command and control. It bore mentioning that even those who believed that theirs was a just cause could commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.
4. Reports from the field pointed to an alarming pattern in the scale and choice of targets by both sides to the conflict. The deaths of hundreds of civilians in documented and corroborated incidents strongly suggested the indiscriminate use of force. On 30 July 2006, the world had been shocked by the Israeli attack on a residential building in Qana that had resulted in scores of civilian deaths, including many children. Although hundreds had died in Lebanon and survivors were left to endure large-scale destruction of their country’s infrastructure, Israeli attacks affecting civilians continued unabated. Also unrelenting was Hezbollah’s indiscriminate shelling of densely populated centres in northern Israel, bringing death and destruction to many. There had also been repeated allegations of Hezbollah’s systematic use of civilians as human shields.
5. There was an urgent need to conduct a comprehensive, high-level inquiry into reports of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Israel and Lebanon.

Such an inquiry should be concerned primarily with the plight of the victims, addressing all violations by all parties and laying the foundation for possible measures of reparation and accountability.

6. She was particularly concerned by the humanitarian situation of the population remaining in southern Lebanon, who were in dire need of food, water and medical assistance, which humanitarian workers were no longer able to deliver. The plight of displaced persons in the war zone and of refugees in neighbouring countries was also a grave concern. Their right to food, health and adequate housing and the right of their children to education must be respected.

7. The magnitude of the suffering of civilians under attack demanded a full-scale commitment and concerted action by the international community as a whole. The Council's efforts should focus on the people whose fundamental rights had been violated and on those who had been injured or displaced. Its commitment to exposing all human rights violations and to addressing the calls of all victims for justice and reparation would help those affected by the conflict to start rebuilding their shattered lives.

8. Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), referred to the appalling situation in Lebanon: over 1,000 innocent civilians had been killed in their homes and workplaces; 1 million Lebanese had been displaced, many of whom had fled to areas without access to secure food or water; and critical infrastructure was in ruins. The OIC leaders, meeting in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on 3 August 2006, had strongly condemned the massive Israeli attacks responsible for the civilian deaths and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, in violation of numerous principles of the Charter of the United Nations and provisions of the Geneva Conventions concerning the treatment of civilian populations, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child relating to the protection and care of children in armed conflict.

9. Given that the widespread condemnation of Israeli actions by the United Nations Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other world leaders had not sufficed to end the killing in Lebanon, it was incumbent upon the Human Rights Council to send a clear message that human rights violations in Lebanon must cease. The Council was faced with a moral choice between humanity and inhumanity, and between law and lawlessness - not with a political balancing act. The killings in Lebanon could not be justified on any pretext; Israeli military operations simply must end. He called on the Council to establish a commission of inquiry to establish the extent of breaches of human rights and international humanitarian law. The Council should act to ensure the establishment of humanitarian corridors in Lebanon allowing unhindered access to humanitarian convoys, and intensify efforts to help the Lebanese Government attend to the rehabilitation of victims, the return of displaced persons, and the restoration of vital infrastructure.

10. Mr. LABIDI (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of OIC.

11. Israel's ongoing acts of aggression against Lebanon and their disastrous impact on the humanitarian and human rights situation had extremely dangerous implications for the future stability of Lebanon and the region as a whole as well as for international peace and security. The international community had a duty to condemn Israel in the strongest terms as the party that

bore full responsibility for the loss of life and material damage sustained by Lebanon. Its aerial bombardment, its incursions into Lebanese territory, and its land, maritime and aerial siege for a period of more than 30 days entailing destruction, the killing of innocent children, women and the elderly, financial losses and internal displacement constituted flagrant breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular the right to life.

12. The Arab Group expressed its full solidarity with the Government and people of Lebanon and strongly condemned Israel's flouting of international humanitarian law through the deliberate targeting of civilians and relief supplies, the destruction of Lebanese infrastructure, hospitals, schools and roads, and the massacres that had claimed the lives of more than 1,000 innocents.

13. The Arab Group called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and strong condemnation of the unjustified aggression by Israel and its breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law that amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The whole world had witnessed media footage of the massacres committed all over Lebanon, particularly in Qana, Marwaheen, Al-Duweir, Al-Bayadah, Al-Qaa and Chiyah.

14. The Arab Group called on the Council to dispatch a commission of inquiry to Lebanon as a matter of urgency to investigate the systematic targeting and killing of civilians, the types of weapons used by Israel and their conformity with international law, and the impact of Israeli attacks on human life, property, infrastructure and the environment.

15. The Arab Group further demanded that steps be taken to ensure the safe provision of humanitarian relief to persons who had been driven from their homes by the Israeli aggression and who were now left stranded by the bombardment of roads and the severing of communications.

16. He thanked all Council members who supported the draft resolution submitted by the Arab Group and OIC (A/HRC/S-2/L.1) and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

17. Mr. BESSEDIK (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed deep concern over the tragic events in the Middle East. He condemned the Israeli military operations in Lebanon, involving indiscriminate attacks on civilians, massive destruction of civilian infrastructure, and blocking of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, thus violating the fundamental rights to life, health and food of the affected population. It was shocking to note that those rights had been violated systematically by an army acting on behalf of a State Member of the United Nations. He urged the Israeli military to practise restraint and scrupulously respect human rights in Lebanon, and called upon the Israeli authorities to immediately lift the air and sea blockade of Lebanon.

18. The African Group appealed to the donor community to respond generously to the request for help issued by the democratically elected Lebanese Government. It shared the grave concerns expressed by other human rights mechanisms over the situation and considered it urgent for the Human Rights Council to send a fact-finding mission to the area to assess the extent of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

19. Mr. AL-AGAIL (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement of Tunisia on behalf of the Arab Group, as well as that of Pakistan on behalf of OIC, deploring the recent acts of armed aggression by Israeli forces targeting the Lebanese civilian population and infrastructure. His delegation strongly believed that the deliberations of the second special session should focus first and foremost on the need to prevent further suffering on the part of the civilian population by ensuring respect for their human rights in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, human rights instruments and international humanitarian law. A high-level commission of inquiry should be dispatched urgently to investigate the targeting of civilians in Lebanon, to examine the legality of the types of weapon used by Israel and to assess the human and material damage caused by Israeli breaches of international humanitarian law.

20. His delegation fully supported draft resolution A/HRC/S-2/L.1 and trusted that it would be adopted by the Human Rights Council in pursuance of its ongoing efforts to promote and protect human rights throughout the world.

21. He urged the Council to address an urgent appeal to the Security Council rapidly to adopt by consensus a resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and to discharge its function of maintaining international peace and security, as requested by the Arab delegation mandated by the ministerial meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States held in Beirut on 7 August 2006, to convey the seven legitimate demands of the Lebanese Government and the Arab point of view concerning the grave situation in Lebanon.

22. Mr. DUMONT (Argentina) said that his country wished to reiterate its grave concern over the critical humanitarian situation faced by civilian populations caught up in the conflict between the Government of Israel and Hezbollah. It repeated its call for an immediate ceasefire and talks between the parties involved. Argentina deplored the missile attacks on Israel and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, as well as the disproportionate use of force by Israel, and appealed to both parties to act in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

23. Argentina condemned the loss of human life and the suffering imposed on children, women, elderly persons and other civilians. The attacks in Lebanon had produced more than 1,000 deaths, 3,500 wounded, 400,000 refugees, and over 1 million displaced persons. Moreover, channels for the distribution of medicine, food and energy in Lebanon had been almost entirely cut off, thus hindering access for humanitarian assistance. The attacks on the basic infrastructure of Lebanon constituted a collective punishment that not only affected economic development but also prevented the full enjoyment of human rights in Lebanon. The devastating attack on Qana, with a majority of child victims, was a clear illustration of the use of indiscriminate force. It was unacceptable to use violence as a means of attaining objectives, and it could only constitute an obstacle to peace in the region.

24. Argentina supported initiatives to prevent further violence and an increase in the number of victims. In response to a request by the United Nations Secretary-General, it had supplied a helicopter and had sent more than two tons of humanitarian assistance in the form of medicines, tents, clothing and food. Argentina would continue to pursue all diplomatic efforts aimed at

contributing to the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East. It was deeply convinced that full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law on the part of all involved in the current conflict was an essential condition for lasting peace in the region.

25. Mr. HUGUENEY (Brazil) said that it was with deep sorrow and grave concern that his country had witnessed yet another escalation of violence in the Middle East. Brazil considered itself to be directly concerned by the violence perpetrated against civilians on both sides of the conflict as it was home to the largest Lebanese community outside Lebanon, as well as a large Jewish community. In addition, many Brazilians had emigrated to Lebanon and Israel. The Brazilian Government had carried out an operation to evacuate some 3,000 nationals from the region and had donated a three-month supply of medicines to the World Health Organization to be dispatched to Lebanon. In a communication addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Brazilian President had condemned not only terrorism but also the disproportionate use of force that had resulted in the death of a large number of civilians, including women and children, and in the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Lebanon.

26. Brazil called on the parties to the conflict to observe their obligations under international humanitarian law, to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians and safe passage from areas of military operations, and to provide the necessary conditions for protecting and supporting all displaced persons. Brazil supported diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching an immediate ceasefire and achieving a negotiated, just and lasting peace. It was convinced that the Human Rights Council could assist in those efforts by emphasizing the need to respect human rights and international humanitarian law.

27. Mr. ALI (Bangladesh) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement of Pakistan on behalf of OIC. He was outraged at the atrocities committed by Israel in Lebanon, which had resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 Lebanese civilians, in the injury of thousands more and in the displacement of more than 1 million people. The situation was very grave and was deteriorating further with each passing day. The brutal and disproportionate use of force was a flagrant violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and must be stopped immediately. It was difficult to believe that such atrocities were occurring in the twenty-first century, despite the progress achieved by humankind.

28. His delegation fully shared the view that the indiscriminate shelling of population centres constituted a foreseeable and unacceptable targeting of civilians. Despite the grave concerns expressed by the international community and the global condemnation of the Qana massacre, Israel continued to violate the supreme obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians during hostilities. International humanitarian law also demanded accountability, which meant prosecuting the persons involved, particularly those in positions of command and control.

29. The grave and alarming humanitarian crisis in Lebanon required that Israel should guarantee unrestricted and secure passage for humanitarian assistance. He called for an immediate ceasefire, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, and the immediate and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory. It was imperative for the Council to take a clear stand on the flagrant defiance of international law and the violation of fundamental human rights by Israel. His Government fully supported draft resolution A/HRC/S-2/L.1 as a first step in that direction and hoped it would be adopted by a broad consensus.

30. Mr. ABDULLA (Bahrain), associating himself with the statements made on behalf of the Arab Group and OIC, said that the month-long Israeli attacks on Lebanon had left more than 1,000 civilians dead and over 3,000 wounded and had forced almost 1 million Lebanese to flee from their homes. He urged the Council to adopt a strong position on the targeting of civilians, particularly women, children and the elderly, the disastrous humanitarian situation and the ruthless destruction of the entire country. On 19 July 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had stated that the bombardment of sites with alleged military significance but inevitably resulting in the killing of innocent civilians was unjustifiable.

31. Israel bore full responsibility for the destruction of Lebanese infrastructure which had made it difficult to convey relief supplies to the needy. The Council must condemn, in particular, the massacres perpetrated in Qana, Marwaheen, Al-Qaa and other towns and villages as flagrant breaches of international humanitarian law and the fourth Geneva Convention. A number of international humanitarian and human rights organizations had called for respect for the principle of proportionality in military operations.

32. He stressed the urgency of dispatching a high-level commission of inquiry to Lebanon to investigate the systematic targeting of civilians, the types of weapons used by Israel and their conformity with international law, and the impact of Israeli attacks on human life, property, infrastructure and the environment. He urged the Council to adopt the draft resolution before it by consensus.

33. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) said his delegation associated itself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

34. The callous attacks on civilians and the wholesale destruction of Lebanese towns were totally unjustifiable acts and a flagrant breach of international human rights and humanitarian law.

35. Indonesia condemned the armed aggression that had brought death and injury to thousands, including United Nations personnel, and caused the displacement of some 1 million people.

36. The deteriorating situation on the ground in Lebanon qualified as exactly the kind of human rights emergency the Human Rights Council had been mandated to address. For the Council to fail to respond promptly to such disregard for the most fundamental human rights standards would be to fail in the discharge of its mandate. It would also raise questions concerning the difference between the Human Rights Council and the Commission on Human Rights it had replaced.

37. Indonesia fully supported the calls for an immediate, comprehensive and unconditional ceasefire between the warring parties in Lebanon; the dispatch of an investigation team to look into the circumstances surrounding the targeting of civilians in Lebanon; and the immediate deployment in southern Lebanon of a United Nations-led international peacekeeping force that included a substantial contingent from OIC countries.

38. Mr. LOULICHKI (Morocco), associating himself with the statements made on behalf of OIC and the African Group, said that the fledgling Human Rights Council would be shirking its responsibility if it remained silent in the face of gross violations of human rights, including the right to life.

39. For more than a month Lebanon had been in a state of war imposed by Israel's escalating military campaign against the Lebanese people, during which it had targeted civilians and destroyed vital infrastructure such as airports, bridges, roads, and electricity and water supply facilities. More than 1,000 civilians had been killed, about half of whom were innocent children and women, many thousands more had been injured and over 1 million people had been displaced to northern Lebanon or neighbouring countries.

40. A month was a very long period in the life of civilians who feared that at any moment they might be blown apart, crushed beneath a building or driven from their homes. They were relying on the international community to take urgent steps to end the hostilities. Yet despite pleas from the United Nations Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Israeli war machine relentlessly pursued its attacks by land, sea and air and prevented humanitarian relief from being channelled to the victims.

41. Morocco urged the international community to take steps to end the war and to work for a comprehensive settlement through dialogue and negotiation. By any standard, Israel's practices in southern Lebanon were gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The Council had a duty to call for an immediate end to the violations and to enjoin Israel to respect humanitarian law and the territorial sovereignty of Lebanon. Morocco therefore supported the draft resolution before the Council and the proposal to dispatch a commission of inquiry to Lebanon.

42. His Royal Highness King Mohammed VI had given instructions for the urgent dispatch of assistance to Lebanon as a mark of solidarity with the Government and people of Lebanon.

43. He hoped that the United Nations Security Council would reach agreement that day on action to end the tragedy in Lebanon and that the international community would engage in a serious and determined effort to tackle the roots of the crisis that had plagued the Middle East region for decades, which meant ensuring that Israel withdrew from the Arab territories that it continued to occupy and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their right to establish an independent State with its capital in Jerusalem.

44. Ms. HSU King Bee (Malaysia) said her delegation associated itself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of OIC.

45. Gross and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law continued unabated in Lebanon, as the Israeli war machine once again displayed its readiness to use excessive force against the civilian population. Relief agencies and NGOs had warned that the bombing was hindering access to emergency relief and services for those trapped in the conflict.

46. The international community, and particularly the members of the Human Rights Council, had a duty and moral responsibility to hold Israel accountable for the atrocities committed. Israel must cease military operations against civilian populations forthwith and Lebanon must be provided with humanitarian and financial aid.
47. Mr. GODET (Switzerland) said the role of the Human Rights Council was to intervene in emergency situations that resulted in serious human rights violations, on the basis of a balanced, non-discriminatory approach.
48. Switzerland condemned all acts of violence and provocation. Hezbollah's attack on an Israeli patrol on 12 July 2006 had constituted such an act. However, while Israel had the right to protect its territory and population, the reaction of its military forces, involving the blockade of an entire country, the systematic destruction of its infrastructure and repeated air attacks on civilians in breach of international humanitarian law, seemed disproportionate.
49. In Israel too, it was civilians who bore the brunt of Hezbollah's unjustifiable and indiscriminate rocket attacks on population centres, which clearly violated international humanitarian law.
50. Respect for the law was not negotiable or contingent on reciprocal action. Switzerland had repeatedly impressed upon the parties - and would continue to do so - their obligation under international law not to attack civilians who were not directly involved in hostilities.
51. The credibility of the Human Rights Council was at stake. It must find a way of responding to the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and investigating the human rights violations committed in the course of the conflict. It must stress that there could be no substantial improvement in the humanitarian situation without an immediate ceasefire. It must also forcefully remind the parties of their obligation to respect fundamental human rights and international humanitarian law and of the need to guarantee unrestricted access to victims; and dispatch a fact-finding mission to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into alleged violations.
52. Mr. MEYER (Canada) said Canada was greatly concerned at the impact on civilians in both Israel and Lebanon of a conflict that had been caused by the terrorist militia called Hezbollah, and its State sponsors, and that had resulted in widespread death and destruction.
53. The Human Rights Council should focus specifically on the human rights concerns emanating from that conflict, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner. Yet the draft resolution before the Council (A/HRC/S-2/L.1) was manifestly one-sided and did not condemn the indiscriminate launching of Hezbollah rockets into Israel to kill civilians. It did not recognize Hezbollah's obligation under international humanitarian law to refrain from targeting civilians and using civilians as human shields in its military operations. Moreover, it failed to focus on the very subject that should be of paramount interest to the Human Rights Council, namely, the impact of the conflict on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the region's civilian population.

54. The Council should be used for constructive, not divisive, ends. It must work to ensure universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues and to eliminate double standards and politicization. Neither the current session nor the draft resolution presented took into consideration the respective roles and responsibilities of all parties and were thus not constructive in promoting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all peoples in the region. Canada would therefore oppose the proposed resolution.

55. Mr. MANALO (Philippines) said the Philippines condemned all acts of terror, violence and destruction, especially attacks resulting in death or injury of innocent civilians and the destruction of critical infrastructure. In that regard, it was deeply concerned at Israel's use of disproportionate, indiscriminate and excessive force.

56. His delegation urged all parties to exercise restraint and respect international human rights standards and humanitarian law, and called for the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance and an immediate ceasefire under United Nations supervision, with the ultimate goal of achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

57. Lastly, his delegation called on all parties to respect safe zones and evacuation routes and facilitate the safe passage of all those seeking to escape from the affected areas.

58. Mr. BESSEDIK (Algeria) said his delegation associated itself with the statements made on behalf of OIC, the League of Arab States and the African Group.

59. Algeria strongly condemned the scandalous human rights violations committed with impunity by the State of Israel against Lebanese civilians. According to the International Court of Justice, international human rights instruments not only continued to apply in situations of armed conflict, but also applied outside a State where that State controlled the foreign territory in question. If the international community was serious in its contention that human rights were paramount in the civilized world, it should condemn violations committed by one State against a neighbouring State's civilian population. To make no distinction between the Israeli army and a resistance movement possessing only rudimentary means of defence would be to vitiate the moral principles it claimed to uphold.

60. If the international community did not deem the war crimes committed by Israel to be human rights violations, then it must consider human rights to be a mere tool for political ends.

61. Mr. MTESA (Zambia) said that as the conflict between Israel and Lebanon raged on, innocent people were dying in both countries. Those who had survived the crisis were wondering what the international community, and in particular the United Nations Security Council, was doing to stop it. It was time to put an end to the killing of innocent people and the indiscriminate destruction of infrastructure. Civilians and soldiers on both sides did not deserve to die. Their lives must be valued and immediate steps must be taken to save them. It was unacceptable that innocent people should be made to pay for misunderstandings that existed at the government level. Leaders had a duty to ensure that they did not plant seeds of hatred between nations, which would only serve to ignite further conflicts in future. A ceasefire should therefore come into effect at once, to bring hope to the people in Lebanon and Israel who felt let down by the international community.

62. The international community's failure to react in a timely manner had led to the escalation of the crisis. Should such a situation arise again in future, the international community must meet the challenge and respond in time to avoid the loss of life and destruction of infrastructure that had been seen in Lebanon, and which went beyond sane and sober reasoning. Although the Security Council was considering the matter and trying to formulate a resolution acceptable to both sides, it was unclear when that would be done. As the negotiation process went on in New York, people continued to die. His delegation did not believe that the saving of innocent lives should be dependent on the agreement to be reached in the Security Council. Both parties to the conflict should show restraint and stop the indiscriminate killing. Whatever solution was found, his delegation wanted to see lasting peace in the Middle East, in order for Israel, Lebanon and Palestine to live in harmony and respect each others' territories, not only as good neighbours but in recognition of the fact that they belonged to one human race. The war in the Middle East was immoral and unjustified and must stop forthwith.

63. Mr. KASSE (Mali) said his delegation associated itself with the statements made on behalf of OIC, the League of Arab States and the African Group.

64. Mali was shocked at the tragic events unfolding in Lebanon, which his delegation, like many others, strongly condemned as flagrant and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

65. His delegation urged all members of the international community to mount a prompt response to the Lebanese Government's appeal for relief for its people. It also urged that the blockade on Lebanon should be lifted to allow relief agencies and the donor community unrestricted access to populations that had been deprived of their basic rights.

66. Mr. AL HUSSEINI (Jordan) said that the grave human rights situation in Lebanon had been caused by the disproportionate Israeli retaliation against civilians. The targeting and killing of civilians, the destruction of infrastructure and property, the mass displacement of people and the extensive damage to the environment were unlawful acts that should not be condoned. The tragedy in Lebanon was unacceptable, and must be rejected by the international community. The events made a mockery of the international community's elaborate regime of international humanitarian and human rights law. There could be no justification for what seemed to be the deliberate targeting of civilians by the Israelis to attain political objectives. The most vulnerable people - the disabled, the elderly, women and children - were being mercilessly bombed in their shelters. Such acts constituted a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and created an environment for the flourishing of hatred, revenge and extremism. The Council should not only condemn those heinous acts in the strongest possible terms, but should also redress them adequately. It should call for Israel to refrain from targeting civilians, respect the human rights of the Lebanese people and abide by the principles of international humanitarian law. The Council should also use its moral and political weight to support the efforts to bring about an immediate ceasefire that would allow the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid, and send a fact-finding mission to investigate the unlawful acts and their consequences. Failure to do so would send the wrong signal to the victims in Lebanon and would undermine the Council's credibility.

67. Mr. CAMARA (Senegal) said that for several weeks, Israeli military operations in Lebanon had been provoking indignation around the world, as a result of the serious violations of the fundamental rights to life, security and freedom of the civilian population. The images of the many victims, most of them women and children, of the recent tragedy in Qana had led to condemnation all over the world. The deliberate and systematic destruction of vital infrastructure by Israeli bombing was preventing the arrival of humanitarian aid and having incalculably serious consequences for the Lebanese people. The violence was increasing, as was the number of innocent Lebanese and Israeli victims. Although intensive diplomatic efforts were being made to find a solution to the crisis in Lebanon, the situation on the ground was worsening and becoming increasingly dangerous with the intensification of Israeli attacks, in disregard of basic human rights principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

68. The Human Rights Council was acting in accordance with its mandate by holding a special session on the tragic situation in Lebanon. The Council should be able to make a precise and objective assessment of the situation and establish an adequate monitoring and warning system to prevent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should provide assistance and technical cooperation. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of preserving human lives and called for an immediate halt to Israeli military operations against the civilian population and infrastructure in Lebanon.

69. Mr. FERRER RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said there could be no justification whatsoever for thousands of air attacks targeting the civil population of a small independent State, in violation of international law. The criminal attack on Qana, which had cost the lives of 34 children, half of them with physical or mental disabilities, as well as the attacks on refugee camps and United Nations personnel, provided irrefutable proof of Israel's policy of genocide in the Middle East.

70. Israel would not be able to act without the economic, political and military support of the Government of the United States of America, and the impunity that Government provided through the use of its veto in the United Nations Security Council to block condemnation of those responsible for such brutality. With rare exceptions, the United States of America had been aided and abetted by the European Union.

71. United, firm and consistent action by the Human Rights Council was needed to help put a stop to the barbarity. That would send a clear message to the world that the new body was genuinely prepared to meet humanity's expectations as the defender and promoter of all human rights for all.

72. Ms. HIMANEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the acceding countries Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine, said that the EU wished to express its utmost concern regarding the Lebanese and Israeli civilian casualties, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the increased number of displaced persons following the escalation of hostilities. It condemned the rocket attacks on Israel by Hezbollah, and the deaths of innocent civilians in the Israeli air strike on Qana. Her delegation reminded all parties that, under international humanitarian law, those who were not directly participating in hostilities were entitled to respect for their lives and their moral and physical integrity. All parties in the conflict must do everything possible to protect civilian populations, and must refrain from all actions in

violation of international humanitarian and human rights law. Moreover, all attacks against United Nations personnel were unacceptable, and the tragic deaths of four United Nations military observers were deplorable. The EU called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, to be followed by a sustainable ceasefire. In that regard, it fully supported the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Security Council to define a political framework for a lasting solution agreed by all parties.

73. The EU was determined to work with the wider international community to bring humanitarian relief to the people of Lebanon. It called on all parties to grant secure and efficient passage for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, particularly in southern Lebanon. The EU was ready to further contribute to Lebanon's revival and reconstruction, and in that context deplored the recent destruction of infrastructure that had made the distribution of humanitarian assistance increasingly difficult. Under international humanitarian law, humanitarian workers and relief items must be granted access to populations affected by conflict. The EU was committed to promoting a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East, in cooperation with partners and the countries in the region. There was no military solution to any of the problems facing the people of the Middle East.

74. Mr. SHA Zukang (China) said that the current situation in the Middle East was a grave humanitarian disaster for both Lebanon and Israel, and the attacks against United Nations observers in the area were particularly intolerable. The tragedy was increasing on a daily basis, and innocent civilians were being killed. Such systematic and gross violations of human rights constituted a breach of the basic principles of justice and human decency. China opposed any efforts to undermine stability in the Middle East, condemned any attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and called on all parties to the conflict to show maximum restraint to avoid exacerbating the situation. Efforts must be made to ensure that humanitarian aid could be distributed and to guarantee the safety of United Nations peacekeepers and relief workers. Diplomatic efforts should be stepped up to arrive at a ceasefire. China had provided emergency humanitarian aid to Lebanon, and China's special Middle East envoy was currently in the region carrying out diplomatic mediation. China would continue to work with the international community to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. War could not bring security or ensure peace, and China therefore called on all parties to the conflict to abide by international humanitarian law and avoid attacks targeting innocent civilians, take account of the fundamental freedoms and welfare of people on both sides, put an end to armed hostilities and bring much-needed peace and tranquillity to the area.

75. Ms. ROCANOVA (Uruguay) said Uruguay was concerned at the failure of international efforts to put a stop to the events in Lebanon and deeply distressed by the destruction of the country that had expended such efforts on reconstruction following years of conflict. The international community must provide the humanitarian aid needed to relieve the suffering and guarantee the basic rights of the civilian population.

76. The humanitarian crisis had also affected northern Israel, which suffered daily missile attacks that had forced hundreds of thousands of people to leave their homes. A sine qua non of any solution to the conflict would be to guarantee Israel's right to secure borders.

77. No viable solution at all would be possible, however, unless the acts of mutual aggression ceased, and that was not within the competence of the Human Rights Council but was the responsibility of the Security Council.

78. Mr. CABRERA HIDALGO (Ecuador) said the situation in Israel and Lebanon constituted a serious threat to the peace and security not only of the Middle East but of the entire international community. It was also a violation of the human rights of the civilian populations of both countries.

79. Ecuador was deeply disturbed at the disproportionate attacks by Israel on the civilian population of Lebanon and the indiscriminate destruction of property and infrastructure, and also at Hezbollah's armed attacks on the civilian population of northern Israel and its kidnapping of Israeli soldiers.

80. The Human Rights Council was facing its most difficult challenge yet. It must adopt resolutions that would help put a stop to the human rights violations resulting from attacks and military operations originating in Lebanon and Israel. It must proceed with firmness and diligence, but also even-handedly, in coordinating with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system to ensure prompt restoration of international peace and security and the enjoyment of all rights in both countries.

81. Mr. GROVER (India) said that India was seriously concerned about the continuing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which was threatening to destabilize the whole of the Middle East. The conflict had resulted in the death and suffering of innocent civilians and had exacerbated an already tense and delicate situation in the region. India had condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah and had called for their immediate release. It had also condemned in the strongest possible terms the excessive and disproportionate military retaliation by Israel. India had repeatedly called for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, and the exercise of the utmost restraint by all sides. It was regrettable that Israel had nevertheless engaged in indiscriminate and irresponsible bombing, resulting in the deaths of innocent civilians and non-partisan actors including United Nations observers.

82. The Israeli military operation had prevented the delivery of humanitarian aid to the affected populations, which had added to their hardship. India expressed its deep condolences, sympathy and support to the people of Lebanon, and considered that the destruction of a country that had been painfully rebuilt after two decades of civil war could not be countenanced. The Indian Government had decided to contribute to the humanitarian and relief efforts in Lebanon. India's sympathy also went to the people of Israel, who had also suffered as a result of the hostilities. His Government called for an immediate ceasefire, and a return to negotiations, since lasting peace and security could only be achieved through a negotiated and comprehensive solution to the problems of the region that took account of the legitimate interests and grievances of all parties concerned.

83. Mr. LOSHCHININ (Russian Federation) said that the Russian Federation was particularly concerned by the continuing bloody conflict in the Middle East, and called for a halt to the violence, in favour of efforts to find a political solution. For four weeks Lebanon had been

subjected to large-scale bombing, which had resulted in the destruction of basic civilian infrastructure. Over 1,000 innocent Lebanese had already been killed, including elderly persons, women and children, and the number of injured was over 3,000. The recent tragedy in Qana had shocked the world. There were also many Israeli victims of the conflict.

84. The Russian Federation called on the Israeli authorities to provide safe conditions for international humanitarian activity in the region. The death and injury of civilians on both sides constituted a serious violation of international humanitarian law and human rights, particularly the right to life. Such a situation could not be allowed to continue, and the Human Rights Council could not fail to take action. Draft resolution A/HRC/S-2/L.1 only addressed Israel, despite the fact that many Israeli citizens had also fallen victim to the conflict. The Russian Federation would therefore like to see a more balanced document, which encompassed all parties to the conflict. The United Nations Security Council must find a solution as quickly as possible so as to end the bloodshed. The Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the Security Council, fully recognized its responsibility in that regard.

85. Mr. SOUFAN (Observer for Lebanon) compared the situation in Lebanon to a horror film and said that Israel was terrorizing the Lebanese people and deliberately and indiscriminately killing children and women. Despite worldwide media coverage raising international awareness of the events taking place, nothing was being done to stop the brutal and senseless war. At the very outset, the Lebanese Government had announced that it had had no prior knowledge of Hezbollah operations, and did not endorse them. Furthermore, the Prime Minister had called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire under United Nations auspices, which would enable all issues and their underlying causes to be resolved responsibly. Unfortunately, such appeals from the Lebanese authorities had not prevented the aggression from escalating, and the situation had gone beyond the issue of prisoners and captured soldiers. A whole nation's human rights, security and land were being destroyed under a questionable pretext.

86. Israel was committing massacres and mass murders that violated the right to life, despite that right being non-derogable in times of armed conflict pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The right to protection was being ignored, and the Lebanese people were being collectively slaughtered and subjected to cruel and degrading treatment and punishment. The right of the child to survival and development, and to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence had been gravely violated when the Israelis had murdered 62 civilians in Qana, including 42 children, 15 of them disabled. None of the bodies recovered from the site of the bombing had been those of militants. Israel could no longer absolve itself of responsibility and claim innocence. The killing of the innocent, children and adults alike, was being perpetrated in a ruthless manner. In addition, the right to adequate housing was being violated with the destruction of civilian homes, Lebanese people were being denied access to humanitarian aid, including food provisions, and the right to education could not be enjoyed, since the few schools that had not been destroyed by bombs were being used as shelters for the internally displaced.

87. Amid the Israeli aggression that aimed to destroy the State of Lebanon, and the disproportionate use of force, it was regrettable that some members of the Council continued to argue about "balance" and to question the Council's competence to act in cases of gross and systematic violations of human rights. He hoped that none of the countries represented in the

Council would ever have to undergo the suffering that Lebanon had known. The draft resolution before the Council addressed the Israeli violations of human rights in Lebanon and should be adopted as a demonstration of the international community's condemnation of Israel's action, and respect for the human dignity of the people of Lebanon.

88. Mr. LEVANON (Observer for Israel) said he felt that, paradoxically, he ought to thank the Arab States and OIC for calling for a special session since their exclusive concern with the suffering on just one side of the border between Israel and Lebanon clearly unveiled their hypocrisy. Suffering knew no boundaries and the peoples of Lebanon and Israel were both paying the price of the vicious campaign of terror waged by Hezbollah.

89. Many Council members seemed to have forgotten the incident that had sparked the crisis on 12 July 2006, namely an unprovoked missile attack on Israeli towns and villages by a terrorist organization, Hezbollah, followed by the abduction of two Israeli servicemen and the murder of eight soldiers. Hezbollah, whose genocidal philosophy called for the destruction of Israel, had since launched over 3,500 rockets across the border, killing and injuring thousands of Israeli civilians, sending almost 1 million people into basements and bomb shelters, and destroying thousands of homes. The Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah had stated to the press that the only solution to the conflict was the disappearance of Israel.

90. The deeper cause of the conflict, however, was the behaviour of cowardly States that fought their battles by proxy on foreign soil, arming, training, funding and directing Hezbollah's murderous campaign. The Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs had recently informed the League of Arab States that he was willing to fight for Hezbollah, and the Iranian President had called for "the elimination of the Zionist regime" at an OIC gathering.

91. As the Council listened to distorted accusations, rockets continued to fall indiscriminately on innocent civilians in Israel, targeting men, women and children - Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. Regrettably, the Council failed to condemn violations of the most fundamental human right, the right to life, when the victims were Israelis.

92. Hezbollah also made civilian casualties unavoidable in Lebanon by concealing its infrastructure, weapons and launch sites among homes, hospitals, mosques and schools. Israel, on the other hand, made tremendous efforts to defend itself in accordance with the principles of international law, directing its attacks against terrorist targets and seeking to avoid disproportionate damage to civilians used as cover by Hezbollah. Nobody whose country faced such an intolerable threat would sit idly by and do less than Israel had done to protect its citizens.

93. Speaking on behalf of 6 million Israelis under a daily barrage of missiles, he asked whether the Council did not regard the genocidal ambitions he had described as violations of the fundamental human rights that it had been established to protect. For if they were, why was it not calling for an investigation of the atrocities committed by Hezbollah, Syria and Iran?

94. The kidnapped Israeli soldiers should be released unconditionally and the threat to the Israeli population halted once and for all. Instead of returning to the situation that had prevailed prior to Hezbollah's attack, the international community must work to build a new reality in which the peoples of Israel and Lebanon could live free from the threat of terrorism.

95. Mr. MELEIKA (Observer for Egypt) condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which had resulted in thousands of civilian casualties, the displacement of almost 1 million people, and large-scale destruction of the water and power supply as well as the bridges and roads used to transport international relief supplies. He condemned in equally strong terms the massacres of civilians, mostly innocent children, in Qana and elsewhere which, together with acts that deprived people of basic necessities such as food, medical care and housing, constituted gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

96. He wondered how much longer the international community would continue to apply double standards to Israel's flouting of international law and remain silent about the bloodshed. History would condemn the international community for its failure to act expeditiously against the Israeli aggression, a failure due to the shortcomings of the existing international order and the inability of the United Nations to implement a system of collective security as required by its Charter.

97. Since the beginning of the crisis Egypt had been acting through its contacts with all parties concerned to prevent an escalation of the conflict that would threaten security and stability in the Middle East and the world as a whole.

98. He urged the Council to fulfil its human rights mandate by adopting the draft resolution before it by consensus, condemning Israeli aggression and dispatching a commission of inquiry to investigate the targeting of civilians and the lawfulness of the weapons used in the conflict.

99. Mr. CHOE Myong Nam (Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon thousands of civilians had been massacred or injured, 1 million people had been displaced and civilian and other infrastructure had been severely damaged. International human rights and humanitarian law had been breached and war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed. He feared that unless action was taken to halt the atrocities, countless more casualties and further devastation would ensue and the whole region would be pushed to the brink of a new war.

100. The pretext of "self-defence" invoked by Israel to escalate its military action could in no way justify the mass killing of civilians. Its defiance of repeated calls by the international community was largely attributable to the moral and material support it received from certain Powers, self-styled "human rights judges", that had treated Israel as a subordinate ally for decades. They adopted an uncompromising position towards other countries that committed human rights violations but took no action against Israel. To address the current crisis objectively and impartially, steps should be taken to end Israeli military action as well as all forms of patronage and protection for Israel.

101. Ms. MILLAR (Observer for Australia) expressed concern about the one-sided nature of the special session. Members of the Council should be encouraged to act responsibly and to promote and protect human rights in a balanced and even-handed way.

102. Australia supported the diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict in Lebanon and the consideration by the Security Council of a draft resolution. It did not believe that a special session of the Human Rights Council would advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

103. Australia shared the international community's deep concern about the impact of the conflict on civilians in Israel and Lebanon and extended its condolences to the Governments of Lebanon and Israel and to the families of those affected. The Government had appropriated A\$ 7.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of displaced civilians, of which A\$ 4 million had been earmarked for United Nations agencies.

104. Israel had the right to protect itself from the terrorist attacks of Hamas and Hezbollah, including hostage-taking and rocket attacks. The crisis provided an opportunity to build a sustainable peace based on a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For that to occur, all parties must accept Israel's right to exist in peace.

105. Mr. RAZZOOQI (Observer for Kuwait) condemned the Israeli aggression against Lebanon in the strongest terms as a flagrant violation of international human rights and humanitarian law. The latter branch of international law protected persons who were not or no longer participating in hostilities and restricted the means and methods of warfare. The most important of the seven fundamental principles of international humanitarian law was that parties to a conflict should at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants in order to spare the civilian population and civilian property. When asked the previous week whether Israel was violating international humanitarian law, an Israeli military spokesman had replied that the Lebanese civilian population had been warned to leave areas that were about to be bombarded. Israel's interpretation of international humanitarian law was, to say the least, highly questionable.

106. The humanitarian situation in Lebanon was catastrophic. Most of the fatalities, now numbering over 1,000, were children, women and the elderly. A contracting party to the Geneva Conventions was violating almost every article with impunity. Three Israeli writers, Amos Oz, David Grossman and A.B. Yehoshua, had recently called on Israel's Prime Minister Olmert to focus on diplomatic rather than military action. He hoped there was still someone left in Israel who was prepared to listen to reason.

107. Mr. AL NUAIMI (Observer for Qatar), associating himself with the statements on behalf of OIC and the Group of Arab States, said that the planned Israeli military aggression against Lebanon had claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people and injured more than 3,000, most of them children, women and the elderly, and had displaced more than 1 million people from their homes. Such acts constituted flagrant violations of basic human rights, such as the rights to life, shelter, food, health and education. Bridges, power stations and private homes had been destroyed, and Israel refused to allow the free passage of humanitarian relief in spite of repeated warnings of dire consequences by United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations.

108. For four weeks the international community had turned a blind eye to the corpses of infants and pregnant women ripped apart by Israeli bombs and to gross violations of

international law such as the second Qana massacre, and had remained deaf to the wails of bereaved mothers and wounded children. It was high time for the international community to shoulder its responsibility and take action to end the killing.

109. The Human Rights Council was facing a test of its credibility and the judgement of history would be merciless. It could either succeed in applying relevant international law or continue to follow the path of political charlatanism and double standards. He therefore called on all members of the Council to adopt the draft resolution on the grave situation of human rights in Lebanon.

110. Mr. ABUSAA (Observer for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator had delivered a report just before the current session of the Council regarding the tragic humanitarian situation in Lebanon caused by gross Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The bombardment had killed over 1,000 Lebanese, the vast majority civilians, injured thousands and displaced almost 1 million people. Ports, roads, bridges, residential areas, airports and communication facilities had been destroyed and the Mediterranean Sea would take many years to recover from an oil spillage caused by the bombing of a power plant.

111. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. By any standard, the consequences of the unjustified Israeli aggression against Lebanon constituted war crimes and crimes against humanity for which the perpetrators must be brought to justice. As the inability of the Security Council to fulfil its mandate to protect international peace and security allowed the Israeli military machine to pursue its aggression, the Council was partly responsible for the massacres that had occurred.

112. He strongly supported the dispatch of a commission of inquiry to Lebanon to investigate the targeting of civilians and the massacres in Qana and elsewhere. It was also essential to establish and secure humanitarian corridors other than the illusory ones that Israel claimed to have permitted and to place them under United Nations supervision.

113. He contrasted the speedy evacuation of foreign nationals from Lebanon with the extremely slow reaction of the international community to the tragedy unfolding within the country.

114. Mr. ALMAGLY (Observer for the Sudan) extended his condolences to the families of the victims of Israel's barbaric aggression against Lebanon, which had not even spared infants in their mothers' wombs.

115. Some of the previous speakers had argued that it was not for the Human Rights Council but for the Security Council to discuss the crisis in Lebanon. The fact was, however, that United States hegemony had turned the Security Council into a sword to be used against the developing countries. For example, the United States and the European Union had roused the entire United Nations system to take action on the Darfur crisis, a tribal dispute in a remote part of the Sudan. The United Nations Secretary-General had visited Darfur but he had not visited Lebanon. The Security Council had adopted nine resolutions on the Sudan, the first under Chapter VII of the Charter, and had so far failed to adopt even a President's statement on Israel's aggression against Lebanon. It had not even been capable of adopting a resolution condemning

the Qana massacre. All it could do was vent its wrath on the Lebanese resistance, which was entitled under international law to oppose the occupation of Lebanese territory.

116. Mr. MOAIYERI (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the holding of the special session underscored the primacy of international human rights law as a means of addressing the concerns of the voiceless people of Lebanon. The brutal collective punishment that they were enduring continued the decade-long pattern of Israeli aggression against the peoples of the region. It came at a sensitive time, when Lebanese communities and parties were engaged in a national endeavour to reach a comprehensive understanding.

117. Diplomatic words failed to describe the massacre of innocent women and children in Qana, which had suffered a similar tragedy 10 years previously when civilians taking refuge at a United Nations outpost had been cold-bloodedly murdered.

118. He urged the Council to stand by the people and Government of Lebanon in their distress by calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and an urgent international investigation into the continuing Israeli massacres. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should visit the region to investigate human rights violations, including the targeting of civilians and infrastructure.

119. Ms. LAURENSEN (Observer for New Zealand) said that the crisis in the Middle East was a matter of grave concern to New Zealand, which condemned the loss of civilian lives and called for an immediate halt to the hostilities.

120. The direct causes of the latest conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours were a matter of dispute. It was clear, however, that Israel had responded to Hezbollah's kidnapping and killing of its soldiers by launching large-scale attacks on Lebanon that had taken a heavy toll, including among United Nations personnel and among civilians seeking to flee the conflict. New Zealand could not accept that Israel had acted with due proportionality or caution. It also condemned Hezbollah's indiscriminate rocket attacks, which had led to civilian casualties in northern Israel. All parties must act to bring about an immediate cessation of the hostilities, to be followed by action to secure a comprehensive peace in the region.

121. Although States had a right under international law to defend themselves against attack, they must respect the principle of proportionality and spare civilians not directly participating in the hostilities and civilian property. The international community should call on all parties to the conflict to respect those obligations. New Zealand supported the United Nations Secretary-General's condemnation of acts that targeted civilians and his call for a comprehensive investigation into violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

122. New Zealand would play its part in providing immediate assistance to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Lebanon. All parties to the conflict must facilitate the channelling of humanitarian aid.

123. The Council had an important role to play in opposing violations of international human rights law by any party. Failure to do so under the current circumstances would undermine its credibility.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.