



Statement
by Amb. Makarim Wibisono
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia
at the Special Session of the Human Rights Council
on the situation in Lebanon

Geneva, 11 August 2006

Mr President,

At the outset, I would like to state that it is high time to convene this Special Session in order to address the grave human rights and humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, in the face of the relentless bombing of that country by Israel over the last four weeks and its subsequent invasion by that country's army.

For nearly a month now, we have witnessed massive and indiscriminate Israeli air strikes, with the heavy shelling of buildings, bridges and other civilian installations, hitting all the people in and around those sites. Such callous attacks against terrorised and defenceless civilians, the wholesale destruction of Lebanese cities, epitomized by the tragedy in Qana, and of their life-supporting infrastructures, are criminal acts which no argument, strategic or otherwise, can morally or legally justify.

This aggression not only blatantly violates the territorial integrity of a neighbour country, it also shows a ruthless contempt for the lives and fundamental human rights of an innocent civilian population, including women and children. The systematic and lethal nature of the strikes against civilian targets in Lebanon are a flagrant breach of all the international human rights and humanitarian instruments -- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ICCPR and ICESCR, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols.

Indonesia strongly condemns the armed aggression and grave breaches of the above-mentioned international human rights and humanitarian conventions, which have led to the killing of some 1,000 men, women and children, the injuring of another 3,000, and the displacement of as many as one million civilians -- a quarter of the Lebanese population. Even UN personnel have not escaped the carnage. Austrian, Canadian, Chinese and Finnish personnel were killed in the course of duty in a direct hit on a marked UN post. And among the civilians, at least one Indonesian national is known to have been among the victims of the bombing.



In our opinion, Mr President, the situation on the ground in Lebanon is clearly extreme and the violations committed are grave, and therefore qualify as a human rights emergency that warrants the immediate attention of the Human Rights Council. Indeed, UNGA Resolution A/60/251 mandated this Council to address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, in order to make recommendations thereon and respond promptly to human rights emergencies. If the Human Rights Council does not act promptly, in the face of such disregard for the most fundamental human rights standards, the Council will be failing its mandate.

Indonesia views the events unfolding in the area within the past month as extremely disturbing. Conflicts of attrition, hardly a new development there, have escalated into war. Against that backdrop, we fully support the calls for an immediate, comprehensive and unconditional cease-fire between the warring parties in Lebanon.

My delegation also joins those calling for the Human Rights Council to urgently dispatch a high-level investigation team to the area to investigate the circumstances of the targeting of civilians in Lebanon in all their relevant dimensions, including through the documentation of human and material damage. We call on the relevant states to cooperate with the team. We also support the request that the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights provide all the necessary administrative, technical and logistical assistance to enable such a team to carry out its mandate promptly and efficiently.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to add our voice to those urging the immediate deployment of a UN-led international peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, composed of countries which have a genuine concern for the changes in that part of the world. We also share the view that a substantial part of this peacekeeping force should come from OIC countries. The withdrawal of the Israeli army behind the blue line and the return of the displaced to their villages should accompany these measures.

In conclusion, Mr President, in view of the extreme gravity of the present crisis and of the need to act decisively to de-escalate the conflict through an immediate cessation of hostilities prior to putting in place a mechanism for a lasting peace, Indonesia would like to see the United Nations, including the Human Rights Council, assume its rightful role and spearhead a vigorous and global effort to resolve the crisis.

Thank you.