



NORWAY

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**2ND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL**

STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER COUNSELLOR**

PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY, GENEVA

Geneva, 11 August 2006

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Norway is seriously concerned with the escalating conflict and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Lebanon. Urgent measures are needed to stabilize the situation, to avert a further humanitarian catastrophe, and to bring an end to the unacceptable loss of civilian lives. We strongly deplore the repeated attacks on civilians and especially on children such as in Qana.

No conflict is above international humanitarian law and international human rights. Indeed, these bodies of law coexist in international and non-international armed conflicts and must not be made subject to relativism. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians and excessive use of force represent serious violations of the Geneva conventions. So does the locating of military objectives within or near densely populated areas. We call on Hezbollah and Israel to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We condemn Hezbollah's attacks on Israel and its population. We are deeply concerned by the Israeli decision to broaden the attacks on the ground in Lebanon. The road to peace in the Middle East must be found by way of negotiations, not armed conflict.

We support the call for an investigation of events that have occurred on the ground, provided that the actions of all actors are covered.

Norway fully supports the ongoing work in the Security Council on a resolution calling for a full cessation of hostilities, and to provide a basis for a long-term political solution. It is a matter of urgency that this resolution is adopted as soon as possible.

The parties to the conflict have a clear obligation under international humanitarian law to ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian relief organisations. The obstacles and security risks humanitarian aid workers are faced with today are unacceptable.

The response to the UN's Flash Appeal for the Lebanon Crisis has so far been disappointing. Norway has decided to grant 25 mill. USD in fresh funds to humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, to be channelled through the UN Appeals, the Red Cross and NGOs. A great challenge facing the international community and Lebanon will be the early recovery and the long term reconstruction of Lebanon. Norway is prepared to participate in this work, in close cooperation with the UN.

Let me add that Norway remains deeply concerned by the suffering inflicted on civilians as a result of the continuing violence in Gaza and the West Bank.