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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Second special session

11 August 2006

**Written statement\* submitted by the World Jewish Congress (WJC), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[10 August 2006]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s) and its content is the author's sole responsibility.

## **Human Rights for All**

My name is Lior Herman, and I address you today on behalf of the World Jewish Congress, the international assembly of over 80 Jewish communities around the world.

My intention was to appeal before this, the second-ever special session of the nascent Human Rights Council and the second one called specifically to single out Israel. I was to point out the one-sided nature of the agenda for this session, and express collective outrage that this body continues to ignore and thereby excuse deliberate and systematic violation of the human rights of tens of millions of our fellow human beings. I was to ask by what right this subsidiary body of the General Assembly convenes a special session while the Security Council remains seized of the very matter under discussion, in violation of Article 12 of the United Nations Charter. I was to ask each of you, distinguished diplomats, how you sit in judgment of others while in doing so you violate the UN Charter, the very source of your legitimacy.

But I arrived here yesterday from London, amid a massive security alert as police foiled an attempted mass terrorist attack against international flights.

The entrenched terrorist army in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah, is one manifestation of a scourge affecting every corner of the globe. Hezbollah is among those terrorist movements which are funded and directed by sovereign states, members of the United Nations. Let me be clear: Iran and Syria, members of the United Nations, are state sponsors of terrorism. By calling for Israel's elimination, annihilation and destruction, Iran violates the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Together, Iran and Syria stand in violation of the UN Charter and the Geneva Conventions, and these states should be held accountable for the targeting of civilians in Israel and the use of human shields in Lebanon.

By continuing to focus this body on just one of the 191 UN member states, today's special session not only awards impunity to dozens of repressive regimes which routinely violate the rights of their own citizens. This Council also grants sanction and legitimacy to those member states using terrorism and abusing religion to attack and undermine free societies.

I left one of those free societies to be here today. How ironic, that none of us here today can return to our homes around the world with any assurance that we will arrive safely to our families. How perverse then, that we convene here at some personal risk in order to condemn one of those free societies that is actively fighting for its own rights and those of its neighbors.

Judaism, like Islam, is premised on the sanctity of human life and human dignity, principles that also apply to the one million Israelis living in bomb shelters to avoid the thousands of Hezbollah rockets designed to maximize civilian casualties, and to the 85 innocents murdered in the Hezbollah attack on Argentina's Jewish community headquarters in Buenos Aires 12 years ago this summer.

The World Jewish Congress, having participated in the founding of the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms, will continue to advocate for meaningful efforts to advance and protect the human rights of all, proportional to the scale of violations. Is Israel the primary violator of human rights in the world? If this Council only focuses on Israel and neglects the bulk of alleged ongoing human rights emergencies elsewhere, how will we ever know?

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