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**Written statement* submitted by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
(CIHRS)
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]

* 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 Crisis in Lebanon¹

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies -CIHRS and the Palestinian Human Rights Organization (in Lebanon) - PHRO have been following with great concern and alarm the massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Lebanon. This concern stems from last month's continued Israeli aggression on the Lebanese territories and the pursuit of the policy of collective punishment against the civilian population. Since the eruption of the conflict on July 12, 2006, the Lebanese side suffered more than 1000 people killed, with thousands more wounded. The situation has caused an estimated one million civilians to flee in search of refuge under very harsh humanitarian conditions. The Israeli side witnessed about tens of civilians killed, as well as dozens injured.

Israel's attacks on Lebanese territory have been targeting the civilian infrastructure. Military forces bombed multiple targets, among which were Beirut International Airport and several airports, electricity stations, bridges, roads, populated villages and neighborhoods, convoys of trucks carrying medical and food supplies and of Lebanese red cross, convoys of displaced persons from southern Lebanon, as well as the Hezbollah TV news station, Al-Manar. Furthermore, a number of international observers of the United Nations (UN) have fallen victim to Israeli bombardment. This repeated and systematic targeting of civilians has been manifested in a number of horrific massacres, most striking of which was "the second Qana massacre" in which 54 people died, half of them children.

On the other hand, Hezbollah has launched a barrage of missile attacks on Israel, which has suffered damage to a number of academic and educational institutes, a medical hospital, a train station, and a number of houses. These attacks have resulted in dozens of deaths of Israeli civilians (Jews and Arabs), and injuring others. There has been oversimplification of the conflict by reducing the crux of the crisis to the beginning of the armed clashes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces on 12 July 2006, or even attributing it to the continued Israeli occupation of Shebaa farms. The roots of the crisis rest in the international community's chronic failure over four decades in the implementation of a just and last peace to the Palestinian question, as well as the lack of the political will to enforce the UN resolutions related to ending Israeli occupation in Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. There has been selective implementation of these UN resolutions, while neglecting others: for instance, the great interest in implementing the UN Security Council Resolution 1559 on Lebanon, on the other hand, the lack of the international political will necessary to force Israel to implement other resolutions substantively related to the Arab-Israeli conflict- such as UN Security Council Resolution 242 (passed nearly four decades ago), which is also no less important to the settlement in the whole region and in Lebanon itself. Moreover, the absence of appropriate accountability for the massive violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law over four decades, which are already investigated and documented by the UN Special Rapporteurs and were examined by the UN Human Rights Commission.

¹ Palestinian Human Rights Organization (in Lebanon)- PHRO without also share the views expressed in this statement.

It is essential that the international community realize that the causes of instability and the spread of violence and terrorism in the region do not originate only from the absence of democracy and development; but, this situation also stems from the growing sense of injustice due to the silence of the international community and the double standards on Israel's ongoing crimes against Arab peoples, over nearly half a century.

In this context, CIHRS and PHRO propose to the UN Human Rights Council the following recommendations:

- To call upon the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution for an immediate cease-fire in Lebanon, immediate withdrawal of Israeli Occupying forces from Lebanon, enable the Lebanese army to extend its control over the entire country and to strengthen UN forces already in place.
- Meanwhile, to call on all conflict parties to stop targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to stop pursuing the policy of collective punishment.
- To call upon the UN Security Council to impose an embargo on export and transfer of arms and ammunition used in violation of international humanitarian law by the parties of the conflict.
- To urge Israel to allow Lebanese and International humanitarian and relief organizations to operate freely in the crisis, and address the lack of protection of UN Interim forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
- To demand for the release of all prisoners arbitrarily detained by both parties.
- To urge the international community to mobilize the necessary financial resources and humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees who are facing the crisis, and to assist states hosting them temporarily to meet their urgent Humanitarian needs.
- To decide for the dispatch of an urgent fact-finding mission consisting of UN relevant Special Rapporteurs to examine violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed since 12 July 2006- including war crimes- and to refer to the Security Council these crimes, while taking all possible measures to prosecute the perpetrators.
