COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Council Conclusions

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS
Council meeting - Brussels, 1 August 2006)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council expresses its utmost concern at the Lebanese and Israeli civilian casualties and human suffering, the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, and the increased number of internally displaced persons following the escalation of violence.

The Council condemns the rocket attacks by Hezbollah on Israel. The Council condemns the death of innocent civilians, mostly women and children, in an Israeli air strike on the Lebanese village of Qana. The Council also states that all attacks against UN personnel are unacceptable and deplores the tragic deaths of four UN military observers.

The Council deplores the loss of innocent civilian life. All parties must do everything possible to protect civilian populations and to refrain from actions in violation of international humanitarian law.

The Council calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities to be followed by a sustainable cease-fire.

In this context, the Council fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General and the Security Council to be rapidly convened to define a political framework for a lasting solution agreed by all parties, which is a necessary precondition for deployment of an international force. Such a force requires a strong mandate from the UN to act in support of a political settlement and the Lebanese armed forces. Once this framework has been established, EU Member States have indicated their readiness to contribute to such an operation together with international partners.

The Council underlines the EU's commitment to Lebanon, to its full sovereignty, and to its long term political and economic partnership with Europe. The EU is ready to contribute to rebuilding a Lebanese state able to exercise full sovereignty on its territory and to protect its people.

P R E S S

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The Council commends the Lebanese Government for its seven point plan for peace as a good basis for a lasting solution. Any solution must include the return of abducted soldiers and prisoners, a settlement of the international borders of Lebanon, deployment of the Lebanese armed forces through the whole of its territory, backed by an international force and the implementation of the Ta'if Accords and UNSCRs 1559, 1680.

The Council calls on all parties in the region with influence to help bring to an end the violence and the suffering that it brings.

The EU reiterates its determination to work with the wider international community to bring humanitarian relief to the people of Lebanon. The EU calls on all parties to grant secure and efficient passage for the delivery of humanitarian assistance especially in southern Lebanon. So far the Community and EU member states have committed over 56 million euros to the relief efforts, with another 52 million in pledges. The EU stands ready to contribute fully to the planned international conference to assist Lebanon's revival and reconstruction.

The Council deplores the continuing violence in Gaza and the West Bank that has led to an equally distressing humanitarian situation. The Council reiterates its call for the parties to return to the peace process on the basis of the Roadmap. An unequivocal commitment by all parties to a viable independent Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours is a key to stability and security in the whole region.

The EU is committed to promote a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East in close cooperation with partners and the countries in the region. There is no military solution to any of the problems facing the people of the region. The Council asked the High Representative to remain engaged and to remain in contact with all the relevant parties and to be ready to contribute to a political solution and to the peace process."
