

Special Session of the Human Rights Council
(August 11, 2006)

Statement by India

India is seriously concerned about the continuing conflict between Israel and the Hezbollah extending across the Lebanon-Israel border which is threatening to destabilise the entire region. West Asia is our extended neighbourhood and peace and stability in the region is of vital interest to us. The present conflict has resulted in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians and has exacerbated an already tense and delicate situation in the region.

India had condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers by the Hezbollah cadres and called for their immediate release. Simultaneously, we have condemned in the strongest possible terms the excessive and disproportionate military retaliation by Israel which has targeted civilian infrastructure and resulted in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians, including women and children. We have repeatedly called for immediate cessation of all acts of violence, exercising utmost restraint by all sides and resumption of dialogue. *Our parliament adopted a resolution on July 31 calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.*

It is regrettable that Israel has chosen to continue with the indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon, ignoring calls for restraint. There have been several instances of indiscriminate and irresponsible bombing by Israel resulting in death of innocent civilians and non-partisan actors including UN Observers. The Israeli military operation has also destroyed civilian infrastructure and has prevented the delivery of humanitarian aid to the affected populations adding to their hardships. India expresses its deep condolences, sympathy and support to the people of Lebanon at this difficult time. The virtual destruction of a country which has been painfully rebuilt after two decades of civil war, cannot be countenanced. India has decided to contribute to the humanitarian and relief efforts to rebuild Lebanon. Our sympathy also goes to the people of Israel who have also suffered because of the ongoing hostilities.

In our view, there should be an immediate ceasefire so that the destruction of Lebanon is ended and humanitarian assistance could be provided. All sides must immediately halt the violence and return to the path of negotiations. We remain convinced that lasting peace and security in the region, which is a matter of interest and concern not only to the countries of the region but to the whole world, can be achieved only through a negotiated and comprehensive solution to the problems of this region that takes into account the legitimate interests and grievances of all the parties concerned.