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Israel – USA: Ensure Israel hands over maps of cluster bombs strikes in South Lebanon

As the USA State Department raised concerns in its report to Congress about possible violations by Israel of a classified US-Israeli agreement on the use of cluster bombs, Amnesty International urged the Israeli government to hand over detailed maps and coordinates of the areas in south Lebanon into which its forces fired hundreds of thousands of cluster bombs during the 34-day conflict with Hizbullah last July-August.

Each day that Israel delays, more and more civilians' lives are put at risk in south Lebanon. It is vital that detailed maps and all other information be made available urgently in order to reduce the risk both for the civilian population in the affected areas and for those carrying out the mine clearance operations.

In the past six months, accidents involving unexploded cluster bombs have caused more than 200 casualties, including several children, in and around villages in south Lebanon. Thirty people, eight of them de-mining personnel, have been killed and more than 180 people have been injured, including 20 mine clearers. Many of the injured have been maimed for life. Israel's failure to provide maps or other information showing where its troops used cluster bombs has made the task of clearing unexploded munitions more dangerous and slower than it would otherwise be, putting both civilians and mine clearance personnel at greater and unnecessary risk.

The United Nation Mine Action Coordination Centre (UN-MACC) has identified more than 800 sites over which unexploded but still lethal remnants of cluster bombs and other ordnance are scattered and estimates that the clearing will take a year or more.

The Israeli authorities' failure to provide detailed information regarding their use of cluster weapons in Lebanon becomes more inexcusable with each passing day. They should act immediately to ensure that all relevant information is made available to UN-MACC without further delay or prevarication.

Amnesty International is urging the US government, which supplied many of the cluster bombs fired by Israeli forces into south Lebanon, to ensure that the Israeli authorities provide the maps and other information, so as to reduce the potential for further civilian casualties.

Most of the unexploded cluster sub-munitions which litter south Lebanon, and which continue to pose a lethal danger for the local population, the de-mining personnel and UN peace-keeping forces, are US-made.

In August and September 2006, Amnesty International researchers found unexploded *BLU-63* sub-munitions from *CBU-58B* cluster bombs in a house in the village of 'Ainata and in the courtyard of a house in the village of Rashaya al-Foukhar. *CBU-58B* cluster bombs are US-made. They each contain 650 *BLU-63* bomblets and are air-delivered.

A vast quantity of unexploded *BLU-63* sub-munitions were also found near Nabatiyeh, north of the Litani river, where Israel did not give any advance notice to the local population of its intention to launch air or artillery attacks.

Amnesty International researchers also found unexploded M42 and M46 cluster sub-munitions around the village of 'Aitaroun. Both the M42 and the M46 cluster bombs are US-made and are delivered by artillery cannon.

A third type of US-made unexploded cluster sub-munitions found in south Lebanon is the M77, which is delivered by Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). The rest were mainly Israeli-made M85.

Amnesty International continues to call on the US and on the rest of the international community to declare and enforce an arms embargo on both Israel and Hizbullah until effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that weapons will not be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law. The US, Lebanon, Iran and Syria, in particular, must ensure that no weapons that may be used to commit violations are sent by them to either party or

transit through their territory.

The organization also calls on the Israeli government to impose a moratorium on the use of all cluster weapons and to provide maps of the locations of the land-mines which its forces laid in south Lebanon in the past year.