

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Media Advisory

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Amnesty International missions to Lebanon and Israel

An Amnesty International mission is currently in Lebanon to carry out research into human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law during the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hizbullah. At least 500 civilians, including many children, have so far been killed in Lebanon and some 18 civilians killed in northern Israel.

The delegates in Lebanon have been to the port city of Tyre, to which many thousands of civilians displaced by Israeli attacks have fled, and got to Qana village, a few kilometres away, within hours of the Israeli air attack which demolished a four-storey building killing some 28 civilians, including many children. They interviewed survivors of the attack and have also visited other villages in South Lebanon where civilians have been killed and injured in attacks, and have interviewed humanitarian and aid workers and villagers who have been forced from their homes by the conflict. The delegates are compiling information about war crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law and about the broader impact on civilians. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been forced from their homes in what is developing into a major humanitarian crisis due to the destruction of roads, bridges, sea and airports and other infrastructure and the ongoing Israeli blockade of Lebanon.

Another Amnesty International mission is going to Israel, departing on 3 August. The purpose of this mission is to investigate the impact of Hizbullah rocket attacks on civilians in northern Israel and to obtain information from the Israeli authorities about investigations they have announced into some of the killings by their forces in south Lebanon. The mission will also look into the mechanisms in place to protect civilians and into alleged war crimes. The delegates will visit towns in northern Israel where civilians have been killed or injured by Hizbullah rockets and hope to hold meetings with government officials, non-governmental organizations, aid workers and others. Amnesty International's delegates will be assisted by the organization's Israel Section.

Amnesty International is calling for an immediate and full ceasefire, for independent and impartial investigations into all the incidents of civilian killings on both sides and for any war crimes to be investigated and prosecuted.

For interviews with the two missions, please call Nicole Choueiry, Middle East and North Africa Press Officer on +44 7831 640 170, or Amnesty International's press office on +44 207 413 5566 or +44 777 847 2126.

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566
Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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