



THE PRIME MINISTER

Copenhagen, 31 JUL 2006

H.E. Fuad Siniora
Prime Minister
President of the Council of Ministers
Lebanese Republic

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 20 July.

I am appalled by the shelling of a residential building in Qana yesterday and the death of more than 50 civilians, mostly children. Please accept my sincere condolences in this regard.

The situation in Lebanon is indeed very critical. Denmark is gravely concerned about the mounting toll of civilian casualties, and the extensive damage to the civilian infrastructure. There is an urgent need for a cessation of hostilities – a point which Denmark already stressed at the Security Council on 21 July as well as during the meeting yesterday when the shelling of Qana was discussed.

Denmark as a member of the Security Council has strongly supported the efforts of the UN Secretary General to stop hostilities and return to the political process. In the Security Council we have stressed that Denmark stands firmly behind you and your government and that the best solution lies in supporting your government's efforts to restore full sovereignty over all Lebanese territory. That is essential for the full implementation of Resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006).

We support the ongoing deliberations on an international force in order to assist your government in this considerable task. Such a force can only be effective, if the parties agree with its deployment and mandate.

Also, I can assure you that we are working closely in the Security Council as well as together with our EU-partners to accelerate a process, which will help reach a peaceful solution to the crisis.

We are very much aware that the Lebanese people are trapped in the middle of these grim hostilities, and that you and your government are struggling to cope with this immense burden. To assist you in this difficult task we have in the Security Council supported the agreement to create humanitarian corridors to provide desperately needed assistance to those under siege. In addition Denmark has so far contributed almost 4 million USD in humanitarian assistance.

We condemn in the strongest terms the kidnapping of the Israeli soldiers and the firing of missiles into Israel. Such actions are simply unacceptable. Without doubt, Hezbollah and those who support them bear full responsibility for these deadly crimes. The extremist elements behind these actions are opponents of stability and lasting peace. At the same time Israel must ensure that its response is proportional, and measured, and carried out with full respect for the obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. Thus Denmark has stressed that Israel, while having the right to defend itself, must show utmost restraint and avoid disproportional action.

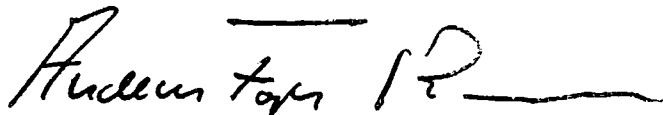
In a broader perspective, the only solution and the biggest challenge is to bring about lasting peace and stability in the Middle East, and to bring back hope to the people of the region. A lasting solution must, in order to be viable, thoroughly address all the outstanding issues in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your extraordinary assistance in the evacuation of the thousands of Danish citizens that were in Lebanon, when the crisis broke out. The support of your armed forces and police was invaluable in this regard.

Finally, I hope that it will be possible for me to welcome you in Denmark once the situation has been stabilised.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anders Fogh Rasmussen', with a horizontal line above the name.

Anders Fogh Rasmussen