

## INDIANAPOLIS JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

### *WHERE WE STAND*

#### STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

JULY 17, 2006

The Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council, representing the synagogues and Jewish organizations in the Greater Indianapolis area, unequivocally condemns the unprovoked and deadly rocket and mortar attacks by the Iranian- and Syrian-backed terror group Hezbollah on Israeli northern communities. These attacks, along with the kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldiers within Israel's internationally recognized borders by Hezbollah and Hamas terrorists operating in Lebanon and Gaza, demonstrate a dramatic escalation by the enemies of Israel and peace.

This attack would not have been possible without the explicit authorization of Hezbollah's and Hamas' two main state sponsors in the region, Iran and Syria, which continue to harbor terror group leaders. Israel possesses the inalienable right of any sovereign nation to defend its citizens from violent attack.

We, the organized Jewish community, stand steadfastly by Israel in its efforts to protect its citizens from acts of terrorism. For some years our Jewish community, through the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis, has supported and partnered with social service organizations, medical facilities, schools and innovative projects in the Western Galilee region of Israel. We are deeply saddened that our many friends there have once again been forced to seek safety from attack in bomb shelters, and that the hospital in Nahariya has been forced to move patients into its underground facility.

We are gratified by the strong words of support from our government, particularly President Bush at the G-8 Summit in Russia, regarding Israel's right of self-defense. The international community must pressure the governments involved to reign in Hezbollah and Hamas. In particular, the Lebanese government must deploy its army to southern Lebanon to displace Hezbollah from the internationally recognized Israeli-Lebanese border, and Iran must cease providing arms and assistance so that Hezbollah may serve as its proxy army against Israel.

We further call upon Syria to cease harboring the terrorist leaders of Hamas who, in Damascus, are not even accountable to their counterparts in the government of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel has had to defend its very existence for nearly 60 years in the face of active and sustained threats that include terrorism, boycotts, an international campaign to de-legitimize its right to exist, and multiple wars waged by more than a dozen Arab and Muslim states, either directly or through terrorist groups they arm and harbor. We pray for the day they follow the example of Jordan and Egypt and make peace with Israel.

True peace can only come when Israel's enemies renounce violence and accept Israel's right to exist in secure and recognized borders. Only when Israel is secure can it – as it has on numerous occasions – make bold moves for peace. When Hamas and Hezbollah attack Israel, they attack peace, and that is a tragedy for both the Israeli and the Palestinian people, and indeed for all the peoples of the Middle East.