

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write to express our strong support for Israel's right to self-defense amid the intensifying attacks that Israel faces from Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorists in Lebanon. Since Hamas's barbaric October 7 attacks across Israel's southern border, Israel has endured over 19,000 Iranian-backed missile and drone attacks from all fronts.<sup>1</sup> Hezbollah alone has launched over 5,820<sup>2</sup> rocket, missile, and drone attacks into northern Israel that have killed 34 Israelis<sup>3</sup> and forced more than 60,000 Israelis to uproot their lives and flee their homes.<sup>4</sup> Israel should not have to live under constant fear of aerial attack and has the legal right and moral obligation to defend its sovereign borders and its people. Hence, we urge you to unequivocally support Israel's right to defend itself against Hezbollah's attacks, and to provide in a timely manner the support necessary to restore peace and security.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701 concluded the 2006 Lebanon War that began as a result of Hezbollah's rocket assault and direct attack on Israel.<sup>5</sup> UNSCR 1701 requires "security arrangements to prevent the resumption of hostilities, including the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani river of an area free of any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of [the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)]."<sup>6</sup> The resolution requested that Israeli forces withdraw from Lebanon. Despite Hezbollah's culpability for initiating the war and the deplorable anti-Israel bias prevalent in the UN and other international organizations, Israel withdrew.

In contrast, Hezbollah— with Tehran's backing— has been expanding its terrorist militias, stockpiling its weapons arsenal, and launching attacks from within the area that is supposed to be

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<sup>1</sup> Fabian, Emanuel. "Over 19000 rockets fired into Israel since start of war, IDF says." The Times of Israel. June 10, 2024. [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/over-19000-rockets-fired-into-israel-since-start-of-war-idf-says/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/over-19000-rockets-fired-into-israel-since-start-of-war-idf-says/)

<sup>2</sup> Cicurel, Ari. "Monthly Iran Projectile Tracker: June 2024." JINSA. <https://jinsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Monthly-Iran-Projectile-Tracker-June-2024-7-3-24-2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> "Swords of Iron: An Overview." INSS Tel Aviv University. <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/war-data/>

<sup>4</sup> Summers, Charlie. "Protesters highlight plight of northern Israel's displaced residents outside PM's Jerusalem home." The Times of Israel. June 22, 2024. [https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog\\_entry/protesters-highlight-plight-of-northern-israels-displaced-residents-outside-pms-jerusalem-home/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/protesters-highlight-plight-of-northern-israels-displaced-residents-outside-pms-jerusalem-home/)

<sup>5</sup> "The Second Lebanon War 2006." ADL. September 1, 2016. <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/second-lebanon-war-2006>

<sup>6</sup> "Resolution 1701 (2006)." United Nations. August 11, 2006. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1701>

demilitarized.<sup>7</sup> These actions are in flagrant violation of UNSCR 1701 and the prohibition of acts of aggression covered by Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. The United Nations, the Government of Lebanon, and UNIFIL have utterly failed to enforce the demands of UNSCR 1701 with regards to Hezbollah.<sup>8</sup> More broadly, Hezbollah's attacks trigger Israel's right to self-defense as recognized in Article 51 of the UN Charter.<sup>9</sup> Hezbollah's unchecked continued aggression represents a clear failure of diplomacy, international organizations, and international law that leaves Israel with few options. If urgent action is not taken by your administration to secure enforcement of UNSCR 1701, there could be severe consequences for both Israel and U.S. national security interests in the Middle East.

It is disappointing that your administration's policy towards the conflict on Israel's northern border is ambiguous at best. America should not be neutral when it comes to the conflict between Israel, our greatest ally in the Middle East, and Hezbollah, the Iranian regime's most lethal terrorist proxy. In early June, Hezbollah dramatically increased their missile and drone attacks against Israel and your administration, out of fear of escalation, responded by cautioning Israel against responding.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, your administration continues to block the transfer of 2,000-pound bombs, F-15 fighter aircraft, and other U.S.-made defense articles needed in Israel.<sup>11,12</sup> These decisions have exacerbated perceived tensions and divisions between the United States and Israel, empowered Hezbollah terrorists, and impeded Israel's efforts to defend itself. A failure to fully support Israel's right to self-defense in both word and deed undermines U.S. national security interests and risks breaking faith with our nation's ironclad commitment to Israel.

Accordingly, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions without delay:

- (1) Do you agree that Israel has a right to its own self-defense?
- (2) Do you agree that Hezbollah has violated the terms of UNSCR 1701? Do you assess that Hezbollah continues to act in violation of UNSCR 1701?
- (3) What is your position regarding the Government of Lebanon's failure to implement key provisions of UNSCR 1701? What appropriate responses should the United States and international community take to assist the Government of Lebanon and promote enforcement of the resolution?

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<sup>7</sup> Shaikh, Shaan & Williams, Ian. "Missiles and Rockets of Hezbollah." *Missile Threat*, Center for Strategic and International Studies. June 26, 2018, last modified August 10, 2021. <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/hezbollahs-rocket-arsenal/>

<sup>8</sup> Bowman, Bradley & McMillan, Cameron. "The grave consequences of the UN's failure in Lebanon." *FDD*. June 14, 2024. <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/06/14/the-grave-consequences-of-the-uns-failure-in-lebanon/>

<sup>9</sup> "Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice." United Nations. June 29, 1946. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Ravid, Barak. "Scoop: U.S. warns Israel 'Limited War' with Lebanon could draw Iran to intervene." *Axios*. June 6, 2024. <https://www.axios.com/2024/06/06/biden-israel-lebanon-war-iran-intervention>

<sup>11</sup> Hansler, Jennifer. "Blinken confirms US is still pausing a shipment of heavy bombs to Israel as Netanyahu increases pressure on admin." *CNN*. June 18, 2024. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/06/18/politics/blinken-confirms-pause-heavy-bombs-israel/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> Malsin, Jared & Youssef, Nancy A. "Biden Administration Delays Moving Forward With F-15 Sale to Israel." *The Wall Street Journal*. June 18, 2024. <https://www.wsj.com/world/congressional-leaders-allow-major-arms-sale-to-israel-to-proceed-after-white-house-pressure-f2e48389>

- (4) What steps has the United States Government taken to date, in concert with its allies and partners, to facilitate implementation of UNSCR 1701?
- (5) What is the official United States Government stance on Israel's right to prevent further Hezbollah attacks from Southern Lebanon?
- (6) Do you agree that Hezbollah should halt all attacks on Israel?
- (7) Do you agree that Hezbollah should completely withdraw north of the Litani River, consistent with UNSCR 1701?
- (8) Will you fully end any pauses or delays of arms for Israel immediately, including any delays in the delivery of 2,000-pound bombs?
- (9) Will the United States supply all necessary armaments and support should Israel implement its legal right to self-defense against Hezbollah?

We look forward to a written and unclassified response to these questions no later than August 9, 2024.

The failure to achieve even partial implementation of UNSCR 1701 has allowed the Hezbollah terrorist threat on Israel's border to metastasize. The United States must now speak with clarity and act with urgency to unequivocally support Israel's right to self-defense. A failure to do so will be a moral failing with serious strategic consequences.

Sincerely,



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Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress



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Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator