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Lebanon: ICJ Expert Legal Inquiry into Possible Violations of International Humanitarian Law begins second stage of investigations

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) *Expert Legal Inquiry into Possible Violations of International Humanitarian Law in the Armed Conflict in Lebanon* today began the next stage of its investigations into whether and to what extent the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and Hezbollah violated the laws of war in the recent conflict in Lebanon.

A 16-day preliminary fact-finding mission completed its work in Lebanon, having held the first round of discussions with government, military and Hezbollah officials and after examining sites and interviewing eyewitnesses in southern Lebanon. Opening the second stage of the Inquiry, members of the Inquiry panel have now returned to Lebanon for further, more detailed investigations.

The Expert Legal Inquiry will also visit Israel this month, where they intend to carry out investigations in northern Israel and hold extensive discussions with senior IDF officers who were responsible for the military operations in Lebanon. The proposed dates of the mission, as well as civilian and military officials whom the Inquiry panel wish to meet in Israel, are being finalised with the Israeli authorities, after the Government indicated that it would receive the high-level team.

The five-member Inquiry panel, established by the ICJ in August 2006, consists of former senior military officers and internationally-respected experts in international humanitarian law/human rights law, supported by senior military advisers with operational and policy expertise in air operations and explosives. The five members of the Inquiry panel are as follows:

- **Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar**, (Retired) (India), retired as Deputy Chief of Staff of Indian Army, member in 2005 of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Security Threats, first Force Commander and Head of Mission of UNPROFOR in the Former Yugoslavia, currently Director of the United Service Institution of India.
- **Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Garraway** (Retired), (UK): currently Visiting Professor, Kings College London, Associate Fellow, Chatham House and Visiting Fellow, Human Rights Centre, Essex University, who retired from the UK Army after 30 years of service in the UK Army Legal Service.
- **Professor Louise Doswald-Beck**, (Switzerland), Professor, Graduate Institute of International Relations and Director of the University Centre for International Humanitarian Law, Geneva, and ICJ Commissioner and former head of the Legal Division of the ICRC.
- **Professor Françoise Hampson**, (UK), Professor of Law, Essex University, UK, member of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of

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- Human Rights, who has been a consultant on international humanitarian law to the ICRC.
- **Dr. Amin Mekki Medani**, (Sudan), International human rights lawyer, former Regional Representative for the Arab Region of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

“The ICJ has set up this Expert Legal Inquiry to carry out an impartial and thorough investigation. It has all the military and legal expertise it needs to carry out a professional inquiry”, said Nicholas Howen, Secretary-General of the ICJ.

“It is still vital to go beyond confusion and misstatement about the conflict in Lebanon, to clarify the facts surrounding the military operations of both sides and impartially apply international humanitarian law,” added Nicholas Howen.

After it has completed its investigations and analysis, the Inquiry panel will produce a public report with its conclusions and recommendations, including in relation to accountability and reparations for any violations that are identified.

For further information, contact the ICJ, Heidi Steffensen, +41-76-562-3810 or the International Commission of Jurists main office on +41-22-9793800