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## Australian Arabic Council condemns silence

Melbourne| July 7, 2006 | The Australian Arabic Council (AAC) condemns the silence of the international community and Australian government on Israel's recent military actions and aggression.

In the face of Israel's contravention of the Geneva Conventions, international law and its use of collective punishment the AAC calls on the Australian public and members of parliament to show some conviction and stand up for democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law.

Acting-Chairperson, Mr Taimor Hazou, explained: "Israel is breaking numerous international laws and flouting international standards and conventions.

"Israel has gone too far and is getting away with it while the world watches on.

"Israel first invaded Gaza openly using collective punishment as part of its military tactics by demolishing civilian transport links, bulldozing homes and bombing a power station crucial for water purification and other civilian infrastructure.

"Israel has and continues to use 'terror tactics' meant to capitulate and punish a civilian population. These tactics are illegal under international law," said Mr Hazou.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has said Israel is in violation of the most fundamental norms of humanitarian and human rights law and is gravely concerned with the violations of the human rights of the Palestinians caused by Israel.

Israel has kidnapped over 9,500 Palestinians the majority without charge or trial and are being held in detention. As part of "Operation Summer Rain" Israel has kidnapped 21 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, 8 Ministers and the Deputy Prime Minister.

Commenting on the silence of Australian, MPs Mr Hazou added: "We can not in true conscience just sit idly by while Israel hands out collective punishment and abducts democratically elected representatives.

"The facts of this conflict have for some years pointed to the double standards held by the international community; it is time politicians started to speak out.

"Despite the facts speaking for themselves and many Palestinians living in the hardest of conditions, can you imagine the response if members of the Israeli Keenest were abducted.

"Of greater concern, is the sudden bombardment by Israel of civilian infrastructure in Beirut and the illegal blockage of Lebanon's ports.

~ page 1 of 2 ~

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“Israel’s escalating military actions must be stopped.

“The only reason Israel is even bold enough to take these illegal steps, is because it knows it can get away with it,” said Mr Hazou.

The AAC calls on the Federal government to work to stop the violence immediately and provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

Concluding the AAC’s statement Mr Hazou stated: “We call on all Australian Parliamentarians to show their true commitment to democratic values and human rights, by showing some conviction and standing up for what we all believe in.

“If these actions were taken by any other nation, would the international community of parliamentarians be so silent?

“The reality is that while we advocate for a “War on Terror”, invade Iraq and threaten Iran with bombardment we allow Israel to act with impunity.

“It is time for the double standards to end. If you want to “win the war on terror” then terrorism in all its forms must be condemned and stopped.

“We call on Federal Parliamentarians and Senators to show some meatal and speak out during this time of silence.

“We should all be judged by the same laws and standards,” concluded Mr Hazou.

## Facts & Figures

	Israeli	Palestinian
<b>Political Prisoners</b>	1	9,599
<b>Political representatives abducted</b>	0	30
<b>Killed between 28/06-13/07</b>	2	97
<b>Injured between 28/06-13/07</b>	4	242
<b>Artillery, bombs, rockets used 28/06-13/07</b>	710	127
<b>Killed since 29/092000</b>	1,084	4,020
<b>Children killed since 29/092000</b>	121	734
<b>Injured since 29/092000</b>	7,633	30,281
<b>Targeted UN Resolutions</b>	65	0
<b>Homes demolished</b>	0	4,170
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	8.9%	25-31%
<b>Confiscated land &amp; settlements built</b>	60+ (Jewish only)	0

Source: <http://www.ifamericansknew.org/>; <http://www.almubadara.org/new/english.php>

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