

Out of scope



From: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Sent: Sunday, 28 July 2024 5:46 pm
To: s9(2)(g)(ii)
Cc: s9(2)(g)(ii)

Subject: RE: HEZBOLLAH ATTACKS ON ISRAEL s6(a)

(RESTRICTED)
s9(2)(g)
(ii)

an updated note and advice on public coms is attached (and copied below) for the Minister's consideration.

HEZBOLLAH ATTACKS ON ISRAEL s6(a)

Key Updates

- Minister Wong has issued a statement on X on the Majdal Shams attack:

*Australia unequivocally condemns the strike on the northern Israeli town of Majdal Shams.
My thoughts are with those killed, those injured and their loved ones.*

The leaders of Australia, Canada and New Zealand made clear on 26 July the grave concerns we hold about further escalation and destabilising actions in the Middle East.

We demanded Iran and its affiliated groups, including Hizballah, cease their attacks.

An immediate ceasefire in Gaza has never been more urgent, to protect civilians, see hostages released, and enable aid to flow.

The deaths and injuries in central Gaza overnight highlight the unacceptable human toll.

We repeat our call on all parties to agree to a ceasefire.

- The US has issued a statement through the National Security Council:

We condemn this horrific attack that reportedly killed a number of teenagers and children playing soccer on a Saturday evening in the village of Majdal Shams in northern Israel. Our hearts go out to the families of those who lost loved ones today, and we are praying for a speedy recovery for those who have been injured. Israel continues to face severe threats to its security, as the world saw today, and the United States will continue to support efforts to end these terrible attacks along the Blue Line, which must be a top priority. Our support for Israel's security is iron-clad and unwavering against all Iranian backed terrorist groups, including Lebanese Hezbollah.

- The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Josep Borrell, has made a statement on X:

Shocking images from the soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams.

I strongly condemn this bloodbath.

We need an independent international investigation into this unacceptable incident.

We urge all parties to exercise utmost restraint and avoid further escalation.

- s6(a)

- The death toll from the attack on Majdal Shams has risen to 12.

Recommended Public Comment

- MFAT recommends that you issue the following comment on X:
s9(2)(g)(i)

Rationale for public comment

- The attacks occurred on Majdal Shams and Deir al-Balah overnight NZT.
- s6(a)

Hezbollah's attacks have led to the displacement of tens of thousands of Israelis from northern Israel, and significant public and private damage. s6(a)
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- Other foreign ministers or international figures to comment include Penny Wong (Australia), Tor Wennesland (UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process), EU High Representative Josef Borrell, and the US National Security Council.s6(a)

CANZ Prime Ministers issued a third statement on Friday evening, centred on concerns over the situation in southern Lebanon.
- s6(a)

Current situation

- Twelve children and youth have now been confirmed to have been killed by a rocket as in the town of Majdal Shams in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel has attributed the attack to Hezbollah, which has denied involvement.
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Talking Points

- New Zealand condemns the attack on Majdal Shams, and the appalling deaths of children and youth.
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- New Zealand is also deeply concerned by the reported bombing of a school in Deir al-Balah in Gaza, and by reports that children were among the casualties.

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- s9(2)(g)(i) this escalation in hostilities only makes a ceasefire in Gaza more urgent. We urge all involved actors to exercise restraint and de-escalate. We support diplomatic efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701.
- A wider scale war would have disastrous consequences for Israel and Lebanon, and for civilians across the region.
- New Zealanders in Lebanon are advised to register on SafeTravel, leave the country as soon as possible; and while there, remain security conscious, monitor local media and stay informed of developments. If you require consular assistance, contact the New Zealand 24/7 Consular Emergency Line on +64 99 20 20 20.
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MFAT Assessment

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s6(a)

Middle East and Africa Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
28 July 2024

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