MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

H.E. Ms. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett
President of the Security Council
United Nations
New York

Jerusalem, 17 June 2025

Excellency,

Following Israel's previous letters to the Security Council concerning the malign activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the outrageous letters of Iran dated 13 and 16 June 2025, Iran's public threats to eliminate the State of Israel, in stark violation of the UN charter, and its continued attempts to achieve the means to accomplish this by rapidly developing military nuclear capabilities, as well as its ballistic missile program, I write to you with utmost urgency and resolve to inform the members of the Security Council of a critical military operation undertaken by the State of Israel: Operation Rising Lion.

In the early hours of Friday, 13 June 2025, the State of Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, aimed to neutralize the existential and imminent threat from Iran's nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programs. This operation specifically targets military facilities and critical components of Iran's nuclear weapons program, as well as key individuals involved in Iran's efforts to achieve nuclear weapons. It also includes strikes against infrastructure associated with Iran's ballistic missile program, which poses a direct threat to the state of Israel, the region and beyond.

Operation Rising Lion was launched following a critical development in Iran's nuclear weapons program and aimed also at thwarting the imminent threat of additional Iranian missile and proxy attacks. While Iran rapidly produces highly enriched uranium, reliable intelligence confirmed in recent months that the Iranian regime had significantly accelerated its clandestine efforts to develop nuclear weapons. These actions were carried out by Iran while systematically deceiving the international community and obstructing IAEA safeguards. As recently determined by the IAEA Board of Governors, Iran is in non-compliance with its NPT safeguards obligations. Rather than complying with its obligations, Iran responded with a further escalation by expanding its enrichment and other activities to obtain nuclear weapons. Iran's nuclear strategy is clear: achieve nuclear weapons which will be aimed against the State of Israel.

In addition to the acceleration of its nuclear weapon program, Iran has accelerated its efforts to build a vast arsenal of ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel within minutes. Iran had already launched hundreds of ballistic missiles against Israel, in April 2024 and October 2024, targeting Israeli population centers and also in the last few days. Recently, Iran has accelerated its efforts in this regard and planned to produce 10,000 such missiles within the next three years. Given Israel's size, this is an intolerable threat, as the events of the past days have tragically shown. No country in the world would ever tolerate such a threat.

Furthermore, in recent decades, since the Islamic regime in Iran took power, and as part of an openly declared plan to annihilate the state of Israel, Iran has established an extensive network of terrorist proxies surrounding Israel. Iran supplies these proxies with funds, weapons, including advanced missile and drone capabilities, military training and guidance. Iran has been, and continues to be, substantially involved in their proxies' persistent and unlawful attacks against Israel.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) – which has been designated by several states as a terrorist organization – leads these efforts, inter-alia, by directly attacking Israel and by wielding Iran's proxy network of terrorist armed groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, Hamas and others. This is all part of the Iranian war plan to encircle Israel with "a ring of fire", in pursuit of Israel's annihilation, including through ground invasions into Israel's territory.

For decades, Iran has also conducted clandestine acts of hostility against Israel in every possible domain – by land, air, sea and cyberspace. Additionally, Iran has targeted Israeli and Jewish institutions abroad through its terror networks and under the guidance of the IRGC, such as the massive terror attacks that were perpetrated against the Israeli embassy and the Jewish community center in Argentina and many other terror attacks around the world.

The Islamic regime in Iran has repeatedly and explicitly declared its intention to annihilate the State of Israel. Less than a month ago, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, declared that Israel is "a cancerous tumor that must be eradicated and it will be". Israel, as the Jewish homeland, cannot and will not accept the threat of extermination. Such existential threats, aimed at Israel's annihilation, seek to revive the darkest and most barbaric periods in human history. It is not merely rhetoric. Iran has a strategic plan to eliminate Israel, which includes concrete plans and actions to achieve this goal.

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In this ongoing armed conflict, Israel is strictly adhering to the law of armed conflict and conducting precise strikes against military objectives, while taking every feasible measure to minimize collateral harm to civilians. The despotic Iranian regime, on the other hand, launches indiscriminate and barbaric missile attacks against Israel, deliberately targeting Israeli civilians. As of now, twenty four innocent civilians among them children have lost their lives, and hundreds more have been injured, including foreign diplomats, due to these assaults on Israeli civilian population centers. These attacks demonstrate the true nature of the Iranian regime and the grave threat it poses to Israel and stability in the Middle East. It is a threat to Israel, the region and the world if the Iranian regime obtains nuclear weapons accompanied by a massive arsenal of ballistic missiles.

Excellency,

Israel cannot, and will not, accept this situation. Operation Rising Lion was launched as a measure of last resort. It was prompted by a critical development in Iran's covert nuclear weapons program and in response to, and in order to thwart, the threat of imminent Iranian attacks. This was the last window of opportunity to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, and takes place after diplomacy proved ineffective.

Israel is acting to defend its security and very existence. At the same time, this operation aims to contribute to a safer and more stable Middle East by preventing the tyrannical and extremist Iranian regime from continuing its destabilizing actions in the region and beyond. Iran's ongoing aggression poses an existantial threat to Israel and a grave threat to international peace and security. Israel will continue to take all necessary measures to protect itself and its citizens, in full accordance with international law.

I request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the United Nations Security Council and of the General Assembly.

I would like to inform you that an identical letter has been sent to H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Gideon Sa'ar
Minister of Foreign Affairs

STATE OF ISRAEL