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4 MOTHERS Leaving Lebanon in Peace P.O. Box 23630 TEL AVIV 61231 ISRAEL

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Dear First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton:

While you are visiting in Israel, I wanted to acquaint you with the work of an important women's grassroots group, The Four Mothers Movement to Leave Lebanon. The movement was started in March 1997 by four mothers who live in the North of Israel and had sons serving in Southern Lebanon. These mothers were reacting to the terrible loss of life that continues in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in Southern Lebanon and to the fact that the zone, originally designed to provide security for Israel, was in fact contributing to the ongoing hostilities in the region. They demanded that the Israeli government put Lebanon back on the national agenda and unilaterally withdraw from what has become our Viet Nam.

I know the terrible feeling of a mother waiting for her son to come home from Lebanon. My son Arik was there for two years. I was lucky; he made it out. Others have not been so fortunate. From 1982, when the Lebanon war began, to 1985, when it presumably ended, 640 Israeli soldiers died there, and untold numbers of Lebanese fighters and civilians. Since 1985, over 600 Israeli soldiers have been killed, including seven in the last two weeks. These are not just numbers; they are our sons. We question the reasons for this ongoing slaughter. Our government gives us the same answer: we must stay in Lebanon. We demand to know why.

We call on you as a mother and a role model to women activists throughout the world to speak out on Lebanon and to urge the American government to actively seek solutions to this ongoing war, about which few know or care. We believe that Israel can defend itself like all other countries, from within its own borders. With the active encouragement of the United States, the present government may finally admit the failure of its seventeen year policy in Lebanon and seek dialogue instead of conflict. Peace, not territory, is our only security in the region. We hope you will add your voice to this important issue.

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