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**Survey Data Report: Ghanaians are Critical about the 2006 Recent Hostilities in Lebanon but are Optimistic about Peace in the Middle East.**

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**Abstract**

*This article examines variation and distribution of opinions in Ghana regarding conflict in the Middle East and was limited to the conflict that erupted along the Southern Lebanon and Israeli border during July and August 2006. The survey research focused on several key areas: United States of America understanding of Middle East issues, country's right to self-defence, disproportionate use of military force, proxy war, and indifference to the loss of human life. The survey was conducted in the Central Region and 318 (N=318) completed survey instrument were assessed. The results suggest respondents are less likely to give support for the disproportionate use of military force, more likely to give support for a country's right to self-defence to Lebanese combatants defending their territory against intruders, respondents are of the opinion that Israel, more so than not, is fighting a proxy war, and that Western countries have an indifference to the loss of life.*

## **Introduction**

Since the creation of Israel in 1948 there have been three major wars between Arab countries and Israel, several military campaigns, and continued cross border hostilities between antagonists along the southern Lebanon, West Bank, and Gaza Strip borders, which the hostilities are associated with United States support for Israel, Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan Heights. Border hostilities are also associated with Israeli settlement construction, targeted assassination, attacks by Hizbullah and Hamas on Israeli citizens, attacks on Israeli military personnel, and infrastructure, and retaliatory strikes by Israeli Defense forces against Islamic militants. Opinion research on Middle East has been extensive in the United States and Europe, however, there have been relatively little research into how Ghanaians or Sub-Saharan Africans view the conflict stemming from Hizbullah, Hamas, and other resistance groups from which they arise or, the military action of Israel in the region.

The opinions of Ghanaian society are important for a variety of reasons. At the broadest level, they tell us whether these groups or the conflict is considered legitimate in terms of their goals as well as their methods. They also tell us how much support such groups are likely to get from the larger global society, both directly and indirectly. To understand the public's feelings about these groups and the conflict, it is also critical to understand the prevailing narratives in the societies they come from. For more than forty years the United States has supported Israel without reservation economically, politically and militarily. Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, United States invasion of Afghanistan, and the horrendous events of September 11, 2001, the United States has undertaken a "war on terrorism," introducing large numbers of troops into predominantly Islamic countries, particularly Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which has conflicted with social, cultural, religious, and political sensitivities of the governments and people where U.S. and western troops are present. The opinions, beliefs, and attitude of people living and working in Ghana or sub-

Saharan Africa are rarely measured. The absence of such measurements raises a few questions. How do people in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa understand the purpose and aims of the US interests in the Middle East? To what extent are Ghanaians and sub-Saharan Africans interpretations consonant with the interpretations reflected in opinion surveys conducted in the United States, and Europe? Do Ghanaians perceive that US military forces are a stabilizing force or a threatening one in the Middle East or for that fact, a stabilizing or threatening one in Africa?

Political and religious groups such as Hizbullah, Hamas, and other resistance groups, to Israel, have not emerged simply in reaction to US policies. They have a broad practical, ideological, emotional, and instrumental agenda that includes serving and protecting Shiite communities and Lebanon sovereignty and transforming the Palestinian occupied territories into an independent and autonomous state. To what extent do these issues resonate among Ghanaians? The use of violence against civilians for political and ideological purposes has figured prominently in debates about Hezbollah, Hamas, and Israeli military action. Do Ghanaians believe the conflict among combatants is justified and for whom and under what circumstances or do they think the current situation warrants such acts? And, to what extent do Ghanaians believe a peaceful resolution can be achieved in the Middle East between warrior parties along the southern border between Lebanon and Israel, and between Hamas and Israel? This report focuses on the general distribution of attitudes in Ghana and is limited to the conflict, which erupted along the Lebanon-Israeli border during July and August 2006. The study also includes questions on a wide-range of variables that may be related, in general, to the Middle East conflict.

### **Southern Lebanon, Hizbullah, and Hamas**

The Middle East has a long history of conflict and violence. Particularly with respect to the conflict in Lebanon and the Palestinian occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the west Bank. Such hostilities pose challenges for the United

States, European Union, Israel, the international community, and other countries in the Middle East and above all, for the people living in the conflict zones of Lebanon, Gaza, West Bank, and Israel. Aggressive posturing between antagonists, attacks, and counter attacks on Palestinians, Lebanese, and Israeli populations and paramilitary clashes continue unabated and have vacillated for more than 60 years. The capture of one Israeli Defense personal in the Gaza Strip in June 2006, failure to recognize elected Hizbullah and Hamas official and other political parties in Lebanon and within the Palestinian occupied territory, coupled with the subsequent capture of two Israeli soldiers in Southern Lebanon in July 2006, contributed and lead to the recent 6 week long intensive war between Hezbollah and Israeli forces.

During the 2006 conflict in Southern Lebanon, many called on the United States to enter into discussions with Arab and Muslim groups and persuade Israel in reaching a peaceful agreement with their respective adversaries in the Middle East (Bone, 2006; Cockburn, 2006). Israel's military incursion and offenses into the Palestinian occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and Israel's 2006 intrusion into Southern Lebanon did not result in extensive public opinion criticism in the U.S.A (Brzezinski, 2005). United States efforts to rebuild and redirect the peace process in the Middle East between Israel and its opponents have had modest progress but in many ways this suggest peace efforts have staggered. The staggered peace process is associated with the U.S. and Israel's refusal to acknowledge Hamas surprise victory in Palestinian democratic parliamentary election of January 2006 (Hilal, 2007, Forbes, 2006). The election results gave Hamas 76 of the 132 seats in the chamber, with the ruling Fatah party trailing with 43 seats (CBC News, 2006). The election victory has posed problems for efforts to restart peace talks with Israel, continued financial hardship for Palestinians living within the boundaries of the Gaza Strip, and failure of some governmental and nongovernmental organizations to deal with Hamas has exacerbated social and economic stress. One reason why the election results

came as a shock is that no one predicated the Hamas victory because the polls, prior to the election, suggested Fatah was leading Hamas in the polls (El Deeb, 2006). After the January elections, during April approximately 80 million dollars was withheld from the Hamas led government. The money withheld was earmarked to compensate, in part, the salaries for government workers. It was estimated that 45 percent of the population lives under poverty on about \$2.00 a day and nearly one-third of the workforce is unemployed (World Bank, November 2006).

After the January 2006 general election in the Palestinian territories several factors were associated with increases stress among Palestinians, these included but are not limited to: failure of the United States to recognize the democratically elected Hamas government; cross-border violence in the Gaza Strip and West Bank territories; targeted assassinations, and the collapse of the Hamas led government in June 2007 (Oxfam Briefing Note, April 2007).

In July 2006, Israel invaded Southern Lebanon. What was Israel's justification for self-defense and incursion, and the original provocation into Lebanon? Differing accounts on what actually occurred is not clear. However, the provocation shifted several times and ended with a report stating the incident involved the killing of eight and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon by Hizbullah militants on the Lebanese frontier near the Aytal Shaab Village on July 12 around 9:00 am (Trish Schuh, 2006; Bahrain News Agency, 2006). Schuh (2006) suggests the contested justification for Israel's aggression may well come to rest on the principal idea that Lebanese government failed to reign-in and stop Hizbullah alleged cross-border activities. Jonathan Cook (2007) described the event that led to the war which began on July 12, "when Israel launched waves of air strikes on Lebanon after Hizbullah killed three and captured two soldiers on the northern border with Israel and five of the Israeli soldiers were killed when their tank was destroyed by a land mine when they attempted to pursue Hizbullah fighters in southern Lebanon." Hizbullah had long

been warning that it would seize soldiers if it had the chance, in an effort to push Israel into a prisoner exchange. The justification for Hizbullah's actions and continued resistance is directly related to Israel not completing a full withdraw from Lebanon in 2000 and the continued occupation by Israeli forces of Sheeba Farms which lay within Lebanon's territorial borders (Cook, 2007; The Nation, 2006).

Hizbullah's missile attacks and Hamas' aggression against Israel stems from Israel's military incursions into Lebanon and continued occupation and isolation, an unwillingness to recognize the Hamas government, and continued Israeli settlement building within designated Palestinian occupied territories of the West Bank. Anderson Strindberg (2006) proposes the capture of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah was a reaction against Israel's unrelenting aggression against Lebanon's sovereignty, and the capture of one Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). The Canadian **Broadcasting Corporation** (CBC NEWS, 2006), described the capture of Shalit which involved Militants affiliated with the Islamic group Hamas apprehended Shalit and killed two other soldiers on June 25, 2006, at an army base after tunneling into Israel from the Gaza Strip. Negotiations for Shalit release, mediated by Egypt, had repeatedly broken down and been complicated since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. Such hostilities and others during 2006 were disassociated from its wider context of Israel's incursions, arrests, and detentions of Palestinians, and the continuation of Israeli settlement construction on Palestinian land. Israel presents her conflict with Hizbullah and Hamas to the world community as being manufactured and perpetrated by the enemies of the Sate of Israel, particularly Syria and Iran.

President George W. Bush's administration, it is believed, partially supported and was indirectly involved in the planning of Israel's retaliation attacks against Hizbullah. Seymour M. Hersch (2007) indicated the goal of the Israel's air force aerial assault of Lebanon was to weaken Hezbollah's growing military

strength since Israel's withdraw from southern Lebanon would ease security issues for Israel on her northern boundary and the war in 2006 would serve as a prelude to a potential American pre-emptive strike to damage or destroy Iran's nuclear installations. The Bush administration, according to Hersch (2007), had several reasons for supporting Israel's, actions: 1) to strengthen the Lebanese government to take control away from Hizbullah and then assert control over southern Lebanon, 2) strip Hizbullah of its missiles and, 3) going after Iran's proxy, Hizbullah, in the Middle East as part of U.S. interest in bring about pro-western democratization in Lebanon.

After approximately 34 days of conflict in 2006, a United Nations brokered cease-fire went into effect at 8:00 AM local time on 14 August. The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701 (UN Security Council, SC/8808, 2006)) calling for a cessation of hostilities and an end to the conflict on 11 August.

The resolution called for the disarming of Hizbullah and reoccupation of Southern Lebanon by the Lebanese army (assisted by international forces) and the eventual withdraw of Israeli forces. Lebanon and Hizbullah agreed to the resolution on 12 August and Israel agreed to the terms of the resolution on 13 August (Wright, 2006; D'Amato, 2006). Despite the cessation of hostilities as of October 2006, Israel had yet to fully withdraw and Hizbullah had refused to disarm. Along with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Lebanese army moved into the region south of the Latini River for the first time in 40 years, the area had been under Hizbullah control prior to this time, UNIFIL's troop deployment is comprised mainly of soldiers from Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, and France (UNIFIL, 2006)

Over the course of the conflict, as many as 4,000 rockets were launched into Israel and the Israeli Air Force carried out more than 10,000 sorties, thousands of Israeli buildings were damaged and billions of dollars worth of damage done to Lebanon's infrastructure. Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and the



Israeli Prime Minister Office (2006) estimated that over 400 Hizbullah fighters were killed and slightly more than one hundred IDF soldiers were killed with hundreds sustaining wounds. Other officials estimated place casualties around 43 Israeli civilians killed and 75 seriously injured, of which one third were Arab Israelis, and approximately 1,200 Lebanese civilians killed and 4,400 injured, one-third were reported to be children (see, Amnesty International, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2007; Reliefweb.org 2006)

Public opinion surveying on Middle East foreign policy is almost nonexistent in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ghana. However, there have been a few surveys conducted in Africa, assessing Ghanaian opinions on democratization issues with virtually no assessment on the Middle East issues. AfroBarometer (2002) publishes reports and the results of national sample surveys on the attitudes of citizens in selected African countries towards democracy. In January 2006, a collaborative effort of British Broadcast Company, and International Policy Attitude (2005) conducted a transnational opinion poll of citizens from 27 countries on the Most Significant Events of 2005, which Ghana was one of the sampled countries. Two recent surveys (Sharif, 2002, 2006b) were conducted which directly assessed Ghanaian opinions on a variety of issues relating to terrorism and the Middle East.

### **Survey Methodology**

To assess the hostilities in Lebanon during July and August of 2006, the researcher conducted an in-depth study of public opinion in Ghana. The research was independently supported by the principle investigator. The survey was conducted in the Central Region of Ghana between July and December 2006. The opinion survey utilized a 4-page, 38-item questionnaire constructed around a multiple choice closed ended question format supported with Rensis Likert scale type responses. Likert scale was developed in the 1930s by Rensis Likert to provide an ordinal-level measure of a person's attitude. The self-administered

survey was handed out to 350 potential participants in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa, between August and December 2006 and was based upon non-probability sampling. The findings discussed in this report are based on only urban and rural respondents who expressed an interest to participate and were acquainted with many of the issues in survey. The survey received 318 (N=318) completed instruments, 13 were discarded because of incompletes, 10 instruments were discarded for not being anonymous, and 9 questionnaires were never returned to the investigator. Readers are reminded that survey results are estimates, the accuracy of which depends upon the sample size, how respondents are selected, and observed percentages. they should bear in mind that a survey frames the issues in a particular way and respondents are generally restricted to answering questions in terms of the responses provided. Furthermore, the reader should also be cautious about the results of subgroups, as described in the results, because they have the potential for larger variation than those found in large randomly drawn samples or for the entire population.

## **Findings**

### **Generalised Characteristics of Respondents**

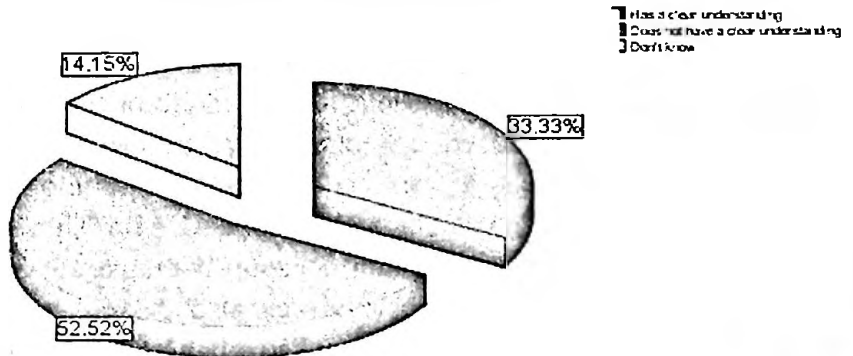
Three hundred and eighteen people participated in the survey. Approximately Seventy-one percent (N=227) of the participants were male and 28.6 percent (N=91) were female. Approximately 59 percent of all respondents were between 18 and 31 years of age, 32 percent were between 32 and 43 years, and 9 percent were 44 years of age and above. Roughly, fifty-eight percent of the respondents indicated their marital status as single (e.g., never married), 40 percent reported they were either married or in a permanent relationship, and nearly 6 percent suggested that were separated, divorced, or widowed. When participants were asked to categorize their highest level of education, approximately 42 percent completed senior secondary school; 32 percent completed some college; 6 percent completed some technical training; 32

percent achieved the baccalaureate and five percent were awarded the master's degree. Political orientation was more diffused on a continuum from extremely-slightly conservative (45.9 %) or extremely-slightly liberal (43.3 %), and roughly 10 percent did not know which best describes their political orientation. When religious affiliation was considered nearly 76 percent of participants identified their affiliation as Christian, 19 percent Islamic, 4 percent as traditional African. One hundred percent of the participants in the survey listed their nationality as "Ghanaian."

### Ghanaians Do Not Believe USA Has a Clear Understanding

Despite what might be assumed regarding the extent to which the United States has a clear understanding of the issues in the Middle East. Ghanaians who participated in the research are of the opinion America does not have a clear understanding of the history of the Middle East. Nearly half of those polled (53%) say the U.S. does not have a clear understanding of the history of the Middle East; a third (33%) suggested America has an understanding, while fourteen percent (14%) did not know if America has a clear understanding of the conflict associated in the Middle East (Figure 1).

Figure 1 America Has a Clear Understanding of the History of Conflict in Middle East Between Israel and Israel's Arab Neighbors



### Categorising Hizbullah and Hamas

The respondents seem divided over the question whether the Lebanese group Hizbullah and the Palestinian group Hamas are a political or terrorist organization. Nearly a third (36%) of the respondents believes Hizbullah can be categorized as a political organization, while nearly another third (35%) believe it is both a political and terrorist organization. When a similar question was asked regarding the Palestinian group Hamas, forty-four percent (44%) report Hamas as being a political organization and slightly less than a third (29%) say Hamas can be categorized as both a political and terrorist organization. Nine percent (9%) pronounced they did not know if Hams was either a political or a terrorist organization (Table 1a-b).

Tables 1a-b: Categorizing Hizbullah and Hamas

<b>Table 1a How Would Categorize the Lebanese Organization Hizbullah</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Political Organization</b>	116	36.5
<b>Terrorist Organization</b>	52	16.0
<b>Both a Political and Terrorist Organization</b>	112	35.2
<b>Don't Know</b>	39	12.3
<b>Total</b>	318	100.0
<b>Table 1b How would you Categorize the Palestinian Organization Hamas</b>		
<b>Political Organization</b>	140	44.0
<b>Terrorist Organization</b>	56	17.6
<b>Both a Political and Terrorist Organization</b>	93	29.2
<b>Don't Know</b>	29	9.1
<b>Total</b>	318	100.0

### **Support for the Right of Self-Defense**

A large majority of participants in the study agree that Lebanon, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority in the occupied territories have a right to self-defense. Ninety-seven percent (97%) declare a country has a right to self-defense. There were minor differences in agreement among respondents whether Israel or Lebanon has a right to self-defense, averaging 95 percent. However, there was a ten percentage point reduction (86%) when the question was posed whether the "Palestinian Authority" has a right to self-defense (Table 2a-d). The average for those who did not know whether a country, Israel, Lebanon or, the Palestinian Authority has a right to self-defense approximated 7 percent, collectively.

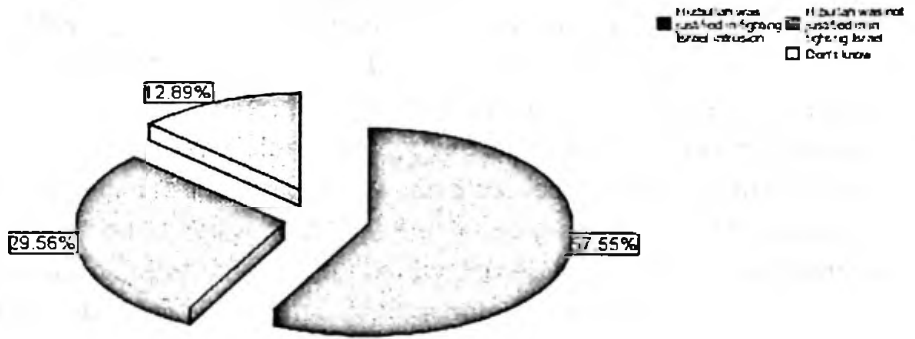
**Tables 2a-d: Right of Self-Defense**

<i>Table 2a Country Has a right to Self-defense</i>	Frequency	Percent
Yes	309	97.2
No	6	1.9
Don't Know	3	.9
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 2b Israel Has A right to Self-Defense</i>		
Yes	303	95.3
No	10	3.1
Don't Know	5	1.6
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 2c Lebanon Has a Right to Self-Defense</i>		
Yes	305	95.9
No	33	10.4
Don't Know	2	.6
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 2d Palestinian authority Has a right to Self-Defense</i>		
Yes	272	85.5
No	33	10.4
Don't Know	13	4.1
Total	318	100.0

**Justification for the Use of Military Force**

During the July-August military conflict between Israel and Hizbullah, a question was asked to address whether Israel or Hizbullah were justified in the use of military force show contrast. Approximately fifty-eight percent (58%) said Hizbullah was justified in fighting Israel's intrusion into Southern Lebanon (Figure 2).

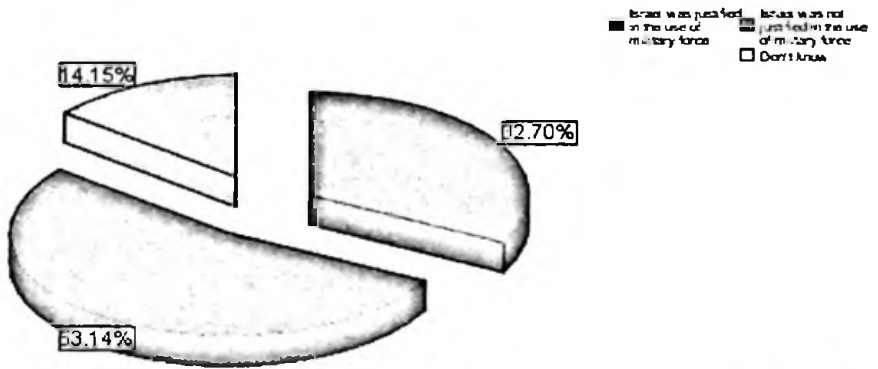
Figure 2 Hizbullah Was Justified in Fighting Against Israel's Intrusion and Military Action In Southern Labanon



Thirty-three percent (33%) said Israel is justified in the use of military force against Hizbullah (Figure 3). Yet, fifty-five percent (53%) expressed Israel was not justified and thirty percent (33%) indicated Hizbullah was not justified.

There is relatively no difference between respondents who indicate they did not know who was justified in the use of military force (14.2 and 12.9 percent respectively).

Figure 3 Isearl Was Justified in the Use of Military Force Against Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon



On average, Ghanaians are more likely than not to justify use of military action by Hizbullah against Israel's intrusion into southern Lebanon, than Israeli's use of military force against Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon.

### **Capture of Soldiers between Antagonists Does Not Justify the Use of Disproportionate Military Action**

There appears to be some support, on the surface, for the assumption that capturing military personnel between antagonists frequently result in the disproportionate use of military force in the Middle East. This seems to be the situation when one party to the conflict is perceived to be military inferior, identified as a terrorist group, or country believed to be harbouring a terrorist group. Given this assumption, the research query six questions regarding the use of disproportionate use of military action, justification, and responsibility. On the question whether the capture of a soldier (e.g., military personnel) between antagonists justifies the use of disproportionate military action, slightly more than two-thirds (68%) report it is not justifiable to use disproportionate military action against an adversary when military personnel are captured or held. Seventeen percent (17%) say it is justifiable, and fifteen percent (15%) did not know if it is justifiable (Table 3a).



Tables 3a-c: Disproportionate military Action, Responsibility for Fighting

<i>Tables 3a Capture of Soldiers between Antagonist Justifies the use of Disproportionate Military Action</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Justifiable	54	17.0
Not Justifiable	217	68.2
Don't Know	47	14.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Israel Was Justified In Ariel Bombardment of Lebanon's Infrastructure In Order to Weaken Hizbullah In Lebanon</i>		
Israel Bombardment Was Justifiable	46	14.5
Israel Bombardment Was Justifiable Not Justifiable	234	73.6
Don't Know	38	11.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Table 3c Hizbullah Was Justified In Targeting and Firing Missiles and Rocket at Israel's Infrastructure in Northern Israel</i>		
Hizbullah Was Justified	113	35.5
Hizbullah Was Not Justified	156	49.1
Don't Know	49	15.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Table 3d Whom is most Likely Responsible for the Fighting Between Hizbullah and Israel</i>		
Hizbullah	81	25.5
Israel	58	18.2
Both Hizbullah and Israel	115	36.2
Don't Know	64	20.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Table 3e Whom is most Likely Responsible for the Recent Armed Clashes Between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Stripe</i>		
Hamas	68	21.4
Israel	68	21.4
Both Hamas and Israel	110	34.6
Don't Know	72	22.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Table 3f Israel is Justified in the Targeted Assingation of Suspec ted Individuals Involved in Terrorist Activites Against Israel</i>		
Yes	75	23.6
No	200	62.9
Don't Know	43	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When the question posed whether Israel was justified in aerial bombardment in Lebanon to weaken Hizbullah (Table 3b) and whether Hizbullah was justified in firing missile towards Israel (Table 3c), on average, the general opinion is that there is no justification for such unbalanced military action. However, opinions tend to suggest that Hizbullah's actions of targeting and firing missiles towards Israel are more justified than Israel's aerial bombardment of Lebanon's infrastructure to weaken Hizbullah in Lebanon (Table 3b-c). On a parallel plane, respondents tend to share similar opinions on who is responsible for the fighting between Hizbullah and Israel (Table 3e) and armed clashes between Hamas and Israel. Opinions indicate Hizbullah, Hamas, and Israel share responsibility for armed conflict and violence in the Middle East (Table 3d-e). There were, however, negative opinions, which emerged about Israel's 'target assassination' of suspected terrorists. Fully, 62 percent of Ghanaians surveyed who heard something about Israel's targeted assassinations say that Israel is not defensible in targeting for assassination suspected individuals believed to be involved in terrorist activities against Israel, whereas, 24 percent say Israel is justified (Table 3f).

### **Fighting a Proxy War**

Opinions divide over whether Hezbollah is fighting a proxy war for Iran or Israel is fighting a proxy war for the U.S. in the Middle East. Most notably, approximately 31 percent state Hizbullah is fighting a proxy war for Iran against Israel; however, forty percent believe Israel is fighting a proxy war for the U.S. against Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon (Tables 4a-b). Twenty-nine percent (29%) and thirty percent (30%) did not know if Hizbullah or Israel was engaging in a proxy war, respectively.

Table 4a-b: Fighting a Proxy War

<i>Table 4a Hizbullah is fighting a Proxy War Against Israel for Iran</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	100	31.4
No	125	39.3
Don't Know	93	29.3
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 4b Israel is Fighting a Proxy War Against Hizbullah for the United U.S.</i>		
Yes	126	39.6
No	97	30.5
Don't Know	95	29.9
Total	318	100.0

### Global Indifference to the Loss of Life

When asked about the extent to which Western countries, the United States, or Israel has a global indifference to the loss of life in Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank respondents suggest there is a global indifference to the loss of life. When considering together Western countries, U.S., and Israel, approximately two-thirds (60%) of all Ghanaians in the study report there is a global indifference to the loss of life in Lebanon, Gaza, and the Western Bank (Table 5a-c). Twenty-three percent (23%) indicate Western countries, U.S., and Israel have no indifference to the loss of life and seventeen percent (17%) report they did not know if there is a global indifference.

**Table 5a-c: Global Indifference to Loss of Life**

<i>Table 5a Western Countries Has A global Indifference to the Loss of Life Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Western Have a Global Indifference	186	58.5
Western countries Do Not Have a Global Indifference	73	23.0
Don't Know	59	18.6
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 5b United States Has a Global Indifference to loss of life in Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and Western Bank</i>		
Western Have a Global Indifference	194	61
Western countries Do Not Have a Global Indifference	77	24.2
Don't Know	47	14.8
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 5c Government of Israel Has a Global Indifference to the Loss of Life in Lebanon, Gaza Strip, and West Bank</i>		
Government of Israel Has a global Indifference	192	60.4
Government of Israel Does not Has a Global Indifference	66	20.8
Don't Know	60	18.9
Total	318	100.0

### **Position Weakened or Strengthened**

Sometime during armed conflict between countries a question that is raised focuses on assessing the degree to which one country or another has or had the opportunity to gather public support against another country in a conflict. Respondents were asked three questions regarding, the extent to which, the six-week Middle East crisis in Lebanon during 2006 weakened U.S. and Israeli standing in the Middle East. An average percentage of forty-one percent (41%) believes the Middle East crisis, which began 12 July 2006, offered an opportunity for the U.S. to gather Arab support against Hizbullah and Iran. Only about 32 percent (32%) rejected this idea and twenty-seven percent (27%) report they were unsure if the crisis offered an opportunity (Table 6a-b).

**Table 6a-c: Positions Weakened or Strengthened**

<i>Table 6a Middle East Crisis that began 12 July 2006 offered an opportunity for the US to gather Arab support Against Hizbullah and Iran</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	131	41.2
No	101	31.8
Don't Know	86	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Table 6b During the Recent Middle East*

Weakened	161	50.6
Strengthened	71	22.3
Don't Know	86	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Table 6c During the Recent Middle East Crisis the United States position in the Middle East has Weakened or Strengthened*

Weakened	194	61.0
Strengthened	57	17.9
Don't Know	67	21.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>100.0</b>

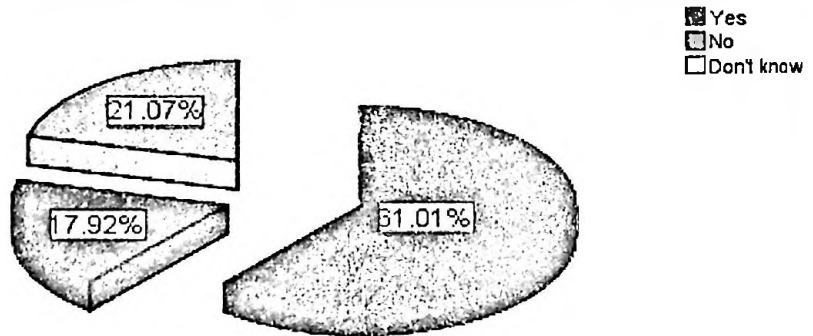
The number of Ghanaians (61%) who believe the Middle East crisis in Lebanon in 2006 has, in fact, weakened the U.S. position in the Middle East is slightly greater than for those respondents who believe Israel's position(51%) has been weakened by the conflict and violence (Table 6b-c).

### **Diplomatic Efforts Were Prolonged**

Slightly less than two-thirds (61%) of all Ghanaians believe diplomatic efforts were prolonged, in order for Israel to achieve its battlefield achievements over Hizbullah. Approximately eighteen percent (18%) report diplomatic efforts were not prolonged, whereas twenty-one percent (21%) did not know if diplomatic

efforts were prolonged to allow Israel to achieve a degree of battlefield objectives over Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon (Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4 Diplomatic Efforts Were Prolonged, Rather Than to End the Conflict in Hope that Israel can Achieve Battlefield Objectives**



#### **Instigation of conflict and violence**

Despite the on-going conflict and violence of Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip and Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon with Israeli, most Ghanaians in the study are of the opinion that Palestinian's (52%), Iranian (43%), and Israel's (40%) are responsible for instigation of conflict. On average, thirty-eight percent (38%) report that Israel is not responsible, whereas, twenty-nine percent (29%) imply Palestinians and Iran are not instigating the violence in the region (Table 7a-c).

**Table 7a-c: Instigation of Conflict**

<i>Table 7a Iran is Instigating Conflict in Lebanon</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	138	43.4
No	95	29.9
Don't Know	85	26.7
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 7b Israel is Instigating Conflict in the Middle East</i>		
Yes	128	40.3
No	121	38.1
Don't Know	69	21.1
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 7c Palestinian Militants are Instigating Conflict in the Middle East</i>		
Yes	165	51.9
No	92	28.9
Don't Know	61	19.2
Total	318	100.0

### **Assessing the Prospects for Peace in the Middle East**

By considerable margins, Ghanaian opinions on the possibilities of peace in the region are optimistic. Eighty-five percent (85%) say that one way to secure peace in the Middle East and secure Israel's border is to solve all outstanding issues that have come to define Israel's conflict with the Arab/Muslim world (Table 8a).

**Table 8a-d: Middle East Peace**

<i>Table 8a One Way to Secure Lasting Peace and Israel's borders is to Solve All the Outstanding Issues that have Come to Define its conflict with The Arab World</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	271	85.2
No	23	7.2
Don't Know	24	7.5
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 8b One Way to Secure a Lasting Peace in the Middle East to Have all the Parties Meet Without Preconditions</i>		
Yes	265	83.3
No	34	10.7
Don't Know	19	6.0
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 8c Israel's Strategic Position is less Because it is Holding and Occupying Palestinian Territory</i>		
Yes	127	39.9
No	107	33.6
Don't Know	26	26.4
Total	318	100.0
<i>Table 8d Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian and Israel Can Reconcile Themselves to Peaceful Co existence</i>		
Yes	213	67.0
No	72	22.6
Don't Know	33	10.4
Total	318	100.0

Similarly, when asked 'one-way to secure a lasting peace in the Middle East' is to have all parties meet without preconditions, eighty-three percent (83%) suggest this could be a strategy to secure peace (Table 8b). On the issue whether Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinians, and Israel can reconcile towards a peaceful existence, sixty-seven (67%) believe this is achievable compared with twenty-three percent (22%) who did not think peaceful co-existence is achievable (Table 8d).



Ghanaians differ on the question whether Israel's strategic position in the Middle East is less because it is holding and occupying Palestinian territory. While forty percent (40%) believes Israel's position is less, thirty-four percent (34%) considers Israel's position has not lessened, and twenty-seven percent (27%) did not know if Israel's strategic position is less because it controls and occupies Palestinian territory (Table 12c).

### **Implications and Conclusions**

Undoubtedly, the United States is considered one of the major indirect players in the conflict and has much at stake in the Middle East, and the actions of Israel are associated with the representation of the U.S. in the global community. The consequences of this association for U.S. foreign policy action during the 2006 crisis between Hizbullah and Israel, show how the U.S. and Israel are perceived in the world community as though they are coupled together. In this regard, United States condemnation was absent and predictable of Israel's offense and bombardment of Lebanon. The actions of Israel appear to be made possible by the indirect or direct approval of the U.S. and this may emerge as if the United States had actually engaged in the offense against Lebanon and Hizbullah in the eyes of Ghanaians and perhaps sub-Saharan Africans.

The survey findings provide evidence of the factors, which influence popular appraisal of the 2006 hostilities in Lebanon with Hizbullah and the continuing antagonism between Hamas and Israel. They demonstrate that Ghanaians are more likely, than not, to have negative opinions on the popular issues associated with Israel and relatively less negative opinions regarding the images of Hizbullah and Hamas. The findings also propose the following:

- Fifty-three percent of the respondents in the study believe the US does not have a clear understanding of the Middle East conflict.
- Respondents are more likely than not to categorize both Hezbollah and Hamas as political organizations rather than as terrorist organizations.

- Participants in the study overwhelmingly support the general opinion that a country has a right to self-defense, particularly with respect to Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinian authority and the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Slightly more than half of all respondents who were polled indicated that Israel was not justified in the use of military force in southern Lebanon during July and August 2006. However, less than half of all respondents reported Hezbollah was justified in fighting Israel's intrusion into southern Lebanon.
- When the question was asked, if the capture of soldiers between antagonists in a conflict justifies the disproportionate use of military action more than two thirds of the respondents in the survey reported it was not justified to use such force.
- An interesting pattern of responses emerged regarding the question "who's responsible for the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel". Slightly more than one-third of respondents suggests in Hezbollah and Israel, Hamas, and Israel are believed to be equally responsible for the conflict which broke out in July 2006.
- Among participants there were modest variation displayed in opinions as to whether Hezbollah and Israel was engaged in a proxy war for Iran and United States, respectively. Slightly less than 32% were of the opinion that Hezbollah was fighting a proxy war. However, a slightly larger percentage (40%) thought Israel was engaging in a proxy war for the United States.
- On the general question whether the conflict of 2006 weakened or strengthen either Israel or the United States position in the middle east, slightly more than 55% of all respondents in the study articulated the viewpoint that both countries' position in the Middle East was weekend as a partial result of recent Lebanese crisis of July and August 2006.
- On the question whether the conflict provided an opportunity for the United States to harness Arab support against Hezbollah and Iran, approximately 41% suggested there was an opportunity, whereas, 32% suggested the

conflict did not offer opportunity for the United States to gather Arab support against Hezbollah and Iran.

- Slightly less than one third of all respondents said diplomatic efforts were prolonged, in order for Israel to achieve battlefield objectives against Hizbullah along the southern Lebanon border with Israel.
- Most Ghanaians surveyed suggest that Palestinians are more likely responsible for the conflict in the Middle East than either Iran or Israel.
- A majority of Ghanaians who participated in the survey were rather optimistic about the prospects of peace among Syria and Lebanon the Palestinians and Israelis, particularly, if there are no preconditions for peace or outstanding issues which have come to shape the conflict in the middle peace.

The hostilities which erupted after Hizbullah's attack on 12 July 2006, according to D'Amato (2006), can be thought of as a border incident that under international law does not amount to an armed attack against the state of Israel for the reason that hostile and aggressive border incidents often occur between nations such as India and Pakistan regularly. Constant border incidents occur between a number of nations; for example consider border clashes between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Turkey and Iraq, or Benin and Nigeria if either of these antagonists to cross border hostilities or aggressive actions any of these two groups of nations would have or be now engaged in total war. Such border incidents, capturing one's adversary or enemy soldiers, do not give justification for one nation to engage in acts of war against another. The findings of this survey may possibly suggest participants are of the opinion the hostilities between Hizbullah and Israel was not *Causus belli*.

The primary aim of this paper was to determine and present the extent to which there are differences of opinion among Ghanaians on the events related to the hostilities of July – August 2006 in Southern Lebanon. The research mention there is incredibly little opinion survey research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa,

which critically examines international issues associated with the Middle East. In spite of this shortcoming in polling research in Ghana the paper demonstrate that Ghanaians are willing to participate in public opinion polling and willing to share and express their opinions on global issues relating to international security issues in the Middle East. It follows from the analysis, that Ghanaians have a generally positive image of Hizbullah and Hamas as institutions representing and supporting a country's right to self-defense, Lebanese and Palestinian combatants defending their country's territory against military actions of Israel, and the capture of military personnel between antagonists does not justify the disproportionate use of military action. Additionally, the findings indicate participants in the survey are of the opinion that Israel, more so than not, is fighting a proxy war and that Western countries have an indifference to the loss of life among Lebanese and Palestinians. Ghanaians are critical about recent hostilities in Lebanon but relatively optimistic about the prospects of peace in the Middle East among the Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Israelis.

The research makes three larger contributions. Methodologically, the article shows that cross-sectional studies and polling of Ghanaians on complex international security issues such as the 2006 conflict between Hizbullah and Israel, and that between Hamas and Israel are achievable and have enormous impact on results. Although some previous studies consider the influence of democratization or the quality of life issues in sub-Saharan Africa they tend to exclude analysis such as terrorism, western foreign policy issues in the southern hemisphere, western hegemony, or the rise of Islamic or Christian fundamentalism (see Sharif, 2002 and 2006a,b). Secondly, the research and its findings add to our knowledge and understandings of the viewpoints of Ghanaians and how they are linked to complex international security issues, which demonstrate opinion surveys are workable. Thirdly, the research encourages collaborative comparative survey research projects in Ghana and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Collaborative survey research can be developed

and conducted in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa to ascertain views on such issues as global warming and environmental concerns, globalization and world urbanization, media and consumerism, people and lifestyles, religiosity and faith, aggression in the Horn of Africa, and ethnic and religious hostilities. Most importantly, the world does not comprised isolated regions but consist of an interconnected global community for which the opinions of diverse members of this community should and must be considered because what happens in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Iraq, Somalia, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Albania or, the United States has a ripple effect throughout the global community.

The aggregate of individual attitudes, beliefs, or opinions held by the global adult population on pertinent global issues and problems should be measured, analyzed and evaluated to help assist in confronting private and public issues. Opinion survey research is an excellent tool to gauge and understand difference in attitudes on local, regional, and global issues. Mills (1959) argued the task facing social scientists is developing the "sociological imagination" which would enable us to grasp history and biography and the relationships between the two within society (e.g., global society) because no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and the intersection within society has completed its intellectual journey. Opinions regarding global issues are associated with factors that often transcend local environments of the individual and have to do with local institutions and the manner in which they overlap and permeate (interpenetrate) global social and economic structures, histories, and involve antagonisms or crisis in institutional arrangements.

This baseline survey of Ghanaians sets out to examine the extent to which Ghanaians place an importance on the issues associated with the 2006 hostilities between Lebanon and Israel and the opinions of the Middle East crisis in general. The findings were both expected and surprising. The research serves

to highlight not only what Ghanaians believe is important on the issue of conflict in the Middle East, but also some areas where Ghanaians may have different, or less well-formed views on the issues of what occurred in Lebanon in 2006.

As previously noted, the study utilized a non-random sampling strategy. Generating a complete sampling frame from which a random sample may be drawn in Ghana is difficult and generally not viable because of informational and infrastructure issues. It is recommended that future opinion research may be able to address two sampling problems confronted by this study. First, where researchers lack a good sampling frame for a dispersed population and the cost to achieve a sample element is very high, multistage cluster sampling is an alternative approach to non-random sampling. Secondly, it is recommended that researchers conducting opinion surveys in Ghana evaluate situational, environmental, and familial-related stresses that might interfere with women participation and survey compliance and therefore plan alternative strategies to reduce or limit non-responses from potential women participants. It is recommended that this study be replicated with a larger, diverse random sample so that some generalizable approaches to facilitating opinion research in Ghana can be documented. In addition, it is recommended that future research be planned and conducted employing web based opinion surveys to describe the opinions of Sub-Saharan Africans versus those of Europe and America.

This survey report and recommendations outline above reflect an analysis of the opinions of respondents expressed in the survey and do not highlight significant demographic and subgroup variations in responses which may exist in the general Ghanaian population. Given the sampling strategy used for the research additional analysis using random sampling should be developed and compared with the findings of this study or where sufficient data exist to do so.

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