Security Council

Letter dated 16 June 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to bring to your attention resolution 1595 (2005), by which the Security Council established an international independent commission of the United Nations to investigate the killing of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri, and 20 other persons. In paragraph 4 of this resolution, the Council requested me to notify it of the date on which the Commission would begin its full operations. In reply to this request, I hereby inform you that the Commission is fully operational as from today, 16 June 2005.

As you are aware, on 16 May I appointed Mr. Detlev Mehlis as Commissioner to head the work of the Commission. Mr. Mehlis arrived in Beirut on 26 May, began talks with the Lebanese authorities on the subject of the functioning of the Commission and embarked on a review of the evidence and information collected in the course of the investigations and inquiries into the crime.

This week, Mr. Mehlis brought to their conclusion some talks on a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese Government, which I am attaching (see annex). He has been adding to the small team which accompanied him to Beirut and has begun to establish the headquarters of the Commission, keeping in mind the safety and security of his staff. He has instructed a team of explosives experts to examine whatever remained after the explosion which killed Mr. Hariri and the other victims. The experts have already formed an opinion on a number of critical points. Thanks to the progress which he and his colleagues have made, Mr. Mehlis was able to inform me that the Commission would enter its genuinely operational phase today.

Pursuant to paragraph 9 of resolution 1595 (2005), I intend to report orally to the Council every two months on the progress of the Commission's work, beginning from today.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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* Reissued for technical reasons.