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Apr 10, 2009 11:40 | Updated Apr 11, 2009 23:28

North Korea sued for aiding Hizbullah

By DAN IZENBERG

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Article's topics: Hizbullah, North Korea, Second Lebanon War, Katyusha Rockets

Thirty Israelis who were hurt during the Second Lebanon War filed suit on Friday against North Korea and Hizbullah for more than \$100 million in Washington District Court, one of their lawyers, Nitzana Darshan-Leitner of the Israel Law Center, said Friday.

The plaintiffs, all of whom hold US citizenship, charged that North Korea trained senior Hizbullah officers and built a series of bunkers in south Lebanon to store Katyushas and other rockets that the Hizbullah used against Israel during the 2006 war, thwarting IAF efforts to locate launching pads.

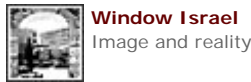
Forty-three Israeli civilians were killed and over 4,000 were wounded during the war. This is the first time Israeli Hizbullah victims have sued North Korea for its role in the war - support of a terror organization.



Katyushas prepared for launch [illustrative]. Photo: AP [file]

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The petitioners are represented by Darshan-Leitner in Israel, and by Attorney Robert Tulchi in the US.

In the lawsuit, the complainants cite a congressional memorandum from May 8, 2008 that was passed on to the State Department, which describes one of the structures built by North Korea as "a 25-kilometer underground tunnel that Hizbullah used for moving its fighters."

The memorandum states that "Hizbullah's underground structures significantly improved its ability to fight against Israel during the Second Lebanon War in 2006."

Darshan-Leitner said that North Korea had become a central player in providing support for Middle East terror groups like Hizbullah.

"It was North Korea that trained Hizbullah's senior operatives and built the group bunkers that allowed terrorists to evade Israeli fighter jets during the Second Lebanon War and to continue firing rockets at Israeli civilian areas," the attorney said in a statement.

"Since it aided Hizbullah rocket fire, North Korea is liable for damages to all those civilians hurt by the terror organization. This lawsuit has been filed in order to achieve justice for terror victims and to teach North Korea that supporting Hizbullah comes at a heavy cost."

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