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US COURT FINDS IRAN, NORTH KOREA LIABLE FOR DAMAGES



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ATTACKS

THE JERUSALEM POST

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July 25, 2014

PREV PAGE

January 15, 2015 – Federal judge rules rogue states responsible for providing “material support and assistance to the Hezbollah terrorists who fired the rockets at Israel that caused the plaintiffs’ injuries.”

A US federal court on Wednesday entered a final default judgment against Iran and North Korea for damages caused to joint American-Israeli citizens by rocket attacks during the Second Lebanon War of 2006.

Federal Judge Royce Lamberth in Washington ruled that the two rogue countries were liable to plaintiff Chaim Kaplan and a group of other plaintiffs represented by Shurat Hadin because they “provided material support and assistance to the Hezbollah terrorists who fired the rockets at Israel that caused the plaintiffs’ injuries.”

The court said it will appoint a special master in the near future to collect evidence of specific damages to make a recommendation to the court on the issue.

Whether the plaintiffs will have a way to collect any damages against the countries is highly uncertain, but other Shurat Hadin related lawsuits have indicated that there may be assets to seize.

In his 18-page decision, Lamberth declared “there can be no doubt that North Korea and Iran provided material support” to Hezbollah.

Lambert’s decision said that North Korea gave Hezbollah “advanced weapons, expert advice and construction assistance in hiding these weapons in underground bunkers, and training in utilizing these weapons and bunkers to cause terrorist rocket attacks on Israel’s civilian population,” while “Iran financed North Korea’s assistance and helped transport weapons to Hezbollah.”

More specifically, the court said that North Korea sent rocket and missile components to Iran where they were assembled and shipped to Hezbollah via Syria.

Regarding financing, the court said that most financing came from the Iranian Republican Guard Corps.

The court quoted several passages from experts who testified in the case, including one who explained that rockets used by Hezbollah had been specially customized by North Korea to fire more quickly and allow the user more time to flee the area. While these rockets were different from other North Korean rockets, they could only have been made by North Korea.

The case against North Korea was filed in April 2009 – with an initial default in May 2010.

The case against Iran was filed in March 2010 – with an initial default in May 2014.



Lamberth added that other key Hezbollah agents who underwent training in North Korea were Mustafa Badreddine, who served as the movement's counter-espionage chief in the 2006 war, and Ibrahim Akil, head of Hezbollah's security and intelligence service.

Shurat Hadin head Nitsana Darshan-Leitner said, "At times like this when Israel is once again under rocket attacks by Islamic extremists, the district court judgment we received proves that the wheels of justice will eventually find the perpetrators and impose liability on them."

She added: "We continue to work to ensure that no terrorist nor their financial patrons will escape having to face the rule of law and civil lawsuits for their criminal acts."