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# PRESS RELEASE

## **U.S. Completes Oil Spill Clean Up in Lebanon**

WASHINGTON, DC – The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and in consultation with the Lebanese Ministry of Environment, completed a project to clean up over 68 miles of shoreline reaching from Byblos to Enfeh. This effort was required as a result of an oil spill that took place during the recent conflict and it focused on areas of high economic importance including commercial harbors, public beaches, and several historic sites.

As a result of the USAID-funded project, more than 36,000 bags of oil contaminated waste were collected and more than 220 local laborers, including fishermen, were hired and trained to perform critical clean up functions. In addition, local businesses were used to provide and operate heavy equipment, and also to supply support services. Those trained also now possess a valuable skill and will be able to serve as experienced responders for future oil spill operations in Lebanon and internationally.

In addition to cleaning Byblos Port, a World Heritage Site, over 100 affected fishing boats were cleaned and repainted.

“We, as citizens of Byblos, are glad for feeling the excellent human relation that happened spontaneously between both Lebanese and Americans,” said the General Manager of a Byblos hotel. “We will be more than happy to keep contact with you, as true friends and welcomed guests in a peaceful and clean Byblos in Lebanon. “

This \$5 million project is being funded as part of the more than \$230 million U.S. commitment to Lebanon for humanitarian, reconstruction and security assistance announced by President Bush on August 21, 2006.

For more information on the U.S. Government's humanitarian efforts in the region, as well as before and after photos of the clean up, please visit USAID's website at:

[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/middle\\_east/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/middle_east/).

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