

....And Lebanon will remain



وسيبقى لبنان...

UPDATE FROM A LEBANON UNDER UNJUSTIFIED ISRAELI WAR RAGE
Wednesday July 26th, 2006- 15th day of attack

15th day of Israeli attack: 418 Lebanese killed mostly civilians, 2000 injured so far and 750,000 Lebanese flee their homes (Reuters)

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora told the Rome meeting his country would sue Israel for compensation for the "barbaric destruction" it has inflicted. "Israel cannot go on indefinitely disregarding international law," he declared.

The situation in Remeish, Ein Ibil, and other Lebanese villages

A group of the residence of these Southern isolated villages was able to reach Beirut yesterday to ask for help for the rest of the community that have been stuck there under the Israeli bombing since Wednesday July 12th. The villages have not received any food supplies or other support since July 12th. The village that usually accounts for 5,000 residents is hosting now more than 20,000 residents, all whom have moved up from more Southern villages due to the Israeli attack. Medicines in those villages are running out, both medicines of permanent sicknesses and daily medicines as well. A 60-year old lady died a few days ago because her heart medicine was no more available in the village. Still, neither the UN not the Red Cross or any other non-governmental organizations such as Caritas or others are able to reach the isolated villages, although supplies are ready to be sent there. Top United Nations officials and independent humanitarian bodies have been calling on Israel for days to guarantee the security of aid convoys to heavily bombed areas of the south.

Aid door to Lebanon 'closed'

Geneva - United Nations humanitarian agencies said on Tuesday they were still largely blocked from bringing relief supplies into Lebanon and from getting injured and chronically sick people to hospitals. The agencies spoke just before Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said his government would allow aid airlifts through its air and sea blockade to its northern neighbour. But, the first reaction was that the Israeli move did little to solve the immediate humanitarian crisis.

Jennifer Pagonis of refugee agency UNHCR said: "It is enormously frustrating to be right on the back doorstep of Lebanon and ready to move in with hundreds of tons of aid, but the door remains closed." Pagonis said supplies for the 20 000 people packed into parks or public buildings in and around Beirut "are still blocked in Syria, waiting a safe route into Lebanon". (25/07/2006 18:06 - SA)

Israeli hits the UN Post on South Lebanon: is that another missed target too????

An Israeli air strike on Tuesday July 25 2006 hit UN post in the town of Kham resulting in the death of four unarmed UN observers from Austria, Canada, China and Finland. U.N. officials said the air strike flattened the building housing the observers and preliminary U.N. assessments indicated that Israel had used precision-guided munitions. The UN report says each time the UN contacted Israeli forces they were assured the firing would stop. A senior Irish soldier working for the UN forces had warned the Israelis six times that their bombardment was endangering the lives of UN staff, Ireland's foreign ministry said. Had Israel responded to the requests, "rather than deliberately ignoring them", the observers would still be alive, a diplomat familiar with the report said. Israel rejected the statement by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan that the targeting of the UN position was "apparently deliberate". The UN Security Council is meeting to discuss the incident.

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Economic damages to Lebanon

So far, economic damages amounts to more than \$1bn (£540m), economists estimate. Yet the total cost could be much larger. Much of the \$50bn that has been injected into the country during the last decade to rebuild it after the 1975-1989 civil war may have been wasted. The tourism industry has also been paralysed. Consequently, Lebanon will find it increasingly hard to service its \$35bn debts, and the government will probably have to shelve its plans for economic reform. Giant cash injections from the international community remains Lebanon's only real hope of a relatively swift recovery. "We will definitely need \$3bn in assistance in the very short term in the nature of donations rather than loans," says Mr Marwan Iskander, a Lebanese economist. (*BBC* news.bbc.co.uk)

Collapse of the Rome conference

Amid worsening Middle East violence, an international conference on the crisis Wednesday failed to agree a framework for a ceasefire in Lebanon between Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants. Calling for "historic deeds" to bring peace, Lebanese Prime Minister Saniora said it was time for Israel to take the initiative because the Arabs were "committed to peace." Participants at the Rome meeting included top officials from 15 countries -- including Germany, Britain and France as well as United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. Key players in the conflict did not attend the meeting. Israel was not represented at the talks and neither Syria nor Iran - which are Hezbollah's main backers - had been invited. Saniora demanded that Israel pay compensation for the "barbaric destruction" of his country during the ongoing conflict with Hezbollah. "Israel cannot keep ignoring international law," Saniora told the conference. Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja - whose country is current president of the 25-nation EU - pointed to "increasing frustration in Europe at the lack of progress in achieving a cease-fire and coming to grips with the causes of the conflict."

Civil Society Gathering for Life calls for another gathering against the Israeli aggression

The civil society gathering for life (lil Hayat) which is a gathering of more than 40 NGO and civil society organizations called upon all Lebanese to gather on Thursday July 27th to open a banner protesting the Israeli aggression on Lebanon and asking for cease fire in all the languages. They ask the international community to intervene for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, to avoid more losses among innocent civilians. The mobilization will be joined by a delegation from the European Parliament who are visiting Beirut on a mission. The delegation met with a group of non-governmental organizations who are working on relief work and civic demonstrations in Beirut and heard from them the conditions of their work and the challenges they are facing.

Stories from the South of Lebanon; these are results from the Israeli War on Lebanon

From Tibnine (a Lebanese Southern village): Wearing only slippers on his feet, it took Youssef Beydoun two-and-a-half terrifying hours to walk from his shell-battered village of Kounine to the relative safety of Tibnine. Here the 78-year-old is one of some 1,600 refugees crammed into Tibnine's government-run hospital, all of them having fled from a cluster of Shiite hill villages to the south. With drinking water running out, no milk, no electricity and declining stocks of food as well as little prospect of imminent escape from Tibnine, the refugees are caught in a vortex of confusion, fear, anger and despair. (*By Nicholas Blanford, Special to The Daily Star, Wednesday, July 26, 2006, www.dailystar.com.lb*)

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Across the south, towns and villages have been emptied of their inhabitants, leaving eerie scenes of ghostly desolation like that in Nabatiye, eight miles north of the Israeli border. Stores are locked. Windows near bombing sites are gone. In some cases, the power is out. Hospitals are still functioning but are low on everything: fuel for generators, dialysis filters, antibiotics. Basements have become shelters for the elderly, the young and the disabled. (New York Times, www.nytimes.com)

"Many rabbis and professionals have told me recently that they fear for their jobs should they even begin to articulate their doubts about Israeli policy--much less give explicit support to calls for an end to the occupation."

-- Rabbi Michael Lerner
April 28, 2002 in the Los Angeles Times
