

....*And Lebanon will remain*



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UPDATE FROM A LEBANON UNDER UNJUSTIFIED ISRAELI WAR RAGE
Monday July 31st, 2006- 20th day of attack

Ha'aretz Today (published in An-Nahar Lebanese newspaper www.annaharonline.com) Jedon Levy, Israeli Human Rights activist and writer, noted in his article "Days of Darkness" that "*the ethical and logical darkness surrounds Israel and the trend of revenge and Chauvinism is increasing*". He added "*The ethical blindness that is spreading in Israel ...threatens the existence and image of Israel as much as the Katyusha threatens us.*"

Robert Fisk: 'How can we stand by and allow this to go on?'

You must have a heart of stone not to feel the outrage that those of us watching this experienced yesterday. This slaughter was an obscenity, an atrocity - yes, if the Israeli air force truly bombs with the "pinpoint accuracy" it claims, this was also a war crime. Israel claimed that missiles had been fired by Hizbollah gunmen from the south Lebanese town of Qana - as if that justified this massacre...

And there was no doubt of the missile which killed all those children yesterday. It came from the United States, and upon a fragment of it was written: "For use on MK-84 Guided Bomb BSU-37-B"...

No one in this country can forget how President George Bush, Ms Rice, and Tony Blair have repeatedly refused to call for an immediate ceasefire - a truce that would have saved all those lives yesterday. Ms Rice would say only: "We want a ceasefire as soon as possible," a remark followed by an Israeli announcement that it intended to maintain its bombardment of Lebanon for at least another two weeks....

All across southern Lebanon now, you find scenes like this, not so grotesque in scale, perhaps, but just as terrible, for the people of these villages are terrified to leave and terrified to stay. The Israelis had dropped leaflets over Qana, ordering its people to leave their homes. Yet twice now since Israel's onslaught began, the Israelis have ordered villagers to leave their houses and then attacked them with aircraft as they obeyed the Israeli instructions and fled...

Mobilize to avenge the blood of Qana (by Uri Avnery: an Israeli journalist, writer and peace activist)

...Interviewed by the BBC's political editor, Nick Robinson, on Saturday 30 July, Blair repeatedly declined to call for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon. "Give Israel time to do its job of destruction. Let Israel annihilate Hezbollah and, preferably, Syria as well. When this is done, we shall call for a ceasefire." This is the conclusion which any reasonable person watching Blair's interview would draw. Indeed, it is the conclusion which Nick Robinson himself drew - he said so himself in conversation with the television news presenter after the interview...

If there is anyone out there who is still wondering why Arabs and Muslims view Britain and the United States as their implacable enemies, then look no further. To the analysts, experts and commentators, whether in the media or in academia, who are still befuddled as to why Arabs and Muslims are turning to "extremism" and terrorism, we say this: replay the images of murder in Qana, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut and Gaza, then listen again to the war criminal Bush and his poodle Blair resisting calls for a ceasefire, and you have the answer...

Still, no safe access for humanitarian aid to the South of Lebanon

"Incredibly, Israel yesterday denied safe passage to a UN World Food Programme aid convoy en route to the south, a six-truck mission that should have taken relief supplies to the south-eastern town of Marjayoun". (Robert Fisk)

This update was prepared by the Arab NGO Network for Development- information was collected from various news agencies, but mostly from blogs created by civil society groups and individual activists- for more information please visit our website at www.annd.org, email us at annd@annd.org, phone us at 961-1-319366 or fax us at 961-1-815636

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The Daily Star (July 31, 2006 www.dailystar.com.lb) reported that the UN food agency said it cancelled a six-truck convoy of medicines, flour, canned meat and vegetable oil to the southern Lebanese town of Marjayoun on Sunday after Israeli forces declined to give their consent, but hoped on Monday to reach the village of Qana, where an air raid killed 60 people. "There are tens of thousands of people in the south who are in desperate need of assistance. Obviously this is a setback," said Amer Daoudi, World Food Program (WFP) emergency coordinator for Lebanon. "The decision was in accordance with established security procedures in Lebanon, under which WFP requires concurrence from all parties involved in the conflict for humanitarian aid convoy movements. This is the first time that such concurrence has not been forthcoming," the statement continued.

In the meantime, Reuters reported that "Aid workers are finding it impossible to get medical supplies and food safely to isolated villages in southern Lebanon due to the Israeli bombardment". A humanitarian corridor has allowed the United Nations to truck food and basic medical supplies to the southern port of Tyre, but getting safe passage beyond that is another matter. Reuters report noted that Christopher Stokes, director of operations for Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) Belgium said "For us, the major issue is clearly the impossible access in the south. This talk of a humanitarian corridor should not mask the real situation". "It's a kind of humanitarian alibi because in effect there is no real humanitarian access in the south. And we are deluding ourselves, the international community is deluding itself, if it believes there is," he said in his Beirut office.

Furthermore, the International Committee of the Red Cross (CRC) said on Friday some of its convoys in the south had been turned back because of intense fighting. "the CRC is appealing for more than 80 million USD in aid to help civilians caught in the Lebanese crossfire. In addition, the group says access to water and basic services has been choked off. Medical evacuations and relief operations can't meet the population's needs. One executive with the International Committee says the emergency response could probably continue into next year. (2006 Associated Press)

On the night of Monday July 31, 2006, a Lebanese TV reported that Belgium stated that Israel refuses to let humanitarian aid flights into Lebanon.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Qana Massacre 2006

"The Israeli military is fully responsible for its air strikes that killed at least 60 civilians in the village of Qana and both Israel's and Hezbollah's indiscriminate attacks against civilians are war crimes"...

"The appalling loss of civilian life in Qana underscores the need for the U.N. secretary general to establish an international commission of inquiry to investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law in the context of the current conflict", HRW Executive Director Roth said. Such consistent failure to distinguish combatants and civilians is a war crime, he said"...

"Just because the Israeli military warned the civilians of Qana to leave does not give it carte blanche to blindly attack," Roth said. "It (Israel) still must make every possible effort to target only genuine combatants."

HRW recalled that even if Israeli military claims of Hezbollah rocket fire from the Qana area were correct, Israel remained under a strict obligation to direct attacks only at military objectives, and to take all feasible precautions to avoid the incidental loss of civilian life.

..."Tens of thousands of civilians remain in villages south of the Litani River, despite Israeli

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warnings to leave. The vast majority is unable to flee due to destroyed roads, a lack of gasoline, high taxi fares, sick relatives, or ongoing Israeli attacks. The sick and poor are those who mostly remain behind," it said. (From www.naharnet.com)

Amnesty International on Qana Massace:

Lebanon/Israel: 48 hours not enough as war crimes continue (Press release, 07/31/2006)
<http://news.amnesty.org/index/engmde020022006>

"The devastating attack on Qana makes clear that an immediate and full ceasefire is urgently needed. Measures taken by Israel to temporarily suspend airstrikes over southern Lebanon are insufficient. "Calls for the warring parties to obey the laws of war and protect civilians have fallen on deaf ears. Israel is carrying out disproportionate and targeted attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers, while Hezbollah continues to launch rockets at Israeli civilian population centres," said Irene Khan

However, international humanitarian law also makes it clear that even if one side is shielding itself behind civilians, such an abuse does not "...release the Parties to the conflict from their legal obligations with respect to the civilian population and civilians."

Israel's relentless bombing of roads and bridges has also made it extremely difficult for civilians in south Lebanon to flee north following warnings from Israel. Under customary international law, intentionally launching a disproportionate or indiscriminate attack or intentionally directing attacks at civilians or civilian objects is a war crime.

Ha'aretz published on media bias; "Pimping Hezbollah: Media bias done well"

From the article: "Time's July 31 issue opens its cover story on the Israel-Hezbollah war with a remarkable photo gallery entitled "The Damage Done," each two-page spread superbly filled by a single riveting shot...The first photograph shows in shattering detail a south Beirut apartment block ripped to splinters by Israeli bombs...The second shows a badly burned Lebanese woman being comforted by her brother, both in anguish after an Israeli air force strike that killed their mother and sister...Then there are the Israelis. The concluding shot does not show Israelis under rocket fire or wounded by Katyushas. In fact, the most remarkable element of the Time report is that one could read the magazine cover to cover and never know that any Israelis had been killed and injured in their homes, in the street, in a train depot, by Hezbollah missiles." (End)

A question should be put out here: Is the Time reporting discriminating against Israel or does the reality of this attack, with its disproportional force and violation of international law from the side of Israel does not allow except for such a coverage. This is the minimum press coverage that can be done given the situation. It is worth noting that after 20 days of military actions, around forty Israeli were killed, more than the half of which are soldiers, while more than 700 Lebanese were killed, more than 665 of which are civilians. Moreover, one third out of the 700 are children and more than their half are women. More than thirty Lebanese southern towns and villages are completely destroyed; more than 40 buildings in the southern suburbs of Beirut were leveled to the ground. At least ten industries were destroyed in addition to 62 bridges including the highest one in the Middle East on the international road between Beirut and Damascus. Moreover, three airports and all the costal ports were heavily damaged. No media coverage can be fair in covering this.

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Jewish Committee on the Middle East; From their Press Release - U.N. Must Sanction Israel (5/9/1996)

The evidence is now overwhelming that Israel's unprecedented attack on the U.N. base at Qana in southern Lebanon last month was almost certainly done deliberately as the U.N. itself has recently concluded. It should be remembered that this is not the first time Israel has acted in outrageous ways violating basic standards of international law and conduct and then pursuing a clear pattern of deception and cover-up when unexpected evidence was forthcoming. Indeed, just in recent years the Security Council has condemned Israel for the Dome of the Rock massacre in 1990 and the massive attack on Tunis in 1985. Indeed, in just a quick review of recent history we find numerous instances of unconscionable Israeli actions usually followed by major deceptions on the part of the highest-ranking Israeli political and military leaders. Just a few of these instances are listed below, followed by date and numbers of killed when known: Deir Yassein Massacre (1948 -- hundreds), Kibya Massacre (1953 - 75), Lavon Affair (1955), Kfar Qasem Massacre (1956 - 43), U.S.S. Liberty Ship Massacre (1967 - 30+), Killing of unarmed Egyptian Prisoners of War (1967 - unknown), Sabra & Shatilla Massacre & Lebanon invasion (1982 - thousands), Shinbet Torture Scandal (1984), Tunis Massacre (1985 - 75+), Mordechai Vanunu kidnapping and secret trial (1986), Abu Jihad assassination in Tunis (1988), Dome of the Rock Massacre (1990 - 22), Illegal mass expulsions (1993), Qana Massacre (1996 - 100+). (*The Jewish Committee on Middle East, P.O. Box 18367 - Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 362-JCOME (362-5266) Fax: (202) 362-6965 Email: JCOME@aol.com*)

The Arab NGO Network for Development Calls upon its friends and supporters all around the world

Today, July 30th, another massacre was committed in Lebanon: More than sixty civilians, among them 37 children, were killed by Israeli bombs while they were sleeping in shelters in the village of Qana. They died not very far away from the mass grave holding the bodies of 106 civilians burned by a previous Israeli attack in April 1996 inside a shelter provided by a UN battalion

Reacting to these terrible news, Pope Benedict XVI said today: "In the name of God, I call on all those responsible for this spiral of violence so that weapons are immediately laid down on all sides." And in more simple terms, the Swedish Foreign Minister expressed the feeling of citizens worldwide: "It is time to end this madness."

The only sane decision that needs to be made immediately is that of a ceasefire. A ceasefire would allow for humanitarian relief to reach the innocent victims, for the bodies to be buried instead of being eaten by the dogs, and for all the underlying problems to be negotiated and eventually solved. More victims can only produce more hatred.

In the last few days, Lebanon has been promised by the EU, the UK and the US help in rebuilding its infrastructure and humanitarian aid to assist the eight hundred thousand internally displaced persons and "humanitarian corridors", but they stopped short of demanding a ceasefire, which encouraged Israel to continue with its "mission" of unilaterally enforcing the resolution to disarm Hezbollah. With that same logic, Hezbollah could argue it has a mission to enforce the many UN Security Council resolutions demanding Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories.

On July 27, Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon said that Israel had given civilians ample time to leave southern Lebanon. "All those now in south Lebanon are terrorists who are related in some way to Hezbollah," he said, according to the BBC. "Just because the Israeli military warned the civilians of Qana to leave does not give it carte blanche to blindly attack," said Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch.

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"Through its arguments, the Israeli military is suggesting that Palestinian militant groups might 'warn' all settlers to leave Israeli settlements and then be justified in targeting those who remained."

The escalating violence in Lebanon can not be solved unilaterally with self-proclaimed righteousness by any party. Peace is negotiated between enemies, not with friends. And the first step to any negotiation is a ceasefire. Or is it that every child has to die so that they do not grow into "terrorists"?

A year ago, the UK Prime Minister championed the cause of including in the UN mandate the "responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". Yet the UN, the European Union, The United States and the United Kingdom have failed in their responsibility to protect the Lebanese children. Or even to clearly condemn that criminal act.

The Arab NGO Network for Development condemns the aggression against Lebanon and the lack of commitment with world peace that the UN, EU, US and the UK have shown in this situation.

ANND calls upon all its friends, colleagues, sisters and brothers from civil society organizations and concerned citizens across the world to join all their efforts in order to put an end to the escalating aggression against Lebanon.

ANND calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Lebanon.

Please take action now!

- Write an e-mail to annd@annd.org endorsing this call as an individual or organization (please give us your full name and nationality and, in the case of an organization, the name, country and city of its headquarters and position of the signing person)
- Write to the UN secretary general Kofi Annan, to President George W. Bush, to Prime Minister Tony Blair or to your own government asking them to engage actively in achieving an immediate cease-fire.