

....*And Lebanon will remain*



...وسيبقى لبنان

UPDATE FROM A LEBANON UNDER UNJUSTIFIED ISRAELI WAR RAGE
Thursday July 27th, 2006- 16th day of attack

16th day of Israeli attack on Lebanon:

The government says **up to 600 people are dead**.

Lebanese Health Minister Mohammad Khalifeh said hospitals had received 401 bodies of people killed during the war launched by Israel. On top of those victims, there are 150 to 200 bodies still under the rubble. "We have not been able to pull them out because the areas they died in are still under fire," he told Reuters.

Bodies still lie in the streets in some isolated Lebanese border villages, where fighting has trapped terrified civilians, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said.
(Reuters)

The US authorizes Israel to continue killing civilians and violating all human rights conventions we know

From "Lebanon battles rage as world powers disagree"

By Stuart William, (AFP)

Fighting in Lebanon has showed little sign of abating after Israel lost nine soldiers in its biggest one-day toll so far, with world powers still at odds over a conflict now in its 16th day.

Washington blocked adoption of a UN Security Council draft resolution critical of Israel, after its warplanes killed four UN observers in a raid in a south Lebanon town that UN chief Kofi Annan said was "apparently deliberate".

It also thwarted any call for an immediate ceasefire at a 15-nation conference on the conflict in Rome, infuriating Arab opinion and giving Israel what one government minister claimed was "authorization" to press on with its devastating offensive on Lebanon.

After an Israeli cabinet meeting, Justice Minister Haim Ramon made clear that Israel no longer regarded the border town of Bint Jbeil, around which the nine soldiers were killed in fighting with Hezbollah guerrillas Wednesday, as a civilian area. "Everyone who is still in south Lebanon is linked to Hezbollah, we have called on all who are there to leave," he said ahead of the cabinet meeting.

"Maximum firepower has to be used," he said. "We have to exploit the advantages that we have over Hezbollah with the air force and artillery and be cautious when we use ground troops." "Yesterday in Rome we have in effect obtained the authorization to continue our operations until Hezbollah is no longer present in southern Lebanon," he told army radio.

(Agence France Presse)

Open Letter to Tony Blair calling for a ceasefire

Oxfam, Save the Children, Christian Aid, Amnesty International, CAFOD, Care Islamic Relief, UNISON, Medact, Muslim Council of Britain, War On Want, Welfare Association, and World Vision call Blair to rethink the UK policy as a matter of urgency

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In their letter to their Prime Minister Blair, international non-governmental organizations stated:

"We write again now collectively to reiterate and amplify these shared concerns... We are concerned however that the British government has yet to use its full influence to bring about an immediate ceasefire, a lasting end to the hostilities, and full compliance with international humanitarian law.... Though this may not have been the intention, by failing to back the UN and call for an immediate ceasefire the UK government has reduced the impact of international calls for an immediate halt to the violence. As such, your current policy risks putting civilian lives at continued risk rather than helping to protect them.... But we have not yet heard a compelling argument as to why you will not call for an immediate ceasefire to save lives now - and create space for negotiations over a final settlement. The present policy looks in danger of placing the UK Government in the uncomfortable position of only calling for a ceasefire once one side in the conflict has achieved its military objectives".

UN agencies in Lebanon call for a coordination meeting

OCHA (UN Office for coordination of Humanitarian Assistance) organized a coordination meeting yesterday (Wednesday, July 26th) among various UN agencies, international non-governmental organization (INGOs) acting in Lebanon and local civil society organizations involved in emergency and relief. The meeting came just after the visit of the deputy secretary general of the UN for humanitarian Assistance, Mr. Yan Eglund. By the end of his visit to Lebanon, Mr. Eglund called for 150 million dollars for three months to respond for immediate needs.

The objective of the meeting was to define who is doing what and where. It is worth noting that local civil society organizations and NGOs were significantly fast and efficient in organizing and absorbing the shocks resulting from displacement of the Lebanese. More than half of 600,000 internally displaced people were accommodated in schools and other gathering centers. Now, the number of INGOs involved is growing, which necessitates more coordination and cooperation.

In addition to the coordination for relief activities in the safer areas of evacuation, the main challenge is to reach the areas of military activities in south Lebanon. Villages are totally isolated and inhabitants there are calling for immediate intervention in order to avoid human disaster.

It was agreed that World Food Program (WFP) will be in charge of all logistic matters, including transportation. The representative of the WFP announced that the first convoy of all kind of humanitarian assistance managed to reach Tyr (Southern Lebanon) few hours before the meeting was convened. He also indicated that two convoys were planned for Friday; one to Saida and Jezzine and the second to Nabatieh (All in Southern Lebanon). Another convoy is expected to go to Marjoun on Sunday. The next convoy to Tyr will be on Monday. WFP asked all groups wanting to transport supplies to inform OCHA in order to arrange their transportation to the respective areas. The security of safe corridors to pass supplies and relief packages to the Southern villages is still a highly critical issue.

WFP noted that there is an agreement to send humanitarian assistance through Limasol (Cyprus) by sea to the port of Beirut, and by land through Syria passing by the northern borders of Lebanon. It is worth noting that a ship full of medicines and other humanitarian assistance was sent to the port of Saida, but it was not allowed to enter. The ship is still waiting the permission from the Israeli army to unload its cargo.

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Lebanese Civil Society Stand up for Lebanon in Dire Times

From what Brian Whitaker - Guardian Unlimited July 27, 2006

...The inhabitants of the Lebanese capital are making the most of a terrible situation, despite official incompetence and Israel's continuing air campaign. The Phoenicians were the greatest traders of the ancient world and the Lebanese are their descendants. In Lebanon, every situation - no matter how dire - is an opportunity for someone to do business.

It is now one week since Nayla Mouawad, the Minister of Social Affairs, told a press conference of her plans to set up tents for them in sports grounds and other open spaces. On Tuesday, she informed another press conference that the tents had yet to arrive from Switzerland. The ministry also seems to be having problems with staff who are unable or unwilling to turn up for work.

In the meantime, individuals and non-governmental organizations have been taking the initiative. On Tuesday, I visited Zico House, which has become the hub for voluntary relief efforts in central Beirut. Zico House used to be a sort of arts centre which also housed various radical and leftist groups such as the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, Haya Bina ("Let's Get Going!") and Helem (Dream), the only openly functioning gay and lesbian organization in the Arab world. Helem's office is still recognizable from the posters promoting safer sex and another in rainbow colors saying "No pride in occupation", but as soon as the war started it was turned over to the relief effort.

As I arrived at Zico House, they were preparing to distribute a consignment of cooking oil. A van was parked outside and a long line of people rapidly passing the oil containers from hand to hand stretched from the van into the building and way up the stairs.

In the back yard, there were piles of newly-donated clothes and volunteers sorting them into boxes labeled "skirts - long", "pyjamas - men", "shorts - men", etc. In the kitchen, I found Rhea, with a ring through her lip, and Aida (punk-style pants and hair dyed in an interesting pattern) along with two other young women, grappling with a vast pan of spaghetti to feed the volunteers.

This particular relief effort, which now comprises some 40 different groups, goes by the name of Samidoun ("Steadfast"), and most of its volunteers are in their 20s and 30s. It may look a bit chaotic but it's actually highly organized, using computers to keep track of people's needs. Volunteer helpers present themselves to a man with a laptop who assigns them a task...

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THE INDEPENDENT

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

FREE GLOSSY POSTERS TO COLLECT

THE GREAT ARTISTS

As a humanitarian disaster looms, Britain and US are left exposed by refusing to endorse the UN's demand for an end to hostilities

Middle East: Who backs immediate ceasefire?

Yes

No

Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, denied that Washington was isolated in its tacit support for the Israeli offensive against Hezbollah, insisting that other governments represented at the Rome meeting had supported the US position.

"Yes, there were a lot of countries calling for an immediate ceasefire. There were several that did not," she told journalists traveling with her to Kuala Lumpur. "It was not all countries calling for an immediate ceasefire," she insisted. (AFP)

(on left: cover of the Independent)

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URGENT APPEAL FOR SUPPORT OF RELIEF WORK IN LEBANON

To donate to NGOs serving 15,000 displaced Lebanese in the area of Beirut, please send your donations to:

In all transfers, the following applies:

Account with institution: BKAUWBBE (this is the SWIFT code)
Bank of Kuwait and the Arab World s.a.l.
Beirut - Lebanon
Beneficiary Name: Green Line Association
Beneficiary Account: 10USD4612006189003

For USD transfers: The correspondents in USA with their SWIFT BIC codes are:

1. Bank of New York New York USA SWIFT code: IRVTUS3N	2. HSBC Bank New York USA SWIFT code: MRMDUS33	3. American Express Bank Ltd. New York USA SWIFT code: AEIBUS33
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For Euro transfers: The correspondents in France and Germany with their SWIFT codes respectively are:

1. Societe Generale Paris - France SWIFT code: SOGEFRPP	2. Dresdner Bank AG Frankfurt - Germany SWIFT code: DRESDEFF
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Even a limited amount will make a big difference under the current very complicated circumstances. All donations will be channeled to relief efforts on the grounds and a full report will be prepared by the spending procedures.

For more information or to help please call Mr Nizar Rammal at 961-3-908-307 or email: nizarrammal@yahoo.com

To donate to the Lebanese government, please use the following accounts:

US\$:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York, New York
Bic code FRNYUS33 Routing Number **021084694**
Favor Banque du Liban account number **021084694**

Euros:

Deutsche Bank, Frankfurt
Bic code DEUTDEFF
Favor Banque du Liban account number **021084694**

Lebanese Lira:

Banque du Liban Account Number **01700362123**

Donations to the Higher Council of Relief:

Bank of Lebanon- Account number **411150067**
For more information, visit www.lebanonundersiege.gov.lb or contact relief@pcm.gov.lb