

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
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Israeli Attack on Lebanon

Violates International Humanitarian Law

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Israel's brutal maritime and air siege and attacks on civilians and civilian targets in Lebanese territory violate international humanitarian law. As the "Save the Lebanese Civilians Petition", addressed to the concerned citizens of the world, underline, targeting and killing non-combatants cannot be justified on grounds of self-defence, and disproportionate resort to force cannot be accepted as a measured response, but should be condemned as a despotic exercise of collective punishment of an entire nation. Israel's merciless onslaught slays innocent people of a neighbouring country and also heightens the suspicion that such bloody exercises may be the groundwork, no matter how tragic these 'preliminaries' are, for further similar undertakings in the region.

Israel's sanguinary pursuits dishonour the 1949 "Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War," the 1907 "Hague Convention IV with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land," and the 1998 "Rome Statute" of the International Criminal Court. Irrespective of the impotence of the United Nations Security Council to act in support of international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of that body, all States party to the Geneva Convention have the collective obligation to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. International jurisprudence, regulations and standards require that civilians and civilian infrastructure cannot be included within military objectives.

In spite of these legal specifications and moral concerns, unoffending civilians of Lebanon were deliberately and collectively punished through fierce bombardment. By the last week of July (2006), more

than 300 Lebanese civilians were murdered, and many more were wounded. Civilian infrastructure is in the process of getting destroyed, a fact that will adversely affect the lives of the survivors. Alarmed tourists and business people are desperately searching ways and means to leave the country as soon as possible.

Even non-Lebanese who manage to head home face unpredictable surprises on the way. For instance, one of the Turkish ferry-boats, named “Akchakoja”, sent to Beirut to pick up 1,500 of its citizens sieged there, was shot at by the Israeli navy, with no casualties, and held up for one whole day before allowed to proceed. Turkey’s Communications Minister Binali Yildiran complained the next day that the Israeli armed forces enforce their own rules and regulations to foreign ships as well even in international waters. Similarly, another Turkish ferry-boat, bound to carry away 1,029 of its citizens, was delayed on the way and reached the southern Turkish port of Mersin much later than expected. The skipper remarked that the Israeli war vessels, floating fifty miles off the Lebanese shore, created a corridor of their own, enforcing all other ships to pass only through that narrow and controlled route.

The United Nations Organization, whose lack of strength and vitality shocks the international community, should activate itself to stop this heedless bloodshed at once. Under the present circumstances, it is the foremost duty of the NGOs and other civic organizations, and also of individuals with clear-headedness for truth and perception for justice, to respond forthwith to the call of the “Save the Lebanese People Petition” and instantly send appropriate support to the following e-mail address: //D:I.P.O-ORG\IPO-nr-Lebanese-Civilians-20july06.htm

I ventured to state above that such hideous acts may be the first steps for even more monstrous misdeeds elsewhere. The attention of the international community need to be drawn to the possibility that they may also constitute preparatory steps for attacks on moderately daring but unprovocative states like the Islamic Republic of Iran. The international community should (1) discourage unilateral aggression on that country, (2) prevent the adoption of a UN Security Council decision that may be construed to allow such an aggression under conditions appropriate for the aggressor’s intent, and (3) finally help avoid an embargo decision that will eventually penalize the people at large.

However, in case of an attack, no matter how remote that possibility may be, Iran has at its disposal numerous ways and means of quick, assertive and forceful response. Apart from the elements of her own national power, that country will enjoy support of the great majority of the world public, especially the peoples of the entire Middle East. The latter includes large groups of citizens, communities, religious sects, and tribes in Lebanon as well. Support may come not only from Shiite or Muslim bands, factions or even masses, but also from the adherents of other religions or secular circles who value international law and oppose interventions in this volatile region. One of Israel’s military objectives may well be then to weaken, silence or obliterate Lebanese groups that may sympathize with Iran if the latter becomes a target from outside attack.

There are some other indications that Western media, in part, intends to prime the world public for war with Iran. For instance, the “National Post”, a Canadian paper started and now owned by hawkish neo-

cons, concocted a story about a supposedly new Iranian law that required her Jewish citizens to wear yellow insignia, reminiscent of the Nazi practice some seven decades ago. Although the paper's story was picked up by the "New York Post" and several wire services, with photos of German Jews from the Hitler era but under the general heading of Iran, there was no such law and no such practice in Iran. Not all papers and news agencies printed the denials, allowing the falsification to reach millions of readers.

The author of the original article was an Iranian immigrant, a certain Amir Taheri who frequented the White House advising the US President as a supposed expert on his home country. Taheri's earlier book on the fall of the Shah regime, initially well-received, was later exposed, as a failure referring to nonexistent sources and involving distortions, by none other than Professor Shaul Bakhash, the doyen of Persian studies in the United States. Taheri also tried to present Iran's able chief representative to the UN in New York, Dr. Javad Zarif as one of the students who led the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979. But Professor Dwight Simpson immediately responded in a letter to the "New York Post" that the accused person, as a young man, had been his student then at the San Francisco State University, and moreover was serving as his assistant in the teaching of his classes in international relations on 4 November 1979, the day the embassy take-over had occurred.

The world public should be informed properly about the truth regarding Lebanon and Iran. This is no time to be deaf and blind.