
The war on Lebanon

“I put this together to help me come to terms with what has just happened to my country”

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Post mortem

Wednesday 12th July

Assault

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Additional information

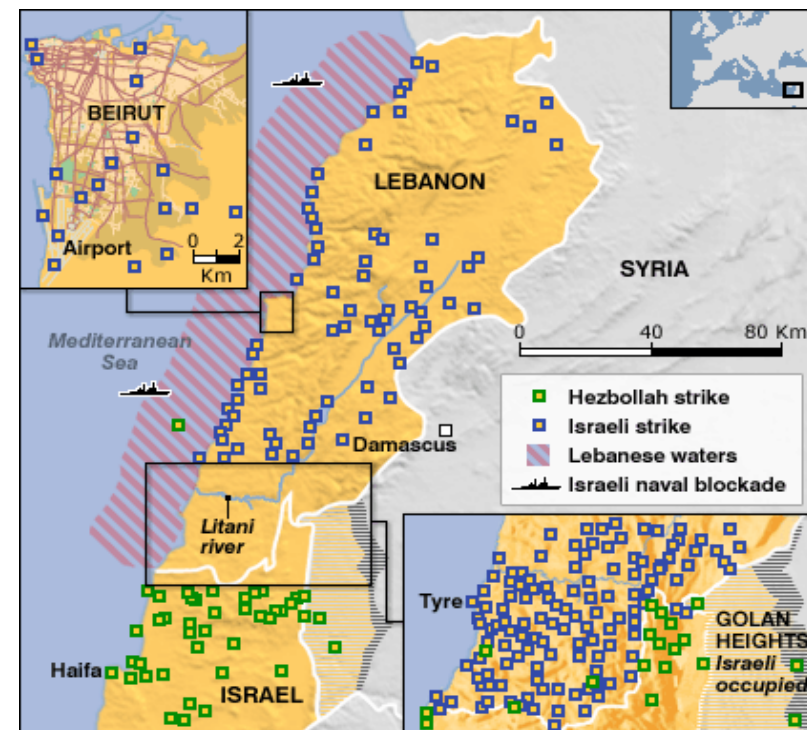
Post Mortem

12 July – 14 August 2006

The cost

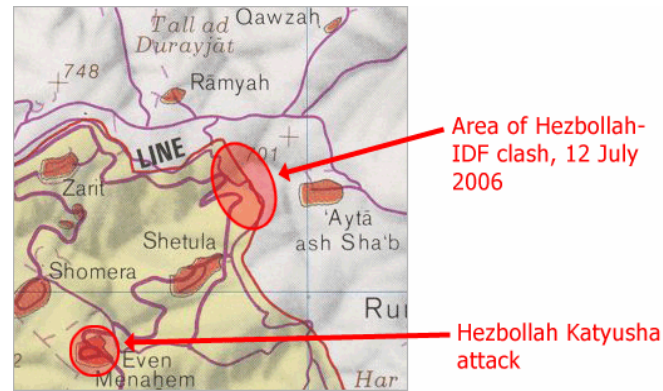
	Israel	Lebanon
Civilian dead	43	1,130
Civilian wounded	650	3,697
Military dead	116	55*
Displaced	500,000	915,000
Damage	300 buildings	6,900 homes** 900 businesses 145 bridges 29 utilities
Economic	\$1.5bn	\$6.5bn***
Bombed	4,000	100,000****

The scale



A skirmish between Hezbollah and Israel escalates into war

Wednesday 12th July



Hezbollah fires rockets into Israel and raids an army post on the border. Three Israeli soldiers are killed and two are captured. Israel sends a tank into Lebanon in pursuit. The tank is destroyed. Five Israeli soldiers are killed.

"It is an act of war by the state of Lebanon against the state of Israel in its sovereign territory." (Ehud Olmert, Israeli Prime Minister)

"The government was not aware of, and does not take responsibility for, nor endorses, what happened on the international border." (Fouad Siniora, Lebanese Prime Minister)

"No military operation will return the Israeli captured soldiers. The prisoners will not be returned except through indirect negotiations and a trade of prisoners." (Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Leader)

"If the soldiers are not returned, we will turn Lebanon's clock back 20 years." (Dan Halutz, Israeli Chief of Staff)

"You wanted an open war. You will get an open war." (Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Leader)

Israel imposes a land, sea and air siege on Lebanon; 'collective punishment' begins

The assault



"Where to attack? Once inside Lebanon, everything is legitimate, not just southern Lebanon, not just the line of Hezbollah posts." (Major General Udi Adam, Head of Israel's Northern Command)

"To those countries who claim that we are using disproportionate force, I have only this to say: You're damn right we are." (Dan Gillerman, Israel's ambassador to the UN, The Jewish Press)

"The assault on Lebanon was premeditated, the soldiers' capture simply provided the excuse." (George Monbiot, The Guardian)

"Israel may be pursuing other aims in Lebanon than saving two soldiers taken hostage" (Vladimir Putin, Russian President, RNIA)

"Israel's military offensive against Lebanon is totally disproportionate. Is destroying Lebanon the ultimate goal? One could ask if today there is not a sort of will to destroy Lebanon, its equipment, its roads, and its communication." (Jacques Chirac, President of France)

The scale and ferocity of the bombing shocks the world

The destruction



“In four weeks the full might of Israel has achieved a comprehensive destruction to rival that of 18 years of civil war.” (Chris Walker, The Independent)

“It is horrific. The devastation here is a violation of humanitarian law.” (Jan Egeland, UN Humanitarian Chief, touring south Beirut)

“I have covered some pretty vicious wars in my time. But I've never seen so much damage inflicted upon a civilian area so swiftly.” (Richard Pendlebury, Daily Mail)

“In trying to find the needle, the Israelis have burnt the haystack.” (Chris Walker, The Independent)

“Ali Bakri wrenched open the broken doors of his small supermarket, clearing the fridges of food that had gone rotten over the past month. About 80% of the village had been levelled, he estimated, and 60 people had died. “The destruction is massive. It's as if a tsunami or a second Hiroshima has hit.” (Declan Walsh, The Guardian)

Note: A detailed map of the destruction in south Beirut is found at

http://graphics.nytimes.com/packages/html/world/20060804_MIDEAST_GRAPHIC/index.html or <http://www.guardian.co.uk/flash/0,,1839787,00.html>

85% of all casualties are Lebanese civilians, 40% are children

The suffering



The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stated having "serious questions" regarding the actions of Israeli forces in Lebanon.

"The pattern of attacks shows the Israeli military's disturbing disregard for the lives of Lebanese civilians. Our research shows that Israel's claim that Hezbollah fighters are hiding among civilians does not explain, let alone justify, Israel's indiscriminate warfare." (Kenneth Roth, Director of Human Rights Watch)

"The Israeli army ordered the inhabitants of a neighbouring village, Marwaheen, to leave their homes and then fired rockets into one of their evacuation trucks, blasting the women and children inside to their deaths. And this is the same Israeli air force which was praised last week by one of Israel's greatest defenders - Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz - because it "takes extraordinary steps to minimise civilian casualties". (Robert Fisk – The Independent)

"Some pilots told me they have shot at the side of targets because they're afraid people will be there, and they don't trust any more those who give them the coordinates and targets." (Yonatan Shapiro, former Israeli Blackhawk helicopter pilot, The Observer)

A quarter of all Lebanese flee their homes in fear; Humanitarian aid to reach the most vulnerable is hampered

The humanitarian crisis



“Days of Israeli air, artillery and ground attacks have driven an estimated 700,000 Lebanese from their homes.” (USA Today)

“The ongoing [Israeli] military operation has caused enormous damage to residential areas and key civilian infrastructure such as power plants, seaports and fuel depots. Hundreds of bridges and virtually all road networks have been systematically destroyed, leaving entire communities in the south inaccessible. The widespread destruction of public infrastructure ... as well as the targeting of commercial trucks, has seriously hampered relief operations.” (Jan Egeland, UN Humanitarian Chief)

“I have just received official confirmation from Israel that further to the corridor allowing evacuation from Lebanon, a two-way in-and-out humanitarian corridor on the Lebanese side has been established,” (Dan Gillerman, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, Voice of America)

“So much for Ehud Olmert’s ‘humanitarian corridors’. Two weeks after the Israeli Prime Minister’s comforting assertion - which no one in Lebanon believed - the Israeli air force has blown up the last bridge across the Litani river, in effect ending all humanitarian convoys between Beirut and southern Lebanon. Requests from humanitarian organisations for clearance from the Israelis are now being refused. Even the Red Cross admits there is now, in effect, a blockade on a vast area along the Lebanese border where thousands of civilians are still cowering in their homes.” (Robert Fisk – The Independent)

The country's infrastructure is decimated; the economy in ruin

Economic ruin



"10 years to rebuild, 4 days to destroy" (Sign, peace for Lebanon demonstration, London)

"Lebanon had been expecting its best tourism season for more than 30 years. The economy had been expected to grow by 5%. The post-bombing projections are now for either zero or negative growth. (BBC News)

"I have seen all the wars in Lebanon since 1975. I'm supposed to have some experience in these catastrophes. But I've never seen a war like this in intensity." (Al-Fadl Chalak, President Lebanon's Council for Development and Reconstruction, USA Today)

"Among about a dozen factories bombed was the country's largest dairy plant, Liban Lait, which produces yogurt and cheese under license from France's Groupe Danone, and a large tissue-producing factory owned by a Palestinian Christian who lives in Jordan." (LA Times)

"They [Israeli army] want to destroy everything, even pickup trucks loaded with potatoes or watermelons." (Adnan Kassar, President of the Lebanese Economic Organisation., FT)

"The factory is 42 years old, of which I worked here for 41. In two minutes, everything was gone." (Salah Baraki, Factory Manager, IRIN)

Not even mother nature is left unpunished

The environmental disaster



"The Israeli bombing of a Lebanese power plant has triggered the Mediterranean's worst ever environmental catastrophe, with up to 30,000 tons of heavy fuel oil spewing out into the sea and the sludge-covered bodies of dead fish littering the once pristine beaches." (The Guardian)

"The oil is coming from the Jiyeh utility storage tanks, 30 km south of Beirut, which the Israel Air Force bombed on July 13 and 15. The oil released has befouled beaches along Lebanon and Syria too. Moreover, the fighting has prevented the cleanup from starting. Experts warn that beaches in Cyprus, Turkey and Greece could also be affected. (Ha'aretz)

"The problem is there is no cleanup, along with the Israeli blockade. Otherwise we could fish and survive. Now, it's a catastrophe that people have lost their livelihood." (Joseph Chaloub, a 55 year-old fisherman who has fished from the Byblos harbour his entire life)

"Until now, the worst ecological disasters have taken place in the oceans and it's the first time that an oil spill has happened outside the open sea. The cost of cleaning up Lebanon's once golden beaches, will cost between 45-50 million dollars." (Yacub Sarraf, Lebanese Environment Minister).

"It could take between 6 and 12 months to clean up the oil from some 100 km of Lebanon's coastline." (Greenpeace)

And like in all wars, Lebanon has its share of horrors

Crimes against humanity



- “Wanton killing of civilians is terrorism, not a war against terrorism” (Naom Chomsky)



- Qana: “In all, there were 56 corpses, and 34 of them were children. When they ran out of plastic bags, they wrapped the small corpses in carpets.” (Robert Fisk)



- Israeli children sign bombs ready for Lebanon. Lebanese mass graves resulting from Israeli shelling

All the while, politics takes priority over suffering

The stench of politics



Majority of UN Security Council demand an immediate cease-fire; US vetoes.

US and France draft a ceasefire resolution. Lebanon rejects it as it does not call for an immediate ceasefire.

UN Security Council unanimously approves a resolution calling for a ceasefire, 31 days after the start of the war.

Lebanon accepts. Hezbollah accepts. Israel announces its official acceptance by bombing Beirut's southern suburbs 20 times within two minutes.

"The notion that you just declare a ceasefire and act as if that is going to solve the problem, I think is simplistic." (John Bolton, U.S. Ambassador to the UN)

"It's clear the Americans have given the Israelis the green light. They [the Israeli attacks] will be allowed to go on longer, perhaps for another week," (Senior European official, The Guardian)

"July was a pretext for a major offensive (on Lebanon) that had been in the works for a long time. Israel's attack was going to be a model for the attack they really want to do. They really want to go after Iran." (Seymour Hersh*, The New Yorker *Pulitzer Prize winner)

"How many of these dead would have survived if George Bush and Tony Blair had demanded an immediate ceasefire weeks ago will never be known. But many would have had the chance of life had Western governments not regarded this dirty war as an "opportunity" to create a "new" Middle East by humbling Iran and Syria." (Robert Fisk, The Independent)

However in the eye of the storm, the Lebanese rally in unprecedented scenes of unity, solidarity and effort

Unity in adversity



"If this war did not unite the Lebanese, then nothing else can possibly unite us." (Edmond Saab, Executive Director of An-Nahar daily, Jerusalem post)

"We affirm the need to safeguard national unity and abort the objectives of the Israeli aggression, which is to undermine unity and provoke internal strife." (Joint statement by the religious leaders of Lebanon, including the Christian Maronite and Muslim Shiite, Sunni and Druze)

"It is no longer important today if we agree with Hezbollah or not, we must only be unified in the face of barbaric Israeli aggression." Nailah Tueini An-Nahar journalist, Jerusalem Post)

"We have learned the hard way that there is no point in Muslim fighting Christian and Christian fighting Muslim. We need each other now more than ever if Lebanon is to survive." (Michael Jounih, fisherman, The Telegraph)

"If your town is attacked by the Israelis, everyone will fight, whether they are Amal, the communists or the nationalists. They [Hezbollah] don't have the right to monopolise the resistance." (Mustafa, Amal fighter, The Guardian)

34 days too late, the ceasefire takes effect on 14th of August.
Many immediately head home to face the carnage and start the rebuilding

The fragile ceasefire



"People travelled south at a rate of 6,000 per hour, according to Unicef, cramming into cars stacked with mattresses and bags in defiance of renewed Israeli threats. Israeli planes dropped leaflets over the southern city of Tyre warning refugees not to return home until a joint Lebanese-international force starts to deploy later this week." (Declan Walsh, The Guardian)

"We were expecting damage, but this is Armageddon. There's no other word to describe it," (Abbas Saadik returning to his home in the tiny hilltop town of Khiam in southern Lebanon - Naharnet)

"As a three-day-old ceasefire gathers traction, Hezbollah's hardened fighters are swapping their missile launchers for spades, brooms and briefcases of cash." (Declan Walsh, The Guardian)

"Hezbollah is not just about rockets and fighting, otherwise people would have left us long ago. We will be victorious in the reconstruction, just as we have been victorious against Israel's army." (Ghassan Darwish, Hezbollah, BBC News)

"Together we shall build Lebanon, together we shall stand strong and rebuild our country." (Fouad Siniora, Lebanese Prime Minister)

So what was it all for?

The aftermath



Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Sunday (13.8.06) met with the parents of abducted Israel Defence Forces soldiers Eldad Regev and Udi Goldwasser and told them that Israel will negotiate with Hezbollah over their release.“ (Ha'aretz)

Additional information

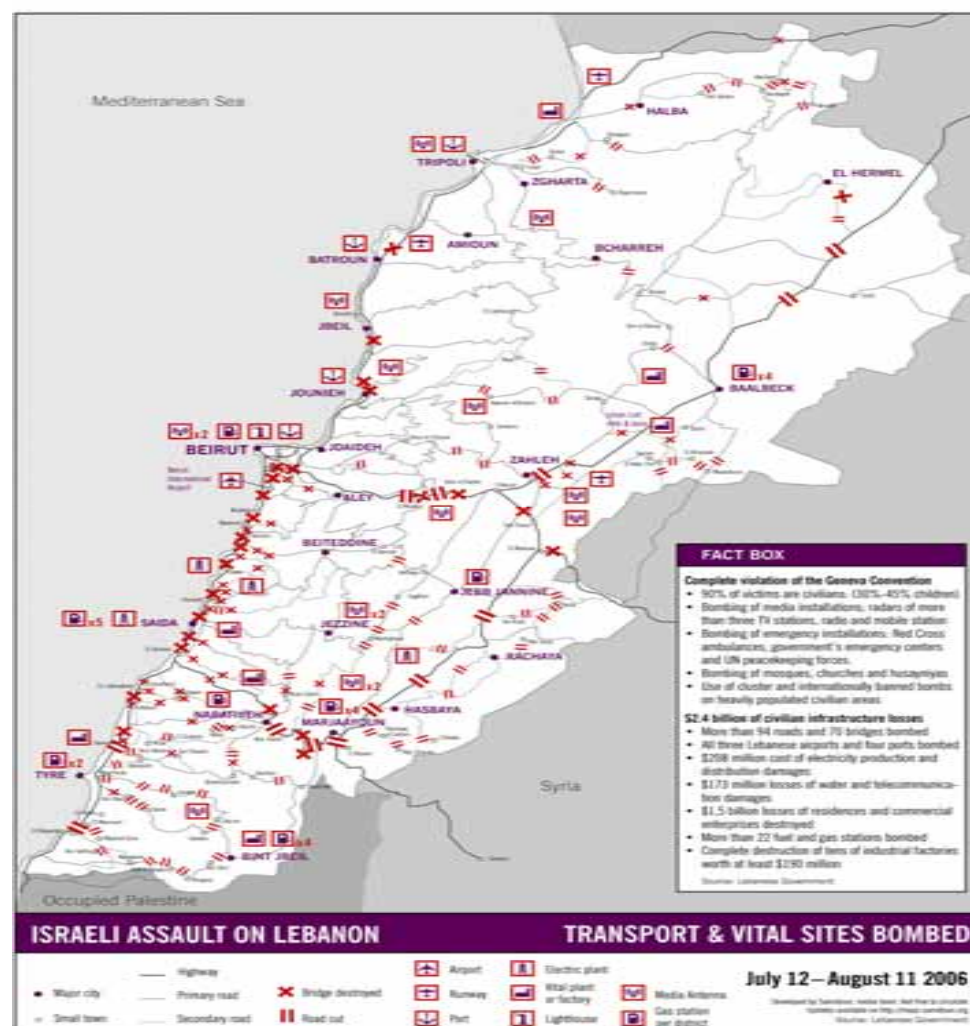
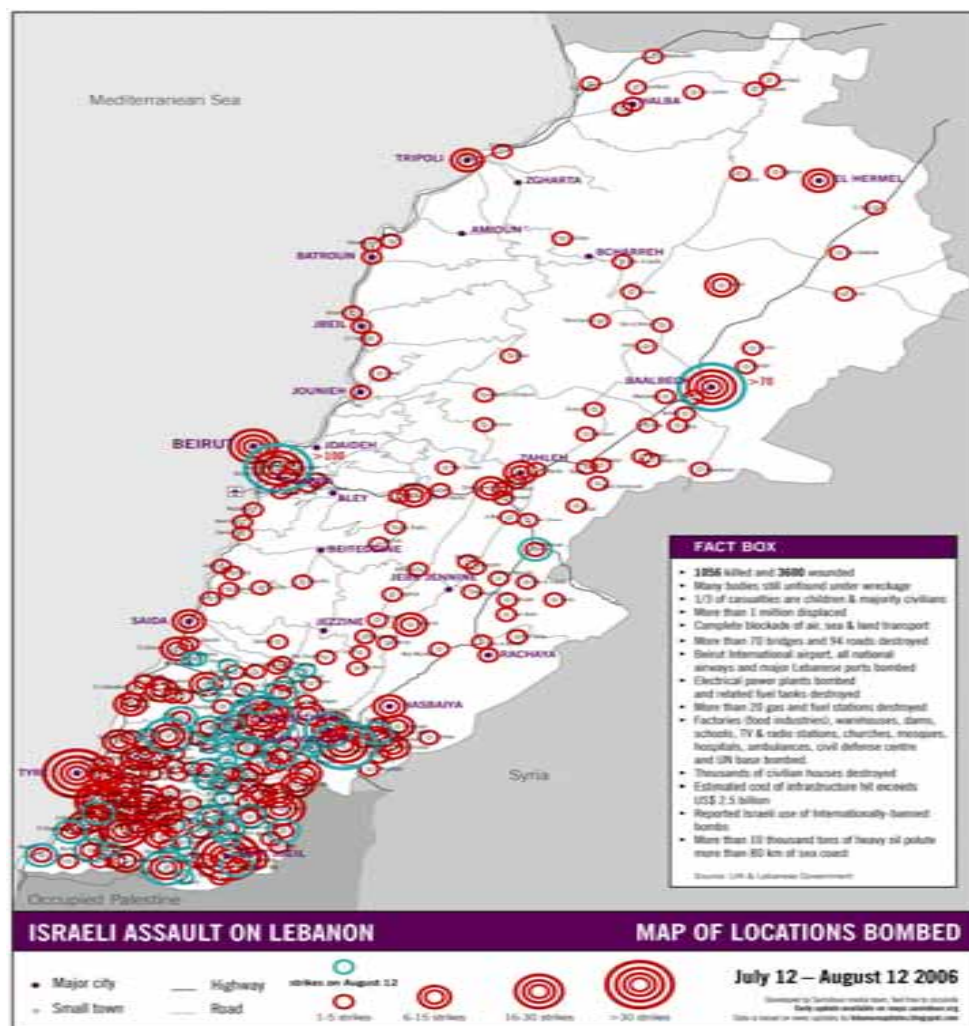
Images from Lebanon

War on Lebanon



The maps show the extent of the damage on Lebanon

War on Lebanon



Source: Samidoun <http://maps.samidoun.org>, Lebanese Government

Destruction of Beirut's southern suburb has been compared to Stalingrad, and described as '20 ground zeros'

Before and after



The Qana massacre shocked the world...

Massacres



Qana airstrike	30 Jul	Attack on a three-story building, burying a large number of Lebanese refugees sheltering inside. 28 dead, including 16 children, with 13 people reported missing. Many say the global outcry at seeing the images from the massacre was a turning point in the conflict and the call for Israel to accept a ceasefire; especially as in 1996 Qana previously the site of another massacre when Israeli shells killed 102 people, mostly women and children, taking refuge in a United Nations headquarters "There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional cease-fire as well as an international investigation into the Israeli massacres." Fouad Siniora, Lebanese Prime Minister) Israeli UN Ambassador Dan Gillerman said that it was a "horrible, tragic incident." Gillerman said the dead were "victims of Hezbollah," which he said was using civilian buildings as cover to launch rockets. (CNN) "It's absolutely dreadful, it's quite appalling. We have repeatedly urged Israel to act proportionately." (Margaret Beckett, British Foreign Secretary)
Qaa airstrike	4 Aug	33 farm workers, mostly Syrian and Lebanese Kurds, were killed during the airstrike. "I was picking peaches when three bombs hit. Others were having lunch and they were torn to pieces," (Mohammad Rashed, one of the wounded workers, Reuters)

But there were others that were just as dark

Massacres



Shiyyah Beirut suburb airstrike	7 Aug	Two missiles fired from an IDF bomber destroyed three apartment buildings in the suburb. 50 bodies have been recovered and 61 are expected to be recovered. <i>"There is no way to know for certain how many were killed. There were many displaced people in the building who are still unaccounted for."</i> (Mohammed Khalifa, Lebanese Health Minister)
Ghaziyeh town airstrikes	7 Aug 8 Aug	In the first attack, the IAF bombed a building killing 15. In the second attack, the IAF fired five missiles into three buildings killing a total of 14 civilians and wounding 23. A total of 29 civilians died
Marjayoun refugee convoy airstrike	11 Aug	Israeli drones attacked a convoy of 500 cars carrying 3000 civilians being escorted by the UN from a southern town caught in heavy fighting, killing at least seven people and wounding 36. <i>"That's when the second missile struck and Elie's head and shoulders were blown away. His daughter Sally is 16 and she jumped from the car and cried out: 'I want my Daddy, I want my Daddy.' But he was gone. Who flew the drones? An Israeli soldier of the invasion force? A nameless officer in the Israel Defence Ministry in Tel Aviv? The Israelis knew a civilian convoy was on the road. Yet they sent their pilotless machines to attack it. Why? "</i> (Robert Fisk, The Independent)

There were 5 separate direct attacks on ambulances (13,18,24,26 July, 11 Aug)

Violations of the Geneva convention



Emergency services	“At least 10 Lebanese ambulances bearing the emblem of the international red cross have become targets in Israeli air strikes.” Martin Chulov, The Australian)
	“Israeli missiles had clearly pierced the very centre of the red cross on the roof of each ambulance...An attack on a hospital, the killing of an entire Lebanese family, the seizure of five men a new civilian death toll - 468 men, women and children - marked the 22nd day of Israel's latest war on Lebanon.” (Robert Fisk – The Independent)
	“An Israeli missile hit two clearly marked Red Cross ambulances that were parked inside the town of Qana evacuating civilians; the wounded included a 60-year-old woman and 12-year-old boy who's now in a coma.” (Paula Zahn, CNN)
	Israel's Ministry of Justice has explained its actions bringing documented cases of Palestinians abusing the neutrality of ambulances and medical facilities for terrorist purposes.
Hospitals	“Witnesses in Baalbek said they saw dozens of IAF helicopters hovering over the city. They said the hospital in Baalbek, filled with patients and wounded people, was bombed by IAF helicopters late Tuesday. Plumes of burning smoke billowed from the hospital after it was directly hit, they said.” (Ha'aretz) "A group of Israeli commandos was brought to the hospital by a helicopter. They entered the hospital and are trapped inside as our fighters opened fire on them and fierce fighting is still raging," (Hussein Rahal Hezbollah, chief spokesman,570News)

The UN peace keeping force (UNIFIL) was attacked

Violations of the Geneva convention



United Nations	"Israel ignored repeated warnings it was shelling close to the UN observers. On six separate occasions, the officer was in contact with the Israelis to warn them that their bombardment was endangering their lives." (Irish department of foreign affairs)
	UN personnel were subjected to dozens of attacks and near misses from both sides, most prominently the 25th July Israeli bombing of a UNTSO position, which killed four UNTSO unarmed observers. Diplomats familiar with the probe say that the strike was carried out with a precision-guided missile.[1,2]
	"I am shocked and deeply distressed by the apparently deliberate targeting by Israeli Defence Forces." (Kofi Annan, Secretary-General) [3]
	Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert phoned Kofi Annan and expressed his deep regret over the death of the four UN observers. He promised that Israel would thoroughly investigate the incident and would share the findings with Annan. [4]
	Dan Gillerman, Israel's UN representative, said Israel would not allow the UN itself to participate in an investigation of the air strike that killed the 4 UN observers.[5]

Banned and illegal bombs were used on Lebanon

Violations of the Geneva convention



Banned weapons	Human Rights Watch said that it had taken photographs of cluster grenades stored by Israeli artillery teams on the border. It also said that a cluster grenade attack on Wednesday killed one and wounded at least 12 civilians in the village of Blida. Human Rights Watch has said: "Hezbollah has launched rockets toward Haifa that contained thousands of metal ball bearings. Human Rights Watch is of the view that neither weapon should be used in or near civilian areas as a matter of international law"
	Doctors in hospitals in southern Lebanon say they suspect some of the burns they are seeing are being caused by phosphorous bombs (BBC News)
	"Israeli army statement: The use of cluster munitions is legal under international law and the Israeli military uses such munitions in accordance with international standards. We are checking the specific details of the incident mentioned in the report." (Al Jazeera)

Some informative sources

Information Sources

Subject	Links
Overview of the conflict	http://www.guardian.co.uk/flash/0,,1807749,00.html http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/629/629/5218106.stm http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualties_of_the_2006_Israel-Lebanon_conflict http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/3C19F99D-C371-4C92-945C-D1E99D96E172.htm http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/501EB624-506D-49A7-894E-6E4841A60259.htm http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/international/lebanon_israel/index.html?SITE=YAHOO&SECTION=HOME
Humanitarian	http://www.guardian.co.uk/flash/0,,1836473,00.html
Timelines	http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/35772526-C1A8-4599-868C-E513C4F29C9B.htm http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2006_Israel-Lebanon_conflict http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/5259576.stm
Interviews	Robert Fisk http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/07/19/1345257&mode=thread&tid=25 Naom Chomsky http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/07/14/146258
Profiles	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezbollah http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/guides/456900/456976/html/nn3page1.stm

<http://www.lebunited.org/pCharities.aspx>
https://www.unicef.org.uk/common/wp_donate/donform.asp?app=66095002
[http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList2/Help the ICRC](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList2/Help_the_ICRC)