

# Deadly Escalation of Israeli Airstrikes on Paramedics in Lebanon

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*16 Lebanese have died from Israeli airstrikes on the south of Lebanon since March 27. The first strike was on Hebbarieh, where seven young paramedic volunteers died, in the second attack five died at Tair Harfa, of which three were Hezbollah paramedics, and then an attack on Naqoura killed four, of which two were paramedics from the Amal Movement.*

Seven young medical volunteers were killed in an Israeli airstrike on Hebbarieh. The Islamic Emergency and Relief Corps operate a medical center in the Sunni village of 2,000 inhabitants which has never before been targeted by Israel. There had been ten persons earlier at the center, and after some left, the center was hit in a massive airstrike that residents recalled as being similar to an earthquake. The volunteer medical crew were all young, with the oldest of the dead just 25 yrs.



The center was run by the Jamaa Islamiya (Islamic Group), a Sunni Muslim group affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood which had been established as a Lebanese political party over 50 years ago.

**Sheikh Mohammed Takkoush**, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Group, said coordination with Hezbollah, the Shiite resistance organization, is vital to fight Israel.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a global organization with a very heavy presence in America and Great Britain. US President Barak Obama was particularly closely affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and elevated the group to an ally status when he used their armed fighters as foot-soldiers in his project to overthrow the Syrian government.

**Senator Ted Cruz** of Texas has brought forward several legislative bills aimed at outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood in the US, but he has not had support from the US Congress.

Usually, Israel strikes Hezbollah and Shiite targets in Lebanon, but this marks a first for Hebbarieh. The village elder reported at least ten houses had been destroyed in the attack, along with numerous cars which were burnt.

The south of Lebanon is home to Christians, Sunnis, Druze and Shiites. During the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, 1985-2000, all the various religious communities suffered equally under the brutal Israeli military regime, which saw even women and children imprisoned at al-Haim prison. After the Israelis left in 2000, the prison was opened as a museum and memorial to the torture and suffering the Lebanese endured for decades. In the summer 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, the prison was completely destroyed by Israeli airstrikes in an effort to erase the evidence of crimes against humanity committed there.

Hezbollah released a statement condemning Israel's heinous criminal aggression, and pointed out that the center targeted was a medical center serving families in the village.

Other health centers in the south are operated by Hezbollah's Islamic Health Society, and the Amal Movement's Risala Scouts, whose medical teams have carried out the majority of rescue missions since the war broke out in southern Lebanon in October.

Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), and Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, condemned the Israeli airstrike on the medical volunteers in Hebbarieh calling it a heinous crime. Jumblatt called the attack a massacre that goes against all international laws, and called for an urgent complaint to the UN Security Council. Jumblatt is well known for his close relationship with America.

**Wael Abou Faour**, Member of Parliament representing the PSP, described the attack as a “mass crime” against humanitarian workers.

The Amal Movement referred to it as a massacre, and a war crime committed by Israel. The movement also said that the international community could no longer remain silent or turn a blind eye to what the Israeli war machine is committing in Palestine and Lebanon, considering these acts to be tantamount to crimes against humanity.

**Nabieh Berri**, the leader of the Amal Movement, and has held the office of Speaker of the Parliament for decades. He is an American citizen of Lebanese birth, having lived in the US previously. His movement is allied strategically with Hezbollah, which is also a political party which won through open elections seats in the Lebanese Parliament.

The American media paints Lebanon as a country under the domination of an armed group, Hezbollah. However, Lebanon is home to many resistance groups, who may be from different religions, or political parties, but all hold the same passionate view towards Israel: that the occupation of Palestine must end, and Israel must end the occupation of Lebanese territory in Shebaa Farms. The armed resistance to occupation is guaranteed to all peoples by the Geneva convention.

## **Tair Harfa Attack**

Israel bombed Tair Harfa after sunset on March 27, killing five, three of whom were Islamic Health Society paramedics. The president of the Tair Harfa municipal council, **Qassem Haidar**, said that the Israeli airstrike targeted a house in the village, completely destroying it.

## **Naqoura Massacre**

Naqoura is a small city in southern Lebanon. Since March 23, 1978, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been headquartered in Naqoura.

Israel bombed Naqoura shortly after the Tair Harfa attack. Two paramedics from the Risala Scouts were killed along with three others at a café as they were about to break their fast in the Holy month of Ramadan.



The Amal Movement announced the death of two of its members: Ali Ahmad Mahdi, and first responder Hussein Ahmad Hojeir. Both men were from Naqoura and were killed in the Israeli attack.

Nearly 240 Hezbollah resistance fighters and about 40 civilians have died in Lebanon, while the cross-border exchanges of fire have killed nine civilians and 11 soldiers in Israel.

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon had already killed more than half a dozen medical personnel and rescue workers, according to Lebanon's health ministry.

### **Other Israeli Strikes on Lebanon**

Israeli artillery shelling targeted the outskirts of the town of Mais al-Jabal and shelled the town of Blida in the Marjayoun district.

Heavy Israeli artillery fire targeted the outskirts of Adaisseh, with two Israeli artillery shells falling east of the village of Taybeh, and the Israeli army fired with machine guns at residential neighborhoods in the village of Kfar Kila and the outskirts of Odaisseh, also an Israeli drone fired a missile on a House in Dhaira, Sour district, but the explosive failed to detonate.

### **Hezbollah Strikes Back**

In response to the recent deadly attacks on southern Lebanon, Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets at the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona and the military base of the Israeli 769th Brigade in the Kiryat Shmona barracks, which killed one person.

Hezbollah also said they fired on surveillance equipment at the Israeli site of Miskav Am, opposite the Lebanese village of Adaisseh.



More than 32,000 people have been killed in Gaza and 74,000 wounded, women and children make up two-thirds of the dead. Hezbollah, and many other resistance groups, are standing in solidarity with the suffering Palestinian people.

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