

Israeli Warplanes target Red Cross and UN in southern Lebanon

Commentary by Michel Chossudovsky

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This report published by the Malaysian Sun confirms that Israeli war planes are now targeting the UN and the Red Cross. No doubt, we will be told that this is "collateral damage". The underlying objective is criminal. Israel seeks, in blatant violation of international law, to prevent the flow of humanitarian aid to Lebanese civilians.

If the United Nations Security Council does not implement sanctions against Israel, when UN sponsored missions and accredited humanitarian organizations are the target of Israeli war planes, what can we conclude?

Is this end of the United Nations as an international body?

The arrogance and criminality of Israel is beyond bounds.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, 24 July 2006

Israeli warplanes hit UN troop positions in Lebanon

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UN troops in Lebanon have come under heavy fire in the past 24 hours, while plans are afoot for their families to be evacuated.

In another incident Israeli aircraft attacked a convoy of 26 Red Cross ambulances which the UAE was sending by road into Lebanon.

Israeli warplanes fired close to UNIFIL, or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, positions on at least fifteen occasions, scoring a direct hit on one position near the village of Marwahin. UN officials said there was material damage, but no casualties.

French army Maj. Eric Minoli, who is commanding a UNIFIL contingent, said he is sickened by what he has seen.

"The people are clearly terrorized. Many Lebanese are fleeing north," he said. "As a Frenchman and a United Nations soldier, I hope the diplomats work out a cease-fire."

A spokesman said the UN force was facing serious restrictions in movements due to the

ongoing hostilities, and the destruction of roads and bridges.

The spokesman also revealed Israeli ground troops had entered Lebanese territory twice on Tuesday. It was previously thought ground troops had only entered Lebanon on Wednesday.

Meantime the families of UNIFIL members are preparing to be evacuated.

UNIFIL was deployed to the country in 1978 following the invasion by Israel. It remained through a second Israeli invasion in 1982, and the subsequent occupation. When Israel finally withdrew in May 2000, UNIFIL remained in place to patrol the Blue Line, the border between Lebanon and Israel.

The 2,000 soldiers-strong force is supported by 50 military observers of UNTSO, 95 international civilian personnel, and 304 local civilian staff.

It draws personnel from China, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Ukraine.

Separately 26 Red Cross ambulances sent by the UAE government to assist the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon came under fire from Israeli warplanes, while being driven from the Syrian border to Beirut. Some of the ambulances had to return to Syria, while others made it through to Beirut.

The UAE Foreign Minister, Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said, "We condemn and reject this kind of conduct which completely disregards humanitarian values. It shows Israel's insensitivity to the acute humanitarian crisis facing Lebanon."

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