

Kidnapped in Israel or Captured in Lebanon? Official justification for Israel's invasion on thin ice

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Global Research, July 25, 2006

Antiwar.com 25 July 2006

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
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As Lebanon continues to be pounded by Israeli bombs and munitions, the justification for Israel's invasion is treading on very thin ice. It has become general knowledge that it was Hezbollah guerillas that first kidnapped two IDF soldiers inside Israel on July 12, prompting an immediate and violent response from the Israeli government, which insists it is acting in the interest of national defense. Israeli forces have gone on to kill over 370 innocent Lebanese civilians (compared to 34 killed on Israel's side) while displacing hundreds of thousands more. But numerous reports from international and independent media, as well as the Associated Press, raise questions about Israel's official version of the events that sparked the conflict two weeks ago.

The original story, as most media tell it, goes something like this: Hezbollah attacked an Israeli border patrol station, killing six and taking two soldiers hostage. The incident happened on the Lebanese/Israel border in Israeli territory. The alternate version, as explained by several news outlets, tells a bit of a different tale: These sources contend that Israel sent a commando force into southern Lebanon and was subsequently attacked by Hezbollah near the village of Aitaa al-Chaab, well inside Lebanon's southern territory. It was at this point that an Israel tank was struck by Hezbollah fighters, which resulted in the capture of two Israeli soldiers and the death of six.

As the [AFP](#) reported, "According to the Lebanese police force, the two Israeli soldiers were captured in Lebanese territory, in the area of Aitaa al-Chaab, near to the border with Israel, where an Israeli unit had penetrated in middle of morning." And the French news site [www.VoltaireNet.org](#) reiterated the same account on June 18, "In a deliberated way, [Israel] sent a commando in the Lebanese back-country to Aitaa al-Chaab. It was attacked by Hezbollah, taking two prisoners."

The [Associated Press](#) departed from the official version as well. "The militant group Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers during clashes Wednesday across the border in southern Lebanon, prompting a swift reaction from Israel, which sent ground forces into its neighbor to look for them," reported Joseph Panossian for AP on July 12. "The forces were trying to keep the soldiers' captors from moving them deeper into Lebanon, Israeli government officials said on condition of anonymity."

And the [Hindustan Times](#) on July 12 conveyed a similar account:

"The Lebanese Shi'ite Hezbollah movement announced on Wednesday that its guerrillas have captured two Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. 'Implementing our promise to free Arab prisoners in Israeli jails, our strugglers have captured two Israeli soldiers in southern

Lebanon,' a statement by Hezbollah said. 'The two soldiers have already been moved to a safe place,' it added. The Lebanese police said that the two soldiers were captured as they 'infiltrated' into the town of Aitaa al-Chaab inside the Lebanese border."

Whether factual or not, these alternative accounts should at the very least raise serious questions as to Israel's motives and rationale for bombarding Lebanon.

MSNBC online first reported that Hezbollah had captured Israeli soldiers "inside" Lebanon, only to change their story hours later after the Israeli government gave an official statement to the contrary.

A report from [The National Council of Arab Americans](#), based in Lebanon, also raised suspicion that Israel's official story did not hold water and noted that Israel had yet to recover the tank that was demolished during the initial attack in question.

"The Israelis so far have not been able to enter Aitaa al-Chaab to recover the tank that was exploded by Hezbollah and the bodies of the soldiers that were killed in the original operation (this is a main indication that the operation did take place on Lebanese soil, not that in my opinion it would ever be an illegitimate operation, but still the media has been saying that it was inside 'Israel' thus an aggression first started by Hezbollah)."

Before independent observers could organize an investigation of the incident, Israel had already mounted a grisly offensive against Lebanese infrastructure and civilians, bombing Beirut's international airport, along with numerous highways and communication portals. Israel didn't need the truth of the matter to play out before it invaded Lebanon. As with the United States' illegitimate invasion of Iraq, Israel just needed the proper media cover to wage a war with no genuine moral impetus.

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