

Why an Israeli Newspaper Wanted to ‘Flatten’ a City of Millions ... Beirut

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Featured image: Israeli defence minister Moshe Yaalon

Earlier this month Haaretz, Israel’s influential liberal daily, published a blood-curdling article. It openly argued for war crimes on a massive scale against the civilian population of a neighbouring Arab state.

“Should Israel Flatten Beirut to Destroy Hezbollah’s Missiles?” the article’s headline mused. It was written by Amitai Etzioni, a professor of international relations at George Washington University. He was also a member of the Palmach, a unit in one pre-state Zionist terrorist group, a forerunner of the Israeli military. He participated in the Nakba (or Catastrophe), Israel’s 1948 ethnic cleansing of some 750,000 Palestinians.

After criticism [by the journalist Belén Fernández](#), Etzioni later got *Haaretz* to edit the online version of the story, so that it now has a slightly less aggressive headline (but not before [copies of the original](#) were [made](#)).

But the [substance of the article is still the same](#): this esteemed professor advocates the use of a weapon that “flattens all buildings within a considerable range” on Beirut, a city of some 2 million people. “There are going to be civilian casualties,” he threatens

Etzioni seems to be dimly aware that such open advocacy for the massacre of an entire population may not go down well with many (even if it passes muster in the elite Israeli-American circles he frequents). So he covers himself with the unconvincing caveat that a fuels-based weapon causing “massive explosions” in order to “flatten” Beirut would only be used once people were given “a chance” to leave the area.

As Fernández points out though, this proviso fools few – certainly not the Lebanese, who are only too aware of Israel’s record of deliberately targeting civilian populations. “This obviously fails to account for the Israeli military habit of ordering civilians to evacuate areas and then [bombing them en route](#),” she writes.

Such Israeli threats are not new. And they are more than just threats: this criminal state has carried them out, repeatedly.

In 2006, Israel did indeed flatten Dahiya, a large southern neighbourhood of Beirut, using massive aerial bombardment, resulting in untold civilian casualties. Two years later Major General Gadi Eizenkot, who had been head of Israel’s Northern Command at the time of that

war, revealed that this was a deliberate and systematic Israeli military policy, which would be carried forward. It even had a name: [the Dahiya Doctrine](#).

“What happened in the Dahiya quarter of Beirut in 2006 will happen in every village from which Israel is fired on,” Eizenkot explained. “We will apply disproportionate force on it and cause great damage and destruction there. From our standpoint, these are not civilian villages, they are military bases...This is not a recommendation. This is a plan. And it has been approved.”

Since then, Israel has [applied exactly the same sickening policy](#) of death to the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip.

On purely amoral grounds, Etzioni laments that “many studies have shown that such bombing — in Tokyo and Dresden and London - do not have the expected effect, nor did it in 2006”. (It’s worth noting in passing here that Etzioni is implicitly comparing Israel’s military doctrine in Lebanon to a Nazi war crime during World War 2. Although the author seems only dimly aware of the implications, the comparison is nonetheless apt.)

And this rouge state is not only unrepentant of such actions, it is actively threatening to commit these crimes against humanity again and again.

As recently as May 2015, the incumbent Israeli “defence” minister [Moshe Yaalon addressed a conference in Jerusalem](#) and repeated the same violent belligerence.

Yaalon threatened that in any future war against Gaza or Lebanon “we are going to hurt Lebanese civilians to include kids of the family. We went through a very long deep discussion... we did it then, we did it in [the] Gaza Strip, we are going to do it in any round of hostilities in the future.”

Again, Yaalon covered such threats by blaming the victims for being “human shields” and spewing out lies about “rocket rooms” and “terror assets in the densely populated urban area.”

It is clear that Israel reserves to itself the right to target the civilian populations of its enemies. And when the victims strike back against such brutality, they are accused by Israel of “terrorism”. It is Israel that is the true originator of terrorism in the Middle East. That is a truth that stretches back even further than the era when Amitai Etzioni and his kibbutznic comrades were charging around British Mandate Palestine murdering and driving out Palestinian civilians from their land.

A continued and endemic threat against the peoples of the region is clear: the threat is Israel. Who will stop this criminal entity?

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