

# *The fantasy of turning Lebanon into another Gaza will backfire on Netanyahu regime*

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By Denijal Jelic

In the largest assault on Lebanon in decades, the Western-backed Israeli regime is currently bombarding and massacring people in the south and the suburbs of Beirut, killing hundreds and injuring thousands and inflicting significant destruction on civilian infrastructure.

The regime's intensified war against Lebanon comes after days of heightened Israeli terror campaign throughout the country and the ongoing genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza.

As an estimated half a million Lebanese civilians were forced to flee their homes in a mass exodus, it is evident that the colonial Israeli regime is once again using ethnic cleansing and forced displacement as a means of war.

After indiscriminately bombing civilian areas in southern Lebanon for days, the regime on Friday carried out a series of airstrikes in the southern suburb of Beirut, using bombs supplied by the US.

The exact casualty toll is still not clear as many people continue to be trapped under the rubble.

### Campaign of terror

More than 600 people, including many children, are confirmed to have been killed so far in the past two weeks in Lebanon. More than two thousand have been injured, and the toll keeps mounting as the aggression continues with the green light of its Western allies and sponsors.

The current intensification of Israel's war against Lebanon follows a week of large-scale terror campaigns across the country.

While the regime continued its bombardment of Lebanon, numerous pagers and other electronic devices simultaneously exploded throughout the country on two consecutive days as a result of Israeli infiltration and sabotage, killing dozens and injuring thousands of people.

The attack has largely been identified as terrorism. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention condemned "Israel's terrorist attacks against Lebanese people".

In a statement, the organization outlined: "What we see is a genocidal state that is completely out of control and supported by a Western world that is, in large measure, too racist and Islamophobic to care."

The UN Human Rights office and even a former CIA director described Israel's attack as a form of terror.

This tragedy was followed by a massacre through Israeli airstrikes in the densely populated Beirut suburbs. Although the Israeli regime's terrorist attacks this week were carried out with new methods, they fit a long pattern of Israeli incursions and invasions of Lebanon and the targeting of Lebanese civilian infrastructure.

### Colonialism and ethnic cleansing

The Israeli regime is currently perpetuating a displacement crisis in Lebanon, as around half a million people have been forced out of their homes once again.

The Netanyahu regime recently proclaimed the "return" of Israeli settlers to the North of the 1948 territories as a goal of the war. Settlers had left the area in recent months due to retaliatory strikes from the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, which entered the war in solidarity with the Palestinian people and as a means to reduce the pressure on the Palestinians in Gaza.

The embattled regime in Tel Aviv has faced a strategic defeat in Gaza and Lebanon. In intensifying its war crimes against Lebanon's population, the regime seeks to weaken Hezbollah and coerce the Lebanese resistance into withdrawing from the border area.

The regime may be hoping to deflect attention from its disastrous military campaign in Gaza and cut the link between the two fronts and potentially seize a refugee crisis in Lebanon as a means of pressure against Hezbollah. However, these goals appear unrealistic as the resistance movement continues to respond by targeting the significant military infrastructure of the Israeli regime.

While Hezbollah and its allies, including Iran, have been clear that they do not want the expansion of war in the region, the Israeli regime cannot exist without war.

The current Israeli ethnic cleansing and terror campaign in Lebanon is likely to backfire. Void of any strategy other than relentless destruction, the Israeli regime continues to massacre civilians, while the Lebanese resistance is showing restraint and patience and responding by targeting military infrastructure rather than settlers.

At the same time, the Israeli war against the Lebanese population is an ideological one and part of the Israeli settler-colonial conquest in Western Asia.

Since its first aggression against Lebanon during the Nakba of 1948, the Israeli regime has invaded and occupied the country and waged war on multiple occasions but has been defeated by the Lebanese resistance.

As an ever-expanding colonial apartheid regime, Israel's continued survival requires perpetual warfare against the indigenous people in the region and everyone who poses a significant threat to its settler-colonial advance.

The forced displacement of half a million of people from south Lebanon and the relentless massacring of civilians today is thus not a war strategy, but a method of an unrestrained colonial system.

#### Genocidal intent

Throughout the decades, the Israeli regime has been open about its genocidal intent toward the people of Lebanon. Netanyahu's regime has long stated that it seeks to turn Beirut into a second Gaza.

While according to the regime's lies, aimed primarily at its Western audiences, the "target" of its attacks is the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, high-ranking members of the regime have reiterated that there is no difference between Hezbollah and Lebanon and that Lebanon would be annihilated, threatening to send Lebanon "back to the Stone Age".

Such Israeli fantasies of genocide have been abundant in the past years.

These fantasies, too, are an expression of the Zionist colonial ideology. While the regime is consistent in its genocidal intent, it continues to sell these fantasies to racist Western audiences and enablers by reproducing its same uncreative lies about an alleged "terrorist" infrastructure in Lebanon.

The lie that civilian homes are used as missile factories and storage for rocket launchers has been repeated exhaustively for decades, including in Israeli propaganda during its invasion and occupation of Lebanon in the 1980s and during its 2006 war on Lebanon.

The regime parroted the same claim on Friday as it dropped US-supplied bombs on residential houses in the southern suburb of Beirut, with Netanyahu giving his nod for the latest war crime from the United Nations headquarters in New York.

#### Total destruction

The Israeli project seeks to destroy everything that stands in its way as part of its "self-defense" and defense of the collective West which it represents. And it will not stop.

Even a year into the Israeli genocidal slaughter of Gaza, there has been no meaningful response from the international community. Earlier this year researchers proposed a conservative estimate of at least

186,000 deaths.

Already before October 7, the year 2023 had been the deadliest on record for Palestinians.

The international community's inability to intervene in Palestine throughout the decades, due to the imbalance of power within UN institutions and the ongoing hegemony of the United States, has created the conditions and infrastructure that allowed the Israeli regime to carry out this genocide and commit unspeakable crimes.

The United States and its European proxies continue not only to shield the Israeli regime from any accountability but also to provide an entire discourse of justifications and euphemisms, while making sure that the regime can continue its crimes unhindered, both in Palestine and Lebanon.

While these dynamics are worth a detailed analysis, the root cause is racism. The Israeli colonial project has been established as a European outpost and racist apartheid regime in Western Asia and can only exist in its current form through the continuous infliction of violence against the indigenous people and any form of meaningful resistance that could threaten the success of this colonial project.

An entire diplomatic discourse around an alleged 'ceasefire' has been constructed in the West and has largely served as a rhetorical means for the United States in the past months to distract from the actual genocide, while making sure Israel has sufficient time and resources to continue its onslaught. Effectively, the United States could stop Israel today and end the genocide.

It could have done so any day since October 7. Hezbollah has made it clear repeatedly that there cannot be a de-escalation as long as there is no ceasefire in Gaza and the genocide continues.

But since Israel enjoys the full endorsement of the United States and US proxy regimes in Europe and favorable - and at times enthusiastic - backing from the dominant mainstream media even after 12 months of relentless genocidal slaughter, why would Israel even think about stopping?

At this moment, Lebanon is facing a war of aggression unleashed by a heavily armed settler-colonial regime that is dragging the entire region toward death and total destruction.

Today, Lebanon is being terrorized because the Lebanese resistance intervened in the genocide in Gaza.

In fact, the small country of Lebanon is once again under attack from a nuclear-armed colonial regime that is enjoying enthusiastic military, political, economic, and ideological backing and unconditional protection from the United States and its proxies.

\* Denijal Jegic is a writer and researcher based in Beirut, Lebanon.

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