

Terror attack on Lebanon opens new front in US-Israeli war in Middle East

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On Tuesday and Wednesday, thousands of mobile communication devices rigged with explosives by Israel detonated throughout Lebanon, killing dozens of people, including members of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah organization, and wounding thousands.

The mass terror bombings by Israel against the people of Lebanon are a flagrant war crime. They violate the laws of war regarding assassination, treachery and the prohibition of indiscriminate bombing.

“International humanitarian law prohibits the use of booby traps—objects that civilians are likely to be attracted to or are associated with normal civilian daily use—precisely to avoid putting civilians at grave risk and produce the devastating scenes that continue to unfold across Lebanon,” said Lama Fakih, Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch, in a statement.

The *New York Times* described the death of a nine-year-old victim of the attack:

“Fatima was in the kitchen on Tuesday when a pager on the table began to beep,” her aunt said. “She picked up the device to bring it to her father and was holding it when it exploded, mangling her face and leaving the room covered in blood,” she said. “Fatima was trying to take courses in English,” Ms. Mousawi said. “She loved English.”

While these crimes were committed by the Israeli government and military, they were orchestrated with the help of the limitless financial, military and political support of the United States and other imperialist powers for Israel as part of their drive to subjugate and dominate the Middle East.

At Wednesday’s White House press briefing, the usually composed White House spokesman John Kirby could not help visibly sneering as he denied US responsibility for or foreknowledge of the terrorist attack. “We were not involved,” Kirby said, grinning from ear to ear.

Meanwhile, officials of the Democratic Party openly gloated about this act of mass murder. “I fully support efforts to target and neutralize any existential threat like Hezbollah,” wrote Democratic US Senator John Fetterman on X, after sharing a screenshot of the news report of the attack.

Israel’s attack on Lebanon aims to massively escalate its war with the country, in which hundreds of people have been killed since October of last year. Just hours before the start of the bombings, Israel’s security cabinet met to declare that it had “updated the objectives of the war” to include returning Israeli residents to northern Israel, a euphemism for escalating Israel’s war against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

On Wednesday, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant reported that the Army’s 98th Division, which includes commandos and paratroopers, is being transferred from Gaza to northern Israel.

“The ‘center of gravity’ is moving north, meaning that we are allocating forces, resources and energy for the northern arena,” Gallant said.

The transfer of Israeli forces to the north does not mean any let-up in the suffering of Gaza’s population, who are totally besieged and being systematically starved and denied access to water, electricity and medical care. Since October, more than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel, according to the official death toll, while a study published in *The Lancet* suggested the real death toll could be 186,000 or more.

The attack on Lebanon is the latest in a series of provocations by Israel, supported by the United States,

with the aim of provoking war not only against Lebanon but also against Iran.

In April, an Israeli strike killed a group of Iranian military officers meeting in Damascus, to which Iran responded with a strike on Israel with 300 missiles and drones, nearly all of which were intercepted. In July, Israel assassinated Fuad Shukur, senior member of Hezbollah, with a strike in Beirut, followed by the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh at a military guesthouse in Iran.

Israel's terrorist attacks throughout Lebanon mark a new stage in the criminalization of imperialist foreign policy and set a precedent for the legitimization of terrorist attacks on both political leaders and the broader civilian population.

Hezbollah is one of the largest political parties in Lebanon and until 2022 held the dominant position in the country's parliament. Many of those targeted were not soldiers but politicians, professionals and administrators. And with thousands of bombs detonating throughout the country, many bystanders with no connection to Hezbollah to begin with, including two children, were killed in the blasts.

A precedent is being set, by means of which the definition of war is being expanded to include what was previously defined as terrorism. The effect is to legitimize such prohibited methods as the booby-trapping of everyday objects with the aim both of assassinating individual members of the civilian population and causing mass indiscriminate killing and maiming.

This has implications far beyond the Middle East. Throughout the past 50 years, actions by the state of Israel have been used to set a precedent for US global policy. The most significant example is the doctrine of "targeted killing," that is, state-sanctioned assassination.

In November 2000, Israel became the first state in the world to "openly acknowledge that it operated a policy of targeted killing," wrote Nils Melzer, who served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, in 2009. Soon after, the United States moved "to openly adopt the method of targeted killing."

The US conducted its first known drone strike outside a war zone, in Yemen, in 2002. In 2011, US-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki and his son, both US citizens, were killed in separate drone strikes in Yemen. In 2020, a US drone strike in Iraq killed Qasem Soleimani, a high-ranking Iranian military official, while on an official visit to Iraq.

As with the adoption of "targeted killing," the war

crimes now being committed by Israel will become the new baseline for even greater crimes by the United States and other imperialist powers.

Israel's terrorist attack was denounced, entirely hypocritically, by the pseudo-left enablers of the Gaza genocide. "This attack clearly and unequivocally violates international humanitarian law and undermines US efforts to prevent a wider conflict," wrote Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Far from conflicting with US policy in the Middle East, as Ocasio-Cortez claimed, Israel's offensive against Lebanon is proceeding with the full support of the Biden-Harris administration.

In July, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered an address to both houses of Congress in which he vowed to expand the genocide in Gaza into a war against Lebanon and Iran. Following Netanyahu's address to Congress, he met with Vice President Kamala Harris, who vowed, "I will always ensure that Israel is able to defend itself, including from Iran and Iran-backed militias, such as Hamas and Hezbollah."

American imperialism is expanding its war throughout the Middle East as part of a global military offensive targeting Russia and China. At the very moment when thousands of explosives were going off throughout Lebanon, the US was finalizing plans, expected to come into effect later this month, to allow Ukraine to carry out virtually unlimited strikes on Russia using NATO weapons, threatening an escalation into global nuclear war.

The US-Israeli terrorist attack against Lebanon is a warning. As the US embarks upon wars all over the world in order to defend its global hegemony, it is willing to use the methods of mass murder and terrorism to achieve its aims.



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