

Breaking: Israel Bombed Beirut?

By [Richard Silverstein](#)

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[Tikun Olam](#) 4 [תיקון עולם](#) August 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Photo: Massive mushroom cloud from Hezbollah warehouse bombing and its aftermath

A note to our readers

We bring to the attention of our readers an important Tikun Olan [תיקון עולם](#) article by author Richard Silverstein pointing to the role of Israel. This report is unconfirmed. It is not corroborated by other press reports.

According to The Times of Israel, “Israel offered humanitarian aid to Lebanon, ... in a rare show of support for the enemy country. Why would Israel come to the rescue of Lebanon “with medical and humanitarian aid”?”

According to Forbes, ... “an ominous question hangs in the air, Was Israel responsible? The answer is, probably not”

Israel denies any involvement. Lebanon’s government and Hezbollah militants – never shy about blaming their arch-enemy Israel for any misfortune – say [acknowledge] the disaster was an accident caused by volatile explosive material in a warehouse.” ([Forbes](#), emphasis added)

It is worth noting the intensity of the explosion, “equivalent to an earthquake with the magnitude of 4.5 on the Richter Scale”.

[The Forbes report](#) acknowledges that:

There is no question that Israel had the capability to destroy that warehouse. ... Or, Israel’s Mossad intelligence could have arranged a bomb or other sabotage. In recent weeks, there have been [numerous explosions](#) at nuclear sites, ballistic missile factories and power plants in Iran... The Mossad is a top suspect. ... The problem with blaming Israel for the Beirut explosion is motive” (emphasis added)

According to Richard Silverstein, Israel had targeted a Hezbollah’s weapons depot, without realizing that there were explosive materials (ammonium nitrate) in a neighbouring warehouse.

And now Hezbollah is being blamed “for storing its weapons next to a building filled with explosive material”. In the words of Bloomberg: “Hezbollah Will Not Escape Blame For Beirut.” And this in turn will create political turmoil in Lebanon.

Update: (August 8, 2020)

Lebanon's President Michel Aoun confirmed that the government would investigate causes of the explosion. "The possibility that there was external interference," would also be addressed.

Reports suggest that Hezbollah weapons had not been stored at the airport.

Is it relevant? The tragic event took place three days prior to the legal procedure regarding the 2005 Hariri bombing in The Hague directed against four members of Hezbollah.

Judges at The Special Tribunal for Lebanon are due to give their verdict on Friday [August 7] in the trial of four men accused over the 2005 Beirut bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and 21 others.

The bombing of Beirut has contributed to triggering political divisions within Lebanon.

Lebanon as a country is in crisis. Whatever the cause of the explosion, our thoughts today are with the people of Beirut.

GR, August 5, 2020

Israel Bombed Beirut?

by Richard Silverstein

August 4, 2020

A confidential highly-informed Israeli source has told me that Israel caused the massive explosion at the Beirut port earlier today which killed over 100 and injured thousands. The bombing also virtually leveled the port itself and caused massive damage throughout the city.

Israel targeted a Hezbollah weapons depot at the port and planned to destroy it with an explosive device. Tragically, Israeli intelligence did not perform due diligence on their target. Thus they did not know (or if they did know, they didn't care) that there were 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate stored in a next door warehouse. The explosion at the arms depot ignited the next door warehouse, causing the catastrophe that resulted.

It is, of course, unconscionable that Israeli agents did not determine everything about their target including what was in its immediate vicinity. The tragedy Israel has wreaked is a war crime of immense magnitude.

The ICC has already been investigating Israel for war crimes in Gaza since the 2014 Operation Protective Edge. Now, I imagine it will expand the scope to incorporate today's criminally negligent massacre.

Though Israel has regularly attacked Hezbollah and Iranian weapons depots and convoys in Syria, it rarely undertakes such brazen attacks inside Lebanon. This attack in the country's capital marks an even greater escalation. The sheer recklessness of this operation is astonishing.

Not surprising though. An operation of this sort can only happen amidst internal political dysfunction. Bibi is on the ropes and desperate to change the subject. When his intelligence officers brought the plan to him he probably rubbed his hands with glee and said: "Go to it!" Israeli intelligence was naturally out to please the boss and probably cut corners in order to make the attack happen. When no one is at the wheel saying "Stop!" the boat hits an iceberg and sinks. That's possibly what happened here.

The Israeli bombing brings to mind similar bombings orchestrated by its agents in Beirut in the period before and after its 1982 invasion. Ronen Bergman's book on Mossad assassinations and [Remy Brulin](#) have documented multiple Israeli bombings during this period which wreaked widespread death and destruction on the city's civilian population.

In this case, the damage done was accidental. But that will be little comfort to the thousands of Beirutis whose lives have become a living hell as a result of this Israeli crime.

As an aside, former Likud MK Moshe Feiglin tweeted a quotation from the Bible about the disaster:

"There never have been such great days in Israel as the 15th of Av [the day of the bombing] and Yom Kippur."

Of course, it pains me to admit that Pres. Trump was correct in his earlier statement that the explosion was a "[terrible attack](#)," and that the information was conveyed to him by "his generals." In this case, he and they were right.

There could (and should) be domestic political repercussions for this disaster. As Netanyahu approved the attack, he is responsible for the consequences. In 1982, a commission of inquiry found Ariel Sharon culpable for the invasion of Lebanon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla. He was sent into political exile for a decade. At the very least, this should disqualify Bibi from leading the country. This would be the outcome in any democratic nation in which the leader was held accountable for his failures.

But alas, Israel is not such a nation, and Bibi always seems to weasel out of responsibility for his blunders. The difference here is that the Israeli leader is already under pressure due to his government's disastrous response to Covid19 and the looming corruption trial on three counts of bribery. This could be the tipping point.

Normally, Israelis would not bat an eye at such a massacre. They have become inured to the suffering they inflict on their Arab neighbors. But given Netanyahu's collapsing popularity, this could hasten his end.

Israel couldn't have picked a worse time to inflict such suffering on Lebanon. The country is in deep economic crisis. Businesses are going bankrupt, people have nothing to eat, politicians quarrel and blame while doing nothing. Lebanon is a basket case. Suffering is everywhere. There is little appetite from its Arab brethren like Saudi Arabia to come to its aid. If any country did not need this added tragedy it is Lebanon. But there you go-Israel doesn't seem to have any sense of shame or restraint when it comes to inflicting pain on its neighbors.

Of course there will be doubters. Those who disbelieve my source. But to them I point out two pieces of circumstantial evidence which are telling. Normally, if Israel has undertaken a

successful terror attack (such as those against Iran) it will either refuse to comment or a senior military or political figure will saying something like: While we refuse to comment, whoever did it did the world a favor.

In this case, Israel immediately [denied responsibility](#). Even Hezbollah supposedly said Israel hadn't caused the damage (likely protecting itself from the inevitable blame that will fall upon it for storing its weapons next to a building filled with explosive material).

The second tell-tale sign is that Israel never offers humanitarian aid to its Arab neighbors. During the Syrian Civil War the only group to whom Israel offered humanitarian assistance was its Islamist anti-Assad allies. Israel has never offered such aid to Lebanon, [until today](#). Instead, it has rained down death and destruction for decades. For it to do so now is the height of chutzpah.

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