

Is Lebanon the Next War After Gaza? Interview with Alwan N. Amin Eddine

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On February 14, [Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon killed at least seven civilians](#), after Hezbollah rocket fire killed an Israeli soldier.

In Souaneh, a woman was killed along with her two children. Rawaa al-Mohammed, and her two sons, Hassan Mohsen, 13, and Amir Mohsen, 2 were killed in their home.

In Aadchit, one man was killed, and 10 others were injured by Israel.

In another Israeli strike, two women, and four members of one family were killed by Israel, and none of those killed had any connection to Hezbollah.

Israeli government spokesperson Ilana Stein told Reuters,

"The current reality, where tens of thousands of Israelis are displaced [in the north] and cannot return to their homes, is unbearable. They must be able to return home and live in peace and security."

Stein never mentioned the 28,000 killed in Gaza, or the 1.2 million in Rafah now awaiting planned extermination by the Israel Defense Forces.

On February 13, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah warned Israeli leaders,

"To those who threaten us with a widening of the war: if you widen, we will too," he said, adding that "those who think the resistance might be afraid are very mistaken".

He also vowed that Hezbollah would only cease fire "when the aggression stops and there is a ceasefire in Gaza".

While the Israeli war on the people of Gaza rages on, Steven Sahiounie of MidEastDiscourse interviewed Alwan N. Amin Eddine, founder of [Sita Institute](#), Beirut, and the author of '[Paths to War: An Analysis of International and Regional Potential Sources of Conflict](#)', 2019.

Steven Sahiounie (SS): The situation between Hezbollah and Israel is very tense. In your opinion, do you see the US supporting Israel in a large air campaign to destroy Hezbollah?

Alwan N. Amin Eddine (AE): I don't see the US being able to do anything in Lebanon, especially since the US is in an election year. The US tradition for a presidential election year is one that they will not begin a major war and hand it over to a new president. Therefore, it is my opinion that the US will not enter a major war in Lebanon at this time. Of course, Hezbollah is a target for both Israel and the US, and especially after all the accusations Hezbollah has faced in the past from the US and others.

We should be fearful of the madness of Benjamin Netanyahu, because he has not achieved any field victories in Gaza. Netanyahu's only achievement in Gaza has been the deaths of civilians, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and freeing only two hostages.

Netanyahu is afraid of the corruption charges against him, because he will certainly be put in prison. For this reason, he must remain in power in order to remain personally free. The only reason Netanyahu wants to continue the Gaza war as long as possible, is to delay his own incarceration. This war in Gaza is fought by Netanyahu as a personal matter, to save himself. And I think, the political future of Netanyahu is at risk, and he does not want to end up like Ehud Olmert, who was sentenced to prison for the Lebanese war in 2006, and the first Gaza war.

Today, Netanyahu is behaving like a gambler; he is losing, but still borrowing money while hoping he will win eventually.

In my opinion, the US interference in a war in Lebanon is out of the question. The only way the US could begin a major war in Lebanon, would be in response to some big unexpected event.

All of the Europeans, and Americans who have come to Lebanon recently, have said they are against enlarging the Gaza war into a regional war. In his last visit to the Middle East, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken assured the various Arab leaders that the Gaza war will not be enlarged upon.

Even the Iranian Foreign Minister announced that the fear is not from a regional war, but the fear is what Netanyahu, and his Likud Party might do in Gaza, and against the Palestinian people.

SS: Prime Minister Mikati and others have condemned the Israeli airstrikes and drone attacks. In your view, can the Lebanese government do anything to decrease tensions?

AE: The Lebanese government has a very weak military, because the Lebanese Army is dependent on US aid, which comes with conditions. Even when Lebanon asks for the smallest, and most basic weapons, the US still places conditions on them. The Americans will say where, when and how those weapons can be used.

An example of this, is when the Lebanese Army clashed with the Radical Islamic terrorist

group, Fatah al-Islam in Nahar al-Bared, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice refused to allow the Lebanese Army to arm their helicopters in the fight. However, the Lebanese Army insisted on using them, and making adjustments, according to my recollections.

The Lebanese government, and its army, are severely handicapped due to the lack of aircraft and helicopters. The aircraft are not war-ready or capable. The Lebanese Army is one of the strongest armies in the region concerning training. The ideology of the Lebanese Army includes resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Concerning the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, the government sent formal complaints to the UN, and the Arab leaders, and Hezbollah responds to the attacks on the battlefield. The Lebanese government have stated officially they do not want the war to enlarge, and they have no ability to prevent the many Israeli attacks. However, the Lebanese Army may respond to the Israeli attacks, and they have done so in the past, and have lost martyrs to the Israeli aggression.

SS: Lebanon has experienced a financial disaster. In your opinion, if a ceasefire begins in Gaza, what effect will it have on Lebanon?

AE: Concerning the financial crisis in Lebanon: it is not related to the war in Gaza. Only if there were major regional changes, like peace treaties, or UN resolution 1701 being implemented, the surrendering of weapons, and Hezbollah being pull back, then the west will give the government a financial inducement which could help the economy.

The financial crisis in Lebanon, is not similar to the crisis in Greece and Cyprus in the past. The Lebanese crisis is rooted in the fundamentals of the country. There are conflicting financial decisions throughout the government, and corruption in every corner of the regime. In my opinion, I do not see a connection between the war in Gaza and the financial crisis in Lebanon.

The Lebanese financial crisis is continuing, and Lebanon needs new financial resolutions, emerging banks, and remitting money back to account holders, even if it may be done in segments over time.

In my opinion, there might be a connection between the war on Gaza and the US presidential election, because if Hamas keeps resisting, and the Israeli army pulls out, and Israel realizes this point very well, that it will be an achievement for the axis of resistance. The axis of resistance will use this to implement several conditions that they demand in the various countries they reside in, such as: Yemen, Gaza, Lebanon, Iraq, but not Syria. In Syria, the situation is different because of the presence of Russia and the alliances between them.

Although there is not a connection between Gaza and the Lebanese financial crisis, there could be a connection between Gaza and filling the Lebanese presidential vacancy.

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