

# Lebanon: Solidarity Initiatives and Mobilisations

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## Press release

### Greek delegation to Lebanon

**July 27, 2006**

Tomorrow (28/08/2006) morning a Greek delegation to Lebanon is leaving Athens. The delegation is expected to arrive at Beirut on Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup>. The Greek activists together with people from France, Austria, Germany and India are going to form a unified international civil mission. Its task is to promote the demand for an immediate cease-fire and express the solidarity of social movements to the people of Lebanon.

Today in a press conference held in Athens representatives of the Greek delegation said that after the fiasco of the Rome conference the so-called international community actually gave a green light to Israel to wipe out Lebanon and Palestine. They added that the key point for a fair and enduring peace in Middle East is the withdrawal of the Israeli army from all occupied Arab territories and the formation of an independent sovereign state in the borders of '67.

The following organizations participate in the Greek delegation:

Greek Social Forum, Association Intifada, Public Sector Workers Confederation, Confederation of Professors, Union of Hospital Doctors of Thessaloniki, Antiwar Internationalist Movement, Antiwar Movement of Rethymno, Network for Political and Social Rights, Synaspismos-Coalition of the Left (European Left Party), NAR (New Left Current), newspaper Avgi

Athens 27/7/2006

If you want to communicate with the Greek delegation you can call at these numbers: 0090 6944740587, 0030 6934564917

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## **Australia: Tens of thousands demand 'Israel out!'**

**From Green Left Weekly, July 26, 2006**

**Alex Bainbridge**

Central Sydney was filled with throngs of people - many from the Lebanese and Palestinian communities - as 20,000 people marched on July 22 to protest the bitter injustice of Israel's latest offensive against Lebanon and Palestine.

Indignant that media reports continuously refer to Israel's aggression as "self-defence", countless home-made placards carried pictures of dead, injured or dying children with messages like "Is this the terrorist you were looking for?"

The protest gave expression to the passionate concerns of a community that the establishment media and state and federal governments have done their best to terrorise and intimidate with "anti-terror" laws and by cultivating a culture of fear.

The rally was organised by the Australian Arabic Committee in Solidarity with the People of Lebanon and Palestine, and was supported by peace groups, unions and other community organisations.

Speakers included Shiite Islamic Council representative Kamel Moslemani; Lebanese community leader Abraham Constantine; Sheikh Taj Aldin Alhilali, Andrew Ferguson from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union; Greens Senator Kerry Nettle; Pip Hinman from the Sydney Stop the War Coalition; and Julia Irwin and Linda Burney from the ALP.

The march to the US consulate, which took up both lanes of George Street and several blocks, was loud with Lebanese women and youth leading popular chants of "One, two, three, four - Stop Bush, stop the war", "Down, down George Bush", "Israel, USA, how many kids have you killed today?" and "Free Lebanon, free Palestine, Israel out!"

The crowd stayed on at the US consulate long after the speeches ended, clearly happy with the community response.

Keysar Trad from the Islamic Friendship Association told Green Left Weekly that more rallies, and bigger ones, would be needed if Israel did not pull back from its invasion of Lebanon.

In Melbourne, around 6000 people marched from the State Library to Federation Square on July 22, chanting "No more war!" and "Stop the bombing!"

A wide range of community organisations addressed the rally, including Sheikh Fahmi; Taimor Hazou from the Australian Arabic Council; David Spratt from the Victorian Peace Network; and representatives of the Islamic Council of Victoria, Victorian Trades Hall, the Greens and the Lebanese Communist Party, which played a major role in organising the rally. A representative of Australians for Lebanon read a solidarity message for the people of Lebanon.

In Canberra, 250 people protested, while in Adelaide up to 1000 people rallied in the city to hear David Palmer from Adelaide's No War and Paul Heywood-Smith from Friends of Palestine, among

other speakers.

Up to 500 people joined a protest in Brisbane, and listened to speeches by Halim Rane from Fair Go for Palestine, Salam el-Merebi from Al Nisa and musician Phil Monsour.

For details of future emergency protest actions against Israel's wars on Palestine and Lebanon, visit <<http://www.greenleft.org.au>> .

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## **Al Jazeera English**

### **World protests against Israeli raids**

#### **Sunday 23 July 2006**

Thousands of people around the world gathered in street protests on Saturday to demand an end to Israel's offensive in Lebanon and Gaza.

The biggest rally took place in London where thousands of demonstrators urged Tony Blair, the British prime minister, to stop what they described as his refusal to condemn Israel's actions and join international calls for an immediate ceasefire.

"Peace for Lebanon!" they chanted as the march weaved its way through central London, past the US embassy and on to Hyde Park, watched all the way by the police.

"Stop the killing, stop the bombs. Israel out of Lebanon," shouted the peaceful protestors, many draped in Lebanese or Palestinian flags.

Others shouted "Hezbollah is here to stay. Zionism go away".

Betty Hunter, the general-secretary of the Palestine solidarity campaign, one of the groups that organised the event, said it was vital to reject Israel's two-pronged campaign against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

#### ***'Ashamed' of Blair***

She said: "The main purpose of this demonstration is to say to Tony Blair and our government that we are ashamed of the position they are taking which is basically to collude with the war crimes of Israel."

Israel's 11-day air offensive in Lebanon has left more than 372 Lebanese and 34 Israelis dead, while more than 100 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have died in Gaza.

The operation in Lebanon was sparked when the Shia group Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers on July 12.

Disgust at the toll spurred people to join the rally in London. Police put the number of participants at 6,000 to 7,000, while organisers said the turnout was between 20,000 and 25,000.

### *'Disgust'*

Much of the anger at Saturday's London protest was directed at the British government for its refusal to openly condemn Israel's actions and call for an immediate ceasefire.

Yasmin Ataullah, the spokeswoman for the British Muslim initiative, said: "We're disgusted by the way the US and Britain have isolated themselves from the rest of the international community."

Speaking in Beirut, Kim Howells, a foreign office minister, made the strongest criticism yet of Israel by a British government minister.

He said: "These have not been surgical strikes. It's very, very difficult to understand the kind of military tactics that have been used."

"You know, if they're chasing Hezbollah, then go for Hezbollah. You don't go for the entire Lebanese nation."

### *'No war' in Sydney*

In Sydney, a 10,000-strong crowd waved Australian and Lebanese flags and carried coffins and placards saying "No War" as they made their way through the city centre, escorted by about 400 police.

"They are murdering children and burying them under rubble," a Lebanese-Australian woman, who gave her name only as Diana, told Australian associated press.

### *Jews and Arabs in Tel Aviv*

In Tel Aviv, 1,000 Israeli Jews and Arabs turned out to denounce their country's actions, gathering in Rabin Square and brandishing placards reading "war is disaster" and "Jews and Arabs refuse to be enemies".

Mohammed Barrakeh, an Israeli-Arab MP, said: "This war is a catastrophe. We can prevent this catastrophe through negotiations that would save the lives of Arabs and Israelis."

"The war won't end soon but we won't stop protesting either."

### *Geneva's silent march*

In Stockholm, where 2,000 marched to the Israeli embassy, several hundred protestors clashed with police, throwing stones and objects at police officers. Two people were arrested.

Other demonstrations took place in Geneva, Paris, Strasbourg, Warsaw, Chicago, Amsterdam and in a number of cities around Britain.

In Geneva, 500 people marched in silence behind a coffin meant to symbolise the death of the conscience of the United Nations.

Anouar Gharbi, the president of the rights for all association that organised the protest, said: "We have chosen a silent march to show that there is no word to qualify the unqualifiable."

And several hundred demonstrators gathered in downtown Chicago carrying banners that read: "The Right to Fight Or The Might to Smite", or "Not with our money, not in our name."

### *'Outraged' in Chicago*

Dale Lehman, a 60-year-old Jewish resident of Chicago, said: "I'm outraged as an American, I'm outraged as a human being at what is happening to the people of Lebanon."

A small counter-protest demonstrated in support of Israel over the road from the main rally.

The main Chicago rally was organised by the American council on American-Islamic relations.

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## **Pakistan, Karachi**

### **July 24,2006**

To show solidarity with Palestinian and Lebanese people and condemning Israeli aggression, STOP THE WAR COALATION, Karachi Chapter, called a meeting in which representatives of dozens of political parties, civil society organizations and citizens participated. In the meeting, it was decided that a peaceful protesting rally will be organized from Regal Chock to Fresko Chock, Karachi on July 28,2006 on 4:00 PM. Participant organizations were Awami National Party, Labour Party Pakistan, Jeay Sindh Mahaz, National Workers Party, People Labour Bureau, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Labour Education Foundation, PILER, SPO, PIFFPD, Shirkat Gah, Aurat Foundation, Roots For Equity, Interantional Socialist Group, Progressive Youth Front , Pukthoon Students Federation and others.

Regards

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## **ITALY: Solidarity to Lebanon and Palestine**

**Date: 19 juillet 2006**

2000 people participated the night before yesterday in a demonstration against the war in Middle East, calling for ceasefire, end of Gaza siege and israeli occupation, starting negotiations, international civilians protection.

Libanese and palestinians, attending the march, together with jews against occupation, gave short speeches. During the demonstration some calls were read, coming from libanese associations, anticolonialist and antioccupation israelis and palestinian-israeli women international call.

The demonstration, with candlelights in the night near Coliseum, was launched by 20 civil society associations and coordinate by Action for peace.

In the march were also members of parliament from Rifondazione Comunista, Comunisti italiani, Verdi.

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## **ATHENS: Solidarity to Lebanon and Palestine**

**July 19, 2006**

About 4.000 people participated yesterday in Athens in two demonstrations against the Israeli aggression to Lebanon and Palestine. The first was organized by the Greek Social Forum, the Intifada Collective, the Lebanese Community of Athens, the Union of Palestine Workers and many leftists organizations (those who participate in the European Social Forum as well those who organized the "anti-Forum"). The other demonstration was organized by the Greek Communist Party. The two demonstrations ended at the Israeli embassy. The demonstrators asked the immediate pause of the Israeli aggression and the liberation of all occupied Arabic territories.

Yannis Alimpanis (Greek Social Forum)