



ADDRESS

BY

**H.E. GENERAL EMILE LAHOUD
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON**

**AT THE
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OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

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Madam President,

Today, I am honored as I congratulate you on your election as the first Arab woman to ever preside over this austere body, and I hope that this heralds a new era of better understanding of women's aspirations and Arab causes.

Also, I would like to thank His Excellency, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for all that he has done for Lebanon and for the cause of peace in the region and the world as a whole.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you, representing a terribly wounded country, a country whose ordeal is well known to you — my ravaged country, Lebanon.

From July 12 through August 14, my country was subjected to a barbarous aggression and to a rarely seen campaign of savage dismemberment, when hundreds of fighter jets emptied their loads of heavy and banned bombs, targeting mostly civilians, killing and maiming thousands, and destroying all that made Lebanon a viable state. Obviously, this was a premeditated Israeli "sentence" to destroy my country and everything it stood for, having been blessed and termed by His Holiness Pope John Paul II as a "*unique message to Humanity*," in which people of different sects could coexist and live together *peacefully*. This aggression became even more cruel, when it won the tacit approbation of certain GREAT POWERS.

Regretfully, the United Nations Security Council looked powerless in its attempts to stop the slaughter of Lebanon's children and protect the peace in Lebanon and the Middle East. It took over a month and numerous calls for an immediate ceasefire, for all those concerned to finally impress a mere "Cessation of Hostilities," that is yet to become a formal and final "ceasefire."

It becomes self-evident for us to question the "credibility of the United Nations," in light of the Secretary-General's acknowledgment that the delays in adopting Security Council Resolution 1701 did indeed harm this credibility. Moreover, we cannot but have serious doubts as to this organization's ability to safeguard world peace, when its resolutions are subjected to the vagaries of a very few world powers.

Today, as I stand before you, I ask:

How many Children was this evil, vengeful machine of destruction supposed to have killed, before the world community decided to respond in defense of a "rightful" cause?

Allow us to ask this question, as we are filled with a deep sense of grief, when scores of our fallen citizens are still beneath the rubble.

Let me just reassure you that this savagery did not weaken our people's resolve, nor shake its resilience, as it rallied around its army and government and embraced its national resistance, whose men faced occupation forces with epic valor, preventing their advance, and presenting Lebanon with yet another victory, in the name of justice and dignity.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While we stand under the United Nations umbrella to warn the world of the dire consequences we shall all face when the very foundations of this world body are shaken, it is also time to ask Israel, who owes its very existence to a United Nations resolution, to finally abide by past and recent resolutions.

As of August 14 this year, Lebanon has once again, *and without a shadow of a doubt*, reasserted the fact that it is a nation that respects its commitments while it implements international resolutions and proceeds to deploy 15,000 Lebanese army soldiers on the border between Lebanon and Israel; while Israel continues in its daily breaches of Security Council Resolution 1701, having imposed a humiliating siege on Lebanon, and refusing to withdraw from the Lebanese territory in the Shebaa Farms sector, whose "liberation" remains Lebanon's sacred right and duty. To this day, Israel continues to treat the people of Lebanon as HOSTAGES, kidnapping at will scores of its citizens, in a flagrant breach of the said resolution.

Finally, Israel refuses to surrender to the United Nations the maps of thousands of mines it left behind on Lebanese territory, while the case and fate of Lebanon's prisoners in Israel remains very ambiguous, and no clear resolution of their ordeal is addressed anywhere.

Today, and for the sake of peace, the world community is called upon to safeguard Security Council Resolution 1701 from oblivion, a fate that characterized scores of previous resolutions.

Here and on behalf of a grateful country, I would like to solemnly salute the fallen "Soldiers of Peace" who will hence share their obituary with that of our brave army soldiers and that of our valiant resistance fighters, victims of PROHIBITED weaponry, first tested by Israel on our soil, and subject to an international INVESTIGATION. We are hopeful that this time, the world community will allow this investigation to reach its natural conclusion. This will constitute a clear INDICTMENT of Israel for its recurring violations of international conventions and the Human Rights Charter.

We also hope that the United States WILL NOT resort to its "unfailing" VETO,

allowing for the indictment of Israel's actions, in sympathy for the thousands of innocent civilians who were killed and maimed by the "smart," cluster and phosphorus bombs, and those laced with depleted uranium.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Inspired by the principles and treaties of the United Nations, Lebanon retains the "Right of Action" to prosecute Israel before the competent bodies, most notably this venerable Assembly, or that of the International Tribunal, and to request the appropriate reparations for all the catastrophes Israel has inflicted on Lebanon.

Today, I ask you to stand by my country, as that will be written down as a just and rightful stance. I also call upon you to differentiate between him who defends his country against Israeli aggression and occupation and strives to liberate his countrymen from decades of unlawful imprisonment AND those elements who perpetrate acts of wanton slaughter against their countrymen and others equally. May I remind you that Lebanon's experience with the scourge of terror goes back a long way, and it took a very heavy toll on its armed forces.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The most recent aggression on Lebanon has left this small country scarred and terribly afflicted, with thousands of its innocent people either killed or injured. The toll of destruction runs through several thousand housing units, hundreds of bridges, ports, airports, and factories. But my message is the following: "The WILL of our People to LIVE and MOVE FORWARD has proven to be much stronger than defeat and despair." In record time, the people of Lebanon launched a campaign of reconstruction, made even more successful by instant and comforting gestures of good will from many friends, at home and abroad. It is with such overwhelming support and assistance that Lebanon will beat all odds towards a stellar rebirth, thereby scoring another point in favor of Humanity.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is ample talk today of the need to reach a PERMANENT and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, which is something Lebanon has stressed for decades. However, we are quick to point out that NO such peace can be achieved in the Middle East without addressing the root cause of instability in the Middle East, namely the Arab-Israeli dispute and its core issue, PALESTINE.

Despite the horrid events in Lebanon, a window of opportunity has presented

itself and should be fully exploited in order to revigorate the Middle East Peace Initiative that was founded on the Arab Peace Initiative adopted during the Beirut Arab Summit of 2002.

The Arab Peace Initiative remains the suitable venue to achieve a permanent, comprehensive and just peace, because it simply calls for the implementation of all United Nations resolutions as they pertain to the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab lands, and for the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes.

Only such a settlement will be capable of affording Lebanon and its neighboring countries with the stability and security they long for and would give Israel a sense of security — something it has failed to obtain through sheer force and aggression. Moreover, this should put an end to the hemorrhage in the Palestinian territories and foster moderation where despair has bred extremism and violence, most notably in Iraq, where it is vital for all of us to help that tortured Arab nation preserve its territorial integrity and the unity of its people.

Today, there is incessant talk of a “New Middle East” as a harbinger of better things to come, and this prompts us to ask the following:

“IS what we have witnessed in Lebanon and continue to see in Palestine and Iraq conducive to an environment of Peace and Tranquility?”

“IS this much heralded “New Middle East” only attainable through widespread strife, unimaginable bloodshed, roving sedition, and oppression?”

Our conception, Ladies and Gentlemen, of a “New Middle East” is one that is coherent with the United Nations resolutions, and that is in concurrence with the principles of justice and right as stipulated in these resolutions. Our idea of a New Middle East is one where a comprehensive peace settlement becomes reality and guarantees the rights of all; where Palestinian refugees return home as stipulated in UN Resolution 194, and as such, are NOT resettled in host countries; and where prisoners return to their loved ones.

This is the ONLY way to attain a stable Middle East, and all else will plunge our region into further upheaval and bloodshed.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Should our conception of peace in the Middle East become reality, I can assure you that the need for conferences, studies, and discussions of terrorism would become moot. Should this happen in tandem with serious attempts to combat poverty and sustain acceptable levels of development in needed areas, this will certainly parch the

pools where terrorism draws its human and financial supports.

Madam President,

I have recently read one of your statements where you emphasize that the rehauling of the United Nations is going to be one of your top priorities.

I would like to commend you on such a position, because no one appreciates the need for world peace more than the people of the Middle East, since we recognize the fact that the preservation of world peace requires a United Nations CAPABLE of taking decisions and COMPETENT to see them through.

Here, I would like to reiterate what I said from this very pulpit only last year — that *“the core values of a democratic and just world are best served by enhancing the capabilities of the United Nations and its instruments, and by reinforcing “in-house” democratic values. This institution should remain a sanctuary of world consciousness and the primary defender of human values such as Freedom, Justice, and Peace.”*

Perhaps the reforms that were carried out so far, such as the establishment of a Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission, will constitute the needed incentives for achieving a United Nations capable of safeguarding right and justice.

Taking into consideration current trends in world affairs, I propose to the General Assembly the creation of a Commission leading to lay the foundations of a Charter of “The Rights of Nations” — one that will be of equal importance as the Human Rights Charter, and that shall IMPOSE on member states, ALL states, a code of conduct that is founded on the principles of justice and the rule of law.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I come here from a country riddled with scars, rising from the rubble and ashes of aggression, to speak of justice. I do not pretend to pontificate from the helm of a tank.

Lebanon remains a peace-loving nation, and it extends its hand to all those who share with its peaceful vision, founded on a just settlement and extracting as such the seeds of oppression and violence.

We trust that the forces of Good will prevail at the end, because its flames burn in the heart of the righteous, because the sounds of Jubilation will undoubtedly prevail over the beating of War drums and the sibilating of Hate and Violence.

Thank you, Madame President.