

## **This Terrible War**

### **By Archbishop George Khodr**

I beseeched God, since the beginning of this distress, to overshadow Lebanon under His generous mercy. His mercy shall stop this war waged by Israel spitefully. An absurd death, evil, and terrible is falling upon us besides the annihilation, the tearing apart, and ripping to pieces of the country. This enemy is delighted in our death-the death of our innocent nation in its overall constituting sects and groups-no matter what we may consider of the wisdom of this or that of these sects.

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I am not surprised by Israel's action; this is present in the literature of its fathers who ordered the annihilation of the Canaanites that is our people. This is ancient and is prior to the founding texts of Zionism which endeavors the founding of a racially prejudiced Jewish state. This excluding principle is opposed to the principle of founding of modern nations. This does not shock me, but what shocks me is the lineup of the Americans and Europeans in general, behind the Jewish state, and the position of the United States in stating that Israel has the right to defend itself! Who attacked it? If what Mr. Bush intended is the kidnapping of the two soldiers, does that verify all the massacres, destruction, terror, and starvation waged upon the Lebanese people? Is it necessary to burn Lebanon in order to return these two soldiers? There is no relation of causality between the abduction and this open war. Then, who can believe that such a military operation of this scale is a mere reaction; shouldn't have taken months of preparation in the scope of a huge action against Lebanon-as a part of an international political plan-aiming at greatly shaking the whole region? The great hypocrisy is that the Americans, after their great failure in Iraq, do see Lebanon fit to become a model of a free democratic state amongst the Arabs: whilst they bless, or do not stop, the aggression against it. Is democracy feasible in an incapable country? Subsequent to the policy of "scorched earth" which the Israelis are eager to enforce; who can possibly attain a democratic and civilized state capable of inspiring freedom to the Arab world? Those who think that the abduction of the two Israeli soldiers was an act of foolishness on the part of Hezbollah (I don't say he's acquitted) use it as the direct reason to impede the ongoing national dialogue which was closing to a form of an agreement between it and the other parties. Either disclosed or silent disagreement with Hezbollah at the present time can only serve and support Israel and the nations behind it. Whatever it turns to be, I see that this war shall strengthen the Lebanese character of Hezbollah once it discovers that its foreign allies or those who supported it financially shall not consult Hezbollah when they shall try to negotiate

an agreement with the Americans. The victory of the National Resistance in this war shall strengthen Lebanon and shall bring this Resistance closer to other national groups and confirm its pure Lebanese belonging.

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I wrote this article past Monday and maybe a cease-fire will be in place before it is published. What the Lebanese shall recognize is that they have to seek after power sources and reform for their government; a great mobilization of our resources can free us of our fragility. In times of truce or peace, we must identify, not only our enemy who is killing us today, but also to identify those who are halfhearted or just don't care about us, and woe then to him who didn't realize that our true national unity rests upon our complete and unconditional loyalty to our nation alone. The nations, who affirmed their support to our sovereignty after the withdrawal of the Syrian armies from Lebanon, have demonstrated that their sole unconditional support is for Israel. Are we able to prove to these nations that Lebanon is an absolute issue too, and that no one has the right to watch over its fires like Nero who observed the fire of Rome accusing the Christians of what he did? Under the shadow of death we taste today, we have the right to feel wrath, and to refuse to be exclusively dependent on others for our existence. We're not a resented nation but don't we have the right to feel anger?

We shall descend in total death if we, after the end of the present distress, surrender to silly sectarian tensions. We shall congratulate who made victory possible because it is our victory all. History shall thus pass, but woe to all Arabs if Israel defeats us because it shall then enslave them all.

Western nations did not yet realize that the peace of the region will not be the American peace but the Israeli. America did not understand that it is Israel which is using it; and that Israel-in its deep psychology-has no ally, despite its strategic alliance with the United States. This is a juridical alliance not a psychological one. And I wish if the world Christians could comprehend that the Jewish supremacy brought in by the Israeli victory is, in its first degree, endangering their own existence because the real clash is, on the religious doctrinal level, between the Church and Judaism. The yielding of the Christians of the West in front of Jews and Judaism, manifest in the Judainization of Christian theology since the past ninety years, did not yet influence eastern churches here, Orthodox and Unorthodox, and may reach us here causing us to fall in the heresy of Zionist Christianity. Beyond Israeli arrogance there shines a clear Jewish arrogance; they hate Christ personally, and especially, hate the Apostle Paul who prevailed over Judaism. All of this is prevailing in Jewish literature, but who is reading?

Lebanese Christians may not have today great weight in the politics of their country. But I boldly declare to them that Israel doesn't prefer their existence over Islamic existence, because Lebanese Christians don't have what to offer to win the hearts of Jews, meanwhile Muslims have oil. We coexisted with Arab Muslims for a long period, and mostly it was a peaceful coexistence. We found here in Lebanon a coexistence principle which granted us the greatest possible freedom and we won't enjoy greater freedom under a Jewish peace.

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And after the pain, creativity must reign; forgiveness must reign over the whole Lebanese mosaic. But this requires from us not to hold any religious sect responsible of this war. For this we shall work together for the prosperity of Lebanon but with great sacrifices enabling us to build a great nation.

We shall endure pain, especially if the crisis prolongs, because we know that our solidarity is the condition of our permanence as a free country able to become a model to all Arabs teaching them the fullness of freedom for their nations; and then we may become a model to the whole world as well. Let us not be afraid from death, because death is the freedom of the living, this can be true, if we understood that the individual and the community are strengthened by sanctity, and that this sanctity is what makes a country strong and honest.

What remains, is that our hearts are with the displaced scattered everywhere and are in need for us all and for our prayers. I hope the Lord God shall inspire us to help them directly or through humanitarian organizations and through the Higher Commission of Relief, especially taking care of baby food and medications for chronic diseases. But most importantly, is that the neighbors of these organizations where the displaced took refuge to, do make all the possible to let them feel the solidarity of the Lebanese people in the midst of the distress.

We implore the Lord God to grant an end to the fight, that we may all return to our homes and for our country to prosper in rest and peace.