



## On Lebanon's Litani River, bombs with a cup of tea

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**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Good day. This is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you from South Lebanon on August 21st, 2024. Right now I'm seated on the northern bank of the Litani River, approximately 20km from the border of Lebanon and occupied Palestine. I just came from the town or the city of Saida, on the coast of Lebanon with my guide, Hadi. We stopped in Saida on our way to South Lebanon because today, a Palestinian who is claimed by Israel to have been involved in the transfer of weapons into the West Bank to resistance fighters there, was assassinated by a drone strike near the largest refugee camp outside of occupied Palestine. And, I'm about to show you some footage from that strike, and you'll hear from my guide, Hadi, who will explain in greater detail what happened there today. This river, the Litani River, is extremely important in the conflict, the decades long conflict between Islamic resistance forces in South Lebanon and Israel. After the 2006 war to bring an end to the 2006 war, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1701, which required the armed groups operating between the border of northern occupied Palestine, Lebanon, to withdraw north of the Litani River. They have not done so. I think it's fair to say that their position is that Israel has violated the resolution. That was some kind of a strike. I don't know exactly what it was. Perhaps an airstrike, a drone strike. It's interesting to see that the people here are a little bit excited by that strike, but... And there's another one. Interestingly, the...

**Unknown:** You like sugar?

**DL:** Yes, I'll take a little bit of sugar in my tea. Thank you. The people here are relaxing in the summer heat. They're not panicking, as far as I can see. Apparently, they're accustomed to this. Many children are playing in the water. This is a time honoured custom down here. And judging from the sound of that, that sounds like the roar of a jet engine, so that may well have been a strike by an Israeli aircraft. In any case, we hope to move on from here and to spend the night closer to the border of northern occupied Palestine in an area overlooking an Israeli military base. And we will try to document, as I've indicated in the prior report, strikes here that have inflicted damage on civilian infrastructure, caused civilian casualties. That's the

primary purpose of my coming down here with my trusted guide. And one of the interesting aspects of this river is that pursuant to resolution 1701, people are not supposed to cross the river without the consent of the United Nations peacekeeping force operating here. But, it's quite apparent that people do cross at will. They are, after all, on their own land. These are Lebanese citizens. And they evidently feel that they shouldn't have to obtain the consent of anyone in order to cross this river. There is a lot of reason to believe that the Israelis would very much like to occupy the area south of this river and not only occupy on a temporary basis, but permanently as part of the Greater Israel project. But, having spent a considerable amount of time down here, as I have in the past, in the south of Lebanon in the past year and a half, from my non-military perspective, that seems very much like a pipe dream. The idea that the Israelis could occupy this land for any period of time and ultimately exercise permanent control over it. As I've indicated, the people here are quite accustomed to the violence of the Israeli military, and they don't seem interested in going anywhere. So in any event, you're about to hear now from my guide, Hadi, as we drove through the city of Saida, and, we'll have more to report later once we arrive at our destination. For now, I'm signing off, Dimitri Lascaris, from August 21st, 2024.

**Hadi Hoteit (HH):** Today, Israeli drones attacked a car near the – it's called the areas of villas or near the Imam Ali mosque. You can see it right now. So over there.

**DL:** Straight ahead?

**HH:** Yeah, it's ahead of us. What happened is that the guy named, Khalil Maqdah, is a 60 years old commander in the PLO, in Fatah, in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. He was killed today in an Israeli air strike and it was most probably a drone strike. And they killed him, accusing him of being responsible – I don't like to use the word smuggling, you know, it's, his land. He is Palestinian. Israelis are the people occupying his land. But he was responsible for getting weapons to the West Bank. This is what Israel is...

**DL:** Which is under international law occupied territory.

**HH:** And this is where his car was. And this is the burnt car. Here, here, here. So you see it? The burnt car? We can't stop, actually here.

**DL:** We can't stop?

**HH:** We can't stop. Because, you know, we have to get permissions.

**DL:** And you were saying that we are just steps away from the largest Palestinian refugee camp outside of Palestine?

**HH:** Correct. This is Ain al-Hilweh.

**DL:** And how many Palestinian refugees live there?

**HH:** About 120,000.

**DL:** So it's like one of the largest Palestinian cities in the world.

**HH:** Yeah. It is a very important Palestinian camp. And the last time when I was with our friend, our mutual friend, Dave, he told me that Canada accepted like thousands of refugees from this camp in the 2000s, early 2000s, were later on they discovered that an NGO was responsible of evacuating the camp, by telling the Palestinians that they can go to Canada and live there and leave this camp and they were giving them visas and work visas and migration papers and everything.

**DL:** And were they actually allowed to go to Canada?

**HH:** Yeah. According to what I heard, like maybe 10 to 20,000 Palestinians who right now live there, they belonged to these camps, to Ain al-Hilweh and other camps.

**DL:** Right. So now we're heading inland. Saida is on the coast. That's where we are now. This is what, the fourth, fifth largest city in Lebanon, Saida?

**HH:** Yeah, I believe it is the fifth.

**DL:** And we're going to head into the southern area. We will be going south of the Litani River this afternoon?

**HH:** We're going to the border. To the border area. Next to some of the Israeli positions that are located in front of Meiss El Jabal, Houla and Merkaba, and we are going to be in the area that is overlooking these places. Of course we can not go more than this because it's a very dangerous place. And still all the area near the border is dangerous, but there, when we reach a certain point in front of the Israeli bases positions we are risking that they actually hit us with fire...

**DL:** Yes.

**HH:** Or with drones. And drones are always a risk.

**DL:** And that's why we're going to be conspicuously displaying these signs.

**HH:** We are doing our duty, you know. Telling them that we are press. And this is what we're doing. And this is what we should do now.

**DL:** But you also, you indicated...

**HH:** Our friends, Farah Omar and Rabih Me'mari, were also wearing press signs when they got attacked directly by a tank.

**DL:** These were Al-Mayadeen journalists?

**HH:** Right, Al-Mayadeen journalists.

**DL:** And today you indicated, you indicated I thought today, that they had now killed another, the Israelis had murdered another Palestinian journalist in Gaza.

**HH:** 170 journalists.

**DL:** In Gaza alone?

**HH:** 170, until now, in Gaza, are dead. Killed by the Israeli occupation regime. 170 journalists. And this is a systematic killing of journalists. This is not by accident that you kill 170 journalists in different places. This means the Israelis are working systematically to make the Palestinians unable to tell their narrative and tell the perspective of the war to the people and to the world. And also by this they are trying to tell anyone who wants to become a journalist, you are going to be killed. And, you have to be...

**DL:** And your family as well. They have been killing families of journalists.

**HH:** Of course. Some of the journalists, they didn't, they couldn't kill him, maybe, they killed family members.

**DL:** Yeah. And by the way, is that...?

**HH:** Yes, that's the top commander, martyr Fuad Shukr.

**DL:** Anyways, we're now heading inland, I believe. Or are we still going down the coast for the moment? We're going to Tyre?

**HH:** We're going inland right now. And we are trying to reach [inaudible].

**DL:** So the next big town we're going to come across is Bint Jbeil?

**HH:** No, no, we're going basically to Ghaziyeh, Nabatiyeh and then we're going to Bint Jbeil.

**DL:** Right. Okay. We're signing off for now. And, we'll have more to report later on.

**END**

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