

# MID-EAST e-NEWS

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<http://www.morethantourists.com>

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## Welcome

It has been difficult to keep up with the pace of events this month, with increasing violence in Iraq being upstaged by events in Gaza, and then being put in the shadows by the rapid escalation in Lebanon. A summary of the Lebanon events is below, and continues as we speak... er, write.

This week I have attempted a summary of the events related to the Israeli response to the abduction of two soldiers by Hezbollah.

By the time you receive your next e-News your intrepid correspondent will have relocated, back to the Middle East. Let's hope the move goes smoothly.

Email your responses to [pkclark@pmbx.net](mailto:pkclark@pmbx.net) & check the web for back issues.

## Israel in Lebanon

Israel's rapid reaction upon the abduction of two of its soldiers from a Lebanese border post pushed the Gaza confrontation to the background on July 12th. This is a summary of events so far. Local times for the region (summer time, GMT + 2, EST +7) are given where known.

Last week's summary of the incidents in Gaza has been continued, but there is no space for it in this issue. It will be available as a separate article at

[www.morethantourists.com/pdf/GazaIncursion.pdf](http://www.morethantourists.com/pdf/GazaIncursion.pdf)

<b>WED</b> July 12 <sup>th</sup> am	6	Hezbollah raid into Israel 2 Israeli soldiers seized, 3 killed, 2 wounded (1 dies later)
	7	IDF pursues abductors, tank hits mine, 4 killed Hezbollah shots kill soldier attempting to retrieve bodies Israel bombs 3 bridges in south Lebanon (Lebanese soldier killed)
	11	Shells fired at S. Lebanon positions Troops enter Lebanon in search of soldiers
pm	12	Israeli reserve troops called up
	4	Air strike campaign authorized
	5	Nasrallah: soldiers seized for swap
	6	Israel blames Lebanon for Hezbollah actions
<b>THUR</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> am	7	Lebanon PM denies responsibility for seizure
	12	Aircraft attack Pal foreign ministry in Gaza
	5	Aircraft bomb Beirut airport runways ('a Hezbollah hub') Air raids kill 20 in S Lebanon
	6	Nahariya hit by Hezbollah rockets, 1 killed, 20 injured
	7	Air strike on Hezbollah TV building in Beirut
	9	Blockade of Lebanon announced by Israel Bush urges restraint, accedes Israel right to self-defense
	pm	12
1		Hezbollah threatens Haifa 7 rockets hit Safed (Galilee), 11 hurt, 1 dies later
2		Cyprus offers flights out of Syria to Europeans in Lebanon
4		Israel bombs Bekaa valley military base Qulayaat (N. Lebanon) air base bombed by Israel
7		2 rockets hit Haifa
8		Israeli missiles hit Beirut airport fuel tanks Leaflets warn Lebanese to avoid Hezbollah buildings
11		Condoleezza Rice urges restraint by Israel Canada PM calls Israel's action 'self-defense' Saudi Arabia blames Hezbollah for escalation Israeli aircraft bomb the road to Syria in 5 places

<b>FRI</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> am	3	S. Beirut bridge destroyed Beirut power plant fuel supply bombed Airport highway bombed	
	4	Hezbollah neighborhood bombed, 3 killed	
	6	PFLP base hit by Israeli jets 4 airliners leave Beirut airport for Amman	
	10	2 missiles fired at Beirut airport runway	
	11	Vatican condemns attacks on Lebanon	
	pm	1	Siniora reports Bush as pressuring Israel for restraint Rocket hits Safed, injures 8 Mobile phone relays hit, inoperable So far: Lebanon: 63 killed, 165 injured Israel: 2 killed, 100 injured
		5	2 <sup>nd</sup> air strike on Harek Haik suburb hits radio station
6		3 <sup>rd</sup> strike, 3 missiles hit Haret Haik, inc Hezbollah office	
7		Rockets fired into Mt. Meron, Israel, 2 killed, inc. child More than 50 wounded by barrage of rockets in N Israel Missile hits, sets fire to Israeli ship off Lebanon coast Investigation indicates Iranian-made guided missile 4 soldiers missing, ship is towed home Thousands of Lebanese flee to Syria	
<b>SAT</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> am		12	Syria expresses support for Hezbollah Nasrallah declares 'open war' on Israel
		1	2 <sup>nd</sup> missile misses Israeli ship, sinks Egyptian merchant ship Arab Foreign Ministers emergency meeting in Cairo
		10	Bush calls on Syria to halt Hezbollah
pm	12	4 Hezbollah rockets hit Tiberias, Galilee, 2 hurt 20 killed (15 children) in air strike on family van in S Lebanon Air strike on Hezbollah targets in Beirut	
	3	Air strike fires 3 rockets at Syria border post Barrage of 70 rockets fired into N Israel	
	5	Patriot missile battery deployed at Haifa Aircraft target Beirut lighthouse (Lebanese soldier killed) Radar installations targeted at Tripoli & 2 other ports	
	9	N Israel under emergency 'Special Situation' So far: Lebanon: 104 killed (15 children), 300 injured Israel: 4 killed, 300 injured Hezbollah has fired more than 700 rockets into N Israel	
	11	Israel warns Lebanon army against firing on its aircraft	
	<b>SUN</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> am	3	Heavy bombing hits Hezbollah Al Manar TV
8		Rocket barrage on Haifa, inc. railway station, 8 killed, 20 hurt	
11		Bodies of all 4 sailors recovered	
pm		4	Javier Solana visits Beirut
	5	G8 nations blame 'extremists' for escalation Israeli air strike on Tyre (S Lebanon) kills 16	
	7	Village house destroyed in S. Lebanon, 8 Canadians killed	
	9	Israeli aircraft target Beirut airport fuel tanks again So far: Lebanon: 140 killed (15+ children), 300 injured Israel: 24 killed, 400+ injured	

To keep up with this information day by day, go to [www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/?rt=1&period=14&adv\\_form=1](http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/?rt=1&period=14&adv_form=1)  
On this Reuters news page, under "Filter by Country" click on **Israel** for a 14-day list of events.

## A Tale of Two Countries Armenia

During World War I, in the waning years of Turkish rule, a large number of Armenians suffered under the hands of the Ottoman authorities. Armenians claim that as many as 1.5 million were killed in an act of genocide for which they still demand an apology from the current Turkish government. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915, 250 Armenian leaders were arrested, for deportation or execution. Over the next two years hundreds of thousands of Armenians lost their lives.

When Armenia obtained its independence in 1991 a war broke out with Azerbaijan over the control of Nagorno Karabakh. Though hostilities ceased in 1994, the situation still is not resolved.

In consequence of these two issues, Armenia still suffers under trade embargoes by Turkey and Azerbaijan, stifling economic growth.

Armenia's industry benefits from power produced by a nuclear power plant at Metsamor, close to the Turkish border, west of Yerevan. The plant's safety has been in doubt, and it was closed after a 1988 earthquake, reopening in 1995. Conversely, the majority of its gas supply is provided by Russia, and Armenia has suffered from recent price rises, doubling in April 2006 alone.

After being elected Prime Minister in 1997, Robert Kacharian became President in 1998, and was reelected in 2003. (Kacharian was born on Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1954). Prior to his 1997 election Kocharian had been Prime Minister ('92-'94) and then President ('94-'97) of Nagorno Karabakh

Though the Armenian peoples make up the bulk of the country's population, there are also some Yezidi Kurds (1.5%) as well as a number of Russians.



In Baku, statue of Fuzuli, (Muhammad ibn Suleyman) an Azeri poet (c.1483-1556).



Looking over the Metsamor nuclear plant to the twin peaks of Ararat.



Azerbaijan's capital, Baku is located on a peninsula of the Caspian sea.



USSR composer Aram Khachaturian (1906-1978) was from Armenia. (Sabre Dance, Spartacus)

## Azerbaijan

In ancient times Azerbaijan's Zoroastrians built temples around the country's naturally occurring flumes of gas and oil springs.

Since independence the country has not benefited as much as expected from the oil revenue arising from contracts with BP (\$7.4bn deal in 1994) and other companies. The pipeline is routed to the Black Sea through Georgia.

Heydar Aliyev, a communist leader under the Soviets, led Azerbaijan as president from 1993. He ruled firmly, brooking no dissent, appointing his son, Aliyev, as Prime Minister in 2003, only two months before stepping down as president. In the subsequent election Ilham Aliyev's victory was challenged by many observers. (Ilham Aliyev was born on Dec, 24<sup>th</sup>, 1961)

90% of the country's population are ethnic Azeris, being nominal Shia Muslims, though quite secular in outlook. Azeris also form a significant proportion (approx. 25%) of the population of neighboring Iran. Numerous other ethnic groups can be found in Azerbaijan, as is clear when it is realized that at only 2% of the population, Russians are the second-largest ethnic group.

In the north, Azerbaijan's ethnic and religious mix is increasingly affected by the Dagestani peoples and the Salafi (similar to Wahhabi) Islamic movement. This has the potential for unrest, but the strong government inhibits any rise of Islamism. Similarly, other religious groups are suppressed, as a result of the government's concerns over pluralism.

Scientists consider the industrial region around Baku to be amongst the world's worst for pollution - caused by the use of DDT and other chemicals involved in the production of cotton.



*a) What comes first - Return or Redemption?*

Ezekiel 36 is frequently referred to in considering the return of Israel to the Promised Land. A large part of the chapter is quoted here.

Paul Tanner reminds us that Ez.36:16-21 records Israel being exiled due to their sins, the “profaning of God’s holy name among the nations. Thus, God will need to act to counter what Israel has done to His name. He will do this by ultimately regathering the nation and cleansing them as a Spirit-filled people.”

Verses 24-27 seem to indicate the internal work of the Spirit normally associated with the New Covenant brought by Christ. That is how Mark Harlan refers to that passage, seeing it as describing “the time when she experiences the New Covenant which is the precondition for her regathering and restoration to the Land.” A natural reading, taking into account the sequence of the verses (particularly from verse 24 onward) would seem to indicate that Israel will return to the land prior to returning to God. Verse 33 does seem to indicate that the ‘cleansing’ occurs simultaneously with resettlement and rebuilding, though even this does not disallow a prior return, one without repentance.

When considering the prophetic role of the current state of Israel, what are the options?

- 1) the current state is unrelated to that addressed in prophecy
- 2) the presence of an independent Jewish state is a clear fulfillment of prophecy

These alternatives bring up subsidiary issues that are perhaps best distinguished by a short table.

<b>1</b> the current state is unrelated to that addressed in prophecy	<b>2</b> the present state of Israel is a clear fulfillment of prophecy		
	<b>a</b> Israel’s presence means nothing more is required for their scriptural possession of the land	<b>b</b> Prophecy indicates that to truly belong in the land Israel must experience a change of heart	
	<b>i</b> The present (secular) Israel will return to its biblical (Jewish) roots	<b>ii</b> Israel will see a general acceptance of Jesus as Messiah	

Much of the discussion of the validity of the modern Israel arises from the evident presence of Jews in the land, after so long.

Affirmation that this is the work of God is seen in the provision of the land (after WWI, by the British Mandate); the desire of Jews to return (persecution in eastern Europe, and especially in Nazi Germany); the 1948 establishment of a state; it’s ‘miraculous’ defense against strong Arab nations; and in particular the 1967 acquisition of Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Objections to many of these points do not necessarily invalidate the working out of prophecy in the presence of Israel.

These objections revolve around the secular nature of the return (Zionism was largely a secular, political, movement); the questionable incidents that accompanied the 1948 conquest (Deir Yassin, King David Hotel); the overwhelming support that western arms provided Israel in the early years; the apparent injustices suffered by the “non-Jewish population” before 1948, since the 1967 occupation, and during the Intifadas.

That these demonstrate the corrupt nature of human endeavor does not discount the ability of God to achieve His ends through the unredeemed intentions of men.

**Ezekiel 36:16-38**

<sup>16</sup> Again the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>17</sup> "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. <sup>18</sup> So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. <sup>19</sup> I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. <sup>20</sup> And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the LORD's people, and yet they had to leave his land.' <sup>21</sup> I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

<sup>22</sup> "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. <sup>23</sup> I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

<sup>24</sup> " For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. <sup>28</sup> You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. <sup>29</sup> I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. <sup>30</sup> I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. <sup>31</sup> Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. <sup>32</sup> I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel!

<sup>33</sup> " This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. <sup>34</sup> The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. <sup>35</sup> They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." <sup>36</sup> Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'

<sup>37</sup> "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, <sup>38</sup> as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

This Month

June	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	July	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S			
<b>Africa</b>	Violence increasing in S.Sudan process advances in Darfur															Ceasefire signed in Darfur - peace talks start in July			Sudan,Uganda armies act against LRA rebels			Sudan refuses UN force in Darfur			Darfur rebels attack town E of Darfur			Fighting in Somalia-60 killed			SLA infighting in Darfur-8,000 die this month		
<b>Asia</b>																Nagorno-Karabakh referendum planned																	
<b>Pakistan</b>																14 die in fighting over water rights			Suicide bomber kills 6 troops			Bomb kills 6 commandos in NW			Air crash kills 45			Suicide bomb kills Shiite cleric Turabi					
<b>Afghan.</b>																Journalist found assassinated in Waziristan			Wazir militants call for ceasefire			Army kills 25 rebels in Baluchistan			Bombay bombs kill 179 Pakistani militants suspected								
<b>Arabia</b>																Romanian soldier killed			US troops kill 14 Taliban			Condoleeza Rice visits Karzai			20 Taliban killed in ambush attempt			UK troops attack base-40 rebels killed					
<b>Iraq</b>																4 US killed in Nuristan prov.			2 UK killed in Helmand prov.			4 Afghans from US base killed			US troops kill 30 Taliban in Helmand								
<b>US Deaths:</b>																6 militants dead in Riyadh police raid						Qaeda reject renewed amnesty offer			Saudi criticizes Hezbollah								
<b>US Deaths:</b>																US seals Ramadi roads			Kirkuk alcohol shop bombed			Sunni religious leader arrested with insurgents			Sunni woman MP kidnapped			Militia leader arrested for spying for Iran			Gunmen kill 12 at Kirkuk army post		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Death penalty demanded in Saddam trial			4 Russian embassy hostages killed			Gunmen warn Kirkuk police to quit			3 US killed in Anbar			Police patrol attacked-5 die					
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Sunni leader in Basra killed			3 bombs in Baghdad kill 14			3 police chiefs shot dead in Baquba			Attempted kidnap of Shia woman MP			Shia gunmen kill 42+ in rampage			Bomb at Baghdad Sunni mosque		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																10 bakery workers abducted			Basra bomber targets pensioners			Baquba, Hilla market bombs kill 18, 8+			Clashes with insurgents in Sunni Adhamiya-7 die			Bombs at Shia mosque-17 die			Balad Ruz-Mortars hit Shia mosque		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Iraq army takes control of Muthanna. 150,000+ displaced by conflict. Second Saddam trial, for genocide, to begin Aug. 31 <sup>st</sup>			Saddam defence lawyer killed			Mortars hit Sunni mosque nr Baghdad			450 men of village held for questioning			Diyala council member killed			raided, members abducted		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Oil production reaches highest level since 2003 invasion			Insurgent leader held by US			Kirkuk car bomb-3 die			Tunisian held in Feb. Mosque bombing & reporter abduction			Oil production 2.5/export 1.9bbl/day			Car bomb at Kirkuk PUK offices-3 die		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Baghdad morgue reports 1,595 bodies in June.			Japan to withdraw troops			Sunni imam killed in Baghdad			9 bodies found in rivers			Dep. Electric minister abducted, escapes			Shia/Sunnis clash in mosque attack		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Attempts to bring reconciliation, dialogue with insurgent groups			4 US marines killed in Anbar			Senior Qaeda leader held			Kirkuk funeral bomb-7 die			Ramadi hospital raided to seek insurgents			Saddam trial-closing arguments-he goes on hunger strike		
<b>US Deaths:</b>																7 bombs in Baghdad kill 25			US troops clash with Sadr loyalists			Romania troops to stay			2 bombs in Kirkuk, Peshmerga killed			Attack on contractor's office-8 die					
<b>US Deaths:</b>																2 US soldiers abducted, killed			Baghdad:2 bombs kill 22			Sunni imam killed in Muqdadia			Car bomb kills 12 Shia in Najaf			20 bus drivers abducted, killed					
<b>US Deaths:</b>																Insurgent leader held in Diwaniya			Kirkuk security chief killed			Troops attacked by Mehdi militias			Baquba mosque bombed-7 hurt			US 'copter crashes, crew safe					
<b>Iran</b>																Retrial ordered for Iranian Arabs involved in unrest			Bus crash kills 22 in Khorasan			US wants Iran to respond to nuclear deal by 7/12						Israeli ship hit-Iran missile suspected					
<b>Turkey</b>																Troops kill 8 Kurds (PKK) near Iraq border			3 soldiers, 1 Kurd fighter killed in east			Flooding kills 9 in NE						3 PKK Kurds killed near Iraq border					
<b>Lebanon</b>																PKK bomb kills 4 in Antalya resort			198 Iranian-Kurd refugees stranded on border			Assad: Islamic militants fled to Lebanon						Hezbollah raid into Israel. 3 soldiers killed & 2 abducted. (See page 1)					
<b>Jordan</b>																Olmert & Abbas meet at reception in Petra			350 on corruption charges			Saddam daughter is 'guest' of royal family						Govt. takes control of Islamist charity					
<b>Egypt</b>																Ferry capsizes-8 die			Red Sea bomb militants killed in Sinai									Guards prevent attempted knife attack on church					
<b>Israel</b>																Air strike on Gaza car kills 3 children			Meretz party protests Gaza raids			Israeli raid on WB police post-3 held for settler death						Israel responds to Hezbollah raid with naval blockade, air strikes against Hezbollah & strategic targets (See page 1)					
<b>Israel</b>																Dual conflicts break out after abductions on Gaza border (by Hamas), & Lebanon border (Hezbollah). Israel incursion into Gaza (after 6/25) followed by strikes on Hezbollah targets in Lebanon (7/12)			Air strike misses militants, kills 2 in home			2 militants killed in Nablus raid			Jenin: IDF kill 1 planting bomb								
<b>Israel</b>																Al Aqsa militant killed in Nablus raid			Israeli raid captures 2 militants in Rafah			WB militant shot during arrest raid in Jericho											
<b>Israel</b>																Israel restricts settlers from preventing clearances			Israel raid captures 2 militants in Rafah			10 arrested in WB sweep											
<b>Israel</b>																2 killed in Jenin raid																	
<b>WB &amp; Gaza</b>																Police protest overdue wages at Gaza parliament			Egypt crossing closed (2 days) because UN monitors were unable to reach it			Abbas & Hamas agree policy statement on statehood			Abbas postpones referendum on statehood			Some workers to get 1/2 month's wage			2 Palestinians die at closed Egypt border		
<b>WB &amp; Gaza</b>																Crisis over Hamas refusal to recognize Israel, funding for PNA ceases, workers unpaid. EU attempts to negotiate an aid approach. Incursion cuts off power in South Gaza.			Some (29,000 out of 165,000) receive paychecks of \$300 for past 4 months wages			Militants (inc Hamas) abduct Israeli soldier on Gaza border			Israel's response includes air strikes on Gaza govt. buildings, power utilities, targeted killings of Hamas members. By July 15 <sup>th</sup> , 84 Palestinians have been killed								