

Justice for Lebanon Rally III
Peaceful Demonstration & Candlelight Vigil
Copley Square, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
Wednesday, August 11, 2006 at 6:00pm

“Justice is Grand; Lebanon is Godsent”

speech by Loai Naamani
President, Lebanese Club at MIT

After last week’s rally, I received an anonymous, heartfelt email from a Lebanese lady who participated in the vigil and may as well very much be in the crowd tonight. She was responding to our demands for justice and said:

“Justice is a grand word. But how can we ask and demand justice from the world at a time we, the Lebanese, the so-called citizens of this country, the country of diversity, faith and color, do not do our country justice? ... Lebanon is God sent, an endowment from nature that we do not deserve.”

Her words still haunt me until now and have brought back memories of endless conversations about this with friends, questions I have asked myself many times, the very same conversations and questions I am certain many of you, or at least the Lebanese among you have entertained at some point. Questions of identity, of previous civil wars, of Lebanon as the battlefield of others, of the Lebanese as proxies for others, of Lebanon the “sweet lie” as Ziad Rahbani likes to call it... Questions that no Lebanese wants to think about now. Some are busy ‘surviving’, others have long answered those questions, and others are determined to avoid them now in the name of unity.

Did we deserve Lebanon? I don’t know. Only time will tell. What I do know, however, is that even if we didn’t deserve it in the past, we want to deserve it now. We have decided to earn it. Our commitment to unite and survive this at any cost is unquestionable and unshakeable.

Again, the world should behold and understand that the “national resistance” in Lebanon today is not in our missiles, but in the shield of solidarity of a united Lebanese people that have chosen to live.

And there is nothing worse, ladies and gentlemen, than watching a nation sink with its people, its united people, while we stand here silent and divided.

And this is why the question I am here to ask you today is:

Do *you* deserve Lebanon? Does *your* free world deserve Lebanon?

Last week the world's response was heard loud and clear by the tiny little angels of Qana, when it allowed their kindergarten to become the kindergraveyard of Lebanon.

Today its response comes in a shy, draft UN resolution...

A UN resolution that calls for a "cessation of hostilities" – What ridiculous language is this? What happened to "immediate ceasefire"?

A UN resolution that calls for the "unconditional release of Israeli soldiers" and fails to request the same for the Lebanese prisoners – Why? And to use Siniora's reference, are our prisoners the children of a lesser God?

A UN resolution that asks Israel to cease its "offensive military operations"? Offensive? As in, stop offending the children of Qana by stuffing their tiny little eyes with sand and stone? And the irony of it all is that if they stop their offensive operations, they can go on with their defensive ones. After all, let us not forget that all that has befallen Lebanon until now is in self-defense.

I see many of you carrying signs of peace, calling for peace.

Peace is a grand word too. Just as our dear, anonymous lady called Justice a grand word, peace is even grander.

But it's difficult to conceive how one can wage peace today with who killed one's children yesterday. A call for a ceasefire is not a call for peace, but it is definitely an indispensable prerequisite for peace.

Anyway, which peace is it that you want?

Do you want a peace that is imported to Lebanon? *Answer me loud and clear.*

Do you want a peace that is imposed on Lebanon?

Do you want a peace that is purchased for Lebanon?

Do you want a peace that is raped from Lebanon?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our peace begins with life, not death.

Our peace begins with justice, not servility.

Our peace begins with an Israel-free Lebanon, and yes... that means each and every Israeli soldier should leave each and every inch of Lebanese soil.

Our peace begins with celebrating the last of Israel on our land, whether they choose to leave now or whether they wait until they're *made* to leave soon.

Another word they like to convince us of its grandeur is “terrorism”. After all, isn't this part of the Global war on terrorism?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Isn't it first class terrorism and a crime of war to kill a 1,000 people, a third of which are children?

Isn't it first class terrorism and a crime of war to drive a million people out of their homes?

Isn't it first class terrorism and a crime of war to decimate every last remnant of our infrastructure?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If this is not terror, then we have to confess: we know not what terror is anymore.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If terrorism is in defending ourselves, our land, and our dignity,

If terrorism is in standing up united in the face of Israel's aggression,

And if humanity is in shoving more sand in more eyes of the children of Lebanon,

And if humanity is in shredding a nation to pieces in the name of self-defense,

Then we tell this world out loud, outright, and with all due respect:

We are proud to be the terrorists we are, and we are proud to denounce the humanity you claim.

- *Loai Naamani*