

To Rebeca

TO LEAVE LEBANON IN PEACE
LEBANON: THE FORGOTTEN WAR

From 1982, when the Lebanon war began, to 1985, when it presumably ended, 640 Israeli soldiers died there. Since 1985, an additional 574 soldiers have been killed, including 18 who have died this month alone. In this bloody conflict untold Lebanese have also fallen. After fifteen years of warfare, the fighting goes on in the self-declared "security zone," and Lebanon remains the forgotten war.

To call attention to this continuing loss of life and political stagnation, four mothers, from northern settlements, with sons serving in Lebanon, demonstrated in March, following the tragic helicopter accident, which killed 71 soldiers. They asked the government to put Lebanon back on the national agenda and to actively seek ways of extracting Israel from the unending nightmare of Lebanon.

They gained immediate media attention in Israel and became known as "The Four Mothers Movement." Their numbers quickly swelled, indicating the widespread dissatisfaction and frustration of a large cross-section of the country with the present status quo, and they were joined by fathers, people without children, young people, former soldiers, and older people. I am a member of this group.

Our first priority has been to marshall support for withdrawal. On the first Friday of each month, volunteers around the country collect signatures petitioning the government to find alternative security arrangements so that we may withdraw immediately from Lebanon. At present we have gathered more than 15,000 names. We also distribute literature and bumper stickers reading "LEAVE LEBANON IN PEACE."

On the day after a soldier is killed in Lebanon, we demonstrate on Elizer Kaplan Street, Tel Aviv, directly opposite the Defense Ministry (5:00-7:30 week days, 1:00-3:00 Friday)..

Representatives also meet with any official who will receive us. To date we have held lengthy meetings with President Ezer Weizman, Defense Minister Yitzchak Mordechai, MKs Gideon Ezra, Avigdor Kahalani, Miki Eitan, and Yossi Beilin, and municipal mayors, including Tel Aviv's Ronnie Milo. We plan additional meetings with Foreign Minister David Levy and others.

We are a truly grassroots movement, without political affiliation, a rarity on the Israel scene, and without financial backing. Our members pay from their pockets for each poster made and for each sticker distributed.

Even with our meager resources and numbers, our message is getting across. We have received good media coverage in Israel, and abroad we have been featured on BBC television, NPR radio, and feature stories have appeared in leading newspapers in Germany, UK, and Argentina, and Austria. Time magazine is planning a feature.

But these results are limited. We could do much more if we could reach more Israelis, through advertisements and large meetings. For that we need your help.

If you are interested in joining our demonstrations, distributing petitions and collecting signatures, meeting with officials, or working on future projects, please contact

FOUR MOTHERS MOVEMENT

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If you are able to make a monetary contribution, which is badly needed to continue our work, please send donations to
BANK HAMIZRACHI, KIRYAT SHMONA
BRANCH 487, ACCOUNT NUMBER 347717.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS MESSAGE TO FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ABROAD WHO MAY WISH TO SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO FIND ALTERNATIVES TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN LEBANON. THANK YOU.

Thank you.

Professor Linda Ben-Zvi