

(11 September 2008). However, despite the proximity in the totals at the end of both periods, the number of changes recorded during the current period (24 obstacles removed and 28 installed) was significantly lower when compared with the previous period (82 removals and 101 additions).

6. Though the total number of obstacles remains indicative of the widespread nature of the system of internal movement and access restrictions, this figure alone is insufficient to capture some of the most relevant developments and trends during the reporting period.

7. The West Bank barrier, in conjunction with its gate and permit regime, [is a] key component of the system of movement and access restrictions. Construction continued on various sections of the barrier during the period, albeit at a slower pace compared with past periods. The Israeli authorities requisitioned land and began leveling works toward the construction of four new sections, two of which are aimed at relocating existing sections, in compliance with decisions issued by the Israeli High Court of Justice more than three years ago. All four sections are located within the West Bank, rather than on the Green Line or in Israel, in contravention of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2004.

8. In addition, large areas between the barrier and the Green Line, in Salfit, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Hebron governorates, were declared as "seam zone" and closed to Palestinians. Since 2003, monitoring of barrier-affected communities situated in the northern West Bank shows a significant reduction in access to agricultural areas situated between the barrier and the Green Line.

9. Access to East Jerusalem through the two main barrier checkpoints controlling access of Palestinians with entry permits from the northern and southern West Bank (Qalandia and Gilo) has been further constrained as a result of longer delays.

10. Israeli settlements remained the most important factor shaping the system of movement and access restrictions. This is reflected in the significant degree of overlap between the location of access restrictions (including the barrier) and the location of settlements and settlers' routes. The main trends observed during the reporting period include an acceleration in the expansion of settlements on the western ("Israeli") side of the barrier, along with the maintenance

of all settlement outposts and the expansion of some; a deterioration in access of Palestinian farmers to agricultural lands located in the vicinity of some settlements, due, among other reasons, to an increase in settler violence; and the imposition of harsh restrictions (including prolonged curfews) on individual villages in the northern West Bank, following incidents of stone throwing at settlers' vehicles.

11. Access of farmers and herders to areas in the Jordan Valley and in the eastern slopes of Bethlehem and Hebron governorates that were declared in the past as closed military zones or as nature reserves was further constrained as a result of an increase in the enforcement of restrictions by the Israeli authorities. Approximately 28 percent of the West Bank is designated either as closed military zones or as nature reserves.

12. Overall, the easing observed during the period in the flow of Palestinian traffic in some areas falls short of a genuine improvement in access. This is reflected not only in the lack of change in the total number of closure obstacles, but also in the parallel implementation of other restrictive policies and measures, including the expansion of the barrier and Israeli settlements. Moreover, in contrast to assurances given by the government of Israel regarding the temporary nature of the system of movement and access restrictions, measures adopted during this and previous periods indicate a further entrenchment of this system. As a result, the space available for Palestinian development is increasingly constrained. . . .

ARAB

B1. HIZBALLAH SECRETARY GENERAL SAYYED HASAN NASRALLAH, SPEECH ON EGYPTIAN ACCUSATIONS OF HIZBALLAH ACTIVITIES ON GAZA BORDER WITH EGYPT, LEBANON, 10 APRIL 2009 (EXCERPTS).

Hasan Nasrallah devoted his usual Friday televised address to responding head-on to the Egyptian government's dramatic announcement two days earlier of a Hizballah network operating in Egypt to spread Shi'i ideas and prepare hostile operations threatening public security. While forcefully denying the charges as made, the speech is important for its confirmation, with detail, of Hizballah's involvement in transporting weapons and ammunition across the border into Gaza the month before Operation Cast Lead. Nasrallah's

summary of his party's policies with regard to the Arab countries is also noteworthy. (See section "The Regional Cold War" in Doc. A2 above for International Crisis Group's analysis of the Egyptian-Hizballah exchange.) The speech, carried by Hizballah's al-Manar television, was translated in full by BBC Monitoring Middle East and made available by BBC World Monitoring on 12 April 2009.

First the facts. . . . On 19 November 2008—that is, more than a month before Israel's war on our people in Gaza—the Egyptian authorities arrested a Lebanese citizen. At that time, media outlets said that a Lebanese citizen and other Palestinian and Egyptian nationals were arrested on charges of transporting weapons and ammunition to the Gaza Strip across the Egyptian border. Some media outlets said then that the Lebanese national was a member of Hizballah. Matters rested [there]. . . .

About a month or more later, the Zionist enemy launched a violent war on Gaza. Everyone knows what happened in that war, what the Egyptian regime's stand was, and what Hizballah's stand was. Hizballah's position was strong and clear on the need to open the Rafah crossing and to lift the siege imposed on the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance in Gaza. Early on, we appealed to the Egyptian authorities to do that, and when it did not do that, our minimum duty was to condemn all those who blockade Gaza and close the doors and crossings to Gaza. . . . As a result . . . a very harsh political and media campaign began in Egypt against me personally and against Hizballah. . . .

In any case, after the end of the war, the climate calmed down in general and the door was open to inter-Arab reconciliation [which] we welcomed. . . . Two days ago [8 April 2009], the Egyptian public prosecutor issued a statement leveling a number of accusations, which you heard in the media. To recall what he said [Nasrallah then takes his glasses off and reads from a paper]: "The public prosecutor, 'Abd al-Majid Mahmud, in a statement yesterday explained that investigations have shown that what took place had the aim of undermining public security in the country." It means that a Lebanese citizen called Sami, together with a number of young men, were preparing [continues reading] "to undermine public security in the country and prepare an activist and organizational program to prepare elements of

the organization inside the country to carry out the organizational tasks with which they are charged . . ." [T]he statement talks about a lengthy plan for "recruiting, training, reconnaissance, liaison, administration, leasing luxurious apartments"—as though there are many luxurious apartments and villas on Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip—until it says [continues reading]: "spreading Shi'i thought inside the country. The public prosecutor said in the statement that investigations have confirmed that the secretary general of Hizballah charged the official responsible for Hizballah's operations unit for the cordon states [states bordering Israel] with carrying out hostile operations on Egyptian territory after he [Nasrallah] delivered his speech on 'Ashura Day [8 January 2009] inciting the Egyptian people and the Egyptian armed forces to turn against the regime. However, the arrest of the accused prevented the plan's implementation. The statement added that the number of accused under investigation was 47. The office of the prosecutor of the Supreme State Security interrogated them and provided all legal guarantees in accordance with the criminal procedures law." Of course they prevented lawyers from attending the interrogation, and they engineered the fabrication that the Lawyers Union—and I don't [know] who else—did not agree to send lawyers, although there are lawyers who have been assigned to defend the accused and who were prevented from attending the interrogations.

Those are the facts. We come to the comment. We are a group of people who say things clearly and responsibly. We are responsible for what we do and we are not ashamed for a moment of announcing it. . . . Therefore I say: First, Brother Sami is a member of Hizballah. We do not deny this matter, nor are we ashamed of it. Second, what he was doing along the Egyptian-Palestinian border was logistical support to help the Palestinian brothers in transporting ammunition and individuals for the benefit of the resistance inside Palestine. That is all he did. And that is the only correct matter that was not mentioned in the [prosecutor's] charges. I read to you that when the arrests were made [November 2008] the Egyptian media said that a Lebanese citizen and others were arrested on the charge of transporting materiel to the Gaza Strip. Now, the public prosecutor in his entire statement did not touch on this matter, even though this is the only matter and there is nothing else at all. . . . Third, all the charges stated

in the public prosecutor's statement are falsehoods, fabrications, and fantasies. . . . [They say . . .] that it [Hizballah] is destroying Egypt and the Egyptian economy. Today I heard that there was targeting of important figures in Egypt. . . . [The aim is] to incite the Egyptian people and tarnish the image of Hizballah, which is bright, respected, and very big among the Egyptian people who harbor respect toward all strugglers and resisters. . . .

Fourth, the number of individuals with Brother Sami could be less than 10, and I do not know where the 50 accused come from. In any case, many of the young men who are now in custody have no connection with Brother Sami. I do not know if they are involved in other matters, but if they want to say that the Hizballah cell comprises 50 persons, that also is untrue.

Fifth—let us also be very frank and very clear—if helping the Palestinian brothers whose land is occupied and who are being besieged, killed, displaced, and starved is a crime, then I today officially confess to that crime. And if it is a sin, then it is a sin through which we seek to get nearer to God and we do not ask his forgiveness for it. If this matter is a charge, then we are proud of that charge. Everyone knows it is not the first time [that] brothers from Hizballah are arrested while trying to transport weapons to the Palestinians in occupied Palestine. There are known precedents.

Therefore it is the Egyptian regime that should be condemned today, not Sami and his companions. It is the Egyptian regime that should be indicted today because it is still blockading the Gaza Strip [which] has greater need for the Rafah crossing than at any time in the past to reconstruct thousands of housing units that have been destroyed. The humanitarian conditions are more tragic than any time in the past, but the blockade is still total. It is the Egyptian regime that should be condemned because it works day and night to destroy the tunnels, the only artery that keeps the Gaza Strip alive. You have seen on television that not only weapons and ammunition are transported through those tunnels, but medicines, and even some cattle—I have seen goats and sheep and so on—and consumer goods and food. But the Egyptian regime, in cooperation with the Israelis and Americans, is destroying even this simple, difficult, and costly breathing outlet to prevent the means of life from reaching the Palestinians in Gaza.

At the same time, Israel receives the most important new U.S. aerial weapons, develops its capabilities, and carries out the largest maneuvers in its history in June 2009, and the Netanyahu government produces [Foreign Minister Avigdor] Lieberman. . . . We expected that the result of the huge transformations in the region, in Palestine, and the Israeli entity would be that the Egyptian leaders would call the Arab states—and at least the cordon states affected by the conflict—to study what measures and policies should be adopted regarding these developments and the danger Israel is now posing anew to all the states of the region, and especially in the light of important international and U.S. developments. However, very regrettably, we found that the Egyptian regime is still placing itself in the same cul-de-sac and is escalating its hostility to the resistance movements, and continuing with the strategy of war on resistance movements, including Hizballah. . . .

I categorically deny any intention on the part of Hizballah to carry out any attacks, or target Egyptian security, personalities, or interests, be they in Egypt or anywhere else in the world. . . . We adopted a political stand. We even avoided demonstrating or staging sit-ins near the Egyptian embassy in Lebanon so as not to open the door to problems and fabrications. . . .

There remains a last new subject that I will consider . . . : the attempt to project a new picture of Hizballah as an organization that seeks to form—or has formed—cells in the Arab states, wants to destroy Arab national security, seeks to overthrow Arab regimes, trains dissident groups here and there, and targets the security of the Arab states. . . . Hizballah does not want to have enmity with any Arab regime, any regime in the Islamic world, or any regime in the world. True, we have Israel, because we believe that it is an illegal, illegitimate, cancerous, and hostile entity, and our enmity with it is based on this stand. There is also the U.S. administration, and our hostility toward it is caused by its policies. If it changes its policies, this hostility will stop. . . .

Concerning the Arab peoples, we have friendships and very normal relations. . . . We are a Lebanese party, our leadership is Lebanese, and all our members, all our elements are Lebanese. We have no branches. We have no branches in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, or Djibouti or anywhere else. . . . Its main cause, for which it was born and to which it has adhered and

will never abandon, is the cause of liberating the territory, protecting Lebanon, and confronting the Zionist project, which constitutes a threat to Lebanon and all states, all peoples, and all governments of the region. . . . If a political Arab regime exists in this or that country, it is of no concern to us if it is democratic, dictatorial, monarchical, hereditary, legitimate, or illegitimate, whatever its descriptions or theories on which it is based. Even in Iraq, many asked us to adopt a stand on the political process and what it produced . . . [W]e do not take a stand against any Arab government, not in Iraq and not elsewhere. We take a stand on occupation. We denounce the U.S. occupation of Iraq and support the Iraqi resistance to the U.S. occupation, but we do not support Iraqis who fight each other. . . .

Concerning the Israeli issue, we consider our confrontation of Israel and the Zionist project to be our duty. Helping the brothers in Palestine is our duty, exactly as it was the duty of the whole world to help us during the resistance in Lebanon, to help Lebanon in liberating what is left of its occupied territory, and to help Lebanon in confronting the Israeli attacks, ambitions, and threats. . . .

I would like to close this subject by telling the Arab world, the Arab governments, and the Arab peoples the following: Brothers, do not overburden Hizballah. I know that many want to place on our shoulders responsibilities that are bigger than our country, greater than our resources and capabilities, greater than what our country can accommodate given our circumstances. Even concerning assistance to the Palestinian brothers, we also take into consideration how much repercussions we should place on the shoulders of our country. . . .

Therefore, benefiting from this incident, I would like to issue the following appeal: In connection with everything that is being raised in the media, and everything that is said, plotted, or concocted by certain intelligence services here or there and presented as reports to the Arab rulers, I tell these rulers to examine all this very carefully. From the official, practical, ideological, cultural, and religious viewpoint as well as in the field, we have no such intentions and we do not want any struggle or enmity with anyone. Likewise, we do not stand at anyone's door to request anything. . . . During the most difficult days of the July war, when the Israeli Air Force was using over 100 aircraft to bomb our homes and centers, vil-

lages, and neighborhoods day and night, I said while under bombardment: we do not want anything from the Arab rulers. We thank them. I also said that day that we just wanted them to. . . . leave us alone. . . . By God, we do not want from you any political, moral, financial, or military support. Nothing. We just do not want you to harm us or to plot against us, or accuse us unjustly.

Of course that is as far as Hizballah is concerned. As for Palestine, on the contrary, we ask them [the Arab states] to shoulder their responsibilities, help the wronged and oppressed Palestinian people who have been suffering for the past 60 years. We want them to lift the siege around them and help them rebuild their country, their homes. [Meanwhile] they [the Israelis] are carrying out maneuvers and we do not know what they are preparing for the region and for Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and the entire region.

I ask the Arab rulers to shoulder their responsibilities at a serious, sensitive, and momentous phase in the region in light of the stand of the current Israeli government, which is the most extremist, most obstinate, and most aggressive. Let them shoulder their responsibilities. Instead of sponsoring the resistance movement, and instead of supporting and assisting them, at least we should not harm and fight them. I say this with all sincerity and faithfulness. . . .

B2. HAMAS POLITBURO CHIEF KHALID MISHAL, REMARKS ON HAMAS CHARTER, PRESIDENT OBAMA, COMPARISONS WITH HIZBALLAH, AND OTHER MATTERS, NEW YORK TIMES, 5 MAY 2009 (EXCERPTS).

Khalid Misbal's interview with the New York Times was his first to a U.S. news organization in more than a year. The excerpts published by the Times on 5 May were taken from a five-hour interview conducted in Arabic over two days at his house in Damascus. Although the excerpts do not cover much ground that was not covered in Misbal's long interview with JPS in March 2008 (see the two-part Misbal interview in JPS 147-48), they are interesting in that they are clearly directed at the new Obama administration. The full excerpts of the Times interview can be found online at www.nytimes.com.

On the Hamas Charter and a Palestinian State:

The most important thing is what Hamas is doing and the policies it is adopting

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