

Evidences of new weapons are arising in the Israel-Lebanon war

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By now there are countless reports, from hospitals, witnesses, armament experts and journalists that strongly suggest that in the present offensive of Israeli forces against Lebanon and Gaza 'new weapons' are being used.

New and strange symptoms are reported amongst the wounded and the dead.

Bodies with dead tissues and no apparent wounds; 'shrunken' corpses; civilians with heavy damage to lower limbs that require amputation, which is nevertheless followed by unstoppable necrosis and death; descriptions of extensive internal wounds with no trace of shrapnel, corpses blackened but not burnt, and others heavily wounded that did not bleed.

Many of these descriptions suggest the possibility that the new weapons used include 'direct energy' weapons, and chemical and/or biological agents, in a sort of macabre experiment of future warfare, where there is no respect for anything: International rules (from the Geneva Convention to the treaties on biological and chemical weapons), refugees, hospitals and the Red Cross, not to mention the people, their future, their children, the environment, which is poisoned through dissemination of Depleted Uranium and toxic substances released after oil and chemical depots are bombed.

Right now, the Lebanese and Palestinian people have many urgent and impellent problems, yet many people believe that these episodes cannot and must not pass ignored. In fact several appeals have been launched to scientists and experts with a view

to investigating the issue.

With the intent of responding to such appeals, we have set up a team to investigate the testimonies, the images, and possibly the material evidence that delegations and NGOs will be able to bring from the affected areas. We want to offer support to the health institutions of Lebanon and Palestine, which ask constantly for help and external verification and monitoring, and we are examining all available materials in order to formulate hypotheses which can be verified or disproved.

We ask for the active participation of our (Italian) scientific institutions, and, following the request from medical personnel in the conflict area, we are requesting that the UN set up an international independent verification and investigation committee, with a view to facilitating entry into the conflict zone, as well as collecting material and testimonies directly in the field, and undertaking inquiries and verifications concerning the various claims regarding these new kinds of weapons of mass destruction being used by Israeli forces in Lebanon. We request that such investigating teams be set up immediately, and that procedures be defined and implemented with a view to supporting future investigations. Of particular concern is the issue of how to collect and store samples from the different theatres, with a view to preserving important information regarding the various impacts of these weapons.

We ask that the international committee have access to all sources of information, that it be fully operational, while abiding by relevant investigative procedures, including cross-checking of information between different laboratories. The international committee is to report to the competent authorities, including the Human Rights tribunals and international courts, if appropriate..

As people and as scientists, we are offering our time and expertise in order to reach an understanding of the underlying facts, in the belief that a perspective of justice, equity and peace

among people can be reached only with the respect of the rules defined up to now within the international community of nations. The issue pertains to the behavior of the parties in an armed conflict.

We ask that the respect of these rules be verified in the context of the present conflict.

We invite scientists to contribute to this effort by offering their specific competences. In particular we seek collaboration of toxicology experts, pharmacologists, anatomy pathologists, doctors with an expertise in trauma and burns, chemists.