Trends. Civilians and Meanings of Collateral Damage: Hezbollah and Israel

Editor
Recent Israeli government attacks in Lebanon have been vociferously criticized by high-level officials in many Arab countries and by representatives of multilateral governmental organizations and human rights organizations. The criticism focuses on the Israeli attacks' killing and wounding of Lebanese civilians and destroying Lebanese materiel infrastructures supporting the basics of life.

The Israeli response is the attacks have been in response to Hezbollah killing and wounding of Israeli forces and are intended to deter further attacks. Civilians are killed and wounded as collateral damage--i.e., secondarily and accidentally to hitting primary targets more directly related to Hezbollah capabilities and motivation. The Israelis less insistently add that civilians can be conceptualized as collateral damage in at least two other senses--first, as being intentionally (from the perspective of Hezbollah) and physically coincident to primary targets, second as being supportive of primary targets.