

Hezbollah calls for respectful  
attitude toward Israelis  
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*“We should not fall under any illusions and let ourselves believe that peaceful negotiations are an alternative to military resistance,” Nasrallah said.*

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Secretary-general of Hezbollah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, said that Arabs should respect the Israelis because they have showed the other side of their nature, and should respect them for the way they cared for their fellow citizens, dead and alive.

However, he warned that this wouldn't stop Hezbollah from taking more prisoners if it needed to in the future. Nasrallah was speaking on the occasion of the return of the detainees from prison in Israel, at Sayyed al-Shuhadaa compound in the Southern suburbs of Beirut on Thursday night.

“These values are our values too,” Nasrallah added, in reference to the Israelis concern about their citizens' lives.

Nevertheless, the successful results of this purely humanitarian deal have no other political implications, he said. “We should not fall under any illusions and let ourselves believe that peaceful negotiations are an alternative to military resistance.”

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“Effective resistance was the main factor behind our success,” Nasrallah said. He said that Arabs in general have “negotiated from weakness,” and that was why their attempts at negotiation failed.

Nasrallah said that there were still three main prisoners left: Samir Qantar, Yehya Skaff and Nasim Nasr, who happens to hold Israeli citizenship. Nasrallah said that Nasr was Lebanese because his father was Lebanese. He got Israeli citizenship because his mother was originally Jewish, though she had subsequently converted to Islam, he added. The Israelis deny that Skaff is held in any Israeli prisons and deny all knowledge of him.

Nasrallah said he had many options left to deal with this issue, adding that if necessary, Hezbollah would kidnap more Israelis, but make sure that they were taken alive this time. Another option was to exchange information on Ron Arad.

He mentioned the case of the four Iranian diplomats kidnapped in Lebanon

in 1982, and said that he considered Israel responsible for providing information on their fate. It is alleged that Lebanese factions handed the diplomats over to the invading Israeli Army.

Nasrallah praised the freed prisoners and their sacrifices, and said they had the right to sue Israel in an international court for what happened to them as they had been hostages, taken from their homes, while the captured Israelis were prisoners, soldiers captured in a foreign land.

Nasrallah said that the imbalance in the number of prisoners exchanged reflected the imbalance of forces between Hezbollah and Israel. He said that there was nothing to stop Israel taking more prisoners at any time, and the imbalance of forces meant that Hezbollah could not stop them.

He said it was the responsibility of the international community to stop them taking more prisoners in the occupied territories.

Nasrallah quoted an Israeli political commentator who said that Israel was “like a donkey that had given a free ride to Hezbollah” by committing a fatal mistake, keeping Samir Qantar. The analyst said that this left the door open for Hezbollah to get more concessions from Israel.

Sayyed al-Shuhadaa compound has not seen such a large celebration since the South was liberated in 2000.

The organizers set out 8,000 seats while three times that figure gathered outside

and around the compound, unable to get in.

The side roads leading from the airport to the compound were also packed by thousands of people of all ages, waving Lebanese, Palestinian and Hezbollah flags and banners.

Giant television screens were erected inside and outside the compound, while crowds followed live coverage on Al-Manar Television from the airport. The crowds inside and outside the compound cheered loudly whenever Nasrallah appeared.

The celebration was attended by high-ranking Syrian and Iranian officials. Security measures were, as usual, tight. Roads leading to the compound were heavily guarded by Hezbollah members and volunteers. All cars were parked at a safe distance from the route taken by the freed prisoners from the airport.

The prisoners made their way through the crowds with difficulty, shaking hands, occasionally kissing old friends or sympathizers cheering them on. Everyone present at the celebration stood until the last prisoner passed and took his place on the stage. Only 19 of the 21 released by Israel made it to the celebration. Lebanese security detained the other two at Beirut airport for interrogation.

The released prisoners looked calm, confident and fresh despite the long journey from Israel to Germany then on to Beirut.

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