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AOL News

Sunday, 16 July 2006

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Israel accused of using illegal weapons

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Lebanon's cabinet says the country faces "real annihilation" by Israel and accuses the Jewish state of using banned weapons against civilians.

Information Minister Ghazi Aridi said after an emergency cabinet meeting that Israel was using internationally prohibited weapons against civilians.

He did not elaborate, but Lebanese media reports, which could not be confirmed, claimed Israel had used phosphorus incendiary and vacuum bombs, which suck up the air and collapse buildings.

More than 100 Lebanese civilians have been killed by Israel's attacks.

In Israel, defence minister Amir Peretz said that his country would not stop its offensive in Lebanon until "the reality changes".

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He said the army would continue to target the sources of guerrilla rocket fire into northern Israel.

But, Peretz added that Israel would not reoccupy Lebanon, nor would it stay there for the long term.

At a meeting with officials in Haifa, where eight people

were killed in a missile strike, Peretz promised that the army would continue to fight the Lebanese guerrillas to stop the attacks on northern Israel.

"We've no intention of stopping this campaign until the reality has changed," he said. "Whoever hit Haifa will pay a heavy price."

Peretz also urged Israelis to be strong, remain calm and have patience while the army continued its offensive to try to stop the rocket fire.

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Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia today donated £27million to Lebanon in response to a plea for help made by its prime minister Fuad Saniora, a Saudi official said.

The official said King Abdullah had ordered a fund transfer immediately.

The aid was aimed at "providing urgent relief to lessen the suffering of the Lebanese people in these difficult times," the official said in Riyadh.

On Saturday, Saniora urged Arab countries to provide assistance to his "disaster-stricken country".

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