

border zone. The resistance fighters took total control of these posts and held them for a number of hours. Several military vehicles were destroyed, while the resistance fighters took with them a tank, ammunition and light weapons when they withdrew. Reports from South Lebanon revealed that the Israeli occupiers didn't dare return to the Barachit post until hours after the guerrillas had left. Lahd's men flatly refused to go back at all.

On January 5th, according to Israeli admission, five SLA men died in a roadside bomb explosion near Markaba, northeast of Bint Jbail. Two SLA militiamen were killed and three injured in a resistance attack near Rihan in the north-central part of the occupied zone, on January 7th. More than 10 other resistance attacks occurred in the same week.

In January, the Lebanese National Resistance Front staged a total of 80 attacks on the Israeli occupation forces and the SLA, averaging between two and three attacks daily, in all parts of the occupied border zone, but most concentrated in the central and eastern areas around Bint Jbail, Marjeyoun and Hasbaya. The most frequent type of operation was attacks on enemy patrols and posts, using rockets and other weapons. There were also many explosions against enemy posts and patrols, as well as a number of ambushes and direct clashes with the enemy forces. In January, Katyusha rockets were also directed against Zionist settlements in northern Palestine on four different occasions, as if to reemphasize the failure of the Israelis' 1982 invasion of Lebanon under the false slogan of «Peace for the Galilee».

## ENEMY DEMORALIZATION

Signs of demoralization were rampant among the SLA militiamen in early January. Reports from South Lebanon told of rising friction between the Israeli occupation army and the SLA. One SLA officer told his Israeli commander that the Israelis promise to support them, but actually only laugh at them. Calling on his forty soldiers to resign, the SLA officer said he no longer trusted the Israeli army or its promises. Families of SLA men killed

in attacks refused to receive the Israeli soldiers who came to pay condolences. According to Lebanese security sources, 115 militiamen in the Bint Jbail area applied to resign from the SLA in the first week of January.

All this indicates a partial backfire for the Israeli policy of putting reactionary or ignorant Lebanese in the frontline posts controlling their occupied zone, in order to save Israeli lives. In truth, it is the SLA that takes the brunt of the casualties. Over 100 have been killed and 200 wounded since the Israelis withdrew to their self-proclaimed 'security zone' in June 1984. About one-third of these SLA casualties have occurred in the past few months, bringing the situation to a peak. According to the Israelis, over 300 SLA militiamen have deserted since September 1986. The Israelis term this a 10% desertion rate for they claim the SLA numbers over 2,500. However, independent observers estimate the SLA at about 1,500, which makes the desertion rate closer to 20%.

'Israel' is now paying SLA salaries in dollars in an attempt to avoid desertions and recruit new members. However, pure monetary incentive has proved to be insufficient even in crisis-ridden Lebanon, and much harsher measures are also enforced. In the eastern sector of the occupied zone, Israeli intelligence officers threatened the mayor of Shabaa that 50-70 youth from the town must join the SLA, or Shabaa would face a food blockade. In the western sector of the occupied zone, the Israeli occupation army imposed compulsory SLA service on the youth in Naqoura. Otherwise, they must pay 360,000 Lebanese pounds annually, to cover the salary of a militiaman. This made some Naqoura families decide to leave, because their sons did not want to join the SLA, but the Israelis then blocked them from travelling.

Following the mid-January visit of a high-level Israeli military delegation to the 'security zone', SLA positions in the central and western sectors were reinforced with tanks. More Israeli soldiers were placed alongside the SLA in posts along the dividing line between liberated and occupied Lebanon. New strategic outposts were set up on the northern edge of the occupied zone,

supervised by the Israelis at night and the SLA in the day. However, reports continued of SLA militiamen refusing to man certain posts where the Lebanese National Resistance Front had made attacks.

## WAR ZONE

The real extent of the Israelis' attempt to 'boost' the SLA, in order to save their own occupation, is seen in their horrendous treatment of the civilian population of South Lebanon. This only serves to reemphasize that it is not at all a 'security zone' that the Israelis have established, but a real war zone for continuing their policy of scorched earth, attrition and collective punishment against the southern villagers. The gross violations of human rights summarized below show clearly that the Zionists aim to empty the occupied zone of all patriots, if not all inhabitants - and even the UNIFIL - in order to keep it as a launching pad for their aggression against Lebanon as a whole.

Shelling is the favorite SLA/Israeli form of collective punishment. Hardly a day passes without the bombardment of villages and agricultural land, especially along the dividing line between liberated and occupied Lebanon. In January, there were 57 instances of such shelling, hitting over 40 different villages and towns, killing over twenty citizens, and destroying houses and crops. Some places were repeatedly hit. Maidoun, Jbaa and Jarjouh, lying north of major Israeli/SLA positions in the central and eastern parts of the occupied zone, were each shelled three to five times, as was Barachit, farther south.

On five different occasions in January, Israeli helicopter gunships raided villages, firing rockets and strafing with machine guns. Early in the month, two Israeli helicopters raided a village north of Shabaa. This was accompanied by a mini-invasion where a large force of the Israeli occupation army crossed the 'security' line, advanced eight kilometers and shelled areas where grapevines were planted. On January 4th, six Cobra helicopters spewed rockets on Qabrika and Kirbet Salim villages, north of Bint Jbail, wounding fifteen persons and