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THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE WAR OF THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS IN LEBANON 1985-1988

Mohammed Ahmed Fakak^{1,*}, Jassim Mohammed Khudhair²

^{1,2} University of Mosul / College of Arts/ Iraq. ¹mom_faf1992@yahoo.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7376-4016>,

²jasem.m.k@uomosul.edu.iq, <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5565-2391>

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Corresponding Author: Mohammed Ahmed Fakak

(mom_faf1992@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's stance on the War of the Camps in Lebanon (1985-1988), emphasising its diplomatic, humanitarian, and political actions. The discord, mostly among the Amal Movement and Palestinian factions, resulted in significant humanitarian issues within Palestinian refugee camps. Under King Fahd, Saudi Arabia continuously denounced violence and promoted ceasefires via Arab League channels and direct entreaties to Lebanese and Palestinian officials. The Kingdom released multiple comments advocating for national reconciliation, condemning Israeli meddling, and providing humanitarian assistance to trapped citizens. Saudi initiatives encompassed diplomatic participation in Arab League summits, urgent ministerial assemblies, and solicitations to the United Nations. The Kingdom also rendered direct humanitarian assistance, including food and medical supplies, and exerted pressure on international organisations to intervene. This study contends that Saudi Arabia's stance was not neutral but rather actively sought to limit the situation and avert additional regional turmoil. The Kingdom's position was consistent with its overarching objective of preserving Arab unity and reducing Israeli influence in Lebanon. The research employs original materials, such as official Saudi comments and Arab League decisions, to chronicle and examine the history and substance of Saudi engagement. The analysis reveals that Saudi Arabia was pivotal in aiding the Lebanese state and Palestinian people during this conflict, advocating for Arab unity and humanitarian assistance.

KEYWORDS: Saudi Arabia, War of the Camps, Palestinian Refugees, Lebanon Civil War, Arab League diplomacy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), Lebanon experienced multiple internal armed conflicts, notably the "War of the Camps," characterised by violent confrontations between the Amal Movement and Palestinian factions, particularly the Fatah Movement, occurring in various Palestinian camps in Beirut and the South from 1985 to 1988. This clash epitomised the intricacies of the Lebanese-Palestinian-regional discord during that period. The primary factors contributing to the commencement of the War of the Camps included the contest for influence in Lebanon, the Palestinian-Syrian conflict, and the security vacuum that Lebanon faced post-1982. Key phases of the conflict included the initial clashes in the Sabra and Shatila and Burj al-Barajneh camps between the Amal Movement and Fatah fighters in April 1985, the intensification of assaults and the stringent blockade of the Burj al-Barajneh and Shatila camps, the obstruction of food and medical supplies in 1986, and direct Syrian intervention to stabilise the situation following the escalation. Global condemnation of the 1987 camp siege and the subsequent de-escalation of hostilities in 1988 due to international and Arab diplomacy, as well as Lebanese-Palestinian public pressure. King Fahd bin Abdulaziz (1982–2005) advocated for the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, asserting that the Kingdom believes that safeguarding Lebanon's unity is essential for the cohesion of the regional nations. He acknowledged the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's ongoing endeavours to assist Lebanon in re-establishing the unity of its populace and sovereignty over its territory. King Fahd sent multiple calls to the Lebanese government and various factions to terminate hostile actions, encouraging all combatants to employ rationality, halt hostilities, and conclude the current conflicts in Beirut. He also implored people to transcend their divisions and fight the Israeli adversary to safeguard their nation and preserve their territorial integrity. The Saudi Cabinet denounced the bombing operations and urged Lebanese officials to heed the repeated requests for a truce. It implored them to exert maximum effort to resolve the persistent conflicts among the combatants via prudence, diplomacy, and foresight, underscoring the Kingdom's faith in these officials' capacity to attain the intended results.

1.1. Saudi Policy toward the Camp War in 1985

The security conditions in many Lebanese districts worsened in January 1985. Between January

3 and 18, 1985, violent confrontations occurred between the militias of the Progressive Socialist Party and the Lebanese Forces. Artillery bombardment struck the city of Aley, Souk el-Gharb, and the Iqlim el-Kharroub, Choueifat, and Mount Lebanon. On January 21, confrontations occurred between members of the Amal Movement and the Al-Murabitoun Movement on the periphery of Beirut. On January 24, certain neighbourhoods in eastern Beirut were subjected to shelling. In light of the worsening security situation, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah urged a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon. He underlined that the Kingdom believes that safeguarding Lebanon's unity is essential for upholding the cohesion of the regional nations. He expressed the Kingdom's ongoing commitment to assist Lebanon in re-establishing the unity of its populace and sovereignty over its region. On March 21, 1985, militias associated with the Phalange Party commenced a savage shelling of Palestinian camps in Sidon, while Israeli soldiers raided several villages in the south. In response to the worsening circumstances in Sidon, the Saudi Cabinet convened on April 1, 1985, to deliberate on the perilous developments in Sidon and the ongoing bombardment by the Phalange rebels targeting the city and its Palestinian camps. Following the session, Saudi Minister of Information Ali Al-Shaer made a statement to the Saudi Press Agency, Radio and Television, in which he said: "In light of the reports and information submitted to King Fahd from official sources regarding the overall current situation in the Lebanese crisis, the Cabinet reviewed, at the beginning of its session, the developments in the security situation in Lebanon and the intensification of fighting in some areas, particularly the city of Sidon, and the suffering of the city's residents and the residents of the camps there from acts of violence and indiscriminate shelling. The Cabinet expressed its hope that renewed efforts would lead to a halt to the bloodshed and a cessation of fighting in various regions. In view of the continued shelling by the Phalange Party militias and Israeli forces on the city of Sidon and the Ain al-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps, the emergency session of the League Council at the level of permanent representatives of member states began at the headquarters of the Arab League on April 8, at the request of Jordan, to discuss the developments in the situation in southern Lebanon and the Israeli aggression and violent artillery shelling by pro-Israel militias on the city of Sidon and the Palestinian camps in the city to which the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese people are

exposed. The Saudi delegate to the Council stressed in a speech he delivered at the beginning of the opening session that Israel and its affiliated militias are seeking a comprehensive explosion in Lebanon. He said that the Israeli enemy, after what it was exposed to at the hands of the national resistance in Lebanon, is now seeking to open a breach within the body of the resistance and the Lebanese army. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia contributed to drafting the statement issued by the Council, in which it condemned the arbitrary practices and brutal Israeli attacks on the cities and villages of the south and the Palestinian camps, and denounced the participation of the forces working for Israel in those practices and attacks, and stressed the need to support the Lebanese and Palestinian people in confronting these attacks, as the Council affirmed its support for the Lebanese government and army in confronting these practices targeting the residents of the south and affirming their presence in preserving Lebanon's unity, land and sovereignty, and thwarting all Israeli plans. The Council decided to provide all forms of support to the heroic resistance in southern Lebanon to strengthen its confrontation with the Israeli forces and their proxy forces. The Council decided to assign the Arab Group at the United Nations to consult and coordinate with the Lebanese government to raise this issue with the President of the UN Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to stop the attacks and practices of (Israel) and to protect Lebanese cities and villages and Palestinian camps. As the camp war and battles in Sidon entered their fifth week, and fighting began between Christian militias and the Lebanese army, and violent battles erupted in West Beirut on April 17, 1985, between the rival militias, particularly the Amal Movement and the Progressive Socialist Party on the one hand, and the Al-Murabitoun militias on the other in West Beirut, King Fahd appealed to the Lebanese leadership and various parties to end the aggressive practices. He asked all fighters to use reason, cease fighting, and put an end to the ongoing battles in Beirut, "to overcome their differences and confront the Israeli enemy to defend their homeland and protect the integrity of their lands". On the evening of April 18, the Saudi Royal Court issued a statement stating that King Fahd had received numerous phone calls and appeals from Lebanese and Palestinian leaders in the final hours of the evening of April 17, urging him to exert urgent efforts to halt the brutal and ongoing attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps and the Lebanese people in the south, and to curb the abuses

committed by some armed elements against citizens. In West Beirut, the King, following the news of these bloody tragedies with deep pain and out of his sense of Arab and Islamic responsibilities, appeals to the legitimate Lebanese authority and effective leaders at all levels to immediately exert efforts to halt these attacks and curb the aggressive practices taking place in Beirut, in order to preserve the lives, honor, and property of innocent Lebanese citizens. The King also calls on all conflicting Lebanese factions to renounce their differences and confront the brutal Israeli enemy as one in defense of their homeland, honor, and nation, and to preserve the unity of their land and people, until victory is decreed for them, God willing. With the resumption of violent fighting in Sidon and neighboring areas between April 19 and 22, 1985, and the Kataeb Party militias shelling the city and the Ain al-Hilweh and Mieh Mieh camps, the Saudi Cabinet reviewed the deteriorating situation in Lebanon. The Saudi Minister of Information stated that King Fahd chaired the Cabinet session on May 6, and that the Cabinet discussed the overall political and security situation. The current situation in Lebanon, and the developments in southern Lebanon, which the King is following with great interest, stated that the Council called for a cessation of fighting and battles and asked the Lebanese leadership to resolve the crisis and work to stop the violations being suffered by Palestinians in the camps there as quickly as possible. Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz called on the Lebanese to place the interests of their country above all other considerations. This came in an interview with the Kuwaiti magazine Al-Majalis, in response to a question about the means to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision towards it, which has recently taken a turn that threatens Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Crown Prince replied that the Kingdom has done everything in its power to stop the fighting among the people of one nation, "and we are continuing our efforts in this regard. We have rendered this support by engaging with multiple stakeholders in the Lebanese context and by reaching out to Presidents Hafez al-Assad and Amin Gemayel. We anticipate that our compatriots in Lebanon, as the Israeli disengagement approaches completion, would prioritise Lebanon's interests above all else and collaborate to address their nation's crisis. The Crown Prince asserted that it is their responsibility, emphasising the Kingdom's preparedness to assist the Lebanese in this endeavour, while emphasising that Lebanon is an

integral part of the Arab country and that Saudi Arabia's stance towards it has consistently been constructive. In early May 1985, the Amal Movement commenced military preparations to fight the Palestinian resistance and assert control over the Palestinian camps in Beirut, specifically the Sabra, Shatila, and Burj al-Barajneh camps. On May 19, violent confrontations occurred between the movement's militants and Palestinian militants within the Palestinian camps. The objective was to dominate the camps, and the movement successfully encircled them. The result of the confrontations, combat, and artillery bombardment between the Amal Movement and the Palestinians till May 24 was roughly 250 fatalities and 900 injuries. In response to the situation in Lebanon, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urged Arab nations to intervene to halt the bloodshed and safeguard Palestinian rights. King Fahd implored Lebanese leaders to take the initiative to cease hostilities and expressed his anguish over the ongoing violent conflicts surrounding and within the Palestinian camps. On May 24, the Saudi Royal Court released a statement indicating that the King had been monitoring recent developments in Lebanon, particularly the tragic violent confrontations between certain Lebanese and Palestinian militants in and around the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila, as well as subsequent events in the Burj al-Barajneh camp. The statement also addressed the artillery shelling, destruction, and bombings that affected the southern suburb and various areas of western Beirut, resulting in the deaths of numerous innocent civilians. The King articulated his profound sorrow and anguish regarding the persistence of these tragedies and acts of sabotage that undermine the human and mechanical resources that ought to be allocated to confront the Israeli adversary, rather than being directed against the Palestinians, who are guests on Lebanese territory and live under divine protection. In the sweltering climate of Lebanon, the King implored all warring Lebanese leaders to promptly cease hostilities with their Palestinian counterparts. The King, representing himself and the Saudi government, urged all allied nations to take action to cease the violence, safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people, and assist them in their rightful endeavour to reclaim their rights and attain self-determination and return to their homeland. The King expressed his expectation that all Lebanese officials would exert maximum effort to resolve the ongoing conflicts among the fighters through wisdom, diplomacy, and an understanding of the

implications, emphasising the Kingdom's confidence in their capacity to fulfil these aspirations. The official Saudi radio issued a statement urging a cessation of hostilities in the Palestinian camps to "thwart the designs of the Israeli adversary, which persists in its assaults on the Lebanese and Palestinian populations." Following the renewed artillery and missile bombardment by Amal Movement militants on the Sabra and Shatila camps in southern Beirut on May 26, 1985, the Saudi Cabinet denounced the shelling and urged the Lebanese leadership to heed the ongoing appeals for a suspension of hostilities. During its session presided over by King Fahd on May 27, the Cabinet received political and media reports regarding the worsening situation in Lebanon, highlighting the tragic violent confrontations between armed factions of the Amal Movement and Palestinians residing in various camps within Lebanese territory. These conflicts resulted in numerous fatalities and injuries among innocent civilians and combatants from both factions. The Cabinet denounced the assaults on Palestinian camps by Amal Movement militias and expressed its expectation that the Lebanese leadership would heed the Kingdom's repeated appeals, as well as those from various Arab and Islamic leaders, urging an immediate cessation of hostilities, an end to the bloodshed, and the preservation of remaining human, mechanical, and economic resources to confront their shared adversary and compel its complete withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Amal Movement militias besieged the Al-Bass camp near Tyre on June 2. The militias and the Sixth and Eighth Brigades of the Lebanese Army recommenced their missile bombardment of the Palestinian camps in Beirut using missiles, artillery shells, and tanks. The Saudi Foreign Ministry released a statement affirming that the ongoing shelling of the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra, Shatila, and Al-Bass constitutes a breach of Arab and international agreements. It cautioned Israel over the repercussions of persisting with this approach and urged all Arab and international entities and organisations to support the Kingdom in swiftly intervening to halt these assaults. It further urged international bodies and organisations to intervene to halt the massacres occurring against the inhabitants of these camps. The Foreign Ministry declared that the destruction of homes, the killing of children, women, and the elderly, as well as the detention of hundreds of civilians and their transportation to undisclosed sites constitutes a blatant violation of human rights.

On June 8, 1985, in Tunis, the emergency session of the Council of the League of Arab States convened at the foreign ministers' level, prompted by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to address the conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon amid ongoing bombardments by the Amal Movement and the Sixth and Eighth Brigades of the Lebanese Army, as well as the atrocities perpetrated against the inhabitants of these camps. A delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was led by Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal. Upon his arrival that evening, Saud al-Faisal conferred with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, regarding the recent happenings in the Palestinian camps in Beirut. He conducted multiple meetings prior to the commencement of discussions to reconcile differing perspectives and achieve a consensus to cease armed assaults on Palestinian camps in Lebanon, as well as to facilitate the organisation of Lebanese-Palestinian ties. The consultations led by al-Faisal concentrated on the feasibility of establishing an Arab committee to supervise the resolution of the current issues between the two parties. The ministerial conference commenced with a private session in which Yasser Arafat articulated the PLO's perspective on the occurrences in the Palestinian camps. Saud al-Faisal, the leader of the Saudi delegation, advocated for collaborative efforts to achieve a resolution that would terminate the conflict. He urged an urgent cease of hostilities in Lebanon to halt the murder of Lebanese and Palestinians in Beirut, expressing profound sadness over the atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinians. The Saudi minister urged the conflicting factions in the Palestinian camp regions to practise self-restraint and engage in amicable discourse, considering the cohesion of the national struggle. The emergency meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States persisted in its proceedings on June 9 during its second closed session. The conditions of the Palestinian camps and the suggested resolutions to terminate the conflict were examined. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal emphasised the necessity for all parties to make every possible effort to resolve the plight of the camps, engage in discussions over measures to safeguard the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, halt the slaughter, and address the threats to collective Arab action. A resolution was passed that demanded an immediate and complete ceasefire, the easing of the siege on the Palestinian camps, and the prompt withdrawal of the encircling forces from the areas adjacent to the camps. The statement also demanded the release of all detainees, compliance

with the principles of Arab chivalry, and the facilitation of International Red Cross and Red Crescent missions to access the camps for the transportation of the wounded, ensuring their safety, and delivering comprehensive medical assistance. Additionally, it called for the repatriation of the displaced to their homes and camps, the provision of urgent aid, and the establishment of necessary assurances to restore normalcy in Lebanon. In a statement to delegates from Al-Jazirah and Okaz newspapers, Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal remarked on the conclusion of the emergency session, asserting that the outcomes of this conference are favourable and beneficial. A resolution has been reached about the camps, and the Secretary-General of the Arab League will exert considerable effort to execute these decisions, thereafter presenting a report at the forthcoming League Council meeting on June 24. Saud Al-Faisal affirmed, in answer to a query from the Al-Jazirah newspaper delegate regarding the summit conference, that "this issue was indeed discussed and will be revisited in the forthcoming meeting of the Arab foreign ministers." June 24th. Amid escalating hostilities between Amal Movement militants and Palestinians at the Burj al-Barajneh and Shatila camps from June 1 to 9, which led to significant Palestinian casualties, the Saudi Cabinet convened on June 10. During this session, Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal delivered a succinct report on the outcomes of an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers held at the League headquarters in Tunis, addressing the Lebanese situation "in light of the unjust assaults on Palestinian camps by certain armed Lebanese factions in Beirut and its suburbs." In response to the unfolding events in Lebanon and the worsening conditions in the camps, King Fahd articulated his observations and expectations regarding the ramifications of the protracted violent conflicts that Lebanon has endured in recent years. The King reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to the safety of Palestinian refugees living in camps within Lebanese territory. He also declared Saudi Arabia's willingness to participate in any Arab assembly that addressed the Lebanese issue and sought prompt resolutions to halt the conflict in Lebanon. Between June 12 and 17, the security situation in Lebanon escalated violently, with intense clashes involving various medium and heavy machine guns, rocket launchers, and artillery occurring around the Burj al-Barajneh and Shatila camps, as well as in residential neighbourhoods in Beirut, the southern suburbs, and western Beirut. This compelled King

Fahd to condemn these actions and assaults on the Palestinian camps. In a speech on June 18, he stated that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are enduring damage and devastation in their camps, asserting that these actions must cease and that they require help and defence. The Saudi Crown Prince delivered a speech affirming the Kingdom's solidarity with Lebanon and condemned the killings occurring in the camps, stating: "It is heartbreaking to witness individuals committing murder, excessively aggressive, and killing children, the elderly, women, and even the wounded." He characterised these actions as barbaric and asserted that some perceive the liberation of Palestine as a project necessitating the slaughter of the Palestinian people and their cause, asserting that the events surrounding the camps constituted genocide in every sense, rather than oppression or war. The term genocide signifies: "Let those who wish to remain ignorant understand that the collapse of the camps and the massacre of their populace will not eradicate the Palestinian cause from the nation's conscience." The Palestinian struggle represents a profound obligation and a noble commitment. It is a cause that does not tolerate avoidance, manipulation, negotiation, deceit, or concealment. The dignity of the Palestinian is a responsibility borne by every Arab Muslim. Consequently, the Palestinian brethren can be guaranteed that their nation will persist until their rights to self-determination, repatriation, and the establishment of an independent state are actualised. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attended the emergency meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States at the level of permanent delegates in Tunis on June 29, 1985, to address the security situation in Lebanon, specifically concerning the Palestinian camps. The mission of the Kingdom was led by Abbas Faeq Ghazzawi, the Kingdom's ambassador to Tunisia. Two themes were addressed during the meeting: the Palestinian camps in Beirut and the emergency Arab summit convened by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which received consensus from the majority of Arab nations to deliberate on the Palestinian issue. Multiple choices were made, including the repatriation of the displaced, reconstruction of homes, release of all detainees, provision of humanitarian assistance to the camps, and ongoing efforts to secure a truce. The Arab nations have concurred to convene an extraordinary summit in Morocco on August 7 to address various Arab matters, including the situation in Lebanon. The Saudi Cabinet convened on August 5 to deliberate on Arab matters and political stances

within the Arab context. The report also investigated the situation of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, focussing on the killings and arrests endured by Palestinians. It demanded the cessation of hostilities in the camps and the termination of the siege enforced by the militias on the Palestinian camps. The discussion also included the holding of an emergency Arab summit in Casablanca, with King Fahd expressing optimism that the conference will provide favourable outcomes for the Arab nation and its critical challenges. The Saudi Council of Ministers designated Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, representing the King, to attend the emergency Arab Summit. Prince Abdullah arrived in Casablanca on the evening of August 6. Upon arrival, he issued a press statement articulating his satisfaction at attending the conference and relaying King Fahd's hopes that the conference would yield significant advantages for the Arab nation, encompassing all its countries and peoples, and that Arab leaders would advance towards realising the aspirations of the Arab populace. The Saudi Crown Prince engaged in extensive discussions before the inaugural session with the leaders of the Arab delegations, including Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait; Maaouya Sid'Ahmed Ould Taya, President of the Republic of Mauritania; King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan; and Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). He engaged in discussions regarding the Lebanese and Palestinian crises, the plight of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the conflicts and bombardments affecting their camps, and strategies to mitigate and counter the discord orchestrated against the refugees. The summit commenced on the evening of August 7 and concluded on August 9. Discussions were held regarding developments in the Lebanese and Palestinian matters. The conference's closing statement urged Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organisation to collaborate and coordinate efforts to safeguard the rights of the Lebanese and Palestinian populations. The conference articulated profound apprehension on the worsening circumstances in Lebanon and reaffirmed its solidarity with the Lebanese populace, its dedication to averting the fragmentation of Lebanon, and the significance of attaining stability and security in the region. Subsequent to the conference, the Saudi Crown Prince articulated that the outcomes of the extraordinary summit constituted a compelling rebuttal to those who presumed that inter-Arab disagreement would result in fragmentation. He

stated, "No Arab nation is untouched by the anguish of fraternal Lebanon, which remains engulfed in this deluge of blood, and no one is questioning the reclamation of occupied territory." Consequently, I assert that disputes regarding methods, regardless of their intensity, will not obscure our objectives. Although the paths may diverge, the objectives remain steadfast. Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal, who headed the Kingdom's delegation at the summit, informed Al-Madina newspaper after the meetings concluded that the final statement of the summit was highly significant and that its premise served as the basis for re-establishing unity within the Arab nation. He observed that the Kingdom had undertaken and was undertaking initiatives to reconcile Arab perspectives on addressing issues and promoting peace and harmony among Arab nations. During its session presided over by King Fahd on August 12, the Saudi Cabinet examined the favourable results of the summit and received detailed accounts regarding the Lebanese-Palestinian issue from the Crown Prince, who led the Kingdom's delegation at the meeting. The Cabinet determined, based on its observations and the statement released at the conference's end, that the summit successfully met its primary objectives and advanced the interests of the Lebanese and Palestinian causes, along with other significant challenges facing the Arab country.

1.2. The Saudi Position on the Developments of the Camp War in 1986

The hostilities between the Amal Movement and Palestinian combatants in the Palestinian camp regions resumed in early 1986. This war experienced a qualitative advancement in two dimensions. The initial development involved the escalation of the conflict beyond the Beirut camps and the southern suburb (Shatila and Burj al-Barajneh) to encompass the Rashidieh camp in the Tyre region, subsequently extending to the eastern area of Sidon, alongside the Palestinian advance from the Ain al-Hilweh camp towards the acquisition of the town of Maghdouche and several adjacent villages. The second factor was the intensification of the military and logistical blockade on the Palestinian camps in Tyre and Beirut, resulting in an extension of the protracted civil war in Lebanon. In January and February, a series of confrontations transpired within the camps, explosives were hurled at many residences, and numerous artillery and mortar shells were discharged upon the Palestinian camps by the Amal Movement militants. In response to the killings,

displacement, and unjust siege occurring within the camps, the Saudi Cabinet convened on March 3, 1986, to deliberate on the tragic events in southern Lebanon, the ongoing Israeli assaults on cities in the region, and the situation in the Palestinian camps in Beirut, Tyre, and Sidon. The Cabinet underscored the necessity of resolving the Lebanese crisis by fostering ongoing dialogues between Lebanese and Palestinian leaders to achieve solutions that promote unity, address security, economic, and social issues, and stabilise the situation to terminate the camp conflict. It urged foreign powers to facilitate the deployment of security or military personnel to separate the combatants within the camps and their vicinity. In support of the Lebanese government and populace, King Fahd mandated that the 28th of Ramadan, corresponding to June 5, 1986, be designated as an international day of solidarity with South Lebanon and the national resistance, pursuant to a resolution by the Lebanese government and the endorsement of the Arab League. This date marks the fourth anniversary of the Israeli incursion into Lebanon in 1982. The observance of this day involved Arab capitals collaborating with official institutions, unions, syndicates, local entities, and the engagement of Arab media. The Arab League resolved during its 83rd session to designate a week of solidarity with South Lebanon throughout all Arab nations and beyond. The Saudi embassies collaborated with the Arab League offices, Lebanese embassies globally, and the councils of Arab ambassadors to ensure extensive participation in this event. In light of the escalation of the Lebanese civil war and the intensification of hostilities across various Lebanese cities, coupled with the deteriorating security conditions in the Palestinian camps in Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut—characterized by the bombardment of residential areas adjacent to the camps and a significant number of casualties between June 6-15, 1986—King Fahd issued an appeal to the Lebanese populace, urging them to disarm and restore peace to Lebanon, "and to safeguard what remains of the Palestinian people until their return to their homeland." He emphasised that Saudi Arabia would exert every effort to conclude the civil war and re-establish peace in Lebanon, while continuing to support the nation in collaboration with its Arab counterparts. During the ongoing conflict within and surrounding the Palestinian camps at the close of June and the onset of July 1986, Israeli aircraft executed a succession of airstrikes on the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, located southeast of Sidon, and the Mount Lebanon area, east of

Beirut, from July 11 to 14, leading to fatalities, injuries, and property damage. This led the Saudi Cabinet to address the matter of hostilities between the Lebanese and Palestinians during its session on July 14. Lebanese Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Masoud, representing the Saudi Press Agency, announced post-session that the Cabinet, led by King Fahd, examined the forceful assaults executed by Israel on the Ain al-Hilweh camp in Sidon and on Mount Lebanon. He asserted that the Kingdom denounces this aggression and aspires for a resurgence of awareness among the Lebanese and Palestinians at all levels to cease hostilities, foster reconciliation, transcend divisions, halt the bloodshed and the loss of innocent lives, and achieve national unity and consensus, which is the King's call and objective in confronting the Israeli adversary present in the region. All Arab nations and those that are oppressively and forcibly seizing their territories. The Minister stated, "The Kingdom regards the Palestinian cause as the paramount issue and the principal Arab concern, which Saudi Arabia steadfastly endorses and will persist in its supportive stance under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)." On August 10, 1986, King Fahd lamented the unsuccessful goodwill endeavours attributed to sectarian strife and foreign interventions in Lebanon. He advocated for an end to hostilities and conveyed his assurance in the Lebanese people's capacity to reconstruct their nation and maintain its integrity. On September 14, 1986, King Fahd met with Lebanese Information Minister Joseph Skaff. The Lebanese Minister convened with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, in Jeddah, as well as with Lebanese Information Minister Ali Al-Shaer on September 15. During the discussions, they deliberated on Lebanese-Saudi ties and matters of mutual interest. The Lebanese Minister announced in a press statement prior to his departure from the Kingdom on September 15 that he discussed the situation in Lebanon with Saudi leaders and updated them on the status of the talks. The rescue mission, initially indicated by the ongoing meetings of the Lebanese government, highlights our consensus on the imperative of sustaining the dialogue process to attain the requisite reforms that will restore unity and coexistence among the Lebanese, eliminate regional barriers, and consolidate legitimate institutions. The Lebanese Minister stated that the Saudi Minister of Information conveyed King Fahd's unequivocal directives concerning matters pertinent

to Lebanon and its citizens, reflecting the King's commitment to diligently support the Lebanese peace process and promote all initiatives aimed at the reunification of the Lebanese and the liberation of the southern territory occupied by Israel. The Lebanese Minister conveyed his appreciation to King Fahd and the Crown Prince for their sincere support, which the Kingdom has demonstrated towards Lebanon and its citizens on multiple occasions and in various contexts. In light of the ongoing camp conflict and the eruption of violent confrontations between Amal Movement fighters and Palestinian combatants, resulting in numerous casualties in the Shatila and Burj al-Barajneh camps, as well as artillery bombardments affecting the southern suburbs of Beirut, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz affirmed that the Kingdom's policy is centred on reconciling the perspectives of the warring factions in Lebanon and advocates for solidarity to foster unity of purpose and thought during the period from December 4 to 31, 1986. He denounced the murders occurring within the camps and the assaults conducted by Israel against them. He enquired about the methods by which we might infer, rationalise, or elucidate the correlation between the Israeli air or naval assaults on Palestinian camps and the bombing, fatalities, and devastation occurring in proximity to the camps in Beirut and Rashidieh. He enquired: Is this reality simply a consensus or an accord against the Lebanese and Palestinians? He asserted that the siege on the camps and the indiscriminate bombardment, which fails to distinguish between genders, ages, or armed and unarmed individuals, not only contravenes fundamental positive laws but also violates divine principles. He stated that King Fahd has exerted and continues to exert every effort to terminate these violent catastrophes in Lebanon.

1.3. Saudi Support for the Besieged Palestinians and Efforts to Lift the Siege on the Camps and Stop the Fighting in 1987-1988

The Lebanese war persisted in multiple cities at the onset of 1987, marked by a perilous intensification of the camp conflict in Beirut, Tyre, and Sidon, alongside a significant decline in security circumstances within the Burj al-Barajneh and Shatila camps from January 15 to 21, 1987. On January 21, King Fahd urged the warring Lebanese factions to cease hostilities, deeming it unfeasible to resolve the Lebanese civil war under the cacophony of explosions and gunfire. In response to the individuals impacted and displaced by the conflict in the camps, King Fahd mandated on January 25,

1987, that the appropriate Saudi authorities transport 100,000 tonnes of flour and 50,000 tonnes of dates to Lebanon, for distribution by the relevant committees to the needy among the Lebanese and Palestinian populations. This royal donation was part of the in-kind assistance initiative mandated by King Fahd for Lebanon, encompassing all its demographics and sects, and serves as a genuine reflection of his ongoing humanitarian support for the Lebanese people. Ali Al-Shaer, the Saudi Minister of Information, announced that King Fahd's aspiration was to witness Lebanon recover from its decline and resume its active role in contributing to civilisation across various domains, while maintaining his support for the country at multiple levels. At the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, convened in Kuwait from January 26 to 29, 1987, King Fahd addressed the conflict in Lebanon, emphasising that the atrocities of killing, torture, and displacement inflicted upon the Palestinians not only violated fundamental secular laws but also transgressed divine laws and the tenets of chivalry and honour. He stated, "We have exerted, and persist in exerting, every effort with all parties to terminate these violent tragedies, from which solely the Israeli adversary, concealed between the two conflicting factions, derives advantage, along with all of fraternal Lebanon and the entire Arab nation." Following a meeting with Lebanese President Amin Gemayel at the conference on January 29, King Fahd expressed Saudi Arabia's endorsement of Gemayel's initiatives and his willingness to extend comprehensive political and economic support to Lebanon to aid its citizens in resolving the calamity affecting both the Lebanese and Palestinians. The Islamic Summit finished its deliberations on January 29, 1987, resulting in the issue of multiple resolutions, including those pertaining to the camp war. The initiative originated from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which advocated for an immediate ceasefire, insisted on the cessation of the blockade on Palestinian camps, and the repatriation of displaced individuals, while endorsing the League's endeavours in this matter and reaffirming its dedication to Lebanon's independence, sovereignty, and the integrity of its territory, populace, and institutions. It also underscored the necessity for the prompt and unconditional evacuation of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory. In early February 1987, tensions persisted in the Palestinian camp regions, characterised by artillery bombardments directed at the camps and adjacent neighbourhoods in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Hostilities

intensified in the Burj al-Barajneh and Shatila camps. This led the Saudi Cabinet, during its session on February 9, 1987, to call for the immediate cessation of the siege on the Palestinian camps, the availability of medical and food supplies, and the evacuation of the injured and ill. Saudi Minister of Information Ali al-Shaer informed a correspondent from the Saudi Press Agency that the Cabinet, under the Crown Prince's guidance, had examined a report concerning the situation in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and the plight of the Palestinian populace within these camps, exacerbated by conflict and blockade, which has led to suffering, starvation, and vulnerability to perilous epidemics. The Council was informed about the King's extensive communications with the relevant parties to cease the shelling and bombing of the camps and to lift the blockade imposed on them. The Saudi Council of Ministers reiterated its urgent appeal to the Lebanese authorities and active national forces to promptly address the escalating situation, exerting all possible efforts to lift the blockade on the camps and facilitate the entry of trucks carrying food and medical supplies to the residents, as well as evacuate the injured and ill to hospitals. The Council of Ministers urged the allied Arab and Islamic nations to provide substantial charitable support in this regard. On February 11, 1987, King Fahd mandated the preparation of substantial quantities of food and supplies for distribution to the inhabitants of the besieged Palestinian camps. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia endeavoured to exert international pressure on the Amal Movement militias to terminate the blockade they had enforced on the Palestinian camps and to permit the ingress and distribution of food and supplies to the inhabitants. On February 23 and 13, it escalated its diplomatic engagements with the United Nations to urge the UN Security Council to call for the cessation of the blockade on the Palestinian camps in the Beirut suburbs following the onset of starvation there. The Saudi discussions and engagements with global entities sought to elicit a statement from the international organisation advocating for a ceasefire and urging the relevant parties to permit UN agencies to recommence humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees. In reaction to the Saudi pressure on the camps, the UN Security Council urged an immediate halt to the conflict in Lebanon on February 14, emphasising the necessity of delivering food and medical supplies to the camps besieged by Amal Movement militias since late September 1986. The siege on the camps was alleviated, allowing for the delivery of 15

tonnes of bread and medical supplies to the Burj al-Barajneh camp. Saudi relief supplies, comprising two trucks filled with food provisions, also arrived at the Rashidieh Palestinian camp in Tyre, southern Lebanon, accompanied by ambulances that transported several injured individuals from the camp for medical care in Sidon and Tyre. The Saudi Cabinet monitored the initiatives undertaken to alleviate the blockade on the Palestinian camps. During the session presided over by Crown Prince Abdullah on February 16, the Cabinet received a succinct report from Prince Abdullah regarding the recent developments concerning the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, subsequent to the alleviation of the siege on certain camps and the influx of food supplies for their inhabitants. The Cabinet was informed about King Fahd's ongoing efforts and communications aimed at securing comprehensive safety for the residents of the Palestinian camps and ensuring their sustained access to food supplies from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other sources. The Cabinet reiterated the Kingdom's ongoing commitment to the security of the camps. King Fahd emphasised the necessity of collaboration among the Lebanese to facilitate the nation's recovery from its current crisis and expressed optimism that the initiatives designed to ensure security in Lebanon will yield positive outcomes. On March 12, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urged the warring factions in Lebanon to formulate an agreement to conclude the civil war and uphold Lebanon's Arab identity, territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty, through constructive dialogue intended to foster peace and stability across the nation under Lebanese national legitimacy. On March 23, King Fahd emphasised the necessity of resolving the Lebanese problem and averting its persistence, considering "the significance that Lebanon holds in that delicate area of the region." He asserted that any resolution to this situation must originate from the Lebanese populace, and that any external solution "will be destined for failure." He asserted that a conclusive resolution to the Lebanese dilemma could solely be attained through the establishment of Lebanese legitimacy, the facilitation of reconciliation, and the safeguarding of Lebanon's freedom, independence, and territorial integrity. Simultaneously, during the persistent conflict in Lebanese cities, Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami was slain on June 1, 1987, when a Lebanese army helicopter, which was taking him from Tripoli to Beirut, was bombed. The event also resulted in injuries to Lebanese Interior Minister Abdullah al-Rassi. The Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia denounced the death of Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami on June 1, 1987. An official Saudi source informed the Saudi Press Agency that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is deeply concerned and saddened by the assassination of Rashid Karami, the Lebanese Prime Minister, who was a victim of sedition and recognised for his patriotism and efforts to maintain Lebanon's unity and stability. The source indicated that the Kingdom condemns the assassination of Rashid Karami, asserting that it "holds accountable those malevolent actors undermining Lebanon's security for this incident and regards it as an irresponsible act." The Kingdom reiterates its appeal to all Lebanese to endeavour to restore security and peace in Lebanon and to maintain its national unity. King Fahd bin Abdulaziz transmitted a message of condolence to Lebanese President Amin Gemayel over the demise of Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami, stating: "His Excellency Amin Gemayel, President of the Lebanese Republic... I have received the news of the demise of His Excellency Prime Minister Rashid Karami, the Prime Minister of Lebanon. I extend my sincerest condolences to Your Excellency, beseeching God Almighty to confer His abundant mercy upon him, to provide him a place in His eternal gardens, and to bestow patience and comfort upon you, his family, and relations. We belong to God, and to Him we shall return. I extend my wishes for a swift recovery to His Excellency the Minister of Interior, Mr. Abdullah Al-Rassi. On June 8, 1987, during King Fahd's leadership of the Saudi Cabinet session, the King discussed the circumstances in Lebanon and the ramifications of the Lebanese crisis, which has resulted in the deaths of thousands, including national leaders and innocent civilians. In his discourse on the Lebanese tragedy, the King underscored that Lebanon's redemption from its plight is contingent solely upon the Lebanese leaders, provided they consolidate their efforts and harmonise their voices to rescue their nation, uphold its national unity and the solidarity of its populace, and enhance its economic potential to reinstate its previous security, prosperity, generosity, and stability. King Fahd expressed, "We maintain a profound hope that the Lebanese, across all sects, will unite as one to persist on the trajectory Lebanon embarked upon during its period of stability until the unfortunate events transpired." On June 11, Lebanese Information Minister Joseph Skaff conveyed Lebanon's gratitude, from both the government and the populace, for King Fahd's unwavering support and effective initiatives to assist Lebanon. In his interview with

the Saudi publication Al-Jazirah, he underscored the impactful role of Saudi Arabia in shaping policy. Regional and international initiatives aim to secure an agreement that will resolve the Lebanese crisis. He stated, "The Kingdom plays a crucial role at the political level to ensure Lebanon's security and stability, and to mitigate the dangers posed by the catastrophic circumstances stemming from the Israeli presence on its territory." Due to the initiatives undertaken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, other international powers, and the UN Security Council, the siege of the Palestinian camps south of Beirut, which persisted for 990 days, concluded. On the evening of January 20, 1987, the Amal Movement and the Sixth Brigade of the Lebanese Army vacated 17 sites surrounding the Shatila camp and 10 sites near the Burj al-Barajneh camp, which were subsequently transferred to the Syrian forces responsible for maintaining security in the area, in accordance with the initiative proposed by Minister of Justice Nabih Berri on January 15, 1988. The Palestinian combatants subsequently retreated inside the Palestinian camps. At the emergency Arab Summit in Algeria on June 6, 1988, led by King Fahd bin Abdulaziz, the Saudi delegation expressed concern over the troubling situation in Lebanon. King Fahd emphasised the need for solutions to alleviate the ongoing crisis and its dire consequences for the Lebanese Arab populace. He noted that Lebanon had endured a civil war lasting fourteen years, a harsh Israeli occupation of a valued section of its southern territory, and challenges stemming from interventions by external entities, aimed at undermining Lebanon's unity, independence, and sovereignty. On June 27, 1988, the Saudi Council of Ministers urged the combatants and disputants within and surrounding the camps to halt hostilities, relinquish their arms, and employ reason and conscience to protect the lives of innocent camp inhabitants and conserve human and material resources. From being squandered unlawfully.

2. CONCLUSION

From the above, the Saudi position on the camp war is evident as follows:

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- King Fahd followed the news of the bloody tragedies with deep sorrow. Driven by his sense of Arab and Islamic responsibilities, he appealed to the legitimate Lebanese authorities and influential leaders at all levels to immediately exert efforts to halt these attacks and curb the aggressive practices taking place in Beirut, in order to preserve the lives, honor, and property of innocent Lebanese citizens. The King called on all conflicting Lebanese factions to set aside their differences and confront the brutal Israeli enemy as one in defense of their homeland, honor, and nation, and to preserve the unity of their land and people.
- The Saudi Royal Court issued several statements and appeals to Lebanese and Palestinian leaders, urging them to exert urgent efforts to halt the ongoing attacks on Palestinian refugee camps and the Lebanese people in the south, and to curb the abuses committed by some armed elements against citizens in West Beirut. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on all Lebanese parties to set aside their differences, achieve national reconciliation, and stand against Israeli conspiracies against Lebanon. It affirmed its support for the Lebanese people and their legitimate government in their efforts to preserve Lebanon's security, sovereignty, and independence. As a result of the efforts exerted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, other international powers, and the UN Security Council, the siege of the Palestinian camps south of Beirut, which lasted (990) days, ended. On the evening of January 20, 1987, the Amal Movement and the Sixth Brigade of the Lebanese Army evacuated (17) positions around the Shatila camp and (10) positions around the Burj al-Barajneh camp, which were handed over to the Syrian forces tasked with maintaining security in the area, in implementation of the initiative launched by Minister of Justice Nabih Berri on January 15, 1988. Palestinian fighters also withdrew into the Palestinian camps.

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