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**Hezbollah condemns Foley beheading as ISIS savagery**

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BEIRUT: Thursday condemned the beheading of American photojournalist James Foley, describing the killing as a "savage crime" executed by terrorist groups.

cited "financial and military support of terrorist groups," paired with "political and media protection" and international silence over crimes committed by in and Syria, as the main causes behind the "terrible crime."

A statement was issued by Hezbollah's news office after a video of Foley's beheading was posted online Tuesday by militants.

In the almost five-minute long video, the group declares that Foley was condemned to death in retaliation for U.S. President Barack Obama's ordering of airstrikes against positions in northern Iraq.

Thursday also condemned an Israeli airstrike on Gaza that killed three senior commanders from the Qassam Brigade, saying that the assault reinforces the movement towards jihad and liberation.

"Past experiences have proven that the killing of the brigade leaders won't break the will of the resistance; instead it will increase the persistence and force behind the drive towards jihad and liberation," the statement said.

Hamas, which has control over the Gaza Strip, named the deceased as Mohammad Abu Shamaleh, Raed Attar and Mohammad Barhoum, the three highest-ranking casualties it has announced since began its offensive six weeks ago.

The attack was a clear sign of Israel's intention to hit the group's armed leadership after the latest attempts at a cease-fire failed.

All three, killed in the bombing of a house in the southern town of Rafah, had led operations against over the past

20 years, said.

expressed condolences to the families of the victims, lauding the martyrs for “sacrificing themselves in resistance to occupation and in defense of their families’ people and nation.”

reiterated its condemnation of ongoing Zionist crimes in Gaza, warning that “assaults are escalating brutally among a fatal Arab and international silence.”

The lack of international condemnation constituted a “protective umbrella for Zionist terrorism” and covered the continued assault that “targets all forms of life in Palestine,” the statement argued.

Following the collapse Tuesday of a 10-day cease-fire, the Israeli military appears to have ramped up its efforts to hit the leadership of Hamas’ armed wing.

The commanders targeted Thursday were the most senior men killed since November 2012, when the assassination of military chief Ahmed al-Jabari triggered an eight-day cross-border war. While says it has killed several hundred militants in the conflict, they have largely been frontline fighters, not the organization’s commanders.

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