
PRESSKIT

GEBRÜEDER BEETZ FILMPRODUKTION



LEBANON

BORDERS OF BLOOD

LEBANON

BORDERS OF BLOOD

A DOCUMENTARY BY GEBRÜEDER BEETZ FILMPRODUKTION HAMBURG AND ZYGOTE FILMS
1X90MIN, HD, 2020
KAN IN CO-PRODUKTION WITH WDR AND ARTE

LEBANON - BORDERS OF BLOOD

AS LEBANON TODAY IS ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE, A LOOK BACK INTO THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY EXPLORES HOW A SMALL REGIONAL CONFLICT DEVELOPED INTO A MAJOR GEOPOLITICAL CRISIS.

FIRST BROADCAST: ARTE 17 NOVEMBER 2020

SUMMARY

DOCUMENTARY LEBANON - BORDERS OF BLOOD

THE DOCUMENTARY 03

BACKGROUND 04

INTERVIEWEES 05

THE FILMMAKERS 07

CREDITS 08

CONTACT 09



LEBANON - BORDERS OF BLOOD

SYNOPSIS

Today, the very existence of Lebanon is in question. With rampant political corruption, hostility between sects and communities, the dominant presence of militias and warlords, and now, a global pandemic on top of an economic meltdown, Lebanon is in a fragile state. The ever resilient Lebanese continue to rise up, to stop yet another cycle that could quickly turn it into a failed state. For the past 15 years, Iran and its proxy Hezbollah, have been the controlling power in Lebanon. But Iran is not the first power that tried to rule the country. Lebanon's history is a sequence of regional players attempting to rule over it, leaving it in a state of destruction and a sea of blood. To understand Lebanon is to understand the Middle East; a boiling pot that erupts and engulfs the region and extends far beyond.

The story of Lebanon is one of ongoing tragedy. A march of follies orchestrated by heads of state, sects and militias. The Palestinians, French, British, Iranians, Syrians, Americans, Israelis and the Lebanese themselves, have all, at one point or another, contributed to the country's tragic history.

BROADCAST: 17 NOVEMBER, 8:15 PM, ARTE

For the Palestinians, Lebanon was a training ground for their battle to reclaim historical Palestine. For the Syrians, Lebanon was an inseparable piece of Greater Syria wrongfully taken by colonialist forces. For the Americans, Lebanon was their most disastrous and costly foreign intervention since Vietnam. And for the Israelis, Lebanon was their Vietnam.

Caught up in the chaos were the Lebanese themselves – made up of different sects, religions and ethnicities – writing their own history in a string of political assassinations, massacres and betrayals. To understand Lebanon is to understand the Middle East.

LEBANON - BORDERS OF BLOOD is about how a series of disastrous decisions can shape the destiny of millions. With an impressive array of interviewees from all sides, we uncover new revelation on some of the key events: the breakout of the Lebanese Civil War, the Israeli invasion, Sabra and Shatila massacre, the bombing of the Marines compound, the assassinations of Lebanon's presidents, the rise of Hezbollah, and until the widespread demonstrations in Lebanon today.

BACKGROUND

LEBANON - BORDERS OF BLOOD portrays the history of the country, told chronologically from WWI through the 1975 civil war to the catastrophic Beirut port explosion in August, 2020.

The documentary focuses on the connections to German and French history. It provides insights into today's proxy wars and the influence of the powerful Gulf States as well as the interests of global players—China, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Lebanon is a powder keg of 18 different, partially hostile religious communities in a de facto incapacitated state where every fourth inhabitant is a refugee. Once called the „Switzerland of the Orient,“ Lebanon appears as a western paradise trapped in the hell of conflicts in the Middle East. The film is extensively researched, with spectacular mined archives, the history of the region and its changing geopolitical influence by the West is reappraised.

A panorama of world politics opens up through the study of Lebanon. Starting from the country's precarious situation today, the film looks back at its history, which is surprisingly closely linked to us Europeans. French colonialism and its consequences, the two world wars leading to Lebanon's independence, the founding of the State of Israel, the escalation of the Middle East conflict, the Cold War, the terrorism of the 1970s on European soil and the Israeli policy of intervention -- all has had an impact on Lebanon. Looking at Lebanon therefore also means looking at the history of the French and the Germans - from a new perspective. Specifically, with the turmoil of the civil war and its aftermath, Europeans have left their mark on the country, which is stained by contradictions like no other.

Anyone visiting the capital Beirut will find themselves in a metropolis with a vibrant nightlife, breathtaking beaches, a lively arts and intellectual scene.

On the other side, the city has long been a center of attraction for terrorist organizations, a retreat for warlords and drug dealers, or a backdrop for secret service killing squads.

Lebanon is sitting on a huge mountain of weapons paired with an explosive mixture of conflicting interests of internal political parties and foreign powers. Sunnis, Shiites and Christians compete for power - often by force. They are supported by countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran, which in turn are fighting for supremacy in the region. But Israel, the Europeans and the United States also influence and fuel the country's internal conflicts.

Since the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, the country has been divided into two hostile political camps. The de facto conflict makes the state and its institutions unable to act or govern.

With the more recent Syrian war, which triggered large flows of refugees, this changed the political situation in Germany, France and all other European Union countries as it becomes clear that the situation in the Middle East is highly relevant for the world as a whole.

Since more than a million refugees have fled to Lebanon from the war zones in neighboring Syria, the situation there has also become more acute. Currently, these refugees account for approximately one quarter of the total population of Lebanon. In the shadow of the Syrian war, a new conflict with global implications is thus looming.



INTERVIEWEES

As we have been committed to tell the story of the conflicts in Lebanon, we chose to illuminate individuals who were involved and directly impacted by chaos and tragic events as they unfolded over the years. We are very proud of the unprecedented access that we achieved and the quality of the interviewees.

The research for this series was vast in its scope. It consisted of interviews with over 100 people — civilians, combatants, commanders, diplomats, intelligence officers, UN personnel, journalists, and policy-makers from ALL sides of the conflict in Lebanon.

Lebanese interviewees

Amin Gemayel - Christian Lebanese politician and president of Lebanon, 1982-1988. He succeeded his younger brother Bashir Gemayel in the presidency, when he was assassinated after only one week in office.

“Lebanon is a mosaic of parties, ethnicities. It’s the weakness of Lebanon and the strength of it.”

Hanin Ghaddar - a Shia Lebanese native, was a year old when the civil war began. She was a political activist and a journalist for Lebanese newspapers As-Safir, An-Nahar, and Al-Hayat, and more recently, longtime managing editor of Lebanon’s NOW news website. There she worked on a broad range of issues including the evolution of Hezbollah inside Lebanon’s fractured political system through Iran’s growing influence throughout the Middle East. Currently, Ghaddar is the Friedmann Fellow at The Washington Institute’s Geduld Program on Arab Politics, where she focus on Shia politics throughout the Levant.

Darina Al Joundi - Internationally recognized Lebanese-born French actress and director, Al-Joundi portrayed Mrs. Youssef on the popular American streaming series, “Homeland.” She recollects and shares stories of her childhood and youth in war-torn Beirut. During the civil war, her family fled to Baghdad where one of the father’s closest friends is a certain “Salem” -- later learning that this was in fact, Ilich Ramirez Sánchez, the terrorist known as “Carlos the Jackal.”

Étienne Saqr - also known as Abu Arz, is a Lebanese nationalist leader and founder of the right-wing Christian-lead militia and political party, Guardians of the Cedars. He and his militia lead the Lebanese war of independence against the Palestinians and Syrians in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 2000, he has been living in exile.

Palestinian interviewee

Imad Shakur - a long-time confidante of PLO leader Yasser Arafat, and his chief adviser on Israeli Affairs during and after the Lebanese War, he tells the inside story of the evacuation of Palestinian leaders from Beirut in 1982.



INTERVIEWEES

Israeli interviewee

Tzipi Livni – Former Israeli Foreign Minister (Minister in various capacities, 2001-2009). Livni was a member of the cabinets of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

German interviewee

Volker Schlöndorff— Film director of the novel of the same name “Circle of Deceit” by Nicolas Born, is about a war reporter on assignment in 1981 Lebanon, while the civil war still raging. The film was set in the actual locations of a completely destroyed Beirut. Schlöndorff won an Oscar for his film “The Tin Drum.”

“In 1962, Beirut was truly the Switzerland of the Orient. There were the nightclubs, there were the expensive restaurants, there were the expensive hotels, which by the way, we could not afford.”

U.S. Interviewees

Terry Anderson – an American journalist stationed in Beirut who reported for the Associated Press. In 1985, he was taken hostage by Hezbollah militants and held in captivity for six years and nine months, before his release in 1991.

Ryan Crocker - A leading American diplomat who served in the Middle East since the 1970s. He was a U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon, 1990-1993. President George W. Bush called him “America’s Lawrence of Arabia.”

Thomas L. Friedman – is an internationally renowned author, reporter, and foreign affairs columnist for The New York Times--the recipient of three Pulitzer Prizes and the author of six bestselling books, among them From Beirut to Jerusalem which chronicled his days as a reporter in Beirut during the Lebanese Civil War and in Jerusalem through the first year of the Intifada.

“We study these political science terms in college, ‘anarchy’, but until you’ve seen a car driving backwards 50 miles an hour to get away from a bombing scene or fighting, or to escape a militia, you actually don’t know what real ,anarchy’ looks like.”

THE FILMMAKERS

DUKI DROR

Born in Tel Aviv and educated at UCLA and Columbia College in Chicago, Duki Dror is today one of Israel's most prolific documentary filmmakers. His extensive oeuvre - his personal films, character-oriented and experimental documentaries, and his unique artist biographies - have brought him international attention and success. Drors are distributed worldwide and are shown and awarded at numerous festivals. His recent successes confirm his international presence.

Filmography (Selection)

- 2002 Raging Dove (Sundance Channel)
- 2014 Partner With The Enemy
- 2016 Down The Deep, Dark Web (France 4)
- 2017 Inside The Mossad (on NETFLIX)

REINHARDT BEETZ

Reinhardt Beetz has been working for over 20 years as an editor, producer and director for ARD, ZDF, ARTE, NDR, MTV and various international broadcasters.

After studying film in Hamburg, he spent one and a half years in the USA, where he worked on numerous documentary film productions for Discovery Channel. His special focus is on the development of scenic primetime TV multi-part productions for the national and international market as well as on format development and implementation of new internet/TV formats.

Filmography (Selection)

- 2017 Leningrad Symphony (NDR, ARTE, ORF, NRK)
- 2018 We Are The Half World (WDR, NDR/ ARTE, BR)
- 2018 False Confessions (NDR)
- 2019 Outcast - The Persecution Of The Huguenots (NDR/ARTE, RBB, WDR Bildung)

DANA WOLFE

Dana Wolfe is a five-time Emmy Award winning Canadian-born American journalist, television and debate producer.



CREDITS

SCRIPT:	Duki Dror, Reinhardt Beetz Itay Landsberg Nevo, Dana Wolfe	EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:	Reinhardt Beetz, GBF
DIRECTOR:	Duki Dror	EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:	Duki Dror ZYGOTE
RESEARCH:	Lior Amir Barmatz, Daniela Reiss Razon, Hagit Ben Yaakov, Juliane Hribar	HEAD OF PRODUCTION:	Rebecca Zaubel GBF
DOP:	Ron Katzenelson, Matthias Bolliger, Matthew Reber	HEAD OF PRODUCTION:	Ali Adin ZYGOTE
MOVIE EDITING:	Joelle Alexis, Dana Wolfe, Gal Goffer, Jens Greuner	SENIOR PRODUCER:	Nadine Neumann GBF
MUSIC:	Frank Ilfman	SENIOR PRODUCER:	Liat Kamal Eshed ZYGOTE
SOUND DESIGN:	Ronen Nagel	EDITORIAL OFFICE (KAN):	Gili Gaon
GRADING:	Ahron Peer	EDITORIAL OFFICE (WDR):	Inbal Petel
SOUND DESIGN:	Erez Levi, Pierre Brandt, Sascha Prangen		Christiane Hinz
NARRATOR:	Gerhart Hinze		Thomas Kamp

BROADCAST: 17 NOVEMBER, 8:15 PM, ARTE

CONTACT

gebrueder**beetz**
FILMPRODUKTION

Reinhardt Beetz
Gebrüder Beetz Filmproduktion Hamburg GmbH & Co. KG
Eppendorfer Weg 93a
[D] 20259 Hamburg
Germany
r.beetz@gebrueder-beetz.de
T +49 40 414 94 57 0

in coproduction with

 ZYGOTE FILMS