

Netanyahu Condemns Syrian Massacre of Civilians

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed “revulsion” over the ongoing massacre of innocent civilians by forces of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

“Iran and Hezbollah are an inseparable part of the Syrian atrocities and the world needs to act against them,” Netanyahu said.

Most of the at least 108 people killed in the Syrian town of Houla were civilians, according to the United Nations’ Human Rights office, and entire families were shot in their homes while fewer than 20 were killed by artillery and tank fire.

“Part of the victims had been killed by artillery shells, now that points ever so clearly to the responsibility of the government. Only the government has heavy weapons, has tanks, has howitzers,” Reuters reported U.N. peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous as saying. “But there are also victims from individual weapons, victims from knife wounds and that of course is less clear but probably points the way to the (pro-Assad) shabbihas, the local militia.”

Lasous revealed strong suspicions that the shabbihas were involved in the tragedy in Houla. He noted similarly “very strong rumors” that in other places in other instances of extreme violence they were involved.

“When you look at the situation from the ground you see a number of military and security forces who are in uniform but you see also a substantial number of people who are dressed in civilian clothes,” he told reporters, “yet are heavily armed with machine guns and all that.”

The United States has expelled Syrian diplomats to protest the

May 25 massacre. U.S. allies Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Canada followed suit.

“Today the United States informed the Syrian Chargé d’Affaires Zuheir Jabbour of his expulsion from the United States. He has 72 hours to leave the country,” State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said in a statement. “There are also reports that many families were summarily executed in their homes by regime forces. We hold the Syrian government responsible for this slaughter of innocent lives We encourage all countries to condemn the actions of the Assad regime through similar action.”