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## Cracker weather

Temperatures exceeded 24C in Christchurch yesterday, prompting one family to take advantage of the perfect weather with a walk in the hills, followed by gelato and a stint at the Margaret Mahy playground.

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Pictured: From left, Tomas, 6, Pascuala, 11, and Antonina, 9, enjoy ice cream during yesterday's unseasonably warm weather.  
PETER MEECHAM/THE PRESS



# Ceasefire in name only

Shortly after the lull in fighting in Iran took effect, Israel launched strikes in areas of Lebanon

**MIDEAST WAR**  
**Anneke Smith**

When US President Donald Trump announced a two-week ceasefire in the Iran war no-one was thinking about a fly on the wall – Lebanon.

Much of the focus of the war so far has been on the brokering of a period of no bombs and the economic fallout of Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

There was hope the strategic shipping lane would reopen – flooding oil back into the global supply chain – but Iran has shut the strait – again – in response to Israeli attacks against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon.

The Associated Press has reported the strikes in commercial and residential areas of Beirut had amounted to the deadliest day in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war with nearly 200 people killed and hundreds wounded.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu has been clear his view is the ceasefire deal doesn't cover fighting against Hezbollah.

Former New Zealand prime minister and member of global leadership group The Elders Helen Clark said it was a perilous situation.

"The ceasefire is extremely fragile. The Pakistan prime minister has gone on the public record, including tweets directly from his account, saying ... he absolutely believes he brokered a ceasefire covering Lebanon and this has now become a huge issue because Israel has stepped up attacks on Lebanon."

The ceasefire is predicated on a 10-point peace plan proposed by Iran that suggests, among other things, "complete cessation of the war on Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen".

Clark said given key players in the region had different understandings of what – and who – the ceasefire covered, it would be up to America to exert its influence

over Israel to secure peace. "The US wants out of Iran crisis. The fact that they have put the vice-president, JD Vance, who is widely assumed and almost certainly opposed to the war in the first place, in charge of the negotiations, means the US wants a deal."

"When does the US bare its teeth and say you can't do this, we arm you, we fund you, you're wrecking our ceasefire. Stop it. When do they say that? The best hope today is that JD Vance is involved because he wants out, he wants a deal and he's in charge of the negotiation."

Clark, who has been highly critical of the coalition's positioning on issues like Palestine and Aukus, believes New Zealand should have "called out" the US and Israel's initial attacks on Iran at the end of February.

"Given they're not taking any leadership position on any of these issues, they could clearly tag along with the strong voice of [French president] Emmanuel Macron,

good friend of New Zealand, and say the most effective way of ensuring this ceasefire thrives is that it covers Lebanon."

France, Canada and the United Kingdom are among a group of countries that have issued a joint statement calling on all sides to implement the ceasefire, including in Lebanon.

At the time of writing, New Zealand had not signed up to this statement, though its understood the prospect of doing so remains on the table. "We have been party to the negotiations that the UK led last weekend and our officials continue to talk and work with them so it just will be maybe a timing issue and ultimately a decision for Mfat and foreign affairs. I wouldn't read too much into it," Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said yesterday.

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