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Letter to Readers

International Viewpoint needs $\hat{a}, \neg 3,670$

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As a unique source of analysis during the crisis in Lebanon, the readership of InternationalViewpoint.org has swelled over the summer, forcing further development in the technology that underpins the site. We urgently need small and large donations to meet the growing demand.

Last year IV promised readers that, with the right financial support, we could double the readership to 250,000 visits a year by the start of next year. We have hit that target early. 700 visitors now come to the site each day. Even this is a reduction from the 1,000 a day our system was counting before we found a way to ignore visits by machines to the site.

The rising readership is largely driven by the readers' demand for analysis of the conflicts and struggles like those in the Middle East. Over the summer we have had a double-sized publishing volume, placing our translators and web team under some pressure. More translations, of course, also raise our costs.

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Hitting that readership target forced us to bring forward plans to upgrade the site. Over the last month the software that powers the site has undergone a major upgrade, which has allowed us to optimise the design. The new system makes the design and writing of articles more efficient. It has improved performance slightly, and has allowed us to ignore some automated requests from machines.

However, the upgrade solves only some problems, and it produces new tasks for us, including training up our volunteers in the complexities of the new system. Over the last 3 months, readership of the site has risen 38%. Since the same resources are serving many more people, the extra demand means the site becomes slow: 63% of web sites are faster.

All of this would be enough reason for us to ask for more donations.

However, we are also asking for readers to support us in producing two new publications on the Middle East. We need help to produce a magazine-format collection of the articles we have recently published about the Middle East for activists around the world to use in their campaigning work. We have also decided to produce our first book: International Viewpoint has started to prepare a collection of the most important Marxist writing about the Middle East over the last decades, including documents to reflect the views of the Fourth International, Matzpen (the defunct Israeli socialist organisation) and of Arab socialists.

Each year, International Viewpoint needs £5,000 in donations. So far, we have received just £1,330. If we can raise £2,000 by the end of September, then we can complete the site upgrade and produce magazine-format special issue that our activists need so much. If we can raise the remaining £1,670 by December, then we can go ahead with the production of this amazing collection of Marxist writing on the Middle East.

If you can donate £100 or more, then we will give you a copy of this impressive new book as a token of our thanks.

Make your gift today

To donate online, click on the 'Make a Donation' button on the left hand side of the internationalviewpoint.org

website.

By post, send cheques payable to International Viewpoint, PO Box 112, Manchester M12 5DW, Britain.