



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah December 29, 2025 – January 5, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets to enforce the November 2024 ceasefire agreement and to prevent the organization's renewed military buildup. The forces attacked a Radwan Force training compound and eliminated two Hezbollah operatives.
- ▶ Hezbollah's secretary general called for arming the Lebanese army so it could confront "enemies" and expressed pride in the organization's ties with Iran.
- ▶ The president of Lebanon expressed cautious optimism about preventing renewed escalation, reportedly stemming from his understanding that for the time being, the American president and the Israeli prime minister had agreed not to carry out large-scale attacks in Lebanon because they were focused on the possibility of taking action against Iran.
- ▶ The Lebanese prime minister said the weapons Hezbollah would hand over to the state would not be thrown into the sea or transferred to Israel. According to reports, the commander of the Lebanese army is expected to announce the completion of the first phase of disarmament south of the Litani River at a cabinet meeting on January 8, 2026, although "Lebanese military sources" admitted that Hezbollah had not fully withdrawn from the area.
- ▶ Iran has reportedly increased oversight of the transfer of funds to Hezbollah and is setting priorities for resource allocation.
- ▶ Criticism was voiced in Lebanon over Hamas' refusal to hand over its medium and heavy weapons to the Lebanese army, after Fatah handed over large quantities of weapons in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp.

Israel-Hezbollah Tension

The IDF

- ▶ This past week the IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets to enforce the November 2024 ceasefire agreement and prevent Hezbollah's renewed military buildup. The forces

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

attacked a training and instruction compound used by the Radwan Force and Hezbollah military facilities in south Lebanon, and a Hezbollah terrorist operative was eliminated in the al-Jmaijmeh area of south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, December 29, 2025–January 4, 2026). The Lebanese ministry of health reported two killed and four wounded in the Israeli attacks (Lebanese News Agency, December 29, 2025–January 5, 2026). Hezbollah announced that a "military operative" and a member of the Islamic health organization had been killed in an IDF attack in the al-Jmaijmeh area of south Lebanon (South Lebanon—Watching the Enemy Telegram channel, January 4, 2026).²

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem delivered a speech for the sixth anniversary of the elimination of the former Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani and the former commander of Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. He said the organization wanted Lebanon to be a sovereign, free, independent, strong state, and called for dialogue and national unity in the face of "enemies," prioritizing the end of Israel's "aggression" and its withdrawal from Lebanon, the release of "prisoners" held by Israel and the rebuilding of the country. He also noted the need to support and arm the Lebanese army so it could "confront enemies" and criticized those who "justify IDF aggression" and did not participate in "resisting" it, and those who he claimed "submit to American patronage and promote Israel's right to occupation." He said he was proud of Hezbollah's relationship with Iran, which he said only gave to the "resistance"³ and took nothing, in contrast to the United States, which he claimed interfered economically and politically in Lebanon's internal affairs. He added that the sacrifices in the "resistance axis"⁴ had not weakened but rather strengthened it, calling Lebanon a "model of sacrifice" thanks to the "resistance–army–people" triangle. He claimed the "struggle" against Israel was "a coordinated regional effort" of not only Lebanon, but the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, Iraq and Yemen (al-Manar, January 3, 2026). "Informed sources" reported that Qassem did not address events in Venezuela due to "security considerations." They said the speech had been prerecorded and there was enough time to

² For further information about the Islamic health organization, one of Hezbollah's social institutions, see the July 2019 ITIC report, [The Islamic Health Organization: Hezbollah institution providing health services to Hezbollah operatives and the Shiite population in general as a means for gaining influence and creating a Shiite mini-state within Lebanon](#)

³ The Palestinian terrorist organizations whose objective is to destroy the State of Israel.

⁴ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

reedit it, but it had not been, lest the logistical arrangements involved would be detected by Israel and Western intelligence agencies (*al-Diyar*, January 4, 2026).



Na'im Qassem gives his speech (al-Manar, January 3, 2026)

► "Sources close to the Amal–Hezbollah alliance" said Qassem's speeches reflected the strategy of absolute adherence to the concept of "resistance" and refusal to surrender, while attempting to redefine the organization as a "resistance" movement⁵ defending Lebanese sovereignty within a national defense strategy framework, while reducing its regional role and distancing itself from the concept of "the unity of arenas." According to the "sources," the strategy is accompanied by intensive political discourse with Arab and other international partners, including Egypt and Turkey, and by presenting realistic visions to enable internal and external understandings (*al-Diyar*, December 30, 2025).

► Hezbollah figures voiced opposition to negotiations with Israel, accusing Israel of continued "aggression" and of failing to meet its commitments to the ceasefire agreement. They reiterated that the "resistance" did not intend to disarm or surrender, despite international pressure:

◆ Hassan Ezzedine, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Lebanon and the "resistance" had met their commitments to the ceasefire agreement, while Israel was evading its obligations. He said the Lebanese government had to fulfill its responsibilities, including the release of territory and prisoners, halting the attacks and launching reconstruction, and take an unambiguous international stance, including granting the Lebanese army full authority to defend sovereignty and return residents to the border villages. He said construction had to be accelerated to prevent Israel from exploiting various situations, adding that the public was prepared to return to the area with even minimal conditions (*al-Diyar*, January 2, 2026).

⁵ Terrorist movement.

◆ Ali Miqdad, also a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed Hezbollah had regarded itself as "Lebanon's defender" since 1982, and the sacrifices of the "shaheeds" were meant to ensure the state's freedom, sovereignty and independence, not to surrender to Israel. He claimed the organization had fully met its commitments to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the ceasefire, while Israel had failed to implement the agreement's provisions and continued to violate Lebanese sovereignty. He added that the organization did not intend to be drawn into internal conflicts and alleged the "resistance" was a "stabilizing and unifying factor" (Lebanese News Agency, January 2, 2026).

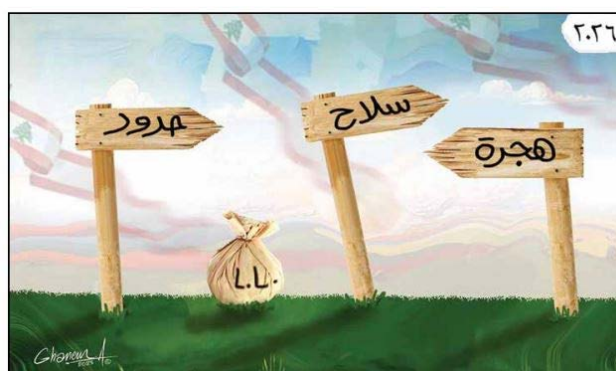
◆ Hussein Jishi, also a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed the Lebanese president, prime minister and military command had made clear there was no evidence of violations south of the Litani River, and now Israel had to withdraw from the "occupied territories" and halt the attacks, since sovereignty began with the "liberation of land" and deterrence, not diplomacy alone. He said Resolution 1701 applied only to the area south of the Litani River, any discussion beyond that was an internal matter to be decided as part of a national defense strategy, and calls to restrict the "resistance's" weapons outside beyond that were unrealistic and served foreign agendas (Lebanese News Agency, January 3, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun continued to express his confidence that the danger of imminent war had significantly declined. Meeting with academics, he said the coming days promised a more stable atmosphere for Lebanon and greater hope for the future. He added that "the winds of war have grown more distant," but had not disappeared completely, and efforts continued with "friendly and sister states" to fully neutralize the threat of war (Lebanese presidency Facebook page, December 31, 2025). A "senior source" told Hezbollah's daily *al-Akhbar* that the president based his remarks on information received from high-level international organizations and Western embassies, according to which the American president and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had agreed at their last meeting to attack Iran if it did not meet American demands, but for the time being would not carry out large-scale attacks on Lebanese territory. However, "sources" said Lebanon's "neutrality" depended on Hezbollah's not intervening, as any intervention would be met with extensive Israeli attacks, particularly in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia and the Beqa'a Valley (*al-Akhbar*, January 5, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the government had taken action to prevent escalation and ensure a full Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. He said Lebanon would spare no effort to halt Israeli attacks, claiming the state was not involved in regional "[resistance] axis" politics (LBCI, January 1, 2026).

► "Sources" reported that the upcoming meeting of the ceasefire monitoring committee, expected to take place on January 9, 2026, would be attended only by military representatives, after two meetings in which civilians led the Israeli and Lebanese delegations, and that no meeting involving civilian officials had been scheduled at this stage. According to the "sources," the decision was the result of "organizational considerations" and the unavailability of some participants, and a new date for a broader meeting would be set later (LBCI, January 1, 2026). "Sources" also linked the decision to an American desire to prevent France from playing a larger role in the talks after the inclusion of civilian representatives, and therefore the meeting was again limited to military personnel (*al-Diyar*, January 5, 2026).



Challenges for Lebanon, 2026: emigration, weapons, borders, the Lebanese currency
(*al-Joumhouria*, December 31, 2025)

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army announced that to maintain order during New Year celebrations, 19 Lebanese and two Palestinians were arrested and transferred for investigation. The army said security forces carried out raids on the homes of wanted individuals in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut and in north Lebanon, and seized a large quantity of weapons. The move reflected an attempt by the army to demonstrate control and enforcement even in sensitive areas effectively controlled by "armed groups," and to send a message of deterrence and the preservation of internal stability during a tense period (Lebanese army X account, January 1, 2026).



**Lebanese army soldiers patrol Beirut during New Year's festivities
(Lebanese army X account, January 1, 2026)**

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL claimed in a statement that during a patrol in the Kfar Shuba area, UN forces were shot at in two separate incidents, with no casualties or damage. According to UNIFIL, the shots were fired from an IDF position south of the Blue Line and only stopped when a request was sent "via communication channels." UNIFIL had reportedly notified the IDF of the patrol in advance, adding that such incidents occurred from time to time and were becoming "concerning pattern" (UNIFIL Telegram channel, January 2, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah⁶

Disarmament

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam again stated that Hezbollah's weapons had to be in the hands of the state. He dismissed rumors that the weapons would be thrown into the sea or transferred to Israel, calling them "baseless claims." He also downplayed assessments regarding the possibility of an internal Lebanese confrontation, noting that Lebanon had already endured wars and civil wars, and he did not believe anyone in the country wanted more fighting (LBCI, January 1, 2026).

► Lebanese Minister of Information Paul Morcos said the commander of the Lebanese army, Rodolph Haykal, was expected to announce the completion of the first phase of the weapons-limitation plan at the next cabinet meeting on January 8, 2026. He added that the army had many needs, but despite the limited support it received it was performing its duties (LBCI, January 3, 2026). Reportedly, Haykal's briefing is expected to confirm the practical completion of the first phase of the plan for a state monopoly on weapons, but will note that it has not been completed in areas outside the government's direct control, namely Israeli-controlled

⁶ For further information, see the December 2025 ITIC report, [Hezbollah: One Year After the Ceasefire](#)

points in south Lebanon and the IDF's firing range outside some of the villages near the border. Meanwhile, the army intends to implement the plan north of the Litani River, but no timetable can be set without cooperation from Hezbollah, which could lead to renewed political, military and economic pressure on Lebanon (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, January 5, 2026).

► Despite the expected announcement, "Lebanese military sources" admitted that there were growing signs that Hezbollah had not fully withdrawn from south of the Litani River, but had instead redeployed in a manner which preserved parts of its facilities, primarily those underground, while Israel continued its attacks on the grounds of preventing "reconstruction of [military] capabilities." The "sources" said that although many "assets" had been dismantled and confiscated and smuggling routes exposed and shut down, it did not guarantee that all underground layers had been uncovered. That was due to the topography, which favors those intimately familiar with the terrain and Hezbollah's extensive experience in fortification and concealment. It was noted that the assessment in Lebanese security was that the organization was not returning to overt activity south of the Litani River, but was maintaining a limited and dispersed logistical presence in the form of warehouses, movement routes and operatives in civilian clothing (Aram News, December 30, 2025).

► Therefore, "sources in the Lebanese government" said that Egypt, Qatar and Turkey had sent Hezbollah messages described as "last-chance advice," according to which the organization had to transfer its weapons to the state to prevent a possible Israeli attack which could deepen the rift between the organization and most of the Lebanese public and the international community. According to the "sources," the messages were sent because of growing regional and international pressure and warnings that continued possession of weapons outside the state framework could lead Lebanon into diplomatic and economic isolation and even ignite a military confrontation (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 1, 2026).

► "Sources close to Hezbollah" confirmed Qassem's statements that the organization would consider disarming as "suicide," since, they claimed, a "state monopoly on weapons" was a disguised Israeli-American project. They said the second phase of the plan would not be discussed as long as Israel had not met the preconditions, i.e., withdrawal from five positions in south Lebanon, resolution of the issue of Lebanese prisoners held by Israel and a halt to daily attacks. The sources called on various countries to exert pressure on Israel as well and not only on Lebanon, claiming bias on the part of the international community (*al-Diyar*, January 3, 2026).

► An "official Lebanese source" said it was generally believed that a broad Israeli war against Lebanon was not expected at this time, and that the time-frame allotted for concentrating weapons exclusively in state hands had been extended to allow the Lebanese army to devise mechanisms to ensure implementation of the plan. However, in the source's assessment, Israeli attacks would continue and possibly even escalate and deepen damage to Hezbollah's structural arrays. The source added that the time-frame had been extended to allow the army to expand its deployment south of the Litani River and stabilize its positions, in cooperation with UNIFIL, and to neutralize Israeli claims regarding weapons caches and the presence of armed forces in the area (al-Anbaa', January 2, 2026).

► A "former Lebanese military source" said that the second phase of the disarmament plan was expected to be easier to implement than the first phase, contrary to prevailing assessments. According to the "source," the geographic and demographic differences between areas south of the Litani River and to the north might facilitate implementation. He added that would lower the risk of a broad Israeli war, although it did not rule out continued targeted attacks, based on an assessment that Hezbollah's core assets, long-range precision missiles and UAVs, were located mainly in the Beqa'a Valley and in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, which are densely populated areas (al-Anbaa', January 4, 2026).

Hezbollah's Economic Challenges

► "Sources close to Hezbollah" noted that a gradual but significant change was taking place in the organization's relationship with Iran. Tehran, which was an "open financier" for the organization, has become a crisis manager connecting the flow of funds primarily to priorities and with tight oversight. According to the "sources," recent discussions between Iran and Hezbollah focused less on the amount of money and more on what would be funded, what would be cut and how the organization's commitments would be reorganized, in light of mounting economic pressure in Iran. According to reports, Hezbollah was told that the era of unconditional support had ended, and that any additional assistance would be conditioned on cost reduction, particularly in welfare and compensation, alongside demands for precise accounting and detailed implementation plans. Although the scope of assistance is estimated at about \$900 million to \$1 billion, less than the organization's demands, a large portion of reconstruction and compensation needs remain unfunded. Meanwhile, Iranian involvement in management issues, resource allocation and organizational structuring is increasing, based on the perception that Hezbollah has entered a phase of attrition and harmful budgetary inflation

must be curbed. However, "those close to the organization" claimed that the strategic relationship with Tehran remained stable, but with a "new equation" of less money, tighter oversight and decisions aligned with Iran's regional considerations (Aram News, December 31, 2025).

► An op-ed piece published on the al-Siyasa news site claimed that the arrest of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in an American raid shattered the "financial illusion" on which Hezbollah has relied in recent years. According to the article, as Iran has weakened internally and its ability to finance its proxies has lessened, the organization turned to alternative networks based on drug trafficking and money laundering through Venezuela, under the protection of the Maduro regime. Now, following Maduro's detention, reportedly the channel has effectively been closed and without political and security cover, one of the main pillars of Hezbollah's financing has collapsed, allegedly deepening its risk of a severe financial crisis and even bankruptcy (al-Siyasa, January 3, 2026).

► According to reports, diplomatic circles understand that the American action in Venezuela is part of a broader concept that also affects the Lebanese arena. "Sources" said "American officials" had conveyed to Hezbollah deep regional changes were expected, and the organization was required to become pragmatic and consider disarming within the framework of an internal political arrangement (al-Madan, January 4, 2026).

The Challenge of Reconstruction

► According to a report, behind the headline of "reconstruction" in Lebanon lies a complex and fragmented process divided between reconstructing infrastructure and rebuilding homes and communities, with funding and implementation separate and lacking an overall framework. According to the report, the \$250 million World Bank loan is intended primarily to restore basic infrastructure, not for full reconstruction, and is expected to be spread over the next two years starting in March 2026. Meanwhile, housing reconstruction remains at the preliminary stage of debris removal, without a dedicated budget and without clear timetables, with official sources claiming that any progress depends on the 2026 budget and warning against rumors of imminent payments (al-Midan, January 1, 2026).

Elections

► Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said parliamentary elections would not be postponed and would be held on schedule in May 2026. Responding to rumors of a possible two-year delay, he said the matter had not been raised with him seriously, and the "Shi'ite duo" (Hezbollah and

Amal) wanted the elections held as scheduled, since they can ensure full Shi'ite representation (Voice of Lebanon, January 3, 2026). Yanal Saleh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called holding parliamentary elections on the constitutionally set date "the natural, correct choice." He said he opposed any attempt to undermine the process or turn it into a pretext for disrupting democratic life. He warned of an organized campaign directed against the "resistance" and distorting its national role, and what was happening now was a blatant attempt to harm one of Lebanon's most prominent sources of power, serving the interests of the "Israeli enemy" (al-'Ahed, December 31, 2025).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► The Lebanese army received four trucks of weapons from Fatah in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Sidon. Abdel Hadi al-Asadi, responsible for public relations and media in the Palestinian National Security Forces in Lebanon, said it was a continuation of the implementation of the agreement signed in May 2025 between the chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Abu Mazen, and the president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun. He said it reflected the depth of the Palestinian-Lebanese partnership and the shared commitment to strengthening security, improving stability and preserving relations between the two sides (al-Mayadeen, December 30, 2025).



Right: Trucks carrying weapons leave the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp (al-Mayadeen, December 30, 2025). Left: Some of the weapons transferred to the Lebanese army (Lebanese army X account, December 30, 2025)

► Given Fatah's involvement in the disarmament plan, criticism of Hamas is growing in Lebanon due to the movement's refusal to hand over its medium and heavy weapons. Hamas and other armed terrorists groups argued that the refugee issue should be resolved as a whole, and not in a way that gave priority to disarmament over Palestinian rights.

► The chairman of the Lebanese–Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Ramez Dimechkie, said he was disappointed with Hamas' position, and as long as the "factions"⁷ declared that they operated under the auspices of the state, they had to comply with its decisions. He said Hamas and its allies should coordinate dates with the Lebanese army for handing over weapons, as other PLO factions had done. He said that at this stage it was illogical to convene meetings on the issue, while "sources in Hamas" claimed in response that they were still expecting a dialogue of all the factions on the weapons issue and other matters relating to Palestinian rights (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 31, 2025).

► The chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, spoke with Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and praised the PA's relations with Lebanon. Mahmoud Abbas noted the "constant desire" to deepen cooperation and expressed appreciation for Beirut's position supporting the Palestinian people and their aspiration for freedom and independence. Salam reiterated Lebanon's "unreserved support" for the Palestinian cause and the Palestinians' right to establish an independent state on "their land" (Wafa News Agency, January 1, 2026).

⁷ Armed terrorist organizations.