

Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah January 5-12, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon and in the Beqa'a Valley to enforce the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 and to prevent the organization's renewed military buildup. The forces attacked weapons depots above and below ground, launch sites and launchers, and eliminated five Hezbollah operatives. Hamas military sites in south Lebanon were also attacked.
- ▶ Aoun, the Lebanese president, maintained "cautious optimism" and said the risk of a large-scale war had been almost completely eliminated despite the continued Israeli attacks, noting that reaching understandings with Israel would be a significant step toward peace.
- ▶ The Lebanese army announced it had achieved "operational control" in the area south of the Litani River as part of the first phase of achieving a state monopoly on weapons, but the government has still not set timetables for the continued disarmament of Hezbollah. The Lebanese foreign minister claimed the Lebanese army would be capable of confronting Hezbollah if necessary.
- ▶ The Iranian foreign minister visited Lebanon and met with the country's leadership and with Hezbollah's secretary general. He said Iran wanted to strengthen bilateral economic and political ties and claimed that Tehran supported Hezbollah as a "resistance" organization but did not interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs.
- ▶ A member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament said an American attack on Iran would lead to wide-scale regional escalation.
- ▶ According to reports, mid-level Hezbollah officials have begun moving their families and assets out of Lebanon, mainly to Latin America.

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

Israel-Hezbollah Tensions

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. In south Lebanon and in the Beqa'a Valley the forces attacked Hezbollah weapons depots above and below ground, launch sites and launchers, military structures and engineering equipment used to rehabilitate military facilities. Five Hezbollah operatives were eliminated, including two operatives from the organization's aerial unit (127) (IDF spokesperson, January 5–12, 2026). Lebanese media reported five fatalities and at least five wounded in the Israeli attacks (*al-Nashra*, January 5–12, 2026). Media outlets identified with Hezbollah reported five operatives killed, one of whom was a member of the Bint Jbeil municipal council (Telegram channels South Lebanon – Watching the Enemy and Balaa', January 5–12, 2026).

► "Sources in Lebanon" claimed that the Lebanese leadership had been notified that if Israel launched a campaign against Hezbollah, it would focus aerial attacks on military facilities and carry out limited ground operations, but no large-scale invasion, avoiding harm to state institutions and providing safe corridors for civilians, as long as the Lebanese government did not intervene on the organization's behalf. Harsher messages were reportedly conveyed to the political echelon in Beirut, warning that Israel was preparing large-scale attacks, especially if Hezbollah intervened in a possible confrontation between Israel and Iran. According to the "sources," the messages were not "media intimidation" but rather serious strategic warnings intended to make it clear that time was running out for Hezbollah and its refusal to relinquish its strategic capabilities significantly increased the likelihood of imminent escalation (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, January 6 and 12, 2026).

Hezbollah

► According to the Hezbollah block in the Lebanese Parliament, the State of Lebanon, the people, the army and the "resistance"² had honored their commitments to the November 2024 ceasefire agreement south of the Litani River. Hezbollah said that responsibility now lay with the government, whose duty it was to pressure Israel to meet its commitments (foremost by halting the attacks and withdrawing fully from the territories it "occupied") while not making concessions which could encourage the "enemy" to continue exerting pressure. The bloc called on all Lebanese to unite around a single position against the "occupation" and warned against

² Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

sowing internal division. At the same time, it criticized the United States, claiming that its regional policy undermined international order and brought the region closer to chaos (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 8, 2026).

► "Security sources in Lebanon" claimed that Hezbollah had begun a covert redeployment of forces and strategic weapons, based on the assumption that a broad confrontation with Israel was approaching and to be able to respond after absorbing a first attack. The measure, reportedly taken following information about American backing for an Israeli attack, includes transferring elite units, missiles and advanced weapons to mountainous hinterland areas north of the Litani River, and concealing sensitive assets to reduce damage in an opening blow (Aram News, September 6, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun claimed the wave of Israeli attacks on January 5–6, 2026, on Hezbollah and Hamas targets was meant to undermine international efforts to contain escalation. He said that the timing of the attacks, on the eve of the meeting of the ceasefire oversight committee, raised questions about Israel's intentions. He said that Lebanon was cooperating with the international community and the Lebanese army was taking thorough, decisive action to disarm Hezbollah south of the Litani River (X account of the Lebanese presidency, January 6, 2026).

► In an interview marking one year in office, Aoun again expressed "cautious optimism," saying that the risk of a large-scale war or an Israeli ground invasion had largely been eliminated, although the attacks might continue for a long time. He said Lebanese efforts were currently focused on formulating a security agreement, Israeli withdrawal, the cessation of hostilities, the return of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel and a solution to the border issue. He said that would be a significant step toward peace, but "peace is a state of non-belligerence" and Israel need not fear for the security of its northern communities (Telegram channel of the Lebanese presidency and LBCI, January 11, 2026).



President Aoun during an interview (al-Jadeed, January 11, 2026)

► Lebanon's foreign minister, Joseph Rajji, said Lebanon was still officially in a state of war with Israel. Interviewed by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, he said normalization with Israel was a taboo subject in Lebanon and public calls to discuss peace were marginal, and the same applied to economic cooperation promoted by Israeli actors (*al-Nahar*, January 7, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► "Sources in Egypt and Lebanon" reported that as part of increasing bilateral military cooperation, dozens of Egyptian military advisors were sent to Lebanon over the past two months. According to the "sources," Egypt is assisting the Lebanese army in upgrading its intelligence capabilities and is examining the transfer of weapons, armored vehicles and aerial defense systems. They said the objective was to strengthen Lebanese state institutions through the army, not to provide direct assistance in disarming Hezbollah (The National, January 6, 2026).

UNIFIL

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun met with the UN undersecretary general for peace operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and told him that Lebanon welcomed any country willing to deploy in south Lebanon following the completion of UNIFIL's withdrawal at the end of its mandate in late 2026, and to operate according to an agreement defining its activity alongside the Lebanese army (X account of the Lebanese presidency, January 7, 2026). Aoun also said the number of Lebanese army forces in the south was expected to gradually increase to more than 10,000 soldiers and officers. He claimed completion of the army's deployment to the southern border was delayed by Israel's continued hold on occupied areas and its failure to comply with the agreement, and said the Lebanese army was carrying out its missions south of the Litani River, adding that Israeli and internal claims regarding its failure were unfounded (Lebanese National News Agency, January 7, 2026).

► During his visit to Lebanon, Lacroix toured south Lebanon with the UNIFIL command and visited the force's positions along the Blue Line (UNIFIL Telegram channel, January 6, 2026).

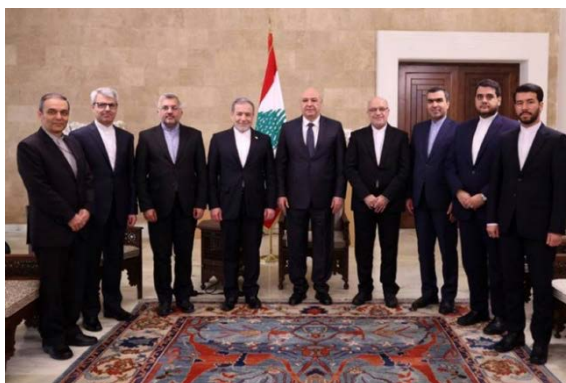


Lacroix visits south Lebanon (UNIFIL Telegram channel, January 6, 2026)

The Iranian Foreign Minister Visits Lebanon

► Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Lebanon and met with state leaders and with Hezbollah, with discussions focusing on strengthening economic and political ties between the countries and discussing regional security challenges:

- ◆ Lebanese President Joseph Aoun told Araghchi that Lebanon was interested in developing relations with Iran, including economic and trade relations, but on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. Araghchi said Tehran supported Lebanon's independence and sovereignty over all its territory and its desire to strengthen bilateral relations (X account of the Lebanese presidency, January 9, 2026).



Aoun with the Iranian delegation (X account of the Lebanese presidency, January 9, 2026)

- ◆ Lebanese Foreign Minister Joseph Rajji welcomed relations with Iran but called for directing all assistance to the state and its institutions, and said exclusivity of weapons and decisions regarding war and peace had to rest solely with the state. He called on Iran to help shape a new approach to the issue of Hezbollah's weapons and noted that Lebanon's reconstruction was being delayed because donor states conditioned their aid

on progress in disarming Hezbollah. Araghchi said Iran sought relations with Lebanon based on mutual respect and sovereignty, supported its unity and did not interfere in its decisions, and responsibility for Lebanon's defense lay with its government. He claimed Iran supported Hezbollah as a "resistance" organization³ but left decisions regarding Lebanon to the Lebanese (MTV, January 9, 2026).

◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem told Araghchi that Israel and the United States were guilty of continuing "aggression" and "violations" of the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, despite his claim that Lebanon had fulfilled its obligations south of the Litani River. Qassem added that Hezbollah would continue to cooperate with the Lebanese state and army in the "struggle" against Israel. Araghchi noted Iran's desire to strengthen ties with Lebanon and said the objective of the economic delegation accompanying him was to expand cooperation in various fields (al-Manar, January 9, 2026). Araghchi also visited the burial site of former Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah (Tasnim, January 8, 2026).



Araghchi visits Nasrallah's grave (Tasnim, January 8, 2026)

- "Sources" reported that security services at Beirut airport prevented the Iranian delegation accompanying Foreign Minister Araghchi from bringing four suitcases into the country and returned them to the aircraft (al-Jadeed, January 9, 2026).
- The leader of the Christian Phalange Party, Sami Gemayel, spoke out against the Iranian foreign minister's visit, saying that Iranian rhetoric regarding Lebanon was blatantly hypocritical. While Araghchi publicly spoke of "shared interests" and equal relations, in practice Tehran continued to treat Lebanon as a satellite state and a regional bargaining chip. He added that the gap between Iranian rhetoric and behavior indicated its disregard for Lebanese sovereignty and cast a shadow over the visit itself, which was perceived as carrying out a

³ Terrorist organization intent on destroying the State of Israel.

political agenda that went beyond the outwardly "conciliatory" messages (X account of Sami Gemayel, January 9, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah⁴

Disarmament

► On January 8, 2026, the army commander told the government that the objectives of the first phase had been achieved. He said the army had successfully established control south of the Litani River "in an effective and tangible manner," except for areas remaining under "Israeli occupation." It was reported that ministers opposed to Hezbollah demanded timetables, while ministers from Hezbollah and Amal conditioned progress on halting Israeli "violations." The government instructed the army to prepare a plan for disarmament north of the Litani River, but no schedule was set. Hezbollah avoided directly relating to the army's announcement but reiterated its position that Lebanon in general and the organization in particular had fully implemented the ceasefire agreement and Israel had to honor its commitments.⁵

► The Lebanese foreign minister, Joseph Rajji, accused Hezbollah of "lying or not knowing how to read" because of its threat of civil war if the Lebanese army continued disarming the organization north of the Litani River. According to him, the warnings were an overt attempt to blackmail the Lebanese government. Rajji said Hezbollah was trying to buy time in order to reorganize its ranks and maintain its dominance in the country. He also claimed that the Lebanese army was capable of confronting Hezbollah militarily, if necessary (*al-Nahar*, January 7, 2026).



"Hezbollah's weapons will destroy Hezbollah's operatives like ravenous animals!" Netanyahu, who stands at the head of the Lebanese people against Hezbollah, says, "It's over" (X account of Saer Sabil, January 7, 2026)

⁴ See the December 2025 ITIC report, [Hezbollah: One Year After the Ceasefire](#).

⁵ See the January 2026 ITIC report, "The Completion of the First Phase of Hezbollah's Disarmament."

► On the eve of the cabinet meeting, Lebanese media published photographs from an underground Hezbollah facility in south Lebanon, extending hundreds of meters between Kafra and Siddiqine, south of the Litani River, which army forces entered in late December 2025. Large quantities of ammunition and advanced equipment were discovered at the site, including old Soviet-model reconnaissance UAVs used for intelligence collection and several dismantled DR-3 cruise missiles of Russian manufacture. According to reports, the forces are still neutralizing the facility and it is estimated that the work will continue for another week (*al-Jadeed*, January 7, 2026). Experts noted that the size of the facility, its structure and interior point to a central storage and distribution site rather than a routine warehouse. According to "military sources," the exposure of the site dovetailed with data presented by the Lebanese army on the detection of tunnels, weapons depots and a wide deployment of forces in the south, illustrating that the process of dismantling armed infrastructure south of the Litani River was progressing, but what has been revealed to the Lebanese public is only the tip of the iceberg (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 10, 2026). Hezbollah-affiliated media outlets quickly downplayed the significance of the exposure and claimed that it was an old facility dating back to the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Hezbollah claimed that "resistance is not measured by a facility that received a new name or gained media attention, and it does not tremble because of a photograph in a room that tries to cause chaos, because resistance is a way of life" (Telegram channel South Lebanon – Watching the Enemy, January 7, 2026). Reportedly, the Lebanese army arrested the soldier who took the photographs as well as another soldier who appeared in them. The arrest was allegedly prompted by a public furor and claims of "dishonoring the resistance" (*al-Akhbar*, January 7, 2026).



Right: DR-3 cruise missiles discovered in a Hezbollah warehouse. Left: a Lebanese soldier next to ammunition crates in the warehouse (*al-Jadeed*, January 7, 2026)

► According to reports, while Egypt, France and Arab countries are working to restrain Hezbollah's capabilities, Turkey views the organization's weapons from a different strategic perspective, derived from its broader confrontation with Israel and efforts to establish an Israeli–Greek–Cypriot axis. According to the report, Turkey is trying to increase cooperation with Iran, and direct communication channels between the Turkish embassy in Beirut and Hezbollah's leadership have also been recorded, indicating a Turkish willingness to dialogue directly with the organization and examine the issue of its weapons not merely as an internal Lebanese problem, but as a component of the regional balance of power vis-à-vis Israel (*al-Diyar*, January 10, 2026).

The Challenge of Hezbollah's Reconstruction

► "Sources in Lebanon" reported that Hezbollah was reorganizing its command, control and internal security structures as part of preparations for a future confrontation with Israel and efforts to reduce its vulnerability to targeted killings and intelligence penetration. The organization is replacing well-known command figures with anonymous commanders, canceling or merging units and adopting a more decentralized, covert, compartmentalized structure, including deep changes in the liaison and coordination unit and a reduction in the importance and influence of the head of the liaison and coordination unit, Wafiq Safa. Meanwhile, increasing erosion is being recorded among the mid-level ranks which bear an operational, organizational and social burden, a situation the leadership is trying to contain but which is perceived as an indicator of increasing internal sensitivity (Aram News, January 9, 2026; *al-Madan*, January 7, 2026).

► In addition, "sources" pointed to the fact that in recent months, mid-level and financial figures in Hezbollah have begun moving their families and assets out of Lebanon, mainly to destinations in Latin America, using old networks, alternative citizenships and shell companies. Beyond the economic aspect, the move has distinct propaganda and political significance, reflecting some operatives' lack of confidence in the resilience of the Lebanese arena, and creating a gap between the rhetoric of sacrifice, and confrontation and personal conduct aimed at securing escape routes in the event of broad escalation or internal collapse (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 8, 2026).

The Challenge of Civilian Rehabilitation

► Reportedly, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem ordered an internal investigation to examine failures and restore confidence in the organization following residents' claims of

inequality in the distribution of compensation and the slow reconstruction of damages in south Lebanon villages, the Beqa'a Valley and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia. The measure reflects recognition at the leadership level that failures in managing compensation and rehabilitation could become politically and socially explosive, especially at the current time marked by erosion, public pressure and preparation for a possible confrontation (al-Madan, January 7, 2026).

Hezbollah–Iran Relations

► Given the American threats to take action against Iran if the protests against the regime are suppressed, Hassan Ezzeddine, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, warned that any American attack on Iran would lead to wide-scale regional escalation and create a volatile situation of unpredictable consequences. He accused the United States of aggressive conduct and contempt for international law, claiming it was a bully and used force, but would not achieve its objectives. He stressed Iran's resilience and its ability to cope with pressures and crises, and represented it as the anchor of the "resistance axis"⁶ and a defender of the Shi'ite community and oppressed peoples in the region (Telegram channel Balaa' Media, January 10, 2026).

► An analytical article on the current relationship between Iran and Hezbollah noted the ambiguity and lack of uniformity at the top of the Iranian leadership regarding Hezbollah's future and its role in Lebanon. According to the article, the envoy of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Ali Hassan Khalil, was sent to Tehran to clarify "guidelines for the next phase," given the confusion and contradictions within Hezbollah itself, which has lost its unity and now operates through several power centers with conflicting agendas. In Khalil's meetings in Tehran, a sharp gap reportedly emerged between the Iranian political echelon, which emphasizes restraint, preservation of Hezbollah's strength and avoidance of escalation in light of negotiations with the United States, and the Revolutionary Guards, who push for rehabilitating military capabilities and renewed confrontation with Israel, arguing that only force deters Israel and the United States, and opposing talk of restraint. According to the article, Khalil returned to Lebanon without answers, reinforcing Hezbollah's confusion and strategic embarrassment (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 8, 2026).

⁶ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► The IDF attacked sites for the production of weapons and other Hamas military facilities in south Lebanon, including in the Sidon area (IDF spokesperson, January 5, 2026). In response, a "senior Hamas official" claimed that Israel was using "false pretexts" regarding the existence of the movement's military facilities in Lebanon to justify the continuation of its military operations in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon (al-Jazeera, January 5, 2026).