



Themes and Motifs in the Rhetoric of Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah Secretary General

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Overview¹

- ▶ Na'im Qassem was appointed secretary general of Hezbollah on October 29, 2024, when the organization was challenged by the elimination of the previous secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, and much of the senior leadership, and the deaths and wounding of thousands of commanders and operatives in the hostilities against Israel. Hezbollah also faced internal criticism within Lebanon, which peaked in the Lebanese government's decision to disarm the organization.
- ▶ Since his appointment, on more than fifty occasions he has addressed Hezbollah's situation in speeches, declarations and open letters dealing with the struggle of the "resistance"² against Israel and the complex relations between the organization and the institutions of the Lebanese state, especially the government decisions it.
- ▶ The rhetoric of Qassem's first speeches was defensive and intended primarily to underscore that the organization was recovering and rehabilitating itself after the blows it received and that it played a vital role in defending Lebanon. In the absence of tangible achievements and amid growing internal criticism, he established the narrative that the organization's survival was a victory. He also promoted a narrative of patience intended to justify Hezbollah's lack of offensive action despite Israeli "aggression."
- ▶ In the first months of his tenure, Qassem said Hezbollah was prepared to give the Lebanese state the legitimacy to stop the Israeli "aggression" and would cooperate in formulating a national defense strategy. However, the continuation of Israeli strikes to enforce the November 2024 ceasefire, along with Lebanese government measures against the organization, led to an escalation in his rhetoric, including threats of civil war and threats against Israel.
- ▶ Qassem represented Hezbollah as part of a broader regional struggle against the "Greater Israel project," while linking the Lebanese arena to the Gaza Strip, Syria and Iran. As the

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

² Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

Lebanese government hardened its position toward Hezbollah, Qassem emphasized his organization's connection to Iran and the "axis of resistance."³

► Hezbollah's entry into the war in support of Iran on March 2, 2026 provided Qassem with an opportunity to justify ending the narrative of "patience," emphasize the connection with Iran and escalate his rhetoric against the Lebanese leadership because of the direct negotiations with Israel. However, after the second ceasefire on April 16, 2026, he promoted claims of victory to send "moderate" messages about willingness for dialogue with the Lebanese government to distance it from the United States and Israel and to change its attitude toward the "resistance."

► **In ITIC assessment, the development of Qassem's rhetoric from defensive to militant reflects the organization's approach to Israel, apparently inspired or dictated by Iran, and corresponds to the complex situations and challenges he has faced since he became secretary general. However, even after he escalated his rhetoric against the Lebanese government and his sharp criticism of it, Qassem restrained himself to avoid an increase in the organization's internal isolation. Hezbollah's entry into the hostilities against Israel on March 2, 2026, under instructions from its Iranian patron, was accompanied by a sharpening of Qassem's rhetoric, focusing on his absolute opposition to any political arrangement with Israel which would affect the future of the organization.**

Background

► On October 29, 2024, about five weeks after the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah, and about a month before the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon went into effect (November 27, 2024), Hezbollah announced the appointment of Na'im Qassem as the new secretary general. Qassem is one of Hezbollah's founders and had served as the organization's deputy secretary general since 1991, but has no military training. He is considered the organization's chief ideologue and focused on Hezbollah's political and social aspects.⁴

► Qassem was appointed secretary general at the organization's lowest point, after it had been severely damaged in the war it initiated against Israel on October 8, 2023 as a support front for the Gaza Strip, and especially in Operation Northern Arrows in September 2024, during which Nasrallah, his designated successor Hashem Safi al-Din and dozens of other

³ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

⁴ See the November 2024 ITIC report, [Sheikh Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah's Newly - Appointed Secretary General](#)

senior figures were eliminated, and thousands of commanders and operatives were killed or wounded, many of them in the pager explosions on September 17, 2023. The campaign also led to internal criticism of Hezbollah within Lebanon, including from supporters of the organization in the Shi'ite community, who remained without response despite Hezbollah's promises to deal with reconstruction, and later from Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, and the prime minister, Nawaf Salam, who since taking office at the beginning of 2025 have tried to disarm Hezbollah and implement a state monopoly on weapons.⁵

► This study analyzes the changes and escalation in Na'im Qassem's in his speeches and statements between his becoming secretary general and the hostilities against Israel that began on March 2, 2026 and the ceasefire of April 16, 2026. Approximately fifty speeches, statements and letters by Qassem between October 30, 2024 and April 18, 2026 were examined. All quotations from Qassem's speeches were taken from Hezbollah's al-Manar TV website.

The Development of Na'im Qassem's Rhetoric

The First Speech and the Claims of Recovery and "Victory"

► In his first speech, on October 30, 2024, Qassem dealt with two challenges. One was calming the organization's supporters after the series of blows it had received and the other was telling the "enemy" that it had not been broken or defeated. His first speech moved between his acknowledgment of the blows received and his claims of victory, with examples. He turned the severe damage to the organization into a badge of honor, claiming that surviving the pager attack, the killing of Nasrallah and eleven months of fighting equaled victory. That theme would accompany every future speech, "steadfastness" as proof of victory without the need for a real military achievement, and the ability to survive in the confrontation with Israel and pose a significant challenge to "the enemy."

► Qassem was also forced to justify the organization's actions, especially opening the support front for Gaza, and rejected the claim that Hezbollah acted as an executive arm of Iran and had no authority to make independent decisions, as his critics claimed. He also tried to ease the growing internal criticism of the organization, given the destructive consequences of the war for Lebanon's residents, particularly the residents of the Shi'ite strongholds in south Lebanon and the residents of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, and explaining that sacrifice and destruction were unavoidable.

⁵ See the May 2025 ITIC report, [Challenges Faced by Hezbollah after the November 27, 2024 ceasefire](#), and the December 2025 report, [Hezbollah: One Year After the Ceasefire](#)

► However, at first he emphasized that Hezbollah had no desire to initiate offensives but focused on defending Lebanon and the region against Israeli threats. The following are excerpts from Qassem's remarks in his first speech as Hezbollah secretary general (October 30, 2024):

- ◆ We do not want war. For eleven months we supported Gaza, which was necessary to avert the Israeli danger hovering over the entire region.
- ◆ The goal of our "resistance" is to liberate the land and prevent Israel's regional expansion. We fight for ourselves and not for anyone else's interests, and pay a price for it. For the sake of liberation, for the sake of independence and for the sake of the Palestinians.
- ◆ Iran does not want anything from us. It supports us without compensation. We fight on our land, the land of Lebanon.
- ◆ Four thousand military and civilian operatives were harmed in the explosion of pagers and communication devices. Nevertheless, we stood on our feet. No one [else] could have risen from such a situation
- ◆ Hundreds of thousands of Israelis are unable to conduct their lives. We are hurting Israel. They live in pain. The Israeli Broadcasting Authority reported that 300,000 Israelis will require psychological treatment after the war. We can continue like this as long as necessary. Even for months and more.
- ◆ The "resistance" cannot win without sacrifice. There must be patience. We are aware of the difficulty of those whose homes were destroyed.



Na'im Qassem in his first speech as Hezbollah secretary general (al-Manar, October 30, 2024)

Hezbollah Defends Lebanon and Is Prepared for Indirect Negotiations

► In November and December 2024, Qassem had a new doctrine of "victory," not the conquest of territory or the prevention of losses, but the "continuity of the resistance." He repeatedly sharpened the theme, stating that Hezbollah was recovering, continuously improving its capabilities and defending Lebanon against what he called "Netanyahu's project," which he claimed sought to conquer Lebanon and take control of the Middle East. Qassem also sought to reassure his followers and convince them that despite the severe consequences of the pager attack on Hezbollah's capabilities, it had no shortage of operatives, claiming that only the organization's activity on the ground would be able to stop Israel, not a political move. Faced by ongoing internal and external claims that Hezbollah had been defeated, Na'im Qassem boasted that "the word defeat does not exist in Hezbollah's vocabulary."

► Despite Qassem's claim that Hezbollah had the patience to conduct a long war of attrition, he was obviously looking for an exit point, and he said he would be prepared to conduct indirect negotiations, led by the Shi'ite parliament speaker, Nabih Berri, to end the fighting, but on the condition that Israeli attacks ceased and Lebanese sovereignty was preserved. The following are from his speech on November 6, 2024:

- ◆ Netanyahu, as he declared, has a major project whose goal is to change the region, eliminate Hezbollah, conquer Lebanon and change the map of the Middle East. We are now on the defensive against Israeli aggression and against Israel's regional expansion.
- ◆ Only one thing will stop Israel, "military operatives"⁶ fighting Israel on the ground and firing rockets at the Israeli home front. We have tens of thousands of fighters in Hezbollah. We do not currently have that number on the border, but they exist.
- ◆ We do not expect the aggression to end through politics. We need to make the enemy ask to stop the fighting. As for ending the war, it is possible only through negotiations, only through a third party and through Nabih Berri, and there are conditions, they are the cessation of the aggression and preservation of Lebanese sovereignty.
- ◆ There is nothing in our dictionary but victory and standing tall. We cannot possibly be defeated. Victory is ours. We are certain Netanyahu will be defeated. We are prepared for a war of attrition.

⁶ Terrorist operatives.

► In a speech on November 20, 2024, Qassem voiced similar themes of Hezbollah's recovery and rehabilitation and reiterated Hezbollah's agreement to conduct indirect negotiations to end the fighting, with Lebanese Parliament speaker Berri as the organization's representative, but added that Hezbollah was also preparing for a long war of attrition. Qassem reiterated Hezbollah's "equation," an attack on Beirut would be met by an attack on Tel Aviv.

► Another claim Qassem tried to refute was that Hezbollah was incapable of stopping the activity and advance of Israeli forces into Lebanese territory, saying that Hezbollah's method of operation was to ambush forces inside the territory. Hezbollah's attacks on Israeli civilians living in the north was also represented as an "achievement." The following are from his speech on November 20, 2024:

- ◆ With the opening of the large campaign in Lebanon and after the pager event, Hezbollah was in a state of confusion for ten days. After that it recovered at the political and military level. Since then, for two months, the "resistance" has stood firm in the face of Israeli attacks.
- ◆ Our remarks regarding the outline of the agreement indicate that we agree to indirect negotiations through Nabih Berri. We support stopping the aggression and preserving Lebanon's sovereignty. We will not agree that the enemy can enter and kill at any time it wishes.
- ◆ The enemy attacked in central Beirut and eliminated Muhammad Afif,⁷ and therefore we had to attack central Tel Aviv [*sic*].
- ◆ In a short period, we killed a hundred Israelis and wounded a thousand. We continue to launch UAVs and fire rockets. Many Israelis have left their homes. Hundreds of thousands. The "resistance" is not a regular army. It does not prevent the army from entering but attacks it when it is inside the territory. Therefore, it does not matter if the enemy enters Lebanese villages. What matters is how many enemies are killed and how many wounded. The objective of the "resistance" is to kill the enemy and prevent it holding Lebanese territory and remaining there.

Themes of Victory, Acceptance of Lebanese State Authority and Connections to Iran

► On November 27, 2024, the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon went into effect, halting the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Qassem's statements since the

⁷ Head of Hezbollah's "media relations" [propaganda] unit, eliminated November 17, 2024.

ceasefire indicated that the agreement and its implications intensified Hezbollah's discomfort in the internal Lebanese arena and made it more difficult to justify it as the defender of Lebanon. In the political arena as well, Hezbollah was obviously uncomfortable, mainly because that it had been forced to accept the ceasefire agreement without recompense or visible achievement. Accordingly, Na'im Qassem concentrated on themes and motifs repeated time and again in his speeches, especially Hezbollah's victory in the hostilities. He claimed Hezbollah was strong and the agreement had been imposed on Israel and not on Hezbollah, repeating that the agreement obligated Hezbollah only south of the Litani River.

► At this point, Qassem also noted the organization's commitment to the Lebanese state and army regarding implementation of the agreement, thanked Iran and promised to assist the many displaced persons and rebuild Lebanon, promises meant to calm the growing internal criticism of Hezbollah's inability to provide a response to the distress of the many displaced persons.

► Two days after the ceasefire agreement went into effect, Qassem delivered a speech entitled "Victory from Allah." Beyond the desire to add a religious dimension to the claims of victory, he tried to minimize the importance of the agreement in terms of achievements for the "enemy," and therefore claimed the ceasefire agreement was not new but rather an implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. He noted Hezbollah's commitment to the Lebanese state, supporting it in reconstruction, while noting that Hezbollah was coordinated with the Lebanese army and provided backing for its redeployment as part of the agreement. He said support for the Lebanese army would not prevent him from continuing to remain on guard against attempts by the "enemy" to weaken Lebanon.

► Unlike his first speeches, in which did not to mention Iran's backing, Qassem thanked Iran for its assistance and support and thanked the other partners in the "resistance axis." He claimed that despite the agreement, his organization's support for "Palestine" and assistance in its liberation would not cease and would continue in other ways. The following are from his speech (November 29, 2024):

◆ I declare we have achieved a great victory. The victory is greater than that of 2006 because of the length of the war, its intensity and the great sacrifices. We won because we prevented the enemy from destroying Hezbollah and stopping the "resistance." We defeated the enemy because Netanyahu had to convince Israelis that the agreement was good for them and he admitted that the army's forces needed to be refreshed. Our

enemies are defeated, listen to their statements. I chose [Avigdor] Lieberman's statement as an example, who said the Israeli government raised a white flag while Hezbollah's flags were raised in Lebanon. In a survey conducted in Israel, 61% of Israelis admitted that Israel did not win. Look at their displaced who have not returned. Notice the joy among us in Lebanon compared to the difficult atmosphere on the Israeli side.

- ◆ The agreement is merely a mechanism for implementing Resolution 1701. It is not new; it is the implementation of the 2006 agreement. It is not above the 2006 agreement but below it.

► Thank you to Iran. Thank you to the supreme leader Khamenei. Thank you to the shaheed Qassem Soleimani. Thank you to Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

- ◆ We will cooperate with the Lebanese state and other countries to rebuild everything. The Lebanese army will deploy in south Lebanon according to the agreement, and praise be to Allah, the coordination between Hezbollah and the Lebanese army is at a high level. The "resistance" will stand guard to prevent the enemy from weakening Lebanon and will strengthen Lebanon's defensive capabilities.



Na'im Qassem in his "Victory from Allah" speech (al-Manar, November 29, 2024)

► Almost identical motifs appeared in a speech Qassem delivered on December 5, 2024:

- ◆ We won because we did what was required of us and Allah brought us victory. We won because the enemy did not achieve its goal. We agreed to a ceasefire from a position of strength and our people on the ground with our heads held high.

- ◆ The agreement is merely a mechanism for implementing Resolution 1701. It is not new, it is the implementation of the 2006 agreement. It is not above the 2006 agreement but below it. Hezbollah will allow the success of the agreement.

- ◆ The displacement crisis in Lebanon is unprecedented. About a quarter of a million families left their homes. I thank them for their sacrifice and everyone who helped them. Hezbollah provided financial assistance to the displaced from Iran and Hezbollah in the

amount of \$300-400 for each family out of 233,500 displaced families, so far. So far \$57 million have been paid and another \$20 million will be paid. Special thanks to Iran. Most of the amount comes from Iran.

► Another prominent theme that began to appear in Qassem's speeches at this time concerned the situation in Syria in the shadow of the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime at the beginning of December 2024. On the eve of the regime's collapse, Qassem said he was concerned about the loss of the Syrian "backing" (December 5, 2024): "What is happening in Syria now is happening under the auspices of the United States and Israel. They are trying to destroy Syria again through terrorist gangs. Allah willing, they will not succeed. We in Hezbollah will stand by Assad as much as we can."

► A few days after the fall of the Syrian regime, Qassem gave a speech in which he admitted it was a blow to the organization's military supply route and expressed his concern that the new regime would not be a partner in the "resistance axis" (December 14, 2024): "Hezbollah has at this stage lost its military supply route. Perhaps the new regime in Syria will allow the transfer of weapons to Lebanon and if not, we will look for other ways. We hope for cooperation between Syria and Lebanon at all levels. We hope the new regime in Syria will see Israel as an enemy. The Syrian people deserve to choose their leadership and we hope the regime will include all the sects of the Syrian people."

Hezbollah's Commitment to the Lebanese State Begins to Crack

► At the beginning of 2025, Qassem's rhetoric still linked "resistance" with religious faith in a way that shifted the main discourse from the military sphere to the religious. Every blow the organization received was represented as a "trial from heaven," every shaheed "won" because he had "achieved his goal." That apparently helped Qassem survive politically in the absence of real achievements he could market to the media.

► At the same time, the media began to discuss a possible political arrangement between Israel and Lebanon, and Qassem clearly began to retreat from Hezbollah's commitment to the Lebanese state. Initially, his rhetoric remained moderate and encouraged the Lebanese government to exercise its political authority and responsibility to make Israel withdraw its forces from the five points in south Lebanon where an Israeli presence remained after the ceasefire. He also returned to reiterating Hezbollah's well-known slogan, "army, people and resistance," to claim Hezbollah played a legitimate role as the defender of the Lebanese people

and as a partner in defense alongside the Lebanese army. For example, in a recorded speech he delivered on January 1, 2025 at a conference in Tehran, he said,

- ◆ We proved through the "resistance" that we succeeded in preventing the Israeli enemy from advancing. Now the Lebanese state has an opportunity to prove itself in the political realm.
- ◆ The "aggression" in south Lebanon is "aggression" against the State of Lebanon and the international community.

► At the same time, Qassem consistently continued efforts to persuade public opinion in Lebanon that Hezbollah was in fact the "shield of Lebanon" against the conquest of territory in Lebanon by Israel. In a speech he delivered on January 4, 2025 marking the fifth anniversary of the elimination of former Qods Force commander Qassem Soleimani, he said,

- ◆ We succeeded in preventing Israel from achieving its goal, eliminating the "resistance." Look how much land the "enemy" conquered in south Syria. One and a half times the size of Gaza. Look how it destroyed its army. That did not happen in Lebanon, thanks to our "resistance." Remember that.

► Na'im Qassem began to openly challenge the authority of the Lebanese government, declare that Hezbollah's patience was running out and signal that his organization would not sit idly by indefinitely without acting. At the same time, he did not try to impose new rules, instead saying his organization was still patient and giving the Lebanese government an opportunity to act within the realm of diplomacy

- ◆ The leadership of the "resistance" will choose how and when it will act. We are being patient to allow the implementation of the ceasefire. Our patience is by our decision. We will decide when to act. Do not concern yourselves with "what Hezbollah will do in the face of Israeli violations." When we decide to act you will know (January 4, 2025).
- ◆ Hezbollah has so far exercised restraint in the face of hundreds of Israeli "violations" of the agreement in order to give the State of Lebanon an opportunity to deal with it, but our patience must not be tested (January 18, 2025).

► As the Lebanese government explicitly adhered to the principle of applying state sovereignty over all weapons, a principle that Hezbollah strongly opposes, escalation was evident in Qassem's rhetoric. Initially he apparently sought to avoid an explicit clash with the Lebanese government, as he spoke at length about integrating his organization into what he

called a "strategic defense framework" in Lebanon, but at the same time he consistently signaled that Hezbollah's patience was running out:

- ◆ The "resistance" and its weapons are still present and there will be a discussion about integrating the "resistance" into Lebanon's defense strategy, to preserve Lebanon and its independence (January 18, 2025).
- ◆ We patiently waited sixty days for the "occupation" to withdraw. We decided to exercise restraint and give the state an opportunity to deal with the enemy's failure to withdraw. The Israeli "violations" prove the need for "resistance." The "resistance" won. It always wins. We saw in south Lebanon the triple equation, "the army, the people and the resistance" (January 27, 2025).

► As time passed, Qassem realized that there was no agreement on the horizon that would bring about Israel's withdrawal from the five points it held in Lebanese territory, while the targeted strikes by the IDF on Hezbollah targets in various areas of Lebanon continued and intensified. In his speeches he repeatedly stated that the continuation of the current situation of "occupation" was pushing Hezbollah toward the possibility of action, while maintaining ambiguity regarding the timing. At the same time, Qassem did not stop urging the Lebanese government to assume its responsibility and address the "violations." Such themes appeared in his speech for World Jerusalem Day " (March 29, 2025):

- ◆ If Israel thinks it will create a new equation and attack the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, the Beqa'a Valley and south Lebanon, we will not accept this [*sic*]. The Lebanese state must deal with it, everything has a limit.
- ◆ If Israel does not stop, we will have to choose other options. Israel must know that it will not succeed in achieving its goal through pressure. We will not allow it. We are not weak, we have patience to achieve convenient solutions, but we will not be able to sit idly by. We will not say when we will act.

Escalating Threats to the Lebanese Government⁸

► In March 2025 Na'im Qassem's became increasingly frustrated by the realization that the Lebanese government was determined to advance the decision to disarm Hezbollah and that his consistent efforts to persuade the Lebanese public of the need to integrate Hezbollah and its weapons into a "Lebanese defense strategy" were not bearing fruit. Qassem began to

⁸ See the November 2025 ITIC report, [Hezbollah's defiance, the instability of the ceasefire and attempts to promote an Israeli-Lebanese dialogue](#)

emphasize that Hezbollah's surrender was not on the agenda and the options were "victory or martyrdom." The theme of sacrifice and absolute refusal to surrender became central in his speeches. He gradually began to level explicit criticism at the Lebanese government, threatening that any attempt to disarm Hezbollah by force could drag Lebanon into a civil war. During Operation Rising Lion [the First Iran-Israel War] in Iran (June 13-24, 2025), Qassem also began to note the responsibility that Hezbollah had toward its patron, Iran, in preparation for justifying a possible offensive move by Hezbollah if and when the order came from Tehran to enter the hostilities. The following are from his speeches at that time:⁹

- ◆ Disarming Hezbollah by force is a service for Israel and will cause a civil war. It will not happen. We will not allow anyone to disarm Hezbollah. Whoever turns against the "resistance" will be fought as we fought Israel (April 19, 2025).
- ◆ The Lebanese state is responsible for implementing the ceasefire and if it fails there are other options, the "resistance" will not be silent and will not surrender. It is patient, but its time to act will come. The war is not over yet (May 25, 2025).
- ◆ Iran's steadfastness does not exempt us from the responsibility to stand by it and support it in every possible way. We will act in the way we see as appropriate (June 19, 2025).
- ◆ When we win, we win, and even when we die as shaheeds we win (June 28, 2025).
- ◆ We will not indefinitely overlook the "violations." When we decide to respond, we will respond. We have two options, victory or martyrdom. Surrender is not an option (July 8, 2025)
- ◆ As long as we breathe Israel will not achieve its goals. We are prepared to sacrifice our lives for honor and for the independence of Lebanon (July 18, 2025).

► On August 5, 2025, the Lebanese government instructed the army to prepare a plan to disarm all armed militias, including Hezbollah, by the end of 2025.¹⁰ In a speech Qassem delivered the same day, marking forty days since the elimination of Saeed Izadi (Hajj Ramadan), commander of the "Palestine Corps" in the Qods Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, he criticized the Lebanese government for its decision to institute a state monopoly on weapons and accused it of serving Israel's interests and not Lebanon's

⁹ See the July 2025 ITIC report, The "Resistance Axis" and the Israel-Iran War

¹⁰ See the August 2025 ITIC report, [Lebanese Government Decides to Disarm Hezbollah – Positions of Power Actors](#)

sovereignty, as it claimed. In subsequent speeches he escalated his rhetoric against the Lebanese government, criticized it for what he described as its "mistaken" decision and warned of the danger of civil war should there be an attempt to disarm Hezbollah by force. Qassem did not make do with persuasion, and to reinforce his determination to fight the decision he used motifs of sacrifice from Shi'ite tradition in his speeches, especially the Battle of Karbala.¹¹ He continued reiterating familiar arguments claiming Hezbollah's weapons were essential for defending Lebanon against external threats, primarily the threat of "Israeli occupation and aggression" within the framework of the "Greater Israel vision" led by the prime minister of Israel. He also emphasized Hezbollah's participation in the Iranian-led "resistance axis," adding that unity among all parts of the axis was important. The following are from his speeches reflecting those themes:

◆ The weapons of the "resistance" are not the problem, rather the Israeli "aggression" is the problem. Solve the issue of the "aggression" and then we will discuss the issue of the weapons (August 5, 2025).



Speech marking forty days since the elimination of Izadi (al-Manar, August 5, 2025)

◆ We will not hand over our weapons as long as the "aggression" continues and there is "occupation." If necessary, we will conduct a campaign identical to the Battle of Karbala. The Lebanese government made a wrong decision on August 5 and it will bear responsibility for the internal explosion in Lebanon and the destruction of Lebanon. How did you make such a decision? Do you not see the Israeli chief of staff praising his soldiers for the conquest of south Lebanon and promising them additional conquests? Did you not hear Netanyahu's statements about the vision of Greater Israel? We do not desire a civil war but it can happen (August 15, 2025).

¹¹ A watershed battle in Islam in which Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, was killed by the army of the Umayyad caliph Yazid I in Iraq. The battle became a symbol of sacrifice and justice for the Shi'ites.

- ◆ The Lebanese government made a wrong decision regarding disarmament. If it does not retract its decision, it means it is not preserving Lebanon's sovereignty. Whoever wants to tear from us our weapons in fact wants to tear from us our soul, and when that happens the world will see our strength (August 25, 2025).
- ◆ We stood against a great world war, through the Israeli war machine, and with tyrannical American and European support without limits. The goal was the elimination of the "resistance" on the way to "Greater Israel." The elimination of the "resistance" in Lebanon, elimination of the "resistance" in "Palestine" and elimination of the "resistance" in this entire region, so that Israel would remain and expand and take what it wanted. Disarmament means dismantling power, in response to Israel's demand and to realize its goals. We will not allow disarmament, and we will confront in a Karbala-style manner, because we are in the midst of an existential campaign, and with the help of Allah we have the ability to be steadfast (September 27, 2025).
- ◆ We bless Iran and the leader, Imam Khamenei, this brave man, who instilled a spirit of hope among the nation and granted all forms of assistance to "Palestine." We bless the Iranian people, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the security forces, the government and all of Iran, because with their support the "resistance" succeeded in standing and holding out, and with the help of Allah will also win (September 27, 2025).
- ◆ Israel is acting for the sake of the "Greater Israel" project, and America supports it fully. Every step you see is part of the "Greater Israel" project. What we have seen in Gaza for two years is an inseparable part of this project, which Netanyahu spoke about openly about a month ago. Everything that is happening in the region is interconnected. From here I say, when we confront Israel, everyone must confront it from his place, according to his ability and according to his plan. Even if he is not convinced of the truth of the Palestinian issue or does not believe in it, at least he must be convinced that he must distance the danger from himself before it reaches him, because this project will reach him eventually, according to the Israeli plan (October 4, 2025).

► Even after Na'im Qassem escalated his rhetoric toward the Lebanese government following its decision to concentrate all weapons in the hands of the state (which meant disarming Hezbollah), he continued to reiterate that the government was responsible for taking action against Israeli "aggression," a position which at this point helped him justify Hezbollah's not initiating an offensive against Israel, adding the recurrent motif of patience:

◆ They expected us to respond to them with violations. That is, when the Israeli violations began, they expected that we would also respond with violations, so they could say they violated and we violated, and then they would run wild more and continue blaming us. Our position is that the state is responsible, and that we must show patience (October 4, 2025).

Hezbollah's Entry into the Hostilities¹²

► Since his first speech as Hezbollah secretary general, Na'im Qassem said he was grateful to Iran and appreciated it, but did not express a position regarding his organization's entry into the war alongside Iran. In a letter published on June 19, 2025, he wrote, "Iran's steadfastness does not exempt us from the responsibility to support it in every possible way. We will act as we see appropriate."

► Beginning in 2026, with the intensification of media discourse about the possibility of an American strike on Iran, Qassem declared for the first time that Hezbollah would not remain neutral if a war broke out against the Islamic Republic. On January 26, 2026, in a statement for a conference in support of Iran, he said,

◆ Several parties asked us whether Hezbollah would intervene if the United States and Israel began a war against Iran. We are not neutral regarding an attack on Iran. A war against Iran will ignite the entire region this time.

► On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel launched a campaign against Iran, during which senior Iranian officials were eliminated in the opening strike, foremost among them the leader Ali Khamenei. On March 2, 2026, Hezbollah launched rockets at northern Israel for the first time since the ceasefire in November 2024. After the IDF responded with extensive strikes in Lebanon, including in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, Hezbollah announced a new campaign, to which it gave a name with religious connotations, the Campaign of the Eaten Chaff.¹³

► Hezbollah's entry into the hostilities brought Qassem's rhetoric to its peak, as his attacks on the Lebanese government ranged from sharp criticism of its measures against Hezbollah and its decision to open direct negotiations with Israel alongside, emphasizing the importance of internal unity in order to halt the moves of the "enemy." From a series of speeches, recorded

¹² See the March 2026 ITIC report, [Hezbollah's Use of Force During the Current Fighting Against Israel](#)

¹³ The name comes from the final words in Surah 106 in the Qur'an, which tells how Allah sent birds (ababil) that rained small stones on the army of the Abyssinian governor of Yemen, who plotted to destroy the Kaaba, and it was consumed like chaff.

statements and letters (which were apparently published because of personal security considerations), it is possible to identify the convergence of all the previous rhetoric into justification of the new campaign on the grounds that Hezbollah's patience had run out, as he had warned for some time, while emphasizing that "this is an existential war over Lebanon, over Palestine and over Iran."¹⁴

► Qassem's rhetoric since the beginning of the hostilities in March 2026 were characterized by three central themes. First, Qassem reiterated that there was no chance Hezbollah would surrender, while emphasizing the narrative of victory. He found it necessary to explain what victory meant from Hezbollah's perspective along with highlighting its achievements on the battlefield, in light of the growing internal criticism over the heavy price paid by Lebanon and its citizens. Second, for the first time there was open acknowledgment of the failure of the Lebanese government's political course and firm opposition to direct negotiations with Israel, more nuanced and not as clear in his previous speeches. Third, even after the declaration of a ceasefire between Iran and the United States on April 8, 2026, Qassem continued to reject any concession without compensation, consistent with the Iranian line. The following demonstrate the themes:

- ◆ We said again and again that our patience had a limit and we said that the state had to fulfill its role. To those who wonder about the timing I ask, are 15 months of violations and 500 shaheeds not enough? Israeli "aggression" against Lebanon was planned in advance and is not a response to the rocket fire. We will win and we do not fear a confrontation (March 4, 2026).
- ◆ We warned again and again that there was a limit to our patience. We held internal discussions on a response but chose to wait and give an opportunity to political measures. In the past month the discussion in Israel about action against Lebanon intensified, especially after the strike in Iran and the elimination of the leader Khamenei. We therefore decided that the circumstances were suitable for a response. The "aggression" is responsible for the destruction. The solution is stopping it, not surrender. We will not live under humiliation (March 13, 2026).

¹⁴ See the April 2026 ITIC report, [Renewal of Hostilities and Negotiations with Israel Increase Tension between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government](#)



Speech marking World Jerusalem Day (al-Manar, March 13, 2026)

- ◆ It became clear that we had two options, either surrender and give up the land, honor, sovereignty and the future of our generations, or an inevitable confrontation and "resistance" to the occupation to prevent it from achieving its goals. When the exclusivity over weapons is raised as a response to an Israeli demand while the "occupation and aggression" continue, it is a step on the path to the end of Lebanon and the realization of the dream of "Greater Israel." And when a proposal is raised for negotiations with the Israeli enemy under fire, it is the imposition of surrender and the theft of all of Lebanon's capabilities, especially since negotiation is invalid with an "enemy" that occupies land and attacks daily (March 25, 2026).
- ◆ For more than forty days of aggression, the "occupation" failed to prevent rockets, artillery shells and UAVs from reaching the near and far "settlements," up to Haifa and beyond. The "resistance" will continue until our last breath. Even the mobilization of one hundred thousand Israeli soldiers will not help the "enemy" conquer. They will become corpses and body parts, while those "occupation" soldiers who remain alive live in the field in fear and do not know what awaits them (April 10, 2026).
- ◆ Since the State of Lebanon signed an indirect agreement with the enemy on November 27, 2024, there have been more than ten thousand violations, and yet we demonstrated patience. About 500 civilians and young people and others fell as shaheeds, hundreds more were wounded, homes were destroyed, and with all that we were patient and diplomacy did not advance one step. We are winning now and at every moment despite the heavy sacrifices, at every opportunity we will take prisoners and fight the "enemy" from behind, from its right and from its left. Let it be clear, because our existence is threatened, and because our land is threatened by the "Greater Israel" project, and because we believe in the sovereignty of our land and its independence,

and no one has the right to impose anything on us in the way we run our country as Lebanese citizens and as Lebanese authority, we decided to fight and "resist" and therefore we are conducting Operation Eaten Chaff. We reject negotiations with the "usurping Israeli entity." Such negotiations are defeatist. There must be Lebanese agreement to change course from a situation of no negotiations to a situation of direct negotiations as currently proposed. That is part of a series of gratuitous concessions that the government is granting. There will be no surrender. If someone thought to surrender, let him go and surrender alone, we will remain in the field until our last breath. We have experience. How long did [the Israelis] remain in 1982? In the end they left against their will. The "occupation" does not remain when there is "resistance" (April 13, 2026).



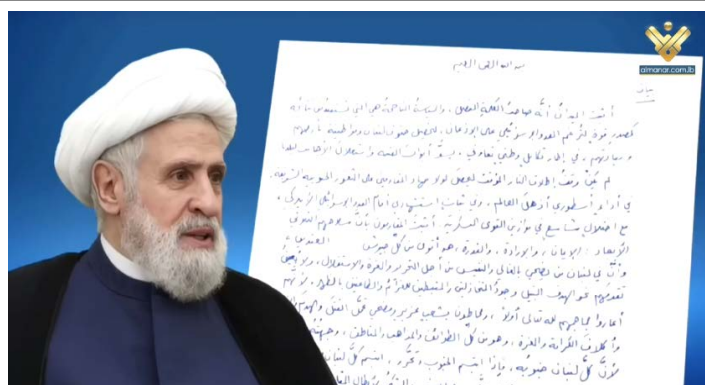
Recorded statement by Qassem (al-Manar, March 25, 2026)

Internal Moderation Under the Shadow of the Now Hostilities against Israel

► With the temporary ceasefire with Iran which went into effect on April 7, 2026, Qassem published an official statement, at its center a change in his declared negative position toward the Lebanese government and its moves, and an emphasis on Hezbollah's willingness to mend fences with the government which will lead to "maximum cooperation." In the statement after the temporary ceasefire went into effect between April 16-17, 2026, he again justified Hezbollah's entry into the hostilities and claimed there would have been no ceasefire without Hezbollah and Iran. At the same time, he refused to refer to the ceasefire as the end of the matter and threatened that the organization's "fighters" would respond to any "violation." He also reiterated his willingness for dialogue with the Lebanese government and the promotion of a national security strategy, as follows (April 18, 2026):¹⁵

¹⁵ See the April 2026 ITIC report, [The Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Agreement: Reactions and Insights](#)

- ◆ A ceasefire means a complete cessation of all hostile actions, and since we do not trust this enemy, the fighters will remain on the ground with their fingers on the trigger. They will respond to violations of the aggression accordingly. There will not be a ceasefire from the "resistance" alone. It must include both sides. We will not accept a repetition of the 15 months of patience toward the Israeli "aggression" while waiting for diplomacy that achieved nothing.
- ◆ The ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel [April 2026] does not mean anything at the practical level, but it is a humiliation for our country that America dictated the agreement and spoke on behalf of the Lebanese government. Enough of imposing such humiliations on Lebanon.
- ◆ We are ready for maximum cooperation with the government in Lebanon based on the realization of our country's sovereignty, within a framework of unity, preventing division, and appointing centers of power within a national security strategy.
- ◆ The temporary ceasefire would not have taken place without the jihad of our fighters in the positions of south Lebanon.
- ◆ The Islamic Republic of Iran supported and assisted us, and linked the ceasefire with the Pakistan agreement [the ceasefire with the United States] to its cessation in Lebanon explicitly, and then closed the Strait of Hormuz in response to the American violation of the ceasefire in Lebanon. After that came the American "surrender" and the forcing of the Israeli "enemy" to stop.



Recorded statement by Qassem after the ceasefire (al-Manar, April 18, 2026)