



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah April 13-27, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ On April 16, 2026, America announced a ten-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. On April 22, 2026, the ceasefire was extended for an additional three weeks.
- ▶ Until the ceasefire, the IDF attacked hundreds of Hezbollah terrorist targets in south Lebanon from the air, eliminated hundreds of commanders and operatives, and continued establishing a forward defense zone in south Lebanon. After the ceasefire went into effect, IDF forces destroyed terrorist infrastructure and assets, eliminated operatives within the forward defense zone (the Yellow Line) and attacked infrastructure and operatives in response to Hezbollah violations. Four IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting, three of them after the ceasefire.
- ▶ Since the beginning of the ceasefire, Hezbollah issued 23 claims of responsibility for attacking IDF forces in south Lebanon and communities in northern Israel in response to alleged Israeli "violations." UAVs were used in most of the attacks. Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem declared that the organization would continue its "defensive resistance"² and that it would respond to "aggression" to prevent a return to the status quo ante of the current hostilities, which began on March 2, 2026.
- ▶ The ambassadors of Israel and Lebanon to the United States held two direct meetings, one of them at the White House. Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, and senior government officials defended the decision to open direct negotiations with Israel, stating it was the only way halt the "aggression," make Israeli withdraw and reconstruct the state.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem and other senior figures strongly opposed direct negotiations with Israel, and accused the government of allowing the "aggression" to continue and betraying public trust instead of standing alongside the "resistance."

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 Terrorist attacks.

- ▶ The Iranian embassy in Lebanon and Hezbollah held a joint event marking 40 days since the elimination of Iran's leader Khamenei, attended by the Iranian "ambassador" who had been officially told to leave Lebanon.
- ▶ Security forces in Syria arrested a Hezbollah terrorist cell and prevented rockets from being fired at Israeli territory from south Syria.
- ▶ Lebanese authorities reported that at least 2,509 people had been killed since the beginning of the hostilities on March 2, 2026 and more than 121,000 people were still in displacement centers. Many residents of south Lebanon and the Dahiye al-Janoubia have not returned to their homes despite the ceasefire, fearing renewed fighting.
- ▶ Two UNIFIL soldiers died after being injured in two separate incidents in south Lebanon.

The Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire

- ▶ On April 16, 2026, the United States announced a ten-day ceasefire had been agreed on by Israel and Lebanon to advance direct bilateral talks for a peace agreement. The announcement was made two days after the first meeting of the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors in Washington. The American administration stated that the ceasefire could be extended by mutual agreement if the negotiations showed progress and if Lebanon effectively demonstrated its ability to implement its sovereignty. Israel would retain the right to take all necessary measures for self-defense, but the United States forbade Israel to attack in Lebanon.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem reiterated his familiar demand for an end to the "aggression," the withdrawal of the IDF to the border, the release of Lebanese held in Israel, the return of the displaced and the reconstruction of the state. Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, said the ceasefire showed that Lebanon would determine its own fate and ignored Iran when he thanked the countries that helped stop the fighting.³
- ▶ On April 24, 2026, after the second meeting of the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors, the United States announced the ceasefire would be extended for an additional three weeks (Truth Social, April 24, 2026).

³ See the April 2026 ITIC report, [The Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Agreement: Reactions and Insights](#)

The Fighting in Lebanon

The IDF

► The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah terrorist targets throughout Lebanon from the air and conducting ground activity in the south of the country (IDF spokesperson, April 14-27, 2026):

- ◆ **Until the beginning of the ceasefire:** The IDF attacked hundreds of Hezbollah terrorist targets in south Lebanon from the air, including military headquarters, rocket and missile launchers, and weapons depots. Hundreds of Hezbollah commanders and operatives were eliminated, including the commander of the Bint Jbeil sector. Ground forces expanded their activity in south Lebanon and conducted targeted raids to establish the forward defense zone to prevent Hezbollah activity near the Israeli border and push the organization's firing capabilities away from northern Israeli communities. Activity focused on the town of Bint Jbeil. IDF forces also seized the strategic Christofani Ridge in south Lebanon, which controls the southern Beqa'a Valley region. One IDF soldier was killed in the fighting. According to the IDF, since the beginning of the hostilities on March 2, 2026 until the ceasefire, at least 1,800 terrorist operatives were eliminated and more than 5,000 targets were struck.
- ◆ **Since the beginning of the ceasefire:** IDF forces remained within the forward defense line in south Lebanon (the Yellow Line) and eliminated operatives who approached the line or were identified within it and operatives who attempted to attack the forces with rocket fire and explosive drones. Launchers and military structures of Hezbollah were also attacked outside the Yellow Line in response to Hezbollah violations of the ceasefire. IDF ground forces continued locating and destroying terrorist infrastructure and weapons within the Yellow Line, some of which were found in civilian structures, including children's rooms. Three IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting.



Right: Military equipment confiscated in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, April 14, 2026. Left: The Israeli flag and the Paratrooper flag flown in the stadium in Bint Jbeil (Lebanon Debate, April 22, 2026)

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah continued attacking military, security and civilian targets in Israel and IDF forces in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 13-27, 2026):

- ◆ **Until the ceasefire:** From April 13, 2026 (13:30) until the ceasefire, Hezbollah issued 157 claims of responsibility for attacks with UAVs, missiles, rockets, anti-tank missiles, artillery shells and anti-aircraft fire, and exchanges of fire with IDF forces in south Lebanon. According to Hezbollah, the organization attacked "occupation forces" in Lebanese and Israeli territory 2,184 times since the beginning of the hostilities on March 2, 2026 until the ceasefire, as well as attacking "settlements" and Israeli cities with UAVs and missiles to a range of 160 km from the border.

- ◆ **Since the beginning of the ceasefire:** From April 19 to April 27, 2026 (13:00), Hezbollah issued 23 claims of responsibility for attacks using UAVs (15 claims), artillery shells, rocket barrages, "appropriate weapons," explosive devices and anti-aircraft fire, which according to Hezbollah were responses to Israeli ceasefire violations. Most of the attacks were directed at IDF forces and Israeli UAVs in south Lebanon, but rockets were also fired at Israeli communities near the border.

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said the organization would continue its "defensive resistance"⁴ and had no intention of returning to the status quo ante of the current hostilities which began on March 2, 2026, when Israel attacked despite the ceasefire of November 2024. He said they would respond to and confront "aggression," and had no

⁴ Terrorist attacks.

intention of yielding despite the threats of the "enemy." He added that the organization's capabilities "are not measured in months or years," and were based on the triad of faith, will and capability. He also claimed that Israel had reached a dead end in the hostilities, while "the resistance is flourishing, strong and invincible." He said he was confident that the "Israeli enemy" would not remain on "our occupied land" and that residents would return to their lands "to the last inch of the southern border with occupied Palestine" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 27, 2026).⁵

► On April 26, 2026, Hezbollah claimed that the attacks on IDF forces in south Lebanon and "settlements in northern occupied Palestine" were [allegedly] a "legitimate response," while accusing Israel of carrying out more than 500 "violations" since the beginning of the ceasefire. Hezbollah accused the Lebanese authorities of not demanding an end to the "aggression" as a condition for continuing the talks with Israel, thereby "encouraging the enemy to continue the aggression." Hezbollah also accused the Lebanese authorities of not fulfilling their basic national duties and only watching as "the enemy destroys homes, burns crops and land." Hezbollah warned that "continued violations " would be met with "resistance and defense," and that they would not "wait or gamble on failed diplomacy" or on a "government that hesitates to defend its homeland" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 26, 2026). Sources stated that Hezbollah's statement was not only a declaration of war against Israel but also an attack on the State of Lebanon itself, it increased concern over the collapse of the ceasefire. According to the report, Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, was in continuous contact with representatives of the American government to prevent further escalation, and the Americans promised to monitor the issue (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 27, 2026).



Lebanon in a tug of war between Israel on one side pulling along the Yellow Line, and Iran on the other, pulling through Hezbollah (al-Madan, April 22, 2026)

⁵ See the April 2026 ITIC report, [Themes and Motifs in the Rhetoric of Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah Secretary General](#)

► On April 22, 2026, a correspondent for Hezbollah's daily *al-Akhbar* was killed in an IDF strike in the village of al-Tiri. Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, linked the incident to the fighting in south Lebanon and claimed that Israel was creating a buffer zone while "deliberately attacking" the civilian population. He called for ending direct contacts with Israel, arguing that they did not serve Lebanon and granted legitimacy to Israeli actions, adding that Hezbollah would continue the "resistance" until full withdrawal was achieved, while rejecting any attempt to establish a new security situation in the south (*al-Akhbar*, April 23, 2026). The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson stated that two vehicles had exited a structure used by Hezbollah and driven toward forces at the forward defense line, in violation of the ceasefire agreement. One of the vehicles was attacked, as was a structure to which some of the suspects fled. She emphasized that the IDF did not deliberately target journalists and that rescue forces were not prevented from reaching the scene (X account of the IDF Arabic spokesperson Ella Wawiya, April 22, 2026).

Direct Israel-Lebanon Negotiations

► On April 14, 2026, a direct meeting was held at the American State Department in Washington by Lebanon's ambassador to the United States, Nada Hamadeh Awad, and Israel's ambassador, Yechiel Leiter, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and American ambassador to Lebanon Michelle Issa in attendance. According to the summary statement of the meeting, the first of its kind since 1993, the participants held "productive" discussions on steps to initiate direct bilateral negotiations. It was also stated that Lebanon noted the need to implement the ceasefire agreement from November 2024 and the principles of territorial integrity and full state sovereignty (State Department website, April 14, 2026).

► On April 22, 2026, the second meeting was held, which was moved from the State Department to the White House to allow the participation of the American president and vice president. The president said he planned to invite Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, and Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, for a meeting (Truth Social, April 22, 2026). The president noted Washington's commitment to supporting Lebanon, including assistance in dealing with Hezbollah, and recognition of Israel's right to self-defense. He said the United States was optimistic about the possibility of reaching a peace agreement in the near future, while naming Hezbollah as the main factor delaying it. The talks also showed a desire to promote political dialogue and the possibility of additional high-level meetings, while the

Lebanese delegation continued to operate through a direct diplomatic channel under American auspices (*al-Nahar*, April 24, 2026).



White House figures with the Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors (*al-Nashra*, April 22, 2026)

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, and senior government officials defended the decision to open direct negotiations with Israel, calling it a necessary step to end the fighting and reconstruct the state. They said they were determined to continue implementing a state monopoly on weapons:

► At a cabinet meeting Aoun said contacts with the American administration focused on a ceasefire and launching negotiations for ending the state of war, Israeli withdrawal, the return of prisoners, deployment of the Lebanese army to the international border and discussion of disputes surrounding the Blue Line. He said he had no intention of holding direct talks with Netanyahu, contrary to incorrect reports in the media. He said the return of the Lebanese File to the American table was a strategic opportunity for economic recovery and reconstruction, and adding that he hoped to meet with the American president. He noted his commitment to addressing ceasefire violations and the internal public pressure to end the fighting, mentioning the growing fatigue of the Lebanese public and bereaved families with the continued confrontation (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 23, 2026).



**Lebanese government meeting headed by President Aoun
(X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 23, 2026)**

- ◆ At a summit of European Union leaders in Cyprus, Aoun presented a political path based on strengthening state sovereignty and transferring the declarations of war and peace exclusively to the government, along with promoting diplomatic negotiations under American auspices and international support to achieve a full Israeli withdrawal. He related to the humanitarian and economic crisis in Lebanon, represented it as existential and necessitating broad international mobilization. He added that Lebanon sought to manage its affairs independently and was no longer willing to serve as an arena for regional struggles (Lebanese News Agency, April 24, 2026).
- ◆ Lebanon's prime minister, Nawaf Salam, said Lebanon's position in the talks in the United States was based on a demand for full Israeli withdrawal and the complete rejection of ideas such as a buffer zone or any Israeli presence which would prevent the return of the displaced and the reconstruction of the south. He said they were participating in negotiations under American auspices because the United States was the main factor capable of influencing Israel, while expressing willingness to exhaust diplomacy despite the uncertainty of its results. He said disarming Hezbollah would be a gradual process based on strengthening the Lebanese army, stating that the government would not yield to external pressures (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 24, 2026).
- ◆ Lebanon's foreign minister, Youssef Rajji, said the Lebanese state was the sole authority for conducting negotiations, including direct negotiations with Israel if required, as part of an effort to end the war. He said negotiations were a legitimate tool for protecting national interests, adding that Lebanon was no longer a playing card in the regional arena but was working to formulate an independent policy, relying on international and diplomatic support to achieve Israeli withdrawal and reconstruction of the south. He said concentrating weapons in the hands of the state was a necessary condition for rebuilding and strongly criticized Hezbollah, accusing it of harming national interests and delaying reconstruction (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 23, 2026).
- ◆ Lebanon's information minister, Paul Morcos, said Lebanon viewed the ceasefire as a means and not an end, with the main objective remaining full Israeli withdrawal, the return of prisoners and stopping attacks on civilians. Along with presenting the scale of heavy losses, Morcos pointed to a shift toward a proactive approach in the international arena, including promoting legal proceedings and documenting "violations," especially attacks on journalists and civilian teams (Lebanon Debate, April 25, 2026).

► The speaker of the Lebanese parliament, Nabih Berri, did not hide his opposition to direct contacts, but said he supported indirect negotiations based on precedents under American mediation, including the maritime border agreement and progress on issues of the Blue Line. He did not publicly express sweeping opposition, but in practice preferred existing mediation mechanisms over changing the format of the talks. He said he was deeply distrustful of Israel and called on displaced persons not to quickly return to their homes. He also rejected any attempt to establish Israeli control in south Lebanon and said a continued presence could be expected to lead to a renewal of the "resistance,"⁶ while reiterating Lebanon's commitment to fully preserving its territorial sovereignty (*al-Joumhouria*, April 21, 2026).

► Reportedly, Saudi Arabia is increasing its involvement in the Lebanese arena and is seeking to prevent independent management of negotiations with Israel by the Lebanese government, lest decisions be made which do not align with the interests of the Gulf States. According to the report, the Saudi special envoy, Prince Yazid bin Farhan, who visited Lebanon, and Saudi foreign minister Faisal bin Farhan, are trying to formulate a unified Lebanese position and preserve the balance established in the Taif Agreement to prevent a scenario of destabilization by Hezbollah after the war (*al-Akhbar*, April 24, 2026). Subsequently, Foreign Minister bin Farhan spoke with Speaker Berri, who praised Saudi involvement and noted Lebanon's commitment to the Taif Agreement (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 23, 2026). Reportedly, a American-Saudi axis, in cooperation with Egypt, is trying to formulate an arrangement resembling a non-aggression pact, which would include Israeli withdrawal, deployment of the Lebanese army in the south and Hezbollah's withdrawal beyond the Litani River, alongside a gradual process of the containment of weapons instead of disarmament, resolution of disputes along the Blue Line, release of prisoners and civilian reconstruction. The arrangement relies on international guarantees, mainly American, and is accompanied by an attempt to integrate the Shi'ite camp through coordination with Tehran and internal dialogue under Saudi-Egyptian auspices (*al-Joumhouria*, April 24, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

► Hezbollah remains firmly opposed to direct talks with Israel and accused the Lebanese leadership that by willing to negotiate, it allowed Israel to continue the "aggression" and thereby betrayed the trust of the Lebanese public:

⁶ Terrorist attacks.

◆ In an open letter, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said that despite the "sacrifice, honor and defeat of the enemy [*s'ic*]," the Lebanese authorities rushed into a useless and humiliating concession by entering direct negotiations. He reiterated his position that the solution was stopping the "aggression," Israel's withdrawal from the "occupied" territories, the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel, the return of the displaced and reconstruction. He added that the "resistance" was a "response to aggression" and not the cause, and its weapons were meant only to repel "aggression" and prevent the "occupation of Lebanon as part of Greater Israel," and therefore the "resistance" would not disarm and was prepared for a Karbala-style battle [a battle to the death]. He thanked Iran, which he claimed was responsible for the ceasefire, and wondered why the government stubbornly refused to accept Iranian involvement. He said he hoped the government would "retract its violations," adding that the direct negotiations did not interest Hezbollah in the least (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 27, 2026).



Na'im Qassem's open letter (al-Manar, April 27, 2026)

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the direct channel with Israel should be abandoned and a consensual national position should be formulated. He said direct negotiations could lead to unilateral decisions with strategic implications for Lebanon's future, and while he supported the continuation of the ceasefire, he opposed political concession to Israel and demanded full withdrawal, return of the displaced, release of prisoners and reconstruction. He added that Hezbollah would not disarm, warned against attempts to impose a new security situation in the south, and opposed Israel's Yellow Line (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 20, 2026).

- ◆ Deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political council, Mahmoud Qamati, called negotiations "invalid and granting legitimacy to Israel, and could lead to Hezbollah's disarmament. He said the current negotiations were being conducted from a position of weakness and did not serve Lebanese interests, while the preferred alternative was indirect negotiations based on precedents. He criticized the Lebanese leadership for not leveraging the "achievements of the resistance" and warned that the organization's patience toward the diplomatic path was nearing its end (*al-Nashra*, April 23, 2026).
- ◆ Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah bloc in the Lebanese Parliament, sharply criticized the promotion of direct negotiations with Israel and warned they could lead to a serious deterioration in Lebanon's position. He said any official contact with Israel during war was a constitutional violation and lacked national legitimacy. He said that in practice, the arrangements proposed by the ceasefire allowed Israel to continue military actions under diplomatic cover (*al-Akhbar*, April 24, 2026).
- ◆ Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, criticized the extension of the ceasefire, claiming it was meaningless in light of continued Israeli activity on the ground, because, he said, it did not impose similar restrictions on Israel as those imposed on Lebanon. He warned that the emerging arrangement provided cover for accelerating direct negotiations while damaging Lebanese interests, adding that Hezbollah rejected any ceasefire which did not lead to full Israeli withdrawal. He said Hezbollah reserved the right to respond to any Israeli action and continued to view "resistance" as a legitimate tool for restoring sovereignty (Lebanese News Agency, April 24, 2026).



Ali Fayyad (LBCI, April 24, 2026)

- ▶ President Aoun rejected the accusations of betrayal and said the traitors were those who dragged the state into war for external interests. He added that if the war were for Lebanon, the state would support it, but when it served foreign interests, he completely opposed it. He

said the goal was to end the state of war with Israel, adding that he would not accept an agreement that humiliated Lebanon (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 27, 2026).

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of Hezbollah's daily *al-Akhbar*, pointed to intensive American involvement in shaping the negotiations, including pressure on President Aoun to advance steps toward direct contacts with Israel as a condition for deeper American involvement in the country. According to al-Amin, Aoun was required to balance between external demands and internal constraints, while initiatives such as a direct meeting with the Israeli prime minister were rejected due to concerns over damage to internal legitimacy. He noted a change in the position of the "resistance," which opposed international oversight mechanisms, rejected American guarantees and stated that it would continue to maintain "military" freedom of action and the right to "respond to Israeli violations." Reportedly, Hezbollah views the Lebanese army as a legitimate security partner, but opposes any influence on its independence or attempt to disarm it (*al-Akhbar*, April 20, 2026).

Hezbollah's Opponents

► According to reports, internal criticism of Hezbollah is increasing, as it is perceived as relying on the Iranian axis and opposing a political arrangement despite growing public pressure for stability and reconstruction. According to assessments, the international community supports a Lebanese-led solution to the weapons issue, and political progress may be conditioned on limiting the organization's weapons and strengthening state exclusivity (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 22, 2026). Hezbollah's political opponents continued to support direct negotiations with Israel while placing responsibility on the organization for the war and undermining internal stability:

► Parliament member Fouad Makhzoumi expressed full support for President Aoun's political line and the government, and said direct negotiations with Israel were a strategic opportunity to achieve Israeli withdrawal, rebuild the state and strengthen sovereignty. He sharply criticized Hezbollah, which he described as operating on behalf of Iran and dragging Lebanon into costly and unnecessary wars, while consistently opposing negotiations. Makhzoumi pointed to broad public support for a political path, along with American and Saudi backing, and noted the need to implement international decisions, especially limiting weapons to the state, as preparation for a comprehensive arrangement (X account of Fouad Makhzoumi, April 23, 2026).

◆ Head of the Free Patriotic Movement, Gebran Bassil, sharply criticized Hezbollah and said it had dragged Lebanon into two rounds of fighting to serve external interests, support for the Gaza Strip and Iran, with no national benefit for Lebanon. He said they had damaged the organization's internal legitimacy, since they were perceived as the decisions of an external agenda and unrelated to Lebanese considerations (*al-Nashra*, April 23, 2026).



Lebanon walks a tightrope over an abyss on the way to negotiations
(*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 21, 2026)

Hezbollah

Tensions in the Leadership

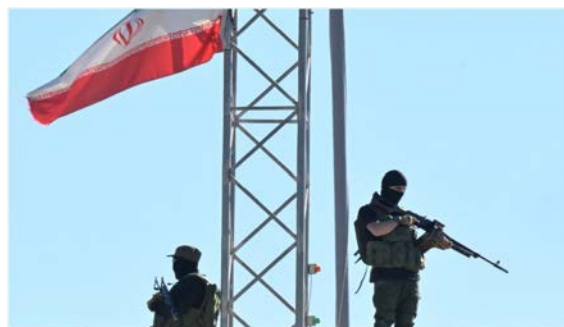
► According to a report, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem tried to reduce media appearances by senior organization figures but encountered opposition. That reportedly indicated Qassem's difficulty in consolidating internal discipline and showed that the disagreements reflected gaps in situational assessment and influence within the organization, and raised questions regarding the cohesion of the leadership during a period sensitive for the organization (*al-Kalima Online*, April 20, 2026).

Escalation in Inter-Sectarian Tensions

► Reportedly, Hezbollah is undertaking unusual security measures in sensitive and mixed areas, including the distribution of personal weapons in Sunni-majority areas in Sidon, Beirut and Tripoli. Such measures raise concern about deepening sectarian tensions and the potential expansion of internal friction, especially in view of the country's political and security sensitivity (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 24, 2026).

Relations with Iran

► On April 22, 2026, the Iranian embassy in Lebanon organized a rally in front of its building in Beirut marking 40 days since the elimination of Iran's leader Ali Khamenei, with the participation of senior Hezbollah representatives. The designated Iranian ambassador, Mohammad Sheibani, was also present at the event, despite the Lebanese Foreign Ministry's demand that he leaves the country by March 29, 2026. Hezbollah Parliament member Ali Fayyad gave a speech claiming that Lebanon should not fear Iran because Tehran wanted stability in Lebanon (*al-Nahar*, April 22, 2026).



Right: Hezbollah bodyguards and the Iranian flag.
Left: "Ambassador" Sheibani (*al-Nahar*, April 22, 2026)

International Activity against Hezbollah

► The American Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Sayed Badr al-Din Nima'i Mousavi, an Iranian citizen linked to the Qods Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, who led a network which financed Hezbollah and the Iranian regime. According to the statement, Mousavi smuggled Iranian oil to the regime of ousted Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro in exchange for gold that was transferred to Hezbollah operatives in Tehran. They transferred the gold for sale in Turkey and the profits were used to finance Hezbollah (American Treasury Department, April 16, 2026).

► Security forces in Syria arrested five suspects in a terrorist cell operating under Hezbollah direction and connected to the cell exposed on April 11, 2026 when it attempted to assassinate a rabbi in Damascus. It was reported that the suspects were trained by experts abroad and that one of the suspects, Ali Majid Mahfouz, liaised between the two cells and was trained abroad in preparing explosives (*Syrian al-Ekhbariya*, April 19, 2026).

► Security authorities in the Quneitra district in south Syria reported they had prevented a Hezbollah-linked cell from firing rockets "across the border." Security forces seized a vehicle

carrying a rocket launcher and arrested several suspects (SANA and Radio Shams, April 19, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► During a visit to the 12th infantry brigade in the north of the country, Rodolph Haykal, commander of the Lebanese army, noted the importance of maintaining internal stability and civil peace as central to national security. He warned that damaging the legitimacy of the army served external interests and could encourage internal confrontation. Haykal reinforced the army's commitment to defend Lebanon's sovereignty and restore its territories, and noted the importance of morale, unity and loyalty among the forces operating to maintain security throughout the country (X account of the Lebanese army, April 21, 2026).

The Situation in Lebanon

► The Lebanese ministry of health reported that since the beginning of the hostilities on March 2, 2026, at least 2,509 people had been killed and 7,755 injured. The disaster risk management unit reported that the number of displaced persons in shelters reached 121,225, representing 31,717 families (*al-Nashra*, April 26, 2026).

► Despite the ceasefire, a wave of displacement from south Lebanon to Beirut was reported. According to the report, along with the extensive destruction and the absence of infrastructure and essential services in the villages, some residents received messages from Hezbollah warning of instability and the possibility of renewed fighting, which accelerated their departure. It was noted that the public perceived the lull as temporary and fragile, especially because it was not based on a stable arrangement but on external pressures, mainly American, and any escalation on the ground could lead to its rapid collapse (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 19, 2026). Some of the displaced families who returned to their areas of residence, mainly in the Dahiye al-Janoubia in Beirut, did so only partially, while preparing for renewed departure (*al-Madan*, April 25, 2026).



Traffic jam of vehicles bound northward from Tyre (Tyre Instagram account, April 26, 2026)

► Reportedly, residents in areas less affected by the fighting began returning to their homes contrary to Hezbollah instructions, increasing criticism of the organization, with claims that it was trying to obscure the extensive destruction on the ground. Hezbollah's opposition to negotiations and fear of renewed fighting were perceived as factors prolonging the population's displacement and increasing its distress. According to claims, the overall picture was of erosion of Hezbollah's public legitimacy in south Lebanon, and a rise in a sense of helplessness and fear that the displacement would become permanent (*al-Liwaa*, April 21, 2026).

► The Lebanese ministry of agriculture reported that about 520,000 dunams of agricultural land, representing 22.5% of the total cultivated area, were destroyed by the fighting, raising concerns of a collapse of food security. According to ministry data, 78% of farmers in south Lebanon ceased their activity, while more than 6,500 farmers cannot reach their lands. Damage was also caused to 10,261 farms, including 3,020 wheat farms, 1,689 tobacco farms and 803 potato farms. According to the minister of agriculture, Nizar Hani, the damage to the agricultural sector after the previous hostilities which ended in November 2024 amounted to about \$1 billion and the numbers are currently expected to rise further (*al-Akhbar*, April 27, 2026).

UNIFIL

► On April 18, 2026, French President Emmanuel Macron reported that a French soldier from the UNIFIL force was killed and three others were wounded in a shooting incident in south Lebanon. He said all indications pointed to Hezbollah as responsible for the shooting and demanded that the Lebanese president and prime minister ensure the safety of UNIFIL soldiers in Lebanon (X account of the French president, April 18, 2026). The UNIFIL statement said that

a patrol engaged in clearing munitions near the village of Ghandouriya was attacked by small arms fire from "non-state actors." One soldier was mortally wounded and three others were wounded, two of them critically (UNIFIL Telegram channel, April 18, 2026). On April 22, one of the wounded French soldiers died in a hospital in Paris and another soldier remains hospitalized in serious condition (UNIFIL Telegram channel, April 22, 2026).

► Meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, Lebanon's prime minister Nawaf Salam expressed appreciation for France's continued support for Lebanon, and noted Beirut's commitment to completing the investigation into the killing of the UNIFIL soldier and bringing those responsible to justice. They discussed the need to accelerate the convening of a conference to support the Lebanese army and to promote an international conference for the reconstruction of the state, while noting the importance of preserving the ceasefire agreement from November 2024 (X account of Nawaf Salam, April 22, 2026).

► On April 24, 2026, UNIFIL reported that an Indonesian peace observer had died of in a hospital in Beirut after being injured in an explosion at a base in Aadchit on March 29, 2026. The force called on all regional actors to comply with international law and warned that deliberate harm to peace observers was a violation of humanitarian law and UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (UNIFIL Telegram channel, April 24, 2026).