

## Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon May 11-18, 2026

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ The IDF continued destroying terrorist infrastructure and eliminating terrorists in the forward defense zone (the Yellow Line) in south Lebanon, gained full operational control of the Litani River, attacked hundreds of Hezbollah facilities and assets, and eliminated terrorists in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley. A senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operative was eliminated in a strike in the Beqa'a Valley. Two IDF soldiers were killed and four wounded in the fighting; three civilians were wounded by the explosion of an explosive UAV in Rosh HaNikra.
- ▶ Hezbollah issued more than 130 claims of responsibility for attacks on IDF forces in south Lebanon and targets in northern Israel, most of them using explosive and regular UAVs, claiming that since the beginning of the ceasefire on April 17, 2026, it had attacked more than 330 times to halt the advance of IDF forces in south Lebanon. It claimed to have shifted to a "multi-layered war of attrition" using diverse weapons systems.
- ▶ The Lebanese and Israeli delegations held the third round of direct talks in Washington, for the first time with the participation of military personnel, and agreed to extend the ceasefire for 45 more days and initiate political and security negotiations. Reportedly, if the ceasefire stabilized, Israel was expected to begin a gradual withdrawal and the Lebanese army would deploy in the south of the country.
- ▶ Hezbollah continued its absolute opposition to direct negotiations with Israel and accused the Lebanese leadership of making concessions to Israel and the United States while attempting to disarm the "resistance." The editor of Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* accused President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam of being the "occupation government in Lebanon."

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

- ▶ The Lebanese prime minister said the state was facing the most severe crisis since its establishment and called for restoring the state's exclusive monopoly over weapons and national decisions.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem thanked Iran for its continued support of the organization and linked the current hostilities against Israel to the "Iranian confrontation." Hezbollah's opponents accused it of being an Iranian proxy and operating contrary to Lebanese interests.
- ▶ The UAE added 16 Lebanese individuals and entities to its list of terrorist organizations, including the al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, part of the international effort to take action against the organization's funding sources.
- ▶ The Lebanese ministry of health claimed that approximately 12,000 people had been harmed since the beginning of the campaign on March 2, 2026, including nearly 3,000 dead.

## The Fighting in Lebanon

### The IDF

▶ This past week the IDF continued extensive ground and aerial activity in the Yellow Line zone, attacking and destroying terrorist infrastructure, including Hezbollah weapons depots, observation posts and rocket and missile launchers, and eliminating terrorists who posed a threat to IDF forces. The forces gained operational control in the Litani River area, destroyed infrastructure, eliminated terrorists and attacked hundreds of Hezbollah targets in other areas in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley, focusing on the Tyre region, eliminating more than 200 terrorists and destroying launchers, weapons depots, observation posts and a UAV launch site. Two IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting, one by mortar shell fire and the other by an explosive UAV strike, and four IDF soldiers were wounded. Three civilians were wounded in an explosive UAV strike in Rosh HaNikra (IDF spokesperson, May 11-18, 2026).

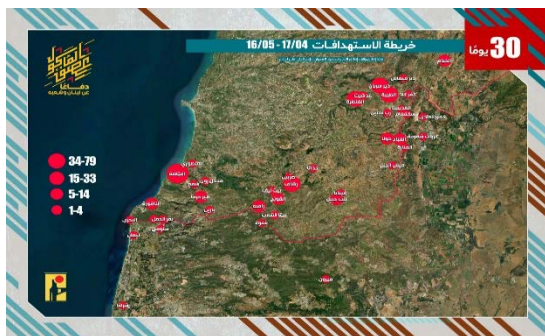


**Right: IDF soldiers near the Litani River (IDF spokesperson, May 12, 2026). Left: An AI image mocking Hezbollah leaders Nasrallah and Qassem, seen "having coffee" with an IDF soldier near the Litani River (X account of Dr. Khalil al-Khalis, May 13, 2026)**

## Hezbollah

► Between noon on May 11 to noon on May 18, 2026, Hezbollah issued 131 claims of responsibility for attacks using explosive UAVs (48 of the attacks), ordinary UAVs, anti-tank missiles, rockets, mortar shells and anti-aircraft missiles. The overwhelming majority of the attacks targeted IDF forces in south Lebanon, however explosive UAV, ordinary UAV and rocket attacks also targeted northern Israeli border communities, and a rocket was fired at the lower Galilee for the first time since the beginning of the ceasefire on April 17, 2026. Hezbollah said it had transitioned to more "offensive and complex patterns" of operation, including combined ambushes, swarms of explosive and ordinary UAVs, anti-tank missiles and attacks on Israeli aircraft. Hezbollah also claimed responsibility for its first attack using a squadron of four explosive UAVs on an IDF position on the border (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 11-18, 2026).

► According to statistics issued by Hezbollah, since the beginning of the ceasefire it had carried out 339 attacks, 318 of them in Lebanese territory, 291 attacks to prevent the advance of IDF forces and three attacks on communities in Israeli territory. Explosive UAVs were used in 140 attacks, 63 were rocket attacks and 56 were UAV attacks. Hezbollah claimed to have hit "at least" 250 Israelis, 48 Merkava tanks, 36 engineering vehicles, a helicopter and an Iron Dome aerial defense system battery. The highest number of attacks was allegedly carried out was the town of al-Bayada on the coast, and the attacks deepest into Israeli territory were directed at military bases in northern Israel (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 17, 2026).



Right: Hezbollah statistics. Left: Map of the attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 17, 2026)

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem sent an open letter to the organization's operatives and commanders, praising Hezbollah's military capabilities, particularly the UAV, rocket and missile arrays. He claimed the weapons systems created "anxiety and psychological crises" in Israel, representing the fighting as a continuing success and an expression of steadfastness, based on "religious faith" and readiness for prolonged sacrifice (website of Hezbollah's secretary general, May 12, 2026).

► Sources claimed the hostilities in south Lebanon had entered a phase of multi-layered war of attrition, exceeding the model of pinpoint responses and focusing on the "operational, psychological and cognitive erosion" of the IDF and the Israeli home front. According to the sources, Hezbollah was gradually changing its operational patterns from a defensive strategy based mainly on long-range fire to direct offensive activity, including short-range ambushes, infiltration, activity behind IDF lines and follow-up attacks on forces, rescue forces and logistical and engineering infrastructure. Hezbollah claimed to be making combined use of explosive UAVs, rocket barrages, artillery and UAV swarms, while attempting to disrupt the IDF's ability to establish a hold in the border zone and undermine the sense of security in the Israeli home front and the effectiveness of the aerial defense systems. Hezbollah gave special significance to an attempt to launch a surface-to-air missile at an Israeli aircraft, indicating an attempt to expand the rules of engagement and reduce Israel's aerial freedom of action in south Lebanon (*al-Akhbar*, May 12, 2026; *al-Diyar*, May 14, 2026).

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor in chief of Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar*, wrote that the organization had preserved its "operational capabilities" and imposed a "deterrent equation" on Israel, even if the organization currently chose not to be dragged into a broad confrontation. He claimed Israel did not escalate because it did not want another all-out war, adding that despite the continued Israeli attacks and security activity, Israel had not yet achieved its central objectives, which were dismantling the capabilities of the "resistance"<sup>2</sup> and preventing its recovery (*al-Akhbar*, May 12, 2026).

► According to a report, Hezbollah did not issue death notices for its operatives and instead held limited funerals away from media exposure to make it more difficult to track the scale of the organization's losses, and to prevent a negative impact on public opinion and

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<sup>2</sup> Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

Hezbollah's support environment in light of the continued fighting and the accompanying human cost (*al-Nahar*, May 15, 2026).

## UNIFIL

► UNIFIL said it was becoming concerned by the increasing Hezbollah and IDF activity near UN positions in south Lebanon, particularly after numerous UAV incidents near the force's headquarters in al-Naqoura. UNIFIL said there had been several explosions and crashes of UAVs "suspected of belonging to Hezbollah," some of them within UNIFIL areas themselves, endangering the peacekeeping forces and damaging buildings, although no casualties were reported. Preliminary findings indicated that at least one UAV was Iranian-made. Meanwhile, UNIFIL announced it had conveyed protests both to the IDF regarding its activity near UN positions and to the Lebanese army regarding the activity of "non-state actors" in the area, while calling on all parties not to engage in activity liable to endanger the peacekeeping forces (UNIFIL Telegram channel, May 13, 2026).



**UAV explosion in the UNIFIL headquarters compound (UNIFIL Telegram channel, May 13, 2026)**

## Direct Negotiations between Lebanon and Israel

### The Lebanese government

► The third round of direct talks between Lebanon and Israel in Washington lasted two days with the participation of Israeli and Lebanese officers. The Lebanese delegation, headed by former ambassador Simon Karam and backed by President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, focused on the demand for a full, stable ceasefire, an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, the release of prisoners, the return of the displaced persons and strengthening the deployment of the Lebanese army south of the Litani River. Israel said it would not agree to a full withdrawal or a permanent ceasefire without tangible progress on disarming Hezbollah weapons and restricting the

authority over war and peace solely to the Lebanese state (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, May 15, 2026; *al-Nahar*, May 12, 2026; *Nidaa al-Watan*, May 14, 2026).



**The delegations meet in Washington (Lebanon Debate, May 15, 2026)**

► An agreement was reached to extend the ceasefire for 45 days, after Lebanon rejected an Israeli demand for a shorter period. Negotiations would continue on two parallel tracks, political and security; security would deal with border arrangements, oversight mechanisms, deployment of the Lebanese army and the issue of Hezbollah's weapons (*al-Akhbar*, May 15-16, 2026). On May 29, 2026, a first round of military-level talks between Lebanon and Israel would take place and if the ceasefire stabilized, Israel would begin a gradual withdrawal from south Lebanon, the Lebanese army's control in the south would be extended and the reconstruction of the area would be advanced. The next round of political talks would begin in early June, when Lebanon would want to discuss border issues, prisoners and formulating of a future bilateral agreement (*al-Jadeed*, May 16, 2026).

► The Lebanese were cautious regarding the chances for success. Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Hezbollah's ally, said any arrangement had to include a real ceasefire, an end to the elimination of "fighters" and destruction in the south, a timetable for Israeli withdrawal and the return of residents to their villages. Meanwhile, it is becoming clear to the Lebanese that the negotiations are being conducted under increasing American-Israeli pressure to advance tangible progress on Hezbollah's weapons, and that Washington seeks to separate the Lebanese issue from the broader contacts with Iran. Saudi Arabia, France and Egypt are trying to formulate a "regional umbrella" which would help stabilize the Lebanese arena and reduce tensions between the internal power centers in the country (*al-Diyar*, May 13-15, 2026; *al-Akhbar*, May 15, 2026; *al-Joumhouria*, May 15, 2026).

► Reportedly, behind the scenes in Washington, the United States and Lebanon are working to stabilize the ceasefire for 45 days and later turn it into a permanent ceasefire because of

American concern over the collapse of the understandings before the beginning of the planned security talks. According to the report, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Berri informed the presidential palace in Lebanon that Hezbollah would agree to commit to the ceasefire if Israel implemented it in practice and not only in declarations. Any future arrangement had to include a complete cessation of fighting in south Lebanon, the beginning of an Israeli withdrawal and only afterward a broad deployment of the Lebanese army in the area (*Nidaa al-Watan*, May 18, 2026).

### **Hezbollah's Position**

► Hezbollah and its media outlets continued their intransigence regarding the direct negotiations taking place between Lebanon and Israel in Washington, portraying them as an illegitimate move advancing under American sponsorship whose central objective was to disarm Hezbollah and damage the "resistance." Hezbollah distinguished between opposition to direct negotiations and willingness in principle for indirect methods" which would lead to a ceasefire, Israeli withdrawal and the achievement of "Lebanese" objectives. Hezbollah claimed the Lebanese leadership was acting under American-Israeli pressure without real leverage, thereby endangering Lebanese sovereignty and the balance of deterrence vis-à-vis Israel:

- ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem wrote an open letter to the organization's commanders and operatives stating that Hezbollah would not agree to an external discussion of its weapons, which he said were an internal Lebanese matter, and called for conducting only indirect negotiations with Israel while opposing direct contacts, which he called a net gain for Israel. He reiterated Hezbollah's five points as conditions for an arrangement, i.e., ending Israeli attacks, Israeli withdrawal from the disputed territories, release of prisoners, return of residents to the south and reconstruction of the destruction, again claiming the organization was prepared to conduct a dialogue regarding a national security strategy. He linked the developments in Lebanon to regional issues, claiming that possible understandings between Iran and the United States could be key to ending the fighting (website of Hezbollah's secretary general, May 12, 2026).

- ◆ Meanwhile, Hezbollah's faction in the Lebanese Parliament claimed that the national leadership continued to "concede" to Israel and the United States while relying on weak diplomacy. The faction represented Hezbollah as Lebanon's most

important defender, attacked the direct negotiations with Israel and claimed they deepened internal division, while calling on the government to return to the "essence of the constitution and the national pact" (website of the Loyalty to the Resistance faction, May 14, 2026).

◆ Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of the political council, warned against internal *fitna* (enmity, chaos), which he claimed was being advanced under American sponsorship and in cooperation with the Lebanese government to disarm the "resistance." He claimed President Aoun had violated understandings given to Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, adding that the organization had a broad support base and "significant military capability," such that any internal attempt to exploit the fighting against Israel to harm the "resistance" would fail (*al-Akhbar*, May 15, 2026).

◆ In a statement marking 43 years since the May 17, 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel, Hezbollah warned against any course leading to a peace agreement with Israel. It claimed the Lebanese leadership was being swept along by American-Israeli pressure and granting "free concessions" which were detrimental to the sovereignty of the state and the "resistance." Hezbollah reiterated yet again that it would not agree to disarmament or normalization of relations with Israel, and represented the current negotiations as a continuation of "agreements of surrender" threatening Lebanon's internal stability (Lebanon 24, May 16, 2026).

◆ In articles and commentaries issued in the daily *al-Akhbar*, headed by articles of editor in chief Ibrahim al-Amin, the Lebanese government, particularly President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, was portrayed as effectively advancing an American-Israeli agenda against Hezbollah. According to al-Amin, the Lebanese state was being dragged toward a model of security coordination with Israel under American sponsorship, similar to the "Palestinian model," while advancing mechanisms for oversight over the organization's weapons and expanding the powers of the Lebanese army to deal with its infrastructure. Al-Amin used the expression "the occupation authorities in Lebanon" to describe the Lebanese leadership to portray it as effectively operating in the service of American and Israeli interests against the "resistance." *Al-Akhbar* claimed Israel and the United States did not regard the Lebanese state as an actor with the ability to impose arrangements, but rather as a tool for advancing Hezbollah's disarmament as a condition for any future arrangement

(*al-Akhbar*, May 14-16, 2026). Richard Kouyoumjian, responsible for foreign relations in the Christian Lebanese Forces party, sharply criticized *al-Akhbar* after it described the Lebanese leadership as the "occupation government," and called it "Iranian incitement against the institutions of the state" (X account of Richard Kouyoumjian, May 16, 2026).

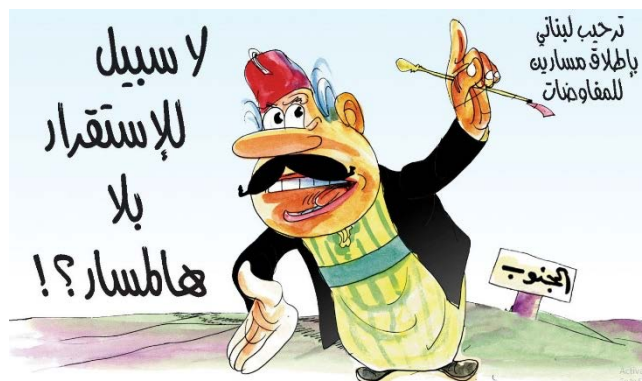
## Hezbollah's Opponents

► The political forces opposing Hezbollah continued publicly aligning themselves with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, while supporting negotiations with Israel and the state's efforts to strengthen its sovereignty and the status of its institutions and establish its standing as the body authorized to decide on war and peace:

◆ Samir Geagea, chairman of the Christian Lebanese Forces party, said Hezbollah had no right to delay the state's course after decades of operating outside Lebanese law and legitimacy. He said only state institutions were legitimate, and government decisions had rendered Hezbollah's military activity illegitimate. He said Hezbollah's policies had led to the deterioration of security and the return of an Israeli presence in south Lebanon, and called on the state to implement its decisions against the organization without fear of *fitna* (chaos, enmity) or civil war (*Nidaa al-Watan*, May 14, 2026).

◆ Sami Gemayel, chairman of the Christian Phalange party, said that for decades Lebanon had paid the price of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and of the existence of armed militias on its territory. He said rebuilding the state and restoring stability to the south require dismantling all armed forces outside the framework of the state, especially Hezbollah (*al-Markazia*, May 15, 2026).

◆ Lebanese Parliament member Fouad Makhzoumi welcomed the political and security discourses opened in the Washington talks and claimed they established the authority of the state and the status of the Lebanese army as the sole body authorized to decide matters of war and peace (X account of Fouad Makhzoumi, May 16, 2026).



**Lebanon, perceived as subordinate to Hezbollah's influence, and its support for extending the negotiations and the truce with Israel, while casting doubt on their ability to bring real stability to Lebanon, particularly to the south of the country (al-Jourhouria, May 16, 2026)**

## Hezbollah

### Relations with Iran

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem sent a letter to the Ayatollah Ali Reza al-Arafi, director of the religious seminaries in Iran, thanking the Islamic Republic for its continued support for Hezbollah, which began with its establishment in 1982. Qassem said Iranian assistance, particularly from the Revolutionary Guards and the Qods Force, had been a central factor in the organization's ability to "confront"<sup>3</sup> Israel over the years. Qassem again presented the "confrontation" with Israel as part of a broad regional struggle against "American-Israeli aggression," while Hezbollah was committed to "fight" until the attacks ceased, Israel withdrew and prisoners were released. He linked the hostilities in Lebanon directly to the Iranian "confrontation" and represented Tehran as the regional "banner of liberation and independence" (*al-Jourhouria*, May 14, 2026).

► Other senior figures in the camp opposing Hezbollah accused it of operating as an Iranian proxy acting contrary to Lebanon's interests. The Lebanese minister of industry, Joe Issa al-Khoury, from the Lebanese Forces party, said the state could not revive when loyalties were divided beyond the borders of the homeland (X account of Joe Issa al-Khoury, May 16, 2026). Lebanese Forces information official Charles Jabbour criticized the Iran-Hezbollah connection and said the central question was not only Israeli withdrawal, but how to remove the "Iranian forces" from Lebanon, i.e., Hezbollah (X account of Charles Jabbour, May 14, 2026).

► Statements by Russian president Vladimir Putin regarding the transfer of thousands of Iranian soldiers from Syria, some of them to Lebanon, after the fall of the Assad regime

<sup>3</sup> Attack.

strengthened assessments in Lebanon regarding the deepening of direct Iranian involvement in rebuilding Hezbollah's military and organizational capabilities. According to a report, the importance of Putin's remarks lay in the public confirmation of the transfer of Iranian forces from the Syrian arena to Lebanon, alongside Hezbollah's efforts to reorganize. It was also claimed that advisers from the Revolutionary Guards were operating in Lebanon to rebuild, train and provide Hezbollah with operational support, along with skepticism in Lebanon regarding Iranian attempts to represent their activity as being only "diplomatic" (*Nidaa al-Watan*, May 14, 2026).

### **Financing Hezbollah**

► The UAE added 16 Lebanese individuals and five entities to its sanctions list for terrorist activity because of ties to Hezbollah. Included on the list are the al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, and senior managers in the association who are also on the American sanctions list. The assets of all those designated were frozen (UAE News Agency, May 12, 2026).

► Reportedly, the UAE's decision to include al-Qard al-Hassan reflected the intensification of international pressure on Hezbollah's financial infrastructure, along with American and European pressure on Lebanon to comply with the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and take action against the organization's financing networks. According to the report, Lebanon was considering restricting the association's activity and revoking its license, although doubts existed regarding the state's willingness to confront Hezbollah directly on the issue. According to claims, Hezbollah began adapting its financial operating mechanisms to alternative frameworks and decentralized cash transfer networks, with signs of increasing financial erosion following the damage to its economic infrastructure (*al-Nahar*, May 14, 2026).

► It was later reported that the debate in Lebanon over the activity of the al-Qard al-Hassan Association had resumed because of growing calls to revoke its license as a charitable association and halt its financial activity outside the official banking system. According to the report, pressure increased following the commitment by Lebanon's central bank to implement the American sanctions against the association and warnings distributed to banks and financial institutions against maintaining relations with it. It was also noted that the ministry of interior had not yet renewed the association's annual authorization for 2026, but had not taken harsher steps, in part because of political sensitivity and concern over

security and social consequences in light of the association's central role in Hezbollah's economic and social infrastructure (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 14, 2026).

## Sectarian Tensions in Lebanon

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized the condition of the Lebanese state, claiming it was undergoing the most severe crisis since its establishment, after years when it had become spoils of war instead of a unifying framework for all Lebanese. He said no real salvation for Lebanon was possible without a return to the logic of the state, rule of law, constitutional institutions, an independent judicial system and the state's exclusive monopoly over weapons and national decisions. He indirectly criticized Hezbollah and the wars imposed on Lebanon which led to "destruction, displacement and damage to the state's sovereignty" (Facebook page of the Lebanese prime minister, May 15, 2026).

► Senior Shi'ite cleric Sayyed Ali Fadlallah warned against deepening internal division and called for an internal political dialogue to strengthen national unity and prevent a slide into internal confrontations. He noted the importance of the state's role in dealing with the humanitarian crisis and the displaced persons, and said he hoped regional developments, particularly regarding Iran, would help ease tensions in Lebanon (*al-Diyar*, May 15, 2026).

► Druze leader Walid Jumblatt also warned against an escalation in sectarian discourse because of the war and the "confrontation" regarding Hezbollah, but said civil war was unlikely as long as two significant "armed camps" did not exist in Lebanon. He criticized attempts to identify the entire Shi'ite community with Hezbollah and said the organization could not be disarmed by force, but rather through dialogue, strengthening the state and stabilizing security in the south (*Nidaa al-Watan*, May 15, 2026).

► Mufti Sheikh Ahmad Qabalan attacked the Lebanese leadership for what he called "political dependence on external elements," and warned that the current negotiations did not serve the national interest. He noted the importance of the "resistance" in defending Lebanon, warned against attempts to drag the Lebanese army into an internal confrontation with Hezbollah and called for preserving national unity in the face of external pressures (*al-Diyar*, May 15, 2026).



**Mufti Qabalan (*al-Diyar*, May 15, 2026)**

► Hassan Ezz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, criticized the Lebanese judicial system for again permitting the Angry Birds video to be aired on the LBCI channel. He claimed it was politicization of the judicial system and its use as a tool against Hezbollah's environment. He added that such moves deepened internal division and endangered civil peace in Lebanon (*al-Akhbar*, May 16, 2026).

► Meanwhile, an investigative report issued by MTV sparked a wave of public and media criticism against Hezbollah following claims of involvement by elements affiliated with the organization in a network which forged Lebanese passports and documents for foreign citizens, including Iranians and Iraqis, while exploiting loopholes in the state's security and administrative mechanisms. The affair was presented in the Lebanese media as additional proof of Hezbollah's penetration into state institutions and the damage to Lebanese sovereignty, with concern over damage to the international standing of the Lebanese passport and possible implications for the attitude of Arab and Western states toward Lebanon (MTV, May 8-11, 2026).

## The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army neutralized unexploded ordnance left from previous Israeli strikes in the al-Safir area in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut. According to the army's statement, the bomb was transferred to a safe site for handling, while army headquarters called on civilians to exercise caution in areas affected during the fighting and immediately report any suspicious object (X account of the Lebanese army, May 12, 2026).



**A special forces soldier in the Lebanese army neutralizing a bomb in Beirut  
(X account of the Lebanese army, May 12, 2026)**

► Commander of the Lebanese army general Rodolph Haykal met with the Egyptian ambassador to Lebanon, Alaa Moussa, to discuss the latest developments in Lebanon and the region. The Egyptian ambassador stressed his country's support for the Lebanese army's efforts to preserve the state's stability and security, given the security and political challenges Lebanon had faced in recent times (X account of the Lebanese army, May 16, 2026).



**Haykal and the Egyptian ambassador (X account of the Lebanese army, May 16, 2026)**

## The Civilian Situation in Lebanon

► Rakan Nasser al-Din, the Lebanese minister of health, claimed that since the ceasefire on April 17, 2026, more than 1,500 casualties had been recorded in Lebanon, including approximately 380 dead, while since the beginning of the current hostilities on March 2, 2026, the total number of casualties had reached approximately 12,000 people, including 2,988 dead and 9,210 wounded. He said the ministry of health had documented 163 attacks on medical and rescue teams in which more than 100 medical and rescue personnel had been killed, and extensive damage to ambulances, fire engines and hospitals in south Lebanon (*al-Akhbar*, May 13, 2026; *al-Joumhouria*, May 16, 2026).

► The chairman of the hotel owners association in Lebanon warned that the Lebanese tourism sector was falling apart because of the security situation and the ongoing war, and

noted that at present there were almost no indications of tourist traffic ahead of Eid al-Adha (May 26 – May 30, 2026). He said hotel occupancy rates in Beirut were around only 7%–8% percent and even lower in other areas. He warned that the country's tourism establishments were on the verge of collapse after the loss of another tourist season (*al-Akhbar*, May 13, 2026).

► During a tour in Marjayoun, Hanine al-Sayyed, Lebanese minister of social affairs, announced the launch of a financial assistance program for more than 6,000 families in the Hasbaya and Marjayoun districts, as part of the government's efforts to strengthen the populations remaining in the frontline villages in south Lebanon. She said the program was in addition to aid previously granted to tens of thousands of displaced families from the south, and its objective was to support displaced persons and families who chose to remain in their communities despite the fighting. She said the presence of the residents in the south was a first line of defense against attempts at displacement, and the return of the displaced persons to their villages remained a central objective of the Lebanese government (*al-Diyar*, May 15, 2026).

## The Palestinians in Lebanon

► According to reports, Wael Abdelhalim, a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) commander, was killed with his daughter in an Israeli strike on the family apartment in the al-Jalil Palestinian refugee camp in the city of Baalbek in the Beqa'a Valley (Lebanese News Agency, Al Jazeera, May 18, 2026).

► The ministerial committee in the Lebanese government responsible for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon held its first meeting as part of a renewed Lebanese attempt to regulate the handling of the Palestinian refugee camps and strengthen state involvement in their administration. During the meeting, chairman of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, ambassador Ramez Dimashkieh, presented a series of initiatives intended to formulate a "unified Lebanese vision" of the Palestinian refugees, including regulating issues of humanitarian rights, camp governance and the issue of the management of their weapons under the authority of the Lebanese state. Reportedly, Lebanon adheres to its opposition to the permanent settlement of the refugees and to preserving the principle of the "right of return." The meeting took place following the matter's return to the center of the political and security discourse in Lebanon and amid growing calls to strengthen state control and presence within the camps and Palestinian population centers (*al-Diyar*, May 13, 2026).