

Dismantling the Hezbollah Infrastructure at the Ali Taher Ridge to Advance the Ceasefire Agreement

Dror Doron

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Overview¹

- The Ali al-Taher Ridge, which lies north of the Litani River, is strategically important because it commands the al-Nabatiyeh area and is located on the route connecting south Lebanon with the coastal area and the western Beqa'a Valley. According to assessments in Israel and Lebanon, it conceals a major Hezbollah headquarters with a network of tunnels which apparently house dozens of the organization's operatives and store advanced weapons, and Iranian officers and operatives may also be present.
- Since June 2026, IDF activity has focused on gaining full control of the ridge, which lies within the Israeli security zone in south Lebanon, by eliminating terrorists and destroying infrastructure. At least five IDF soldiers have been killed and 18 wounded in explosive UAV attacks and encounters with Hezbollah terrorists.
- To stop the Israeli attacks and advance the June 2026 framework agreement, Lebanese President Aoun proposed evacuating Hezbollah terrorists from the Ali al-Taher Ridge and deploying Lebanese army forces. The initiative was supported by the United States and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, the leader of Amal and Hezbollah's ally, but the Lebanese army had reservations.
- Hezbollah made it clear that it had no intention of voluntarily withdrawing from the Ali al-Taher Ridge and was "resisting" the IDF to prevent it from taking control of the area, adding that accepting President Aoun's proposal would lead Israel to demand the evacuation of other important "resistance" sites, including north of the Litani River, contrary to UN Security Council Resolution 1701.
- **In Amit Institute assessment, the situation on the Ali al-Taher Ridge challenged Hezbollah in two ways. On the military level, loss of its control would impair the organization's ability to manage its military systems in south Lebanon, allowing the IDF**

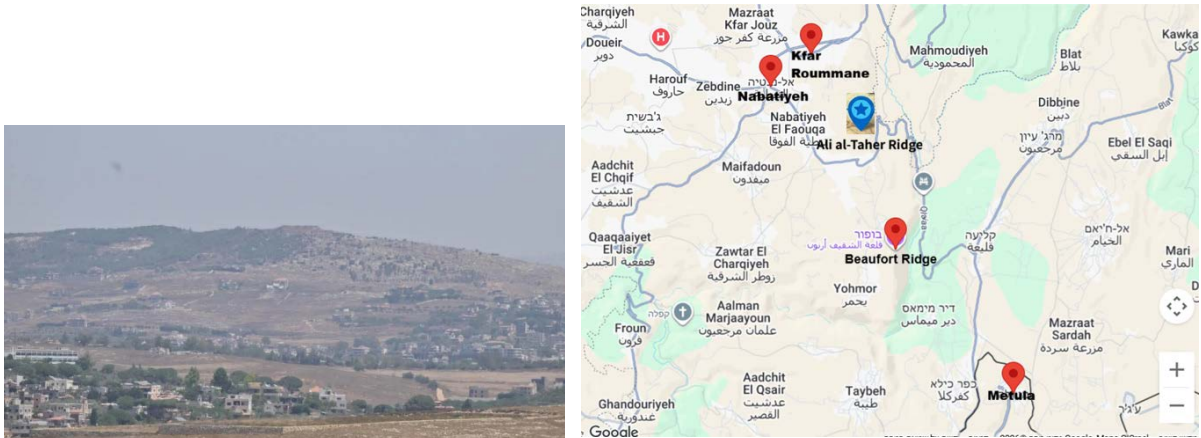
¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the Amit Institute's daily updates as well as its other publications.

to expand its operations to dismantle the organization's infrastructure in other parts of Lebanon, especially in the western Beqa'a Valley. On the political level, the site is located north of the Litani River, which in principle is beyond what Hezbollah is prepared to transfer to the Lebanese army as part of implementing Resolution 1701. Therefore, any decision regarding the Ali al-Taher Ridge would be a precedent which could also be applied to its military assets in other parts of Lebanon.

► Meanwhile, the issue of control of the Ali al-Taher Ridge is becoming a test of the Lebanese government's ability to meet its commitment to dismantle Hezbollah's infrastructure. The Lebanese army's reluctance to confront the Hezbollah operatives holding the site, as well as concern over a direct Iranian response against Israel because of possible attacks on Revolutionary Guards operatives who may be present at the site or in support of Hezbollah, reflect the extent of the challenge the issue poses in the internal Lebanese arena, in the confrontation between Israel and Hezbollah and in the attempt to reach an arrangement between Israel and Lebanon.

The Strategic Importance of the Ali al-Taher Ridge

► The Ali al-Taher Ridge, which rises to approximately 600 meters above sea level, is located north of the Litani River and Beaufort Castle and commands extensive areas that include the town of al-Nabatiyeh, the village of Tebnine, the Iqlim al-Tuffah region and Jabal al-Rihan. Its location provides observation and attack capabilities, and controls the major transportation routes connecting the coastal area, al-Nabatiyeh, the Beqa'a Valley, Tyre and Marjayoun. The ridge was under Israeli control during the IDF presence in the security zone from 1985 to 2000; the IDF had an outpost there (Al Jazeera, June 26, 2026; *Haaretz*, March 28, 2017). It is within the security zone established by the IDF in south Lebanon during the hostilities which began on March 2, 2026 (IDF spokesperson, June 20, 2026).



Right: The Ali al-Taher Ridge and its surroundings (Google Maps). Left: The Ali al-Taher Ridge above the village of Tebnine and al-Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa (MTV Lebanon, August 12, 2026)

► According to the IDF, a major strategic Hezbollah underground infrastructure is located in the Ali al-Taher Ridge and the site is the main headquarters of Hezbollah's Badr Unit, which manages the organization's activity north of the Litani River. Dozens of Hezbollah terrorists are believed to be trapped in the compound (Israeli media, June 20, 2026). Commentators and media outlets in Lebanon also noted the ridge's strategic importance for Hezbollah:

- ◆ According to Brigadier General Khalil al-Jamil, former commander of the Lebanese army south Litani sector, said the facility was apparently headquarters of the Badr Unit. The Ali al-Taher Ridge consists of three interconnected hills: Ali al-Taher, al-Dabsha and al-Tahra, and According to al-Jamil, assessments indicate that the area contains a network of interconnected tunnels extending along the high ground and toward the surrounding villages, and a site of that size requires more than 100 operatives to operate and manage it (al-Arabiya, August 19, 2026).
- ◆ A Lebanese military source noted Hezbollah maintained the Imad 4 facility beneath the ridge where precision missiles and heavy rockets are stored, as Hezbollah revealed in a video published in August 2024² (MTV Lebanon, July 8, 2026).

² See the August 2024 Amit Institute report, [Hezbollah Issues Video of Its Imad 4 Underground Facility: Reactions and Implications](#).



The Imad 4 facility (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, August 16, 2024)

The Presence of Iranian Operatives on the Ali al-Taher Ridge

► Lebanese security sources said they had information indicating that commanders and combat and technical operatives from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were also present in the underground area of the Ali al-Taher Ridge. It was also reported that Lebanese security had information about Iranian efforts to reinforce its presence on the ground in south Lebanon, particularly in the vicinity of the Ali al-Taher Ridge, by increasing the presence of Revolutionary Guards operatives and infiltrating them into Lebanon with forged passports (Erem News, August 19, 2026).

► In response, Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of the Hezbollah political council, claimed there were no "Iranian fighters" in the organization's ranks in south Lebanon (al-Markazia, August 24, 2026). Hezbollah's media information department also denied reports in the Arab media that more than 100 Hezbollah and Revolutionary Guards operatives were present in the compound (Lebanon Debate, August 20, 2026; *al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 22, 2026).

► Meanwhile, the Iranian leadership reportedly informed the Hezbollah leadership that it would not abandon the organization in the "confrontation" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 19, 2026). Subsequently, sources close to Hezbollah were quoted as saying that the organization was counting on Iranian intervention if Israel attempted to capture the ridge (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 20, 2026). Media outlets in Lebanon then raised concerns regarding the consequences if an Israeli move to take control of the ridge wounded or killed Revolutionary Guards officers and operatives "allegedly present" at the site (Lebanon Files, August 26, 2026).

► However, after several weeks, according to reports, in IDF assessment there are no Iranian officers or operatives trapped in the underground compound on the Ali al-Taher Ridge (i24News, August 29, 2026).

Israel Takes Control of the Ridge

► Beginning in June 2026, after taking control of the Beaufort Ridge and its network of tunnels, the IDF focused on the Ali al-Taher Ridge with air and artillery strikes to eliminate terrorists in the area, prevent besieged terrorists from escaping, prevent aid from reaching the compound and destroy Hezbollah infrastructure. Five IDF soldiers were killed and 18 wounded by explosive UAV attacks and encounters with Hezbollah terrorists during activity on the ridge (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, June 20-August 30, 2026).



IDF attacks on the ridge (Right: *al-Nahar*, August 27, 2026. Left: MTV Lebanon, August 28, 2026)

► According to Lebanese reports, Israel is isolating the Ali al-Taher Ridge while disrupting supply routes and exhausting Hezbollah forces trapped inside the tunnels. Reportedly, Israeli activity in the area caused a large number of casualties among Hezbollah operatives and Revolutionary Guards personnel (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 21, 2026).

► According to Lebanese commentators, Israeli control of the ridge would mean the collapse of Hezbollah's second line of defense and the loss of the remainder of its military capabilities in the south, thereby paving the way for the IDF to advance toward Iqlim al-Tuffah and separate the south from the western Beqa'a Valley (Sky News Arabia, August 24, 2026; *al-Nahar*, August 22, 2026). Lebanese army sources said IDF activity in the Mount Hermon area, including the opening of military roads and connecting outposts to one another, raised concern that Israel planned to open a route which would enable it to exert pressure on the western Beqa'a Valley and approach Hezbollah's "military depth" (Erem News, August 25, 2026).

► However, despite Israeli military pressure, for the time being Hezbollah appears to maintain its hold on the area. According to a senior parliamentary source close to the Shi'ite

bloc, Hezbollah rotated its forces using secret access routes which remain under its control (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 19, 2026).

► Diplomatic sources noted that the United States was working to restrain IDF activity and prevent a large-scale military operation to capture the entire site, although it provides political backing for measures focused on limited surgical operations and the continued encirclement of the tunnels in the area. Reportedly, that reflects an American concern that a broad Israeli operation to capture the ridge would cause large numbers of casualties, including Iranians, which could lead to a direct Iranian response against Israel and reignite a regional campaign (*al-Arabiya*, August 19, 2026).

The Ali al-Taher Ridge, Implementing the Framework Agreement and Disarming Hezbollah

► On June 26, 2026, as part of the direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel under American mediation, the ambassadors of the two countries to the United States signed a framework agreement. It established two pilot zones which Lebanese army forces would enter to dismantle Hezbollah and the other "armed groups"³ and their military infrastructure as a first step toward a gradual Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. Implementation began on July 20-21, 2026, with the entry of the Lebanese army into the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh and the villages of Froun, Srifa and Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, under the supervision of the military coordination group for Lebanon led by the United States Central Command.⁴

► Lebanese sources said that during the seventh round of direct negotiations held in Rome on August 4-6, 2026, the Lebanese delegation demanded that the pilot zones be expanded to al-Khiyam, Bint Jbeil and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah. However, Israel reportedly conditioned expansion of the pilot zone program on the dismantling of Hezbollah's military infrastructure in the Ali al-Taher Ridge area (Lebanese and Arab media, August 5-8, 2026).

► To break the deadlock, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun proposed that Hezbollah operatives withdraw from the ridge and Lebanese army forces enter the area. Aoun reportedly briefed Parliament Speaker and Amal leader Nabih Berri, Hezbollah's ally, on the matter and discussed it with representatives of the American administration (*al-Araby al-*

³ Terrorist organizations.

⁴ See the June 2026 Amit Institute report, [The Israel-Lebanon Framework Agreement: Insights and Responses](#) and the August 2026 report, [Hezbollah in the Pilot Zones Disguised as Civilian Organizations](#)

Jadeed, August 24, 2026). Nabih Berri said he was in favor of the pilot zones and of resolving the issue of Ali al-Taher by transferring it to the responsibility of the Lebanese army (Lebanese News Agency, August 19, 2026).

► However, the Lebanese army reportedly rejected the idea and conveyed its reservations to President Aoun. The army noted the need for American guarantees ensuring the IDF would not seek to enter the facility on the grounds that it had to verify the dismantling of the military infrastructure (al-Arabiya, August 19, 2026; *al-Liwaa*, August 24, 2026).

► According to reports, the United States is looking for a diplomatic solution to the Ali al-Taher Ridge issue, according to which control of the area would be transferred to the Lebanese army and guarantees would be given that Israel would not again demand control of the site, in order to allay Lebanese concerns. Michel Issa, the American ambassador to Lebanon, underscored the American linkage between progress on the political track and the disarmament of Hezbollah, saying that if Hezbollah disarmed the war would be over (*al-Sharq al-Awsat* and *al-Joumhouria*, August 20, 2026; *al-Liwaa*, August 21, 2026; *al-Nahar* and *al-Liwaa*, August 24, 2026).

► Hezbollah continued to strongly oppose any possibility of withdrawing from the Ali al-Taher Ridge. The Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* claimed that Aoun had already presented Hezbollah with the plan to evacuate the ridge in July 2026 and argued that it could prevent Israel from continuing its military activity in the area. However, Hezbollah rejected the proposal outright, based on the understanding that at stake was not the fate of a single military outpost but the establishment of an equation for all Lebanese territory. According to the report, even after the proposal was raised again with American support, Hezbollah maintained that the ridge would not fall through "surrender, but only after battle and resistance," and that a voluntary withdrawal without guarantees would only encourage Israel to continue its activity. Hezbollah also said that if the proposal regarding the Ali al-Taher Ridge were accepted, Israel would demand the evacuation of other "resistance" sites, such as Iqlim al-Tuffah and the western Beqa'a Valley, as well as areas in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley (*al-Akhbar*, August 29, 2026).

► Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of the Hezbollah political council, said the organization's position on the ridge was "steadfastness and resistance"⁵ (al-Manar, *al-*

⁵ Intransigence and terrorism.

Nashra, al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 22-24, 2026). However, he said the organization had decided to give the political track an opportunity to achieve an Israeli withdrawal, while noting that any new Israeli attempt at a military advance would encounter a "firm response" (al-Markazia, August 24, 2026).

► According to Lebanese commentary, from Hezbollah's perspective, the issue is not only retaining control of the ridge itself but also the ability to set a limit on further Israeli advances and preserve freedom of action north of the Litani River, even at the cost of limited "operational friction" (*al-Joumhouria*, August 19, 2026; *al-Nashra, al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 22, 2026). Hezbollah-affiliated journalist and commentator Imad Marmal outright rejected the possibility that the organization would voluntarily withdraw from the ridge, since such a move would be a dangerous precedent which Israel would seek to repeat in other areas. Moreover, he said the area was north of the Litani River and therefore fell outside the understandings related to the provisions of Security Council Resolution 1701, which relate solely to the area south of the Litani River (*al-Joumhouria*, August 25, 2026).

► Sources close to Hezbollah said the organization was prepared to transfer its infrastructure to the Lebanese army only in the area south of the Litani River, as part of the implementation of Resolution 1701. Any discussion of the organization's infrastructure north of the river had to take place in an internal Lebanese dialogue and as part of the organization's policy of establishing broad national agreement on a national security strategy (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 24, 2026).

► Despite Hezbollah's hardline positions and claims of unwillingness to relinquish the area, sources close to Hezbollah said it had held discussions about the possibility of evacuating its fighters from the Ali al-Taher Ridge and blowing up its outposts in the area. That was considered the last resort and making a difficult choice to prevent Israel from exposing the weapons and capabilities the organization maintained on the ridge (*al-Nahar*, August 22, 2026).