



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

August 24-31, 2026

Trending

- ▶ **The deadlock in the direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel continues.**
- ▶ **Lebanon is concerned Israeli will attempt to take control of the Ali al-Taher Ridge.**
- ▶ **Hezbollah may open a direct channel of communication with the United States.**
- ▶ **Hezbollah faces a financial crisis and growing criticism among the displaced.**

Overview¹

- ▶ A date has not yet been set for the eighth round of direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel in Rome. President Aoun said senior regional figures told him that Israel would not agree to further concessions, but he said Lebanon was determined to end the state of hostility between the two countries.
- ▶ A Lebanese source said the pilot zones had failed because Hezbollah "personnel" entered the areas before the army, military appointments had been made which served the organization and the Lebanese army had a Shi'ite majority.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem called the framework agreement "illegitimate," adding that his organization completely rejected the pilot zones and the verification mechanism.
- ▶ Hezbollah might agree to talks with the United States, but the American State Department said the organization was currently forbidden to do so by Iran.

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.

- The IDF expanded its attacks on and around the Ali al-Taher Ridge and attacked Hezbollah weapons depots in response to the launch of explosive UAVs. UNIFIL documented 1,030 launches and hits in six days of IDF activity.
- Hezbollah is reportedly using an advanced Iranian wireless communications system while expanding its wired network and relying on couriers to deliver messages in order to hamper Israeli intelligence activities.
- Hezbollah's opponents were angered by the director of Lebanese general security's approval of a six-month residency permit for the designated Iranian ambassador, who had been required to leave the country as early as March 2026. The Lebanese foreign ministry said the Iranian diplomat was still *persona non grata*.
- The al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, began imposing restrictions on its activities because of financial distress. Displaced Lebanese are concerned the crisis may keep the organization from providing assistance but are afraid to publicly express criticism.
- The United States does not support extending UNIFIL's mandate beyond December 31, 2026. The countries being considered for participation in an alternative international force, led by Italy, demand security guarantees from Israel and Hezbollah before approving their participation.

Direct Negotiations and the Future of the Framework Agreement

The Talks

- Sources confirmed that no date had been set for the eighth round of direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel in Rome, adding that Lebanon had not been briefed on the matter by the American mediator. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said the talks would take place in September, but Lebanon has not yet been informed of the date (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 29, 2026).
- American sources said the American administration continued its efforts for a new round of negotiations adding that all sides had to adhere to the framework agreement, which guarantees the sovereignty of both countries. They acknowledged that difficulties existed, but said the United States would continue to stand with the Lebanese people, and Hezbollah had to stop its obstruction and agree to hand over its weapons to the Lebanese state instead of serving Iranian interests (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 31, 2026).

► Sources said the situation in Lebanon and the region would remain unclear and uncertain because of the electoral considerations of the American president and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The sources are concerned that Israel has already decided on a military solution in south Lebanon as a preliminary step to any political understanding, since Netanyahu insists on a military scenario which begins with a decisive outcome on the Ali al-Taher Ridge and could spread northward. The sources said the key element remained the Ali al-Taher Ridge, particularly given the difficulties encountered by the head of the military coordination group, Joseph Clearfield, to secure an Israeli withdrawal from another pilot zone (*al-Joumhouria*, August 25, 2026).

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said he had heard from Lebanese, Arab and regional figures that the Netanyahu government did not intend to agree to any concessions in Lebanon, and he had been asked to exert pressure on Washington to keep the process from stalling until after the elections in Israel and the United States. He added that he had urged general security chief Major General Hassan Choucair to contact Hezbollah, but the organization refused to cooperate. Regarding the Ali al-Taher Ridge, Aoun said Israeli forces were at the facility's entrance and their taking control was only a matter of time. Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and leader of the Amal movement, said Aoun and army commander General Rodolphe Haykal had told him that the army would not yield to pressure and was not considering a confrontation with Hezbollah (*al-Akhbar*, August 29, 2026).

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, meeting in Greece with Greek President Konstantinos Tasoulas, said Lebanon was tired of wars and the objective of the negotiations with Israel was to end the state of hostility. He called for full, not selective, implementation of the framework agreement and asked Greece for help. He said the time had come for Lebanon to be able to rest, they were determined to end the state of hostility and the solution could only be diplomatic (Lebanese presidency X account, August 31, 2026).



Aoun meets with the Greek prime minister (RED TV Lebanon, August 31, 2026)

► Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Mitri said the Israeli delegation had threatened the Lebanese negotiating delegation with a lawsuit in American courts on the grounds that Lebanon was sheltering a terrorist organization, which meant it relinquished the right to take legal action against Israel, according to Article 13 of the mechanism agreement. He added that Justice Minister Adel Nassar, when presented with the issue of prosecuting Israel for [allegedly] killing journalists, said that accountability should begin with Iran and Hezbollah, which caused the war. According to Mitri, most ministers regard Israel's crimes as not their concern. Mitri said he alone continued to document the urban, cultural and environmental damage and the current government would not initiate joining the Rome Statute² (*al-Akhbar*, August 28, 2026).

The Future of the Pilot Zones

► A Lebanese source said the failure of the pilot zones resulted from the entry of Hezbollah personnel into some of them even before the Lebanese army deployed³; from appointments in the Lebanese army which served Hezbollah's interests, including the commander of the Beqa'a Valley region, who is loyal to Hezbollah; and from the presence of a Shi'ite majority in the army, including soldiers loyal to the organization. Military expert George Nader claimed Israel had never wanted the pilot zones and had not withdrawn from Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh as it was supposed to. He said Israel's real objective was to disarm Hezbollah by any means possible, whether through direct action or through *fitna* (civil war) in Lebanon (Erem News, August 28, 2026).

² The Rome Statute grants the International Criminal Court jurisdiction over four categories of international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes against peace. Under the Statute, they have no statute of limitations.

³ See the August 2026 Amit Institute report, [Hezbollah in the Pilot Zones Disguised as Civilian Organizations](#).

► According to military sources, the Lebanese army does not oppose an international verification body, provided that the verification is mutual and includes Israel's withdrawal rather than unilateral monitoring of Lebanon alone. The army firmly opposes direct security coordination with Israel (*al-Madan*, August 30, 2026).

► Italy is the most likely candidate to lead the verification mechanism, given its extensive involvement in Lebanon and its military and political contributions, as well as the fact that Israel has not vetoed it, as it did France. However, military sources claimed Israel was creating difficulties for the verification mechanism because of concern over monitoring "violations" it [allegedly] committed in the south which could be used against it in the future (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 24, 2026).

The Ali al-Taher Ridge⁴

► According to claims, a secret arrangement is being forged between the United States and Israel on the one hand and Iran and Hezbollah on the other, under which Hezbollah terrorist operatives and Iranian Revolutionary Guards personnel would withdraw from the Ali al-Taher Ridge and the Lebanese army would enter it. According to the report, Washington informed Tehran that Israel had already decided to take the ridge, and that if the arrangement failed, within 48 hours Israel would escalate the war (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 28, 2026).

► However, according to the Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar*, the initiative has already encountered opposition from Hezbollah. The paper reported that President Aoun had presented Hezbollah with the plan to evacuate the ridge as early as July 2026 and argued it could prevent Israel from continuing its military activity in the area. However, Hezbollah rejected the proposal outright, based on the perception that the issue was not the fate of a single military outpost but would have consequences for all Lebanese territory. The report further stated that even after the proposal was raised again with American support, Hezbollah maintained that the ridge would not fall through surrender, and would be defended with "steadfastness and resistance,"⁵ and a voluntary withdrawal without guarantees would encourage Israel to continue its activity. Hezbollah said that if the proposal regarding the Ali al-Taher Ridge was accepted, it would cause Israel to demand the

⁴ See the August 2026 Amit Institute report, [Dismantling the Hezbollah Infrastructure at the Ali Taher Ridge to Advance the Ceasefire Agreement](#)

⁵ Intransigence and terrorism.

evacuation of other "resistance" sites, such as Iqlim al-Tuffah and the western Beqa'a Valley, and areas in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley (*al-Akhbar*, August 29, 2026).

Hezbollah

► In a speech marking the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem criticized the direct negotiations, claiming the framework agreement was "illegitimate and illegal" and was not an achievement for Lebanon. He said Hezbollah opposed the pilot zones and the verification mechanism, adding that a verification committee meant American-Israeli authority to enter civilians' homes. He claimed the organization had not lost but had "made sacrifices," and Israel and the United States were the ones suffering economic, reputational and moral losses. He reiterated Hezbollah's willingness to implement only the November 27, 2024 ceasefire agreement, within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (*al-Manar*, August 28, 2026).



Qassem delivers his speech (al-Manar, August 28, 2026)

► In a speech for Islamic Unity Week, Qassem warned that any retreat by the Islamic nation in the face of its enemies would lead to its destruction, alleging that the enemy acted "without mercy in order to become master of the world." He said every act of steadfastness,⁶ however costly, laid the foundations for restoring the resistance's position and strengthened its ability to achieve its objectives and defeat the enemy's plans (*Lebanon Debate*, August 30, 2026).

► Hezbollah political council deputy chairman Mahmoud Qamati said the organization would not be dragged into Netanyahu's inflation of the Ali al-Taher issue as part of his election propaganda, and added that the door had not been definitively closed to direct dialogue with the United States (*Lebanon 24*, August 26, 2026). A source said Hezbollah had not actually opened a window for communication with the United States and conditioned any change in its position on a practical change in American conduct, rather than words

⁶ Intransigence.

alone, as long as the sanctions and support for Israeli attacks continued (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 26, 2026). Reportedly, two positions were being debated in Hezbollah. One supported examining the seriousness of the American proposal for dialogue and the other was concerned it was an attempt to dissociate the organization from Iran and isolate it (*al-Madan*, August 29, 2026). According to another report, Hezbollah is considering opening a direct channel of dialogue with the United States rather than with the Lebanese presidency, on the assumption that an American commitment would have more weight, but without making concessions regarding its position on its weapons (*al-Diyar*, August 29, 2026). An American State Department spokesperson said the Lebanese government was the only legitimate body authorized to speak on behalf of the Lebanese people, but in the current situation Hezbollah still did not want to speak with the Lebanese state, or even with the United States, because it took orders from Iran (Lebanon Files, August 29, 2026).

► An article called relations between Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Hezbollah "beyond repair at the present time." Hezbollah political council deputy chairman Mahmoud Qamati was quoted as saying Aoun had "revealed his true face as an enemy of the resistance" (*al-Madan*, August 29, 2026)

Support for the Agreement

► Hezbollah's political opponents continue to support the government's efforts to advance direct negotiations with Israel and ensure the state's monopoly on weapons, stating that the complete dismantling of Hezbollah's military capabilities is unavoidable:

- ◆ Kataeb Party chairman Sami Gemayel called on the state to assume its full responsibility regarding the monopoly on weapons (Sami Gemayel's X account, August 25, 2026).
- ◆ Senior Lebanese Forces figure Charles Jabbour said there were "no half-solutions with Hezbollah," and its "military-security" status had to be dismantled and outlawed, otherwise the country risked division (Charles Jabbour's X account, August 26-27, 2026).
- ◆ Ghada Ayoub of the Strong Republic faction in the Lebanese Parliament said she was confident President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam were united on the issue of disarmament, but criticized how it was being handled and the loss of time. She warned that elections might not be held soon if the state continued to cut corners, adding that disarming Hezbollah was the top priority (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 26, 2026).

◆ Ghassan Hasbani of the Strong Republic member in the Lebanese Parliament said Hezbollah had no intention of handing over its weapons to the Lebanese state and it was pointless to discuss involving it in the negotiations. He added that any future conversation with Hezbollah about disarming and the mechanisms for doing so would not be negotiations but rather operational steps. He said Hezbollah did not believe in the ongoing negotiations and was still waiting to use its weapons for purposes to be determined by Iran (*al-Nahar*, August 29, 2026).

◆ Razi al-Hajj of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party in the Lebanese Parliament wrote that anyone who read Na'im Qassem's current and past positions realized that he lived in another dimension. According to him, Na'im Qassem recounted imaginary narratives which much of his own support base no longer believed, about steadfastness, victories, sacrifices, defeating the enemy and the rest of the slogans of illusion and failed, outdated propaganda marketed for decades by the axis of war and destruction. He criticized Hezbollah, saying, "You are a party of war. You were born with war, you continue with war and you will end because of war," adding, "You are an illegal group, and it is the state's duty to deal with you accordingly, on the basis of government decisions." He asked, "Is there any group that has humiliated its own people more than you?" (Razi al-Hajj's X account, August 30, 2026).

The Military Situation in South Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued eliminating terrorists and destroying terrorist infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon, with a focus on the Ali al-Taher Ridge. Hezbollah launched two explosive UAVs at the forces on the Ali al-Taher Ridge; there were no casualties. In response, the IDF attacked Hezbollah weapons depots in the al-Nabatiyeh area (IDF spokesperson, August 27, 2026).

► According to reports in Lebanon, the IDF ramped up its attacks around the Ali al-Taher Ridge, particularly at Tel al-Dabsha, Dahiyat Kafr Rumman and the al-Deir neighborhood in al-Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa. The objective was to cut the ridge off from its logistic depth and make it more difficult for the terrorists still besieged in the underground compound, without moving to a direct ground confrontation (Lebanon Debate, August 25, 2026). Reportedly, nighttime attacks on the villages in the south also increased, and operations to blow up and demolish buildings in villages in the security zone continued (Lebanon 24, August 26, 2026).

A source said that more than 5,000 housing units and shops had been destroyed in the town of Meis al-Jabal, with only a few dozen housing units still standing (al-Sharq al-Awsat, August 25, 2026).

► UNIFIL claimed that between August 21 and 27, 2026, 1,030 launches and hits were documented in south Lebanon as a result of IDF activity, an average of 147 per day, alongside extensive destruction of homes and infrastructure (al-Sharq al-Awsat, August 28, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah still does not claim responsibility for attacks on IDF forces, and for the time being does not open fire except in response to an actual Israeli attempt to advance toward the Ali al-Taher Ridge (Lebanon Debate, August 25, 2026). Military-strategic expert Bahaa al-Din Khalil said that if the organization chose to respond, its response would depend on the nature of the Israeli offensive: a measured response if the attack remained focused on Ali al-Taher, or a shift toward establishing a broader "deterrent equation" which would include missile and UAV launches at targets in northern Israel if Israel attempted to capture the ridge (*al-Nashra*, August 25, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Rebuilding Military Capabilities

► A source said Hezbollah had recently obtained an advanced wireless communications system from Iran, which was put into use as part of the process of rebuilding the military infrastructure damaged by the war and Israeli incursions. According to the source, the system was designed to reduce dependence on Lebanese telephone and Internet networks and connect some of the organization's units through an isolated internal network. However, the organization did not rely on it alone but simultaneously worked to expand its ground-based wired network, so that information would be transmitted through more than one channel and penetration of one of them would not expose the entire network. The source added that at certain levels, Hezbollah's communications practices had returned to old methods, and that some commanders now moved without a telephone or wireless device and their messages were delivered by couriers on motorcycles, while certain sensitive orders might be transmitted in handwritten form (Erem News, August 27, 2026).

The Financial Challenge

► A severe cash crisis is apparently developing at the al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm,⁷ which now imposes unprecedented restrictions on dollar loans and limits the collateral it accepts to standard gold bars and ounces, while excluding jewelry. The measure reflects an acute shortage of foreign currency caused by military strikes on financial headquarters, tightened international sanctions and the high cost of supporting displaced families. Consequently, "experts" are of the opinion that the organization's "financial fortress has fallen" (Erem News, August 27, 2026).

► Nevertheless, local Hezbollah personnel reportedly began contacting residents in south Lebanon and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut to determine their needs and provide financial assistance through regional offices and without an official announcement. However, they were met with resentment among groups which claimed they had received no assistance at all. Meanwhile, criticism and skepticism are increasing among some of the displaced regarding the organization's ability to bear the cost of reconstruction, although many are afraid to express criticism openly for fear of the consequences (Lebanon 24, August 26, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► Lebanese army commander General Rodolphe Haykal visited Italy at the invitation of the chief of the Italian defense staff, General Luciano Portolano, with whom he laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He met with the Italian armed forces leadership, held telephone conversations with Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, had a meeting at the Italian foreign ministry and met with Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who said it was necessary to establish peace in Lebanon. The talks reportedly dealt with support for the Lebanese army, UNIFIL's roles, the Bilateral Italian Mission in Lebanon, the Military Technical Committee for Lebanon and the Italian vision for the post-UNIFIL period (Lebanese army account, August 26, 2026). According to sources, Haykal's visit to Rome had been scheduled in advance and was not related to the rounds of negotiations with Israel, but solely to efforts to support the Lebanese army (*al-Joumhouria*, August 25, 2026). Returning to Lebanon, Haykal met with President Joseph Aoun and briefed him on the visit (Lebanese presidency account, August 30, 2026).

⁷ See the June 2019 ITIC report, [Hezbollah's socioeconomic foundations: Al-Qard al-Hasan, a quasi-bank that provides interest-free loans, mainly to members of the Shiite community](#).

► General Haykal met in his office with the chargé d'affaires at the French embassy in Lebanon, Bruno de Silva, who formally invited him to participate in the preparatory meeting for the international conference in support of the Lebanese forces, scheduled for September 17, 2026 in Paris (Lebanese army account, August 28, 2026). In preparation for the conference, the Lebanese army assessed its needs, which include not only weapons but vehicles, communications equipment, UAVs, radar and engineering equipment for detecting tunnels (*al-Madan*, August 30, 2026).



Haykal with the chargé d'affaires at the French embassy in Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, August 28, 2026)

► The Lebanese army received the second installment of a Greek military grant, which included 13 M113 armored personnel carriers and ten trucks (Nidaa al-Watan, August 29, 2026).



Armored personnel carriers transferred from Greece to the Lebanese army (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 29, 2026)

Lebanon-Iran Relations

► Interviewed by Hezbollah's al-Manar network, Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's national security council, said ending the war in Lebanon and Israel's withdrawal were fundamental conditions for any future understanding between Iran and the United States. He claimed

Israel could no longer advance toward the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia and Beirut and would be forced to withdraw with heavy losses (*al-Akhbar*, August 28, 2026).

► Hassan Fadlallah, Hezbollah figure responsible for the negotiations with the Lebanese presidency, was received by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who noted Iran's support for "defending Lebanon's territorial integrity, dignity and sovereignty." Fadlallah praised Iran's "strong diplomacy" and called for a unified Islamic position on Israel. Reportedly, the visit, which contrary to usual practice was officially announced by the Iranian foreign ministry, raised questions as to whether Hezbollah would cooperate with the state in negotiations with Israel or persist in its refusal (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 26, 2026).

► Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, sent a message to the Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran praising Iran and claiming it had "never waged a campaign through proxies," but was and remained at the heart of the campaign. Berri also condemned the death of Iranian leader Ali Khamenei in an American-Israeli bombing (*al-Akhbar*, August 27, 2026).

► Sheikh Ali al-Khatib, deputy head of the Islamic Shi'ite council, held a series of meetings in Tehran with senior Iranian officials, including Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Al-Khatib briefed Araghchi on the situation in Lebanon, particularly in the south, and gave him a memorandum of figures on the situation. Araghchi said Iranian officials were kept informed of the situation in Lebanon through reports from the embassy and "the brothers in Hezbollah and the Amal movement." He said the memorandum of understanding with the United States was a "diplomatic victory" because it achieved the ceasefire in Lebanon (*al-Diyar*, August 28, 2026).



Al-Khatib (left) during his meeting with Araghchi (center) (*al-Diyar*, August 28, 2026)

Status of the Iranian Ambassador in Lebanon

► Iran's designated ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad Reza Sheibani, whose appointment was canceled by the Lebanese foreign ministry and who was declared persona non grata in March 2026, applied to the office of general security director General Major

General Hassan Choucair for a residency permit in Lebanon, based on a valid Iranian passport. Choucair granted Sheibani residency for six months, based on a legislative decree (*al-Nahar*, August 24, 2026). Sources in the Lebanese foreign ministry said the ministry had not been informed that residency had been granted and added that Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi's position was clear. "The matter is not open to compromise, and Iran must implement the decision" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 24, 2026).

► The Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* wrote that regularizing Sheibani's continued stay in Lebanon was a slap in the face for the camp opposed to his continued presence in the country, led by American ambassador to Beirut Michel Issa, Foreign Minister Youssef Raggi and the Lebanese Forces Party, which had led a political-media campaign to prevent any solution which would allow Iran to maintain its political presence in Lebanon. According to *al-Akhbar*, General Hassan Choucair persuaded Lebanese President Joseph Aoun to adopt wording which would keep tension with Iran from escalating without restoring Sheibani's previous diplomatic status, and the arrangement was approved by Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri (*al-Nahar*, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, *al-Akhbar*, August 24-25, 2026).

► The regularization of Sheibani's status in Lebanon prompted strong reactions from the opposition camp. Kataeb Party member Nadim Gemayel said renewing the residency permit was not merely an administrative decision, but a serious retreat from sovereignty and a blow to the state's prestige. If decisions to expel ambassadors were subject to reversal and bargaining, how would the state be capable of making more difficult decisions, such as the monopoly on weapons, disarming Hezbollah and prosecuting those who issued passports for Iranian Revolutionary Guards personnel and officers? There is, she said, no state of half-decisions and no sovereignty based on bargaining (Nadim Gemayel's X account, August 24, 2026). Ghada Ayoub, a member of the Strong Republic bloc in the Lebanese Parliament, wrote in response, "Another Iranian operative in Lebanon... They changed the title, that's all... It makes no difference, since the result is the same, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Lebanon have stolen the land, the government and Lebanon's sovereignty" (Ghada Ayoub's X account, August 25, 2026).

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL headquarters in al-Naqoura are reportedly finding it difficult to move its forces around the occupied areas of south Lebanon, since it requires authorization whenever it seeks to move its motorized forces, and Israeli officials generally refuse to grant

authorization in the absence of a reason for the patrols. Access is permitted only to positions where groups of international forces are present in all sectors. According to the report, Israel also informed UNIFIL's international headquarters that the force's helicopter movements required specific authorization (*al-Akhbar*, August 25, 2026).

► The American State Department told the American-funded Alhurra channel that the United States did not support extending UNIFIL's mandate beyond its expiration on December 31, 2026, claiming that UNIFIL had failed to prevent seven rounds of confrontation or prevent Hezbollah from building military infrastructure close to its positions, whose soldiers the organization exploited as human shields. Reportedly, any future international presence should be linked to tangible objectives of the tripartite mechanism rather than open-ended mediation (*al-Nashra*, August 28, 2026). UNIFIL said Resolution 1701 remained the fundamental framework for stability in south Lebanon, including respect for the Blue Line, the cessation of hostilities, Israeli withdrawal and the extension of state authority throughout its territory, and that its implementation depends on the commitment of both sides (*al-Markazia*, August 27, 2026).

► The countries under consideration for participation in an international force to replace UNIFIL, or in the verification mechanism in the pilot zones in south Lebanon, demand security guarantees from both Israel and Hezbollah and condition their participation on Hezbollah's prior consent and an end to Israeli attacks. In light of the continuing military escalation, all the issues are stalled pending a political breakthrough, and according to sources nothing is final at present (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 24, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in South Lebanon

► The emergency operations center, which is subordinate to the ministry of health, reported that from the beginning of the latest hostilities on March 2, 2026 through August 28, 2026, 4,352 people were killed and 12,318 were wounded (Lebanese News Agency, August 28, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met with a delegation from the town of al-Zahira in south Lebanon, who told him about their displacement-caused distress and difficulties, and asked him to consider providing housing assistance. Salam said the state would not leave the people of al-Zahira, like the rest of the people of the south, to face the burden of displacement alone, adding that various options for dealing with the housing issue were under consideration, such as providing rent for displaced families (Lebanese prime

minister's X account, August 24, 2026). President Joseph Aoun also rejected turning the south into a "forgotten area" or a bargaining chip and said the only weapons that protected the land were those of the legitimate state (Lebanese presidency account, August 30, 2026).

► The IDF reportedly imposed strict restrictions on the movements of residents of the three besieged Christian towns in the Bint Jbeil district, Rmeish, Debel and Ain Ebel, and designated a route for residents to travel into and out of Lebanon through the town of al-Naqoura. According to the report, travel is permitted in daily convoys, with the Lebanese army and UNIFIL responsible for organizing and escorting them. The Lebanese army escorts the convoys as far as the al-Qalila area in south Lebanon,⁸ after which UNIFIL forces escort them to their villages. Residents were instructed to provide UNIFIL in advance with the details of the vehicles and passengers and to permit searches of the vehicles to coordinate their passage with the Israeli forces. The restriction on movement led the Vatican, through its ambassador to Lebanon, to intervene with the United States and demand they be lifted (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 25, 2026).

► A UNIFIL spokesperson announced that the agency continued to document extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure throughout south Lebanon, including homes, schools, hospitals and electricity and water systems (*al-Diyar*, August 25, 2026).

► According to claims, Lebanese security agencies monitor contacts among groups of former South Lebanon Army (SLA) personnel who remained in Israel, with the objective of organizing visits by their members to their villages in south Lebanon and exploring the possibility of returning to the homes they left in 2000, during the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The sources said residents of villages near the border were seriously concerned about the contacts, fearing that armed former SLA personnel might return to the villages and become targets for the "resistance"⁹ (*al-Akhbar*, August 25, 2026).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► The leadership of the PLO organizations in Lebanon, headed by secretary Fathi Abu al-Ardat, met with "Palestine" ambassador to Lebanon, Muhammad al-Asaad, to discuss developments in the Palestinian territories, the [alleged] Israeli "attack" on UNRWA institutions, the situation in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, rising poverty and

⁸ About 15 km from the Israeli border.

⁹ Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

unemployment and the need to strengthen coordination with the Lebanese authorities (Lebanon 24, August 26, 2026).