

Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

September 15-23, 2026

Trending

- ▶ **There have been difficulties in advancing negotiations between Lebanon and Israel because of disagreement over the framework agreement.**
- ▶ **The internal Lebanese dispute over the state monopoly on weapons is worsening, but so far Hezbollah has not withdrawn from the government.**
- ▶ **Hezbollah continues to rebuild its military capabilities with Iranian involvement in decision-making.**

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued ground and air strikes targeting Hezbollah infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon. Two IDF soldiers were wounded by an explosive device and the IDF responded by striking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon. Tensions between IDF forces and the Lebanese army caused by a Lebanese observation post relaxed following contacts carried out through the military coordination mechanism.
- ▶ The Hezbollah secretary general said the organization would continue to pursue the option of "resistance" to Israel, but did not relate to the IDF's demolition of the Ali al-Taher Ridge. Hezbollah is reportedly redeploying at new sites inside Lebanon and preparing to wage guerrilla warfare against Israeli forces in south Lebanon.
- ▶ The Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors to the United States met in Washington; no progress was reported in resolving disagreements over the next steps. The Lebanese president said a security agreement with Israel could lead to a peace agreement.
- ▶ Nawaf Salam's government survived a vote of confidence in the Lebanese Parliament after a discussion over implementing the state monopoly on weapons. Members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament left before the vote. Attempts to renew the dialogue

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.

between President Aoun and Hezbollah have not produced a breakthrough because of its demand to annul the government decisions against it.

► The head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament claimed an "in-depth examination" of the organization's conduct since the beginning of the campaign against Israel on October 8, 2023, had identified correct decisions alongside failures, but he defended Hezbollah's standing with the Gaza Strip.

► According to an unverified report, the powers of the Hezbollah secretary general were limited following Iranian criticism of his performance.

► The Lebanese president participated in a preparatory meeting in Paris ahead of the international conference in support of the Lebanese army and the internal security forces and noted the need to strengthen their capabilities to implement state sovereignty throughout the country.

► Contacts continued to examine the format of a future international presence which would replace UNIFIL once its mandate ended but no agreement has yet been reached regarding its composition or authorities.

► Civilian hardship in south Lebanon continues despite initial reconstruction measures. Difficulties in the return of residents and in restoring housing and essential services led to demonstrations demanding accelerated government assistance.

The Military Situation in South Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued ground and air activity against Hezbollah infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon, locating rocket and missile launchers ready for use and attacking observation posts and military facilities and assets. Two IDF soldiers were wounded when an engineering vehicle drove over an explosive device placed by Hezbollah within the security zone. In response, the IDF attacked Hezbollah observation posts and military infrastructure in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, September 15-23, 2026). Lebanese media outlets, including those affiliated with Hezbollah, accused Israel of "violating" the ceasefire agreement through airstrikes, artillery fire, the use of signal flares and the demolition of buildings in various areas of south Lebanon, including al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa and the villages and towns of Tebnine, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, al-Mansouri, Deir Siryan, Houla and Markaba (Lebanese News Agency and Hezbollah in the Field Telegram channel, September 15-23, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said the organization would continue to pursue the "resistance option"² against Israel, even if the confrontation in Lebanon continued for months. In a speech marking the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the Shi'ite student organization in Pakistan, he said military, political and cultural activity were ways of confronting Israel, and claimed politicking alone would not lead to the "liberation of territory." He said Hezbollah was aware of the disparities in military strength, but regarded its continued ability to stand firm and prevent Israel from achieving its objectives as an achievement. He did not relate to the demolition of the Hezbollah facility on the Ali al-Taher Ridge (al-Manar and *al-Nahar*, September 19, 2026).



Qassem delivers his speech (al-Manar, September 19, 2026)

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called the fighting on the Ali al-Taher Ridge an "epic story of martyrdom under the most sensitive circumstances" and "the enemy and the collaborators" had been mistaken when they assumed the "fighters"³ would surrender. He claimed they had survived four months of siege from the air and ground, and were subjected to attacks with tons of explosives, shells and airstrikes. He also claimed Israel had failed to provide evidence that the ridge was a strategic site. adding that Hezbollah's next steps would remain "ambiguous" (*al-Madan*, September 23, 2026).

► Hezbollah has reportedly begun an organizational redeployment inside Lebanon, using affiliated businessmen and intermediaries to purchase and rent properties outside its traditional strongholds in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley. A

² Violence and terrorism.

³ Terrorist operatives.

source claimed the objective was to transfer offices, operatives and financial and organizational assets to sites less closely identified with the organization, following the exposure of assets and facilities to attacks and surveillance (Erem News, September 19, 2026).

► Former Lebanese minister Naji al-Bustani wrote an op-ed piece claiming Hezbollah was waiting for the results of the contacts between the United States and Iran, hoping an arrangement between them would help advance its demands regarding an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, the release of prisoners and the return of residents. He said that if it became clear that no such arrangement could be expected in the foreseeable future, the organization was preparing to return to limited guerrilla operations against Israeli forces in the south as an alternative to a broad military confrontation and to prevent Israel from establishing its presence in Lebanese territory (*al-Nashra*, September 18, 2026).

► Security expert Riad Kahwaji said since 2024 Hezbollah's capabilities had declined by more than half, compared with their level before October 2023, partly because of damage to the command ranks, missile and UAV capabilities and supply lines through Syria. Brigadier General (ret.) Khalil al-Helou said the organization still possessed military capabilities and the limited number of its operations could indicate a process of reorganization and adaptation of its deployment to the situation on the ground (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 21, 2026). The statements are conjectures and not information based on Hezbollah's capabilities.

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army stated that on September 18, 2026, an Israeli force approached a temporary observation post established by the army on the outskirts of Deir Mimas to accompany residents inspecting their agricultural land, and threw stun grenades in its vicinity. Following the incident, the post was reinforced and tension grew between the forces. According to the army statement, the incident ended following contacts through the military coordination group for Lebanon (MCG4L), after which the Israeli force left the area and the Lebanese soldiers returned to their permanent post (Lebanese army X account, September 18, 2026).



The Arabic reads, "The army on its land in the south and in our hearts," support for the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south and its right to operate in the country's territory after the incident in Deir Mimas (*al-Liwa*, September 19, 2026)

The Lebanese Government

► Tamara al-Zein, Lebanese minister of the environment, noted possible environmental and geological consequences following Israeli explosions in south Lebanon, particularly in the area of the Ali al-Taher Ridge. The government instructed her to prepare a report which would be forwarded to the foreign ministry for presentation to the UN Security Council and other international bodies (*al-Jourhouria*, September 16, 2026; *al-Nashra*, September 17, 2026).

Direct Negotiations and the Israel-Lebanon Agreement Framework

Diplomatic Contacts

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun requested the postponement of the direct negotiations with Israel in Rome to have time to formulate an agenda which would make it possible to progress, particularly establishing the ceasefire and securing the release of the Lebanese "prisoners." Despite the postponement, Lebanese Ambassador to Washington Nada Mouawad and Israeli Ambassador Yechiel Leiter met at State Department headquarters to discuss the framework agreement, Lebanon's demands for an end to the attacks, an Israeli withdrawal and the possibility of expanding the pilot zones in the south. No joint statement was issued following the meeting and no new agreements were reported (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 15, 2026; Lebanon Debate, September 16, 2026; *al-Akhbar*, September 17, 2026).

► Lebanese President Aoun said the goal was first to reach a security agreement with Israel which would end the state of hostility and lead to the deployment of the Lebanese army along the border, adding that such an agreement could be preliminary phase for a future

peace agreement. He said the main conditions for progress were an Israeli withdrawal, the deployment of the army and the return of the residents and Lebanese prisoners (*al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026).

► Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the framework agreement was for purposes of negotiation and not legally binding. Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said he supported continuing the negotiations as a means of ending the Israeli presence in Lebanese territory and noted that the contacts had already contributed to the cessation of attacks in Beirut and its suburbs (*al-Nahar*, September 20, 2026).

► Jean Azizi, an adviser to President Aoun, wrote an op-ed piece describing the difficulty in advancing the negotiations. He said Israel demanded progress in deploying the Lebanese army and disarming Hezbollah as conditions for further withdrawal, while the continued Israeli presence limited the army's ability to carry out its missions and made it difficult for the state to show the public results from the political track. He called on the United States to advance Israeli withdrawal and provide assistance to the army and reconstruction with a process to disarm Hezbollah and integrate its operatives into the national organizations. He said the lack of progress could strengthen the organization's argument for continuing to hold its weapons (Just Security, September 16, 2026, as quoted in *al-Akhbar*, September 18, 2026).

The Pilot Zones

► Michel Issa, American ambassador to Lebanon, toured the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, which had been transferred to Lebanese army control, and the area of the Qaaqaaiyet al-Jisr bridge over the Litani River to examine progress in implementing the pilot zones and the security and civilian challenges facing the residents. The mayor of Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh told him local residents felt insecure because of the continued Israeli presence and the need to rebuild the village. The ministry of public works showed the ambassador the work to open routes and restore infrastructure in the area. The American embassy said it was committed to continued support for the Lebanese government and its army, strengthening state authority and restoring essential services. The visit also led to local criticism. The association of Muslim scholars claimed village representatives and residents had not been sufficiently involved, and according to reports, changes had been made to the itinerary of the tour, which displeased the locals (Lebanese News Agency and the American embassy in Lebanon X account, September 15, 2026; *al-Diyar* and *Nidaa al-Watan*, September 16, 2026; *al-Nashra*, September 17, 2026).



The American ambassador tours south Lebanon
(*al-Madan* [right] and *al-Nahar*, September 15, 2026)

► The United States is reportedly promoting a plan for the Lebanese army to deploy at and dismantle Hezbollah military sites in the south to prevent Israeli forces from entering them. A similar plan was proposed for the Ali al-Taher Ridge, but Hezbollah refused to hand over the facilities and tunnels to the Lebanese army. It was further claimed that future contacts could deal with the Jabal al-Rihan area, including Sajd Hill and the vicinity of Birkat Jabbour, and the possibility of the Lebanese army entering sites where, according to the newspaper, military infrastructure belonging to Hezbollah and Iranian elements is located (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 18, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that if the state succeeded in securing an Israeli withdrawal and an end to the attacks and the deployment of the Lebanese army south of the Litani to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, the conditions would be created for a discussion of implementing the state monopoly on weapons and the role of the "resistance"⁴ in national defense. He said Hezbollah might agree to such an arrangement, but only if it were reached through indirect negotiations with Israel, in accordance with national principles and without non-sovereign commitments made to the "enemy." He added that if the talks failed and the Lebanese authorities revoked the decisions concerning the "resistance," there were several options which could be discussed and agreed upon; he did not elaborate (*al-Madan*, September 23, 2026).

⁴ Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

► Hassan Fadlallah Hezbollah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed President Aoun had not fulfilled commitments made to the organization when he was elected, including preserving the right to "resistance," implementing the ceasefire agreement and Resolution 1701 south of the Litani and holding an internal dialogue. He said trust between the organization and the presidency had been undermined and the framework agreement had run its course. However, he said Hezbollah supported diplomatic activity based on national understanding and a position of strength. Hussein al-Hajj Hassan and Ali Fayyad, both members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, criticized the framework agreement and the government's approach to negotiations with Israel and called for the current policy to be reconsidered (*al-Manar*, September 20, 2026; *al-Diyar*, September 20, 2026).

► Hussein al-Hajj Hassan said Hezbollah would keep its weapons despite the blows it had sustained, claiming the organization and Amal belonged to the regional power structure of Iran's allies. He said Iran had told Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, that Lebanon would be included in any possible agreement between Iran and the United States. Al-Hajj Hassan and Fayyad further claimed that the organization had the capability to act and that regional developments could affect the balance of power in Lebanon (*al-Diyar*, September 18 and 20, 2026).

► Given the disputes between the sides, attempts were reportedly continuing for renewing the dialogue between President Aoun and Hezbollah, including through indirect contacts between general security chief Hassan Shuqair and MP Hassan Fadlallah. The two met several times but no breakthrough was reported. Hezbollah allegedly conditioned the renewal of public dialogue on the revocation of the government's March 2, 2026 outlawing Hezbollah's military wing, a reconsideration of the course of negotiations with Israel and of the framework agreement and the convening of a national dialogue on the future of the south based on the November 27, 2024 ceasefire agreement and Resolution 1701 (*al-Nahar*, September 21, 2026). Alain Aoun, a member of the Free Patriotic Movement faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called on Hezbollah to begin a dialogue with the president to formulate a roadmap for advancing the negotiations, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the deployment of the Lebanese army (Lebanese presidency X account, September 21, 2026).

Support for the Agreement

► After meeting with President Joseph Aoun, Walid Jumblatt, former Progressive Socialist Party president and Druze leader, said he supported the negotiations and the ceasefire agreement, insofar as they would lead to a gradual or complete Israeli withdrawal. He said that if the framework agreement led to an Israeli withdrawal and the demarcation of the borders, he had no objection to advancing it. He said that was his personal position (Lebanese presidency X account, September 21, 2026). A political source said Jumblatt's remarks were "helpful" in preparing for the next round of talks with Israel and there was a positive change in certain internal positions that created favorable conditions for the negotiations (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 23, 2026).

The Lebanese State Monopoly on Weapons

► In preparation for the international conference in Paris in support of the Lebanese army and the internal security forces, President Joseph Aoun said strengthening the security institutions was a condition for asserting state authority and implementing the state monopoly on weapons. He called for long-term international assistance and said the policy would be implemented responsibly and with a desire to avoid internal confrontation (*al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026).

► Speaking before the Lebanese community in New York, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the government was implementing its decisions regarding the state monopoly on weapons despite the difficulties, adding that the authority to declare war and peace and responsibility for the security of the Lebanese should rest solely with the state and its forces. He linked the assertion of state authority to securing an Israeli withdrawal, the return of residents to the south, reconstruction of the country and restoration of public and investor confidence in its institutions (Lebanese prime minister's office Facebook page, September 22, 2026).

► Similar statements were made by other anti-Hezbollah government ministers. Ahmed al-Hajjar, minister of the interior, said the presence of the army and security services in the south was important for the strengthening state authority, enabling residents to return and government institutions to resume their activity. He said he supported a decisive solution regarding Hezbollah's weapons but did not want a violent internal Lebanese confrontation (MTV Lebanon, September 17, 2026); Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said it was an independent Lebanese demand not conditional on negotiations with Israel. He claimed Hezbollah's continued possession of weapons harmed Lebanon's security and sovereignty,

and rejected the claim that implementation of the decision would lead to civil war (al-Hadath, September 20, 2026); Kamal Shehadeh, minister of technology and AI, also said Hezbollah's weapons did not protect the south and its disarmament should be advanced (al-Arabiya, September 15, 2026).

► The Lebanese Parliament debated a vote of no confidence in Nawaf Salam's government, with the state monopoly on weapons receiving particular attention. Salam noted the government's commitment to the state monopoly on weapons and said asserting government authority was a condition for strengthening its position in negotiations with Israel and mobilizing international support for the army and the country's reconstruction (*al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026).

► There were heated exchanges between representatives of Hezbollah and Amal and members of parliament opposed to the weapons. Ghassan Hasbani, a member of the Lebanese Forces faction in the Lebanese Parliament, demanded the government publish a report detailing its progress in monitoring the borders and crossings and addressing the transfer and storage of weapons and financing networks, alongside the obstacles and timetables for completing the tasks. Sami Gemayel, Kataeb Party chairman and member of the Lebanese Parliament, said Hezbollah's involvement in regional wars unrelated to Lebanon had dragged the country into confrontations, caused destruction in the south and led to Israel taking control of additional territory. He said the continued possession of weapons outside the state framework prevented the country's reconstruction. However, members of parliament from Hezbollah and the Development and Liberation faction criticized the government's performance and the continuation of negotiations with Israel in view of the attacks in the south and the lack of an Israeli withdrawal. Parliament speaker Nabih Berri intervened to halt the exchange of accusations (Lebanese News Agency, September 15, 2026; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 16, 2026).



Ibrahim al-Moussawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, speaks during the debate (al-Jadeed, September 15, 2026)

► Confidence in the Salam government was renewed by a majority of 68 members who voted in favor, 12 who voted to topple the government and two who abstained. Amal MPs voted in favor of the government despite their criticism of its policy, while Hezbollah MPs left before the vote was taken. A Hezbollah MP said they had left to show the increase in the organization's opposition to government policy without going as far as voting against it. Anti-Hezbollah political figures said the vote of confidence was the basis for their demand that the government take practical measures to implement the state monopoly on weapons. Sami Gemayel said the Kataeb Party had voted the government based on its commitment on the issue (*al-Joumhouria* and *Nidaa al-Watan*, September 18, 2026; *al-Diyar*, September 17 and 19, 2026).

► Given Hezbollah's escalating rhetoric, including during the parliamentary debate, a source close to the government said Hezbollah continued to behave like a bully and there was nothing to prevent it from dragging Lebanon into a third civil war. He added that war suited Hezbollah, as did street demonstrations which created chaos and diverted attention from it, and the weapons issue was suitable for that (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 23, 2026).

► In his weekly sermon, Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Bechara al-Rahi said defending Lebanon required concentrating weapons and the authority to declare war and peace in the hands of state institutions, alongside advancing a political course that would prevent another which and lead to an Israeli withdrawal (*al-Nahar*, September 20, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Internal Organization

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the organization had conducted an in-depth examination of its conduct since the beginning of the campaign against Israel on October 8, 2023. He said they had identified correct aspects

of its decisions alongside weaknesses or failures in its performance, and identified similar issues on the part of the "enemy." He added that regardless of "minor tactical mistakes," Hezbollah's decision to stand with the Gaza Strip was "a historic and honorable position" which was "a source of pride." He said that immediately after the death of secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and his designated successor, Hashem Safieddine, Na'im Qassem was appointed secretary general to head the organization with the assistance of "several leaders," and the organization had been rapidly rebuilt and reorganized in accordance with internal procedures (*al-Madan*, September 23, 2026).

Iranian Involvement in Hezbollah

► According to Western diplomatic sources, after the ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel in November 2024, the Revolutionary Guards sent officers to Lebanon to assist in training Hezbollah operatives, reequipping the organization and reorganizing its military structure into decentralized units. According to the report, which has no additional confirmation, Hussein Taeb, commander of the Basij arm of the Revolutionary Guards and an associate of the Iranian leader, is involved in rebuilding the organization and supporting its continued possession of weapons. Taeb reportedly told Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem that he was dissatisfied with the latter's performance, which led to a limitation in the secretary general's powers on sensitive issues. Ali Abbas, a senior Revolutionary Guards figure, was given a more central role in Hezbollah's decision-making (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 18, 2026). Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, did not directly relate to the report, but noted that the Hezbollah secretary was is currently responsible for strategic and fundamental decision-making (*al-Madan*, September 23, 2026).

Hezbollah's Media Activity

► Hezbollah's media information unit issued a directive stating that official positions on behalf of the organization would be conveyed through only five channels: speeches by the secretary general, official statements by the organization, statements by the "Islamic resistance," the media unit and the Loyalty to the Resistance faction as a body. Independent statements by members of parliament and senior figures in the organization were not necessarily considered its official position. Political sources claimed that the directive was intended to reduce the proliferation of statements by figures identified with Hezbollah, some

of which were interpreted outside Lebanon as messages from its leadership (Erem News, September 16, 2026).

International Activity against Hezbollah

► Kuwait's state security court of appeals handed down prison sentences and fines in two Hezbollah financing cases. In one case, ten-year prison sentences and a fine of six million dinars (almost \$195 million) were upheld against three Kuwaiti citizens and a Lebanese who were convicted of joining and financing the organization. In another case, a Kuwaiti citizen was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined the same amount for financing Hezbollah through a charitable committee (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 15, 2026).

Hezbollah's Involvement in Syria

► A Lebanese judicial source said Lebanon's military court prosecution had filed an indictment against 14 people, including a Hezbollah operative and a former Syrian intelligence officer from the Bashar al-Assad era, on suspicion of involvement in a network which planned attacks targeting the current regime in Syria. The source said Hezbollah operative Yasser Alaa al-Din, known as al-Hajj Alaa, was involved in getting members of the network out of Syria and training them in east Lebanon. Hezbollah denied allegations it had trained the suspects (*al-Markazia*, September 18, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► On September 17, 2026, a preparatory meeting for the international conference in support of the Lebanese army and the internal security forces was held in Paris, attended by Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, French President Emmanuel Macron, King Abdullah II of Jordan and representatives of countries and international organizations. The Lebanese delegation presented reports of the needs of the army and the internal security forces, and Aoun noted the need to strengthen their capabilities so that they could carry out their missions and assert state authority throughout the country, particularly in the south. Michel Issa, the American ambassador to Lebanon, said the goal of the meeting was to coordinate

long-term support for the Lebanese security forces among the partners (Lebanese presidency X account, September 17, 2026; *al-Nashra*, September 18, 2026).



Aoun, Macron and King Abdullah meet (Lebanese presidency X account, September 17, 2026)

► The Lebanese army announced that 70 containers of various types of ammunition had been received at the port of Beirut as part of American assistance programs for the army. The ammunition was to be used to strengthen its capabilities in carrying out its missions. The statement did not specify the types of ammunition, their value or their designation for particular units, or that it was allocated specifically for army activity in the south (Lebanese army Facebook page, September 20, 2026).



Military equipment at the port of Beirut (Lebanese army Facebook page, September 20, 2026)

Preparations for the Day After UNIFIL

Lebanon's Position

► Speaking in Paris, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said Lebanon was open to the deployment of an alternative international force in the south after the end of UNIFIL's mission, provided its activity was regulated within a legal framework which respected state sovereignty and assisted the Lebanese army without replacing it (Lebanese presidency X account and *al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026).

► Meeting with international leaders and figures on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam noted the need for a continued international presence in the south, preferably under the UN umbrella, to prevent a security vacuum and ensure the continuation of monitoring and coordination missions. Meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, he noted the importance of continuing the monitoring and coordination missions and assistance to the Lebanese army. Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji, who accompanied Salam, asked the Danish foreign minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, as a member of the Security Council, to support Lebanon's efforts to ensure such a presence and continued assistance to the army. According to Rajji, the Danish foreign minister said he was willing to continue supporting Lebanon, but no Danish commitment to participate in a future force was reported (Lebanese prime minister's office X account and Youssef Rajji's X account, September 21-22, 2026).



Salam and the UN secretary general (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 21, 2026)

► Michel Menassa, Lebanese defense minister, army commander Rodolphe Haykal and Antti Häkkinen, Finnish defense minister, discussed continued support for the army and the possibility of continued Finnish participation in an international framework. Häkkinen said Finland was participating in discussions to formulate an alternative mission, but no commitment to participate in such a force was reported (Lebanese army X account and *Nidaa al-Watan*, September 15, 2026).

► Fadi Alameh, chairman of the Lebanese Parliament's foreign affairs committee, said the committee had presented its position to the Security Council regarding the need for the continued activity of a UN force in the south and the implementation of Resolution 1701 (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 18, 2026).

Regarding the Alternative International Force

► Along with the Lebanese effort for a continued UN presence, there were contacts between France and Italy to examine the establishment of a smaller international force to assist the Lebanese army with deployment in the south, monitoring and technical missions. At this stage there is no active international initiative to extend UNIFIL's mandate in its current format, and the United States will not give priority to the alternative force plan as long as negotiations between Lebanon and Israel over border security arrangements are in progress. Lebanon and France were reportedly also holding contacts to reconsider the date for ending the mission (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 18, 2026; *al-Nahar*, September 20, 2026).

► A source claimed Turkey had proposed to senior Hezbollah figures to establish a multinational force from Arab and Islamic countries in south Lebanon, with the possible participation of Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Egypt. Hezbollah reportedly expressed initial agreement subject to further discussions (Erem News, September 16, 2026). Hezbollah told European officials that it would oppose the presence of a force in the south which was not subordinate to the UN and Resolution 1701, and did not accept the framework agreement as the basis for the activity of a future international force (*al-Akhbar*, September 17, 2026).

► With the uncertainty regarding UNIFIL's replacement, peacekeeping force commander Major General Diodato Abagnara said UNIFIL was preparing for an orderly transfer of its missions to the Lebanese army and other UN bodies ahead of the end of UNIFIL's activity, scheduled for the end of 2026. He said they were coordinating with the Lebanese army regarding the handling of sensitive areas, and ways to continue humanitarian assistance in the south were being examined. He said transferring some UNIFIL posts to the Lebanese army could be complicated since more than half of them were currently located in areas under the control of Israeli forces. He said he was willing to extend the mandate in the absence of a new Security Council resolution, the force would be required to end its activity as scheduled (*al-Diyar*, September 19, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in South Lebanon

► The Bint Jbeil municipality issued a report on the damage caused by the fighting in the city in 2023-2026, which it claimed was based on aerial photographs, field inspections, municipal records and residents' statements. According to the municipality, more than 80% of the city's area and approximately 5,000 housing units were destroyed, and more than

1,500 families remained displaced. Also described was the extensive damage to water and electricity networks, educational and health institutions, commercial centers and agricultural land (*al-Akhbar*, September 16, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the government's top priorities were reconstructing infrastructure in the south and assisting returning residents. The Qaaqaiyet al-Jisr crossing, which connects the al-Nabatieh and Bint Jbeil districts, was reopened, and Salam chaired a follow-up meeting on projects designated as priorities in the south, attended by the minister and government bodies involved in reconstruction and assistance, and called for accelerating the restoration of infrastructure and basic services. However, no details were provided regarding the allocation of new budgets or timetables for completing the projects. The council for the south began the first phase of distributing temporary housing units to residents whose homes had been destroyed in the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, after the areas designated for their placement had been prepared and the rubble cleared (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 15 and 17, 2026; *al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026; *al-Diyar*, September 21, 2026).

► The Lebanese ministry of health accused Israel of setting fire to the government hospital in Meiss al-Jabal. According to the ministry, the hospital had been restored and reequipped after the war to serve local residents and displaced persons, and the damage to it reduced their access to medical care (*al-Akhbar*, September 18, 2026). Prime Minister Salam said the school year had begun in accordance with the security situation and infrastructure conditions in each community, and distance learning had been introduced in schools still unable to open (*al-Nashra*, September 16, 2026).

► Lebanese from damaged communities in south Lebanon demonstrated outside the government building in al-Nabatieh, demanding that displaced persons be allowed to return, alternative housing allowances and compensation be paid and the reconstruction of homes and public services be accelerated. Local authority heads and representatives affiliated with Hezbollah participated in the demonstration and criticized the delay in government assistance. Sheikh Ali al-Khatib, deputy president of the Islamic Shi'ite council, called for the establishment of local committees which would work to obtain assistance for displaced persons and residents of the affected villages, and announced that the council would assist them in accordance with its resources. He said the needs of the displaced had

been raised in contacts he held in Iraq and Iran (al-'Ahed, September 17, 2026; *al-Diyar*, September 18, 2026).

► Hezbollah reportedly began paying housing assistance to displaced persons and providing assistance to the families of those killed, the wounded and the needy ahead of the winter and the beginning of the school year (*al-Diyar*, September 19, 2026).



The burden of the accumulating crises on the Lebanese citizen and the difficulty of finding a solution for the full range of challenges (*al-Joumhouria*, September 22, 2026)

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► The Lebanese authorities reportedly reduced their contacts with the alliance of Palestinian organizations, which includes Hamas, and gave priority to relations with the PLO and the Palestinian Authority regarding the future of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and the issue of disarmament. The alliance warned that excluding it from discussions on the future of the camps could exacerbate internal tensions. Ramez Dimashkieh, chairman of the Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue committee, said he had recently met with a Hamas delegation and sensed a change in its approach, but noted that the security situation in south Lebanon made it difficult to advance the handover of weapons. A Hamas figure claimed the movement had returned its heavy weapons to Hezbollah. Dimashkieh added that there was security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority in the refugee camps, while discussion of the refugees' civil rights remained disputed in the Lebanese arena (*al-Nahar*, September 21, 2026).