

Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

October 19 – 26, 2026

Trending

- ▶ **The affair of the explosives truck remains at the center of the struggle between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah for the monopoly on weapons and state authority.**
- ▶ **The dispute over implementation of the framework agreement delays progress in the talks between Lebanon and Israel.**
- ▶ **The possibility of renewed regional hostilities creates tension for Hezbollah between its commitment to Iran and its desire to avoid another war in Lebanon.**

Overview¹

- ▶ The Lebanese military prosecutor issued warrants for two individuals affiliated with Hezbollah suspected of involvement in the attempt to transfer the explosives truck to the Beirut area, but the organization demanded to be given the truck. The Lebanese government postponed the decision on referring the affair to the Judicial Council following mediation efforts to prevent internal escalation.
- ▶ The round of military talks between Lebanon and Israel in Florida ended without a breakthrough because of disagreements over coordination and verification, the pace of dismantling Hezbollah's infrastructure and the link between progress in disarmament and an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon. The Lebanese army rejected Israel's claims that it did not act against Hezbollah activity in the south of the country.
- ▶ There were conflicting reports about messages from Hezbollah regarding its desire to avoid joining another regional war alongside Iran. Internal disagreements reportedly emerged between the organization's political and military echelons regarding involvement in renewed hostilities.

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.

► A senior Hezbollah figure claimed the organization was preparing to distribute funds to displaced persons under its aid and reconstruction program, while authorities in the United States and Lebanon were examining the source of funding for the program, which is estimated at \$600 million.

► Ahead of the planned end of UNIFIL's mandate at the end of December 2026, contacts continue regarding the future of the international presence in south Lebanon, with no agreement on an alternative to force. Lebanon and the Arab League support a continued presence under UN auspices, while the United States seeks to end the mission.

The Lebanese Government-Hezbollah Struggle for State Authority

Investigation of Hezbollah's Truck Full of Explosives

► The investigation into the explosives truck seized at the Dahr al-Baydar checkpoint on its way from the Beqa'a Valley to Beirut continued to gather momentum.² Military prosecutor Judge Claude Ghanem issued summonses for two senior Hezbollah operatives known as "Sajed" and "Dhu al-Fiqar," after the two said they had been involved in transporting and receiving the explosives. Search and investigation warrants were subsequently also issued for the wife of one of the detainees and the owner of the truck after they failed to appear for questioning. At the same time, data found on the telephones of those involved was examined to trace the transfer and identify other involved parties. Hezbollah reportedly refuses to allow the wanted individuals to appear for questioning and demands the return of the truck and its cargo (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 20–23, 2026).

► Lebanese Justice Minister Adel Nassar called the shipment "a serious threat to state security." He said the explosives could have been used for operations inside Lebanon but noted that their actual intended purpose had not yet been determined, and that only a judicial investigation could decide the matter (Lebanon Debate, October 23, 2026).

► Subsequently, the Lebanese government decided to postpone a decision on Justice Minister Nassar's request to refer the explosives affair to the Judicial Council until the security and judicial investigations progressed. According to reports in the Lebanese media,

² At the beginning of October 2026, Lebanese internal security forces at the Dahr al-Baydar checkpoint on the Beirut-Damascus road seized a commercial vehicle traveling from the Beqa'a Valley to Beirut and arrested its two occupants, Hezbollah operatives. Hundreds of kilograms of explosives used to manufacture explosive devices, including C4 and TNT, were found in the vehicle.

the decision followed contacts between President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri to prevent the internal crisis from escalating. Ministers from the Lebanese Forces party left the meeting to protest the postponement of the decision, while Hezbollah and Amal ministers remained. Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said he was in favor of referring the case to the Judicial Council, arguing that the affair concerned state security and required equal application of the law (*al-Diyar*, October 22, 2026; *al-Akhbar*, al-Joumhouria, MTV, October 23, 2026).

► Berri said Amal ministers would not boycott the government meeting, described the Lebanese army as a "red line" and called for preserving civilian peace. According to reports, coordination between the offices of the president and the parliament speaker had resumed, with messages from Hezbollah opposing measures to restrict its activity and demands from other political elements to continue enforcing government decisions (*al-Akhbar*, *al-Joumhouria* and *al-Diyar*, October 21–26, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanese state leaders reiterated the need for the state monopoly on weapons. At a security meeting, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun gave instructions to increase the enforcement of bans on armed displays and the possession of illegal weapons, accelerate investigations and strengthen coordination between the army and the security services. He also gave instructions to ramp up the presence of the security forces in the villages of the south not under Israeli control (X account of the Lebanese presidency, October 19–20, 2026). At a government meeting, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam reiterated the principles of the monopoly on weapons and the authority to declare war and peace, saying they were no longer open to discussion and the army's plan to implement the monopoly on weapons had to be applied throughout the country. He said the constitution, the Taif Agreement, UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the November 2024 cessation of hostilities arrangement with Israel established the authority of state institutions, and the transfer and storage of weapons by unauthorized elements required security and judicial enforcement (X account of the Lebanese prime minister's office, October 22, 2026).

► The United States increased pressure on the Lebanese government and political elements close to Hezbollah to act against the organization's military activity. The American State Department called on the government to bring to justice everyone involved in planning, financing and directing the seized shipment of explosives, and said the materials must not

be returned to Hezbollah. The department spokesperson said the tripartite framework agreement required the organization to disarm throughout Lebanon (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 21, 2026). Washington reportedly sent messages to politicians in Lebanon, particularly Hezbollah's allies in the government and parliament, demanding they distance themselves from the organization and stop obstructing decisions dealing with its military activity. According to the report, the messages were accompanied by warnings of Hezbollah's possible involvement in a renewed regional confrontation (*al-Nashra*, October 22, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

► Senior Hezbollah figures increased their criticism of the government following the explosives affair and reiterated that the organization opposed its forcible disarmament. Hassan Ezzeddine, Hussein al-Hajj Hassan and Ibrahim al-Moussawi, members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed the materials were intended for operations against Israeli forces and accused the United States of interfering in government decisions. The Loyalty to the "Resistance" faction welcomed the postponement of the decision to refer the affair to the Judicial Council but again made discussion of disarmament conditional on an Israeli withdrawal. While Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, warned of deterioration into an internal confrontation, MP Ali Ammar said Hezbollah did not seek a confrontation with the state or the army (*al-Diyar*, October 19, 23 and 24, 2026; Loyalty to the "Resistance" faction website and al-Manar, October 23, 2026).

► Hezbollah did not conceal its displeasure with the authorities' handling of the explosives truck affair and reiterated its opposition to disarming before an Israeli withdrawal:

◆ Hezbollah MPs Hassan Ezzeddine, Hussein al-Hajj Hassan and Ibrahim al-Moussawi claimed the materials were intended for operations against Israeli forces and accused the United States of interfering in government decisions (*al-Diyar*, October 19, 2026).

◆ The Hezbollah faction welcomed the postponement of the decision to refer the affair to the Judicial Council but again made discussion of disarmament conditional on an Israeli withdrawal (Loyalty to the "Resistance" faction website, October 23, 2026). Faction member Raed Berro said Hezbollah would continue to develop its military capabilities, adding that disarmament would not be on the agenda as long as Israel had not withdrawn from all Lebanese territory. He accused the Lebanese leadership of

complying with American and Israeli dictates and called the seizure of the organization's explosives truck "illegal" (Loyalty to the "Resistance" faction website, October 23, 2026).

◆ However, Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, warned against the situation's deteriorating into an internal confrontation (*al-Diyar*, October 23, 2026). His fellow faction member Ali Ammar said Hezbollah did not seek a confrontation with the state or the army (*al-Manar*, October 23, 2026).



"Lost property? No. Evidence is required." Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general, asks for the box of explosives to be returned to him, while a Lebanese security officer refuses, saying it is evidence. Lebanese in the background protest the demand, while Qassem holds a picture of Iran's supreme leader (X account of Saer Sabil, October 23, 2026)

► Senior Shi'ite clerics joined the criticism of government policy. Sheikh Ali al-Khatib, vice president of the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council, criticized the continuation of negotiations with Israel and claimed that dealing with the explosives affair could widen the internal schism. Jafari Mufti Sheikh Ahmad Qabalan claimed negotiations with Israel undermined Lebanon's sovereignty and security in the south. He accused the executive authority of advancing American and Israeli interests and said opposition to its measures was a national duty. On the other hand, Shi'ite cleric Sayyid Ali Fadlallah called for preserving national unity, preventing sectarian friction and focusing on economic and social distress (*al-Diyar*, October 25, 2026).

► Despite the criticism, sources close to Hezbollah said the organization's leadership was concerned about the implications of referring the case to the Judicial Council and the possibility of a confrontation with the judicial system. According to the report, the contacts ended with understandings intended to preserve government stability and prevent political and security deterioration, with an effort to moderate public statements (*al-Diyar*, October 26, 2026).

► According to a diplomatic source, a research report in a Western country determined that Hezbollah's efforts to prevent the explosives affair from being referred to the Judicial Council were caused by concern lest it create a precedent allowing state institutions to expand legal enforcement against its military activity and illegal networks. According to the report, the organization is working to contain the repercussions of the affair through political and media pressure, warnings of internal escalation and assistance from its allies in delaying legal proceedings. Reportedly, the affair is a test of the state's ability to translate its decisions regarding the monopoly on weapons into concrete enforcement measures but it cannot be determined whether the organization's efforts to undermine the effort will succeed (*al-Joumhouria*, October 26, 2026).

► Despite the efforts of Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and Amal movement leader, to calm the tensions, he acknowledged that his relations with Hezbollah had been closer under the previous secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah. According to unidentified political and parliamentary sources, the crisis of confidence intensified following Hezbollah's entry into the hostilities against Israel in March 2026, after the organization, according to the sources, had promised Berri it would not intervene. It was also claimed that Berri conducted his relationship with the current secretary general, Na'im Qassem, mainly through their political aides and not directly as he had with Nasrallah. Despite the differences, the sources said it did not mean the end of the Hezbollah-Amal alliance, but rather political differentiation that allowed Berri to preserve his standing in state institutions and continue to serve as a central figure in contacts with the organization (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 22 and 24, 2026).



Berri: "The state is not a free-for-all" (*al-Joumhouria*, October 22, 2026)

► Qatari involvement in efforts to calm tensions between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government was also reported. Former Hezbollah minister Mustafa Bayram said a Qatari envoy had held a lengthy meeting with Muhammad Raad, chairman of the Hezbollah faction

in the Lebanese Parliament, adding that Qatar had briefed the United States on the meeting and supported the compromise solution reached in the government. Bayram said that although bringing Hezbollah supporters into the streets could lead to a confrontation with the state, the sides had not yet reached that point and the channels of communication remained open (*al-Diyar*, October 24, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army increased its activity to maintain internal security in the Beirut area and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia out of concern of internal clashes. According to military sources, the activity included patrols, raids and arrests of suspects involved in shootings and drug offenses, and encountered no resistance from local residents. The reports said the activity was meant to establish the presence of state institutions and preserve stability, and there was no report that it was directed against Hezbollah facilities (*al-Joumhouria*, October 20, 2026). Sources warned against attempts to push the army into a confrontation with internal elements and noted the importance of preserving its cohesion and status as a state institution (*al-Joumhouria*, October 23, 2026).

Hezbollah's Opponents

► Political forces opposed to Hezbollah criticized the government's decision to postpone referring the explosives affair to the Judicial Council and viewed it as a test of the state's ability to enforce its authority. Lebanese Forces party chairman Samir Geagea claimed there was no need to wait for the investigation to be completed before referring the case to the Judicial Council and called for enforcement measures against senior figures in the organization, but said that he continued to support President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam (*al-Nashra*, October 22, 2026). Lebanese Parliament members Fouad Makhzoumi and Michel Moawad criticized the delay in handling the affair and demanded it be referred to the Judicial Council without delay (X accounts of Makhzoumi and Moawad, October 23, 2026). Lebanese Forces MP Ziad Hawat demanded the investigation examine statements by Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, who confirmed that the explosives belonged to the organization, and called on the government to translate its decisions into concrete enforcement measures. He said his party continued to have confidence in the president and the government and its opposition to Hezbollah was not directed against the Shi'ite community (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 24, 2026).

► Political, public and religious participants of the Lebanon First and Last National Sovereignty Forum called for all weapons and the authority to declare war and peace to be concentrated in the hands of state institutions, and said disarming Hezbollah was a condition for strengthening sovereignty and implementing reforms. Justice Minister Adel Nassar, who participated in the forum, said possession of weapons outside the framework of the state undermined its ability to negotiate from a position of strength, adding that government decisions regarding the monopoly on weapons had to be implemented (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 21, 2026).

Israel-Lebanon Negotiations for the Framework Agreement

Military Delegations Meet

► The round of military talks between representatives of the Lebanese army and the IDF, held at the headquarters of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) in Tampa, Florida, ended without a joint statement and without a public breakthrough on the main issues concerning implementation of the June 2026 tripartite framework agreement. According to reports, the main dispute was over the mechanisms for monitoring and verifying the security measures in south Lebanon. Israel seeks to promote direct operational coordination with the Lebanese army, including the possibility of establishing a joint operations room, while the Lebanese oppose direct coordination between the two armies (*al-Akhbar*, October 23, 2026).

► American officials were disappointed by the lack of substantial progress in dismantling Hezbollah's infrastructure and noted that Israel demanded tangible proof of disarmament in designated areas before proceeding with its withdrawal, while Lebanon continued to demand an end to Israeli attacks and a rapid withdrawal from its territory. An American military official described the talks as "frank but inconclusive," and pointed to the gap between Lebanon's commitments and its ability to implement them. American State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said Washington expected the complete, documented disarmament of armed organizations not subordinate to the state, including Hezbollah (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 24, 2026).

► The Lebanese army rejected Israel's claims regarding its activity south of the Litani River and its ability to carry out its missions, and provided details of clearing of a military facility in the town of Kafra in the Bint Jbeil district. According to the army, work at the facility began

in December 2025 and was halted in March 2026 at the request of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism following Israeli threats to attack the site, although weapons and ammunition remained. According to the army, Israel prevented the resumption of the activity for months until it was able to return to the facility in August 2026 and complete its clearance and closure on October 16, 2026. The army said its actions were documented by the monitoring mechanism and accused Israel of attempting to undermine its credibility in the domestic and international arenas (X account of the Lebanese army, October 20, 2026).



The Lebanese army rejects Israel's claims regarding the presence of Hezbollah military infrastructure in areas where the army operated in south Lebanon (al-Liwaa, October 21, 2026)

► Given the criticism of the army, Lebanese Forces party chairman Samir Geagea confirmed that several months earlier his party had raised the possibility of replacing army commander General Rodolphe Haykal following information that he was unwilling to implement government decisions (*al-Nashra*, October 22, 2026; *al-Akhbar*, October 23, 2026).

The Position of the Lebanese Leadership

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun reiterated his country's commitment to a diplomatic solution with Israel, arguing that continued fighting would lead to further destruction and casualties and would not make it possible to achieve the national objectives. He said the objectives of the negotiations were an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, the release of the detainees, the return of the displaced residents, the reconstruction of the south and the deployment of the Lebanese army throughout the country. He said the objectives were the subject of broad internal agreement, while the dispute concerned the means of achieving them. Meeting with Arab League Secretary General Nabil Fahmy, he accused Israel of failing to comply with the framework agreement and continuing its military activity in the south, claiming Lebanon would adhere to the diplomatic track despite the difficulties (X account of the Lebanese presidency, October 19 and 21, 2026).



Aoun meets with Fahmy (X account of the Lebanese presidency, October 19, 2026)

► While visiting Lebanon, Arab League Secretary General Nabil Fahmy said the League supported Lebanon's sovereignty and efforts to promote a diplomatic solution with Israel. Meeting with President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri and Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji, they discussed the need for an Israeli withdrawal, the expansion of state authority and Arab assistance for reconstruction and stabilizing the economic situation. Salam noted the importance of Arab support for extending state authority throughout the country solely with its own forces, and Rajji welcomed the League Council's support for Lebanon. Fahmy called for translating Arab support into practical measures and said he was concerned about regional arrangements which could harm Lebanese interests (X accounts of the Lebanese presidency and Lebanese prime minister's office; *al-Joumhouria*, October 19, 2026). Fahmy also toured south Lebanon, including a military base in the al-Zahrani area and the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, condemned continued Israeli activity and noted Arab efforts to bring it to an end. According to the report, it was the first visit of its kind by an Arab League secretary general to the south of the country (*al-Diyar*, October 20, 2026).

► Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, said he opposed repealing the 1955 law boycotting Israel and said such a measure would not pass a vote in Parliament. His remarks were a response to reports of American pressure to promote the repeal of the law, in part following the diplomatic contacts between Lebanon and Israel and the legal proceedings which were opened and closed against Lebanon's ambassador in Washington, Nada Hamadeh Moawad (*al-Akhbar*, October 21, 2026).

► UN Secretary General António Guterres submitted the 44th semiannual report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559, in which he called on Hezbollah to hand

over its weapons to the Lebanese state and on Israel to withdraw from all territories it holds north of the Blue Line. He said the June 2026 tripartite framework agreement was a step toward a gradual arrangement based on expanding the authority of the Lebanese army, disarming the "armed groups"³ and an Israeli withdrawal in accordance with agreed conditions. However, he warned that continued Israeli military activity and Hezbollah's refusal to disarm maintained a high risk of renewed confrontation and pointed to disputes over timetables, verification mechanisms and the order in which the commitments are to be implemented as an obstacle to progress in the arrangement (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 21, 2026).

The Military Situation in South Lebanon and the Possibility for Renewed Hostilities

The IDF

► IDF forces continued ground and aerial activity to locate weapons and destroy terrorist infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, October 20, 2026). Lebanese media reported airstrikes, artillery fire, the demolition of buildings and the movement of ground forces at numerous locations in south Lebanon. The activity focused on Kafr Tebnit, al-Khiyam, Baraachit, al-Mansouri, Wadi al-Hujeir and al-Nabatieh, including near civilian sites and agricultural areas (*al-Nashra*, *al-Diyar*, Lebanon Debate and the Lebanese News Agency, October 19–26, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Given the concern over renewed regional hostilities between Iran and Israel and the United States, reports continued regarding Hezbollah's security and military preparations and Iranian involvement in efforts to rebuild the organization. According to unidentified sources, Hezbollah took precautionary measures, concerned lest Israel exploit a regional escalation to launch a surprise attack on targets in Lebanon (Lebanon 24, October 24, 2026).
► An unidentified Lebanese security source claimed there were apparently disagreements between Hezbollah's political echelon, which opposes involvement in another war, and the military echelon, which according to the report is more influenced by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Erem News, October 23, 2026).

³ Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

► Meanwhile, contradictory messages were published about Hezbollah's intention to participate in another regional war. According to political sources, the organization conveyed a message through Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri to President Joseph Aoun informing him that it would not intervene in a possible war alongside Iran. On the other hand, Qatari Prime Minister Muhammad bin Abdulrahman al-Thani reportedly did not receive an unequivocal answer on the issue from Hezbollah faction chairman Muhammad Raad. Former minister Mustafa Bayram said Hezbollah did not intend to disclose its decisions in advance and claimed the rocket fire in March 2026 had been a deterrent (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, al-Modon and *al-Diyar*, October 24, 2026). In addition, a senior Hezbollah figure was quoted as saying that the organization kept all its options open, had given no guarantees and did not intend to give any that it would not participate in a war, since the decision depended on the situation on the ground and on what Israel did (MTV Lebanon, October 26, 2026).

► A senior political source cast doubt on the veracity of the reassuring messages, claiming deciding Hezbollah's involvement in regional hostilities in fact lay in Iran's hands (*al-Liwaa*, October 26, 2026). Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, rejected claims that the organization followed Iranian instructions. He claimed all decisions were made by the leadership in Lebanon and no party, inside or outside the country, dictated them. He claimed that had been the situation under the previous secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, and it continued under secretary general Na'im Qassem. Fadlallah said claims that decisions on confrontations with the "enemy" were based on external pressure were "an insult to the intelligence and untrue" (*al-Joumhouria*, October 26, 2026).

► Reportedly, at meetings in Beirut with Hezbollah and Amal members of the Lebanese Parliament, Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh said Tehran did not plan to ask the organization to intervene on its side in the event of another war, in view of the expected cost to Lebanon (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 21 and 24, 2026). However, according to unverified assessments, Khatibzadeh had in fact asked Hezbollah to prepare for a response in the event of an attack on Iran, regardless of the cost (*al-Joumhouria*, October 24, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Internal Organization⁴

► According to security information and unidentified sources quoted by the anti-Hezbollah daily *Nidaa al-Watan*, there were instances of fighters leaving the organization's ranks and Iranian Revolutionary Guards officers leaving Lebanon, alongside damage to operational infrastructure, support systems and the ability to move and deploy. However, the report did not include quantitative data or independent evidence that would make it possible to analyze the events or determine that Hezbollah's organizational structure had begun to disintegrate (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 23, 2026).

Hezbollah's Aid and Reconstruction Program

► The program presented by Hezbollah to assist displaced residents and residents affected by the war is progressing. Hassan Ezzeddine, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the people responsible for the program had begun field work and completing the required forms, and the transfer of funds to eligible recipients was expected to begin soon (*al-Diyar*, October 19, 2026).

► Funding for the program is reportedly estimated at approximately \$600 million, higher than previously published estimates. According to the Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar*, American and Lebanese officials are examining the sources of the funds and the channels through which they are transferred, including the activity of money transfer companies, money changers and real estate transactions. The governor of the Banque du Liban said the regulated financial system had not identified transfers of this magnitude within a short period (*al-Akhbar*, October 20, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army completed a three-week joint exercise called PEGASUS CEDAR 2026, led by a British team with the participation of American and Italian soldiers and observers from France, Cyprus, Qatar and Jordan. The exercise focused on confronting a terrorist cell and included the use of UAVs, helicopters and various weapons. Acting army commander Hassan Audi said the goals of the exercise were to improve operational cooperation with

⁴ See the October 2026 Amit Institute report, "[The Hezbollah Leadership Two Years after the Elimination of Hassan Nasrallah](#)."

friendly armies, the exchange of knowledge and the army's ability to cope with technological developments (X account of the Lebanese army, October 22, 2026).



**Lebanese army soldiers during PEGASUS CEDAR 2026
(X account of the Lebanese army, October 22, 2026)**

► French President Emmanuel Macron announced his country's intention to convene an international conference in support of the Lebanese army after the elections in Israel, although no date has been set or the scope of the planned assistance determined (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 21, 2026). According to another report, based on unidentified Lebanese sources, the postponement of the conference is related to regional political-security uncertainty, doubts among donor countries regarding the army's ability to enforce the Lebanese state's monopoly on weapons and concerns about a security vacuum following the end of UNIFIL's mission. According to the sources, the donor countries seek a mechanism linking a gradual Israeli withdrawal, the deployment of the Lebanese army and the dismantling of Hezbollah's military infrastructure (Erem News, October 24, 2026).

► The Lebanese army announced it had prevented the smuggling of weapons and ammunition from Syria into Lebanon in the Akroum area of the Akkar district of northern Lebanon. Suspects were arrested for smuggling offenses in the Akkar area and in Aarsal in the Baalbek region. Weapons, ammunition and military equipment were seized and the detainees were transferred for questioning under the supervision of the judicial authorities (*al-Joumhouria*, October 22, 2026).

Preparations for the Day After UNIFIL

► Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, said all Lebanese agreed on the need for UNIFIL to maintain a presence in the south under UN auspices beyond the end of 2026 and although France was willing to help promote a solution, the international atmosphere hampered its efforts (*al-Joumhouria*, October 22, 2026).

► Arab League Secretary General Nabil Fahmy said he supported the continuation of an international presence under UN auspices, and maintaining UNIFIL in its current format was the League's preferred option. He said that in view of the trend toward ending the force's mission, alternatives were being examined, but any future mechanism had to receive the Lebanese government's consent and operate under an international mandate. He acknowledged that no agreement had yet been reached for an alternative arrangement (*al-Diyar*, October 19, 2026).

► Lebanese military sources said the objective of the planned European delegation to Lebanon was to provide the army with advice and training and not to replace UNIFIL. The sources added that Israel opposed the deployment of an alternative international or European force, while Lebanon sought an international presence which would assist in monitoring and documenting violations of the security arrangement (*al-Joumhouria*, October 23, 2026). However, American ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz said he was in favor of ending UNIFIL's activity, and added that Washington was consulting with France, Israel and Lebanon to examine future arrangements for maintaining regional peace. As yet no agreement has been reported between the parties regarding the format, composition or powers of an alternative mechanism (*al-Nashra*, October 23, 2026).

► Meanwhile, UNIFIL commander General Diodato Abagnara said the force would continue to operate in cooperation with the Lebanese army and local communities until the end of its activity. In remarks for United Nations Day, he said achieving stability in the south required trust, dialogue and cooperation as UNIFIL entered the final phase of its presence in the area and the planned end of its mandate on December 31, 2026 (*al-Joumhouria*, October 24, 2026).

► The end of UNIFIL's mission could also affect employment and economic activity in south Lebanon, given the dependence of local workers and businesses on the presence of the international force. UNIFIL spokesperson Candice Ardell said the force currently employed approximately 400 local workers, most of them in the south of the country, and reductions

in jobs as part of the withdrawal process were expected to begin only after December 31, 2026. In the town of Rmeish alone, approximately 85 families were reported to earn their living from direct employment with UNIFIL and another 250 families from employment with companies that provide it with services (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 20, 2026).

The Effects of the Fighting on the Civilian Population

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met with Muhammad Dargham, chairman of the union of municipalities of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, and representatives of the relief commission to discuss accelerating work to reinforce and rehabilitate damaged buildings. They discussed ways to coordinate between local authorities and government relief bodies to ensure building safety and enable residents to return (X account of the Lebanese prime minister's office, October 19, 2026).

► Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Mitri said there was genuine concern about a regional war in which Lebanon could become an arena, but at this stage there were assessments and scenarios rather than intelligence based on a decision to launch a war. He said the state's ability to prepare for another wave of displacement was very limited, and 63 reception centers for displaced residents were still operating in Lebanon, including educational institutions and ministry of education facilities converted for emergency use (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 22, 2026).