



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah January 27 – February 3, 2025

Overview

- ▶ Encouraged by Hezbollah, Lebanese residents escorted by Lebanese army forces continued attempts to return to villages in south Lebanon. Some residents were reportedly injured in clashes with IDF forces. Hezbollah congratulated the residents, calling their attempted return a "victory."
- ▶ IDF forces took action against Hezbollah's ceasefire violations and attacked vehicles and facilities, including in the Beqa'a Valley and near the Syrian border. Lebanese army forces continued gradually deploying into the areas vacated by the IDF. The army also reportedly took control of a strategic Hezbollah underground facility.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem gave two speeches stating the organization's opposition to extending the ceasefire until February 18, 2025. He demanded that state institutions and the international community pressure Israel to stop its "violations" and complete the withdrawal from Lebanese territory. He stated that Hezbollah was investigating the killings of the organization's leaders to learn from them.
- ▶ Qassem said the funeral of former secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and his designated successor Hashem Safi al-Din would take place on February 23, 2025. Nasrallah will be buried near Beirut International Airport.
- ▶ According to reports, Israel complained that Iranian diplomats and Turkish citizens were transferring cash to Hezbollah on flights to Beirut. Hezbollah's "economic wing" announced delays in paying compensation to residents.
- ▶ Designated Lebanese prime minister Nawaf Salam continued efforts to form a new government. According to reports the United States is pressuring Salam to prevent Hezbollah and those loyal to it from influencing the appointment of the next finance minister.

Local Residents Return to South Lebanon

- ▶ This past week local residents continued attempts to return to Yaroun, Aitaroun, Kafr Kila and Maroun al-Ras in south Lebanon, escorted by Lebanese army forces. Tents were erected at the entrances to villages and efforts have been made to retrieve bodies (al-Akhbar, January

28, 2025; al-Mayadeen, January 28–29, 2025). The Lebanese army claimed that the "Israeli enemy" opened fire on military personnel and civilians on the Yaroun–Maroun al-Ras road, injuring one soldier and three civilians (Lebanese army X account, January 28, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported 14 injuries in Israeli strikes on local residents (Lebanese ministry of health X account, January 29, 2025).

► On February 2, 2025, another attempt at mass return to the southern towns and villages was announced; its slogan was "Sunday of Return 2." According to reports, residents entered Aitaroun and tried to enter Deir Mimas, Meiss al-Jabal, Houla and al-Khiam. It was also reported that people came from Beirut to "support" their efforts (al-Mayadeen, al-Akhbar, NBN, February 2, 2025).



Right: Residents of Aitaroun with Hezbollah and Lebanese flags (Unews Agency, February 2, 2025). Left: A resident of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia who went to Yaroun, south Lebanon (al-Mayadeen X account, February 2, 2025)

► The IDF spokesperson in Arabic warned that Israeli forces were still present to implement the ceasefire in the area and that any unauthorized person in south Lebanon was in danger. He also accused Hezbollah of placing its narrow interests above those of the state (Avichay Adraee's X account, February 2, 2025). No clashes were recorded and reportedly, in an attempt to prevent bloodshed, there was an unspoken agreement between Hezbollah, Amal, the municipalities and "activists" to calm protests so demonstrators would not approach the embankments behind which IDF forces were positioned, unlike January 26, 2025, when 24 people were killed. UNIFIL personnel also conveyed IDF warnings to the Lebanese side (al-Akhbar, February 3, 2025).



Map of the villages in south Lebanon which were "liberated" (yellow); villages in which the IDF has a presence (red) (al-Manar, February 2, 2025)

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah congratulated the residents on their return to south Lebanon despite the continued presence of IDF forces, calling it a victory for the "resistance:"¹

◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem described returning residents as a "scene of victory," adding that "resistance" fighters² were on the ground, had not left it, "held their heads high" and that the "resistance" remained steadfast and strong. According to Qassem, the "resistance" had once again [sic] won, as local residents were advancing to frontline in direct confrontation with the Israelis, who had not yet withdrawn (Radio al-Nour, January 27, 2025).

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Hezbollah had launched a project to rebuild south Lebanon and the residents of south Lebanon were determined to "liberate their land" and rebuild their villages. He claimed Israel sought to destroy towns and displace residents but the people had returned and "sacrificed for liberation." He added that "sacrifice" strengthened the people, the army and the "resistance," and Hezbollah had promised the residents they would return to their homes (al-Akhbar Telegram channel, January 28, 2025).

◆ Five members of the Lebanese Parliament representing the Ba'albek-Hermel region, four of whom were members of the Hezbollah faction, visited border villages in south Lebanon. They reiterated their support for the Lebanese people's "struggle" against the "Israeli enemy." Ali al-Muqdad said that no matter how the "Zionist-American enemy and

¹ Hezbollah and Hamas.

² Terrorist operatives.

the nations of the world unite and fight against us, they will not be able to undermine our freedom and sovereignty in the region" (al-'Ahed, January 30, 2025).



Members of the Lebanese Parliament tour south Lebanon (al-'Ahed, January 30, 2025)

◆ Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the events in south Lebanon showed that Hezbollah remained popular among the Lebanese people and that the people were even more committed to the organization's choices, its "resistance" and its leaders after the war waged against Hezbollah. He also said supporters of the "Shi'ite Twins" [Hezbollah and Amal] were prepared to face challenges "and make sacrifices in the face of risks" (al-'Ahed, February 2, 2025). The Amal Movement prohibited its members from participating in activities that "endanger the public," particularly the motorcycle convoys Hezbollah has led in recent years, as a gesture of respect toward other sects in Lebanon and in pursuit of unity. The movement noted that anyone participating in such processions without explicit approval could face expulsion (Lebanon24, January 28, 2025).

The Lebanese army

- ▶ The Lebanese army reported that its forces continued to escort residents returning to their homes and noted its obligation to adhere to the guidelines in official statements (Lebanese army X account, January 29, 2025).
- ▶ Hassan Odeh, acting commander of the Lebanese army, visited army forces in south Lebanon and praised their support for the residents as they returned to their villages and the sacrifices made by the soldiers. He visited the Kafr Dounine-Bint Jbeil area, the al-Shwakeer area, and Srebbine-Bint Jbeil. He also went to Deir Qanoun Ras al-Ain in the Tyre region, where he met with the family of Muhammad Farhat, an officer who was killed in clashes with IDF forces on January 26, 2025 (Lebanese army X account, February 1, 2025).



Right: The Lebanese army secures a procession of Hezbollah supporters in the village of Yaroun, near the Israeli border (al-Akhbar X account, January 28, 2025). Left: Hassan Odeh, acting commander of the Lebanese army, with soldiers in south Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, February 1, 2025)

The Ceasefire

The IDF

► This past week the IDF continued operations in south Lebanon to thwart Hezbollah's attempts to violate the ceasefire. IDF forces destroyed weapons storage facilities, targeted Hezbollah vehicles transporting weapons or approaching IDF forces and an engineering vehicle used to restore Hezbollah facilities in south Lebanon. The IDF intercepted a Hezbollah intelligence-gathering UAV and attacked a military site in the Beqa'a region with underground facilities for weapons development and production, as well as facilities used for smuggling weapons across the Syria-Lebanon border (IDF spokesperson, January 27–February 3, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported that 20 people were injured in an Israeli airstrike in Nabatiyeh and ten were wounded in an aerial attack on the town of Zoutar (Lebanese ministry of health X account, January 29, 2025). It was also reported that two people were killed and ten injured in a strike in Janta in the Beqa'a Valley (al-Nashra, January 31, 2025).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah reported that the decision to extend the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon until February 18, 2025, had been made without consulting them. They demanded that state institutions and the international community take action against the continued operations of IDF forces in Lebanon and continued to threaten that the organization could act on its own against "violations."

- ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed that Hezbollah had agreed to the ceasefire because it did not want a full-scale war and it was an opportunity to assess the government's political capabilities. He denied that Hezbollah violated the ceasefire and

accused Israel of committing 1,350 violations, stating that although it was "painful," the organization had decided to be patient because the state bore responsibility. He added that Israel had to withdraw, as the agreement's original 60-day period had ended, and Hezbollah did not agree it be extended even a single day. He added that the continued "occupation" of south Lebanon constituted "aggression" against Lebanese sovereignty and "everyone" was responsible for confronting the "occupation: "the people, the army, the state, and the "resistance" (Radio al-Nour, January 27, 2025).

◆ On another occasion, Qassem stated that the Lebanese leadership was responsible for monitoring Israel's "aggression" and "violations" of the agreement. He accused Israel of "deliberate aggression" and claimed it was the state's duty to address the issue. He reiterated that Israel could not remain in south Lebanon (al-Mayadeen, February 2, 2025).

◆ Amin Shery, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said it was the state's responsibility to address Israeli "violations," adding that the decision to extend the agreement period in south Lebanon did not concern Hezbollah (al-Nashra, January 28, 2025).

◆ The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily newspaper al-Akhbar accused the United States of legitimizing the extension of the IDF's presence in south Lebanon on the grounds that it was justified "logistical reasons related to the situation south of the Litani [River]." The paper claimed that coordination between the "resistance"³ and the Lebanese army continued as usual and the "resistance" made it clear to the Lebanese army in every meeting that it was committed to the agreement. However, it claimed that the "enemy" wanted the Lebanese army to act as a border guard, thereby [allegedly] creating a problem between the army and local residents. It also reported that Hezbollah had informed all parties that it had no interest in extending the ceasefire agreement and would stand by residents seeking to return to their homes (al-Akhbar, January 28, 2025).

◆ Mohammad Raad, leader of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, condemned the "Israeli aggression" in Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa and Zoutar, claiming it was further proof of Israel's ongoing attacks on the Lebanese people and regional security. He added that the international community constantly turned a blind eye to Israel's activities, which led to "crimes and destruction." He said the Lebanese people had the

³ Hezbollah and the Palestinian organizations operating in Lebanon.

right to "resist" and confront "Zionist" attacks in any way they chose to defend their security and sovereignty (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 29, 2025).

◆ Ibrahim al-Moussawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed the "Israeli aggression" against the Beqa'a region was a blatant and dangerous violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. He claimed the Arab parties to the ceasefire agreement had to meet their responsibilities. He called on the Lebanese presidency and the army to take immediate action to bring a swift end to the "Zionist crimes" and warned that continued "Zionist aggression" without international intervention would encourage further "aggression" (al-'Ahed, January 31, 2025).

The Lebanese army

► This past week, in coordination with UNIFIL and the committee overseeing the ceasefire, Lebanese army forces continued deploying in areas vacated by the IDF south of the Litani River in south Lebanon. According to reports they deployed in the towns of Yaroun and Aitaroun in the central sector, in Marwahin and Barakat Risha in the western sector, and in other areas along the border (Lebanese army X account, January 27–February 3, 2025).

► Videos showed Lebanese army soldiers allegedly patrolling inside Hezbollah's Imad-4 underground facility, located between Jouaiyya and Aitit in the Tyre region (al-Jadeed News X account, January 28, 2025).⁴ However, a Lebanese journalist claimed that the site was not Imad-4 but another facility which was attacked during the war and that no strategic weapons were present at the site (Fadi Nizzal's X account, January 28, 2025).



Lebanese army soldiers in an underground facility allegedly belonging to Hezbollah (al-Jadeed News X account, January 28, 2025)

⁴ In August 2024, Hezbollah revealed the Imad-4, underground facility which was used for storing precision missiles and heavy rockets. For further information, see the August 2024 ITIC report, "Hezbollah Issues Video of Its Imad 4 Underground Facility: Reactions and Implications."

- ▶ "Security sources" denied reports that the Lebanese army carried out raids on January 28, 2025, in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia area of Beirut in the wake of information about the presence of weapons depots or arms that the "Israeli enemy" intended to target (al-Nashra and al-Manar, January 29, 2025).
- ▶ Sami Abi al-Manea, spiritual leader of the Druze in Lebanon, toured south Lebanon and called on the committee overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire to carry out its role and restrain Israel from committing "violations." He also noted the need to stand united in support of the Lebanese army and allow it to carry out its tasks. He also urged local residents to join the army to strengthen it and its capabilities (al-Akhbar, February 2, 2025).
- ▶ "Sources" reported that the Lebanese army's deployment plan in the "occupied" towns of south Lebanon would be accelerated by February 18, 2025, the expected date for the completion of the IDF's withdrawal. According to the report, once Israeli forces fully withdrew from all parts of Yaroun, the deployment of Lebanese army forces across the entire western sector would be completed, except for al-Labouneh and Jabal Blat, and across the entire central sector, except for Maroun al-Ras. The "sources" added that Israel was not expected to withdraw from Blida, Meiss al-Jabal, Houla, Markaba, Ras Thalathin, al-Adeisa and Kafr Kila because of their strategic locations near the border. The "sources" also said Israel would delay its withdrawal from towns in the eastern sector, including al-Wazzani, Sarda and al-Amarah, until February 18 (al-Akhbar, February 3, 2025).

The Lebanese government

- ▶ Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, met with United States Army General Jasper Jeffers, chairman of the ceasefire monitoring committee, and the United States ambassador to Beirut. He said Lebanon had implemented the terms of the ceasefire and accused Israel of violating it and UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Mikati added that the government had agreed to extend the ceasefire until February 18, 2025, after consultations with President Joseph Aoun and Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, to ensure that Israel would have no excuse not to withdraw. However, he said that in exchange for the extension, Israeli attacks and "violations" had to cease, and Israel's withdrawal had to be guaranteed (al-Nashra, January 27, 2025).
- ▶ In response Nabih Berri confirmed that consultations had indeed taken place regarding the extension of the agreement until February 18, 2025, in exchange for increased pressure on Israel to halt "violations." He stated that he had demanded the immediate cessation of

"violations," house demolitions and gunfire, as well as action on the issue of Lebanese prisoners (al-Nashra, January 27, 2025). On another occasion, he said Lebanon demanded Israel stop all attacks, destruction and bulldozer activity along the border (al-Diyar, January 29, 2025).

► According to reports Lebanese President Joseph Aoun received assurances from "American sources" that Israel would complete its withdrawal from south Lebanon by February 18, 2025. In response Aoun warned that if Israel found a new "excuse" to remain in south Lebanon, Lebanon would "take action." Nawaf Salam, Lebanon's designated prime minister, reportedly shared Berri's concerns about an Israeli action which could affect the final withdrawal date (al-Diyar, January 30, 2025).

► The American administration's new envoy to the Middle East, Morgan Ortagus, arrived for her first visit to Lebanon and met with General Jasper Jeffers, head of the ceasefire monitoring committee. They agreed to establish a joint work plan with the Lebanese army to inspect 30 sites "suspected of being "resistance facilities" north of the Litani River. Reports in Lebanon indicated that Ortagus allegedly possessed information about sites where Hezbollah was hiding ammunition, "based on false claims by the Israeli enemy." "Sources" added that there was increased movement of reconnaissance UAVs over Lebanese airspace and that they did not believe Israel would implement the conditions of the ceasefire extension, anticipating an escalation with American support (al-Akhbar, January 30, 2025).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad casualty

► The military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) announced that one of its operatives in Lebanon was killed "on the borders of occupied Palestine" while participating in clashes against the "aggression" on Lebanon (PIJ Telegram channel, January 31, 2025).

Hezbollah

Hezbollah deputy secretary general's speech

► On January 27, 2025, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem delivered a recorded speech. He related to the ceasefire in south Lebanon, praised the "resistance" of Hamas and Hezbollah and claimed they had succeeded in harming Israel (Radio al-Nour, January 27, 2025):

- ◆ **The killing of a senior Hezbollah figure:** Qassem stated that an investigation was still ongoing into the circumstances of the killing of Muhammad Hammadi, Hezbollah's official in the western Beqa'a region, who was shot outside his home in the town of

Mashghara. He hinted at Israeli involvement, claiming that "all eyes were on the Zionists regarding his assassination."

◆ **Congratulating Hamas in Gaza:** Regarding the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, Qassem congratulated "Gaza's victory," claiming it was a victory for the Palestinian people, "all the peoples of the region, and the free people of the world" who supported it. He added that the goal of Operation al-Aqsa Flood [the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre of October 7, 2023] had been achieved and that the "Israeli project" to destroy the "resistance" and Hamas had failed. He further claimed that the "aggression" against Lebanon and Gaza was carried out with American and Western support "without any rules."

◆ **Praise for the "resistance" in south Lebanon:** Qassem stated that the Israeli army had advanced only "a few hundred meters" into Lebanese territory due to the steadfastness of the "resistance" fighters despite many casualties. He claimed Israel had requested the ceasefire, and Hezbollah agreed to it along with the Lebanese government, making it a victory. He boasted that with Hezbollah's capabilities, missiles and UAVs, "many people" [allegedly] believed the "resistance" could defeat Israel in any confrontation.

◆ **The targeting of Hezbollah's leadership:** He admitted Hezbollah supporters had not expected the organization to lose its leaders in such a short time, especially secretary general Hassan Nasrallah. He claimed [alleged] "intelligence leaks" and Israeli air force coverage across Lebanon contributed to exposing the "resistance" to the "enemy," and they were now conducting an investigation to learn from experience and take the necessary measures.

► On February 2, 2025, Qassem gave a speech in which he addressed the ceasefire, the continuation of the "resistance" and Nasrallah's funeral (al-Mayadeen, February 2, 2025):

◆ **Continuing the "resistance":** He claimed the "resistance" was a choice and a path, and they acted according to their assessments and "at the appropriate time." He said that they never spoke of a "complete victory" and that the fight against Israel was a campaign with both wins and losses. He said "the proud people, together with their resistance and army, would liberate Lebanon." He said the "Islamic resistance" would remain, Hezbollah would remain and they would never change their position, asserting

that the Lebanese people, along with the "resistance" and the army, would "liberate Lebanon."

◆ **Nasrallah's funeral:** Qassem said the funeral of Nasrallah [killed on September 27, 2024] and his designated successor, executive council head Hashem Safi al-Din [killed on October 3–4, 2024], was expected to take place on February 23, 2025. The funeral, whose slogan was "We keep our promise," would be a joint ceremony, but Nasrallah would be buried in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia near Beirut International Airport, while Safi al-Din would be buried in his hometown, Deir Qanoun in south Lebanon. Qassem also called on supporters not to shoot into the air during the funeral or on any other occasion. Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's executive committee, published posters marking the funeral date with the slogan "We keep our promise."



Right: Na'im Qassem (al-Manar, February 2, 2025). Left: Announcement of the funerals of Nasrallah and Safi al-Din (Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's executive committee, February 2, 2025)

Other Hezbollah statements

► Ibrahim Amin, chairman of Hezbollah's political council, issued a message to the "resistance fighters" in south Lebanon, stating that the "enemy" had tested the "resistance" on the ground and faced its determination. He said it had to be made clear to the "enemy" that its "crimes" did not bring it victory and that it had only suffered defeats. In an address to the "brothers in the homeland," he claimed they had a "rare, historic opportunity for unity" and called for abandoning resentment, conflicts and disputes in order to impose sovereignty over the "enemies" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 28, 2025).

Hezbollah regrouping

► Israel filed a complaint with the committee overseeing the ceasefire, stating that Iranian diplomats were transferring tens of millions of dollars to Hezbollah in suitcases through Beirut International Airport. Israel also asserted that Turkish citizens were transferring cash to Hezbollah on flights from Istanbul to Beirut. According to the report, some members of the

oversight committee believed the allegations were credible, and the complaints were forwarded to the Lebanese government for further handling (The Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2025). Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei dismissed the claims as "rumors spread by Israel" to hinder Lebanon's reconstruction (Tasnim, February 3, 2025).

Reconstructing Lebanon (Hezbollah)

► Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the organization would begin dispatching teams to assess the damage in order to commence reconstruction. He added that Hezbollah promised to provide shelter for residents (Radio al-Nour, January 27, 2025).

► The al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, announced it would postpone the payment of war compensation to Lebanese until February 10, 2025, citing "technical reasons." It also stated that general operations at its branches would continue as usual (Lebanon 24, January 29, 2025). "Sources monitoring Hezbollah's financial situation" reported that the decision came as a result of the organization's massive economic losses during the war and Israel's destruction of most of its branches, headquarters and warehouses. The "sources" added that the destruction of the fund's cash reserves, jewelry and other assets had plunged it into a financial crisis worse than that of the 2006 war and that the association was unable to meet compensation payments. "Informed sources" further stated that Hezbollah was surprised by the extent of the damage and the number of affected families in need of payments (al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 31, 2025).

Criticism of Hezbollah

► The Lebanese Christian National Forces Party criticized Hezbollah in the wake of the violent events which occurred with the return of residents to villages in south Lebanon on January 26, 2025, during which 22 people were killed by IDF gunfire. The Party said Hezbollah, through its parliament members and media outlets, had launched a wide-scale campaign aimed at painting the events in south Lebanon as a great victory for the "resistance," but the victims were casualties of Hezbollah's "ongoing follies." The Party also noted that Hezbollah attempted to claim that the residents had forcibly expelled Israel from the remaining occupied villages, whereas in reality, the IDF only withdrew from villages from which its withdrawal had been announced, and it was these villages the residents entered. The Party also accused Hezbollah of attempting to depict the Lebanese army as weak at the expense of civilian bloodshed (al-Nashra, January 27, 2025).

The Lebanese Government

The Egyptian foreign minister visits Lebanon

► Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty visited Lebanon and met with President Joseph Aoun, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, and Prime Minister designate Nawaf Salam. Aoun noted Lebanon's insistence that Israel complete its withdrawal by February 18, 2025, and return the Lebanese "prisoners." Abdelatty expressed Egypt's support for Lebanon and its army and stated Egypt's willingness to assist in the country's reconstruction (office of the Lebanese president's X account and Egyptian Presidential Office Facebook page, January 31, 2025).



Right: Aoun (right) and Abdelatty (left)
(office of the Lebanese president's X account, January 31, 2025)

Reconstructing Lebanon (the Lebanese government)

► Lebanese President Aoun met with Imran Riza, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Lebanon. Aoun said Lebanon was committed to implementing government reforms to achieve progress and was ready to cooperate with the UN and its agencies on the matter. Riza emphasized the UN's willingness to support Lebanon and provide \$250 million in aid to help the country recover from war damage (Lebanese presidency X account, January 30, 2025).

Forming a new Lebanese government

► This past week Nawaf Salam, designate prime minister of Lebanon, continued efforts to form a new government:

- ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem stated that matters between the organization, President Aoun and the designated prime minister were "being sorted out and there were no obstacles." He claimed Hezbollah had "acted wisely" and wanted a state and a government. According to Qassem Hezbollah was not complicating the formation of the government's. However, he added that without the participation of the

"Shi'ite Twins" [Hezbollah and Amal], the president would not have been elected "in a way which ensured national unity" (Radio al-Nour, January 27, 2025).

◆ "Knowledgeable sources" reported that Salam told President Aoun that disagreements still existed with the "Shi'ite Twins" regarding several names in the proposed government (al-Akhbar, January 30, 2025).

◆ "Five knowledgeable sources" reported that the American administration was pressuring President Aoun and designated Prime Minister Salam to prevent Hezbollah or its allies from influencing the appointment of the next finance minister in the country, in an attempt to reduce the organization's influence over the state. "The sources" stated that American officials wanted to see Hezbollah's influence in the country diminish with the appointment of the new government under Nawaf Salam (Reuters, January 31, 2025).

◆ After meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Samir Geagea, chairman of the Lebanese Christian National Forces Party, said they were willing to grant the finance portfolio to Shi'ites, but not to Amal or Hezbollah (al-Nashra, January 31, 2025).

◆ Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that forming a government which "led to crises" was not in Lebanon's interest and that the composition of the government had to be based on consensus, the "coexistence pact" between sects and a solid political foundation. He criticized the conduct of the new Lebanese leadership, which he claimed avoided responding to and condemning regional developments, including the American president's calls for the displacement of Palestinians, the presence of the "Israeli occupation" on Syrian Mount Hermon and his statements about remaining in Lebanese territory, while not hesitating to criticize the "resistance" (al-'Ahed, February 2, 2025).