



## Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah February 24 – March 3, 2025

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ IDF forces continued taking action to prevent Hezbollah's military buildup and presence in south Lebanon, violations of the ceasefire agreement. Two Hezbollah operatives involved in smuggling weapons from Syria were eliminated in strikes in the Beqa'a region.
- ▶ Hezbollah intensified its criticism of the Lebanese government's handling of the situation, particularly regarding the continued presence of IDF forces in five locations in south Lebanon and ongoing Israeli strikes across the country. The editor of a Hezbollah-affiliated daily newspaper warned of the possible resumption of "military activity" against the "occupation."
- ▶ The Lebanese prime minister conducted his first visit of south Lebanon. He said the Lebanese army was deployed in the area and working to maintain stability. Local residents confronted him and expressed support for the "resistance."
- ▶ Hezbollah published pictures of its 37 highest-ranking operatives killed during the war, including secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and his designated successor, Hashem Safi al-Din. In the town of Aitaroun in south Lebanon a funeral was held for 95 local residents killed in the war, most of whom were Hezbollah operatives.
- ▶ A Lebanese citizen arriving in Beirut on a flight from Turkey was arrested carrying \$2.5 million in cash, suspected of being brought for Hezbollah. He claimed an Iranian had given him a suitcase of money.
- ▶ Nawaf Salam's new government received a vote of confidence from members of parliament, including the Hezbollah faction. He said the government sought to make independent decisions on matters of war and peace.
- ▶ Lebanese President Aoun said the country sought to resolve all conflicts through diplomacy, including the issue of IDF forces remaining in south Lebanon. He said the "resistance [sic]" was the responsibility of the state, and therefore only the state should hold weapons.

---

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

## The Ceasefire

### The IDF

► This past week the IDF continued operations to prevent Hezbollah from strengthening its military capabilities and taking action in south Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire agreement, which prohibits the organization's presence south of the Litani River. Two Hezbollah terrorist operatives involved in smuggling weapons into Lebanon from Syria were eliminated in airstrikes in the Beqa'a Valley region. Hezbollah operatives were also targeted at a site for the production and storage of strategic weapons near Ba'albek in the Beqa'a Valley, as well as at a Hezbollah observation post in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, February 24 – March 3, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported two fatalities and three injuries from an IDF strike on the outskirts of the town of Janta in the Beqa'a Valley (al-Nashra, February 25, 2025). Hezbollah-affiliated social media accounts confirmed that at least one of the fatalities was a Hezbollah operative (Khoder Zaiterr's X account, February 25, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported one fatality and two injuries in a strike on al-Hermel in the Beqa'a Valley (al-Araby al-Jadeed, February 27, 2025).



**Vehicle of a Hezbollah terrorist attacked in al-Hermel (al-Jadeed, February 26, 2025)**

### Hezbollah

► Hezbollah reiterated its demand that the Lebanese government take action to secure Israel's withdrawal from five points in south Lebanon where IDF forces remain after completing the broader withdrawal on February 18, 2025. This past week Hezbollah escalated its criticism, accusing the government of "weakness" in the face of Israel's continued presence and airstrikes:

- ◆ Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, responding to the IDF strike on al-Hermel, said "the enemy" continued to systematically

violate Lebanon's sovereignty and was "trying to enforce new conditions." He called on state institutions to take a stance on the attacks (al-Nashra, February 26, 2025).

◆ Hussein Jashi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, speaking at a memorial ceremony in al-Naqoura in south Lebanon, claimed the event showed the "enemy's failure" to achieve its goal of reestablishing a security zone along the border. He added that Lebanon had an opportunity to expel the "occupation" and that the government had to address Israel's "daily violations" (al-Nashra, February 27, 2025).

◆ Ibrahim al-Amin, editor of the Hezbollah-affiliated daily newspaper al-Akhbar, said no one expected American intervention to bring about an IDF withdrawal from Lebanon. He claimed that although the Americans and French, the guarantors of the ceasefire agreement, publicly asserted they were working to ensure Israel met its commitments, in private discussions they repeated Israel's position that Hezbollah was violating the agreement and that the Lebanese army was not fulfilling its role. He said that while the "resistance" in Lebanon was currently refraining from direct actions, it reiterated its demand that the state put an end to "Israeli provocations," and the day was not far off when "the use of the rifle will return as a means to end the occupation" (al-Akhbar, February 28, 2025).

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, asked if "the time has not come for this country, with all its pillars [sic], to grow weary of the Israeli strikes that stretch from the southern border to the farthest edges of the Beqa'a Valley?" He asked whether officials did not feel that Lebanon's sovereignty, dignity and national pride were under attack. He added that while Hezbollah was giving the government a chance to meet its responsibilities, it had failed to address any of the issues "created" by Israel, including "the occupation, ongoing aggression and Lebanese prisoners held by Israel." Fadlallah said "the Israeli enemy" was Lebanon's adversary and that the struggle against it was national. He said the "blood of the Hassan Nasrallah" had brought Lebanon honor, pride and existence, and Hezbollah would defend the sacrifices made by its people, ensuring that no one undermined "the sanctity of his blood" or the morale and dignity of its supporters, regardless of their status (al-Manar, March 2, 2025).

► Ali Shoeib, Hezbollah's al-Manar correspondent in south Lebanon, claimed that Israel had established a "buffer zone" in south Lebanon, taking control of lands belonging to villages and

towns near the border beyond the five strategic points where IDF forces remain. He photographed areas where earthworks and engineering operations were conducted, as well as some of the newly established IDF positions (Ali Shoeib's Telegram channel, March 1, 2025).



**IDF post photographed by Shoeib (Ali Shoeib's Telegram channel, March 1, 2025)**

## The Lebanese government

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam conducted his first visit to south Lebanon, accompanied by several government ministers and acting Lebanese Army Commander Hassan Ouda. Salam met with Lebanese army soldiers and UNIFIL troops at a base in Tyre, where he said the army was responsible for defending Lebanon, ensuring the security of its people, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. He added that the army was "increasing its deployment with firmness and determination to establish stability in the south and return our people to their homes and villages." He also toured the Lebanese army base in Marjayoun and surveyed the damage in Khiyam and Nabatieh. During the visit he met with local residents who demanded action to facilitate their return to the border town of al-Dhahira. Some of the residents also chanted slogans in support of the "resistance."<sup>2</sup> In response, Salam stated they were working to rebuild the villages and structures which had been destroyed to ensure the safe return of displaced residents (Lebanese prime minister's X account; al-Janoubia, February 28, 2025).

---

<sup>2</sup> Hezbollah.



**Right: Salam at the Lebanese army camp in Tyre (Lebanese prime minister's X account, February 28, 2025). Left: Salam facing angry residents (al-Mayadeen, February 28, 2025)**

► Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Salam's visit to south Lebanon showed the government was committed to the south, for which he deserved gratitude. He said the visit gave the people hope, and the government had earned their trust by prioritizing the reconstruction of what "the enemy destroyed." He added that the government was dealing with the "enemy's" presence at a strategic level (al-Nashra, March 2, 2025).

## The Lebanese army

► The Lebanese army reported that during searches in south Lebanon, two "camouflaged espionage devices" belonging to the "Israeli enemy" were discovered, including cameras and motion detectors. According to the army, the devices were dismantled and residents were urged to stay away from suspicious objects and report them immediately to the nearest military post (Lebanese Army X account, February 26, 2025).



**"Israeli espionage devices" discovered in south Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, February 26, 2025)**

## UNIFIL

► UNIFIL Commander Aroldo Lázaro presented the latest developments in south Lebanon to representatives of UNIFIL's donor countries. He expressed his gratitude for their continued

support, stating that UNIFIL was doing its best to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and promote regional stability (UNIFIL Telegram channel, February 25, 2025).

## Hezbollah

### Hezbollah casualties

► On February 25, 2025, Hezbollah published a poster of 37 "martyr commanders" who were killed in the fighting against Israel from October 8, 2023, until the ceasefire on November 27, 2024. At the top were former Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and his designated successor, chairman of the executive council Hashem Safi al-Din, followed by southern front commander Ali Karaki, the organization's military commander Fuad Shukr, and head of operations Ibrahim Aqil. Also included were members of Hezbollah's "political leadership" and "military" commanders (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, February 25, 2025).



**The 37 highest-ranking Hezbollah figures killed**  
(Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, February 25, 2025)

► Hezbollah's al-Manar TV broadcast a program featuring members of Hassan Nasrallah's family, who discussed his personal and family life. His son, Jawad Nasrallah, admitted that after the organization's "military" commander, Fuad Shukr, was eliminated in an Israeli strike on July 30, 2024, and especially following the pager attack on September 17, 2024, his father fell into a depression that lasted until his final days, and people said he was no longer the same person. Referring to Israeli Air Force jets flying over his father's funeral on February 23, 2025, Nasrallah called it "proof of their fear" (al-Manar, March 1, 2025).

► On February 28, 2025, a funeral was held in the town of Aitaroun for 95 local residents who were killed in the war, many of them Hezbollah operatives whose coffins were draped with the organization's flags. It was the largest funeral in south Lebanon since April 2006. On the same day, a funeral was held in the town of Aita al-Sha'ab for 41 war casualties. Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, noted "the sacrifice of the dead" and said thanks to them, "the land was liberated" (Janoubia, February 28, 2025).



**Right: Coffins draped in Hezbollah flags at the mass funeral in Aitaroun. Left: Residents waving Hezbollah flags at the funeral (al-Nahar, February 28, 2025)**

## Money for Hezbollah confiscated

► "Three sources" reported that authorities at Beirut International Airport seized \$2.5 million from a passenger arriving from Turkey, funds allegedly intended for Hezbollah. One of the "sources" said it was the first time such an arrest had been made (Reuters, February 28, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of finance confirmed the arrest, stating that under the directive of the public prosecutor of the Supreme Court, he was transferred to the security forces' department of investigation (al-Nashra, February 28, 2025). According to reports, the detainee, a Lebanese citizen, admitted during interrogation that on the night of February 27, 2025, he flew from Beirut International Airport and landed at Istanbul International Airport. He spent several hours in the duty-free area, where he met an Iranian who handed him a suitcase containing the money. He then returned to Beirut while the Iranian remained in Turkey (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 28, 2025).



**The money seized at Beirut Airport, suspected to be intended for Hezbollah  
(Lebanon Debate, February 28, 2025)**

► The Saudi Arabian columnist Abdulrahman al-Rashed, former editor of al-Sharq al-Awsat, said Hezbollah understood that its main supporter, Iran, had been weakened to a degree that would make it difficult to continue backing Hezbollah, despite its being Iran's most valuable asset, particularly after the fall of the Assad regime in Damascus. He said that was because Israel was determined to confront Tehran and because of the financial burden of the "resistance axis"<sup>3</sup> project on Iran's "struggling economy." According to al-Rashed, even if Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had not dismantled Hezbollah as an "institution," the organization would have weakened and disintegrated due to Iran's declining power. He added that the flyover of Israeli fighter jets during Nasrallah's funeral was clearly intended to show that Israel would not allow Hezbollah to return to its previous [terrorist] activities. He wrote that Hezbollah was apparently beginning to grasp the new situation, as evidenced by statements from Na'im Qassem, its secretary general, who said Hezbollah would act against Israel through Lebanese state-led diplomacy (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 24, 2025).

### **Hezbollah's involvement in the reconstruction of Lebanon**

► According to reports, so far Hezbollah has paid compensation for 265,000 buildings damaged during the war, which accounts for 91% of all 292,000 buildings damaged. Hezbollah has also provided \$324 million in financial aid for shelters for families who lost their homes. The reconstruction process is expected to take between three and four years (al-Akhbar, March 1, 2025).

---

<sup>3</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.



## The Lebanon Government

### Vote of confidence for the new Lebanese government

► On February 25-26, 2025, the Lebanese Parliament discussed the guidelines of Nawaf Salam's the new government.<sup>4</sup> A vote of confidence was held after the deliberations, with 95 parliament members supporting the new government, 12 opposing and four abstaining (al-Nashra, February 26, 2025).

► Prime Minister Nawaf Salam presented the government's guidelines and said they wanted an independent government which would decided matters of war and peace. He pledged to ensure the security of Lebanese citizens and to defend the borders in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701, committing to take all necessary measures to liberate the nation from "the occupation" and to establish full national sovereignty. He also said the government promised to repair the destruction caused by the war against Israel and implement reforms in the government and its institutions (al-Mayadeen, February 25, 2025).



#### Nawaf Salam, prime minister of Lebanon (al-Mayadeen, February 25, 2025)

► Mohammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said what he called "the Zionist war in the Gaza Strip" was a war of "criminal aggression" backed by the United States, aimed at attacking Lebanon [sic]. He added that the death of Hassan Nasrallah would not break the "resistance" and called on the government to take responsibility for the refusal of "the occupation" to withdraw from Lebanese territory. He also criticized the government's decision to suspend the landing of Iranian planes in Beirut, calling it a "Zionist" decision." However, he said the faction supported the new government "out of respect and in the principle of participation" and expressed hope that the government would act "wisely,"

<sup>4</sup> For the first time in 25 years, the "resistance clause," based on Hezbollah's "Army-People-Resistance" equation, was not included in the government's guidelines. Instead, it was stated that "Lebanon has the right to defend itself in accordance with the UN Charter and is responsible for maintaining its security and borders."

successfully implementing reforms and leading the country forward (al-Manar, February 25, 2025).

► After the vote of confidence in the Parliament, Salam said his government would work to increase public trust and mobilize support to force Israel to cease "violating" Lebanon's sovereignty and withdraw from its lands in accordance with Resolution 1701. He also noted the importance of dialogue with Syria and the return of Syrian refugees to their country (al-Nashra, February 26, 2025).

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun congratulated the government on receiving a vote of confidence from the Lebanese Parliament, stating that "Lebanon is tired of fighting other people's wars on its soil." He expressed hope that the efforts and cooperation of all parties would lead to achieving the shared goal of "building the new state." He added that Lebanon had the right to a period of political, economic and security recovery (Lebanese National News Agency, February 27, 2025).

## First interview with President Aoun

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun gave his first press interview since taking office on January 9, 2025, during which he reiterated his position that Lebanon was "tired of wars and of fighting others' wars" and noted his support for ensuring the state's monopoly on weapons in Lebanon (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 28, 2025):

◆ **The confrontation with Israel:** Aoun said he was not surprised that Israel remained in five locations in Lebanese territory and warned that when dealing with Israel, "one must expect the worst." He said Lebanon was in contact with the United States and France to push for an Israeli withdrawal. He said Lebanon was committed to implementing Resolution 1701 throughout south Lebanon and the goal was to resolve all disputes and conflicts through diplomacy, although the army had to be prepared for any development. He also praised Na'im Qassem for saying he allowed the state to pursue diplomacy to resolve disputes with Israel.

◆ **The monopoly on weapons in Lebanon:** Aoun reiterated the principle he presented in his inaugural speech, that he sought to establish a monopoly on weapons, limiting them to the state. He added that his goal was for Lebanon alone to be responsible for border security with its own forces, without military or security partnerships. He added that decisions regarding war and peace should reside solely with the state, which had be

the only armed entity, and that "resistance [sic]" was, first and foremost, the responsibility of the state.