



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah March 3 – 10 , 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operations against Hezbollah's efforts to strengthen its military capabilities and against the organization's presence in south Lebanon, contrary to the understandings of the ceasefire agreement. A senior terrorist in Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force was eliminated, and a large-scale airstrike attacked Hezbollah military sites in the south of the country.
- ▶ In his first interview, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed the organization had honored the ceasefire agreement, adding that Hezbollah would not stop the "resistance."² Sources close to Hezbollah warned that if the Lebanese state did not act against "Israeli violations," Hezbollah suicide bombers might attack IDF forces.
- ▶ A senior Hezbollah figure asked why Hassan Nasrallah and Hashem Safi al-Din were in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia despite Israeli surveillance and accused the organization of negligence and disregard for security measures. According to a Lebanese analyst, such statements indicate growing internal disputes within Hezbollah.
- ▶ Lebanese President Joseph Aoun visited Saudi Arabia and participated in the Arab Emergency Summit on Gaza in Cairo, where he met with foreign leaders, including Syrian President al-Sharaa. Aoun said Lebanon would not give up its land or the prisoners held in Israel and said he opposed the "displacement" of Palestinians.
- ▶ The Trump administration approved a \$95 million military aid package for the Lebanese army.

The Ceasefire

The IDF

- ▶ This past week the IDF continued its operations against Hezbollah's efforts to strengthen its military capabilities and against its activity in south Lebanon, contrary to the ceasefire

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

² Attempts to attack and destroy the State of Israel.

agreement which prohibits the organization's presence south of the Litani River. The IDF attacked stored weapons and rocket launchers, terrorist operatives identified while handling weapons and eliminated the commander of the naval forces of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force (IDF spokesperson, March 10-3, 2025). Lebanese media reported that two people were injured in an attack on a vehicle in Ras al-Naqoura (al-Nashra, March 5, 2025). It was also reported that more than 20 targets were attacked in south Lebanon, and the aerial attack was the largest since the end of November 2024, when the ceasefire began (al-Manar, March 7, 2025). Further reports indicated that a civilian and a soldier were killed, and four others injured by IDF fire in two incidents in the village of Kila (al-Akhbar, March 7, 2025; al-Nashra, March 9, 2025).



The vehicle of a Radwan Force officer after the attack (This is Lebanon X account, March 4, 2025)

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah continued to demand that the Lebanese government take action against "Israeli violations," primarily the presence of IDF forces at five locations in the south of the country and the ongoing airstrikes. The organization also warned that if the state did not fulfill its role, they might initiate "military" action against IDF forces:

◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem denied the existence of secret clauses in the ceasefire agreement and said Israel had to withdraw from Lebanese territory. He claimed that the organization had honored the agreement and exited from its "operational areas" south of the Litani River. He warned that if the "occupation" continued in south Lebanon, Israel would have to contend with the army, the people and the "resistance."³ In his first television interview, Qassem said Hezbollah would not stop the "resistance," which he claimed continued on the ground. He asked, "If the resistance stops, will there be a Lebanon?" (al-Manar, March 9, 2025).

³ Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

◆ Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, responding to the elimination of a senior Radwan Force commander, said, "the enemy continues its crimes and attacks" and claimed that the terrorist was attacked while "driving with his family." He called on the international committee overseeing the ceasefire and the Lebanese government to take action to halt the "violations" of the state's sovereignty and asked, "How long will the state continue to ignore [the violations] without taking action?" (al-'Ahed, March 4, 2025).

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the organization believed the state should fulfill its role and the government would decide on going to war. He said the government should lead the efforts to "liberate the land," stop the attacks, return prisoners and maintain national sovereignty, whether diplomatically, through media efforts or by "other means" (al-'Ahed, March 5, 2025).

◆ Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the presence of the "enemy" constituted a violation of the ceasefire agreement and the government had to address the "danger." He added that the government also had to activate and accelerate the country's reconstruction (al-Nashra, March 5, 2025).

◆ "Sources close to Hezbollah" warned that organization operatives were losing patience in light of continued Israeli activity in Lebanese territory and that Hezbollah cells might begin suicide attacks (istishhad) against Israeli forces in the area. They added that it was also possible that Hezbollah would attack to "liberate the territories and restore deterrence" (Lebanon Files, March 7, 2025).

◆ Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, asked why "supporters of sovereignty" remained silent while Israel still "occupied" Lebanese land, and continued to "kill the Lebanese people, destroy homes and uproot orchards." In a speech at a memorial ceremony for a Hezbollah commander, he called on the Lebanese state to fulfill its role and duty "to liberate the land, force the enemy to withdraw and prevent it from attacking Lebanon" (Lebanese News Agency, March 8, 2025).

The Lebanese government

► Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, claimed Israel had created a new border zone within Lebanese territory, which he described as an "occupied area," stating that Lebanon would not allow the imposition of new facts on the ground. He said any border

changes required a united national stance and called on the international community to take responsibility for the "violations" of Lebanon's sovereignty. He said Lebanon would not accept aid in exchange for political or military conditions and that reconstruction should be a top national priority (al-Diyar , March 4, 2025).

► Ghassan Atallah, a member of the Free Patriotic Movement faction in the Lebanese Parliament Member, warned that continued "Israeli violations" in the south of the country could create a state of chaos in which "the south will become a battlefield where anyone wanting to fight the Israeli occupation will do so." He demanded that the state increase diplomatic pressure and called on the sponsors of the ceasefire agreement to act with greater transparency in its implementation (Lebanese National News Agency, March 8, 2025).

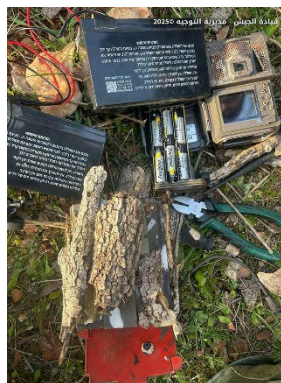
The Lebanese army

► The spokesperson for the American State Department announced that the \$95 million of military aid would be transferred to the Lebanese army. It was approved despite the president's decision to freeze all United States foreign aid except for Israel and Egypt (al-Monitor, March 4, 2025).

► The Lebanese army accused Israel of continued "violations" against Lebanese sovereignty on land, at sea and in the air. The army warned that the situation threatened Lebanon's stability and violated the ceasefire agreement (Lebanese National News Agency, March 6, 2025). The Lebanese army also accused Israel of violating Lebanese sovereignty by allowing hundreds of worshippers to enter the tomb of Rabbi Ashi on the Israel-Lebanon border, stating that the command was monitoring the issue in coordination with the ceasefire oversight committee and UNIFIL (Lebanese army X account, March 7, 2025).

► The Lebanese army reported that its forces had discovered and dismantled additional "Israeli enemy army" espionage devices on the outskirts of the village of Shebaa in south Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, March 8, 2025). Ali Shoeib, correspondent for Hezbollah's al-Manar in south Lebanon, reported the discovery of "Israeli surveillance devices," identified as motion-detection cameras⁴ left behind by the IDF in south Lebanon. The cameras had recorded IDF soldiers concealing them, and images of other soldiers were published (al-Manar, March 5, 2025).

⁴ Trail cameras.



Right: "Israeli espionage device" discovered by the Lebanese army (Lebanese army X account, March 8, 2025). Left: Ali Shoeib with one of the "Israeli espionage devices" (al-Manar, March 5, 2025)

Hezbollah

Interview with Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general

► On March 9, 2025, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem was interviewed by the organization's al-Manar TV, his first interview since assuming the position of secretary general following the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah and Hashem Safi al-Din. He related to Hezbollah's situation during and after the war, as well as relations with the new Lebanese government, Iran and Syria (al-Manar, March 9, 2025):

◆ **The war against Israel:** He claimed there was no connection between Hezbollah's "support war" for the Gaza Strip and the war Israel waged against Lebanon, stating that Israel's decision had been made in advance. He claimed that the "resistance's" ability to attack the residence of Prime Minister Netanyahu in Caesarea proved that "the capabilities exist." He claimed they chose to target only "military objectives" even though they could have attacked anywhere. He also claimed that the entry of Israelis into Sheikh Abbad's [Rabbi Ashi's] tomb was [allegedly] "proof" of a "greater Israeli project stretching from the sea to the Gulf."

◆ **"Security breaches":** He said Hezbollah had uncovered security problems during the war and was learning from them. He also admitted he had been surprised by the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah. He claimed that the "resistance" continued to operate despite its heavy losses and casualties.

◆ **Hezbollah's current situation:** He said that the organization was "under siege and in a difficult confrontation," and had to find ways to meet the challenges and achieve victory. He claimed the United States, Israel and various Lebanese and regional actors were waging a "political assault" on Hezbollah, but they had to seek ways to overcome.

He added that while principles had not changed, the current phase required different methods.

◆ **The political situation in Lebanon:** He claimed Hezbollah's relations with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun were positive. He said the organization wanted to cooperate with Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, which is why it supported the government despite not being part of it. He said Hezbollah would participate in the municipal elections and had reached an agreement with the Amal Movement to renew cooperation, similar to the past partnership between Nabih Berri, the leader of the Amal Movement and speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, and Nasrallah.

◆ **Criticism of Trump:** He referred to the United States president as "the devil leading his people into heresy," claiming Trump used cruelty to pursue world domination. Qassem warned that if the United States began a war with Iran its losses would be immense and the consequences for the world would be "extraordinary."

◆ **Relations with Iran:** He called for the resumption of civilian flights between Iran and Lebanon after nearly a month-long suspension. He described Iran as "a friendly country" and said Hezbollah expected it to resolve the flight issue.

◆ **Developments in Syria:** He said Syria remained unstable and it was too early to tell how events would unfold. He claimed Hezbollah was not involved in Syria at all but did not rule out the possibility of a "resistance" effort against Israel might begin in Syria.



Na'im Qassem in the interview (al-Manar, March 9, 2025)

Statements from other Hezbollah figures

► Nawaf al-Moussawi, in charge of resources and borders for Hezbollah, admitted that "many poorly understood things" had occurred during the war against Israel and that Israel's achievements, such as the operation which destroyed Hezbollah's pager communication system, had resulted from Hezbollah's negligence and even carelessness. He wondered why the former Hassan Nasrallah had remained in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia while it was under

Israeli surveillance and also expressed surprise that the designated secretary general, Hashem Safi al-Din, had stayed in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia after Nasrallah's elimination. He added that the need for security measures might have been underestimated because some people were seeking "personal victory" through "death as martyrs" (al-Mayadeen, March 3, 2025).

► Makram Rabah, a journalist for the daily newspaper Nidaa al-Watan, known for its criticism of Hezbollah, noted that the interview provided the first acknowledgment by a senior Hezbollah figure that there were cracks in the organization, evidence of dissention between the organization's various branches. Rabah said Hezbollah members might soon face two options, to remain under a weakened and defeated leadership or seek alternative regional alliances. He added that once Hezbollah supporters realized that Iran was not truly providing the organization with economic support, people would turn their backs on Tehran (Nidaa al-Watan, March 4, 2025).



Nawaf al-Moussawi (al-Mayadeen, March 3, 2025)

► A "senior source" within the "Shi'ite duo" [Hezbollah and Amal] said Hezbollah was exercising great restraint in response to "provocations" related to reconstruction efforts. According to the source, attempts were being made to drag the organization into internal conflict in order to disarm it. He said Hezbollah refused to surrender its weapons but was willing to discuss its future within a framework of defensive strategy. The source also said the organization supported the state's efforts to "liberate the land" through politics and diplomacy but would maintain the right to defend Lebanon "when necessary" (al-Liwaa, March 5, 2025).

Criticism of Hezbollah

► Members of the Lebanese Parliament from parties opposing Hezbollah criticized the organization and warned that its current conduct could again bring further destruction and devastation to Lebanon:

- ◆ Razi al-Hajj, a member of the Lebanese Forces faction in the Lebanese Parliament, stated that as long as Hezbollah refused to surrender its weapons, Lebanon would not receive any external aid (Lebanese Forces X account, March 6, 2025).
- ◆ Samir Geagea, chairman of the Christian Lebanese Forces faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called for the collection of all illegal weapons and the dismantling of all unauthorized military and security facilities [primarily referring to Hezbollah] according to a clear and limited schedule without delays. He also categorically rejected any presence of IDF soldiers on Lebanese soil, stating that "removing the occupation" was possible only through Lebanon's friendships within the Arab world and the international community, using political and diplomatic means. He added that "military means" [i.e., Hezbollah] had led to the reoccupation of land, unprecedented disasters, death and destruction in Lebanon and among the Lebanese people (Lebanese Forces X account, March 7, 2025).

The Lebanon Government

Lebanese president's political activities

► On March 3, 2025, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun went to Saudi Arabia for his first visit abroad since taking office on January 9, 2025. He and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met and discussed the latest developments in Lebanon and the region. They also addressed ways of strengthening bilateral relations. Aoun thanked Saudi Arabia for its role in stabilizing Lebanon (Lebanese Presidency X account, March 3, 2025; al-Arabiya, March 4, 2025). In a joint statement both leaders noted the importance of Lebanon's extending its sovereignty over all its territory, the role of the Lebanese army and the need to support it, the importance of ensuring the state's monopoly on weapons and the necessity of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Aoun invited the Saudi crown prince for a visit to Lebanon (Saudi Press Agency, March 4, 2025). Aoun told the Lebanese government that Saudi Arabia was prepared to assist Lebanon once the country had implemented reforms and that he expected to visit Saudi Arabia again after Eid al-Fitr (LBC, March 6, 2025).



Aoun and the Saudi crown prince (Lebanese Presidency X account, March 3, 2025)

► On March 4, 2025, President Aoun participated in the emergency Arab summit in Egypt to discuss developments in the Gaza Strip. In his speech at the summit, Aoun stated that there are still lands in Lebanon and "Palestine" occupied by Israel and that Lebanese prisoners remain in Israeli prisons, emphasizing that Lebanon will not relinquish its land or prisoners. He added that there will be no peace without a Palestinian state and the restoration of legitimate rights to the Palestinians. Aoun also stressed that Lebanon's sovereignty depends on Syria's recovery and the full independence of "Palestine" (al-Nashra, March 4, 2025). On the sidelines of the summit, Aoun held diplomatic meetings with foreign leaders, discussing the situation in Lebanon, the region, and Israel's continued presence in south Lebanon. The following are key points from these meetings (Lebanese Presidency X account, al-Nashra, March 4, 2025):

- ◆ In his meeting with Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa, they discussed the need for border control between the two countries to prevent violations. It was reported that they agreed to coordinate through joint committees to be established after the formation of the new Syrian government.
- ◆ In his meeting with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Aoun thanked him for the UN's support for Lebanon, particularly through UNIFIL. Aoun accused Israel's presence in south Lebanon of delaying regional stability. Guterres expressed willingness to support Lebanon's reconstruction process and stated that Israel's presence in south Lebanon does not align with regional stability interests.
- ◆ In his meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, they reviewed the situation in Lebanon, particularly in the south. Aoun also invited his Egyptian counterpart for a visit to Beirut.

- ◆ Qatar's Emir, Tamim bin Hamad, emphasized his country's readiness to continue supporting the Lebanese army and assisting with essential infrastructure projects, such as developing the electricity sector.
- ◆ In his meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah II, Aoun thanked Jordan for its support of the Lebanese army. The Jordanian King emphasized that his country would send additional military vehicles for Lebanon's armed forces.
- ◆ In his meeting with Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas, Aoun expressed Lebanon's support for the Palestinians' right to establish their state and Lebanon's opposition to their "uprooting." Abbas emphasized the PA's support for all measures taken by the Lebanese government to strengthen its sovereignty over its entire territory and implement UN Resolution 1701.



Right: Aoun meeting with Syrian President al-Sharaa. Left: Aoun with Abbas (Lebanese Presidency X account, March 4, 2025)

Rebuilding Lebanon

► The first phase of the so-called Beautiful Faces project has been completed. As part of the initiative, an organization called Wataanwa provided dozens of caravans to several towns in the border region of south Lebanon to facilitate the return of residents to the area. The project, launched in January 2025, was primarily funded by Qatar (al-Akhbar, March 4, 2025).



Caravan project in south Lebanon (al-Mayadeen, March 4, 2025)