



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah April 8 – 21, 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued taking action to prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding its military capabilities and against the organization's presence in south Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire, and eliminated senior terrorist figures and operatives, including the deputy head of the unit for transferring weapons and funds from Iran.
- ▶ Hezbollah continued placing responsibility on Lebanese state institutions to act against the Israeli "violations." Secretary general Na'im Qassem said diplomatic solutions had a time limit and if the government made the decision, Hezbollah was prepared to fight at the border.
- ▶ Lebanese government officials called on the international community to increase pressure on Israel to withdraw from the five points it holds in south Lebanon. President Joseph Aoun said the Israeli presence complicated the deployment of the army.
- ▶ The Lebanese army uncovered hundreds of weapons and dismantled Hezbollah installations in south Lebanon without resistance from the organization. Three Lebanese army soldiers were killed by "Israeli ammunition" which exploded in their vehicle.
- ▶ Discussion over Hezbollah's disarmament intensified. Na'im Qassem, the organization's secretary general, warned they would confront anyone who tried to disarm them, although senior Hezbollah figures expressed willingness to discuss a "national defense strategy" after Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon. President Aoun said a decision had been made to restrict weapons' carrying to state security forces, but added that the issue would be resolved through dialogue.
- ▶ The Lebanese government and Hezbollah denied reports regarding smuggling weapons from Iran through the Port of Beirut.

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

- ▶ The Lebanese army announced the arrest of suspects involved in firing rockets at northern Israel. The detainees were reportedly Hamas operatives, although the movement denied it. President Aoun reportedly decided to disarm the Hamas branch in Lebanon.
- ▶ Nawaf Salam, Lebanese prime minister, paid his first visit to Syria and met with President Ahmed al-Sharaa.

The Ceasefire

The IDF

- ▶ The IDF continued to attack Hezbollah terrorist targets in south Lebanon which violated the ceasefire of November 27, 2024, prohibiting the organization's presence south of the Litani River. The IDF also attacked facilities for the renewed buildup Hezbollah's military capabilities, including a weapons depot belonging of its air defense array in the Beqa'a Valley. Hezbollah operatives working to rebuild the organization's installations were eliminated, including the deputy head of Unit 4400 who transferred weapons and funds from Iran, and a senior figure in the communications array involved in deploying the organization's communication systems (IDF spokesperson, April 8–21, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported a total of nine fatalities in Israeli attacks in south Lebanon (*al-Nashra*, April 8–21, 2025).



IDF attacks in south Lebanon
(Right: *al-Jadeed*, April 20, 2025. Left: *Lebanon Debate*, April 20, 2025)

Hezbollah

- ▶ Hezbollah condemned the IDF attacks in Lebanon but reiterated their position that the Lebanese state institutions had to lead the “resistance” against the continued Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory and against the presence of IDF forces at five points in south Lebanon.

They also warned that the “resistance”² remained prepared to act against Israel if the state did not fulfill its role:

- ◆ In a recorded speech, Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general, said the organization believed in “resistance”³ as a response to occupation and as a way “to liberate our occupied land” if the Lebanese state could not do so. He praised the capabilities of the “resistance” and its successes “in repelling the enemy at the southern border, despite many losses,” and added that anyone who thought the organization was weak was “delusional.” He added that Hezbollah was giving diplomacy a chance but it had a time limit, and “if the enemy wants to continue, it can, but it will see what we decided when the time comes.” According to Qassem, if Lebanon decides “to forcibly expel” Israel from Lebanese territory and fight, Hezbollah will be ready to fight at the border. Qassem further noted that the ceasefire agreement was limited to the area south of the Litani River, claiming that they had done everything required of them, and that discussion of the remaining clauses of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 would begin only after Israel met its obligations (al-Manar, April 18, 2025).



Na'im Qassem (al-Manar, April 18, 2025)

- ◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, accused the “occupation army” of massacring unarmed civilians and placed responsibility on the Lebanese government for “the blood of innocent civilians spilled by a foreign enemy.” He added that after the ceasefire agreement, the “resistance” agreed that the state would be the sole authority in the area south of the Litani, but civilians there and in other areas were suffering from “aggression” and demanded the state protect them, which so far it had failed to do (al-Manar, April 10, 2025).

² Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

³ Terrorist attacks on Israel.



Hassan Fadlallah (al-Manar, April 10, 2025)

◆ Wafiq Safa, head of Hezbollah’s liaison and coordination unit, said the Lebanese state had to do what it deemed necessary to compel Israel to honor the ceasefire. He said that since the agreement went into effect, Hezbollah and the army had honored their parts of the agreement, unlike Israel. He said the area of south Lebanon covered by Resolution 1701 was a demilitarized zone and any weapons found there were confiscated by the Lebanese army. He claimed relations with the army are good and Hezbollah was in constant coordination with it (Radio al-Nour, April 18, 2025).

The Lebanese government

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun praised the Lebanese army for its operations in south Lebanon. He said the army had discovered tunnels and ammunition depots both south and north of the Litani River and was confiscating weapons from Hezbollah “without resistance.” He claimed the army had not deployed in the southern border area because of the “Israeli occupation” of five points. He said Lebanon supported the establishment of a military-civilian-technical committee to secure its southern border and a return to the 1949 armistice agreement (Al Jazeera, April 14, 2025). On another occasion he said he had made it clear to Morgan Ortagus, the United States special envoy, that Israel’s presence at the five points in south Lebanon gave Hezbollah an excuse [not to disarm]. He claimed Hezbollah had shown restraint by not responding to the Israeli “violations” (April 15, 2025). In a meeting in Doha with Tamim bin Hamad, the Emir of Qatar, Aoun said the Lebanese army was completely fulfilling its duty in south Lebanon and implementing Resolution 1701, and added that the continued “Israeli occupation” was delaying the army’s full deployment (*al-Nashra*, April 16, 2025).

► Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, said “Israeli aggression” in recent weeks violated Lebanon’s sovereignty. He claimed the “aggression” was an attempt to

undermine Lebanon's serious commitment to implementing its obligations under the terms of the ceasefire while Israel continued to "violate" them (NBN, April 21, 2025).

► Youssef Rajji, Lebanese foreign minister, spoke with Hamish Falconer, British Minister for the Middle East, about recent developments in south Lebanon and asked him to exert international pressure on Israel to fully withdraw from Lebanese territory "quickly and without conditions" (Youssef Rajji's X account, April 8, 2025).

► Rajji said the United States and Israel had demanded three committees be appointed to discuss the five "occupied points" and the issue of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. He said Lebanon called on all countries to pressure Israel to withdraw from the "occupied" Lebanese territories, but so far the Israelis refused to cooperate, claiming security considerations. He claimed diplomatic efforts would have been more successful if Lebanon had military and economic power, but both were lacking (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 10, 2025).

The Lebanese army

► "Military sources" reported that since the beginning of the ceasefire on November 27, 2024, the Lebanese army had dismantled more than 500 Hezbollah weapons installations and military facilities, including rocket launchers, tunnels and weapons depots, mines and unexploded shells. Army forces also entered 196 of 260 Hezbollah sites marked by UNIFIL south of the Litani River. According to claims, Hezbollah operatives also hid weapons in garbage bins, based on the assumption that the Israeli and Lebanese armies would not search them. Hezbollah reportedly did not resist the army's activities or confront the forces. It is unclear whether the Lebanese army is storing the confiscated weapons or destroying them (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 8, 2025; *al-Madan*, April 9, 2025). According to a report of unclear reliability, Hezbollah secretly handed the Lebanese army a map of the organization's sites where it hid its weapons (*al-Nahar*, April 8, 2025).

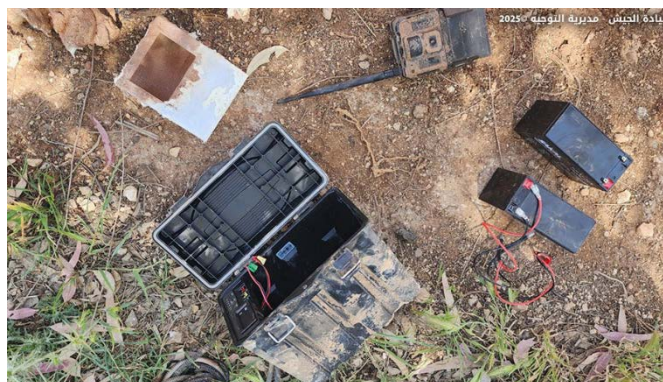
► The IDF Arabic-language spokesperson stated that Hezbollah was reconstructing an underground weapons manufacturing site in the heart of a residential neighborhood in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, after the site had been attacked by the IDF in November 2024. The statement noted that the information was passed to the international oversight mechanism which decided to hold a surprise inspection. However, Hezbollah, warned of the inspection in advance, removed the equipment from the compound and returned it after the inspection (Avichay Adraee's X account, April 9, 2025). Following Israel's claim that Hezbollah hid weapons and established a military site in the al-Shuwayifat area of the Dahiyeh al-

Janoubia, Lebanese media reported that after the Israeli announcement, the Lebanese army arrived at the al-Shuwayifat area in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia and conducted a search, but found nothing (al-Madan, April 9, 2025).

► Rodolph Haykal, commander of the Lebanese army, briefed a government meeting on the situation in south Lebanon, noting that the army was fulfilling its duties fully without internal obstacles. He claimed the main obstacle was Israel’s presence in south Lebanon. He also noted the importance of cooperation between the army and all influential parties in south Lebanon, including Hezbollah. He added that it was no longer possible to cross the Litani River from north to south without passing through Lebanese army checkpoints, internal checkpoints, and inspection points (*al-Akhbar*, April 18, 2025).

► The Lebanese army announced that one of its soldiers was killed and three others injured by the explosion of a suspicious object during an engineering sweep in the Wadi al-Azziya area near Tyre (Lebanese army X account, April 14, 2025). The soldier was killed reportedly by the explosion of a Hezbollah mine planted at the site to attack Israeli forces, and that the Lebanese army was unaware of its presence (*al-Nahar*, April 16, 2025).

► The Lebanese army reported that its forces had discovered an “espionage device” disguised as a camera on the outskirts of the town of Blida in south Lebanon. Residents were urged to stay away from suspicious objects and report them to the army immediately (Lebanese army X account, April 17, 2025).



“Espionage equipment” (Lebanese army X account, April 17, 2025)

► On April 20, 2025, an explosion was reported in a military vehicle in the town of Brayqa in south Lebanon. Lebanon’s civil defense reported four killed and four injured after “remnants of ammunition from the Zionist aggression” exploded inside the military vehicle (al-Manar and *al-Akhbar*, April 20, 2025). The Lebanese army confirmed that the explosion occurred in a military vehicle and that an officer and two soldiers were killed while transporting ammunition;

the incident is under investigation (Lebanese army X account, April 20, 2025). President Joseph Aoun spoke with army commander Haykal and expressed his condolences for the three “who fell while carrying out their mission to maintain security and stability and protect civilians and residents in the southern villages” (*al-Nashra*, April 20, 2025). Following the incident, Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, launched a social media campaign claiming that “the Israeli enemy has once again, unintentionally, reaffirmed Lebanon’s power equation: the army, the people, and the resistance” (Simia Telegram channel, April 20, 2025).

Disarming Hezbollah

► The issue of the future of Hezbollah's weapons continues to occupy the Lebanese political system. Senior government officials and opponents of Hezbollah note the need to disarm the organization and ensure that the state's security forces are the only bearers of arms, while Hezbollah said it would discuss the issue of its weapons only after a complete Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territory.

Hezbollah

► A “senior Hezbollah official” was quoted as saying that the organization would be prepared to discuss the future of its weapons with Lebanese President Aoun if Israel withdrew from south Lebanon and stopped attacking the country, and wanted to discuss its weapons within the framework of a “national defense strategy.” According to claims, Hezbollah is considering transferring its most weapons to the Lebanese army, including UAVs and anti-tank weapons (Reuters, April 8, 2025). In response, Hezbollah’s media department accused the media of spreading “fake news.” Hezbollah said it had “no sources [providing statement]” and its official positions were released exclusively by its media department or via senior officials in official or organizational media (Simia Telegram channel, April 10, 2025).

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said in a recorded speech that the main problem in the country was not the weapons of the “resistance” but the need to “expel the Israeli occupation.” He said that they would not allow anyone to disarm them and that anyone calling for disarmament by force “serves only the enemy.” He added that weapons were the pillar of the “resistance,” and they would confront anyone who attacked the “resistance” or tried to disarm it “just as we confronted Israel.” He said Israel’s withdrawal and cessation of attacks would be an important step on the path toward Hezbollah’s beginning a discussion about defense strategy, and they were prepared to participate in a discussion determined by President Aoun, but “at the right time and not under pressure or dictates.” He claimed the

strategy was about strengthening Lebanon and finding ways to reinforce the army and benefit from the “resistance” and its weapons, not about disarmament (al-Manar, April 18, 2025).

► Ali Damoush, deputy head of Hezbollah’s Executive Council, claimed Israel “violated” the ceasefire agreement and attacked Lebanon with full American support in order to pressure Lebanon into meeting its demands: disarming the “resistance” and weakening Lebanon’s sources of power. He claimed that anyone who called for disarming the “resistance” before the end of the “Israeli aggression” was knowingly or unknowingly serving the enemy’s agenda. He added that disarming the “resistance” at this stage contradicted Lebanon’s interests and weakened its status and strength against Israel. He said disarmament was not currently under discussion, and what could be discussed, a “defensive strategy,” would be discussed at the appropriate time, after the “enemy’s withdrawal,” the release of prisoners and the end of the “aggression.” He claimed Hezbollah was prepared to be an active partner of the government and parliament in achieving Lebanon’s priorities, i.e., stopping the “aggression,” ending the “occupation,” rebuilding the state and implementing reforms (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 18, 2025).



Ali Damoush (al-Manar, April 18, 2025)

► Mahmoud Kamati, deputy head of Hezbollah’s political council, claimed that “the entire world is united against the organization’s weapons.” He said they were not prepared to hold a dialogue in the media with President Aoun regarding the defense strategy while “the enemy is still on our land.” He said no timetable had been agreed upon with Aoun for talks on weapons, and they would start talks when the circumstances were appropriate (al-Jadeed, April 16, 2025).

► Wafiq Safa, head of Hezbollah’s liaison and coordination unit, said President Aoun was aware of Hezbollah’s position, which was that Israel had to implement Resolution 1701, only then would it be possible to discuss a “defensive strategy.” He said that instead of demanding

Hezbollah hand over its weapons, the demand should be for arming the Lebanese army (Radio al-Nour, April 18, 2025). “Government sources” said that the recent statements by Qassem and Safa were intended to energize Hezbollah’s supporters after army commander Haykal briefed the government on the dismantling of Hezbollah outposts in south Lebanon (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 18, 2025).

► Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that any internal Lebanese dialogue had to be based on national interests, and the core issue that “Israel is Lebanon enemy.” He added that the “expulsion of the occupation” from Lebanese territory, the release of Lebanese prisoners, the rebuilding of Lebanon, and the cessation of “aggression and violations of sovereignty” had to be state priorities. Regarding Lebanon’s defense strategy, he said it was a domestic issue agreed upon by those who saw Israel as the enemy, and those who did not view Israel as the enemy created internal divisions and were unfit to take part in the internal dialogue (Radio al-Nour, April 14, 2025).

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of Hezbollah’s daily *al-Akhbar*, warned Lebanese political parties not to be confrontational regarding Hezbollah’s disarmament, which risked igniting a conflict far greater than a civil war. He claimed the forces seeking to rid the country of the “resistance” believed that its heavy losses in the war and expanding American and Israeli regional influence would lead to a voluntary relinquishing of the “resistance’s” weapons, but such a step required a Lebanese consensus or majority, and a regional and international reality different from the current situation (*al-Akhbar*, April 14, 2025).

The Lebanese government

► “Lebanese sources” reported that President Joseph Aoun, in cooperation with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, would lead a direct dialogue with Hezbollah regarding the state’s monopoly on weapons. Reportedly, the dialogue would also deal with mechanisms for disarming the organization and allaying concerns about its political future. “Sources close to Berri” said he agreed with Aoun that the issue of weapons north of the Litani should be addressed within the framework of a national strategy and at a dialogue table set by Aoun. Aoun reportedly plans to hold a dialogue with Hezbollah on the state’s monopoly on weapons (*al-Sharq al-Awsat* and *al-Jadeed*, April 8, 2025). “Sources” later said the dialogue was in its early stages and its goal was to examine Hezbollah’s willingness to reach an agreement, and afterwards a strategy for national security and defense would be formulated (*al-Nashra*, April 9, 2025). According to reports, immediately after senior Lebanese government officials held

meetings with Morgan Ortagus, the American special envoy, Berri met with Aoun, and “the priorities for the disarmament issue were reshuffled” by the “Shiite duo” (Hezbollah and Amal), with the current priority being to “force” Israel to leave Lebanon, end Israeli operations and only then begin serious discussion on disarmament (al-Madan, April 9, 2025).

► A “Lebanese government source” stated that Israel’s withdrawal from south Lebanon would enable resolution of the disarmament issue. The “source” said that the top priorities today were Israel’s withdrawal from the points it still held in south Lebanon, the return of Lebanese prisoners and the resolution of 13 disputed points along the land border. He added that if progress were made on this front, and an Israeli withdrawal and the return of “prisoners” were achieved, a parallel discussion with Hezbollah on disarmament would take place (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 10, 2025).

► “Informed sources” reported there were many reasons to hold a dialogue on disarming Hezbollah, chief among them the American-Saudi Arabian pressure relayed to President Aoun and other Lebanese officials. According to the “sources,” President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam seek to send the message that the state is serious about addressing the weapons issue. However, the “sources” added that the issue of weapons had not been seriously discussed with Hezbollah, as the organization was not prepared to hand over its weapons without guarantees protecting the state from the “Zionist project” and it would not surrender to external pressure. Reportedly, Hezbollah does not oppose direct discussions between the “Shiite duo” and official state actors. The “sources” said Hezbollah was trying to meet with President Aoun, who had so far acted reasonably on the dialogue issue. Hezbollah claimed to have never rejected dialogue, but only if there were a vision for a national defense strategy which would guarantee real deterrence against Israel, and not as in Syria, where “the enemy entered and destroyed all military capabilities of the army and state” (*al-Akhbar*, April 17, 2025).

Senior Lebanese government officials said the following:

◆ Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, meeting with Bechara Boutros al-Ra’i, the Maronite Patriarch of Lebanon, said contentious issues should be addressed sincerely through dialogue. He added that Lebanon’s top priority should be to preserve peace among its citizens. He claimed that the Lebanese did not want war and that only the army was responsible for bearing arms. Aoun stated that the decision to restrict the carrying of weapons throughout the country would be fully implemented (*al-Nashra*, April 20, 2025).



Aoun meets with the Maronite Patriarch (al-Nashra, April 20, 2025)

- ◆ Youssef Rajji, Lebanese foreign minister, said Morgan Ortagus, the United States special envoy to Lebanon, had brought the message that there would be no reconstruction or international aid before the distribution of weapons north and south of the Litani was restricted. According to Rajji, just as no country accepted the presence of weapons outside of its institutions, the demand was the same in Lebanon, as was made clear during the government’s swearing-in (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, March 10, 2025).
- ◆ Joe Issa al-Khoury, Lebanese minister of industry from the Christian National Forces Party, said Ortagus’ proposed timetable for Hezbollah’s disarmament should be taken seriously. He noted that the Palestinian and Hezbollah weapons no longer had a role and should be in the hands of the Lebanese army only, because Israel used Hezbollah’s weapons as a pretext for maintaining its “occupation” of Lebanon. He said ministers from the National Forces called on President Aoun to set a timetable for illegal weapons to be surrendered within six months, as the issue harmed efforts to receive reconstruction aid (*al-Arabiya*, April 10, 2025); President Aoun ignored the request to set a specific timetable (*al-Akhbar*, April 18, 2025).

Hezbollah

Arms smuggling

► Given reports that Hezbollah is attempting to smuggle weapons through the Port of Beirut because flights from Iran have been stopped, “sources close to Prime Minister Salam” said he assigned clarifying the issue to Fayeze Rasamny, minister of transport. According to the sources, the state has not received notification from foreign countries regarding suspicious activities at the port and all information on the matter is considered rumor (*al-Jadeed*, April 8, 2025). Rasamny claimed there was no evidence of Hezbollah smuggling through the Port of Beirut

and security at the port was strictly supervised. According to him, the reports were published without consultation with customs or security officials or the port administration (Lebanon 24, April 9, 2025). In response, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun visited the Port of Beirut and noted the need to monitor imported goods, collect customs fairly and treat those “who commit violations” with strictness (Lebanese Presidency X account, April 11, 2025).

► Hezbollah strongly denied reports that it was smuggling arms through the Port of Beirut:

- ◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called on the Lebanese judiciary to act against anyone “promoting lies and threats to the Lebanese people and sectarian conflicts” (al-Manar, April 10, 2025).
- ◆ Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the pressure on the Lebanese army to disarm Hezbollah, the economic blockade of Lebanon, “the lies being spread about its ports” and the “assassinations carried out by Israel” were a direct threat to Lebanese stability (al-Manar, April 11, 2025).
- ◆ Wafiq Safa, head of Hezbollah’s liaison and coordination unit, rejected the “baseless accusations” against Hezbollah regarding the smuggling of weapons and funds through the port and airport in Beirut (Radio al-Nour, April 18, 2025).
- ◆ Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, launched a digital campaign against the Saudi al-Arabiya network following its report about the transfer of weapons to Hezbollah from Iran through the Port of Beirut. The organization called on its followers to circulate posters under the hashtag “#Port_Sabotage_Program” to confront the “propaganda” of elements repeating al-Arabiya’s claims, despite the denial by the Lebanese minister of transport (Telegram channel of Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, April 9, 2025).



“Rumors, incitement, enticement,” from the campaign against al-Arabiya (Simia Telegram channel, April 9, 2025)

► According to reports, a tanker carrying 50 crates of “prohibited war weapons” was seized at the Port of Tripoli in northern Lebanon, and a worker said accessories for rifles were found and seized by security forces on April 11, 2025. “Sources in Hezbollah” responded that “the allegations of arms smuggling through the Port of Tripoli are baseless,” adding that such incidents occur at major ports around the world, so “the media uproar is unclear” (MTV and al-‘Ahed, April 13, 2025).

Removing Hezbollah symbols

► The Lebanese authorities launched a campaign to remove party flags, posters, and slogans from the streets of Beirut and from the main road to the Rafik Hariri International Airport. The campaign was carried out under the direction of Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmed al-Hajjar, who said the initiative was part of a broader government plan to “improve public spaces” and restore the authority of the state, especially in areas which are prominently visible to visitors (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 17, 2025). Lebanese army forces also removed Hezbollah flags and pictures, including those of the former secretary general Hassan Nasrallah (Jisr News, April 10, 2025).



Removal of Nasrallah’s pictures from the streets of Beirut (Wardana, April 16, 2025)

Hamas in Lebanon

► A “Lebanese security source” reported that Lebanese army forces arrested two Palestinians and a Lebanese national affiliated with Hamas on suspicion of firing rockets at Israel (*al-Nahar*, April 16, 2025). According to a different report, security forces detained several Hamas operatives in the Ain al-Hilweh, Tyre and Nahr al-Bared refugee camps. Lebanese army intelligence warned Hamas not to interfere in Lebanese or Arab state security and not to arm itself in Lebanon in response to Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip (*al-Hadath*, April 16–17, 2025).

► The Lebanese army confirmed that following the rocket fire at Israel on March 22 and 28, 2025, surveillance operations led to the arrest of a group of Lebanese and Palestinians, and vehicles and equipment used in the two attacks were seized. The suspects are currently under

investigation and efforts are underway to apprehend other persons involved (Lebanese army X account, April 18, 2025). A “source in Hamas” denied that the group had any connection to the rocket fire from Lebanon and added that they would not do anything to undermine de-escalation efforts (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, April 18, 2025).

► The Lebanese army later reported that intelligence obtained during interrogations indicated preparations for another rocket attack on Israel. As a result, army forces raided an apartment in the Sidon-Zahrani area, arrested several suspects and seized rockets (Lebanese army X account, April 20, 2025). It was reported that the cell operatives were from Hamas (*al-Arabiya*, April 20, 2025). Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam praised the professionalism of the Lebanese army following the preventing of the rocket fire from south Lebanon. He called on security agencies to continue preventing any actions that could drag Lebanon into further wars (Lebanese government X account, April 20, 2025).



Weapons seized from the Hamas cell (Lebanese army X account, April 20, 2025)

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun made a decision to disarm Hamas in Lebanon and instructed that no military activity by the group was to be allowed in the country. According to the report, the decision will eventually apply to other Palestinian “factions”⁴ (*Nidaa al-Watan*, April 18, 2025).

► During a cabinet session Aoun informed the government that Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas was expected to visit Lebanon to officially launch the disarmament process. The Palestinian embassy in Lebanon confirmed the visit, saying it would take place during May (LBC, April 20, 2025).

Lebanon-Syria Relations

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam visited Syria and held his first meeting with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa to discuss issues of mutual interest, including border security and

⁴ Terrorist organizations.

the prevention of smuggling; reportedly, the atmosphere during the talks was positive. Salam stated that his visit to the country marked a new chapter in bilateral relations, based on the preservation of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. Salam and al-Sharaa noted the importance of enhancing security coordination for the stability of both nations, and agreed to establish a committee composed of representatives from the foreign affairs, defense, interior and justice ministries to monitor shared matters (Lebanese government X account, April 14, 2025; Nidaa al-Watan, April 14, 2025).



Al-Sharaa and Salam in Damascus (Lebanese prime minister's X account, April 14, 2025)

► The Lebanese army announced that its forces had seized rockets, ammunition and explosive devices on the outskirts of the town of Aiha near the Syria-Lebanon border. It was also reported that an intelligence unit patrol in the village of Zabed in the Beqa'a Valley led to the arrest of eight civilians suspected of purchasing and smuggling weapons and ammunition from Syria into Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, April 18, 2025).