



## Spotlight on Terrorism : Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria April 8-15, 2024

### The Northern Arena\*

- 1,264 attacks
- 268 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 62 operatives of other terrorist-organization killed
- Two non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

**\*Updated from October 8, 2023**

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

► This past week Hezbollah continued attacking Israel, mostly military targets in the north and the Golan Heights, and claimed responsibility for 38 attacks. The attacks close to the April 14, 2024, Iranian missile and drone attack on Israel mainly targeted Israeli air defense sites in the Golan Heights, apparently to assist and support Iran. In response, Israeli Air Force planes attacked Hezbollah military facilities in south Lebanon and the Ba'albek region. On April 15, 2024, there was an explosion near an IDF force in the western sector on the Lebanese border. Four soldiers were injured.

► The Iranian attack caused Hezbollah to raise its military alert. Hezbollah praised the Iranian attack, claiming it was Iran's "right to respond," adding that the Iranian attack would initiate a new phase in the Palestinian issue. During the attack there were outpourings of joy in the southern suburb of Beirut.

► Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, gave a speech to mark the death of Mohammad Reza Zahedi, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force in Syria and Lebanon. He praised Zahedi and the role he played during the years he was stationed in Lebanon, noting that Israel's attack in Syria was unusual because it targeted

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<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.

"Iranian territory," making it a direct attack on Iran, not Syria. A Lebanese source close to Hezbollah revealed that Zahedi was a member of Hezbollah's Shura Council, its only non-Lebanese member.

- ▶ According to reports, Amos Hochstein, the American mediator, met with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, to discuss a number of the issues in the Israel-Lebanon border dispute, including an agreement on six points along the border according to demarcations demanded by Lebanon.
- ▶ A money changer with ties to Hezbollah and Hamas was killed in the town of Beit Meri, about seven kilometers (about 4.4 miles) east of Beirut.
- ▶ In Syria, the Israeli Air Force attacked a Hezbollah military facility in the al-Quneitra region. According to reports, Syrian army weapons storehouses, apparently also used by Hezbollah, were damaged.

## South Lebanon

### Hezbollah attacks

- ▶ This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 38 attacks, mainly on military targets, with anti-tank missiles, rockets of various types, including heavy Burkan rockets, whose warheads weigh between 300 and 500 kgs (660 and 1,100 lbs), artillery and UAVs. During the Eid al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of Ramadan, the number of attacks decreased significantly. For the most part, Hezbollah's attacks on April 13 and 14, 2024, targeted Israel's air defense capabilities, apparently in support of the Iranian attack.
- ▶ The daily distribution of the attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 8-15, 2024):
  - ◆ On April 8, 2024, there were **six attacks**, mainly artillery fire and a UAV. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for launching a UAV to attack the IDF naval base in Rosh Hanikra and launching Burkan rockets at the Zurit base. The IDF spokesperson reported that an explosive Hezbollah drone fell in an open area in the Rosh Hanikra area; there were no casualties (IDF spokesperson, April 8, 2024).
  - ◆ On April 9, 2024, there were **eight attacks**, mainly artillery fire. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the attack on a Merkava tank in the Dovev camp. Hezbollah published a video showing the tank attacked by an al-Mas electro-optical anti-tank missile. In addition, two UAVs attacked military targets.



**Right: An al-Mas anti-tank missile launched at the Dovev camp. Left: A few moments before the missile hit the tank (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 10, 2024)**

- ◆ On April 10, 2024, there were **two attacks**, mainly artillery fire.
- ◆ On April 11, 2024, there were **three attacks**, mainly artillery fire.
- ◆ On April 12, 2024, there were **seven attacks**, mainly artillery fire. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for launching a UAV at the Ramot Naftali base and for launching dozens of rockets at compounds used for IDF artillery fire in al-Za'ourah (northern Golan Heights).
- ◆ On April 13, 2024, there were **nine attacks**, mainly artillery fire and UAVs. Hezbollah said its operatives had used an explosive drone to attack a building in the Hanita area which served as the new headquarters of the IDF forces, and that "there were dead and wounded." The IDF spokesperson announced that an explosive aircraft fell in the Hanita area and seriously wounded an IDF reserve soldier, a member of the kibbutz alert squad (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2024). Hezbollah also claimed responsibility for attacking Iron Dome aerial defense system batteries in Tel Na'ama with explosive drones.
- ◆ On April 14, 2024 there were **two attacks**. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for launching dozens of rockets at the IDF Air and Missile Defense Headquarters at the Kela camp in the Golan Heights. Dozens of additional rockets were fired at Nafah, Yarden and Qela.
- ◆ On April 15, 2024 Hezbollah claimed responsibility for planting a number of explosives in the Tel Isma'il region (about three kilometers northeast of Hanita), near the Lebanon-Israel border inside Lebanese territory. According to Hezbollah, the explosives were placed at the site after they had monitored the activity of forces IDF in the sector, and the explosion killed and wounded IDF soldiers. The IDF spokesperson reported that during an operational activity on the northern border on the night of April 14, 2024, there was an explosion of unknown origin which injured four IDF soldiers. The incident is being investigated (IDF spokesperson, April 15, 2024).

## IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon and Ba'albek (IDF spokesperson, April 8-15, 2024):

- ◆ On April 10, 2024, the IDF attacked a military structure in the Aita al-Sha'ab region, where there were Hezbollah terrorist operatives, and a terrorist facility in the al-Khiyam area.



**Right: Attack on Aita al-Sha'ab. Left: Attack in al-Khiyam (IDF spokesperson, April 10, 2024)**

- ◆ On April 13, 2024, the IDF attacked terrorist facilities and military positions in the al-Khraibah region of the Lebanon Valley, al-Wardiyah and Qal'at Debba in south Lebanon, and a complex of military buildings and a military post in the Raihan area.



**Attack in Raihan (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2024)**

- ◆ On April 14, 2024, the IDF attacked military buildings in Ur al-Khiyam and Kafrkila, and several buildings in the camp belonging to Hezbollah's Radwan Force in the Jaba' region of south Lebanon. A site for the manufacture of weapons in the town of al-Nebi Sheet, about 15 kilometers southwest of Ba'albek, was attacked. Reportedly, the attack destroyed the entire building (Lebanese News Agency, April 14, 2024). According to a Hezbollah source, the attack destroyed one of its buildings in eastern Lebanon, near the border with Syria; no casualties were reported (Agence France-Presse, April 14, 2024).



**Attack in al-Khiyam. (Right: IDF spokesperson, April 14, 2024. Left: Fouad Khreiss' X account, April 14, 2024)**



**Attack in Nebi Sheet (Right: mostaghelnevis7 X account, April 14, 2024. Left: Lebanese News Agency, April 14, 2024)**

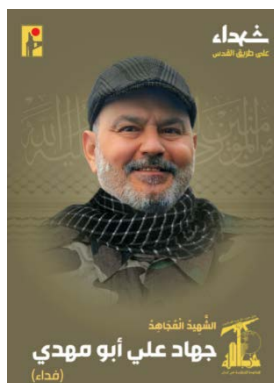
► Lebanese media reported an aerial attack on a house in the south Lebanese town of Saddiqin on the night of April 14, 2024. Reportedly, the house was completely destroyed and dozens of nearby houses were heavily damaged. Nine people were injured and taken to hospitals in Tyre by the civil defense forces of the Scouts of the Islamic Message (Amal's youth movement) and the Islamic Health Authority. It was also reported that fighter jets carried out false attacks (by breaking the sound barrier in order to deter reactions) near villages in the Tyre district and in the coastal area (El Metn Online Facebook page, April 15, 2024). It was later reported that the attack in Saddiqin targeted a room located in the football stadium in the al-Masbah neighborhood (Saddiqin Facebook page, April 15, 2024).



**The destruction in the stadium (al-Akhbar X account, April 15, 2024)**

## Hezbollah operative killed

► Hezbollah reported the death of Jihad Ali Abu Mahdi, aka Fada', born in 1969 in al-Khiyam in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 14, 2024).



**Hezbollah fatality (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 14, 2024)**

## UNIFIL

► Andrea Tenenti, UNIFIL spokesman, said attacks along the Lebanon-Israel border had recently escalated and there was concern that conflicts would turn into war. He added that all parties had to be committed to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 because there was no military solution to the conflict between Israel and Lebanon, and the expansion of the conflict could be "destructive." He said they had conveyed messages to the Lebanese army to be transmitted to Hezbollah, since they had no direct lines of community with the organization, according to which the capabilities of the Lebanese army should be strengthened (al-Hadath, April 9, 2024).

► On the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, Aroldo Lazzaro, UNIFIL commander, said the danger of escalation was real and that there was no military solution to the current conflict. He added

that a political-diplomatic solution was the only way to move forward. He called on the parties to seek the path to peace (UNIFIL X account, April 10, 2024).

## The south Lebanese

► Ali Fayad, a member of Loyalty to the Resistance, the Hezbollah faction in parliament, visited the town of Adeisa in south Lebanon and attended the opening ceremony of a new first aid station. He said that despite the threats, Hezbollah continued to provide health and other services to the residents of the villages in south Lebanon (Ali Shoeib's X account, April 12, 2024).

## Lebanese criticism of Hezbollah

► Carmen Joukhadar, a Lebanese journalist and social activist (with about 15,600 thousand X account followers), posted a cartoon showing a speaker asking, "Who wants a war with Israel?!" No hands are raised. When he asks, "Who wants a civil war?" everyone is happy to vote "Yes" (Carmen Joukhadar's X account, April 9, 2024).



### The Lebanese oppose a war with Israel (Carmen Joukhadar's X account, April 9, 2024)

► Lebanese Member of Parliament Ghada Ayyub claimed Hezbollah did not want a war and did not want to lose one, but was losing Christian and national support on the issue of "the resistance" (LBCI X account, April 8, 2024).

## Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

► On April 9, 2024, **Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general**, gave a speech commemorating the death of Muhammad Raja Zahedi, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps Qods Force in Syria and Iraq, who was killed in Damascus on April 1, 2024, in an attack attributed to Israel. **He praised Zahedi** and his contribution to the "resistance axis"<sup>2</sup> and in particular to Hezbollah, saying he had been in Lebanon for 13 years

<sup>2</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

and was a "reliable, pure" commander, with an "extraordinary personality." Nassarallah related to the following (al-Mayadeen, April 9, 2024):

- ◆ **The attack in Damascus:** The attack was unusual because it [allegedly] targeted the Iranian consulate,<sup>3</sup> which is Iranian territory, and therefore it was an attack on Iran and not Syria. Its target was a "very senior official," the chief Iranian advisor in Lebanon and Syria. It was the highest-profile Israeli attack in Syria in years, and it was only natural that Iran would respond.
- ◆ The attack was carried out because the global war against Syria, in which Israel was a partner, had failed, and by implication, the activity of the American-led international coalition. Israel announced the objective of the attacks was to expel the Iranian advisors from Syria, but it had failed. Assessments, he said, indicated that Israel was wrong in judging the Iranian response to the attack. The United States, Israel and the whole world understood that there would be an Iranian reaction, which was Iran's right. Khamenei and the senior officials in Iran stated that there would be "punishment" and everyone was waiting for it.
- ◆ **The war in the Gaza Strip:** Israel was waging the longest war in the region. Even after half a year, more than half of the hostages had not been returned, the IDF did not enter Rafah, the sirens in the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip continued to wail and Israel announced the deaths of officers and soldiers. The IDF withdrew from Khan Yunis, when it was [allegedly] humiliated under fire and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, achieved nothing. History, he claimed, would remember the war in the Gaza Strip as Israel's defeat.
- ◆ **Downing of an Israeli UAV:** Hezbollah shot down an Israeli Hermes 900 aircraft. Israel saw this action as crossing red lines, and Hezbollah replied "Who said we don't cross red lines?!!"

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<sup>3</sup> In fact it did not. It targeted a building next to the consulate.





### Nasrallah gives a speech in memory of Zahedi (al-Mayadeen, April 8, 2024)

► Ibrahim Amine al-Sayyed, the head of Hezbollah's political council, spoke at a memorial service held for Mustafa Ali Nasif, a Hezbollah terrorist operative, who was killed in the town of al-Hafir in the Beqa'a Valley on March 29, 2024. Al-Sayyed claimed Israel (the "Zionist enemy") had failed to achieve anything in the war, even though they assumed the weapons the United States and European countries gave Israel would be the determining factor in the region. He claimed Israel and Hezbollah's "other enemies" feared the organization's weapons, and especially "the person [who is behind the resistance] in the campaign" al-Manar, April 9, 2024).

## Late IRGC Qods Force Commander in Hezbollah Shura Council

► Following the attack attributed to Israel in Damascus on April 1, 2024, which resulted in the death of Muhammad Reza Zahedi, commander of the Qods Force in Syria and Lebanon, his lieutenant and five other Iranians, a source close to Hezbollah reported that **Zahedi was the only non-Lebanese member of Hezbollah's Shura Council. He said the Council had seven members and was headed by Hassan Nasrallah.** In a speech commemorating Zahedi, Nasrallah confirmed that Iranian Revolutionary Guards "advisors" had been in Lebanon since 1982 to help the "Lebanese resistance" and the "Palestinian resistance" cope with Israel ("the Zionist occupation of Lebanon and Palestine") (Sky News in Arabic, April 9, 2024). The Shura Council, Hezbollah's highest body, is very compartmentalized. If the information is correct, it sheds light on the structure of the Shura Council and the level of Iran's involvement in it and its decisions.

## Reactions to Iran's Attack on Israel

► In the wake of the Iranian attack on Israel and fearing an Israeli escalation, [allegedly] "knowledgeable sources" reported for the first time since the beginning of the fighting in south

Lebanon, Hezbollah announced an increase in the military alert of its forces. According to the sources, the alert was raised in the combat units and especially in the missile and rocket unit. The sources also stated that Hezbollah did not intend to escalate the situation unless Israel attacked it from the air (Lebanon24, April 14, 2024).

► Following the attack, celebrations by Hezbollah-affiliated parties were held in the southern suburb of Beirut (al-Dahia al-Janoubia), a Hezbollah stronghold, during which people gathered in the street and waved Hezbollah flags (al-Mayadeen, April 14, 2024).



#### **The Iranian attack against Israel celebrated in Beirut's southern suburb (al-Mayadeen, April 14, 2024)**

► After the attack, Hezbollah published a statement welcoming and congratulating "Iran's brave decision to respond to the Zionist aggression against the consulate in Damascus" and claimed it was Iran's "natural right." According to the statement, the attack achieved its military goals despite the intervention of the United States and its allies, and would initiate a new phase in the Palestinian issue on the way to the "inevitable victory" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 14, 2024).

► The Lebanese foreign ministry announced it was following the recent events and developments in the Middle East "with great concern" after they had reached the brink of an abyss, after more than six months of war in the Gaza Strip and the failure to implement Resolution 2728 to stop the fighting in the region (Lebanese foreign minister's X account, April 15, 2024).

► "Sources" reported that a number of Western diplomats requested urgent meetings with senior Lebanese officials to discuss the consequences of the Iranian attack and the possibility of holding presidential elections in Lebanon in the near future. The sources added that foreign diplomatic missions in Lebanon, mainly European, had extensive contacts following the

security situation and emphasized the need to distance Lebanon from any possible future escalation in the region (al-Akhbar, April 15, 2024).

## The Lebanese Government

► Amos Hochstein, the American mediator, following negotiations with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, formulated a number of clauses in the issue of determining the border between Israel and Lebanon, among them an agreement on six points along the disputed border according to Lebanon's demands. Lebanon's position was also accepted regarding the B-1 issue (one of 13 points of contention that Hezbollah claims exist between Lebanon and Israel along the northern border), and the northern part of the village of Ghajar. According to the report, the understandings do not include the Shebaa farms (Har Dov) and the Kafr Chouba hills. The Lebanese demand to halt Israeli intrusions into Lebanon's air and sea space was left as a subject for negotiation after the end of the war in the Gaza Strip (Nidaa al-Watan, April 10, 2024).

### **Senior Christian Lebanese Forces Party member murdered**

► On April 7, 2024, Pascal Suleiman, coordinator of the Jbeil region of the Christian Lebanese Forces party, was kidnapped and killed. Media in Lebanon claimed "the crime was not political." The Lebanese army announced the arrest of a number of Syrian citizens who participated in the kidnapping. Investigation revealed that Suleiman had been killed while they were trying to steal his car in the Jbeil region and they took his body to Syria (Lebanese army X account, April 7, 2024; al-Nashra, April 8, 2024). Many senior officials in the Lebanese government condemned the killing, and Hezbollah operatives were accused of having been responsible (MTV, April 7, 2024). The press office of Najib Mikati, the prime minister of Lebanon's interim government, called on everyone to exercise restraint, use reason and not mindlessly follow rumors and emotions (al-Nashra, April 8, 2024).



**Right: Pascal Suleiman's car returned from Syria to Lebanon (Fouad Khreiss' X account, April 9, 2024). Left: Pascal Suleiman and the flags of the Lebanese forces in the background (Liliane Me's X account, April 12, 2024)**

## Condolences for Isma'il Haniyeh

► Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, called Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, to offer condolences on the death of his sons "who were killed by the criminal Zionist enemy." He stated that "the fruit of the sacrifices is a victory for Gaza and the Palestinian resistance" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 10, 2024). Nabih Berri also called Haniyeh to offer condolences on the death of his sons and grandsons (Hamas Telegram channel, April 12, 2024).

## Palestinians in Lebanon

► Issam Sharafeddine, the Lebanese minister of the displaced, said that the security situation in Lebanon was not under control and there were twenty thousand armed men in the Palestinian refugee camps, who were "waiting for zero hour" (al-Jadeed X account X, April 9, 2024). Bassam Mawlawi, minister of the interior and municipalities in the interim Lebanese government, retracted Sharafeddine's statement regarding the number of armed men in the refugee camps (al-Arabia Facebook page – Lebanon, April 9, 2024).

## Money changer for Hezbollah and Hamas killed

► It was reported that Muhammad Ibrahim Srour, 57 years old, a Lebanese money changer who transferred funds to Hezbollah and Hamas, was found shot to death in a house in the town of Beit Meri, about seven kilometers east of the capital. He had not been robbed, as money and two guns were found in the house.

► Senior officials in the Lebanese justice system claimed Srour had been lured to a woman's apartment where he was shot to death. A "security source" stated that evidence at the scene indicated he had been "violently interrogated" and not been killed during a robbery. He

reportedly worked at Hezbollah financial institutions, and in August 2019 the United States Treasury Department imposed sanctions on him for transferring funds from the Iranian Qods Force to Hamas through Hezbollah. The al-Mayadeen network reported that according to its "sources," the Mossad may have been behind his killing. Al-Mayadeen claimed that before his death he had been "violently interrogated" and tortured and that the murderers were in direct contact with Israel during the interrogation (Reuters, April 10, 2024; al-Mayadeen, April 11, 2024; Agence France-Presse, April 10, 2024; al-Markazia, April 10, 2024; Fouad Khreiss' X account, April 10, 2024)



**Muhammad Srour (al-Markazia, April 10, 2024)**

## Syria

### **Region of Quneitra attacked from the air**

► The IDF spokesperson stated that on April 9, 2024, the IDF attacked a military facility in Syrian territory which, according to intelligence information, was used by Hezbollah terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson, April 9, 2024). "Local sources" in Horan reported that Israeli Air Force attacks east of the town of Mhajjah, about forty kilometers southeast of al-Quneitra, damaged ammunition depots of the Syrian army's 9th Division. They are called al-Koum and are apparently also used by Hezbollah in the Daraa district (Horan Free League, April 9, 2024). It was the second time during the last two months that warehouses were attacked from the air by the IDF; the previous attack was on February 17, 2024.



**Attack in Syria in the al-Quneitra region (IDF spokesperson, April 9, 2024)**