



Spotlight on Terrorism : Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria June 9 – 17 , 2024

The Northern Arena*

- 1,767 attacks
- 331 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 75 operatives of other organization killed
- Three non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

***Updated from October 8, 2023**

Overview¹

- ▶ This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 80 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared to 52 attacks the previous week. Attacks escalated in response to the killing of Taleb Sami Abdallah, the commander of the al-Nasr unit and a long-time Hezbollah operative. Hezbollah increased its use of surface-to-air missiles and advanced UAVs to attack Israeli Air Force aircraft in the skies of south Lebanon. Two Israeli civilians and two IDF soldiers were injured in the attacks and considerable damage was caused by extensive fires which broke out in northern Israel.
- ▶ Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. A convoy of Hezbollah trucks was hit on the Lebanon-Syria border in an attack attributed to Israel.
- ▶ In the assessment of senior Hezbollah figures, Israel is not prepared to launch an all-out war in Lebanon and Israel finds it difficult to intercept the organization's UAVs.
- ▶ In Lebanon, public displays of opposition to Hezbollah continued: Kamil Chamoun, leader of the Free Nationalist Party, warned that twenty thousand armed Sunnis, Druze and Christians would take to the streets if Hezbollah attacked the Christian areas.

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► The commander of the Lebanese army held meetings in the United States to discuss the security situation in Lebanon and increasing cooperation between the Lebanese army and the American army.

South Lebanon

Hezbollah attacks

► This past week (June 9-17, 2024, as of 12:00 noon) Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 80 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared to 52 attacks the previous week. Hezbollah attacked with anti-tank missiles, mortar shells, UAVs and various types of rockets, including heavy rockets:

◆ **Escalated attacks:** In response to the targeted killing of Taleb Sami Abdallah, the commander of Hezbollah's al-Nasr unit, attacks escalated sharply with concentrated barrages of various types of rockets and explosive UAVs, which targeted the Golan Heights and the Upper, Lower and Western Galilee. Among the targets were an air control base, a defense plant, IDF posts and bases. On June 13, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for its most extensive attack since the beginning of the current conflict, which began in October 2023, with the simultaneous attack of 30 UAVs and 150 rockets on bases and posts in the Galilee and Golan Heights.² On June 14, 2024, the IDF spokesperson announced that during the previous 72 hours Hezbollah had launched 16 UAVs into Israeli territory, with Israel's air defense units successfully intercepting 11 (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 14, 2024).

◆ **Escalated use of anti-aircraft missiles:** On June 9, 2024, a number of anti-aircraft missiles attacked Israeli Air Force fighter jets operating in the skies over Lebanon. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. An Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked the launch unit in the Tyre area (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 9, 2024). On June 12, 2024, Hezbollah claimed it had launched an anti-aircraft missile at an Israeli Air Force fighter jet flying in Lebanese airspace. Hezbollah claimed that after the attack the plane withdrew to Israeli territory (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 12, 2024). "Sources" stated that Hezbollah had decided to reveal its aerial defense capabilities by launching a surface-to-air missile at the Israeli fighter jet, not to shoot it

For further information see the June 16, 2024, report, "[Reactions to the targeted killing of Taleb Sami Abdallah, commander of Hezbollah's al-Nasr unit.](#)"

down but to inform Israel that its air force could no longer operate freely in Lebanese airspace (al-Nashra, June 12, 2024). According to another report, "sources close to Hezbollah" stated that it had used old anti-aircraft missiles incapable of shooting down a plane, and the launch was meant to send Israel a message (al-Medan, June 14, 2024).

◆ **Use of an advanced UAV model:** On June 15, 2024, as part of the attacks following the killing of Abdallah, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for launching a swarm of UAVs at the headquarters of an artillery battalion in the Western Galilee. According to a video released by the organization, at least two UAVs were used and the attack was filmed in real time by a UAV flying over the base (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 16, 2024). According to the Telegram account affiliated with the Shi'ite axis, the attack used an Iranian Shahed-101 UAV with an electric battery-powered motor, unlike the usual version which uses a combustion engine. He added that the electric engine emits less heat and therefore makes the aircraft difficult to detect, and while the electric engine has a shorter range than a conventional engine, it is effective for the Lebanese arena because of the proximity of Israeli border posts (Almohoar Telegram channel, June 16, 2024).



Right: Launch of one a UAV at an IDF base. Left: The attack on the base (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 16, 2024)

◆ **First use of a double-barreled anti-aircraft gun:** On June 13, 2024, Hezbollah announced that it had attacked an IDF post with a double-barreled, 23mm diameter anti-aircraft gun mounted on an ATV (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 13 and 14, 2024). It was apparently the first time the weapon had been used in the current conflict.



Right: A double-barreled anti-aircraft gun mounted on an ATV. Left: Attacking the post (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 14, 2024)

► The daily distribution of Hezbollah's attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 9-17, 2024):

- ◆ June 17, 2024 (as of 11:00 a.m.): A suspicious aerial target was successfully intercepted after it had crossed from Lebanese territory to Israel's maritime airspace near Acre (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 17, 2024).
- ◆ June 16, 2024: For the first time since February 14, 2024, Hezbollah did not claim responsibility for attacking Israeli targets. That may be related to the beginning of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.
- ◆ June 15, 2024: **Three attacks.**
- ◆ June 14, 2024: **18 attacks.**
- ◆ June 13, 2024: **12 attacks.**
- ◆ June 12, 2024: **19 attacks.**
- ◆ June 11, 2024: **Ten attacks.** Dozens of rockets were launched at the central Golan Heights and the Galilee panhandle. Two UAVs were intercepted (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 11, 2024).
- ◆ June 10, 2024: **12 attacks.** Two UAVs landed and caused fires; four UAVs were intercepted in the Golan Heights and over the sea; anti-tank missiles hit buildings in the north and caused fires (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 10, 2024).



Right: An attack on a house in a moshav near the border (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 10, 2024). Left: A fire in the Tel Hazor area following rocket hits (Upper Galilee Regional Council spokesperson's unit, June 11, 2024)

- ◆ June 9, 2024: Six attacks (from 11:00 a.m.). Two UAVs launched from Lebanese territory fell in the northern Golan Heights without casualties but caused fires (IDF spokesman's Telegram channel, June 9, 2024).

IDF response

- In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. The targets included terrorist facilities, military buildings, munitions warehouses, observation posts, launching positions and rocket- and anti-aircraft missile launchers (IDF spokesperson June 9-14, 2024).



Attacks in Kafir Kila (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 14, 2024)

- On the night of June 10, 2024, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked a military compound of Hezbollah's Unit 4400³ in the Ba'albek region of the Lebanon Valley. The attack was a response to the shooting down of an IDF UAV operating in the skies over Lebanon (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 11, 2024).

The unit responsible for Hezbollah's military buildup which is also involved in transporting weapons³ to and within Lebanon.

► On June 11, 2024, Hezbollah trucks near the Syria-Lebanon border were attacked in an air strike attributed to Israel. The trucks were halfway between al-Quseir in Syria and al-Hermel in northern Lebanon. Rami Abd al-Rahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said that some of the trucks were carrying fuel and others were carrying weapons and that the convoy was completely destroyed. Five people were reportedly killed, three of them Syrians who worked with Hezbollah. In other, unverified reports, two additional non-Lebanese deaths were reported (al-Hadath, June 11, 2024).



Hezbollah trucks catch fire on the Lebanon-Syria border (Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, June 11, 2024)

► On the evening of June 11, 2024, Israeli Air Force warplanes attacked Hezbollah's headquarters in the town of Jwayya in south Lebanon, about 11 km southeast of Tyre and about 15 km from the Israeli border. Hezbollah confirmed that the attack killed Taleb Sami Abdallah, aka al-Hajj Abu Taleb, the commander of the al-Nasr unit. Three other terrorists were killed: Muhammad Hussein Sabara, aka Baker, born in 1973 from the town of Hadatha in south Lebanon; Ali Salim Soufan, aka Kamil, born in 1971 from the town of Jwayya; Hussein Qassem Hamid, aka Sajed, born in 1980 in Bint Jbeil in south Lebanon.



From right to left: Abdallah, Soufan, Hamid and Sabara (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 12, 2024)

Other Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported the deaths of four other operatives (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 11 and 12, 2024).

- ◆ Abbas Muhammad Nasser, aka Abu Haidar, born in 1979 in Teirfalsiyah.
- ◆ Bilal Wajia Alaa' al-Din, aka Bassel, born in 1984 in Majdal Selem.
- ◆ Hadi Fa'ed Musa, aka Alaa', born in 1983 in Shab'aa.
- ◆ Bahij Muhammad Hejazi, aka Hadi, born in 1981 in Haris.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 9-14, 2024)

Palestinian Islamic Jihad casualty

► On June 15, 2024, the Israeli Air Force attacked a terrorist operative in the Aitaroun region of south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 15, 2024). The Lebanese media reported that a UAV launched a guided missile at a motorcycle in the al-Ma'sarah region between Bint Jbeil and Aitaroun. One person was killed and another was wounded (al-Akhbar, June 14, 2024). The Jerusalem Brigades, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing, announced the death of Muhammad Zuheir Khalil Jalbout, aka Abu Khalil, 45 years old, who belonged to the organization's branch in Syria, in south Lebanon (Jerusalem Brigades combat information Telegram channel, June 15, 2024).



Right: The remains of Jalbout's motorcycle (al-Akhbar, June 14, 2024). Left: Muhammad Zuheir Khalil Jalbout (Jerusalem Brigades combat information Telegram channel, June 15, 2024)

Hezbollah sums up 250 days of combat

► On June 13, 2024, Hezbollah published an infographic summarizing its attacks on Israel during the 250 days of fighting, beginning on October 8, 2023. According to the infographic, the organization carried out 2,125 attacks at a depth of up to 35 km, including 304 attacks on cities, towns and villages, 1,373 attacks on targets along the border and 59 attacks on unmanned aircraft and warplanes, 903 buildings in Israeli cities, towns and villages, three defense factories, 409 technical installations, 114 military vehicles, and seven UAVs, and two observation and alert balloons were shot down (one of them a Sky Dew system.) Hezbollah claimed to have used 100 unmanned aircraft, 682 anti-tank missiles, 59 surface-to-air missiles and 925 rockets (described as surface-to-surface missiles). Hezbollah falsely claimed the attacks left more than two thousand dead and wounded on the Israeli side and that 230,000 residents were evacuated from 43 settlements within a range of up to five kilometers from the border. Hezbollah's figures are significantly higher than the actual figures (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 13, 2024).



Hezbollah's infographic summarizing 250 days of combat Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 13, 2024)

Assessments of Hezbollah's arsenal

- Omar Ma'arbouni, a military expert, claimed that Hezbollah had ten camouflaged air defense systems scattered throughout Lebanon. In his opinion the anti-aircraft missiles were manufactured in Russia and Hezbollah received them from Iran (Spot Shot, June 9, 2024).
- According to a report on the Lebanese MTV channel, most of the anti-aircraft weapons in Hezbollah's possession are personal and portable, and operatives can carry them on their shoulders as they move through the fields and forests of south Lebanon. The report stated that the systems included Russian-made IGLA shoulder-fired guided missiles and Iranian-made Mithaq shoulder-fired missiles. In addition, a "source close to Hezbollah" estimated that the organization might have already received the Iranian Khordad 15 system, which is capable of hitting six targets simultaneously from a distance of 120 km, but it would only be activated if a war against Israel began (MTV, June 11, 2024).
- A senior operative of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force stated that Hezbollah now had more than a million missiles of various types, including precision guided missiles, improved and more accurate Katyushas and anti-tank missiles (Foreign Policy, June 11, 2024).

Foreign operatives to support Hezbollah

- The Spot Shot channel reported that if Hezbollah found itself under an existential threat during an all-out war against Israel, hundreds of thousands of foreign fighters were expected to arrive in Lebanon, including pro-Iranian militia fighters from Iraq, Houthi fighters from

Yemen, and Afghan, Pakistani and Palestinian fighters to fight Israel. According to the report, it is a pre-arranged program which can be carried out at any given moment (Spot Shot YouTube channel, June 16, 2024).

Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

► Senior Hezbollah and Hezbollah-affiliated figures referred to the escalation of the conflict and the possibility of an all-out war with Israel:

◆ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, [falsely] claimed that so far Hezbollah had attacked only military targets since "it perceived the situation as a direct military conflict." He claimed Hezbollah had attacked military barracks, military personnel and combat sites at a distance of three to five kilometers and that it had [allegedly] "avoided harming civilians." He added that any Israeli decision to expand the conflict, no matter how "limited," would lead Hezbollah to deter Israel, which could expect "significant losses" (al-Nashra, June 15, 2024).

◆ Nabil Qouak, a member of Hezbollah's Central Council, stated that the Israel's "assassinations" of Hezbollah operatives "do not change the fact that Israel is defeated." He added that "the resistance [i.e., Hezbollah] will respond to escalation with a stronger escalation and Israel will achieve nothing but loss and defeat." He added that the front ran from Hermon to Tiberias and towards Acre and Nahariya, and claimed Israel feared the day when "resistance" UAVs would reach the Knesset and all of Israel's strategic sites, and also feared the day when Hezbollah's missiles and aircraft reached the Negev, Dimona, Eilat and beyond Eilat [sic] (al-'Ahed, June 14, 2024).

◆ Ali Damoush, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, noted Hezbollah's "achievements" so far and said the "resistance" had developed its activities against Israel in terms of quantity and quality, putting new weapons to use and attacking Israel's defenses and espionage. He added that Israel was unable to deal with the UAVs used to attack and gather intelligence, and that the intense actions of the "resistance" made it difficult for Israel to make a decision regarding the beginning of an extensive campaign in Lebanon. He claimed any broad campaign would be suicidal for Israel and it would pay a high price for it (al-'Ahed, June 14, 2024) .

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese parliament, said in an interview with al-Manar that there was currently a "real war" between Hezbollah

and Israel, but "the equation is now different." According to him, only thanks to the "resistance," Israel had so far not entered Lebanese territory and "does not dare" to carry out a ground operation (al-'Ahed June 14, 2024).

◆ "A senior Hezbollah figure" said that despite the Israeli threats and the "harassment" from Israel and the United States, according to the information the organization had and its monitoring of internal Israeli affairs, the chance of an all-out war was currently remote (al-Diyar, June 14, 2024).

◆ "Sources close" to Hezbollah claimed the organization did not want a war with Israel or to turn the conflict into a regional war. In addition, the sources claimed that so far Hezbollah had shown a small part of its weapons and had "may surprises" for Israel (al-Jarida, June 9, 2024). In another report, "sources" said that Hezbollah did not expect Israel to enter into a comprehensive war on the northern front, but added that "the organization is prepared for surprises and is ready to expand the front, even without an all-out war." The sources added that Hezbollah was preparing for war as if it would break out tomorrow and was changing its tactics as if the war would last at least another year (al-Nashra, June 13, 2024).

◆ Tony Issa, a reporter for al-Gomhuria, said that in his opinion Hezbollah was not afraid of an all-out war with Israel. According to him, Hezbollah is convinced that Israel fears the start of a broad war, at least until this coming September. According to Issa, conditions allow Hezbollah to continue the war of attrition against Israel without crossing the familiar lines of response. However, Issa added that Hezbollah wanted to reach an arrangement in the south that would bring it security and political gains (al-Joumhouria, June 14, 2024).

► Given the statements and escalation in the north, IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Daniel Hagari issued a message to the foreign media concerning the situation on Israel's northern border. He said that in view of Hezbollah's refusal to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and move its activities north of the Litani River, Israel would take all necessary measures to restore security to the Lebanese border and return all residents to their homes. He said since the beginning of the current conflict, Hezbollah had launched more than 5,000 rockets, anti-tank missiles and UAVs (IDF website, June 16, 2024).

Internal Lebanese Criticism of Hezbollah

- ▶ The Maronite Christian politician, Kamil Chamoun, who heads the Free Nationalist Party, warned that if Hezbollah tried to attack the Christian areas, there were "twenty thousand armed and trained fighters ready for zero hour," and the Druze and Sunnis would stand by the Christians. He accused Hezbollah of trying to divide Lebanon and demanded that the organization compensate the residents of south Lebanon for its decision to start a war against Israel (al-Mashhad, June 12, 2024).
- ▶ Mark Daou, a member of the Lebanese Parliament from the Taqaddom Party, accused Hezbollah of harming the entire Lebanese people and destroying the south of the country. He stated that if Hezbollah had money, it should donate it to the state (MTV Lebanon News, June 9, 2024).
- ▶ Ghada Ayoub, a member of the Lebanese parliament from Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces Party, said for 30 years Hezbollah had been occupying 20 million square meters of land in south Lebanon and preventing the owners from entering or approaching their property. She expressed her displeasure at the proposal to exempt the residents of south Lebanon from paying taxes and electricity and telephone bills. She stated that the choice was between one country or a "state" [i.e., south Lebanon, controlled by Hezbollah] which would rule Lebanon. She also said that her party had sent a letter to the Lebanese government questioning its decision to compensate each family of a Hezbollah casualty with \$20,000, warning that it was contrary to the constitution, which states that compensation will only be awarded to innocent citizens (MesbarChannel YouTube channel, June 9, 2024). It was reported that of the first 52 names of people eligible for compensation, only three were civilians and the other 49 were "martyrs of the resistance," i.e. Hezbollah operatives (MTV Lebanon News, June 10, 2024).

The Lebanese Government

Accusing Israel of deliberate killing

- ▶ At a cabinet meeting, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the interim government in Lebanon, accused Israel of committing "terrorist aggression" with "intentional killing of the southerners, the destruction of the towns and the burning of the crops." He called on the international community to put an end to Israel's "stubbornness and criminal conduct" and claimed

Lebanon was committed to the full implementation of Resolution 1701 (Lebanese News Agency, June 14, 2024).

Lebanon's appeal to the UN

► According to reports, at the request of ministry of agriculture, the Lebanese government decided to appeal to the Security Council and the UN General Assembly and complain that Israel's strikes had damaged Lebanon's agriculture (Lebanon24, June 14, 2024).

Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority

► Najib Mikati met in Beirut with Azzam al-Ahmed, a senior Fatah member, to discuss various regional issues, particularly the situation in "Palestine" and Lebanon. The two discussed ways to end the war in Gaza and reach a ceasefire as part of ending the conflict and establishing a Palestinian state (Lebanese prime minister's X account, June 13, 2024).

Internal Lebanese Affairs

Coordination between Hezbollah and the Druze

► Lebanese "sources" said that in preparation for an Israeli attack, Hezbollah was giving priority to locating "safe areas" to which the organization's supporters could move. According to the sources, most of the coordinating would be with Walid Jumblatt, the former chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party, because of his influence in south Lebanon. According to the report, Hezbollah understands that this time it will not be able to send its supporters to the Christian regions, where the residents oppose the war (Asas Media, June 11 2024).

UNIFIL

► On June 16, 2024, on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, Aroldo Lazzaro, UNIFIL commander, issued a joint statement with Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the UN coordinator in Lebanon. They called on all parties along the Blue Line to lay down their arms and turn to the path of peace, and expressed "deep concern" about the escalation in the border area and the resulting destruction (UNIFIL website, June 16, 2024).

The Lebanese Army

► General Joseph Aoun, the commander of the Lebanese Army, visited the United States for the first time since his visit in February 2023. He met with the head of the Joint Chiefs Of Staff, General Charles Q. Brown Jr., with whom he discussed the security situation in the Middle East

and efforts to prevent escalation, especially along the Israel-Lebanon border. In addition, he met with the chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, with the heads of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, with members of the US-Lebanon Friendship Committee in Congress and with members of the American Task Force on Lebanon (ATFL). According to reports, they discussed the situation in Lebanon and the region, the challenges facing the Lebanese army and the army's basic needs to maintain Lebanon's security and stability. Aoun also visited the US Army's Central Command headquarters in Florida and met with the commander, General Michael Kurilla, and with whom he discussed the situation in Lebanon and the region and ways to increase bilateral military cooperation (Lebanese Army X account, June 12-14, 2024; Joint Chiefs of Staff website, 11 in June 2024).



Right: Aoun with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the US Army (Lebanon Army X account, June 12, 2024). Left: Aoun with the commander of the US Army's Central Command (Lebanese army X account, June 14, 2024)

International Activity Against Hezbollah

- ▶ The US Treasury Department has imposed sanctions on the shipping company Lainey Shipping Limited, which operates from Hong Kong and is the registered owner of the JANET oil tanker, which flies the Panamanian flag, and on the shipping company Louis Marine Shipholding Enterprises S.A., operating from Panama and the registered owner of the oil tanker BELLA 1. According to the Treasury Department, the two companies transport cargo to Southeast Asia for Concepto Screen SAL, a company owned by Hezbollah and itself subject to American sanctions since May 2022 (US Treasury Department website, June 10, 2024).
- ▶ On June 6 and 7, 2024, the 13th meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group (LECG) to deal with the terrorist and illegal activities of Hezbollah was held, organized by the US Departments of State and Justice and Europol. The meeting was attended by law enforcement personnel, prosecutors and finance personnel from over 35 governments in the Middle East,

South America, Europe, Asia and North America. The participants discussed the signs of Hezbollah's operations and strategies to deal with threats from the organization. The participants also presented the latest measures their governments had taken against Hezbollah's financial apparatuses and against its criminal plots and international terrorist activities (US Department of Justice, June 12, 2024).