



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria July 15 – 22 , 2024

The Northern Arena*

1,978 attacks

- 363 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 79 operatives of other organization killed
- Five non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

*Updated from October 8, 2023

Overview¹

- ▶ During the past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **44 attacks** on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, including towns and villages which had not previously been attacked. The Lebanese Companies for Resistance to the Israeli Occupation and Hamas-Lebanon also claimed responsibility for attacks on military targets. Two IDF soldiers were wounded in the attacks; there was significant damage to property.
- ▶ Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley, including the commander of a unit of the Radwan Force; Hezbollah announced that seven operatives had been killed in the attacks. The IDF also eliminated a senior terrorist operative who belonged to al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and Hamas-Lebanon.
- ▶ Hezbollah and the "resistance axis"² continued preparing for the possibility of a war.
- ▶ Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, threatened to attack new cities, towns and villages in Israel in response to harm to Lebanese civilians, and promised Hezbollah would restore the settlements in south Lebanon. According to reports, Hezbollah has increased aid

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

to the residents and displaced of the south, calculating that the war would continue for a long time.

- ▶ The authorities in Spain and Germany exposed a Hezbollah network that was engaged acquiring parts for UAVs used to attack Israel.
- ▶ According to reports, the Lebanese proposal for a settlement in south Lebanon includes the cessation of Israeli "violations," deploying the Lebanese army south of the Litani River and completing the agreement of the disputed border points.
- ▶ Syria: A Syrian businessman close to the regime and the "resistance axis" was killed in an attack attributed to Israel.

South Lebanon

Claims of responsibility

Hezbollah

▶ This past week (July 15-22, 2024, as of 12 noon), Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 44 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared to 43 attacks last week. The attacks used anti-tank missiles, artillery, UAVs and rockets of various types, including heavy rockets. Two IDF soldiers were wounded:

- ◆ **Attacks on new civilian targets:** On July 19, 2024, for the first time Hezbollah attacked Abir, Manot and Neve Ziv in the Western Galilee, using Katyusha rockets. Hezbollah claimed the attacks were in response to injuring civilians in IDF's attacks on Safad al-Batikh, Majdal Selm, and Shaqra in south Lebanon. Hezbollah also said that in the event of an attack on civilians, the response would be directed towards previously unattacked settlements in accordance with the threat issued by Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, in his speech on July 17, 2024 (see below) (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024). However, Hezbollah did not exceed the scope of its "deterrent equation."³

- ◆ **Use of new weapons:** On July 19, 2024, Hezbollah announced it had attacked an IDF post in Mount Dov with a heavy Wabel rocket. According to reports, the rocket was manufactured by Hezbollah and destroyed part of the post (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024). Reportedly, the rocket belongs to the Burkan series of heavy rockets, but it is heavier, with a 1,000 kg (2,200 pound) warhead

³ For further information, see the July 11, 2024 ITIC report, "[Hezbollah's Policy for the Use of Force against Israel.](#)"

and has greater destructive power (al-Mayadeen, July 19, 2024; Muhammad Alush' X account, July 20, 2024). According to reports, on July 19, 2024, the first use was made of field artillery with a range of 9.5 kilometers (6 miles) in an attack on IDF artillery positions in the Western Galilee (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024; Leb Now's X account, July 2024).

► The attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 15-22, 2024):

- ◆ July 22, 2024 (until 12 noon): Claims of responsibility for attacks have not been published. UAVs launched at the northern Golan Heights were intercepted (IDF spokesperson, July 22, 2024).
- ◆ July 21, 2024 (until 3:50 p.m.): Six attacks. A UAV hit a kindergarten; no casualties were reported; a school building was damaged, no casualties were reported; rocket hits were reported in the Galilee Panhandle, no casualties were reported but fires broke out (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 21, 2024).



Right: Explosive UAV launched at an IDF artillery position (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 21, 2024). Left: Damage to a school building (Israel Fire and Rescue, July 21, 2024)

- ◆ July 20, 2024: Four attacks. About 60 rocket launches attacked the Golan Heights, the Upper Galilee and the Western Galilee; two IDF soldiers were injured by a UAV hit in the northern Golan Heights; a direct hit to a factory was reported; UAV hits caused a fire in the Baniyas nature preserve and a fire broke out as a result of rocket hits, burning about 12.5 acres (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 20, 2024).
- ◆ July 19, 2024: At least 65 rockets were launched at Israel, some were intercepted and others fell in open areas; rockets were reported to have hit Metula and various civilian

communities; an anti-tank missile and UAV hit buildings in kibbutzim (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 19, 2024).

- ◆ July 18, 2024: Nine attacks. UAVs launched at Israeli territory were intercepted.
- ◆ July 17, 2024: One attack. Fifteen rockets were launched at the Nahariya area, most of which were intercepted and the rest fell in open areas. There were no casualties (IDF spokesperson, July 17, 2024).
- ◆ July 16, 2024: Four attacks. Dozens of rockets were fired at Israel, most of which were intercepted. Some hit Kiryat Shmona and in open areas; no casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 16, 2024).
- ◆ July 15, 2024 (after 12 noon): Four attacks.

The Lebanese Resistance Companies

- ▶ On July 19, 2024, the operations room of the Lebanese Companies for Resistance to the Israeli occupation, a Hezbollah military wing composed of non-Shi'ite Lebanese, claimed responsibility for attacking an IDF post with anti-tank missiles and artillery. The wing claimed responsibility for its first attack on July 12, 2024, and again claimed that the Lebanese Resistance Companies promised the Lebanese people they would "continue the resistance until victory and liberation" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024).
- ▶ On July 15, 2024, the Lebanese Resistance Companies said that since October 8, 2023, when the fighting began in south Lebanon, its operatives had been present on the ground to carry out logistical support missions, which also resulted in deaths and injuries. However, in view of developments, the Companies decided to announce they were also "directly dealing with any threat," and claimed their message was that the Lebanese people would not give up their right to defend their land and sovereignty and Lebanese youth would not remain neutral in light of the threats. The wing also reported it was fully prepared to deal with any threat or "foolish attempt by the enemy" (al-Mayadeen, July 15, 2024).
- ▶ Sources claimed that the Lebanese Resistance Companies had more than ten thousand fighters, most of them Sunni. It was also reported that since the beginning of the fighting in south Lebanon, its fighters man rear border posts and provide logistical support (MTV, July 16, 2024).

Hamas-Lebanon

- ▶ On July 20, 2024, the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, claimed responsibility for launching a barrage of rockets from south Lebanon at the IDF base in the Shomra area of

the Upper Galilee, in response to the "massacres of civilians in the Gaza Strip" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, July 20, 2024).

IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. Among the targets attacked were armed terrorist squads, terrorist facilities, buildings used for military purposes, warehouses storing rockets and other weapons, observation posts, launching positions and rocket launchers (IDF spokesperson, July 15-21, 2024).



Right: Attack on weapons warehouses in Adloun (Muhammad al-Obeidi's X account, July 20, 2024). Left: The ruins of a warehouse after the attack (Ahmad Farhat's X account, July 19, 2024)

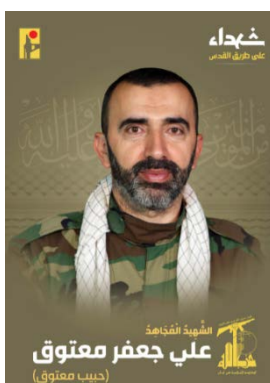
► Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hezbollah operatives:

◆ On July 18, 2024, Hassan Ali Muhanna, an operative in Hezbollah's engineering unit in the Qana sector, was killed in an attack in the Mraymin region. According to reports, he participated in the planning and execution of terrorist attacks against Israel (IDF spokesperson, July 18, 2024). An Israeli drone launched a missile at a vehicle in the Saddiqin region, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Zar'it, but did not hit it. The driver got out and ran towards a nearby field and then the UAV launched three missiles and hit him (al-Akhbar, July 18, 2024). Hezbollah confirmed that the attack killed Hassan Ali Muhanna, aka Abu Hadi, born in 1984, from the town of Jbal al-Botm in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel July 18, 2024).



Right: The attack on Hassan Ali Muhanna (IDF spokesperson, July 18, 2024). Left: Hassan Ali Muhanna (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 18, 2024)

On July 18, 2024, the IDF attacked the headquarters of the Radwan Force in the Jmayjmeh region, where Hezbollah operatives were present, and another Hezbollah headquarters in Majdal Salem. Ali Jaafar Maatouq, a unit commander in the Radwan Force, and another operational commander in the Hajir sector, were killed along with other Radwan Force terrorist operatives. According to reports the two commanders were involved in orchestrating terrorist attacks against Israel (IDF spokesperson, July 19, 2024). It was also reported that in addition to Maatouq, three other Hezbollah operatives were killed (Dr. Ahmad Yassine's X account, July 18, 2024). Hezbollah confirmed that the attack killed Ali Jaafar Maatouq, aka Habib Maatouq, born in 1978, from the Sir al-Gharbiyya in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024).



Right: Ruins of the building in Majdal Salem (Noura's X account, July 18-19, 2024). Left: Ali Jaafar Maatouq (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 19, 2024)

Other Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported the death of five other operatives (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 15-21, 2024):

- ◆ Mustafa Hassan Fawwaz, aka Fada', born in 1975, from Deb'aal in south Lebanon.

- ◆ Yassin Hussein Hussein, aka Abu Zahraa', born in 2006 in Houla.
- ◆ Ahmed Ali Musa, aka Karar, born in 1985 in Houla.
- ◆ Amer Jamil Dagher, aka Abbas, born in 1964, from Bint Jbeil in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Muhammad Hassan Mustafa, aka Murtada, born in 1987, from Aitaroun in south Lebanon.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 15-21, 2024)

Elimination of an al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya operative

- On July 18, 2024, the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya, which is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in Lebanon, announced the death of Muhammad Hamed Jabara, aka Abu Mahmoud, a senior commander of the al-Fajr Forces, the organization's military wing, in an Israeli attack in the western Lebanon Valley (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya Telegram channel, July 18, 2024). Hamas' military wing also announced the death of Jabara, from the town of al-Qar'oun in the western Beqa'a Valley, and called him a "commander" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, July 18, 2024).
- Jabara's coffin was draped with a Lebanese flag, a symbol of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya, an Izz al-Din Qassam flag and a Palestinian flag (Muhammad Abd al-Aziz-Gaza's X account, July 19, 2024). His identity card and Lebanese internal security forces' reserve duty document, valid until April 5, 2028, were made public, according to which he was a retired officer with the rank of second lieutenant. Lebanon reportedly provides cover for terrorist operatives by issuing them internal security force documents (Tanzim Thuwwar Lebanon X account, July 19, 2024).
- The IDF spokesperson confirmed that an Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Jabara in the Lebanon Valley region. According to the announcement, Jabara belonged to Hamas in Lebanon, and was responsible for orchestrating attacks on Israel, some of them in cooperation with al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, July 18, 2024).



Right to left: Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya's mourning notice for Muhammad Hamed Jabara (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya Telegram channel, July 18, 2024); the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades mourning notice (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, July 18, 2024); Jabara's coffin (Muhammad Abd al-Aziz-Gaza's X account, July 19, 2024); Jabara's reserve duty certificate and identity card (Tanzim Thuwwar Lebanon X account, July 19, 2024)

Hezbollah prepares for war

- "Sources close to the resistance axis" reported meetings between senior figures, some of them in Baghdad, attended by Esmail Qaani, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force, where discussions were held regarding the possibility of expanding the front against Israel and of Israel's expanding its attacks on Lebanon. According to people "close" to the Iranians, the result of any Israeli escalation against Hezbollah would be the entry of additional forces and organizations into the conflict. "Sources close to Hamas and Hezbollah" added that Hezbollah would escalate its operations if Israel escalated its activities in the Gaza Strip, but would stop fighting if there were a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (al-Medan, July 19, 2024).
- According to a report of doubtful reliability, on July 10, 2024, in coordination with Hezbollah, Syrian army reinforcements arrived in Lebanon, including about 175 fighters from the ranks of Division 4, the Republic Guard, Division 25 and Division 15 of the special forces. It was also reported that on July 16, 2024, additional reinforcements arrived, including approximately 300 fighters, seven tanks and over 20 military vehicles, including armored vehicles, some equipped with automatic machine guns, ammunition and weapons, in addition to several missile systems and rocket launchers. The reinforcements are reportedly being deployed in preparation for a possible war against Lebanon and the forces are under the supervision of General Saleh Abdallah, commander of the 25th Brigade of Syrian Air Force Intelligence (Political Keys, July 16, 2024).

Hezbollah's inability to prevent Israel from eliminating its operatives

► Mostafa Asaad, a researcher for military and strategic affairs, noted that Israel used all its technology and took advantage of security and technological loopholes to track the movements of Hezbollah commanders. He said Hezbollah had not yet been able to close the loopholes, even though it operated encrypted radios, most of them made in Iran, their development based on Chinese, Russian and North Korean devices. He said the devices could be hacked, making their encryption ineffective. He added that Israel also took advantage of the fact that irregular squads of operatives exposed themselves and other operatives by taking pictures, violating information security restrictions (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 18, 2024).

Use of anti-drone "gun"

► During the ceremonies commemorating the Ashura in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, Hezbollah's southern Shi'ite stronghold, Hezbollah operatives were documented using an anti-drone "gun." According to reports, the "gun" does not contain projectiles but makes it possible to take control of a drone at a distance of up to two kilometers without causing damage to the area near it, landing the drone safely so that information can be extracted from it. According to the report, the "gun" can disrupt drone flights and is powered by a battery (al-Jadeed TV, July 18, 2024).

Nasrallah's Speech, July 17, 2024

► On July 17, 2024, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary, delivered a speech to mark the tenth day of Ashura. He reiterated that Hezbollah would continue fighting Israel in south Lebanon until a ceasefire had been reached in the Gaza Strip:

- ◆ **Threat of expanding the launches:** He warned that the continued harm to Lebanese civilians would "force" Hezbollah to respond by shooting at settlements in Israel that so far has not been the target of attacks.
- ◆ **Preparations for war:** He said that Israel's threats of a war against Hezbollah did not frighten him. He referred to publications according to which the IDF suffered from a shortage of tanks, and warned that if Israel entered south Lebanon it would not have any tanks left at all.
- ◆ **Border demarcation negotiations:** He said that if a ceasefire was reached it would be possible to hold border demarcation negotiations, which would be managed by Lebanese authorities. He added that the reports of an agreement to demarcate the

border were untrue, and that there were only drafts, proposals and ideas. He said the future of south Lebanon would be determined by the results of the current "campaign."

◆ **Reconstruction of south Lebanon:** He promised the residents of the south that the villages on the border would return "to their previous state" and that they would be "more beautiful" because they were a symbol of "our steadfastness and resistance."

◆ **Praise for the Houthis:** He noted the integration of the forces of the "resistance axis" in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq together with Iran and Syria in support of the Palestinians. He praised the Houthis for their success in "preventing ships from crossing the Red Sea to occupied Palestine and imposing a siege on the port of Eilat, which according to its managers has [allegedly] gone bankrupt."



Nasrallah gives a speech for the Ashuraa (al-Manar, July 17, 2024)

Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

► Muhammad Yazbek, chairman of Hezbollah's judicial council, said that the "resistance" was tracking the "the enemy's" hiding places and threatening it, and if Israel continued to destroy houses and carry out targeted attacks, "the hands of the resistance would attack all the settlements until there was no safe place in Israel" (al-'Ahed, July 19, 2024).

► Ali Damoush, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, claimed "the resistance activists are on alert and preparing means of warfare at sea, on land and in the air. The resistance is fully prepared to deal with any scenario and any war imposed on it." He added that Israel had to know that a war against Lebanon today would not be like the previous wars and that Israel would be forced to evacuate areas further from the northern border (Lebanese News Agency, July 15, 2024) .

► Hassan Fadlallah, a Hezbollah member of the Lebanese Parliament, said that the "resistance" was obligated to protect Lebanon, regardless of the victims, and that was obligated to establish new "equations" which included attack on new settlements in every attack in which Lebanese civilians were harmed. He claimed that Hezbollah had intelligence and technological

capabilities that allowed it to track the IDF's secret headquarters and its deployment sites (al-Nashra, July 19, 2024).

Statements by Lebanese Figures

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar, said Hezbollah's attacks on new settlements in northern Israel, in addition to the Houthi drone attack on Tel Aviv,⁴ were the first signs of the "resistance axis" new plan and were meant to show that the "resistance forces" could carry out attacks which "the enemy cannot prevent." Referring to Nasrallah's threat to attack new settlements in Israel, al-Amin wrote that the "resistance" prepared itself for a stronger response to new settlements and that if that led to another response from Israel, Hezbollah was prepared to go to war. According to al-Amin, since the beginning of the war, Nasrallah and Houthi leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi had made it clear that they were acting in support of the Gaza Strip and its "resistance," and that the two have developed operational coordination between all "the forces of the resistance axis" on all fronts, from the center in Iran, through Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon to the Gaza Strip and the rest of "Palestine" (al-Akhbar, July 20, 2024).

► "People close to Hezbollah" said that when Nasrallah said Lebanon would be responsible for managing the negotiations regarding the demarcation of the border after the ceasefire, he was rejecting the possibility of direct negotiations between Hezbollah and the United States since that would require a "neutral" mediator instead of Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, who is affiliated with the "resistance." They added that Nasrallah also wanted to show that Hezbollah did not run a "state within a state" and that everything related to the land and the border was a sovereign matter over which the Lebanon had authority (al-Joumhouria, July 19, 2024).

The Situation in South Lebanon

Hezbollah aids villagers

► According to reports, Hezbollah has improved its support programs for the organization's casualties, and units on the ground, together with the municipalities in south Lebanon, were conducting daily examinations of the damages caused by the Israeli attacks. There are also people who monitor the situation of civilians who have not left the villages near the border every day, where the state mechanisms monitor their needs in terms of sources of energy, food

⁴ For further information, see the July 22, 2024 ITIC report, "Escalation of the Confrontation Between Israel and the Houthis – Background and Significance."

and medical supplies. It was also reported that a Hezbollah crew distributes material aid to all the displaced persons registered with it, including those who are far from the conflict zone, and that the organization provided them with full medical insurance in addition to food assistance and funding for alternative housing for families who did not obtain free housing (al-Akhbar, July 19, 2024).

► "Informed sources" stated that in view of the assessment that the war of attrition on the border was expected to continue for a long time, given the difficulties in achieving a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah decided to give priority to defusing the anger of the Christians and Druze who live in the border area. Hezbollah doubled the amounts it pays to the victims of the war, moved about 90 to 100 thousand displaced persons to apartments for which it pays the rent and provides them with food and basic necessities (al-Kalima Online, July 18, 2024).

The damage to the villages in south Lebanon

► A British Guardian correspondent toured the village of al-Adeisa and a prison in south Lebanon together with a UNIFIL force and reviewed the damage to the settlements caused by Israeli attacks. According to the report, almost all the residents left the villages, which had been devastated, while only a few buildings had not been directly hit. The correspondent said his convoy encountered only Lebanese army vehicles and three ambulances belonging to Hezbollah and Amal rescue services (The Guardian, July 20, 2024).

Network for Acquiring UAV Parts in Europe Exposed

► The law enforcement authorities in Germany and Spain arrested four Lebanese suspected of operating a network to purchase components to build attack drones for Hezbollah. According to the charge, under the guise of working for a toy company, the three arrested in Spain and the fourth, arrested in Germany, purchased electronic components, propellers, dozens of gasoline engines, more than 200 electric motors and more than 12 tons of additional components necessary for constructing UAV fuel tanks, wings and propulsion components. Law enforcement authorities estimated that the components allowed Hezbollah to build more than a thousand UAVs, some of which were used to attack Israel after October 7, 2023 (El Pais, July 18, 2024; Der Spiegel, July 15, 2024).

Contacts for an Arrangement in Lebanon

► According to reports, Amos Hochstein, the American envoy to the Middle East, made an unplanned stop in Saudi Arabia to meet with French envoy Jean-Yves Le Drian, to discuss developments in the Lebanese arena, and primarily the fear of escalation in south Lebanon

and the presidential elections (al-Joumhouria, July 19, 2024). According to another report, "diplomatic sources" said that Le Drian visited Riyadh last week and met with Nizar al-Aloula, advisor to the royal house, who is responsible for the Lebanon portfolio. According to the report, Le Drian presented the results of recent talks, including his meeting with Hochstein. However, the "sources" did not confirm Hochstein's arrival in Saudi Arabia (al-Joumhouria, July 22, 2024).

► The sections of the Lebanese proposal for resolving the situation in south Lebanon after a ceasefire has been reached are the following: assistance for the rapid, safe return of displaced persons from the border areas; a final cessation of the Israeli "violations" and cyber attacks; international support for strengthening the deployment of the Lebanese army south of the Litani River, providing the equipment it needs and assisting its weak forces; settling Lebanon's internationally recognized borders by agreeing on the 13 disputed points of the Israel-Lebanon border; adherence to the activities of the UNIFIL forces and renewing and extending the force's mandate without amending it (al-Akhbar, July 17, 2024).

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib stated that Beirut was prepared to conduct indirect negotiations with Israel regarding the situation in south Lebanon "if it stops its aggression." He added he had met with American envoy Amos Hochstein to discuss the issue. He also noted Lebanon's official position, adherence to the full and comprehensive implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, and called on the Security Council to monitor the negotiations (MTV, July 17, 2024).

► Bou Habib met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the UN Security Council meeting in New York to discuss the situation in south Lebanon and ways to stop the escalation. Bou Habib also met with Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani to discuss recent regional developments. They agreed that all possible efforts should be made to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon (Lebanese News Agency, July 18, 2024).

► Bou Habib visited Hungary and met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó. Szijjártó said Hungary would assist Lebanon and the Lebanese army and that Hungary, as acting EU president, would have the EU transfer €15 million to Lebanon to finance part of the Lebanese army's logistic and health needs (Lebanese News Agency, July 19, 2024).

► On July 21, 2024, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the interim government in Lebanon, visited Iraq and met with Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani, the Iraqi prime minister. They discussed

bilateral relations and ways develop them, as well as regional developments and the beginning of the fighting in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon. Al-Sudani said the "aggression" against Lebanon and "Palestine" had to be stopped (Iraqi prime minister's office Telegram channel, July 21, 2024).



The Iraqi prime minister (right) meets with Mikati (Iraqi prime minister's office Telegram channel, July 21, 2024)

► General Abbas Ibrahim, former head of Lebanon's general security forces, said that American envoy Amos Hochstein had approached him after the war began in October 2023 and asked him to help calm the tensions between Israel and Hezbollah. Ibrahim said he felt that Hochstein was worried because he knew that Israel was not capable of fighting on two fronts and therefore wanted to defuse tensions on the border. According to Ibrahim, when Hezbollah launched the Hudhud UAV into Israeli territory, its objective had been to tell Israel to "think a hundred times before doing anything," but also to convey the message to Hochstein, who was in Beirut at the time, that Hezbollah was in a position of power and not prepared to have demands imposed on it as part of the negotiations (BBC in Arabic, July 19, 2024).

The Lebanese Army

► On July 21, 2024, the Lebanese army announced that a surveillance tower had been hit by an Israeli attack near the town of Alma al-Sha'ab, and two Lebanese army soldiers had been injured (Lebanese army X account, July 21, 2024) .

► Joseph Aoun, the commander of the Lebanese army, met with Vladimir Safonkov, Russian envoy for Middle East affairs, and to discuss the situation in Lebanon and the region (Lebanese News Agency, July 19, 2024).

UNIFIL

► "A high-level Lebanese source" said that Najib Mikati, prime minister of the interim government in Lebanon, directed Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib to take action

to ensure the UNIFIL mandate would be extended in accordance with the usual format and without changes, in view of the fear of escalation from Israel. "The source" added that the French had expressed concern that if an Israeli military operation were to begin during the discussions in the UN Security Council on the extension of the mandate, it would lead to a discussion of missions that exceeded Resolution 1701, but the Americans reassured them and said they were working to prevent the expansion of the war (al-Anbaa, July 15, 2024) .

► Aroldo Lazzaro, UNIFIL commander, met with the representatives of the countries participating in the peacekeeping force in south Lebanon. He said that the activity of more than 10 thousand observers from 49 countries in UNIFIL was essential for stability along the Blue Line. He praised the participating countries for their support and said that the members of the force were prepared to help ease tensions and return to the cessation of hostilities (UNIFIL X account, July 15, 2024).



Lazzaro meets with the representatives of the member states (UNIFIL account X, July 15, 2024)

Syria

Syrian Qods Force-Hezbollah moneymen killed

► According to reports, on July 15, 2024, an Israeli drone attacked a vehicle on the Damascus-Beirut road in the al-Zaboura area, on the Syria-Lebanon border. The attack killed Bara'a al-Katerji and his assistant. Al-Katerji, a businessman close to the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, was in close contact with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force and helped fund the Qods Force and Hezbollah.⁵ According to reports, he was responsible for

⁵ Al-Katerji was a co-founder in several companies, first the international Katerji Group. He and the Al-Katerji Group appear on the US sanctions list for trading fuel between the Syrian regime and ISIS and transferring oil distillates to ISIS-controlled areas in Syria (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights; CNN in Arabic, July 15, 2024).

funding the Golan Liberation Brigade"⁶ (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, July 15, 2024; al-Arabiya, July 15, 2024). Israel did not claim responsibility for killing al-Katerji.



Right: Al-Katerji's vehicle after the attack (Ziyad Shikhani's X account, July 15, 2024). Left: Bara'a al-Katerji with Bashar al-Assad (Dr. Ahmed Yassine's X account, July 15, 2024)

⁶ On March 8, 2017, Akram al-Kaabi, the secretary general of the pro-Iranian Iraqi militia al-Nujaba, announced the establishment of the Golan Liberation Brigade. He stated that his fighters in Syria were prepared to "liberate" the Golan Heights together with the Syrian army when the campaign against ISIS ended.