



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria September 2 – 9 , 2024

The Northern Arena*

2,361 attacks

- 421 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 90 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

► This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **57 attacks** on military and civilian targets in Israel, including civilian cities, towns and villages which had not been attacked since the start of hostilities on October 8, 2023. There were no casualties; damage to property was reported.

► Israeli Air Force attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets and operatives in south Lebanon. Hezbollah reported the death of one operative. The Amal Movement announced the death of three operatives.

► Sources close to Hezbollah said that Hezbollah continued to transfer missiles and other weapons from Syria and through tunnels between different areas within Lebanon.

The Lebanese foreign minister claimed Israel had no interest in a ceasefire in Lebanon, even if a ceasefire were reached in the Gaza Strip. According to reports, several Western and Arab countries are working to promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

► Syria: A scientific research center in the Hama area in central Syria and other military sites used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps to develop weapons were hit in attacks

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

attributed to Israel. More than 16 deaths were reported, including Hezbollah terrorist operatives and operatives of the pro-Iranian militias.

South Lebanon

Hezbollah attacks

► This past last week (September 2-9, 2024), Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **57 attacks** on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared with 48 attacks the previous week. Hezbollah attacked with anti-tank missiles, artillery, UAVs and various types of rockets (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 2-9, 2024). There were no casualties; damage to property was reported:

- ◆ Hezbollah continued attacking Israeli cities, towns and villages which had not previously been attacked. On September 4, 2024, Hezbollah attacked a kibbutz north of the Hula Valley with barrages of Katyusha rockets. The kibbutz has not been evacuated and lies six kilometers from the border (Israeli media, September 4, 2024). Hezbollah claimed the attack was in retaliation for Lebanese civilians hit in IDF strikes in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 4, 2024). In a speech delivered on July 17, 2024, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, threatened that in the event of Israeli attacks on civilians, Hezbollah's response would target Israeli cities, towns and villages which had previously not been attacked.

► The operations room of the Lebanese Companies for Resistance to the Israeli Occupation² claimed responsibility for an attack on the IDF post on Mount Dov (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 7, 2024).

IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah attacks, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets and operatives in south Lebanon, including armed squads, terrorist facilities, buildings used for military purposes, munitions warehouses, observation posts, launching positions and rocket launchers (IDF spokesperson, September 2-9, 2024).

► Lebanese media reported that one person was killed and another injured in an attack attributed to Israel in the village of Kafra (Lebanese News Agency, September 5, 2024). According to reports, a Lebanese civilian was killed by artillery fire attributed to Israel in the town of Qabrikha (al-Watan, September 4, 2024).

² A Hezbollah branch founded in 1997 for Lebanese who were not Shi'ite.

- ▶ Hezbollah reported the death of one terrorist operative in IDF attacks in south Lebanon last week.
- ▶ The Amal Movement reported the death of three operatives in an Israeli attack in the village of Faroun. The general civil defense directorate in Lebanon claimed the three were its operatives, and were killed while fighting fires.



Israeli Air Force attack on Markaba (IDF spokesperson, September 3, 2024)

Hezbollah transfers weapons

- ▶ According to reports, Hezbollah formulated a plan for transferring missiles and other weapons from the Beqa'a Valley region to south Lebanon. "Sources" said that Hezbollah also used its tunnels to store heavy and to transfer weapons between different regions, as shown in the video on the Emad 4 facility on August 4, 2024.³ In addition, "sources close to Hezbollah" said the organization continued transferring missiles and other weapons from Syria to Lebanon, and that all the routes for transferring weapons were operational even after Hezbollah's response to the elimination of Fuad Shagr (Lebanon 24, September 3, 2024).

Cyprus attempts to reassure Lebanon

- ▶ "Sources" said that Tasos Tzionis, Cypriot national security advisor and head of the country's intelligence service, who visited Beirut, met with Muhammad Raad, chairman of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese parliament, and told him that his country would not participate in any "aggression against Lebanon" if a comprehensive war began (al-Akhbar, September 7, 2024). In June 2024, Hassan Nasrallah warned that if Cyprus allowed Israel to "exploit" it in a future war, Hezbollah would consider Cyprus as an active participant in the war.

Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

- ▶ Ali Damoush, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, said that "the resistance in Lebanon" would continue until its goals were achieved, and that Israelis who lived in the

³ For further information, see the August 2024 ITIC report, "[Hezbollah Issues Video of Its Imad 4 Underground Facility: Reactions and Implications.](#)"

north would be able to return home only when Israel stopped the "aggression" in the Gaza Strip. He said Hezbollah would not accept a change in its rules engagement or a violation of the existing [Hezbollah-determined] "equations," and that "if enemy attacks increase, the resistance will expand its operations [attacks]" (al-Nur, September 8, 2024).

► Muhammad Yazbek, chairman of Hezbollah's judicial council, said Hezbollah would without a doubt defeat Israel. He added that if Hezbollah did not stand up to Israel, a day would come when Israel would not differentiate between one Lebanese and another. He claimed that only force deterred Israel, and therefore if Hezbollah used force, it would successfully deter Israel (al-Manar, September 2, 2024).

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed Hezbollah continued "the victories and the achievements" planned by Fuad Shukur, Hezbollah's late military commander. Speaking at a ceremony to mark the 40th day of mourning for Shukur, Raad said Israel had killed him "to lighten the burden" imposed by Hezbollah's "support" for the Gaza Strip. Now, however, "the burden has increased, determination has strengthened and preparedness has increased" and "the enemy feels the siege, has been defeated, has no horizon, its reputation has been tarnished and tomorrow is uncertain" (al-'Ahed, September 7, 2024).

► Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the organization had entered "a new balance of power, and the 'equations' warning the enemy have become more accurate and effective." He said the "aggression" against the Gaza Strip had to be stopped according to terms dictated by the Palestinian "resistance," because there would be direct consequences for the various "support fronts," primarily the Lebanese front. Fayyad also praised the "resistance axis,"⁴ claiming it had become "an axis that has expanded regionally, and includes countries, 'resistances,' and enormous human and logistical capabilities. It controls the most important shipping lanes in the world" (al-Nashra, September 8, 2024).

Attempts to Reach an Agreement between Israel and Lebanon

► "Sources" said that a number of Arab and Western countries, including Britain, France, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, were making efforts to implement UN Security Council

⁴ Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

Resolution 1701. According to "the sources," its implementation would take place in several stages, but first the plan of Amos Hochstein, the American envoy, had to be put into effect: increasing the presence of the Lebanese army along the border; holding negotiations between Israel and Lebanon, mediated by the United States, on the issue of the 13 disputed points; and demarking the land border between Israel and Lebanon (MTV, September 2, 2024).

► "Official sources" told the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar that the British embassy in Lebanon had sent the Lebanese foreign ministry the text of a draft of understandings between the British government and the Lebanese government which would authorize British forces to operate on Lebanese soil. According to reports, the draft, whose existence was made public in November 2023, Lebanon would provide support for Britain's armed forces when they were deployed on its territory. However, according to al-Akhbar, the current memorandum did not really explain the political and strategic reasons motivating Lebanon to agree to such an agreement, unlike usual memorandums of understanding between countries, and in addition, the document did not explain why Britain should deploy forces in Lebanon, including ships, planes and soldiers. Al-Akhbar said the objective of the draft was to achieve a "covert occupation of Lebanon," because Britain's true intentions were hidden, and that the purpose of using Lebanese soil apparently had "various agendas in the Middle East, such as preparing for a confrontation with Russia and extensive support for Israel in its [alleged] war of extermination in the Gaza Strip" (al-Akhbar, September 6, 2024).

The Lebanese Government

► Interviewed by al-Jazeera, Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, claimed that via the mediators, Israel had conveyed the message to Beirut that it did not want ceasefire in Lebanon, even if a ceasefire agreement were reached in the Gaza Strip" (Ali Hashem's X account, September 7 2024).

► Bassam Mawlawi, Lebanese interior minister, said that Hezbollah's response to the killing of Fuad Sakar had been limited and did not match the scope of Lebanon's preparations and concern. He said that in his opinion, the reaction reflected the reluctance of all Lebanese to enter into a comprehensive war which the country would not be able to bear (al-Hurra TV, September 2, 2024)

► Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, met with Cindy McCain, head of the World Food Program, who arrived in Lebanon at the head of a Program delegation; also present at the meeting was Nasser Yassin, minister of environmental affairs, who chairs the National Emergency Committee. They discussed the need to increase support for Lebanese families displaced from their homes in south Lebanon by the fighting, and the need to make preparations to increase the amount of aid for reconstruction once the residents can return to their homes.



**Mikati meets with a delegation from the World Food Program
(Lebanese News Agency, September 9, 2024)**

► Dr. Firass Abiad, the Lebanese ministry of health, visited medical centers in Danniyeh in north Lebanon and said that \$28 million would be allocated to government hospitals. He added that if Israel escalated its attacks, the hospitals in north Lebanon would serve as shelters. According to Dr. Abiad, efforts were being made to improve the hospitals' capabilities to provide primary medical care, which would be essential for the displaced people arriving in the north of the country (al-Manar, September 5, 2024).

UNIFIL

► According to reports, a Lebanese civilian employed by UNIFIL as a barber was injured "when the enemy shot at a car in the al-Khiyam region of south Lebanon" (al-Manar, September 3, 2024). Kandice Ardiel, the deputy director of UNIFIL's information office, confirmed reports that a Lebanese civilian was wounded by gunfire near the border while on his way to provide services to the UNIFIL Spanish battalion. She also said it was the second incident in two days in which UNIFIL contractors had been injured, after two people had been killed the previous day when a vehicle belonging to a company providing service to the UN force had been attacked. Ardiel called for an end to attacking civilians and attacks which directly or indirectly affected the ability of the UNIFIL forces to carry out their mission (Lebanese News Agency,

September 3, 2024). She did not accuse anyone of responsibility for attacking the barber, contrary to Lebanese reports accusing Israel.

► It was later reported that UNIFIL was examining the contracts it had signed with Lebanese companies and workers to carry out logistics work, after it became clear that most of them were affiliated with Hezbollah and some of them were also Hezbollah terrorist operatives (Lebanon Files, September 4, 2024)

Syria

Attacks attributed to Israel

► On the night of September 8, 2024, airstrikes attributed to Israel were reportedly carried out on several military targets in central and western Syria. A Syrian "military source" reported that an Israeli airstrike carried out from the direction of northwest Lebanon attacked several military sites in the area of the city of Masyaf, about 35 kilometers west of Hama. According to "the source," Syrian aerial defense units intercepted some of the missiles. According to reports, 16 people were killed and 36 were injured and property damage was reported (SANA, September 9, 2024).

► The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights stated it was the most extensive Israeli attack in Syria since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, with four waves of attacks targeting military sites belonging to the Syrian regime: the center for scientific research in Masyaf, a site on the Masyaf-Wadi al-Ayun road, Bahir Abbas in Masyaf, two sites in Kafr al-Rawi and aerial defense factories in the southwest of Masyaf. According to the report, 25 people were killed, including four Syrian soldiers, two Syrian Hezbollah operatives, 11 Syrians working with the pro-Iranian militias and five civilians, and 32 people were injured. It was claimed that the attack on Bahir Abbas used "new missiles" which also hit a "floating body" off the coast of Baniyas, about 70 kilometers west of Hama. "Officers from forces in the area" noted that for the past six years, Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps officers had been present at the scientific research center as part of programs for developing short- and medium-range precision missiles, and this year they had also begun to engage in UAV (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 9, 2024).

► "Two regional intelligence sources" said that a large military research center for the production of chemical weapons in Masyaf had been attacked several times. They reported that according to assessments, a team of Iranian military experts was involved in the production of weapons (Reuters, September 9, 2024).



Right: The center for scientific research in Masyaf (Google Maps). Center: Attacks on the Masyaf region (X account of al-Shuoun al-'Aalamiyah, September 9, 2024). Left: Attacks on the Masyaf area (Latakia Akhbar Facebook page, September 9, 2024)