



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria November 11 - 18 ,2024

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued their maneuver in south Lebanon, deepening operations into the "second line of villages." They eliminated Hezbollah terrorist operatives, located and destroyed facilities hidden in civilian sites and uncovered large quantities of weapons. The IDF continued aerial strikes on Hezbollah targets in Dahiyeh al-Janoubia (Beirut) and other areas in Lebanon. Eight IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting.
- ▶ This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 170 attacks on civilian, military and security targets in Israel, including the Greater Tel Aviv area and IDF forces in south Lebanon. Hezbollah claimed its first attack against IDF Headquarters in Tel Aviv and showcased the new weapons used in its attacks on Israel. Two civilians were killed in Hezbollah attacks, and significant property damage was reported.
- ▶ Hezbollah reported that its media chief, Muhammad Afif, was killed in an Israeli strike in Beirut. Reports indicated the deaths of other senior commanders (without official acknowledgment from Hezbollah), with an estimated 1,550 Hezbollah fatalities since October 8, 2023.
- ▶ According to reports, Hezbollah submitted its response to the United States draft proposal for a ceasefire and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 in south Lebanon, though some points still require discussion. Lebanon was preparing for the visit of United States envoy Amos Hochstein.
- ▶ Syria: The IDF attacked Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in Damascus, killing two senior figures and seven terrorist operatives. The IDF continued attacking along the Syria-Lebanon border to prevent Hezbollah weapons smuggling and the infiltration of terrorist operatives.

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

The Fighting in Lebanon

► **Ground operations:** This past week IDF forces continued their maneuver in south Lebanon and began targeting new Hezbollah objectives ("the second line of villages," approximately six kilometers from the border). They eliminated terrorist operatives from the air and on the ground, discovered large quantities of weapons, including rocket launchers, mortar shells and anti-tank missiles aimed at northern Israeli communities, and destroyed command centers, underground facilities and other terror-related facilities concealed in civilian sites. A 32-barrel rocket launcher aimed at Israel and a pickup truck carrying a mobile rocket-launching system were located. Eight IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting (IDF spokesperson, November 11-18, 2024).

► Since November 15, 2024, Hezbollah has claimed responsibility for attacks on "enemy military gatherings" near the towns of al-Khiyam, Markaba and Tallouseh, located on the "second line," indicating the advance of IDF forces (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 15-18, 2024).



Right: IDF forces entering a village in south Lebanon (IDF Spokesperson, November 13, 2024).

Left: A 32-barrel rocket launcher (IDF Spokesperson, November 14, 2024)

► **Aerial operations:** The IDF also continued aerial strikes on Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, including command centers, launchers and locations for the manufacture of weapons. More than fifty 50 Hezbollah targets were struck in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia (Beirut), as well as command centers, weapon depots, and other facilities near Tyre, most of which were located close to civilian sites (IDF spokesperson, November 11-18, 2024).



Hezbollah weapons near civilian sites in Tyre (IDF spokesperson, November 16, 2024).

Hezbollah

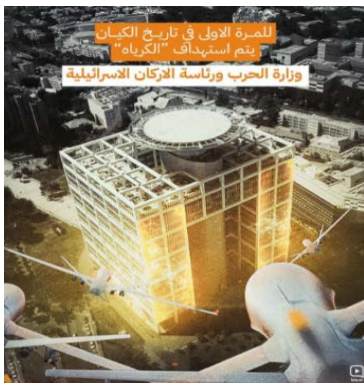
Attacks

► This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 170 attacks on military, security and civilian targets in Israel, including Greater Tel Aviv area, as well as IDF forces in south Lebanon. Hezbollah attacked with anti-tank missiles, artillery, UAVs, precision missiles, various types of rockets and anti-aircraft fire targeting Israeli Air Force aircraft in Lebanese airspace. Among other claims, Hezbollah stated it carried out its first attacks against IDF Headquarters in Tel Aviv area, Haifa and the north. Some of the attacks were described as part of "Khaybar operations" [Hezbollah' revenge for the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah]. Hezbollah also claimed to have targeted civilian settlements it alleged had become military objectives. On November 14, 2024, Hezbollah claimed to have shot down an Israeli Air Force Hermes-450 UAV in eastern Lebanese airspace (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 11-18, 2024). Two civilians were killed and significant property damage was reported (Israeli media, November 11-18, 2024):

- ◆ **Claim of responsibility for the first significant attack on IDF Headquarters in Tel Aviv:** On November 13, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for two attacks, one involving a swarm of "advanced" UAVs with electric engines, followed by Kader-2 ballistic missiles. These claims remain unverified with no Israeli reports of launches toward the area. The organization accompanied its claims with psychological warfare, including posters about the alleged attacks and a 3D animation video showcasing key buildings, along with explanations of their functions (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 13 and 15, 2024).



Right: UAV allegedly launched at the base in Tel Aviv. Left: Kader-2 missile before launch (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 15, 2024)



Right: From a Hezbollah propaganda video (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 15, 2024). Left: Simulation of the "attack" (Simia, the electronic unit of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, November 16, 2024)

◆ **Using new weapons:** As part of its escalation Hezbollah continued deploying new weapons. On November 11, 2024, Hezbollah announced the first use of a Malak-2 rocket in an attack on the Haifa suburbs without other information (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 11, 2024). On November 12, 2024, Hezbollah announced the first use of the heavy Fadi-6 rocket² (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 12, 2024). On November 17, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the first use of Fajr-5 missiles, alongside Nasr-1 missiles, to attack Haifa the previous day (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024).³

² The Fadi-6 is a rocket weighing 650 kgs with a diameter of 302 mm, a warhead weighing 140 kg and a range of up to 225 kilometers. Hezbollah fired Fadi-1 and Fadi-2 rockets on September 22, 2024, a Fadi-3 on September 24 and a Fadi-4 for the first time on October 1, 2024.

³ According to the Hezbollah video, the Fadi-5 is a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 75 kilometers and a warhead weighing 175 kgs, and was used for the first time in the Second Lebanon War (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024).



Right: Malak-2 rocket fired at the Haifa area (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 12, 2024). Left: Six heavy Fadi-6 rockets ready for firing (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 13, 2024).

Hezbollah casualties

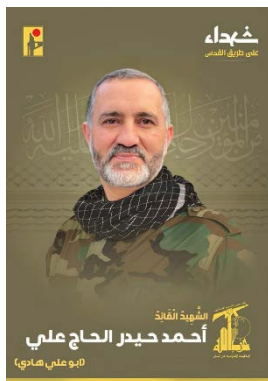
▶ On November 17, 2024, Israel attacked the Ba'ath Party headquarters in Lebanon, located in the Ras al-Nabaa area of Beirut, outside the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia; at least five people were killed. The Ba'ath, secretary general, Ali Hajazi, confirmed that Hezbollah's media chief and spokesman, Muhammad Afif, was present at the site and was killed (al-Mayadeen, November 17, 2024). Hezbollah officially announced the death of its media chief, al-Hajj Muhammad Afif al-Nabulsi, claiming he was killed in a "criminal and aggressive Zionist strike." According to the announcement he had "an honorable career in jihad and resistance media work" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024). It was also reported that Afif's deputy, Mahmoud al-Sharqawi, was killed in the strike (MTV Lebanon, November 17, 2024). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that Afif was killed in an airstrike in Beirut, noting his involvement in military activities against Israel (IDF spokesperson, November 17, 2024).



Right: Mourning notice issued by Hezbollah for Muhammad Afif (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024). Left: Afif's "identity card" (IDF spokesperson, November 17, 2024).

▶ According to claims on social media, more than 1,550 Hezbollah senior figures and terrorist operatives have been killed since the beginning of the conflict on October 8, 2023 (Qalaat Al Mudiq Telegram channel, November 17, 2024). Except for the announcement of Afif's death, Hezbollah continued its policy of secrecy and has not issued official mourning notices since late September 2024. A "source close to Hezbollah" claimed the names of casualties were no longer reported because there were operatives with whom contact had been lost personnel and numerous fatalities whose bodies were difficult to recover. According to the source, around 200 additional fatalities are buried under rubble (Lebanon al-Kabir website, November 12, 2024). Media outlets and social media accounts continued to report the names of senior Hezbollah figures killed in strikes:

- ◆ On November 17, 2024, an "Israeli" attack reportedly targeted an electronics store in the Mar Elias area of Beirut. Two people were killed, including Mahmoud Madhi, chief of operations for Hezbollah's southern front (al-Hadath, November 17, 2024).
- ◆ "Commander" Ahmed Haidar al-Hajj Ali was reported killed in south Lebanon. He held command roles in the 2006 war against Israel [First Lebanon War] and participated in the wars in Syria and Yemen. Additionally, it was reported that he served as an "operations officer" for the Houthis (Muhammad Reza and Sam al-Ghanbari's X accounts, November 17, 2024).



**Mourning notice issued for Ahmed Haidar al-Hajj Ali
(Muhammad Reza's X account, November 17, 2024)**

Overview of sixty days of fighting

▶ Hezbollah issued an infographic entitled "The Battle of the Toughest," summarizing its operations against Israel from September 17, 2024, when the escalation began with the explosion of Hezbollah operatives' pagers, to November 16, 2024. According to the infographic, the organization carried out 1,349 attacks, an average of 22 a day, targeting military sites along

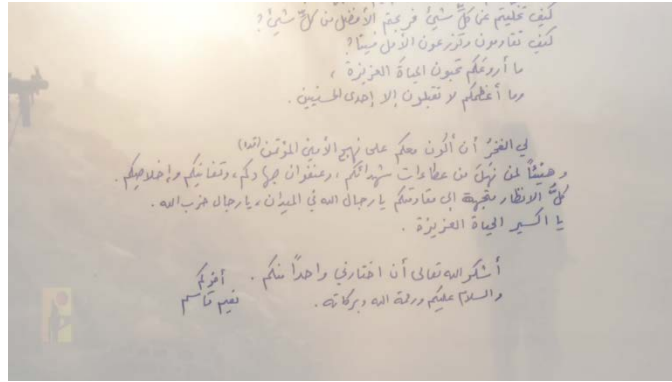
the Israel-Lebanon border and up to 150 kilometers inside Israel. The targets reportedly included 164 IDF bases, 101 camps, 361 positions, 127 posts along the border, 456 "settlements" [Israeli cities, towns and villages], 17 military factories and defense companies, and ten airfields (primarily Air Force bases). The attacks were carried out using 84 artillery shells, 1,047 rockets and missiles, 124 UAVs, 65 anti-tank missiles and 29 surface-to-air missiles. Hezbollah claimed the attacks resulted in over 100 Israeli fatalities, more than 1,000 injuries, and the evacuation of approximately 300,000 Israelis from over 100 "settlements" within a 30-kilometer radius of the border (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024). The number of attacks reported in the infographic far exceeds the figures for which Hezbollah claimed responsibility in its daily publications; the data regarding Israeli casualties and displaced persons are false.



The Hezbollah infographic summing up six days of fighting
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 17, 2024)

Letter from the Hezbollah secretary general to the organization's operatives

► On November 13, 2024, Hezbollah released a four-minute video in which a letter from the incoming secretary general, Na'im Qassem, was read to the organization's operatives, in response to a letter he received from them on November 9, 2024. He praised the operatives for their "faith in the liberation of Jerusalem and our occupied land" and commended their efforts (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 13, 2024).



**From the video of Na'im Qassem's letter to Hezbollah operatives
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, November 13, 2024).**

Criticism of Hezbollah

► The leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, Gebran Bassil, who until recently was considered a Hezbollah political ally, noted his opposition to Hezbollah's initiation of hostilities against Israel in October 2023 under the pretext of supporting the Palestinians. He argued that it harmed Lebanon's interests and the state itself. He added that "the enemy" exploited Hezbollah's attacks to strike Lebanon, as it lacked international legitimacy to do so. Bassil stated that Hezbollah had lost its legitimacy in Lebanon and called for the "resistance" to become part of the Lebanese consensus. That includes a call for a ceasefire, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 regardless of developments in Gaza and the region and participation in a national dialogue to develop a defense strategy which would resolve disputes over the "resistance's" weapons (al-Nashra, November 12, 2024).

► The leader of the Lebanese Forces Party, Samir Geagea, urged Hezbollah to lay down its arms as quickly as possible and end the war to spare Lebanon further "death and destruction," adding that the attacks on Hezbollah's "war infrastructure" have caused significant damage to the country. He acknowledged that Lebanon did not have the necessary power to prevent Israel from resuming strikes even after reaching a ceasefire agreement, especially if Hezbollah's armed presence remained in the area (Reuters, November 14, 2024).

Lebanon

Casualties

► According to the Lebanese ministry of health, between the beginning of the fighting on October 8, 2023, and November 9, 2024, 3,481 Lebanese had been killed and 14,786 wounded (Lebanese ministry of health X account, November 17, 2024).

Economic damage

▶ According to a World Bank report, Lebanon's economy has suffered a loss of more than \$5.1 billion since the outbreak of hostilities on October 8, 2023, including \$3.4 billion from damage to buildings. According to the report, 99,209 housing units were destroyed, over 80% of them in border areas with Israel, with total damages amounting to \$2.8 billion (Agence France-Presse, November 14, 2024).

▶ The Jihad al-Binaa Association,⁴ a Hezbollah institution responsible for war damage restoration and reconstruction, estimated that 45,000 housing units were destroyed across Lebanon as a result of the fighting. Of them, 7,000 units were completely destroyed in Beirut and the Mount Lebanon region, while 28,000 units were destroyed in south Lebanon. According to the association's calculations, the current estimated cost of rubble removal was less than \$12 million, with the total reconstruction cost for the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut currently standing at \$630 million, and the cost of reconstruction in south Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley reaching \$2.3 billion (al-Akhbar, November 15, 2024).

▶ "Sources" reported Iran had informed Hezbollah that it would take responsibility for the reconstruction of south Lebanon, the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia and the Ba'albek region in the Bekaa Valley (al-Anbaa, November 13, 2024).

The Lebanese government

▶ On November 13, 2024, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty visited Lebanon and met with Lebanese interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, and Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun. Abdelatty told them that Egypt fully supported Lebanon and was prepared to assist it until the end of the "Israeli aggression." He said the Lebanese had assured him they were prepared and willing to immediately implement Resolution 1701 and deploy army forces in south Lebanon (al-Nashra, November 13, 2024).

▶ On November 15, 2024, Ali Larijani, advisor to Iran's supreme leader, visited Lebanon and met with Mikati and Berri. He said Iran continued to support the Lebanese government, the army and the "resistance" (al-Nashra, November 15, 2024). Referring to the United States draft proposal for a ceasefire, Larijani stated Iran would support any decision made by the "resistance" and the Lebanese government. He added that if the United States and Israel did

⁴ For further information, see the June 2019 ITIC report, "Jihad al-Bina Association in Lebanon: A Hezbollah social foundation engaged in construction and social projects among the Shiite community, being a major component in Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure."

not "sabotage" the proposal, it could help bring about a resolution (al-Mayadeen, November 15, 2024).



Berri and Larijani (al-Nashra, November 15, 2024).

The Lebanese Army

► "Well-informed sources" reported that the United States was in constant contact with Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun regarding developments in the ceasefire negotiations. According to the report, United States Ambassador to Beirut, Lisa Johnson, briefed Aoun on the draft agreement and formally requested the army provide additional security for the United States embassy in Lebanon and American interests in the country. It was further reported that the Lebanese Army Command had developed a preliminary plan, under which additional forces would be deployed in south Lebanon, observation points would be established, and approximately 2,000 soldiers would be stationed in the border area. The "sources" claimed that the Lebanese Army urgently needed weapons and equipment, as the state budget was insufficient to cover such needs (al-Akhbar, November 17, 2024).

► According to reports, on November 17, 2024, two Lebanese soldiers were killed others injured, some critically, an Israeli strike on the town of al-Mari, about six kilometers northeast of Metula (al-Mayadeen, November 17, 2024). The Lebanese Army stated that two of its soldiers were killed in the Israeli strike on a military center in the town of al-Mari in Hasbaya, and that two other soldiers were injured (Lebanese Army X account, November 17, 2024). Lebanon's interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati called for an end to Israeli "aggression" and to allow the Lebanese Army to fulfill its missions (al-Nashra, November 17, 2024).

Contacts for a Ceasefire

► Lebanese media published the main points of the United States ceasefire proposal, which American Ambassador to Lebanon Lisa Johnson had presented to Parliament Speaker

Nabih Berri, who represents Hezbollah in the negotiations (al-Modon, November 16, 2024; al-Joumhouria, November 18, 2024; Nidaa al-Watan, November 18, 2024):

- ◆ Ceasefire and implementation of Resolution 1701; withdrawal of IDF forces from south Lebanon and withdrawal of Hezbollah to the north of the Litani River; return of displaced persons on both sides of the border.
- ◆ Deployment of Lebanese Army forces in south Lebanon, with an initial deployment of 5,000 soldiers. With UNIFIL assistance, the Lebanese Army will prevent Hezbollah from rearming. For the mission the Lebanese Army will receive necessary support from the international community.
- ◆ Establishment of an American-French committee to oversee the ceasefire and implementation of Resolution 1701. According to reports, Hezbollah opposes the inclusion of representatives from the UK and Germany; the committee may include a representative from an Arab country.
- ◆ Israel will retain the right to take military action if the committee fails to take action regarding ceasefire violations or breaches of Resolution 1701.
- ◆ Dismantling Hezbollah facilities north of the Litani River as well.
- ◆ After two months of ceasefire, discussions will resume on demarking the land border and resolving disputes over 13 border points.

▶ According to reports, on November 17, 2024, Hezbollah submitted its response to Berri, who was expected to forward it to the United States embassy and the Special American Administration Envoy Amos Hochstein (LBC, November 17, 2024). Statements following Hezbollah's response:

- ◆ Lebanon's interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati stated that Lebanon's response to the United States proposal was positive, though some points still required discussion. He noted that he was in constant contact with Nabih Berri and that "ambiguous matters" would be resolved during Hochstein's expected visit. According to Mikati, the proposal did not impose conditions on Israel's military freedom of movement. He emphasized that the government was committed to implementing Resolution 1701 south of the Litani River and strengthening the army's presence in south Lebanon (al-Arabi TV Channel, November 18, 2024).
- ◆ After meeting with Nabih Berri, Labor Minister Mustafa Bayram said the atmosphere had been positive but cautioned against premature expectations. He said

Lebanon's position on the proposal was positive because it was Lebanon which had been attacked and succeeded in preventing the "fall of the resistance." He added that Berri mentioned preparing for Hochstein's visit on November 19, 2024, during which he would inform him of Lebanon's positive response. Attention would then shift to the Israeli side, which would need to demonstrate whether it genuinely sought a ceasefire (al-Nashra, November 18, 2024).

◆ The headline of the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar's front page asked, "Will Washington uphold its promise to ensure Israel complies with the agreement?" "Informed sources" told the paper that Hezbollah was approaching the United States proposal "with great openness" and that Lebanon's response was nearing completion. "Prominent political sources" noted that Hezbollah's response aligned with Resolution 1701 and that the pressure was now on Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. The sources added that the objective of Hochstein's visit was to discuss Lebanon's position rather than announce a ceasefire (al-Akhbar, November 18, 2024).

▶ Before Hezbollah submitted its response, Speaker Berri stated that the chances of reaching a ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel were greater than 50%. He said the settlement proposal was generally positive and had potential but cautioned that past experiences with Israel, particularly under Netanyahu, had been fraught with obstacles and delays that could derail the current efforts, as happened in Gaza (al-Diyar and al-Joumhouria, November 16, 2024).

▶ Prior to Hezbollah's submission of its response, al-Akhbar editor-in-chief Ibrahim al-Amin stated that Israel wanted a new international oversight committee appointed to ensure the implementation of Resolution 1701 and the disarmament of Hezbollah across the area south of the Litani River. Al-Amin said that the ongoing war was "difficult, extremely brutal and with massive sacrifices," but "the idea of surrendering directly or indirectly to the enemy's demands" was inconsistent with the sacrifices made so far and would be impossible to implement (al-Akhbar, November 16, 2024).

UNIFIL

▶ The head of the UN Peacekeeping Department, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, visited Lebanon and met with interim Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib and Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun. They discussed developments in south Lebanon and UNIFIL's role. The Lebanese noted their desire to continue

Lebanese army-UNIFIL cooperation while implementing Resolution 1701. Lacroix said the Resolution was the framework for a return to stability, adding that Lebanon and Israel had to fully implement it (Lebanese News Agency and al-Nashra, November 12-14, 2024).

▶ While in Lebanon, Lacroix toured the south and met with UNIFIL soldiers. According to reports, he also heard accounts from soldiers who were injured in direct attacks on the force and in exchanges of fire (UNIFIL Telegram channel, November 13, 2024).



Lacroix visits UNIFIL forces in south Lebanon (UNIFIL Telegram channel, November 13, 2024)

▶ UNIFIL accused a "group of people affiliated with non-governmental elements" of not allowing its forces freedom of movement during a patrol in the village of Badias in south Lebanon on November 16, 2024. UNIFIL reported that one of the men was armed but the forces managed to overcome the "obstacles" and continued their patrol. However, when they left the town, 40 bullets were fired at them, apparently by the same men. There were no casualties but property damage was reported. UNIFIL stressed that it was the responsibility of the Lebanese government to intervene so that the force could carry out its missions "without fear or threat" (UNIFIL Telegram channel, November 17, 2024)

Syria

▶ "Syrian security sources" claimed there was security coordination between Israel and the Syrian regime to reduce Iran's influence in southern Syria. According to the "sources," Israel was in contact with the head of military intelligence for Daraa province, Brigadier General Louay al-Ali, who was also influential in the Quneitra district. They claimed he provided information about the movements of Iran-affiliated military groups in southern Syria. The information reportedly aids Israel in conducting limited incursions into Syrian territory to apprehend collaborators with Iran (Syria TV, November 12, 2024).

Israeli strike on the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

▶ On November 14, 2024, a "Syrian military source" reported that the "Israeli enemy" attacked several residential buildings in the al-Mazzeah neighborhood of Damascus and the Qudsaya area, a suburb northwest of Damascus. The source claimed that 15 people had been killed and 16 injured, including women and children, and there was significant property damage (Syrian ministry of defense Facebook page, November 14, 2024). The IDF spokesperson confirmed attacks on several military buildings and command centers of the PIJ in Syria (IDF Spokesperson, November 14, 2024).

▶ Initially, the PIJ officially denied that the attack had targeted its facilities, claiming it struck "civilian centers and residential homes" (PIJ Telegram channel, November 14, 2024). However, in a statement released two days later, the PIJ acknowledged that the strike had targeted its "civilian offices," confirming the deaths of two senior leaders, Abd al-Aziz Sayid al-Minawi and Rasmi Yusuf Abu Issa (PIJ Telegram channel, November 16, 2024). In a later announcement, the PIJ reported that seven operatives had also been killed (PIJ Telegram channel, November 17, 2024). According to reports, al-Minawi was a member of PIJ's political bureau and close to the organization's secretary general, Ziyad al-Nakhalah, while Abu Issa held the organization's foreign relations portfolio (al-Quds, November 15, 2024).



Right: Rasmi Abu Issa (al-Jazeera Mubasher website, December 27, 2023). Center: Abd al-Aziz al-Minawi (al-Quds, November 15, 2024). Left: The strike site in the al-Mazzeah neighborhood, Damascus (Sham FM Radio, November 14, 2024)

Bridges along the Syria-Lebanon border attacked

▶ On November 13, 2024, a Syrian "military source" reported an "Israeli" attack on bridges and roads along the Syria-Lebanon border in the Homs region. According to reports, the roads had been significantly damaged and could not be used (Syrian ministry of defense Facebook page, November 13, 2024). Reports also mentioned "massive explosions heard in the area of the city of al-Qusayr near the border with Lebanon" (al-Jazeera, November 13, 2024).

The IDF spokesperson confirmed that fighter jets had attacked Syrian regime routes along the Syria-Lebanon border which were being used to transfer weapons to Hezbollah (IDF Spokesperson, November 13, 2024).



**A bridge attacks on the Syria-Lebanon border in the Homs region
(al-Jazeera, November 13, 2024)**