



## Spotlight on Terrorism Hezbollah and Lebanon<sup>1</sup> December 2 - 9, 2024

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

- ▶ The IDF attacked Hezbollah operatives, rocket and missile launchers and terrorist facilities across Lebanon in response to ceasefire violations. Four IDF soldiers were killed in the fighting.
- ▶ Hezbollah launched its first rocket since the ceasefire, targeting an IDF post on Mount Dov. Senior Hezbollah figures claimed it was a "warning shot" in response to alleged Israeli violations and threatened to escalate its attacks if the committee overseeing the ceasefire did not stop Israel.
- ▶ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general, announced that the organization had begun funding Lebanon's reconstruction with money received from Iran. Hezbollah has reactivated the economic wing of the al-Qard al-Hassan to transfer payments to homeowners whose properties were destroyed.
- ▶ Hezbollah is not officially counting its casualties, with estimates of at least 3,500 operatives killed and at least 10,000 injured. Funerals of Hezbollah operatives have begun in villages in south Lebanon. The date of the funeral of Hassan Nasrallah, former secretary general, has not yet been announced.
- ▶ The Lebanese ministry of health reported that 4,047 people were killed from the beginning of the fighting until the ceasefire on December 3, 2024. The government approved an advance of 4 trillion Lebanese pounds (approximately \$45 million) for the removal of debris.
- ▶ The Syrian army officer responsible for Hezbollah affairs was killed in an IDF attack in Damascus. The IDF targeted crossings along the Syria-Lebanon border to prevent the transfer of weapons to Hezbollah.

### Implementing the Ceasefire

#### IDF activity

- ▶ On December 2, 2024, Hezbollah fired two rockets at the Mount Dov area, which landed in open areas. It was Hezbollah's first attack since the ceasefire went into effect on November 27,

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

2024.<sup>2</sup> In response, the IDF attacked terrorist operatives, dozens of rocket launchers and Hezbollah facilities in Lebanon, including the launcher used in the attack on Mount Dov (IDF spokesperson, December 2, 2024). Hezbollah claimed the attack was a "preliminary warning response" to [alleged] "repeated violations of the ceasefire" by the "Israeli enemy," including "shooting at civilians" and airstrikes which caused civilian deaths, as well as violations of Beirut's airspace (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, December 2, 2024).

► This past week the IDF continued responding to Hezbollah's ceasefire violations by attacking terrorist operatives, rocket launchers and other weapons, and terrorist facilities which threatened IDF forces and Israeli territory. Four IDF soldiers were killed in an explosion in a Hezbollah tunnel in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, December 9, 2024), in all probability due to human error. The Lebanese ministry of health and media outlets reported approximately 20 Lebanese killed by IDF strikes throughout the week, including women (Lebanese ministry of health website and al-Mayadeen, December 2 to 9, 2024).

## Hezbollah

► On December 5, 2024, Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah's secretary general, delivered a speech in which he discussed the ceasefire agreement, accusing Israel of having committed more than 60 violations since it went into effect. He said the agreement was meant to halt "aggression" and did not alter the original terms of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, adding that it was even more favorable than the resolution. According to Qassem, the agreement pertained only to the area south of the Litani River, and Hezbollah was committed to ensuring it would be successful. He added that Israel had nothing to do with the relations between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army (Radio al-Nour, December 5, 2024).

► Other senior Hezbollah figures accused Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement, warning that while the organization was committed to implementing the understandings, it was also prepared to escalate beyond the "warning shot" fired at the IDF post on Mount Dov:

- ◆ Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's Political Council, claimed the rocket fired at the IDF post on Mount Dov was a response to Israeli attacks on civilians. He claimed that the mechanism established to oversee the ceasefire "lacks clarity," accusing the United States of "turning a blind eye" and allowing Israel to act without restraint. While expressing dissatisfaction with the oversight mechanism, Qamati

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<sup>2</sup> For further information, see the December 2024 ITIC report, "[The Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Agreement – The Lebanese Point of View.](#)"

claimed that Hezbollah continued to cooperate, but warned that their patience would not last indefinitely. He warned that the "resistance" [Hezbollah] could attack again and escalate to firing both short- and long-range rockets (al-Mayadeen, December 4, 2024).

◆ Raed Berro, a Hezbollah faction member of the Lebanese Parliament, accused Israel of repeatedly violating the agreement while attempting to achieve objectives it had not attained before the ceasefire. He said Hezbollah would not take such violations lightly and its response would be geared to Lebanon's interests. Regarding coordination between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Army, he claimed stated it had never ceased (Sputnik News Agency, December 4, 2024).

◆ Hassan Izz al-Din, a Hezbollah faction member of the Lebanese Parliament, claimed the organization adhered to its commitments, unlike "the enemy, which continues its violations, prompting the resistance to issue an initial warning against further violations." He added that the "resistance's" patience had limits and it would not accept "the forcing of a new situation on the ground." He called on the committee overseeing the implementation of the agreement to "meet its responsibility by deterring the enemy and ensuring its compliance" (al-'Ahed, December 8, 2024).

► The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar reported that the organization deliberately operated in the Shebaa Farms area, which is not covered by Resolution 1701. The newspaper claimed that Israel, with American support, sought to expand its "zone of aggression" while Lebanon and the "resistance" wanted to adapt to the agreement. The paper claimed that Hezbollah did not want escalation, as opposed to Israel and its allies, which were "doing everything" to destabilize the regional situation (al-Akhbar, December 3, 2024).

## The Lebanese government

► On December 2, 2024, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, met with the chairman of the ceasefire oversight committee, American Army Major General Jasper Jeffers, to discuss the committee's activities. Mikati noted the need for full adherence to the ceasefire and ensuring the withdrawal of the "enemy" from Lebanese territories (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, December 2, 2024). On December 5, 2024, Mikati met with the French representative on the committee, Guillaume Ponchin. Mikati stressed the importance of implementing the ceasefire, halting [alleged] Israeli "violations," ensuring the withdrawal of the Israeli army and strengthening the deployment of the Lebanese Army in south Lebanon (Lebanese News Agency, December 5, 2024).



**Mikati meets with Jeffers (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, December 2, 2024)**

► On December 7, 2024, the Lebanese government held an ad hoc meeting in Tyre. Mikati called on the international community to act seriously and with determination to halt the "enemy's ongoing violations and [ensure its] withdrawal from the territories it occupies." He urged the international community to contribute to implementing the ceasefire to achieve permanent stability (al-Nashra, December 7, 2024).

► Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, condemned [alleged] Israeli "violations" and criticized the conduct of the oversight committee. He called on the committee to fulfill its role by holding Israel accountable, halting its "violations" and ensuring its withdrawal from Lebanon (al-'Ahed, December 2, 2024).

► "Sources in the Lebanese government" said no one understood why the oversight committee's work had been delayed, questioning whether the "delay is intentional to allow Israel to use the ceasefire period to complete what it failed to achieve during the war." According to the report, the Lebanese government intends to request that the oversight committee pressure Israel to stop demolishing homes in Lebanese villages and to expedite the withdrawal of IDF forces from villages and towns in south Lebanon, making it possible for the villagers to return before the end of the 60-day period (al-Akhbar, December 5, 2024).

## **The Lebanese army**

► According to reports, Lebanese Army soldiers returned to their posts in the Shebaa area, from which they had withdrawn at the start of Israel's ground maneuvers in Lebanon. It was noted that the soldiers resumed their positions even before a full Israeli withdrawal and the implementation of the provision regarding entry into border towns (al-Manar, December 4, 2024).

► "Informed sources" stated that the deployment of Lebanese Army forces in the south would occur at one time rather than gradually as in the past. It was also reported that there was full

cooperation between the Lebanese Army and Hezbollah, including a meeting between Army Commander General Joseph Aoun and Hezbollah's liaison unit chief, Wafiq Safa (al-Akhbar, December 6, 2024).

► On December 6, 2024, the chairman of the Quintet Oversight Committee, American Army Major General Jasper Jeffers, the French representative Guillaume Ponchin, the commander of the Lebanese Army's South Litani sector, and Lebanon's representative on the committee, Brigadier General Edgar Lawandos, conducted an aerial inspection of the area south of the Litani to assess the situation on the ground (Lebanese Army X account, December 6, 2024).

► Ziad al-Makari, Lebanese minister of information, said the government had approved a plan to deploy the Lebanese Army south of the Litani River. He noted that the army had begun sending forces to south Lebanon and required a large amount of equipment and support (al-Nashra, December 7, 2024).

## Hezbollah

### Speech by Na'im Qassem

► On December 5, 2024, Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general, delivered a speech in which he related to the ceasefire, the uprising in Syria, the issue of displaced persons and Hezbollah's role in Lebanon's reconstruction (Radio al-Nour, December 5, 2024):

- ◆ Qassem praised the organization's fighting in the war against Israel, emphasizing that "the resistance exists and will continue to excel," and would examine the "crises" and the war to learn lessons.
- ◆ He said that providing shelter for the displaced and reconstruction were promises made by former secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and Hezbollah would abide by them. He said that so far Hezbollah had paid \$57 million toward reconstruction, mostly funded by Iranian contributions, and pledged that Hezbollah would cooperate with the government and state authorities in the reconstruction.
- ◆ He said that anyone whose house had been completely destroyed would receive between \$4,000 and \$8,000 to pay rent for one year, depending on the property's location. Furthermore, homes that were destroyed would be rebuilt at the expense of the Lebanese government, with Hezbollah assisting in the process.



**Na'im Qassem gives a speech**  
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, December 5, 2024)

► According to reports, Hezbollah's Jihad al-Bina Association proposed a comprehensive reconstruction plan, in which there would be three categories of damages: fully destroyed housing units, units requiring structural repairs and units with minor damage. In addition, 20 reconstruction centers were established to assess the extent of the damages (al-Jadeed, December 2, 2024). According to a statement from Hezbollah in the Beqa'a region, engineering teams and senior figures were conducting field surveys and had begun paying \$12,000 to owners of homes which had been destroyed. After appraisals had been carried out, residents whose homes had been damaged would receive payments from Hezbollah's financial institution, al-Qard al-Hassan (Telegram channel of Sinema, Hezbollah's social network, December 4, 2024).



**Hezbollah announcement of the property appraisers' activities in the Beqa'a**  
(Telegram channel of Sinema, Hezbollah's social network, December 4, 2024)

## Hezbollah casualties

► According to reports, Hezbollah began preparing an official count of its fatalities during the fighting, but the process is expected to take a long time as the estimated death toll stands at between 3,500 and 4,000, in addition to more than 10,000 injured. After the Second Lebanon

War in 2006, Hezbollah needed three months to complete lists of approximately 260 fatalities (Lebanon 24, December 4, 2024).

► This past week Hezbollah began holding funerals for dozens of its operatives killed in the fighting against Israel. Social media shared videos from villages in south Lebanon showing processions of coffins draped in Hezbollah flags, accompanied by large crowds of local residents (Aram News, December 7, 2024).



**Coffins of Hezbollah terrorist operatives (Mohamaddsyrien's X account, December 7, 2024)**

► According to reports, Hezbollah intends to postpone the official funeral for former secretary general Hassan Nasrallah until after a new Lebanese president has been elected and the security situation stabilizes. Hezbollah plans to invite presidents and key figures from Lebanon and abroad to the funeral (Lebanon Debate, December 3, 2024).

► A public funeral for Nasrallah is planned following the official one, which will serve as a referendum for the "resistance" (al-Diyar, December 3, 2024). Meanwhile, videos were posted of the grave of Hashem Safi al-Din, head of Hezbollah's Executive Council, who had been expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah but was killed in an Israeli strike on October 3, 2024.



**Hashem Safi al-Din's grave (Amal Yassin's X account, December 7, 2024)**

## Hezbollah activity after the war

► According to "sources familiar with United States intelligence," Hezbollah is expected to attempt to rebuild itself despite the severe damage inflicted by Israel. According to the

"sources," the organization has begun recruiting new operatives and is exploring ways to rearm through local production and smuggling via Syria. However, "sources in Lebanon" reported that Hezbollah's current priority is rebuilding the destroyed homes in south Lebanon (Reuters, December 4, 2024).

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar, related the fall of the Syrian regime, stating that opponents of Bashar al-Assad were mistaken if they thought his downfall would provide an opportunity to undermine the "resistance" [Hezbollah] in Lebanon. He added that the opponents were assuming that any new government in Syria would be hostile to Hezbollah and believed that would make it possible for them to impose their domestic political agenda. He said that even after Assad's fall, the most severe challenge remained the "killing machine that continues to kill the Palestinian people and tries to impose, through fire, a type of cessation of war in Lebanon." According to al-Amin, the outcomes of the confrontation after the start of Operation al-Aqsa Flood on October 7, 2023, showed that "resistance" was the only way to counter the "killing machine" (al-Akhbar, December 9, 2024).

### **Hezbollah's Qard al-Hassan renews its activity**

► It was reported that the al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's central financial institution, had resumed operations, after its offices and branches across Lebanon were targeted by the IDF during the fighting. A "legal source" in Lebanon said that the association's activities were in violation of Lebanese law, as it lacked a license and did not operate under the supervision of Lebanon's central bank (al-Sharq al-Awsat, December 5, 2024). Al-Qard al-Hassan branch managers said that reopening the branches represented another victory for the "resistance," asserting that while Israel attempted to force Hezbollah to collapse, it was recovering quickly (al-Manar, December 2, 2024).

### **Criticism of Hezbollah**

► Samir Geagea, chairman of the Lebanese Forces Party, addressed the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria and its potential implications for Lebanon and Hezbollah. He claimed that over the past 50 years, the rule of Hafez and Bashar al-Assad was the greatest obstacle to building a state in Lebanon, as the Syrian regime "fostered the situation that has accompanied us for 35 years, portraying Hezbollah not as an armed organization but as a 'resistance'." According to Geagea, "If I had to call someone to congratulate them on Assad's fall, I would call Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah's secretary general, and tell him that we all need to return to Lebanon." He



added, "The game is over, and the only logical thing to do that can protect us all is to establish a real state in Lebanon." He noted that the Lebanese people would not agree to turn back the clock and Hezbollah had to prepare to commit to disarming. He warned that if Hezbollah did not comply, the government would need to take decisive action, and if it failed to do so, alternative steps would be considered (MTV Lebanon, December 8, 2024).

## The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

► On December 2, 2024, the Jerusalem Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), announced the deaths of four operatives who were "engaged in resisting aggression against Lebanon," two from the organization's Syria branch and two from its Lebanon branch (Jerusalem Brigades combat information Telegram channel, December 2, 2024).

► On December 5, 2024, the Jerusalem Brigades announced the deaths of three additional operatives from the organization's Syria branch who were "on the borders of occupied Palestine participating in the confrontation against aggression on Lebanon" (Jerusalem Brigades combat information Telegram channel, December 5, 2024).

## Lebanon

### Casualties

► On December 4, 2024, the Lebanese ministry of health reported that since the outbreak of fighting on October 8, 2023, the death toll in Lebanon stood at 4,047, with 16,638 injured. According to the ministry, 2,941 of the deceased were men, though it was not specified how many were Hezbollah operatives or members of other so-called "armed groups." According to Firas al-Abiad, Lebanese minister of health, the data were collected from hospitals, ambulance teams and local authorities, but noted that there were still fatalities buried under the rubble and the final numbers would be higher. He noted the need to document daily events during the fighting, as a significant portion of them could be considered "war crimes," and those responsible had to be held accountable (Lebanese ministry of health website, December 4, 2024).

### Reconstructing Lebanon

► On December 7, 2024, the Lebanese government held an ad hoc meeting in Tyre and approved an advance of 4 trillion Lebanese pounds (approximately \$44,640,400) for clearing debris caused by IDF strikes.

► According to reports, the fighting caused damage to at least one third of Lebanon's territory, not just the south. According to unofficial estimates, the number of housing units affected in Lebanon reached 100,000, half of which were completely demolished. According to estimates, 417 buildings in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, comprising between 8,300 and 12,500 apartments, were entirely destroyed. The government is reportedly developing an infrastructure and housing reconstruction plan, using satellite imagery to compare the condition of buildings before and after the fighting to assess damages and calculate costs (Lebanon 24, December 7, 2024).

► According to an "Arab diplomat in Beirut," it is unrealistic to expect Gulf States to assist in Lebanon's reconstruction, as aid is directly tied to the political situation in Lebanon. He stated that there was no chance of support being provided if Hezbollah or those under its influence dictated how the funding was allocated (al-Anbaa, December 2, 2024).

## Attacks on Hezbollah in Syria

### Senior Hezbollah operative eliminated in Syria

► According to reports, on December 3, 2024, an "Israeli strike" targeted a vehicle near Damascus International Airport, killing one person (Syrian State News Agency and al-Mayadeen, December 3, 2024). "Sources" identified the deceased as Salman Jumaa, Hezbollah's liaison officer in the Syrian military (al-Hadath, December 3, 2024). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that Salman Nimr Jumaa, Hezbollah envoy to the Syrian military, was eliminated in an airstrike in Damascus. He was a key Hezbollah figure in the Syrian military apparatus, responsible for transferring weapons to Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, December 3, 2024).

### Israel attacks along the Syria-Lebanon border

► On December 6, 2024, there were reports of an "Israeli aggression" in the al-Qusayr area near the Lebanon-Syria border (Sham FM Radio, December 6, 2024). There was a report of an explosion on the outskirts of Damascus, allegedly caused by Syrian air defenses intercepting an "enemy UAV" (Sputnik, December 6, 2024). In addition, a strike was reported on a border crossing in Akkar, on the western Lebanon-Syria border, causing infrastructure damage and severing the road connecting Syria and Lebanon (Lebanese News Agency, December 6, 2024). Ali Hamieh, Lebanon's minister of transport and public works, said the strikes targeted a crossing in northern Lebanon and one in eastern Lebanon (Reuters, December 6, 2024). The IDF spokesperson confirmed strikes on weapons transfer routes and terrorist infrastructure

near the border crossings, which were used to transfer arms to Hezbollah. The objective of the strikes was to weaken the capabilities of Unit 4400, Hezbollah's unit responsible for smuggling weapons (IDF spokesperson, December 6, 2024).



**Right: The IDF attack near the Syria-Lebanon border (IDF spokesperson, December 6, 2024). Left: The destruction of the border crossing in northern Lebanon (Jenan Syria X account, December 6, 2024).**