



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria October 14 - 28 ,2024

Overview¹

- ▶ The IDF forces continued maneuvering in south Lebanon, eliminating hundreds of Hezbollah terrorist operatives, locating and destroying facilities hidden in civilian sites, and locating large quantities of weapons. The Israeli Air Force continued airstrikes on Hezbollah targets in Beirut and other locations, killing senior Hezbollah leaders and field operatives in targeted attacks. Twenty-one IDF soldiers were killed in fighting in south Lebanon.
- ▶ Over the past two weeks Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 400 attacks on civilian, military and security targets in Israel and on IDF forces in south Lebanon. Rockets were fired and missiles and drones were launched at targets in northern Israel and deeper into the country, as far as south as the greater the Tel Aviv area, including the prime minister's private residence in Caesarea, IDF bases and defense industry sites. An IDF soldier and a civilian were killed, and significant property damage was reported.
- ▶ Hezbollah confirmed that Hashem Safi al-Din, head of Hezbollah's Executive Council, was killed in an Israeli strike in early October 2024.
- ▶ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, said the organization's goal was to cause Israel pain and suffering, claiming that the Israelis displaced from their homes in northern Israel would not return before a ceasefire. According to reports, Hezbollah will choose a new secretary general only after the fighting ends, in the meantime relying on a shared leadership.
- ▶ Lebanese authorities reported that over 2,653 people had been killed in Lebanon since the start of the fighting on October 8, 2023, and approximately 1.3 million people were displaced. Lebanon's ministry of the economy noted that so far the war has cost Lebanon \$20 billion and was expected to rise.
- ▶ Senior figures in the Lebanese government continued to call for a ceasefire and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. According to reports, Nabih Berri, the

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

speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, who also represents Hezbollah in negotiations, expressed support for separating the fighting in Lebanon from the fighting in the Gaza Strip.

► The Lebanese Army announced the deaths of six officers and soldiers caused by Israeli strikes. UNIFIL reported that their forces were caught in the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

► In an attack on Damascus, the IDF eliminated the new commander of Hezbollah's Unit 4400, responsible for financial operations and weapons smuggling. The IDF continued attacking Syria-Lebanon border crossings used for smuggling weapons.

The Fighting in Lebanon

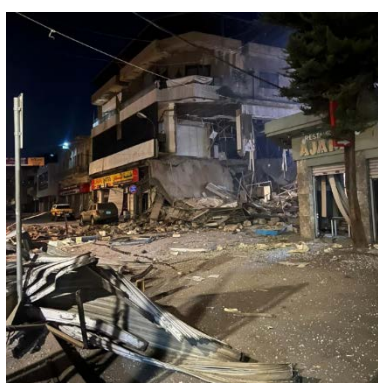
► IDF forces continued maneuvers in south Lebanon, eliminating hundreds of terrorist operatives with airstrikes and on the ground. They located and destroyed terrorist facilities in civilian sites, and exposed large quantities of weapons, including rocket launchers, mortars, anti-tank missiles aimed at northern Israeli cities, towns and villages, firearms, grenades and other military equipment. The Israeli Air Force continued attacking Hezbollah targets in the Dahiye al-Janoubia in Beirut and throughout Lebanon, including command centers and weapons-manufacturing and storage sites, and killed senior Hezbollah terrorist operatives and foot soldiers. Twenty-one IDF soldiers were killed in fighting in south Lebanon: Here are the key developments:

◆ **Locating underground facilities in south Lebanon:** On October 26, 2024, the IDF destroyed a 1.5-kilometer strategic underground Hezbollah military facility in south Lebanon, which was equipped for extended stays with various weapons (IDF spokesperson, October 26, 2024). On October 19, 2024, four underground Hezbollah facilities were destroyed, including a Radwan Force headquarters containing space for storing weapons, equipment for prolonged stays, motorcycles, living quarters and ammunition (IDF spokesperson, October 19, 2024). The IDF also located an 800-meter long Radwan Force underground headquarters in south Lebanon situated in a civilian neighborhood. It was equipped with large quantities of weapons intended for use in the operation to occupy the Galilee (IDF spokesperson, October 14, 2024).



**Right: Weapons discovered by IDF forces in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, October 24, 2024).
Left: Destruction of an underground tunnel in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, October 19, 2024)**

◆ **Attacks on sites where Hezbollah stored funds:** On the night of October 20, 2024, the IDF carried out dozens of airstrikes on Hezbollah headquarters and sites used to store funds for its military wing. The strikes targeted assets of the al-Qard al-Hasan Association,² Hezbollah's financial arm, which supplies Hezbollah the funds to purchase weapons and pay salaries to military operatives (IDF spokesperson, October 21, 2024).



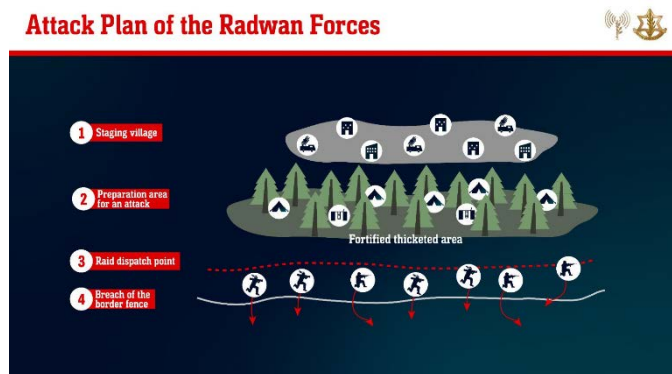
A branch of the al-Qard al-Hasan Association attacked in the Ba'albek market (Right: Future TV News X account, October 20, 2024.. Left: al-Araby TV X account, October 21, 2024)

◆ **Eliminating Hezbollah terrorist operatives:** The IDF continued eliminating Hezbollah operatives, including regional commanders in south Lebanon and members of its air wing (IDF spokesperson, October 14-26, 2024). According to the IDF spokesperson, during the operations in south Lebanon (as of October 21, 2024), the IDF eliminated at least seven Hezbollah brigade commanders, 21 battalion commanders, and 24 company commanders (IDF spokesperson, October 21, 2024).

² For further information, see the May 2019 ITIC report, "[Hezbollah's socioeconomic foundations: al-Qard al-Hasan, a quasi-bank that provides interest-free loans, mainly to members of the Shiite community.](#)"

Exposure of Radwan Force activities

On October 24, 2024, the IDF exposed how Hezbollah's Radwan Force was arrayed in south Lebanon. It established facilities in areas near the Israeli border fence, transforming civilian villages into fortified military strongholds, and from there advanced towards the fence, turning the areas into fortified attack zones camouflaged by dense vegetation. There they situated means for raids on communities in northern Israel, including weapons, explosives and motorcycles. During IDF operations in the village of Mhaibib in south Lebanon, the forces uncovered an extensive Radwan Force underground headquarters hidden under homes in the village. There were entry shafts leading to a long tunnel network, reinforced with concrete and containing facilities for prolonged stays, including sleeping quarters, kitchens, food supplies, showers, motorcycles and large quantities of weapons, all part of deployment for attacking Israel (IDF spokesperson, October 24, 2024).



**Radwan Force plan to attack Israeli, based on IDF discoveries in south Lebanon
(IDF spokesperson, October 24, 2024)**

Hezbollah

Attacks

► This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 400 attacks on military, security and civilian targets in Israel and IDF forces in south Lebanon, using anti-tank missiles, artillery shells, drones, UAVs, precision missiles, various types of rockets, anti-aircraft missiles targeting Air Force aircraft, and attack IDF forces in south Lebanon with explosive devices and gunfire. Hezbollah also claimed responsibility for attacks on various IDF bases and Israeli military and defense industries. Hezbollah also claimed to have downed two Israeli Air Force Hermes-450 UAVs (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 14-28, 2024). One IDF reservist and three civilians were killed by rocket and UAV strikes in the north, and extensive property damage was reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, October 14-28, 2024):

◆ **New weapons:** On October 16, 2024, Hezbollah announced the first use of the Qader 2 missile to attack the greater Tel Aviv area. According to a Hezbollah video, the Qader 2 is a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 250 kilometers and capable of carrying a 405 kg warhead (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 16, 2024). On October 21, 2024, Hezbollah announced the use of Nasser 2 ballistic missile to attack the city of Haifa. According to Hezbollah, the Nasser 2 is a precision surface-to-surface missile with a diameter of 302 mm, a range of 150 km and a 140 kg warhead (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 21, 2024).



Right: Qader 2 missile moments before launch (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 23, 2024). Left: Launch of a Nasser 2 missile (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 25, 2024)

◆ **Attack on the prime minister's residence:** On the morning of October 19, 2024, a UAV launched from Lebanon struck the private residence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Caesarea. The prime minister and his family were not present and no one was injured, but the building was damaged (Israeli media, October 19 and 22, 2024). Hezbollah did not address the attack in its claims of responsibility, but on October 22, 2024, Mahmoud Afif, Hezbollah's head of media information, confirmed that Hezbollah took "full and exclusive responsibility for the attack on the criminal's [sic] home," claiming Hezbollah would try to kill him again (al-Manar, October 22, 2024).

Hezbollah casualties

► On October 23, 2024, Hezbollah announced the death of Hashem Safi al-Din, head of Hezbollah's Executive Council, referring to him as "a martyr killed on the road to Jerusalem" during a "Zionist attack."³ According to the mourning notice Hezbollah issued for him, he had devoted most of his life to serving Hezbollah and the "Islamic resistance," and managed the

³ Since September 30, 2024, Hezbollah has not issued the names of its operatives who were killed by the IDF, which it had done since October 8, 2023.

Executive Council and other "resistance" institutions and units. The organization also committed to continuing on the path of "resistance" and jihad until their goals were achieved in "freedom and victory" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 23, 2024).

► Hezbollah's issued its mourning notice after the IDF's October 22 confirmation that Hashem Safi al-Din, who was slated to succeed Hassan Nasrallah as Hezbollah secretary general, was killed in an airstrike on Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in the Dahiye al-Janoubia in Beirut during the night of October 3, 2024. According to the IDF, 25 other senior Hezbollah commanders and operatives were also killed in the strike, including Hussein Ali al-Zima, head of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters; Bilal Saeb Ayash, head of aerial intelligence; and Mahmoud Mohammed Shahin, head of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in Syria (IDF spokesperson, October 22, 2024). Channels affiliated with Hezbollah reported on the death of Hussein Ali al-Zima, aka al-Hajj Murtada, referring to him as the "great jihad commander," a title previously given to only four senior Hezbollah officials: Fuad Shukur, Ali Kraki, Ibrahim Aqil, and Suhail Hussein Hussayni (Qalaat Al Mudiq Telegram Channel, October 24, 2024).



Right: Hashem Safi al-Din's "identity card" (IDF spokesperson, October 22, 2024). Left: Hezbollah's mourning notice for Hashem Safi al-Din (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 23, 2024)

Na'im Qassem delivers a speech

► On October 15, 2024, Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, delivered his third televised speech since the killing of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general on September 27, 2024 (al-Manar, October 15, 2024):

- ◆ **Hezbollah's achievements in the fighting:** Qassem noted Hezbollah's ongoing confrontation with IDF forces in south Lebanon, claiming the indicated the organization's high capabilities against a regular army. He added that while Israel attacked in Lebanon, Hezbollah reserved the right to strike any point in Israel it chose,

noting that "the missiles reach Haifa and beyond, as Nasrallah wished," including Tel Aviv.

◆ **Israel's attacks do not harm Hezbollah:** Qassem claimed that all Hezbollah's command centers remained operational and that every center had replacements. He also emphasized Hezbollah had strong fighters, was united with the Amal Movement and had other allies.

◆ **Separating the fighting in Lebanon from the fighting in the Gaza Strip:** He said Hezbollah refused to separate the two fronts, claiming Hezbollah supported the "to protect them and our lands" and to narrow Israel's "expansion project."

◆ **Justification for fighting Israel:** He argued that Israel officially occupied Lebanon in 1982 and only withdrew 18 years later thanks to the Lebanese "resistance." He claimed Hezbollah's "resistance" was defensive and that the organization's goal was to protect future generations for centuries to come.

◆ **A new phase in the war:** He said that Israel's escalation, which began on September 17, 2024, with the exploding pager, marked a transition to direct war with Israel, not just support for Gaza. He noted that after Israel launched maneuvers in south Lebanon, Hezbollah implemented a new "pain and suffering" equation for Israel, forcing millions of Israelis into shelters and hitting targets deep inside.

◆ **A message for Israel:** He said that without a ceasefire, Israelis displaced from the north of the country would not be able to return home. He warned that as the war continued the number of abandoned towns would grow, endangering hundreds of thousands or "potentially millions" of people.

◆ **Messages for the Lebanese public:** He called Hezbollah fighters "the hope of Lebanon" and assured them of Hezbollah's support and confidence in their abilities. He told the Lebanese people, "We are together," blaming Israel for ruining everyone's lives and urging unity for the nation. He expressed "gratitude" to the Shi'ites and the displaced persons for their sacrifice, calling them "one family" and asking for patience, promising to "rebuild everything better than it was before. We will not abandon you, just as you have not abandoned us."

Statements from Hassan Fadlallah

► Hassan Fadlallah, a Hezbollah member of the Lebanese Parliament, claimed the "enemy" wanted a war which would "eliminate the resistance," but the "resistance" remained firm. He

claimed the "enemy" had failed to achieve any of its objectives and had not occupied a single village in south Lebanon. He also claimed Hezbollah would "avenge, fight and prevent the attainment of the goals of aggression, would rebuild homes on the border: those are the goals of the resistance." He said that Hezbollah coordinated with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, who was working to promote a ceasefire along with Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government (al-Mayadeen, October 17, 2024).

Media commentary

► "Well-informed sources" reported that the election of a new Hezbollah secretary general had been postponed and might only be held after a ceasefire had been reached, as the Shura Council was currently unable to convene. According to the sources, any secretary general who was appointed would be a direct target for assassination, as Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, had already been added to Israel's target list because of his speeches, even though he was not a candidate for the position of secretary general. The sources added that Hezbollah would most likely rely on joint leadership in the near future, as it had since Nasrallah's death. They also mentioned that several candidates for the position, Na'im Qassem, or Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, chairman of the political council, or a so far unknown figure, since there was still time before a decision had to be made (al-Nashra, October 26, 2024).

► "Sources familiar with the details" noted that Hezbollah's organizational infrastructure remained intact despite significant blows, and that the battles in south Lebanon demonstrated that its military forces were also still operational. They added that Hezbollah's political leadership controlled and managed the campaign, and would rely on joint leadership until the fighting ends (Asas Media, October 26, 2024).

► The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily newspaper al-Akhbar published a series of articles entitled "Tel Aviv in the resistance's crosshairs." One article claimed that Israel and the United States were determined to achieve political gains to compensate for Israel's failure to force Hezbollah to surrender. Therefore, the article suggested, Hezbollah had to make the "enemy" understand that its capabilities had not been significantly affected and that Israel's insistence on political achievements would turn the center of Israel and the greater Tel Aviv area into near-daily targets for attacks. It also stated that, judging by the increase in Hezbollah's operations, which hit far inside Israel, the weapons Hezbollah used and the results, the range

of the coming attacks would be greater than it had experienced so far (al-Akhbar, October 14, 2024).

Psychological Warfare

► On October 26, 2024, Hezbollah released a one-minute video of 25 towns in northern Israel within 25 kilometers of the border which Hezbollah stated had not been evacuated. The video ended with a warning to residents to leave their homes "immediately" as IDF forces were [allegedly] organizing attacks against Lebanon from the locations, designating the towns as "legitimate military targets" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 26, 2024). On October 27, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for firing rocket barrages at Kiryat Shmona and Nahariya, stating that the attacks were within the boundaries of the warning issued to several northern "settlements" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 27, 2024).



From Hezbollah's video to northern "settlers"
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 26, 2024)

► On October 16, 2024, Hezbollah released a video almost two minutes long entitled "Haifa will be like Kiryat Shmona and Metula." It showed depicted a force of Hezbollah operatives approaching Israel on foot, with motorcycles and in ATVs as part of a ground invasion, accompanied by rocket launches into Israeli territory (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 16, 2024).



**From the video "Haifa will be like Kiryat Shmona and Metula"
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, October 16, 2024)**

Criticism of Hezbollah

► With the escalation in the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah and the heavy losses within Hezbollah's leadership, opposition voices within Lebanon have grown louder, calling to end the war and disarm Hezbollah:

- ◆ Samir Geagea, leader of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party, called for Hezbollah's disarmament (al-Jazeera in Arabic, October 23, 2024).
- ◆ Razi al-Hajj, a member of the Lebanese Parliament representing from the Lebanese Forces, urged the Lebanese government to engage in a dialogue with Hezbollah for it to move its military commanders and weapons caches away from civilian areas. He noted that the tragedies suffered by Lebanese society resulted from Hezbollah's use of civilians as human shields (al-Hadath, October 15, 2024). On another occasion he said Hezbollah had not brought its missiles "from the moon" but through border crossings that Lebanon should have closed. He accused Hezbollah of building tunnels, erecting roadblocks and infiltrating public services under the watchful eyes of Lebanon's elected authorities. Therefore, he argued, it was Lebanon's responsibility to tell Hezbollah, "Enough! Your policies, your strategies, and the unity of the fronts you keep talking about and choosing Iran are visiting disasters upon Lebanon" (MTV Channel, October 28, 2024).
- ◆ Nadim Gemayel, a member of the Lebanese Parliament representing the Christian Kataeb Party, also called for Hezbollah to be disarmed, urging the Shi'ite community to seize the opportunity to free itself from Hezbollah and its allegiance to Iran. He said Lebanon was at a crossroads, as Hezbollah's weapons and the "axis of resistance"⁴ had failed to protect Lebanon, its people or the Shi'ite community. He said that "only the

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

Lebanese state can protect Lebanon," and called for a genuine choice: a free Lebanon within its Arab regional environment, with a prosperous economy attractive to foreign investments. That, he argued, necessitated determination, courage, faith, and support (MTV Lebanon, October 23, 2024).

◆ Following the IDF's statement regarding Hezbollah's activities in the basement of al-Sahel Hospital in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, Christian journalist Sabine Youseff wondered why the Lebanese government had not sent the army and security forces to the hospital to locate the alleged half-billion dollars and use it to aid displaced persons or rebuild destroyed villages. She asked, "What frightens the state when Hezbollah is on the brink of collapse?" (Sabine Youseff's Facebook page, October 27, 2024).

The Situation in Lebanon

Casualties

► According to Lebanon's Ministry of Health, as of October 26, 2024, 2,672 people had been killed and 12,468 injured since the outbreak of fighting on October 8, 2023 (Lebanese ministry of health X account, October 27, 2024).

► Firas al-Abiad, Lebanese ministry of health, reported that authorities had documented 55 "Israeli" attacks on hospitals, with 36 hospitals targeted directly and eight forced to cease operations. He claimed that 151 people had been killed and 200 injured in various attacks on ambulances, bringing the total death toll in the healthcare sector to 163, with an additional 272 injured. He accused Israel of "direct and deliberate attacks on medical and emergency sites in Lebanon," calling the incidents "war crimes" which Israel could not claim were accidental (MTV Lebanon, October 25, 2024).

The displaced

► Nasser Yassin, Lebanon's interim minister of the environment and head of the national emergency coordination committee, reported that 343,404 Syrians citizens and 147,608 Lebanese left Lebanon for Syria. He added that 1,095 centers for displaced persons had been opened, 908 of them already at maximum capacity (Lebanese News Agency, October 22, 2024). He said that the total number of displaced persons in Lebanon was approximately 1.3 million, and the country needed \$250 million a month to manage the displacement crisis (Reuters, October 22, 2024).

Civilian assistance for Lebanon

► Amin Salam, Lebanese minister of the economy, stated the war had cost Lebanon \$20 billion so far, and he expected the figure to keep rising. He said over one-fifth of Lebanon's population had been displaced, with many fleeing to Syria. Even if a ceasefire were to go into effect immediately, he estimated that Lebanon would need at least three to five years to recover from the damage. He warned of an increased risk of social unrest, which could destabilize the entire region (Bloomberg, October 25, 2024). Meanwhile, "sources" reported that Lebanon had been placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) blacklist for insufficient action against money laundering and terrorism financing. That will lead to increased scrutiny of Lebanon's financial transactions, with the government required to address issues such as terrorism financing and lack of judicial independence by next year instead of 2026 (Reuters, October 25, 2024).

► On October 24, 2024, an international conference met in Paris to support Lebanon. The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily newspaper al-Akhbar reported that Lebanon had requested more than \$1.16 billion for humanitarian needs. The request included \$425 million prior to the conference, with an appeal to participants for an additional \$59.3 million to support displaced families during winter, \$5.5 million for civil protection, and \$672.1 million for the health, education, energy, water, transportation and environmental sectors (al-Akhbar, October 25, 2024). At the conclusion of the conference French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot announced that \$800 million had been raised for humanitarian aid and an additional \$200 million to support Lebanon's armed forces (Agence France-Presse, October 24, 2024).

The Lebanese Government and Contacts for a Ceasefire

► Senior Lebanese government and public figures have expressed a desire to work toward a ceasefire:

- ◆ On October 25, 2024, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, met in London with United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Mikati noted Lebanon's desire for a ceasefire to halt "Israeli aggression," especially given the 1.4 million displaced persons in Lebanon. He accused Israel of violating international law by targeting civilians, journalists and medical personnel. He also reaffirmed Lebanon's commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 without modifications, stressing that a genuine commitment from Israel for a ceasefire was needed (al-Nashra, October 25, 2024). Blinken reiterated America's commitment to a diplomatic resolution which

would fully implement Resolution 1701 and allow displaced persons in both Israel and Lebanon to return to their homes (United States Department of State website, October 25, 2024).



Mikati (left) and Blinken (al-Nashra, October 25, 2024)

- ◆ On October 23, 2024, Mikati met in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron to discuss the situation in Lebanon and France's efforts for a ceasefire. Mikati expressed his gratitude for Macron's continuous support and efforts to reach a ceasefire and halt the "aggression." Macron said that he would continue to work alongside the United States towards a ceasefire and to explore ways to exert pressure on Israel to achieve this goal (Mikati's X account, October 23, 2024).
- ◆ Mikati gave a speech at the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty held in Paris in which he claimed that Lebanon's commitment to recruiting additional Lebanese soldiers in accordance with Resolution 1701 showed its intention to implement the resolution. He said the step, which was essential for strengthening the Lebanese armed forces' ability to maintain regional stability and security, would require international support. He accused Israel of "aggression" which had displaced 1.2 million "civilians" and severely damaged Lebanon's infrastructure and economy, and condemned attack on medical personnel and UNIFIL forces (al-Nashra, October 24, 2024).
- ◆ Interviewed by al-Arabiya TV, Mikati said that a diplomatic solution remained possible and emphasized the need to deploy the Lebanese army in south Lebanon to implement Resolution 1701. He claimed that Hezbollah had agreed to the resolution but admitted that there had been no communication with the organization since mid-September 2024. Regarding the statement by Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of the Iranian Parliament, about Iran's willingness to negotiate with France on implementing Resolution 1701, Mikati said he had informed Iran's leadership to "lower its affection for

Lebanon," emphasizing that "no one will speak on behalf of Lebanon" (al-Arabiya TV, October 21, 2024).

- ◆ Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, said he had represented Hezbollah since 2006 and that the organization, along with all Lebanese, agreed on the importance of implementing Resolution 1701 and opposed amendments to it. He accused Israel of "destroying everything in Lebanon, as it does in Gaza" (al-Arabiya TV, October 20, 2024).

- ◆ Berri also discussed the situation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, briefing him on Israeli attacks on UNIFIL and the Lebanese army, which Berri labeled as "blatant violations of international laws and resolutions, primarily Resolution 1701." Abdelatty said Egypt stood by Lebanon and was committed to pursuing a ceasefire and implementing Resolution 1701 (al-Nashra, October 20, 2024).

- ◆ A "diplomatic source" said Berri had told Qatari and Egyptian representatives that Hezbollah was willing to separate the south Lebanon and Gaza fronts and accept Resolution 1701 "provided it is part of a package deal" (LBCI, October 27, 2024). Berri's office subsequently denied the report, while a "Lebanese political source" said that implementing Resolution 1701 as a condition for ending the war was now a thing of the past (al-Hadath, October 27, 2024).

- ◆ During a visit to Italy, Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, met with representatives of G-7 countries. He said that throughout history, the Lebanese people had been a "link between various nations and tread a path for peace and prosperity between East and West" and that they wanted solutions which would restore calm and stability. He noted Lebanon's primary interest in achieving an immediate ceasefire, stopping bloodshed, and implementing Resolution 1701, including the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Lebanese territories and the return of displaced persons on both sides of the border to their homes (al-Nashra, October 23, 2024).

Amos Hochstein visits Lebanon

► On October 21, 2024, American envoy Amos Hochstein visited Lebanon, meeting with senior officials in an effort to advance a ceasefire in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hezbollah:

- ◆ Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, told Hochstein that achieving a ceasefire and fully implementing Resolution 1701 were Lebanon's top

priorities, as they were the basis for restoring regional stability. Hochstein said that diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire were continuing and that the American administration supported the full implementation of Resolution 1701. He also called on all parties to work to reach mutual understandings for implementing the resolution (Lebanese prime minister's X account, October 21, 2024).

◆ Hochstein said the meeting with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, had been "very constructive." At a press conference Hochstein stated that the United States was collaborating with the governments of Lebanon and Israel to "find a formula that will end the confrontation between them once and for all." He added that merely committing to Security Council Resolution 1701 was insufficient and that "tying Lebanon's fate to other conflicts is not in the Lebanese people's interest" (Reuters, October 21, 2024).



Berri and Hochstein (left) (al-Nashra, October 21, 2024)

◆ According to "sources," Hochstein proposed to Berri implementing Resolution 1701 with an amendment to serve as a memorandum of understanding, establishing a mechanism responsible for its implementation. Reportedly, Berri agreed to the proposal and discussed the details with Hochstein. They also considered a 21-day ceasefire as a preliminary step toward a permanent ceasefire and the beginning of Resolution 1701's implementation. Sources noted that Berri described the meeting's atmosphere as more positive than he had expected (MTV Lebanon, October 21, 2024). However, "political sources" informed al-Mayadeen, a media outlet affiliated with Hezbollah and the "resistance axis," that Berri, who they claim fully represents Hezbollah, emphasized that Lebanon's position remained that Resolution 1701 should be implemented without any changes (al-Mayadeen, October 21, 2024).

◆ Other "sources" told Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of the Lebanese daily paper al-Akhbar and a close associate of Hassan Nasrallah, the late secretary general of

Hezbollah, that Hochstein proposed a new vision for Resolution 1701. The proposal reportedly includes modifications beyond its implementation, fundamentally altering the resolution itself. According to the sources, the intention exists to expand the powers of international forces north of the Litani River, allowing them to inspect suspicious locations and conduct surprise patrols without prior approval. Lebanese officials reportedly also want the UN to introduce a new mechanism ensuring an end to all forms of "Israeli violations." The sources claimed that Hochstein left the meetings with a negative impression and that no agreement was reached on the next steps, making it unlikely he would return to Lebanon before the United States presidential elections (al-Akhbar, October 22, 2024).

The Lebanese army

► The Lebanese Army announced the deaths of six soldiers in two separate incidents attributed to Israel:

- ◆ On October 20, 2024, three soldiers were killed in an "Israeli" attack on a military vehicle on the Ain Abil-Haneen road in south Lebanon (Lebanese Army X account, October 20, 2024).
- ◆ On October 24, 2024, the Lebanese Army accused Israel of killing an officer and two soldiers in an attack on army forces engaged in a medical evacuation on the outskirts of the town of Yater in the Bint Jbeil district (Lebanese Army X account, October 24, 2024).



Right: The three Lebanese Army soldiers killed on October 20. Left: The three soldiers killed on October 24 (Lebanese Army X account, October 21 and 24, 2024)

► On October 23, 2024, Lebanese Army Commander Joseph Aoun met with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in Beirut. They discussed the general situation in Lebanon and ways to support the Lebanese army in facing current challenges (Lebanese Army X account, October 24, 2024).

► On October 27, 2024, General Aoun visited Jordan, meeting with Jordanian Army Chief of Staff Yusuf Ahmed al-Hunaiti. They discussed cooperation and coordination in various fields and recent regional developments. Aoun expressed his appreciation for Jordan's role in supporting humanitarian aid efforts to Lebanon, while al-Hunaiti noted the importance of the strategic bilateral partnership and the need to intensify efforts to achieve regional peace and security (al-Mamlaka News website, October 27, 2024).

► At the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty held in Paris, Josep Borrell, EU foreign minister, announced that the EU would provide €60 million to the Lebanese Army over the next two years. He stated that €20 million would be allocated this year, with an additional €40 million next year (Reuters, October 24, 2024).

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL reported that its "peacekeeping soldiers" continued their work despite the dramatic escalation, although the security situation posed a significant challenge. There were several incidents where UNIFIL troops were caught in the crossfire (UNIFIL Telegram channel, October 25, 2024):

- ◆ On the morning of October 23, 2024, gunfire from an unknown source was directed at two UNIFIL medical teams arriving to evacuate a patient from Yarin. One vehicle was disabled and abandoned.
- ◆ On the evening of October 23, 2024, a medical facility at a UNIFIL post in Beit Lif was attacked by an artillery shell or rocket of unknown origin, causing structural damage. In addition, two artillery shells or rockets of unknown origin fell near a UNIFIL post in the village of Shebaa, damaging residential buildings and shelter areas. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ On October 22, 2024, UNIFIL soldiers stationed in an observation tower near al-Zahira observed IDF forces clearing nearby homes. The UNIFIL soldiers alleged that when the IDF soldiers noticed they were being observed, they fired at the tower, prompting UNIFIL soldiers to withdraw from the area.



Damage to residential structures at a UNIFIL post (UNIFIL Telegram channel, October 25, 2024)

- ▶ On October 20, 2024, UNIFIL claimed an IDF bulldozer had deliberately destroyed an observation post and a surrounding fence at UNIFIL's site in Marwahin. The IDF and all other actors were reminded of their obligation to ensure the safety of UN personnel and property and respect UN facilities (UNIFIL Telegram channel, October 20, 2024).
- ▶ On October 16, 2024, UNIFIL observers at a post near Kafr Qila reported seeing an Israeli tank fire at their observation tower, which destroyed two cameras and damaged the tower (UNIFIL Telegram channel, October 16, 2024).
- ▶ The UN Security Council "expressed concern" over incidents in which UNIFIL posts in south Lebanon were attacked and UNIFIL soldiers were injured. The Security Council called on all parties to respect the security of UN personnel in Lebanon, adhere to international humanitarian law and fully implement Resolution 1701 (Reuters, October 15, 2024).
- ▶ Candice Ardell, deputy UNIFIL information director, said that peacekeeping soldiers had the full right to defend themselves, though only in limited circumstances when their lives are at risk. She noted that UNIFIL personnel were often forced to remain in their posts and sometimes even in shelters, which restricted monitoring of Resolution 1701 violations. She said emphasized that UNIFIL's role was to report to the UN Security Council on incidents along the Blue Line (Israel-Lebanon border), not to favor any party (al-Nashra , October 24, 2024).
- ▶ Andrea Tenenti, spokesman for UNIFIL, stated that a diplomatic solution was now essential if UNIFIL soldiers were to be allowed to fulfill their mission. He noted the importance of UNIFIL's presence in south Lebanon and urged the UN Security Council to act to stop Resolution 1701 violations. He said that while UNIFIL troops can defend themselves, "violence begets violence" (al-Jadeed, October 19, 2024).

- ▶ Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN deputy secretary general for peace operations and head of UNIFIL, said UNIFIL would maintain its positions in Lebanon despite calls from Israel to withdraw and despite injuries to five soldiers (Agence France-Presse, October 14, 2024).
- ▶ The German Defense Ministry reported that a German warship operating for UNIFIL intercepted a UAV off the Lebanese coast on October 17, 2024. According to a UNIFIL spokesman, the UAV approached from the south, circling the German vessel and coming within meters of it (Reuters, October 18, 2024). The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily newspaper al-Akhbar reported the UAV belonged to the "resistance" and was en route to Israel. The paper described the interception as unprecedented, accusing UNIFIL soldiers of failing to act similarly when IDF forces attacked their posts (al-Akhbar, October 18, 2024).

Syria

Elimination of the commander of Hezbollah's Unit 4400

- ▶ On the afternoon of October 21, 2024, a vehicle in the al-Mazza neighborhood of Damascus was attacked. A "Syrian military source" reported that two people were killed and three injured in an "Israeli" guided missile attack targeting a civilian vehicle (Syrian ministry of defense Facebook page and Sabereen News Telegram channel, October 21, 2024). The attack reportedly killed Ali Hassan Ghraib, aka Ayman Abu Hassan, the head of Hezbollah's Unit 4400, responsible for Hezbollah's "financial activities" and arms smuggling (Damash Post X account, October 22, 2024). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that the IDF had targeted the Unit 4400 commander in Syria, following the targeted killing of his predecessor, Muhammad Jaafar Qusayr, in Beirut in early October 2024 (IDF spokesperson, October 21, 2024).



Ali Hassan Ghraib (Baraa Abd al-Rahman's X account, October 22, 2024)

Syria-Lebanon border crossing attacks

- ▶ On the night of October 24, 2024, the IDF conducted an airstrike on a Hezbollah facility at the Jousiyah border crossing in northern Beqa'a. According to the IDF spokesperson, Hezbollah

planned to use the crossing to smuggle weapons (IDF spokesperson, October 25, 2024). Ali Hamieh, Lebanese transport minister, said the attack occurred only a few hundred meters from a Syrian defense ministry office, leading to the suspension of operations at the al-Qaa (Jousiyah) border crossing, leaving only one active border crossing between Lebanon and Syria (Lebanese national news agency, October 25, 2024).

► On October 26, 2024, an additional Israeli strike targeted the Matrabah border crossing near Homs. According to one report, three people were killed and seven wounded, while according to another two Syrian soldiers were killed and five injured (al-Mayadeen, October 26, 2024; Syria News website, October 27, 2024).

Other attacks attributed to Israel

► This past week other attacks on Hezbollah and Iranian-affiliated targets in Syria were attributed to Israel:

◆ Before dawn on October 17, 2024, explosions were reported near the city of Latakia in western Syria. A "Syrian military source" claimed the "Israeli enemy launched an aerial aggression" from the Mediterranean toward the southeastern entrance to the city. The source stated that two civilians had been injured and property damage reported (Syrian ministry of defense Facebook page, October 17, 2024). Another report claimed the target was a weapons depot in Latakia (Sawt al-Asima Telegram channel, October 17, 2024).

◆ Before dawn on October 24, 2024, explosions were reported in Damascus following an attack on a residential building in the Kafr Sousa neighborhood (Syrian TV Telegram channel, October 24, 2024). A "Syrian military source" stated that the "aerial aggression" came from the "occupied Syrian Golan" and northern Lebanon, affecting two sites in Kafr Sousa, Damascus and a military site in the suburbs of Homs. According to the source, one military personnel was killed, seven were injured, and property damage was reported (Syrian TV Telegram channel, October 24, 2024).

International Action Against Hezbollah

► The United States Treasury Department imposed sanctions on three Lebanese individuals and four companies involved in a Hezbollah financing network which bypassed sanctions. The three individuals, Silvana Atwi, Haidar Husam al-Din Abd al-Ghaffar, and Husam Hassan Hamadi, belong to Hezbollah's economic team. They registered the sanctioned companies in their own names to conceal Hezbollah's involvement in business activities that generated revenue for the organization (United States Treasury Department, October 16, 2024).

► The Treasury Department also imposed sanctions on two Syrians and one Lebanese linked to Hezbollah and the Syrian Army's Fourth Division, involved in the production and distribution of the drug Captagon, generate revenue for Hezbollah and the Syrian regime (United States Treasury Department, October 16, 2024).