

Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah July 7 – 14, 2025

Overview

- ▶ IDF forces attacked Hezbollah facilities from the air and on the ground and eliminated operatives as part of ongoing operations to counter Hezbollah's presence in south Lebanon, a violation of the ceasefire understandings, and against the organization's attempts to rebuild its arsenal and power. The IDF attacked a military headquarters, destroyed underground facilities, and eliminated Hezbollah operatives, an operative of the Iranian Qods Force and a senior Hamas figure in Lebanon.
- ▶ A senior Hezbollah figure claimed that Israel was targeting the "simple" operatives because it was no longer able to attack the organization's leaders. Meanwhile, Hezbollah was reportedly on high alert and had evacuated some of its leaders and centers, fearing of a large-scale Israeli attack.
- ▶ The Lebanese security forces were instructed to arrest those involved in attacks on UNIFIL forces, which had been increasing due to friction between south Lebanese residents and UN soldiers.
- ▶ The Lebanese leadership said they were committed to ensuring the state's monopoly on weapons, even after submitting their response to the American special envoy Thomas Barack, while Hezbollah continued to defy the demands to disarm. Barack warned that Lebanon would face an existential threat if it did not resolve the issue of Hezbollah's weapons.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem gave an extensive interview in which he claimed that Hassan Nasrallah, the former secretary general, had received information about the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre only half an hour before it began, and that Hezbollah did not enter into a full-scale war against Israel, fearing destruction and American intervention. He said the organization was still investigating the failures that led to the pager attack.
- ▶ Hezbollah reportedly began reorganizing in order to merge several of its combat and operational units and redundant institutions.

► The American administration approved the sale of maintenance equipment for Lebanese army reconnaissance and support aircraft, but stated that it did not constitute a change in the balance of power.

► Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority chairman, appointed a new ambassador to Lebanon.

The Ceasefire in Lebanon

The IDF

► The IDF continued to identify and attack Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon, in violation of the November 27, 2024 ceasefire agreement, which forbade the organization's presence south of the Litani River, and to attack Hezbollah's military capabilities and efforts to rebuild its arsenal and power. The IDF attacked a Hezbollah military headquarters operating under civilian cover in the Yahmour area, and IDF ground forces operating in the Jabal Balat and Labouneh areas uncovered weapons depots, rocket launchers, machine guns, and explosive charges, and destroyed underground facilities. Five Hezbollah terrorist operatives were eliminated, including field commanders and a commander in the organization's elite Radwan Force. A Lebanese civilian who worked for the Iranian Qods Force and was involved in orchestrating attacks on Israeli territory was also eliminated (IDF spokesperson, July 14, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported the deaths of six people in the IDF attacks (al-Nashra, July 7–14, 2025).



Weapons discovered by IDF forces in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, July 9, 2025)

► The IDF reported that Mehran Mustafa Bajur was eliminated in an aerial attack in Tripoli, north Lebanon. He was responsible for the planning division of Hamas in Lebanon and involved in the movement's military buildup (IDF spokesperson, July 8, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported that three people were killed in the attack (al-Nashra, July 8, 2025). However, Walid al-Kilani, a senior Hamas figure in Lebanon, claimed that none of the movement's members in Lebanon had been harmed in the attack (Sputnik News Agency, July 9, 2025). Hamas did not publish a mourning notice for any of its operatives in Lebanon.

Hezbollah

► Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political council, claimed that "the Israeli aggression" was failing to achieve its goals and Israel was targeting "simpler" operatives because Hezbollah had distanced its senior leaders, especially "senior jihadi leaders." He claimed Hezbollah had learned from the technological gaps exposed in the "pager operation" and in the eliminations of senior operatives during the fighting, and today Israel could hardly reach the central political and jihadi leaders. He claimed the measures taken by the organization had proven to be "greatly effective," and added that normalization [of relations with Israel] was "a betrayal of the Palestinian people and a betrayal of Arab and Islamic national security." He stated that Hezbollah could not accept normalization and Israel had to leave Lebanon (al-Jazeera, July 9, 2025).

► "Sources" reported that Hezbollah was on high alert, fearing a large-scale Israeli attack. According to the report, Hezbollah had taken precautionary measures, evacuating some of its senior figures from south Lebanon and other areas and evacuating some of its centers. In addition, families of many of the organization's leaders had left south Lebanon for Beirut, and many senior operatives had stopped using their phones (al-Hadath, July 8, 2025). Another report stated that Hezbollah had emptied most of the villages in the south and the Beqa'a Valley of its young fighters, transferring them to strategic locations and other fronts out of concern over an Israeli action (al-Nahar, July 8, 2025).

► There was reportedly public concern in south Lebanon and in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut about the possibility of renewed, more intense fighting. According to the report, many families had begun considering finding places to live in areas they viewed as safer. In the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, For Sale and For Rent signs were hung on many balconies. Residents admitted, "Our nerves can no longer handle the shocks. Every loud noise causes a panic attack, not to mention explosions and shelling... Our homes are important to us, but not more than our lives and our children's." Reportedly, merchants were looking for warehouses for their goods in safer areas, and some had opened new branches for their businesses outside the southern suburb, in places they had never previously considered (Janoubia, July 11, 2025).

Lebanese leadership

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met with the American special envoy for Syria and Lebanon, Thomas Barack. They reiterated the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, a complete cessation of "aggression," the beginning of reconstruction and the release

of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. Salam added that Barack had presented ideas about Israeli withdrawal and returning to the ceasefire agreement, and President Joseph Aoun had given him a list of talking points (al-Nashra, July 7, 2025). Barack also met with Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament. They discussed developments in Lebanon and the region, and that Berri later called the meeting "positive and constructive," saying took into account Lebanon's interests and sovereignty, as well as Hezbollah's demands (al-Nashra, July 7, 2025).



Salam with Barack (al-Nashra, July 7, 2025)

► Joseph Aoun, president of Lebanon, met with a European Union delegation to discuss the need for EU support for the full return of all Lebanese territory to state sovereignty. He called on the EU to take the initiative in fully supporting the Lebanese army and warned that without the army's presence, the security situation could quickly deteriorate, which would have a negative effect on the entire region. He also called for the lifting of EU sanctions on Lebanon and called for the establishment of a European–Arab committee to rebuild Lebanon and revive the economy to bring about full security and sovereignty (al-Nashra, July 10, 2025).

UNIFIL

► A delegation from the ceasefire monitoring committee led by Major General Michael Lenney toured the western sector of south Lebanon. The tour included UNIFIL headquarters in al-Naqoura and several centers of the UN force and the Lebanese army between Labouneh and Marwahin (al-Akhbar, July 10, 2025).

► There were reports of clashes between residents of the town of Aitaroun in south Lebanon and UNIFIL forces after the residents tried to prevent the UN force from patrolling the town without a Lebanese army escort. During the clashes, UN soldiers threw smoke grenades and used tear gas. No injuries were reported (Lebanon Debate, July 10, 2025). A UNIFIL spokesperson confirmed that civilians had blocked a UNIFIL patrol near Wadi Jilou. He said the patrol was coordinated with the Lebanese army, and that local residents threw rocks at UN

forces, which dispersed the crowd with smoke grenades in self defense. He stated that UNIFIL forces could move independently in south Lebanon to carry out their mission of restoring security and stability under UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and did not require an army escort. He warned that any attack on UNIFIL forces constituted a serious violation of international law and Resolution 1701, and said they expected the Lebanese authorities to prosecute the offenders (UNIFIL Telegram channel, July 10, 2025).

► "Government sources" confirmed that following the recent friction between residents in south Lebanon and UNIFIL forces, strict instructions would be given to the security forces to arrest those who attacked the UN soldiers. They noted that ongoing contacts were taking place between Lebanese officials and the UN force command in al-Naqoura, and claimed that everyone was aware of the importance of the force's role in Lebanon, especially at this time (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 10, 2025).



UNIFIL force fires tear gas canisters during clashes in Aitaroun (Lebanon Debate, July 10, 2025)

Disarming Hezbollah

► After Lebanese President Joseph Aoun conveyed the official Lebanese response to the American document, which centered on the issue of disarming Hezbollah, to the United States special envoy Thomas Barack on July 7, 2025, Lebanese leaders continued to emphasize their commitment to ensuring the state's monopoly on weapons:

- ◆ After meeting with Barack, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam stated that only the state could choose between war and peace. He said Hezbollah was part of the state, and secretary general Na'im Qassem was committed to the Taif Agreement¹ (al-Nashra, July 7, 2025). When asked whether the government was capable of disarming Hezbollah after the organization's secretary general declared they would not surrender their weapons,

¹ The Taif Agreement, negotiated in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in September 1989, ended the Lebanese Civil War.

Salam reiterated that the Hezbollah secretary general was committed to the Taif Agreement and that Hezbollah's government ministers had signed a declaration to that effect (al-Nashra, July 8, 2025).

- ◆ President Aoun told a delegation from the Arab and International Relations Council that the decision that only the state would possess weapons had been made and was irreversible, adding that decisions regarding war and peace lay with the Lebanese government. Aoun said that peace was a state without war, and that was what mattered to Lebanon right now, but said normalization [of relations with Israel] was not part of Lebanon's current foreign policy (President of Lebanon's X account, July 11, 2025).

► Senior Lebanese political figures addressed the results of Barack's visit and the prospects for disarming Hezbollah:

- ◆ Lebanese Deputy Parliament Speaker Elias Bou Saab stated that Hezbollah leader Na'im Qassem's statement, that they were "ready for peace and also for escalation and confrontation," could not be ignored. He claimed it was the first time Hezbollah had said it was ready for peace, and he interpreted it to mean that if there were guarantees or deterrents to prevent Israel from attacking Lebanon, Hezbollah would support those guarantees and be ready for peace (al-Arabiya, July 7, 2025).

- ◆ Sami Gemayel, leader of the Christian Phalanges Party, criticized Hezbollah's handling of disarmament and the implications it had for Lebanon's national security. He said it was natural that Hezbollah did not want to find solutions regarding its weapons, but it had to change and support the rapid reconstruction of the state, beginning with surrendering its weapons. Gemayel also warned that Hezbollah's insistence on retaining its weapons could lead to a new external war or internal conflict between it and other Lebanese. He called on Lebanon to meet the American envoy's demands, arguing that only the United States could guarantee an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. He said Lebanon did not want to remain under the shadow of the weapons which had destroyed it, but rather wanted to join Saudi Arabia's initiative for prosperity, development and regional peace (al-Hadath, July 7, 2025).

- ◆ Samir Geagea, leader of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party, claimed that the Lebanese leadership's response to Barack was unconstitutional because it had not been approved by parliament (Samir Geagea's X account, July 7, 2025). He later met with Barack himself and said the demand to collect all illegal weapons in the country, whether

Palestinian or Lebanese, was a condition for the existence and functioning of the Lebanese state (al-Nashra, July 8, 2025). Later, Geagea said that the Lebanese government had decide on disarmament and submit the decision to parliament, and then anyone who violated it should be arrested. He said that the state's disarming any faction would not constitute a civil war but rather a natural action taken to extend state authority over its entire territory. "The state must act regarding UNIFIL, and the army must clearly state that if anyone approaches the force, he will be killed." Geagea also said that Barack had received three documents during his visit to Lebanon, a response document from President Aoun, a letter from Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, and a technical document from the army (MTV Lebanon, July 10, 2025).



Geagea meeting with Barack (al-Nashra, July 8, 2025)

► Interviewed during his visit to Lebanon, Barack said Hezbollah was a foreign terrorist organization and also a political party in Lebanon, and therefore it was a Lebanese problem, not a global one. However, he added that the American president and secretary of state had clearly expressed their support for disarming Hezbollah. Referring to Na'im Qassem's statement that the organization would "never" relinquish its weapons, Barack said it was understandable that each side would "take an extreme stance" (LBCI, July 8, 2025). On another occasion, Barack warned that Lebanon would face an existential threat if it did not resolve the issue of Hezbollah's weapons, even as he acknowledged that any attempt to fully disarm Hezbollah could trigger a civil war. He added that Hezbollah claimed it could not rely on the Lebanese army because Israel bombed Lebanon "every day" and "occupied" Lebanese land. He said the United States, Saudi Arabia and Qatar were willing to help if the state took charge. He also noted that the Gulf States were hesitant to invest money in Lebanon without guarantees that the funds would bypass Lebanon's political elite and corruption (The National, July 12, 2025).



American envoy Barack: I'll return in two weeks and I'm optimistic about a breakthrough. The Arabic reads, "A month, months and a week" [a song by the singer Fairouz] and I'm coming back here to congratulate Berri, Salam, and Aoun!" (al-Liwa, July 9, 2025)

► Senior Hezbollah figures continued to express public opposition to the demand to disarm and said any dialogue about the future of the "resistance"² could begin only after the demand to stop Israeli attacks and withdraw from the five points it holds in south Lebanon had been met:

◆ In the opinion of a "prominent Hezbollah source," the outcome of Barack's visit to Lebanon would not change Israel's "violations and aggression." However, he claimed Barack encouraged dialogue and that several options had opened for moving forward, including entering into a dialogue. The "source" stated that they did not want war and said that Lebanon was waiting for American assurances to prevent an Israeli escalation (al-Joumhouria, July 8, 2025).

◆ Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the "resistance" had become an integral part of the Lebanese people and without the "resistance's" weapons it would be impossible to live with dignity. In a speech at a memorial ceremony for Hussein Khalil, the former personal bodyguard of secretary general Nasrallah who was killed in an Israeli attack in Iran, Izz al-Din claimed that what the "enemy" had failed to achieve on the battlefield would never be achieved through diplomacy, tricks, deception, or pressure on certain Arab and Western countries (al-Nashra, July 10, 2025).

² Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations operation in Lebanon.



Izz al-Din speaking at the memorial ceremony (al-Nashra, July 10, 2025)

- ◆ Muhammad Qamati, deputy head of Hezbollah's political council, said that Hezbollah, the three heads of state, the army leaders and the people all wanted, first of all, for the IDF to withdraw from Lebanon, release prisoners and stop its "aggression," only then would they be ready to discuss an agreement. He said Barack had spoken in a calm diplomatic tone, but one that concealed threats, concessions and dangers for Lebanon (al-Jazeera, July 9, 2025). In another interview, Qamati said that from Hezbollah's perspective, there would be no discussion of disarmament as long as the ceasefire agreement with Israel had not been implemented. He said the Lebanese response to the American document took Hezbollah's position into account and was satisfactory from the organization's point of view. He also said that the Lebanese response prioritized implementing the ceasefire and ending the "occupation" (OTV, July 12, 2025).
- ◆ Faisal Shukur, Hezbollah's deputy responsible for the Beqa'a Valley region, sharply criticized Lebanese calls to disarm the organization. He threatened those who echoed the disarmament demand saying, "We'll tear your souls apart." He warned, "Everything can be joked about, everything can be discussed, everything can be subject to dialogue, except the weapons. Because they are our religion, our Quran, our Muhammad, our Ali, our Fatima, our Hassan, our Hussein, our Imam and our Mahdi." Shukur added that those demanding disarmament should turn to "the Zionists," the Americans, and certain Arab regimes and tell them to "get the Zionists out of Palestine," and only then "maybe we'll consider handing over our weapons" (Janoubia, July 12, 2025).
- ◆ Shi'ite Mufti Sheikh Ahmed Qabalan claimed they wanted to "save Lebanon" and prevent internal division and crises, demanding the government adopt "national, not provocative positions." He added that what they needed was the establishment of a parliament capable of uniting the "national family" in a way that served Lebanon, not

one that further divided it, tore it apart, or exposed it to even greater internal disasters (al-Nashra, July 11, 2025).

◆ Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of the Hezbollah-affiliated daily al-Akhbar, warned of the American "deception" allegedly being carried out by Barack on Washington's behalf, and claimed that the United States "lulls enemies to sleep" with negotiations and then attacks. He claimed in an op-ed that that was what happened to Lebanon in the summer of 2024, when the idea of a ceasefire matured and Israel killed Hassan Nasrallah, and that it subsequently happened in Syria and Iran as well. Al-Amin said there were figures in Lebanon who understood the situation and were not swayed by "nice words." He concluded that the guiding principle was not to repeat the same mistake again (al-Akhbar, July 10, 2025).

► Despite the public statements, "cross-checked information from diplomatic and military sources" reportedly indicated that Hezbollah had begun a review of its missile stockpile in light of developments on the ground and regional changes. The report noted that leaks from Hezbollah's jihad council meetings suggested that the possibility of reducing the arsenal's size was being considered due to rising logistical costs, given Israel's intensive surveillance, declining Iranian support caused by regional geopolitical shifts and Tehran's economic crisis, and growing public dissatisfaction, especially in the south and in the Beqa'a Valley, over deteriorating living conditions and destroyed infrastructure. The "sources" noted that the change in Hezbollah's position did not constitute a strategic withdrawal but rather a tactical shift to more flexible and lower-cost methods, such as using drones, limited special operations and electronic warfare. It was also noted that Hezbollah's rhetoric had gradually shifted from "resistance" to "deterrence and steadfastness," indicating growing awareness within the organization of the changing balance of power (al-Joumhouria, July 11, 2025).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Interview with Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem gave an interview in which he addressed the organization's involvement in Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack and massacre and the fighting Hezbollah waged against Israel as "support" for the Gaza Strip, as well as the impact it had on

the organization. He also spoke about Hezbollah's current status in the Lebanese arena in light of the calls for the group to disarm (al-Mayadeen, July 8, 2025):³

◆ **Hezbollah's involvement in the October 7, 2023 attack:** According to Qassem, the previous secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, received the report about the planned attack only half an hour before it began. He said that both Muhammad Deif, commander of the Hamas military wing,⁴ and Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip,⁵ sent letters to Nasrallah regarding the attack on Israel. He claimed that even Iran and parts of Hamas' external leadership did not know about the attack in advance.⁶

◆ **Hezbollah's assistance in operation al-Aqsa Flood:** He said the day after the Hamas attack, Nasrallah ordered an attack on the Shebaa Farms and told his operatives to expand the fighting if needed. According to Qassem, the Shura Council convened and decided to settle for a "support campaign" rather than a full-scale war, which required prior preparations which had not been made and could have led to Lebanon's destruction and American intervention. He stated that the goal was to force Israel to redeploy soldiers to the north and cause Israel economic damage to ease military pressure on Gaza, and that Sinwar had also said a "support campaign" was sufficient. Qassem claimed there was no unified operations room for the "resistance axis"⁷ and that "unity of fronts" was just a concept and not an organizational structure, each front acted according to its own circumstances and assessments.

◆ **The pager sabotage operation:** Qassem admitted that it was "a very big blow that surprised us" and that they had not known Israel had full coverage of Hezbollah's communications network. He said the devices had been purchased about a year to a year

³ The interview, which was conducted to mark the 13th anniversary of the establishment of al-Mayadeen TV, which is affiliated with the "resistance axis," was recorded on June 11, 2025, and was scheduled to be broadcast two days later, but was postponed due to the outbreak of the Israel-Iran War.

⁴ Eliminated in an Israeli attack on July 30, 2024.

⁵ Appointed head of the Hamas political bureau in August 2024. Eliminated in an IDF operation on October 16, 2024.

⁶ According to Hamas documents brought back from the Gaza Strip by the IDF, Nasrallah and senior Iranian officials were apparently aware of Hamas' intention to attack Israel and had been involved in the preparations since the end of Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021. However, the documents do not indicate that they were aware of Hamas' decision regarding the exact date of the attack and massacre. For further information, see the April 2025 ITIC report, "[Operation Guardian of the Walls as a Watershed in Hamas' Strategy for the Destruction of Israel.](#)"

⁷ Iran, Hezbollah, Palestinian organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

and a half before the September 2024 attack, but there had been no knowledge of the procurement chain and the explosives planted in the pagers had gone unnoticed. He said Nasrallah himself had ordered an internal investigation and promised that the conclusions would be presented once the inquiry had been completed. He also claimed that another 5,000 communication devices had been located in Turkey, en route to Hezbollah, and that the matter was handled after reaching out to the Turkish president.

◆ **Promoting the "victory" narrative:** According to Qassem, despite the pager sabotage and the damage to the organization's leadership, including Nasrallah and Hashem Safi al-Din, Hezbollah had confronted Israel and forced a ceasefire. He claimed Hezbollah "won" because it had prevented Israel from advancing toward Beirut and because Israel had failed to ignite a civil war. He added that the United States was now trying to achieve diplomatically what Israel could not achieve in the war, but Hezbollah had only two options, victory or martyrdom, and surrender was not an option. He warned that Hezbollah would be ready for a confrontation if such a decision were made.



Qassem in the interview (al-Mayadeen, June 11, 2025)

◆ **His appointment as secretary general:** Asked whether he could make military decisions despite lacking practical experience, Qassem said that all military matters were presented in the Shura Council, in which he had served for 32 years, so he was knowledgeable. He added that he did not need to know the technical details of the weapons but had decided on the attack of Prime Minister Netanyahu's residence and Tel Aviv. Qassem emphasized that as secretary general, his first priority was to uphold Nasrallah's principles, chiefly the "liberation of Palestine through jihad," as well as national unity in Lebanon and commitment to Iran and the "resistance axis." He also rejected claims of factionalism within Hezbollah and said the organization was united, even if there were disagreements.

◆ **Longing for Nasrallah:** During the interview, Qassem shed tears when speaking about Nasrallah. He said he cried not because of the secretary general's death, but because he had "attained martyrdom." He said Nasrallah was "a leader of a kind rarely seen in history," that he loved him with all his heart, and that Hezbollah was continuing along his path.

◆ **The issue of Hezbollah's weapons:** He claimed that the weapons were not the reason for Hezbollah's existence, but rather the reason Lebanon remained strong, and therefore the organization opposed disarmament. He claimed that from the Second Lebanon War in 2006 until the beginning of the "campaign" in 2023, Israel had been deterred, and Lebanon had prospered, and that Lebanon would not have survived without the "resistance." He said there were pressures on President Aoun, but he knew that disarming Hezbollah would lead to an unwanted civil war. Qassem claimed Hezbollah wanted to hold a dialogue on national security and to formulate a defense strategy, and only on that basis should decisions be made.

◆ **UNIFIL:** He stated that Hezbollah supported the extension of UNIFIL's mandate in Lebanon for another year on the condition that it continued its mission, adding, "we are not in favor of the force entering villages independently without Lebanese army approval."

◆ **Changes in Syria:** Qassem acknowledged that the fall of the Assad regime was a loss for the "resistance axis." He claimed Hezbollah had no connection to events in Syria and expressed hope that the new regime in Damascus would not normalize relations with Israel.

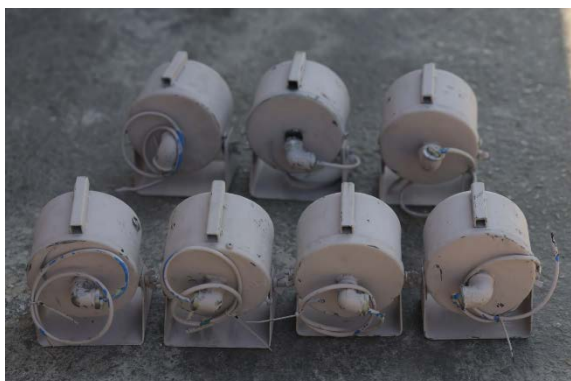
The reorganization of Hezbollah's leadership

► Hezbollah reportedly began reorganizing to merge several of its combat and operational units, as well as redundant or semi-redundant institutions as part of internal restructuring. "Well-informed sources" reported that it was part of a broader effort to keep up with current financial and operational developments, as Hezbollah sought to optimize its expenditures and streamline its structure to better fit the current situation. According to the report, the expected mergers include equipment, logistics and civil engineering units, as well as financial and cultural units. The Liaison and Coordination Unit headed by Wafiq Safa would be dissolved, and he would take on a new portfolio; some geographical military units would be merged, while others with a military character would be disbanded. The plan also includes the merging

of educational, health and welfare institutions, along with the unification of the Jihad al-Bina Foundation, which mainly deals with agriculture and construction. The report suggested that the initiative proposed turning Hezbollah into a purely political entity, in exchange for American security and economic guarantees, indicating potential readiness to adapt to the new reality (Janoubia, July 9, 2025).

Arrest of a Hezbollah operative on the Syria border

► The Syrian general intelligence directorate and the internal security command in the Homs Governorate announced that a suspect named Mahmoud Fadel was arrested in possession of explosive devices ready for use in terrorist acts. According to the statement, the initial investigation found that Fadel was connected to a Hezbollah-affiliated cell and had received the explosives via illegal smuggling routes (Syrian ministry of interior Telegram channel, July 13, 2025). Hezbollah's media information office strongly denied the Syrian announcement, claiming Hezbollah had no presence or activity in Syria and was not connected to events or conflicts in the country. The organization also reiterated its commitment to Syria's security and stability (al-'Ahed, July 13, 2025).



Right: Fadel after his arrest. Left: The explosive devices
(Syrian ministry of interior Telegram channel, July 13, 2025)

The Lebanese army

► United States special envoy Thomas Barack visited Lebanon and met with Rodolf Haykal, commander of the Lebanese army, to discuss recent developments in Lebanon and the region. The two also toured south Lebanon (Lebanese Army X account and al-Hadath, July 8, 2025).



Heikal and Barack meet (Lebanese Army X account, July 8, 2025)

► The Pentagon announced that the United States State Department had approved a potential sale to Lebanon of maintenance equipment for A-29 Super Tucano aircraft, worth \$100 million. The aircraft are used to support ground forces, for intelligence gathering and aerial reconnaissance. It was noted that the sale would enhance the security of a partner nation which continued to be a force for political stability and economic development in the Middle East, though it would not change the basic regional military balance (Defense Security Cooperation Agency website, July 11, 2025).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► It was reported that Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas had appointed Muhammad al-Assaad as the new ambassador to Lebanon, replacing Ashraf Dabbour, who had served in the position since 2012 and was dismissed as part of a series of changes implemented by the Palestinian leadership. Al-Assaad had previously served as Fatah's representative in the USSR and later in Russia from 1990 to 2010. He was then appointed Palestinian ambassador to Ukraine, a role he held until 2019, and in December 2020, he was appointed ambassador to Mauritania (al-Jarida, July 13, 2025).



Muhammad al-Assaad (al-Hadil magazine, July 13, 2025)