Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah December 8-15, 2025

Overview[1]

- The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon to enforce the ceasefire agreement, which prohibited the organization's presence south of the Litani. The IDF reported that in the year since the ceasefire, more than 370 terrorist operatives, most of them from Hezbollah, had been eliminated and there had been approximately 1,200 targeted ground operations to destroy terrorist infrastructure and damage the organization's military capabilities.
- The IDF continued activity to enforce the ceasefire agreement and prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding its military-terrorist capabilities, attacking a Radwan Force training compound and military facilities. The IDF renewed the targeted killings of Hezbollah terrorist operatives, including a senior operative who handled agents within Lebanon's security services.

Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem reiterated the organization's refusal to disarm and called on the Lebanese state authorities to "recalculate their course" and not make concessions to Israel.

- The Lebanese leadership expressed hope that the appointment of former ambassador Simon Karam as head of the Lebanese delegation to ceasefire oversite talks with Israel would prevent escalation. Parliament Speaker Berri said there could be no progress in negotiations unless Israel was willing to withdraw from positions in south Lebanon.
- The IDF canceled an attack on a building used by Hezbollah in a village in south Lebanon after Lebanese Army forces conducted searches despite residents' opposition.
- The Lebanese Army has reportedly completed 90% of the demilitarization of the area south of the Litani River and is expected to complete the mission by the end of the year. However, according to reports, the Lebanese leadership was warned that if it did not disarm Hezbollah

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

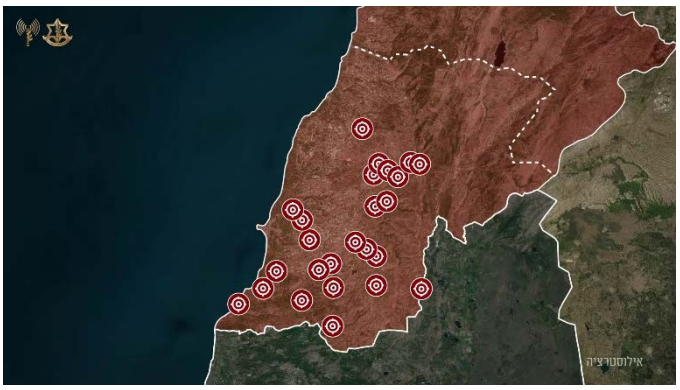
north of the Litani as well, Israel would be given a free hand to attack Hezbollah, including in Beirut.

- Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said Hezbollah's weapons had not protected Lebanon or assisted the Gaza Strip and accused Iran of causing the greatest amount of regional destabilization. The Iranian foreign minister is expected to visit Lebanon and meet with senior Hezbollah figures in preparation for reshaping the organization's leadership.
- Given the growing pressure to shut down Hezbollah's al-Qard al-Hassan Association, the organization was reportedly considering changing its financial structure and its name.

The Tension between Israel and Hezbollah

The IDF

- This past week the IDF attacked Hezbollah targets as part of enforcing the ceasefire agreement from November 2024 and preventing Hezbollah from rebuilding its military-terrorist capabilities and replenishing its arsenal. The IDF attacked Radwan Force training and exercise compounds, military-terrorist facilities and buildings, and launch sites in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley. On December 14, 2025, three Hezbollah terrorist-operatives were eliminated, one of whom was an operative who handled agents in Lebanon's security services, took measures to suppress criticism of Hezbollah, and was the organization's representative in the Bint Jbeil area. They were the first targeted killings since the November 23, 2025 attack, in which Hezbollah's de facto chief of staff, Haitham Ali al-Tabataba'i, was eliminated. According to the IDF, since the beginning of October 2025, about 40 terrorist operatives have been eliminated in 30 villages in south Lebanon, and since the ceasefire of November 27, 2024, more than 380 terrorist operatives have been eliminated. The IDF also said Hezbollah violated the ceasefire more than 1,900 times (IDF spokesperson, December 15–8, 2025).



Locations where Hezbollah terrorist operatives were eliminated since the beginning of October 2025 (IDF spokesperson, December 14, 2025)

Hezbollah

▶ At a conference of the organization's women's action unit, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem reiterated that "the resistance will not be disarmed." He said Hezbollah would continue to defend itself, even "if the whole world joins the war against Lebanon," claiming that the demand for disarmament was meant to weaken the organization and leave the Lebanese Army weak and helpless. He said the negotiations with Israel were useless as long as "the aggression continues," and called on the Lebanese leadership to "recalculate its course" and stop making "concessions." Qassem claimed that Lebanon's main problem was not the concentration of weapons in the hands of the state, but sanctions and internal corruption, which he said had been the result of American policy since 2019. He warned that "surrender" would lead to Lebanon's collapse and claimed that "without the resistance,2 Lebanon would cease to exist" (al-Manar, December 13, 2025).

Na'im Qassem (al-Manar, December 13, 2025)

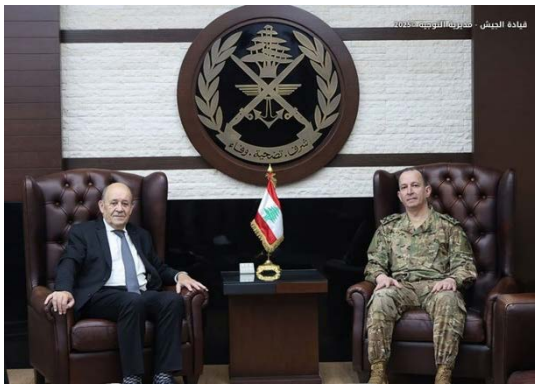
▶ Hassan Fadlallah and Amin Sherri, both members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, met with Prime Minister Nawaf Salam. After the meeting Fadlallah said that all diplomatic efforts had be exhausted to stop Israeli attacks and to compel Israel to implement the ceasefire agreement. He claimed they had also spoken about Lebanon's reconstruction, and that Hezbollah representatives had demanded increased government assistance to accelerate reconstruction work, with emphasis on the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia district of Beirut, which was heavily damaged by Israeli attacks during the fighting (Naharnet, December 12, 2025).

The Lebanese Government

▶ The French special envoy to Lebanon, Jean-Yves Le Drian, visited Beirut and met with President Joseph Aoun, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji, and

[2] Hezbollah and the terrorist organizations operating with it in Lebanon.

Army Commander Rodolph Haykal. According to reports, the Lebanese noted the role played by the Lebanese Army in disarmament south of the Litani River and said they hoped that the appointment of former ambassador Simon Karam as head of the Lebanese delegation to the ceasefire oversight mechanism would help prevent escalation by Israel. They also discussed establishing a mechanism to verify the progress of disarmament (Lebanese News Agency, December 8, 2025). "Diplomatic sources" said that Le Drian focused on preventing broad military escalation following the possibility of Israeli action against Hezbollah and on strengthening support for the Lebanese Army (al-Nahar, December 11, 2025).



Right: Le Drian and the commander of the Lebanese Army (Lebanese Army X account, December 8, 2025). Left: "French support for Lebanon:" Le Drian delivers letters of support from the president of France to Lebanon (al-Jumhuriya, December 9, 2025)

- Lebanon's prime minister, Nawaf Salam, claimed that Lebanon was undergoing a "national reset" but needed international backing to succeed. He said the government was working to establish governance and reforms, including restoring the state's monopoly on weapons, strengthening security at the borders and the airport, dismantling hundreds of illegal weapons depots, and disrupting the activity of smuggling networks. Salam accused Israel of violating Lebanese sovereignty and called on the international community to pressure Israel to withdraw from Lebanon (Financial Times, December 11, 2025).
- Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji noted that the discussions of the committee overseeing the ceasefire agreement in south Lebanon had made it clear that they were not negotiating with Israel, and stressed that Lebanon's goal was full return to the ceasefire agreement (al-Jazeera, December 12, 2025).
- Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said that without a halt to Israeli attacks and an Israeli willingness to withdraw, even from a single one of the five positions in the areas it "occupied," there could be no progress in talks within the framework of the ceasefire oversight mechanism. Berri said the in negotiations "there are no good intentions, only concrete steps,"

and said his conditions were a red line for continuing the meetings (Asas Media, December 12, 2025).

- Egypt's ambassador to Lebanon, Alaa Moussa, said Cairo was investing a great deal of effort and conducting intensive contacts to reduce tensions and prevent war in Lebanon. He said he hoped for a breakthrough because matters were moving in the right direction and Lebanon had recently taken positive steps, particularly by appointing Simon Karam as head of the delegation negotiating with Israel (Lebanese News Agency, December 12, 2025).

The Lebanese Army

- On December 13, 2025, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic issued a warning of the IDF's intention to attack Hezbollah military-terrorist infrastructure in the village of Yanouh in south Lebanon and called on residents living near the building to evacuate the area (X account of Avichay Adraee, December 13, 2025). Lebanese media reported that a Lebanese Army force arrived at a house in Yanouh following an "Israeli request conveyed through the ceasefire oversight mechanism committee." According to the reports, the army broadcast live footage from inside the house and found nothing. The force later returned for another search, and again found nothing. Meanwhile, there were reports of growing discontent among local residents, who wondered if the Lebanese Army was becoming a tool for acceding to Israeli demands for searches of private homes. An additional request to conduct a search reportedly angered the homeowner, who, together with others, attempted to use force to prevent UNIFIL personnel from entering the site (al-'Ahed, al-Akhbar, December 13, 2025). The Lebanese Army said the incident showed the importance of coordination, residents' trust, and adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the ceasefire agreement for maintaining stability (Lebanese Army X account, December 14, 2025).

Right: Evacuation notice from the IDF spokesperson in Arabic (X account of Avichay Adraee, December 13, 2025). Left: Residents confronting Lebanese Army forces near the suspected building in the village of Yanouh (al-Ahed, December 13, 2025)

▶ Lebanese Finance Minister Yassin Jaber and the European Union's envoy to the country, Sandra De Waele, signed a series of agreements totaling €132 million. According to the report, they include programs to strengthen security and stability in Lebanon, as well as programs to strengthen border security (Lebanese News Agency, December 10, 2025).

UNIFIL

▶ A motorized UNIFIL force patrolling near the Blue Line in the Sardah area claimed an IDF tank force shot at them, and that there were no casualties. The UNIFIL force reportedly contacted the IDF through liaison channels and requested that the fire cease. It was further stated that the peacekeeping force and the Israeli tank were present on Lebanese territory, and that the time and location of the patrol had been conveyed to the IDF in advance, in accordance with established procedures for activity in sensitive areas. UNIFIL called the incident a "serious violation" of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and called on Israel to cease "aggressive behavior" toward forces working to stabilize the situation along the Blue Line (UNIFIL Telegram channel, December 10, 2025).

Challenges for Hezbollah[3]

Disarmament

▶ An "official source" stated that the Lebanese Army had reached the final stage of its mission to demilitarize the area south of the Litani River and 90% of the mission had already been completed, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of November 2024. According to the "source," the army is expected to complete disarmament by the end of 2025. However, the "source" said it would not be possible to advance to the stage of disarmament north of the Litani River as long as Israel continued its attacks, did not withdraw from Lebanese territory and did not return Lebanese detainees in its custody. A different "source" claimed that completing the disarmament south of the Litani River "proved" Lebanon had fulfilled its commitments under the agreement, while Israel had not taken similar steps. According to the "source," under the circumstances Lebanon had no obligation to take further steps and "the ball is in the court of Israel and the United States." The "source" said that any discussion of a second stage of implementing the agreement north of the Litani River was meaningless as long as Israel did not fulfill its obligations (al-Joumhouria, December 13, 2025).

▶ Reportedly, a meeting is expected to be held in Paris on December 18, 2025 with the participation of Le Drian, the commander of the Lebanese Army, the United States envoy to

[3] For further information, see the December 2025 ITIC report, **Hezbollah: One Year After the Ceasefire**

Lebanon and the Saudi Arabian envoy, in preparation for an international conference in early 2026to support the Lebanese army. According to reports, Haykal will present the steps taken by the army to disarm Hezbollah south of the Litani River, demand significant assistance to complete the deployment and present a draft plan for disarmament north of the Litani. Supporting countries are expected to demand transparency from the army, publication of its actions and a clear timetable to complete the process by early 2026 (*al-Nahar*, al-Madan and Nidaa' al-Watan, December 11, 2025).

- On December 15, 2025, the Lebanese Army conducted a guided tour of the Tyre region in south Lebanon for foreign ambassadors and military attachés, with the participation of Army Commander Rodolph Haykal. The objective was to present the "army's achievements in limiting weapons in the area" and its activity in response to Israeli attacks. The tour included the western sector of south Lebanon and a visit to a Hezbollah "facility" in Wadi Zibqin (al-Jadeed and Lebanon 24, December 15, 2025).

Pictures the army's tour for ambassadors and attachés (al-Madan, December 15, 2025)

- Lebanese President Joseph Aoun rejected claims made by members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament that prior to his election, he had allegedly committed in writing to adopt a "defensive strategy" toward the organization that did not include disarmament. Aoun said if such a document existed it should be published, and asked how he could have committed to such a thing when in his inaugural speech he called for concentrating all weapons in the hands of the state (Nidaa' al-Watan, December 12, 2025).
- Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said Hezbollah's weapons had not defended Lebanon or assisted the Gaza Strip and that attempts to discuss disarmament were met with refusal. He accused Iran of being the greatest regional destabilization factor. Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, dismissed the remarks, accused Rajji of adopting an "Israeli narrative" and called to focus on Israeli withdrawal, the release of prisoners and the cessation of attacks. He reiterated the organization's opposition to

disarmament and claimed that its weapons had "liberated south Lebanon" (al-Jazeera, *al-Akhbar*, December 12, 2025).

- Despite the Lebanese Army's claims that it was performing its mission to disarm south Lebanon by the end of 2025, according to reports, the possibility of a broad Israeli attack on Hezbollah remains possible if the army does not disarm Hezbollah throughout the country:
  - "Lebanese sources" said they had received notice of an ultimatum, which will expire in early 2026, to decide the fate of Hezbollah's weapons in the area north of the Litani. According to the report, the Lebanese were warned that if practical steps were not taken to disarm Hezbollah, Israel would be given a green light to complete the destruction of Hezbollah's military wing (*al-Diyar*, December 8, 2025).
  - "Sources" reported that the United States had warned Lebanon that it would lose American attention it if it did not complete its tasks by the end of the year, including the government's collecting weapons and approval of economic reforms (al-Jadeed, December 10, 2025).
  - "European sources" reported that the United States special envoy, Morgan Ortagus, warned that Israel intended to attack Hezbollah, especially in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut and the Beqa'a Valley, if the organization did not hand over its precision missiles and UAVs by early 2026 (*al-Akhbar*, December 11, 2025).
  - "Lebanese sources" reported that France demanded an increase in UNIFIL's assistance to the Lebanese Army in disarmament operations, including entering homes and private property, as part of an effort to enable the force to fully carry out its role. According to the "sources," France also warned of the possibility of an Israeli escalation and noted that the Shi'ite leadership in Lebanon, headed by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, supported diplomacy but conditioned it on the cessation of military actions (Sky News Arabia, December 12, 2025).

Iranian Involvement

- Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, invited Lebanese foreign minister Youssef Rajji to visit Tehran to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments, and the Lebanese Foreign Ministry announced that the foreign minister apologized and declined the invitation to visit Tehran "under the current circumstances." Rajji said it was not a rejection of dialogue with Iran but that the atmosphere was "inappropriate" at present. Rajji also reiterated his invitation for a meeting in a neutral and agreed-upon country and said he was prepared "to establish a new

era of bilateral relations, provided they are based solely on mutual respect and absolute respect for independence and sovereignty, as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of states, in any form and under any pretext" (X account of the Lebanese Army, December 10, 2025). Araghchi called Rajji's rejection "embarrassing." He said foreign ministers of countries which had full diplomatic relations did not need a neutral venue in which to meet. However, he noted that he accepted Rajji's invitation to visit Beirut, adding that Iran sought "to turn over a new leaf" in Iranian-Lebanese relations (X account of the Iranian foreign minister, December 11, 2025).

- "Diplomatic sources in Lebanon" reported that Araghchi's proposed visit to Beirut was intended to prepare the ground for far-reaching changes in Hezbollah's leadership, including at the topmost level. According to the "sources," Araghchi is expected meet with Hezbollah's leadership and with central figures in the organization for an assessment of its internal atmosphere and to convey an accurate picture to decision makers in Tehran. The information collected will reportedly be used by Iran in making decisions regarding the future of the organization's leadership, especially the fate of Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem, who according to assessments in Tehran is not perceived as suitable to lead the organization at "the current sensitive stage" and has neither the status nor the capabilities of his predecessor, Hassan Nasrallah (Aram News, December 13, 2025).
- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei referred to the report that the Lebanese foreign minister was "deliberately blocking" the acceptance of Iran's new ambassador to Beirut and said he hoped that the new ambassador would be posted soon. He added that diplomatic relations with Lebanon were long-standing, adding that they wanted to avoid statements which would distract Lebanon from focusing on safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity (Mehr News Agency, December 14, 2025). In response, Lebanese Forces party MP Riad Yazbeck called on Foreign Minister Rajji not to accept the ambassador's credentials (al-Akhbar, December 15, 2025).
- Ali Akbar Velayati, advisor to Iran's leader for international affairs, met in Tehran with Hezbollah representative Abdallah Safi al-Din. Velayati said Iran would continue to support Hezbollah since it was "the main pillar of the resistance front"[4] and had an essential role in confronting the "Israeli regime." Safi al-Din reviewed recent developments in Lebanon and

[4] Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

claimed that "Hezbollah is stronger than ever and ready to defend Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty." He said the organization would not disarm "under any circumstances" (Mehr News Agency, December 14, 2025).

Velayati and Safi al-Din (Mehr News Agency, December 14, 2025)

The Economic Challenge

- Given the international and internal Lebanese pressure to close al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, the organization is reportedly considering changing its name and subordinating it to the supervision of the Central Bank of Lebanon. According to the report, the relevant authorities in Lebanon have not yet responded to the request. It was further reported that Hezbollah was facing an "insurance crisis," because since the beginning of 2025 it had been unable to insure thousands of families of displaced persons among its supporters (al-Hadath, December 12, 2025).
- According to reports, Hezbollah has begun splitting al-Qard al-Hassan into smaller units to circumvent sanctions and reduce pressure to close the association. Hezbollah is establishing a new fund engaged in selling gold in installments as an alternative to the gold pawn mechanism on which the association was based. However, in the assessment of "financial sources," the move will not satisfy the United States Treasury Department, which demands the full and complete closure of the institution (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 13, 2025).
- Hezbollah reportedly regards the economic campaign waged against the organization as a more serious threat than the military confrontation, since it is aimed directly at the organization's popular support base. According to the report, in Hezbollah's assessment, its rivals seek to sever the connection between it and its social environment through sustained economic pressure, and to force concessions or undermine internal cohesion. Despite the pressures, Hezbollah reportedly has thus far managed to adapt through unconventional mechanisms but is preparing to escalate steps, including the possibility of closing al-Qard al-Hassan. Meeting with the governor of the Lebanese Central Bank, Karim Said, Ali Fayyad, a

member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, warned the bank not to take steps targeting the organization's environment, which he claimed went beyond closing accounts and reached the seizure of private assets (*al-Joumhouria*, December 12, 2025).

Hezbollah's Vulnerability

▶ In a speech at a conference of Hezbollah's women's activity unit, the organization's secretary general, Na'im Qassem, mentioned the names of religious scholars killed in the campaign against Israel but did not mention the name of the deputy head of the Executive Council and head of the party's security unit, Sheikh Nabil Qaouk, who was eliminated in an Israeli attack on September 29, 2024. Reportedly, Qaouk's name has recently resurfaced in an unusual wave of rumors and accusations within the Shi'ite environment regarding his "questionable" connections outside Lebanon. Sheikh Mohammad Ali al-Fawani from the Beqa'a Valley claimed in a public post that Qaouk was deliberately made to disappear, buried without an official ceremony and said that the organization's leadership suspected him of collaboration and placed him in an apartment they knew would be attacked by Israel. According to al-Fawani, the lack of security around Qaouk, unusual in relation to his status in the movement, reinforced suspicions of his involvement in the serious security breach of the pager explosions (Janoubia, December 9, 2025).

The Issue of Reconstruction

▶ According to reports, Hezbollah is preparing to launch large-scale reconstruction projects in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, the Beqa'a Valley and parts of south Lebanon if the government continues to ignore the issue. A "source" claimed that Hezbollah planned to hold a Secretary General's Conference for Reconstruction during February and March 2026, ahead of the parliamentary elections, indicating the organization's intention to fill a state vacuum in the sensitive arena of rehabilitation (Lebanon 24, December 9, 2025).

▶ The Finance and Budget Committee of the Lebanese Parliament approved allocations for the reconstruction of areas which had been destroyed, foremost in south Lebanon, in the 2026 budget. It will be the first time that the Lebanese state directly finances reconstruction since the end of the fighting in November 2024. It was noted that the decision included budgeting for the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the Council of the South and the Higher Relief Committee. Committee chairman Ibrahim Kanaan defined the move as "a positive gesture by the state," but "sources in parliament" stressed that it would be only a modest sum,

marking the beginning of reconstruction after a year of reliance on external aid that never arrived (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 12, 2025).