Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon July 27 – August 4, 2026

Trending

► The Lebanese are trying to use the new round of talks with Israel to leverage additional IDF withdrawals from south Lebanon.

► Events marking the anniversary of the Lebanese army were used to promote it as the country's only legitimate security force.

► Hezbollah is facing the challenge of preserving its military strength in the face of internal and external pressure.

► Turkey is seeking to play an influential role in the Lebanese arena.

Overview[1]

► A new round of talks between Lebanon and Israel began in Rome on August 4, 2026. The Lebanese delegation includes military personnel and professional experts, and will focus on halting Israeli strikes and advancing additional IDF withdrawals from south Lebanon.

► The Lebanese army continued to consolidate its control over the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiya as part of the pilot areas plan, but claimed legal restrictions prevented them from searching private homes and accused Israel's strikes of hindering its mission.

► Lebanese President Aoun and Speaker of Parliament Berri finally met and discussed the framework agreement and the formulation of a unified position in preparation for the talks with Israel.

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem called on the Lebanese authorities to halt the negotiations, claiming they only involved Lebanese concessions to Israel and did not pressure it to stop the strikes. He said the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States was the only way to achieve a full Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, adding he was willing to meet with the Syrian leadership.

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

► IDF forces destroyed key Hezbollah underground facilities in the Beaufort Ridge area and continued locating weapons and eliminating terrorists in the security zone. An IDF officer was wounded and an explosive drone was launched at an IDF engineering vehicle; Hezbollah still does not claim responsibility for the attacks.

► Five Lebanese soldiers were wounded by the explosion of an explosive device reportedly planted by Hezbollah. The commander of the Lebanese army and Lebanon's leadership reiterated that only the army was authorized to bear arms and defend Lebanon's sovereignty.

► Assessments in Lebanon indicate that Hezbollah is facing logistical and financial attrition hampering its military buildup, despite Iranian involvement in restoring its capabilities

► The Lebanese president visited Turkey, and Ankara is reportedly interested in participating in a future multinational force to be deployed in south Lebanon once UNIFIL's mandate ends.

► South Lebanese voiced growing criticism over the government's inadequate response, while Hezbollah's institutions sought to take advantage of the opportunity by providing civilian assistance.

Direct Negotiations for the Israel-Lebanon Agreement Framework

The Negotiations Continue

► On August 4, 2026, a new round of direct negotiations between the Lebanese and Israeli delegations began in Rome, mediated by the United States and expected to last three days. In preparation, besides political and military personnel, Lebanon expanded its delegation to include experts in border demarcation, economics and reconstruction. The delegation is headed by former Ambassador Simon Karam, together with Lebanon's ambassador to Washington, Nada Hamade Maoud, as well as military officers and professional experts. The delegation's top priorities are reportedly the expansion of the pilot areas, demands for additional Israeli withdrawals (focusing on Bint Jbeil or al-Khiam), to present the progress made by the Lebanese army in meeting its commitments, demand an end to Israeli military activity and oppose a verification mechanism which would allow Israel to directly monitor the agreement. The discussions are also expected to deal with the land border,

reconstruction and economic assistance for south Lebanon (al-Jadeed and al-Madan, August 2, 2026; al-Hadath, *al-Akhbar* and *al-Liwaa*, August 3, 2026).

► A Lebanese source said the current round would focus on reviewing the first phase of the pilot areas and determining the location of the second phase, with the Lebanese side planning to insist it take place within the area under Israeli control. The Lebanese delegation will also present proposals regarding the verification mechanism, including having UNIFIL manage it, appointing UN observers or requesting assistance from a third party acceptable to all sides. The source added that the talks would also deal with the issue of halting the destruction in areas under IDF control (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 4, 2026).

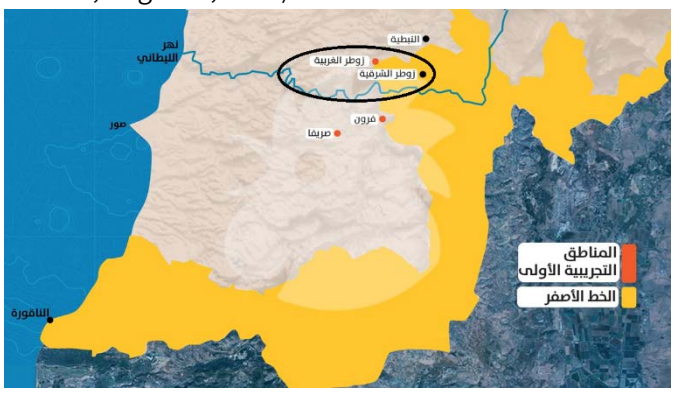
► It was further reported that one of the main issues on the agenda would be the Ali al-Taher Ridge area, where Israel is demanding the removal of Hezbollah infrastructure and verification that the organization no longer had a presence at the site as a condition for further withdrawals (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 2, 2026). Hezbollah reportedly continues to reject Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's proposal to transfer control of the tunnel complex in the Ali al-Taher Ridge area to the Lebanese army as part of the measures to advance the framework agreement; Lebanese officials are of the opinion that the organization's continued refusal could lead to an expansion of Israeli military activity in the area and delay progress in the negotiations (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 3, 2026).

► According to diplomatic sources, the round of talks in Rome is not expected to produce an immediate breakthrough but rather serve as a test of the ability to move from managing the ceasefire to stabilizing it in practice. Reportedly, the success of the talks will be measured by the ability to expand the pilot areas, reduce the level of friction in the south and establish monitoring mechanisms which will allow the Lebanese army to expand its deployment. However, they warned that continued IDF activity in the south, together with Israel's insistence on linking further withdrawals to the removal of the Hezbollah threat and its unwillingness to carry out significant withdrawals before the Israeli elections, reduce the likelihood of substantial progress at this stage (*al-Joumhouria*, August 3, 2026).

The Pilot Areas

► The Lebanese army continued consolidating its control over the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiya, which it entered as part of the pilot areas plan by deploying forces, opening roads, clearing rubble, disposing of unexploded ordnance and restoring basic services for returning

residents; but it restricted civilian movement near Zawtar al-Sharqiya, which remained under IDF control. According to the mayor, the army commander pledged to improve services and continue infrastructure rehabilitation. However, apart from the army and the council for the south, most state institutions have not yet resumed operations in the area. According to available figures, about 60% of the town's buildings have been destroyed, and only about 10% remain fit for habitation (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 1, 2026). Teams from the council for the south completed damage assessment, began clearing the rubble and installing temporary structures, while delivering humanitarian aid and preparing for the residents' return (*al-Akhbar*, August 2, 2026).



Circled in black, Zawtar al-Gharbiya (left) and Zawtar al-Sharqiya. Yellow, areas under IDF control (*al-Nahar*, July 23, 2026)

► The commander of the Lebanese army, General Rudolph Haykal, toured army units deployed in south Lebanon and visited the second intervention regiment in Zahrani and Zawtar al-Gharbiya. He was accompanied by an American delegation and met with commanders, soldiers and residents, reviewed the challenges delaying the return of the population to the south and took part in a ceremony commemorating fallen soldiers. He said the Lebanese army would continue working to strengthen security, support the return of residents and reinforce the stability of the region as part of the framework agreement (Lebanese army X account; *Nidaa al-Watan*, July 31, 2026).

The commander of the Lebanese army visits Zawtar al-Gharbiya
(Nidaa al-Watan, July 31, 2026)

► Lebanese army sources said the main challenge delaying the framework agreement was the continuation of Israeli military activity in south Lebanon, including strikes, gunfire and the demolition of buildings. According to the sources, the army continues deploying its forces, locating and confiscating weapons in open areas and strengthening security control, but has not yet begun searches of private homes because of legal restrictions requiring warrants. They also noted that the extensive destruction, damaged infrastructure and continued Israeli presence in Zawtar al-Sharqiya were hindering the mission, but said the army had no intention of being drawn into a confrontation with Hezbollah and would continue focusing on enforcing state authority in the public sphere. The sources added that the army had located and confiscated large quantities of weapons (*al-Akhbar*, July 29, 2026; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 1, 2026).

► Sources close to Hezbollah claimed the United States was focusing its pressure on the Lebanese army rather than on Israel to accelerate implementation of the army's commitments under the agreement. They claimed the main point of contention was the Ali al-Taher Ridge, where Israel demanded the Lebanese army verify the absence of Hezbollah operatives and weapons as a condition for further withdrawals (*al-Akhbar*, July 30, 2026).

► In the assessment of military and strategic experts, no significant Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon could expected in the near future as long as the issue of Hezbollah's disarmament remained unresolved. They said that even if the pilot area plan was expanded, it would continue to be subject to security monitoring mechanisms and regional developments, particularly tensions between Iran and Israel and their impact on Hezbollah's conduct (Aram News, August 1, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► On July 29, 2026, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri met at the presidential palace after a prolonged period of tension. They reportedly discussed the general situation in Lebanon and the region, focusing on south Lebanon because of "Israel's aggression" and on continuing the framework agreement. Aoun briefed Berri on his visit to the United States and his meetings with the American president and secretary of state. Berri said he was "satisfied" with the meeting (Lebanese presidency X account, July 29, 2026).

Aoun and Berri (Lebanese presidency X account, July 29, 2026)

► According to Lebanese media reports, the objective of the Aoun-Berri meeting was to formulate a unified Lebanese position before the negotiations in Rome. They agreed Lebanon would continue to demand a full Israeli withdrawal, an end to the "violations" and the completion of Israel's commitments as prerequisites for progress in the agreement. They also said developments would be influenced by United States-Iran relations (Lebanon Debate and *al-Akhbar*, July 30, 2026).

► Political sources said Aoun, Berri and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's joint position was that Israel was delaying withdrawal from south Lebanon and exploiting the framework agreement to prolong its presence in the area without effective American pressure. According to the sources, their position is expected to be reflected during the upcoming negotiations in Rome, although Lebanon is not considering abandoning the agreement, but rather seeks to improve its implementation (*al-Diyar*, July 31, 2026).

► Berri said he supported advancing the framework agreement, but any progress had to begin with consolidating the ceasefire, a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, the return of residents to their homes and international and regional guarantees which would ensure Lebanon's stability. Berri reiterated his opposition to direct negotiations with Israel,

adding that his position on the issue had not changed (*al-Akhbar,* July 27, 2026). Berri spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron to discuss developments in Lebanon, the Israeli withdrawal, the country's reconstruction and continued French involvement, including the future of UNIFIL (Naharnet, July 30, 2026; *al-Joumhouria*, July 31, 2026).

The weakening of France's influence in Lebanon and its efforts to preserve its position through involvement in the reconstruction and support for the Lebanese army (*al-Joumhouria*, July 31, 2026)

►Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji criticized Hezbollah, saying it had an Iranian identity and ideology and, as long as it did not disarm, no distinction could be made between its military and political wings (Youssef Rajji's X account, July 27, 2026). In response, Ibrahim al-Moussawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, attacked Rajji, accused him of undermining national unity and representing positions which served Israel, and claimed he was trying to foment a confrontation between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah (Lebanese News Agency, July 28, 2026).

Hezbollah

►Hezbollah and the Shi'ite camp continued to present a unified position against the framework agreement, which they view as serving Israeli and American interests, while rejecting the legitimacy of any discussion of the organization's disarmament. They reiterated that the continued existence of the "resistance"[2] was essential for Lebanon's defense and warned against relying on American guarantees or negotiations with Israel.

- Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed the direct negotiations with Israel had brought "nothing but Lebanese concessions, while Israel had taken

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

everything." In a recorded speech for the *Arbaeen*,[3] he called on Lebanon's political leadership to stop making concessions to Israel and instead hold a dialogue with the "resistance." He asked why the authorities were not demanding that the United States secure a complete halt to the aggression in south Lebanon, claiming all the strikes were carried out under American supervision and with American approval. He said the political leadership was merely holding meetings without addressing the consequences of the "aggression," adding that was not how those who wanted to defend the country's sovereignty should act. He demanded the leadership force Israel to withdraw and establish a timetable for reconstruction. He added that Hezbollah supported the deployment of the Lebanese army south of the Litani River and was prepared to assist it, as it had done in the past. Qassem also claimed it was the memorandum of understanding between Iran and the United States that had led to the ceasefire and deterred Israel from further escalation, and that the memorandum would also lead to a full Israeli withdrawal. He said none of it would have been achieved without "the steadfastness of the resistance" and reiterated that the "resistance"[4] would continue as long as the occupation existed and would never accept "humiliation," promising to confront anyone who cooperated with the "Israeli project" and its plans against the "resistance." In view of American efforts to involve Damascus in Hezbollah's disarmament, he signaled to the Syrian leadership that he was prepared to hold a public meeting between Hezbollah and the Syrian leadership "at a time suitable for both sides" (al-'Ahed, August 4, 2026).

[3] *Arbaeen*: A Shi'ite day of mourning marking 40 days since the death of Imam Husayn ibn Ali and many other members of the family of Ali ibn Abi Talib at the Battle of Karbala in 61 AH (680 CE). It is customary to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam Husayn in Karbala, Iraq to mark the day,

[4] The jihad to destroy the State of Israel.

Na'im Qassem delivering his speech (al-'Ahed, August 4, 2026)

◆Hassan Ezzeddine, Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, Hussein Jashi and Ali al-Miqdad, all members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, together with political bureau member Ghaleb Abu Zeinab, criticized the Lebanese president, the government and the foreign minister, arguing that the framework agreement was not implementable. They said Hezbollah did not seek a confrontation with the Lebanese army and added that the organization's continued participation in the government would be examined according to the interests of the "resistance" (*al-Diyar*, July 27, 30 and 31, 2026).

◆Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, and other organization figures continued to argue that Israel was exploiting the negotiations and the framework agreement to impose new security and political conditions on Lebanon with American backing. They said the residents of the south had the right to return to their homes but were not prepared to relinquish the "right of resistance " as long as the occupation and Israeli activity continued (*al-Nashra*, July 30, 2026; *al-Diyar*, August 1, 2026).

◆Hassan Fadlallah, also a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called the framework agreement an achievement for Israel and the United States which offered Lebanese nothing in return and said Israel would not withdraw from the south before the Israeli elections. He said Hezbollah would continue working "to liberate the south through resistance" or through the contacts being conducted by Iran, while assisting the residents of the south despite the "American siege" (*al-Diyar*, August 2, 2026).

- The deputy head of the Islamic Shi'ite council, Sheikh Ali al-Khatib, Jaafari Mufti Ahmad Qabalan and senior Shi'ite cleric Ali Fadlallah called on the Lebanese government to reconsider the negotiations with Israel. They warned against relying on American guarantees, and said the partnership between the Lebanese army, the "resistance" and national unity was essential for preserving the country's sovereignty. They also called for maintaining internal cohesion and preventing a slide into sectarian confrontation (*al-Diyar*, July 31, 2026).

► Political sources in Lebanon claimed that since the signing of the framework agreement, direct channels of communication between Hezbollah and the presidency had been severed, while the agreement was being implemented solely through the Lebanese army and state institutions. According to the sources, Speaker Nabih Berri chose to maintain a channel of communication with President Aoun, while Hezbollah continued to boycott the presidency. They added that the organization's political standing had eroded, as some of its allies had also begun using rhetoric promoting the state's exclusive authority to bear arms and the strengthening of the Lebanese army's status (Aram News, July 31, 2026).

► American diplomatic sources said efforts to advance a framework for Hamas' disarmament[5] also increased the political and psychological pressure on Hezbollah to promote a similar process in Lebanon. However, they said the Lebanese arena was more complex because of Hezbollah's political, social and military status and the continued support it received from Iran, despite Tehran's diminished regional influence (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 1, 2026).

Support for the Agreement

► Lebanese members of parliament who met with President Aoun said they supported his policy of strengthening state institutions, advancing the negotiations to secure a full Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, returning residents to their homes and promoting reconstruction. They also said the state and its institutions, led by the Lebanese army, were the only legitimate authority responsible for safeguarding Lebanon's sovereignty and security, and called for continued coordination between the president and the prime minister (Lebanese presidency X account, July 28 and August 3, 2026).

[5] See the August 2026 Amit Institute report, **Agreement for Collecting Weapons from Hamas and the Other Armed Organizations in the Gaza Strip – Significance and Reactions**

► Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces party, said Lebanon had already completed 60% to 70% of the process required to end Hezbollah's illegitimate influence over the state and made clear there was no place for Hezbollah's weapons in Lebanon's future. He said neither political stability nor social security could be achieved without ensuring state sovereignty, and decisions for war and peace belonged not to a particular party or to one segment of the Lebanese people, but to the state itself. He added that the fall of the Assad regime in Syria and Hezbollah's campaign against Israel had weakened the organization and had the Lebanese authorities been willing to accept the minimal risks required, Hezbollah would already have collapsed completely. He rejected the possibility of a civil war, saying that currently most Lebanese supported the state while one party was trying to undermine state authority. Therefore, state action to enforce its authority, he argued, should not be regarded as a civil war (Sky News Arabia, August 2, 2026).

The Military Situation in Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued operations in the security zone in south Lebanon to locate weapons, eliminate terrorists who posed a threat and destroy terrorist infrastructure. A key Hezbollah underground facility in the Beaufort Ridge was destroyed which served as a command center and a base for planning and carrying out attacks on Israel. In the town of Hadatha, a tunnel used as a Hezbollah headquarters was also destroyed. In the Ali al-Taher Ridge area, where dozens of Hezbollah terrorists are reportedly entrenched underground, an IDF officer was wounded during an encounter with a terrorist squad. A Hezbollah explosive drone was launched at an IDF engineering vehicle; no casualties were reported (IDF Spokesperson, July 27-August 3, 2026).

The main routes destroyed in the tunnel network beneath the Beaufort Ridge (IDF Spokesperson, July 30, 2026)

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah still does not issue claims of responsibility for attacks on IDF forces, even after the IDF announced the launch of the explosive drone and the encounters. It does, however, hold memorial ceremonies for operatives who have been killed and claims it has not abandoned the "right of resistance,"[6] although it currently avoids actions which could lead to broader escalation (Hezbollah in the Field Telegram channel; *al-Diyar*; Lebanon 24, July 27-August 3, 2026).

► According to a report, the tunnel network built by Hezbollah in south Lebanon after 2000, and particularly after the Second Lebanon War in 2006, has command centers, weapons depots, transportation routes and underground communications systems to ensure continuity of combat even under aerial bombardment. Reportedly, the destruction of the complex beneath the Beaufort Ridge illustrated the extent of the damage inflicted on one of the organization's core strategic assets (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 3, 2026).

► A Lebanese military source said Hezbollah was developing a new operational tactic in south Lebanon based on targeted attacks on important IDF military targets while increasing the use of reconnaissance drones to collect intelligence and monitor troop movements. According to the source, the objective of the shift is to adapt to Israel's intelligence and air superiority, reduce exposure of the organization's operatives and increase the cost of Israeli operations through limited attrition (Aram News, July 28, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned the continuation of Israeli military activity in south Lebanon, particularly the alleged damage to infrastructure and heritage sites, including Beaufort Castle, which he called "a serious escalation and a violation of existing understandings." He said continued Israeli activity on the eve of the direct talks in Rome could undermine efforts to advance the framework agreement and called on the mediating countries and the international community to take action to stop the "violations" and preserve stability in south Lebanon (Lebanese presidency X account, July 31, 2026).

► Aoun also urged the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, to take action against what he called "Israeli violations" in south Lebanon. According to Aoun, continued Israeli activity violates human rights and could undermine the framework agreement. Türk

[6] The "right" to attack Israel with terrorism and violence in an attempt to destroy it.

replied that the UN Human Rights Office was monitoring developments and preparing a report on the issue (Lebanese presidency X account, July 27, 2026).

► Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, condemned Israel's attacks in south Lebanon as "aggression against people, heritage and construction." He claimed Israel used hundreds of tons of explosives and international intervention was necessary to stop the "violations" (*al-Diyar*, July 31, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army announced that a "suspicious object" had exploded during an engineering operation in the Kafra area and wounded five soldiers. The army initially claimed the incident was an Israeli attack but later corrected its account (Lebanese army X account, August 2, 2026). An IDF investigation found that the explosive device had not been planted by IDF forces and most likely by Hezbollah (IDF Spokesperson, August 2, 2026).

The Challenges of Hezbollah's Military Buildup

► Sources in Lebanon said that despite Hezbollah's strategic commitment to Iran, the organization was currently facing significant constraints which could prevent it from joining another military confrontation in the event of an escalation between the United States and Iran. According to the sources, Hezbollah continues to maintain operational capabilities, including precision missile systems and UAVs, but is dealing with losses in manpower, logistical constraints, difficulties in procuring equipment and maintaining smuggling routes, and a military imbalance vis-à-vis Israel, all of which could result in substantial damage to the organization in the event of another conflict (*Nidaa al-Watan*, July 29, 2026).

► A Lebanese security source said Hezbollah was facing the erosion of its logistical and financial infrastructure following tighter oversight of the airport, seaports, border crossings and the financial sector. Reportedly, the reduction in smuggling routes and financial transfers has made it more difficult for the organization to move weapons, equipment and funds, although it continues to operate alternative smuggling channels using cash, money changers, gold and cryptocurrencies (Lebanon Debate, July 27, 2026).

► Military and political sources in Lebanon said experts from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps were assisting Hezbollah in restoring its capabilities. However, it is also facing financial difficulties, declining recruitment and continued political and security pressure, while its strategic decisions continue to be influenced by Tehran (Aram News, July 28, 2026).

► The Lebanese security forces uncovered a weapons depot and logistical infrastructure belonging in the Ras al-Nabaa area of Beirut, and seized weapons, explosives, communications equipment, maps and electronic devices. The individual who owned them admitted to being a Hezbollah operative. Following the incident, political figures and commentators called for expanded enforcement against the organization's infrastructure in Beirut and for accelerating implementation of the government's decision to make the capital an area free of illegal weapons (Lebanon Debate and *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, July 29, 2026; Wadah Sadek's X account, August 1, 2026; *al-Liwaa*, July 31, 2026). According to sources, the findings indicate that the seized weapons were also intended for operational use in the event of an escalation. The incident has renewed the debate over the need to complete disarming Beirut and expand Lebanese army operations against "armed networks" in the city (Aram News, August 3, 2026).

The Lebanese army

► General Rudolph Haykal, commander of the Lebanese army, used the events marking the army's 81st anniversary to state that the army would continue to carry out its missions despite limited resources and ongoing security challenges. He said the army's priorities included securing the borders, combating terrorism, crime and smuggling, and completing the deployment of forces in the south in accordance with the framework agreement, while preparing to deploy in every area from which Israel withdrew. Haykal accused Israel of continuing its "violations," called for further strengthening the army's capabilities through international assistance and said the army would continue to serve as the main institution responsible for preserving security, stability and internal cohesion (Lebanese army X account, July 30, 2026).

► To mark Army Day, Haykal visited several army units in central and southern Lebanon, including the South Litani Sector Headquarters, infantry brigades and intervention regiments. He reviewed the operational situation, congratulated the soldiers and said the strength of the Lebanese army rested on the unity of all its units (Lebanese army X account, July 30 and August 1, 2026).

► In messages issued for Army Day, President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said only the Lebanese army was legitimately authorized to bear arms and defend the country's sovereignty. They called for the continued deployment of the army along the southern border, the extension of state authority throughout Lebanese territory and the strengthening of the army's capabilities through expanding its combat array, improving service conditions and continuing international assistance (Lebanese presidency X account and Nawaf Salam's X account, August 1, 2026).

The Lebanese leadership is seeking to position the army as the country's unifying national symbol and the sole authority responsible for security (*al-Joumhouria*, August 1, 2026)

Additional Turkish Involvement in Lebanon

► President Aoun paid an official visit to Ankara, where he met with Turkish President Erdoğan. They announced the initiation of a new phase in bilateral relations and agreed to expand cooperation in security, the economy, energy, transportation and infrastructure. Erdoğan said Turkey would continue supporting the Lebanese army with training, equipment and humanitarian assistance, including the provision of temporary housing units for displaced residents of south Lebanon (Lebanese presidency X account and Anadolu Agency, July 30, 2026).

► According to analyses in the Lebanese and Turkish media, the objective of the visit was to position Turkey as a key player in Lebanon and its post-war reconstruction. Ankara reportedly wants to increase security and economic cooperation with Beirut, explore defense agreements and participate in a future international force to be deployed in south Lebanon once UNIFIL's mandate ends (*al-Diyar*, TRT and al-Liwaa, July 31, 2026).

Aoun and Erdoğan hold a joint press conference (al-Madan, July 30, 2026).

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL announced it was expanding its activities in south Lebanon along with an ongoing effort to locate and neutralize explosive materials remaining in former combat areas to enable the force to continue its operations and facilitate the safe return of residents. The agency reported the discovery of approximately four tons of ammonium nitrate in a building near Houla and the neutralization of the remains of a UAV near one of the force's positions. UNIFIL Commander Lieutenant General Diodato Abagnara said the removal of explosive materials was key for increasing the force's freedom of movement and strengthening stability in the south (Lebanese News Agency, July 28, 2026). The Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* claimed UNIFIL had not identified the source of the explosive materials or shared the information with the Lebanese army before publishing its announcement. According to the report, Lebanese sources attributed the materials to the IDF and claimed Hebrew markings had been found on some of the containers (*al-Akhbar*, July 30, 2026).

► European countries, led by France, continued to pressure the Lebanese government to submit a formal request to extend UNIFIL's mandate, which is due to expire at the end of 2026, amid concerns that failure to renew it would strengthen the American mechanism established under the framework agreement. According to the reports, France, Germany and

other countries are examining alternatives to prevent a security vacuum in the south if the force's status changes or implementation of the agreement fails (*al-Akhbar*, July 29, 2026).

► UNIFIL Commander Lieutenant General Diodato Abagnara participated in a ceremony for the transfer of assistance to the Municipality of Tyre and noted the force's commitment to continuing its cooperation with the local authorities, supporting communities in the south and assisting recovery and reconstruction efforts. Tyre Mayor Hassan Dbouk said the assistance strengthened the municipality's ability to continue providing residents with services (*al-Diyar*, August 1, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in Lebanon

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam held a series of discussions to advance the first phase of recovery in south Lebanon and to present the national framework for return, early recovery and the restoration of basic services. He instructed the relevant authorities to increase coordination between government ministries, the Lebanese army and the security services, accelerate the removal of rubble, the reopening of roads, the reconstruction of infrastructure and the restoration of essential services, while also deploying temporary housing units and advancing transportation projects. A broad government plan was also presented, in cooperation with the United Nations and development partners, to lead the reconstruction process and facilitate the return of residents through a combination of humanitarian assistance, early recovery and long-term reconstruction (Lebanese Prime Minister's X account, July 31, 2026; *al-Diyar*, August 1, 2026).

► According to published figures, approximately 60% of the displaced residents have returned to their homes in south Lebanon. However, tens of thousands of families are still unable to return because of the extensive destruction and the lack of sources of income. Given the slow return of state institutions and public services to south Lebanon, Hezbollah's institutions are filling some of the state's roles in providing assistance and civilian services. The Samidoun program, which operates under Hezbollah's auspices, reportedly continues to manage a significant portion of the civilian assistance system in south Lebanon (*al-Akhbar*, July 27, 2026).

► Residents of several towns in south Lebanon held a rally in Nabatieh to protest the continued Israeli military activity and the destruction in the south. They criticized the

Lebanese government for failing to respond adequately to residents' needs and for delays in reconstruction and the restoration of services (Lebanon 24, August 1, 2026).

► An article published in the Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* described the "sense of uncertainty" among the residents of south Lebanon because of the continued Israeli military activity, delays in reconstruction and fears that the fighting could resume. According to the article, many residents are struggling to decide whether to return to their homes, rebuild their property or begin new lives elsewhere. The article called for a broad public discussion on the future of the south and stressed that simply waiting could not serve as a strategy for rebuilding society and the region (*al-Akhbar*, August 1, 2026).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam held separate meetings with Yasser Abbas[7] (the envoy of the chairman of the Palestinian Authority) and with senior Palestinian figures. They focused on strengthening bilateral relations, increasing cooperation and continuing coordination on the issue of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Aoun noted Lebanon's commitment to the principle that the state alone had the authority to bear arms and called on the Palestinians to cooperate with the Lebanese security forces in implementing the government's decisions regarding the camps. The Palestinian representatives said relations with the Lebanese government were at their best in recent years and said they were willing to continue bilateral political and security coordination (Lebanese prime minister's X account, July 30, 2026; Lebanese presidency X account, July 31, 2026).

[7] Yasser Abbas is the son of Mahmoud Abbas, the chairman of the Palestinian Authority, and is a member of Fatah's Central Committee and the movement's commissioner for foreign relations.