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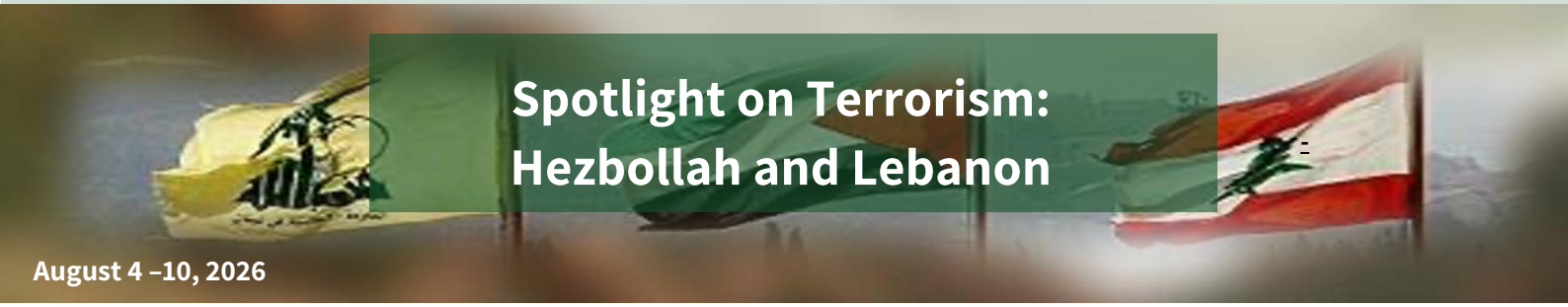

Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

August 4 –10, 2026

Trending

► The seventh round of direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel ended without a breakthrough on the core issues.

► The Ali al-Taher Ridge is the main point of contention in the implementation of the pilot areas.

► Initial contacts were held between the Syrian government and Hezbollah.

Overview[1]

► Two IDF soldiers were killed and four others seriously wounded when an explosive device detonated in Majdal Zoun. In response, the IDF expanded its operations in south Lebanon, issued an evacuation notice to the residents of the village of al-Mansouri and attacked Hezbollah infrastructure.

► The seventh round of direct Israel-Lebanon negotiations in Rome ended without a breakthrough on the core issues, although progress was made on border demarcation, the issue of Lebanese detainees held by Israel and the formulation of mechanisms for the framework agreement.

► According to reports Israel is conditioning the expansion of the pilot areas on the dismantling of Hezbollah infrastructure on the Ali al-Taher Ridge, while Lebanon refuses to take do anything which could be interpreted as recognition of Israeli control over the area. Italy is apparently the leading candidate to head an international mechanism for verifying the demilitarization of the pilot areas.

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam accused Hezbollah of dragging Lebanon into war and undermining its sovereignty. Hezbollah reiterated its demand to halt the negotiations with Israel.

[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.

► According to reports in Lebanon and Syria, the new Syrian regime and Hezbollah have held initial contacts as part of discussions on the organization's future and security arrangements in Lebanon. Syrian security forces and the Lebanese army foiled attempts to smuggle weapons across the border between the two countries.

► The possibility of replacing UNIFIL with a new international force is being examined, with the leading alternative being a European force which could include units from Muslim countries.

► The Lebanese government increased its reconstruction efforts in the south, but hundreds of thousands of displaced south Lebanese are still unable to return to their homes because of the extent of the destruction and the shortage of infrastructure and housing.

Direct Negotiations and the Israel-Lebanon Agreement Framework

Direct Negotiations

► Between August 4 and 6, 2026, the seventh round of direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel was held in Rome, mediated by the United States. The discussions focused on three areas, military, political and legal, and included four main issues: the expansion of the pilot areas, the verification mechanism, security arrangements along the border and the prisoners [Lebanese detainees in Israel]. However, reportedly no agreements were reached on the core issues: Lebanon demanded progress toward a full ceasefire, the establishment of a phased timetable for an Israeli withdrawal and the expansion of the pilot areas, with al-Khiyam, Bint Jbeil and Zawtar al-Sharqiya included in the next phase. Israel conditioned expansion of the pilot areas and further withdrawal on the completion of the dismantling of Hezbollah infrastructure and full verification that the missions had been carried out in the areas already transferred to the control of the Lebanese army. The Lebanese delegation presented legal and historical documents supporting its position regarding the land border and submitted preliminary lists of prisoners, demanding their early release. The United States said it currently did not intend to exert pressure on Israel, and progress in implementing the framework agreement was contingent on progress in dismantling Hezbollah infrastructure and establishing the state's exclusive control over weapons (al-Arabiya, Eram News, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, *al-Akhbar*, *al-Nahar*, August 5–8, 2026).

► According to reports, the identity of the party which would be entrusted with the verification mechanism could not be agreed on. Israel demanded it carry out the verification,

but Lebanon opposed direct Israeli involvement. The United States refused to carry out the task itself and given the reservations regarding proposals involving France and Spain, Italy became the leading candidate; Lebanon, however, continued to support the inclusion of France in the multinational mechanism. Disagreements also remained regarding the authority to carry out searches in areas which would be transferred to the responsibility of the Lebanese army (*Nidaa al-Watan*, *al-Madan*, *al-Akhbar*, August 6–8, 2026).

► Israel reportedly conditioned further discussion of the release of the Lebanese prisoners on receiving information about the fate of Lebanese Jews who disappeared during the civil war and the fate of the Israeli navigator Ron Arad. Lebanon said that could not be done, although the sides agreed to continue discussing the issue (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 8, 2026).

► Meanwhile, progress was made on several technical issues. Preliminary understandings were reached regarding the continuation of the negotiations, a map of the areas under IDF control was agreed on and completed in preparation for the expansion of the pilot areas and work began on formulating a protocol which would regulate the mechanisms for implementing, verifying and monitoring the framework agreement. In addition, a list was drawn up of third-party candidates which would eventually be entrusted with the verification mechanism.

► Lebanese officials called the results of the round "unsatisfactory," but said negotiations remained the preferred path for restoring the south, advancing the issue of the prisoners and extending state sovereignty through the Lebanese army. Political sources, however, said parliament speaker Nabih Berri was "frustrated" by lack of progress and said that as long as Israel refused to expand the pilot areas and move forward with its withdrawal, the practical achievements of the talks remained limited (*al-Joumhouria* and *al-Diyar*, August 8–9, 2026). Lebanese sources also reported that the progress reported by President Joseph Aoun after the talks referred primarily to Israel's willingness to discuss the technical aspects of the border and prisoner issues as part of preparations for a comprehensive arrangement (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 8, 2026).

► According to some reports, it was agreed that another round of talks would be held in early September 2026. However, the Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen network quoted a Lebanese diplomatic official who issued a denial and claimed that if a new round of negotiations were held, it would most likely take place after the summer. Lebanese sources

noted that while Beirut did not want to cut off contacts with Israel, it considered not participating in the next round unless Israel first took concrete steps, especially a ceasefire, an end to the destruction in the south and progress in implementing another phase of the pilot areas. Apparently that was not an official decision, but rather a hardening of the Lebanese position to increase pressure on Israel through the American administration following the failure of the Rome round. According to the report, the final decision is expected to be made after the visit of American General David Clearfield to Lebanon and in accordance with American mediation efforts (*Nidaa al-Watan* and *al-Madan*, August 9, 2026).

The Pilot Area Plan

► This past week the Lebanese army continued to deploy in the pilot areas and in areas transferred to its responsibility, while emphasizing its commitment to the framework agreement and maintaining state sovereignty. Three Lebanese army soldiers were wounded during the neutralization of unexploded ordnance in the town of Zawtar al-Gharbiya in south Lebanon (Lebanese army X account, August 8, 2026).

► The Ali al-Taher Ridge was one of the main points of contention in the framework agreement and the expansion of the pilot areas plan. According to Lebanese sources, Israel regards the ridge as a strategic target because of the alleged [*sic*] presence of underground infrastructure, command posts and a Hezbollah logistical network, and therefore continues to intensify its military activity around Zawar al-Sharqiya and Tebnine. According to the sources, the Ridge was also discussed during the Rome talks, when Israel conditioned the expansion of the pilot areas on the dismantling of military infrastructure in the area. The Lebanese army, however, said it would do nothing which could be interpreted as legitimizing Israeli control of the area and would continue to act to maintain state sovereignty (Eram News, August 4 and 6, 2026; Lebanon Debate, August 6, 2026).

► According to a Lebanese security source, Hezbollah ranks its infrastructure in south Lebanon according to three tiers of importance. The Beaufort and Ali al-Taher complexes are considered the organization's core assets and include command posts, communications systems, tunnels and strategic weapons depots. According to the source, the organization may agree to hand over secondary sites as part of the pilot areas, but will oppose any attempt to touch the core complexes. Reportedly, Hezbollah is preparing for the possible expansion of Israeli activity in the Ali al-Taher area, while according to the Lebanese establishment the objective of Israel's escalation in the south is to increase pressure on

Lebanon in the negotiations and make it more difficult to expand the pilot areas. According to claims, the objective of the Israeli evacuation notice issued to residents of the town of al-Mansouri on August 5, 2026 was to create a precedent for similar measures in the Ali al-Taher area in the future (Eram News, August 4, 2026; al-Jadeed, August 5, 2026).

► Lebanese military officials said the army would not take steps which could be interpreted as legitimizing Israeli control of the Ali al-Taher area or other disputed areas and would continue to follow political directives and act in coordination with the ceasefire monitoring mechanism (Lebanon Debate, Eram News, al-Jadeed, August 4–9, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► In response to a speech delivered by Hezbollah secretary-general Na'im Qassem on August 4, 2026, in which he accused the Lebanese government of acting in Israel's interests rather than Lebanon's, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized Hezbollah and claimed the organization's unilateral decisions to drag Lebanon into wars was what had undermined state sovereignty, provided Israel with a pretext for military action and led to destruction and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Lebanese civilians. He said there could be no sovereignty unless the state was exclusively responsible for security and had only one army. He called for avoiding mutual accusations of treason, promoting a national dialogue and continuing the government's efforts to restore Lebanese territory, return residents to their homes and rebuild the south (Nawaf Salam's X account, August 4, 2026).

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun brifed the Lebanese government on the results of his visits to the United States and Turkey and on Lebanon's diplomatic contacts over the past week. He said his meeting with the American president was positive and had opened new channels of cooperation. He added that his visit to Turkey also yielded positive results in that Ankara expressed willingness to expand cooperation with Lebanon in the fields of energy, the economy and infrastructure and to assist in efforts to extend UNIFIL's mandate (Lebanese presidency X account, August 7, 2026).

Hezbollah

► At the conclusion of the seventh round of negotiations in Rome, several senior Hezbollah figures and members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament presented their unified position that the agreement did not serve Lebanon, the negotiations were not ending Israel's attacks or leading to a withdrawal from south Lebanon, and were being used as

American-Israeli leverage to promote Hezbollah's disarmament and exert pressure on the Lebanese government:

- The Hezbollah faction called on the Lebanese government to halt the negotiations because they were "fraught with concessions" without ending the Israeli attacks, did not lead to a withdrawal or preserve Lebanese sovereignty. It claimed the United States and Israel exploited he talks to exert pressure on Lebanon and condemned United States policy toward Iran and Israeli activity in the Gaza Strip. It also criticized the Lebanese authorities and called for measures to be taken against businessman Antoine al-Sahnaoui following his meeting with the Israeli prime minister (Loyalty to the Resistance bloc website, August 6, 2026).
- Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed that the seven rounds of negotiations had not produced tangible results for Lebanon, while Israel continued its military activity and destroyed infrastructure. He claimed the objective of representing the results of the talks as successful was to embellish zero results, and continuing the current path, which he claimed was conducted under American and Israeli pressure, could lead to further Lebanese concessions. He also claimed the framework agreement conditioned the Israeli withdrawal, the return of the displaced and reconstruction on the disarmament of Hezbollah and verification mechanisms which harmed the "resistance,"[2] and said the organization would not disarm. He said priority should be given to ending the Israeli attacks, advancing reconstruction, releasing the prisoners and protecting Lebanese civilians, and again stressed the alliance between Hezbollah and the Amal Movement (Loyalty to the Resistance bloc website, August 4, 2026; Lebanese News Agency, August 5, 2026; al-Diyar, August 9, 2026).
- Ali Ammar and Hussein Jashi, both members of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, criticized the Salam-Aoun government for continuing negotiations with Israel and the framework agreement. Ammar claimed the government was serving Israel by continuing the "path of concessions," adding that the negotiations had not ended the Israeli attacks, but had only damaged state sovereignty. Jashi said the framework agreement did not serve Lebanese interests and the authorities were concealing its

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

contents from the public and state institutions. The two said Hezbollah would continue to adhere to the "path of resistance" and would not agree to disarm (Lebanon Debate, August 4, 2026; al-Diyar, August 8, 2026).

- Hassan Ezzeddine, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed Iran was the principal factor capable of restraining Israel and influencing the shaping of regional arrangements. He said any future agreement between Iran and the United States would include Lebanon and would lead to American pressure on Israel to halt its military activity and complete its withdrawal (al-Diyar, August 9, 2026).

Support for the Agreement

► Figures in the camp supporting state sovereignty said they were in favor of continuing the negotiations with Israel and implementing the framework agreement. They represented the negotiations as way to strengthen state institutions, advance border demarcation and establish the state's exclusive control over weapons:

- Sami Gemayel, Kataeb Party chairman and a member of the Lebanese Parliament again called for weapons in Lebanon to be restricted exclusively to the state and said it was impossible to build a sovereign state, achieve national reconciliation or ensure Lebanon's future as long as Hezbollah continued to operate as an extra-state armed militia. He said he was in favor of continuing the negotiations with Israel, saying the negotiations would make it possible to complete the Israeli withdrawal, demarcate the borders and establish Lebanese sovereignty. He accused Iran of turning Lebanon into an arena for advancing its regional interests and claimed Hezbollah was not an independent Lebanese organization but an extension of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. He also said he supported President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, adding that in the future there was no reason Lebanon could not join the path of peace taken by other Arab states (Lebanese News Agency, Sky News Arabia, August 5, 2026).
- The Kataeb bloc called on the government to accelerate implementing its decisions regarding the state's control over weapons and the extension of its sovereignty over all Lebanese territory. It noted that implementation had remained partial and did not address security challenges. The bloc stressed that restoring the state's monopoly over security and military decision-making was a necessary condition for strengthening sovereignty, restoring international confidence and advancing reforms and economic recovery (Kataeb website, August 6, 2026).

- Lebanese Forces Party media official Charles Jabbour called for setting the end of September 2026 as the deadline for dismantling Hezbollah's military wing and transferring Hezbollah's weapons to the state. He said that after then the organization's weapons should be regarded as illegal and threatening Lebanon's security, and a call for the continuation of the "resistance" should be considered incitement to anarchy (Charles Jabbour's X account, August 9, 2026).
- Joe Issa al-Khoury, minister of industry, claimed that Hezbollah was in "military distress" and called on it to dismantle its military wing and comply with the state's decisions. The daily al-Madan criticized the organization's conduct after the war and claimed its continued possession of weapons and portrayal of the war as an "achievement" only exacerbated the internal and international pressure on it and made implementing the framework agreement more difficult (al-Madan, Nidaa al-Watan, August 3–8, 2026).
- The Maronite ecclesiastical establishment also backed the political course. The Council of Maronite Bishops, headed by Patriarch Cardinal Bechara Boutros al-Rahi, said it supported the continuation of negotiations between Lebanon and Israel under American auspices, while condemning continued Israeli activity in south Lebanon. The bishops called for an end to the "Israeli violations" and making protecting the communities in the south the top priority (al-Nahar, August 5, 2026).

The Military Situation in South Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued their activity in the security zone in south Lebanon, focusing on locating and destroying terrorist infrastructure, weapons depots and Hezbollah tunnels, and eliminating terrorist cells. A tunnel was destroyed in the Serbin area and weapons depots containing Hezbollah launchers and rockets were located; activity continued in the Beaufort and Ali al-Taher areas. Two IDF reservists were killed and four others were seriously wounded in the explosion of an IED inside a building during activity in Majdal Zoun. Following the incident, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic issued an evacuation notice to the residents of al-Mansouri, stating that Hezbollah had violated the understandings and the IDF would act forcefully against the organization, and strikes were subsequently carried out in the area. It

was also reported that an explosive UAV was launched at IDF forces; no casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, August 4–10, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah did not issue claims of responsibility for attacks on IDF forces in south Lebanon, despite statements by the IDF spokesperson and reports of violations by the organization. According to the Lebanese establishment, Hezbollah is preparing for the possibility of expanded Israeli activity, particularly in the Ali al-Taher and Beaufort areas, which are considered core assets of its military[-terrorist] infrastructure, while maintaining a low operational profile and avoiding actions that could lead to a broad escalation (Hezbollah Telegram channel, *al-Diyar*, al-Jadeed, Lebanon Debate, August 4–10, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

The Shi'ite Arena

► Sources close to Hezbollah claimed its leadership was concerned over growing criticism within the Shi'ite community in the wake of the consequences of the war. According to the report, that concern was one factor behind Hezbollah secretary-general Na'im Qassem's call for a dialogue with the leaderships in Lebanon and Syria, since protests from within the Shi'ite support base could become a significant challenge for the organization (Lebanese Politico,[3] August 5, 2026).

Hezbollah is more politically isolated than ever, with growing public and political calls to concentrate all security authority in the hands of the Lebanese state
(Sa'er Sabil, August 3, 2026)

[3] Lebanese Politico is a media outlet opposed to Hezbollah. Its editor-in-chief is Charles Jabbour, head of the Lebanese Forces Party's media department.

Hezbollah and Syria

►After remarks by Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem, who said there was no obstacle to holding a public meeting with the Syrian president in the future when conditions were ripe, it was reported that the Syrian leadership also did not rule out dialogue with Hezbollah if it served Syrian interests. Commentators in Lebanon said the change reflected Hezbollah's attempt to adapt to the new regional Zeitgeist, preserve channels of security coordination and give priority to stability in relations with Damascus over continued confrontation with it (*al-Nahar*, *al-Joumhouria*, August 5–7, 2026).

►Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa reportedly prefers any future Syrian security involvement in Lebanon to take place within the framework of a joint Arab force rather than through a direct Syrian presence, to avoid a return to the Syrian intervention of the past (*al-Madan*, August 6, 2026). It was also reported that senior Syrian intelligence officials and Hezbollah representatives met in Beirut to discuss the possibility of integrating the organization into the Lebanese security establishment as part of a future arrangement concerning its weapons, with Syrian involvement and guarantees. According to the reports, Damascus seeks to play the role of mediator and guarantor in the future rather than return to the position of direct influence it previously held in Lebanon (Ultra Syria,[4] August 7, 2026). Most of the reports on the issue were based on unconfirmed individual sources.

►The Lebanese army foiled an attempt to smuggle 122 mm Grad rockets from Syria into Lebanon in the mountainous Arsal area. The rockets, a vehicle used to transport them and additional ammunition were seized, and two suspects belonging to the smuggling network were arrested. The army reported that the operation was part of the continuing effort to prevent weapons smuggling along the border with Syria (Lebanese army X account, August 4, 2026). Subsequently, internal security forces of the Syrian ministry of the interior in Tartus Province, in cooperation with Syrian general intelligence, foiled an attempt to smuggle a shipment of weapons and ammunition into Lebanon. According to the authorities'

[4] Ultra Syria is not a Syrian government media outlet, a website which combines news reports, interviews, commentary and in-depth articles.

statement, automatic rifles, RPGs, magazines and ammunition were seized (SANA, August 8, 2026).

The Grad rockets (Lebanese army X account, August 4, 2026)

The Lebanese Army

► Lebanese army commander Rodolphe Haykal met with the commander of the Italian Joint Operations Command, Lieutenant General Giovanni Maria Iannucci, and with the Italian ambassador to Beirut. They discussed security developments, continued assistance to the Lebanese army and the expansion of bilateral cooperation, including preparations for the "day after" UNIFIL's mandate expired (Lebanese army X account, August 4, 2026).

► The Lebanon Sanctions, Stability and Support Act was introduced in the American Senate, providing for annual security assistance of $200 million to the Lebanese army, with the possibility of increasing it to $300 million, subject to progress by the Lebanese government in disarming Hezbollah, combating weapons smuggling and reducing Iranian influence. The bill also provides for sanctions against foreign actors which provide material support to Hezbollah and additional assistance to the Lebanese army, its internal security forces and the reconstruction process (al-Nahar, August 9, 2026).

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL said the parties' commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and the continuation of coordination mechanisms were key conditions for preventing escalation in south Lebanon. According to UNIFIL, although the level of violence is significantly lower compared with recent months, the situation remains fragile (Lebanese News Agency, August 6, 2026).

► Reportedly, the possibility of eventually replacing UNIFIL with a new international force was discussed during the Rome talks. According to Lebanese sources, the leading alternative is a European force which could subsequently be reinforced by units from Islamic countries.

That would not require a new Security Council resolution, but only the consent of the countries participating in the framework agreement, while Lebanon continued to work toward the inclusion of France and Spain in the future mechanism expected to be formed (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 8–9, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in South Lebanon

► The Lebanese media reported on a study by the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, based on Planet Labs satellite images of south Lebanon, according to which approximately 18,000 buildings had been damaged or destroyed in the 19 villages examined. According to the study, approximately 74% of the buildings in the villages examined were classified as destroyed and in 10% the destruction rate exceeded 80% (al-Jadeed, August 9, 2026).

► An in-depth report on the situation in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut after the ceasefire noted that during the day, debris removal, private reconstruction of homes and the reopening of businesses continued, but after dark the area emptied because of fear the attacks would resume. According to the report, most of the reconstruction is being carried out through private initiatives and in the absence of significant government compensation, while shortages of electricity, water, communications and infrastructure continue to make residents' lives and their return to normal difficult (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, August 9, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam held a meeting with senior officials from the council for the south and the relief commission, during which he was briefed on the progress of damage surveys and reconstruction projects and instructed them to accelerate construction of the temporary bridge at al-Qaqa'iyat al-Jisr to improve access between the al-Nabatieh and Bint Jbeil districts. National Defense Minister Michel Menassa and Public Works Minister Fayez Rasamny toured the pilot areas and announced the beginning of work to repair bridges, roads and infrastructure in several affected communities. Menassa said the return of the south Lebanese depended on a combination of the deployment of the Lebanese army, the repair of infrastructure and the restoration of government services (prime minister's office X account, *al-Nahar*, *Nidaa al-Watan*, August 5–6, 2026).

► According to UN data, more than 821,000 displaced Lebanese have returned to their homes, but approximately 360,000 are still classified as displaced, including approximately 26,000 staying in government shelters. Lebanese sources said hundreds of thousands of

people had not yet returned to the south because of the extent of the destruction and the lack of permanent housing solutions (*al-Nahar*, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 4–5, 2026).

► Basic infrastructure reconstruction work continued, focusing on restoring water, electricity, roads and schools to enable south Lebanese to return. The Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* reported that most of the work was funded by the council for the south, local authorities and a World Bank loan, while government funding remained limited. Because of the housing shortage, the relief commission placed approximately 100 temporary housing units in Zawtar al-Gharbiya for families whose homes had been destroyed, while the municipality of Froun called for the initiative to be expanded to its area as well ahead of the beginning of the school year (al-*Akhbar*, *Nidaa al-Watan*, August 8, 2026).

Prefabricated housing units provided to south Lebanese as temporary housing (*Nidaa al-Watan*, August 8, 2025)

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► The chairman of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, Ambassador Ramez Dimashkieh, stated that the visit by Yasser Abbas,[5] who is responsible for the Palestinian portfolio in Lebanon, dealt with ongoing efforts to address the issue of Palestinian weapons in the country. He said some of the Palestinian "organizations"[6] had recently handed over seven truckloads of weapons to the Lebanese army, while the Fatah movement continued to cooperate with the authorities on the issue. He added that he planned to hold a meeting with the Hamas leadership soon to make progress with it on the issue of Palestinian weapons in the camps (*al-Nahar*, August 4, 2026).

► Sources reported that several senior Palestinian figures identified with radical Islam recently left the Ein al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp and moved to Syria after reportedly

[5] Yasser Abbas, the son of the chairman of the Palestinian Authority, is a member of Fatah's central committee and the movement's commissioner for foreign relations

[6] Terrorist organizations.

receiving permission from the new authorities in Damascus. The Palestinian "organizations" in the camp were working to reduce internal tensions and prevent further clashes. However, Lebanese security officials continue to monitor the activities of Islamist elements in the camp and warned of the presence of operatives affiliated with ISIS and the possibility of terrorist attacks being carried out inside or outside the camp (*al-Nahar*, August 8, 2026).