



## Spotlight on Terrorism : Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria June 24 – July 1 , 2024

### The Northern Arena\*

- 1,843 attacks
- 346 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 76 operatives of other organization killed
- Three non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

\*Updated from October 8, 2023

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **38 attacks** on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, similar to the previous week, using anti-tank missiles, mortar shells, UAVs and various types of rockets, including heavy rockets. Eighteen IDF soldiers were injured in the northern Golan Heights by a UAV attack.
- ▶ Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon. Nine Hezbollah operatives and a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative were killed.
- ▶ Senior Hezbollah figures warned Israel not to expand the conflict in Lebanon. According to reports, Hezbollah put its border units on higher alert out of concern for Israeli military infiltration. Several countries called on their citizens to leave Lebanon for fear of escalation.
- ▶ According to reports, Iran provided Hezbollah with new weapons, including unmanned naval vessels. Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah praised Iran and its "regional achievements and victories."
- ▶ The prime minister of the transitional government in Lebanon, Najib Mikati, visited south Lebanon and said the country was already at war.

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

► **Syria:** A Hezbollah operative was killed in an attack on a Jihad al-Bina Association target. The attack was attributed to Israel.

► For the first time since 2016, the Arab League announced it did not designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

## South Lebanon

### Hezbollah attacks

► This past week, June 24 to July 1, 2024, as of 13:00), Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **38 attacks** on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, similar to the previous week. Hezbollah used anti-tank missiles, mortar shells, UAVs and various types of rockets in the attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 24 to July 1, 2024):

- ◆ July 1, 2024 (until 11:00 a.m.): No attacks.
- ◆ June 30, 2024: **Nine attacks.** 18 soldiers were injured, one seriously, by a UAV in the northern Golan Heights; a rocket fell in an open area east of Kiryat Shmona, no casualties or damage were reported (IDF Telegram channel and Israeli media, June 30, 2024).
- ◆ June 29, 2024: **Three attacks.** A UAV was intercepted; anti-tank missiles hit two Israeli communities, no casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 29, 2024).
- ◆ June 28, 2024: **Eight attacks.** Three UAVs launched from Lebanon fell in the Western Galilee after interception attempts failed; no casualties were reported. About 25 rocket launches targeted the Western Galilee and the Galilee Panhandle. There were no casualties, a building was damaged and several fires broke out (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel and Israeli media , June 28, 2024).
- ◆ June 27, 2024: **Three attacks.** About 35 rockets were launched at the Safed area. A number of hits were identified, four people were injured by a fire and a house was damaged in the Upper Galilee was damaged; two UAVs launched from Lebanon fell just south of the border, no casualties were reported; another UAV was intercepted after entering Israeli airspace (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel and Israeli media, June 27, 2024).



**A house in the upper Galilee hit by a rocket (Upper Galilee spokesman's unit, June 27, 2024)**

- ◆ June 26, 2024: **Six attacks.** Anti-tank missiles hit Metula and a border community. No casualties were reported; material damage was caused (Israeli media, June 25, 2024).
- ◆ June 25, 2024: **Five attacks.** Two UAVs launched from Lebanon were intercepted, there were no casualties (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 25, 2024).



**Fires in the wake of the UAV interceptions (North Fire and Rescue spokesman's unit, June 25, 2024)**

- ◆ June 24, 2024: **Four attacks.** A UAV launched from Lebanon was intercepted; anti-tank missiles hit two communities; No casualties were reported; material damage was caused (Telegram channel of the IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, June 24, 2024).

## **Decrease in Hezbollah attacks**

► According to Lebanese sources, Hezbollah decreased the rate of attacks to provide a window for negotiations and reduce tensions. The sources reported Hezbollah would continue a minimum of field operations to wage psychological warfare (Lebanon24, June 30, 2024).

## **First use of Almas 4 missile**

► According to reports, in the attack on an IDF post on May 13, 2024, Hezbollah used an Iranian-made Almas 4 anti-tank missile for the first time. It uses reverse engineering of the Israeli Spike

missile,<sup>2</sup> and can be launched by UAVs and planes from hidden locations, ground launchers, vehicles or the air. The missile reportedly moves on a ballistic trajectory to a target within a range of 12-15 kilometers (7.5 to a little over 9 miles) and may be able to move along different routes and heights. According to reports, the 4<sup>th</sup> generation Almas missile carries a more sophisticated camera than previous versions (Spot Shot YouTube channel, June 25, 2024).

► It was also reported that Iran's defense industries developed a new type of missile capable of hitting Israel's aerial defense systems, including Iron Dome, and that during the past few weeks Hezbollah had tested such missiles for an attack (al-Medan, June 25, 2024).



**Right: Almas 4 missile launched towards an Israeli base on May 13, 2024. Left: Almas 4 missile in flight towards the base (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 4, 2024)**

## IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. The targets included terrorist facilities, buildings used for military purposes, munitions warehouses, observation posts, launching positions and rocket launchers. Israeli Air Force warplanes hit two facilities belonging to of Hezbollah's aerial defense, one in Ba'albek in the Lebanon Valley and the other in Jabal Safi, north of al-Nabatieh, from where surface-to-air missiles have been launched at Israeli Air Force aircraft in recent months (IDF spokesperson, June 24 to 30, 2024).

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<sup>2</sup> *Spike* is a series of anti-tank missiles with full, automatic self-guidance, the ability of the operator to view the image that the missile "sees" in flight and, if necessary, to change, the target after the missile has been launched.



**Attack in Ba'albek (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 24, 2024)**

► Israeli Air Force eliminated Hezbollah operatives:

- ◆ On June 27, 2024, an operative from Hezbollah's air unit, who had launched UAVs into Israeli territory, was killed in an Israeli Air Force attack in the Suhmur region in the Lebanon Valley (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 27 2024). Hezbollah announced the death of Ali Ahmed Alaa' al-Din, aka Elias, born in 1985 in Suhmur (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 27, 2024).



**Right: Scene of the attack in Suhmur (Mulhak' X account, June 27, 2024); Left: Ali Ahmed Alaa' al-Din (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 27, 2024)**

- ◆ On June 28, 2024, three people were killed in an Israeli attack on a building in Kfrkila (al-Nashra, June 28, 2024). Hezbollah did not report any casualties in the attack.
- ◆ On June 30, 2024, Israeli Air Force warplanes attacked a building in Houla in south Lebanon after the presence of several terrorist operatives had been identified (IDF spokesperson's Telegram channel, June 30, 2024). Hezbollah confirmed the deaths of three of its operatives: Nasrat Hussein Shqayr, aka Jawad, born in 1975 in al-Sawanah; Jalal Ali Dhaher, born in 1976 in Houla; Hussein Muhammad Sweidan, born in 1990 in Adsheets al-Quseir Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 30, 2024).



**Hezbollah terrorist operatives killed in an attack in Houla (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 30, 2024)**

## Other Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported the deaths of five other operatives (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 27 to 30, 2024):

- ◆ Abbas Ahmed Srour, aka Sajed, born in 1994 in Aita al-Sha'ab.
- ◆ Abd al-Amir Jawad Asili, aka Jawad, born in 1975 in Rachaf and a resident of Meiss al-Jabal.
- ◆ Muhammad Hussein Qassem, aka Hadi, born in 1974 in Aita al-Sha'ab.
- ◆ Mustafa Hasan Yassin, aka Malal, born in 1992 in Kafr Tabani.
- ◆ Abbas Munif Atwi, aka Jihad, born in 1986 in Shaqra.



**Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 27 to 30, 2024)**

## Palestinian Islamic Jihad casualty

► The Jerusalem Brigades, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing, reported the death of its operative, Uday Muhammad Saleh, aka Abu Omar, 19 years old, killed in south Lebanon (Jerusalem Brigades' Telegram channel, June 28, 2024). That brought the number of Palestinian-Syrian deaths on the Lebanese-Israeli border to 12, since the beginning of the war in October 2023 (Palestinian Refugees Portal, June 29, 2024).



**Uday Muhammad Saleh (Jerusalem Brigades combat information Telegram channel, June 28, 2024)**

## Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

### Nasrallah

► The secretary general of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, sent a message to the international Martyrs Defending Shrines in the Resistance Front conference held in Mashhad in Iran, in which he stated that "the achievements and victories in the region have set our nation on the path to a great and final victory which means the liberation of Palestine from the Zionist occupation and the liberation from American hegemony of all our regions." He praised Iran, saying it had identified a "divine historical opportunity" for the "nations engaged in the region" under attack by the United States and Israel (al-Manar, June 29, 2024).

► A short speech by Nasrallah was broadcast at a ceremony held in Tehran marking the 40<sup>th</sup> day since the helicopter crash which killed Iran's former president, Ibrahim Raisi, and other figures. According to Nasrallah, Iran's enemies expected the accident to cause turmoil and chaos, but Iran "kept its head high" and showed that no incident, no matter how unfortunate, would affect it. He emphasized the strategic regional role played by Iran regarding the Palestinian and the "resistance and liberation" issues, and called for turning "threats into opportunities." Referring to the Iranian presidential elections, he expressed hope a suitable president would be elected, saying it had "great importance for the fate of the entire region" (al-Manar, June 27, 2024).

### Other senior Hezbollah figures

► Senior Hezbollah figures referred to the possibility of an all-out war with Israel:

- ◆ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, said that as long as the war in the Gaza Strip continued the Lebanese front would continue its "support" and no threat would change the situation in Lebanon. He also said that if Israel expanded the war Hezbollah would expand it as well, and if Israel waged an all-out war, so would

Hezbollah, without retreating. He added that the most prominent goal of the "resistance"<sup>3</sup> was currently to prevent Israel from achieving its "aggressive" goals and ensure victory and protection for the Palestinians. He claimed that were it not for the broad American support in all areas, Israel would be able to continue fighting. Regarding publication of pictures taken by the Hudhud UAV in the Haifa area, he claimed it was only an example of the "resistance's" ability to attack deep in Israel if Israel exceeds its borders, and that the IDF and Israel's leaders understood the message (Mehr News Agency, June 26, 2024).

◆ Nabil Qaouq, a member of Hezbollah's Central Council, called the ongoing Israeli threats a sign of incompetence and weakness rather than strength, and that threats and intimidation would not change the "enemy's" defeat. He added that Israel should not underestimate or ignore the "resistance's" UAVs, missiles, capabilities, surprises and fronts. He claimed that made Israel calculate and recalculate "thousands of times before attacking Lebanon" (al-Nashra, June 24, 2024).

## Hezbollah Deploys for War

► In the assessment of "security and military sources" in Lebanon, an extensive Israeli attack in south Lebanon might begin with an infiltration through one town or several towns at the same time. Therefore, Hezbollah ordered its terrorist operatives in all the border towns to remain at their posts and sent reinforcements from the organization's missile unit. As part of Hezbollah's preparations for war, the level or alert was raised in the Radwan and Nasr units along the main roads through which the IDF might enter. It is assumed that Iran will assist Hezbollah with all the weapons at its disposal (al-Medan, June 25, 2024).

## Iranian aid and support for Hezbollah

► According to reports, Iran provided Hezbollah with unmanned vessels, including long-range unmanned submarines, capable of approaching and attacking targets along Israel's shores. The vehicles are made of materials which are undetectable by radar, such as carbon fiber, reportedly Iran's most advanced technology. In addition, Iran has transferred to Hezbollah low-altitude shore-to-sea missiles and torpedoes for attacking naval targets, such as submarines, warships and floating bases. The missiles were developed at Hezbollah's request to attack Israel's naval facilities, such as gas rigs and the ships securing them in the

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<sup>3</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.



Mediterranean. Receiving the weapons was reportedly what encouraged Hassan Nasrallah to warn Israel "to expect us on land, sea and in the air" (al-Medan, June 25, 2024).

► Iran's delegation to the UN warned that if Israel began an extensive military operation against Lebanon, a war of "extermination" would be launched, even though Iran regarded Israel's threats to attack Lebanon as psychological warfare. The Iranians claimed all options were on the table, including full involvement of all "resistance" fronts during the campaign<sup>4</sup> (Iranian delegation to the UN X account, June 29, 2024).

### **Hezbollah stores weapons at Beirut's international airport**

► Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, claimed that the article published in the British Telegraph stating Hezbollah was storing large quantities of Iranian-made weapons at Rafiq al-Hariri International Airport in Beirut was published without documentation or evidence. He claimed a number of "hostile" media outlets interviewed Lebanese who knew nothing about the subject, and said such people did not understand that if there were casualties in Lebanon, they themselves would be hurt before Hezbollah operatives (al-Manar, June 25, 2024).

### **International concerns over escalation in Lebanon**

► Following the fear of the situation's deterioration into war, Western and Arab countries called on their citizens in Lebanon to immediately evacuate the country or weigh whether to not to go there:

◆ **The United States:** The American ambassador to Lebanon, Lisa A. Johnson, renewed her call for American citizens to reconsider traveling to Lebanon because the country's government could not guarantee protection against sudden outbreaks of violence or armed struggle. In addition, Americans in Lebanon should avoid going to south Lebanon, the Syrian border or the [Palestinian] refugee camps (American embassy in Lebanon, June 27, 2024). "American defense sources" reported that the Pentagon was deploying military forces closer to the region of Lebanon and Israel, concerned the conflict would escalate in the coming weeks. In addition, the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp and marine forces were moved to the Mediterranean region to demonstrate military preparedness and to deter a regional escalation, and the forces are prepared to evacuate American citizens from the region in accordance with developments on the ground (NBC, June 27 2024).

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<sup>4</sup> See Footnote 3.

- ◆ **Holland:** The Dutch foreign ministry called on its citizens to avoid traveling to Lebanon and for those living in Lebanon to leave, since commercial flights were still operating normally (Dutch foreign ministry X account, June 26, 2024).
- ◆ **Canada:** The Canadian government called on its citizens to leave the Lebanon while they still can because of the imminent dangers (Canadian government, June 25, 2024).
- ◆ **Germany:** The German foreign ministry advised the country's citizens to leave Lebanon immediately (German foreign ministry X account, June 26, 2024).
- ◆ **North Macedonia:** The country's citizens were called on to leave Lebanon as quickly as possible because of the worsening security situation (North Macedonia government, June 23, 2024).
- ◆ **Russia:** The Russian ambassador to Lebanon, Alexander Rudakov, reported that Moscow did not prohibit arrival to Lebanon but that he had already personally recommended avoiding the country due to the clashes in the south (al-Nashra, June 27, 2024).
- ◆ **Saudi Arabia:** The Saudi Arabian embassy in Lebanon called on its residents not to travel to Lebanon because of recent developments and called on Saudi Arabians who were in Lebanon to leave immediately (Saudi Arabian embassy in Lebanon X account, June 29, 2024).
- ◆ **Jordan:** The Jordanian foreign ministry called on Jordanian citizens to avoid traveling to Lebanon in light of the latest regional developments and out of concern for their security (Jordanian foreign ministry X account, , June 28, 2024).
- ◆ **Kuwait:** The Kuwaiti foreign ministry renewed the call to its citizens to refrain from traveling to Lebanon at the present time because of regional developments. The ministry also called on Kuwaiti citizens in Lebanon for non-essential reasons to leave as soon as possible (Kuwaiti foreign ministry X account, June 21, 2024).

## Hezbollah and the Organizations Supporting It al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group)

► Hassan Nasrallah met in Lebanon with Muhammad Taqoush, the secretary general of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, to discuss the latest political and security developments in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. Both agreed that the "resistance" forces had to continue cooperating to support the Gazans. Also present at the meeting was Sheikh Abd al-Majid Amer,

a member of Hezbollah's Political Council (al-Akhbar, June 28, 2024). The meeting between Nasrallah and Taqoush reportedly initiated a new relationship between the parties, after al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya had belonged to the camp opposing Hezbollah for many years (al-Sharq al-Awsat, June 28, 2028).



**Hezbollah's and al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya's secretaries general meet in Lebanon (al-Akhbar, June 28, 2024)**

► Senior Hezbollah figures, including Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, and Wafiq Safa, head of the organization's liaison and coordination unit, met in Lebanon with senior figures of the Amal Movement. They discussed "Israel's [alleged] aggression in south Lebanon and the Gaza Strip" as well as internal Lebanese issues. After the meeting they issued statement noting their commitment to supporting the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, expressed their appreciation for the "resistance" fighters in the Lebanese front and called on the Lebanese government to "meet its obligations to the residents of south Lebanon and provide them with every type of assistance" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, June 27, 2024).

► Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and head of the Amal Movement, said that July would be decisive regarding developments in south Lebanon and admitted that the current situation was not good. He said that if Israel attacked Lebanon the Amal Movement would fight on the front lines even before Hezbollah entered the campaign. He added that the "resistance" in Lebanon respected the rules of engagement but Israel had violated them and employed a policy of scorched earth in the border areas (RT, June 25, 2024).

## The Situation in South Lebanon

► Najib Mikati, prime minister of Lebanon's transitional government, toured south Lebanon where he received updates from army commanders and visited a school in Tyre to monitor the progress of the matriculation exams. Visiting the headquarters of the Lebanese army's south Litani sector in Tyre, he noted that the Lebanese army was the backbone of the country, adding

that current against Lebanon were a form of psychological warfare. He said Lebanon was already in a state of war and many had been killed, civilians and non-civilians, and a large number of villages had been destroyed by Israeli "aggression" (Radio al-Nour, June 29, 2024). Mikati claimed the "resistance" was doing its duty and the government was doing its duty, and the goal was to forcefully protect the country. He also called for adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1701 in order to maintain stability in south Lebanon (al-Nashra, June 29, 2024).



**Mikati (left) updated during a visit to the Lebanese army's south Litani sector headquarters (prime minister of Lebanon's X account, June 29, 2024)**

► On June 27, 2024, Mikati held a meeting of ministers, governors and public figures in south Lebanon, where they discussed the measures the government was taking to support the residents of south Lebanon in the face of the ongoing Israeli "aggression." Suggestions were made regarding additional steps that should be taken to deal with "any emergency situation that might arise" (al-Nashra, June 27, 2024).

## The Lebanese Government

### Political efforts to prevent escalation

► Najib Mikati, prime minister of the transitional government, met with the German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. He claimed the best way to restore peace in south Lebanon was to stop Israeli "aggression" and fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701. He also called for a comprehensive ceasefire in the war in the Gaza Strip and urged the international community to take concrete steps to reach a political solution to the conflict in the Middle East. Baerbock noted that the situation on the Israel-Lebanon border was sensitive and dangerous, and therefore all parties had to cooperate to deescalate and reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which would lead to a ceasefire in Lebanon (Lebanese prime minister's X account, June 25, 2024).

► Mikati met with the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and said that all available efforts had be invested to prevent Lebanon from becoming the arena of an armed conflict which began in the south. He called for the implementation of all relevant international resolutions to put an end to Israel's [alleged] "expansionist ambitions," and thus not to tie Lebanese stability and its interests to complex conflicts and endless wars (Lebanese prime minister's X account, June 26, 2024).

► Visiting Europe, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib met with Josep Borrell, the outgoing EU foreign minister. They discussed ways to deescalate the border region and to strengthen efforts towards finding a political solution acceptable to all. Borrell said that Lebanon, Israel and the entire Middle East could not afford another war, which would affect the EU as well. He expressed the EU's support for the role of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL in maintaining peace and stability in south Lebanon (Joseph Borrell's X account, June 26, 2024). Before his visit to Europe, Bou Habib met with Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mujtaba Amani, to discuss the situation and developments in Lebanon and the region (al-Nashra, June 24, 2024).



**Bou Habib (right) with the Iranian ambassador (al-Nashra, June 24, 2024)**

► The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar reported that Qatari envoy Abu Jassim bin Fahd al-Thani would arrive in Beirut in the near future for a visit which would focus on the security situation in south Lebanon and the presidential crisis. The paper reported that he would meet with representatives from Hezbollah and Amal and with senior security figures to discuss the possibility of deescalating the situation in south Lebanon. It was claimed the visit had been coordinated with the American administration, which asked Qatar to exert efforts to help the situation. It was also noted that the United States believed that pressure from Qatar on Hamas to accept President Biden's proposal to end the war, alongside its intervention in the Lebanese arena and especially with Hezbollah, could lead to a breakthrough in preventing an all-out war (al-Akhbar, June 27, 2024).

► Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and head of the Amal Movement, said he was expecting an answer from the American envoy, Amos Hochstein, after he returned to Israel, but it had not arrived, so he felt unsettled about the American initiative to end the fighting. Berri added that Hochstein suggested Hezbollah withdraw eight kilometers from north of the border, however Berri's answer was that in return, the IDF had to retreat eight kilometers from the border accordingly [sic] (al-Mayadeen, June 24, 2024). According to reports, during his meeting with Hochstein, Berri conveyed a message from Hezbollah to senior figures in Israel, stating the organization's position had not changed and stopping the war in the Gaza Strip constituted the basis for negotiations (Lebanon 24, June 24, 2024).

► A Lebanese "government source" stated that from the data obtained by the leadership in Lebanon, the possible Israeli military escalation would not cross "the threshold of war" in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating into a full-scale regional war. It was also noted that the main reason for the external pressure on Lebanon was its rejection of the security arrangements proposed by the American envoy Hochstein (al-Anbaa, June 30, 2024).

► According to reports, the United States and France are promoting an effort to prevent the expansion of fighting in the Lebanese arena and are trying to formulate a framework for a political solution to the situation in south Lebanon. According to "knowledgeable diplomatic sources," Hochstein is expected to visit Paris to formulate a working framework. According to the sources, the next two or three weeks are extremely important for finding a solution that will reduce the fighting in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon (a-Diyar, June 30, 2024).

► According to reports, the United States conveyed an indirect message to Hezbollah stating that the administration would not be able to prevent Israel from attacking Hezbollah. It also stated that the United States would assist Israel if Hezbollah carried out a retaliatory operation (Politico, June 24, 2024).

## **Efforts to restore calm after Nasrallah threatened Cyprus**

► The head of the Cypriot diplomatic mission to Beirut, Maria Hadjitheodosiou, met with the Lebanese deputy foreign minister, Elias Bou Saab, to discuss the threat Nasrallah made against Cyprus in his last speech. She noted that Cyprus would not allow its territory to be used for an attack against any country, especially Lebanon. Bou Saab said he would continue to work to preserve and develop Lebanon-Cyprus relations (NBN Lebanon, June 26, 2024).

## Lebanese Politics

- ▶ The chairman of the Lebanese Forces Party, Samir Geagea, stated that the statements [by implication, made by Hezbollah] that the Church and its believers "work in the service of Zionist terrorism" were completely invalid. He said that "the one who serves Zionist terrorism is the one who by his actions caused Zionist terrorism to operate in south Lebanon [i.e., Hezbollah]" (Lebanese Forces Party X account, June 26, 2024).
- ▶ The chairman of the Free National Movement in Lebanon, Gebran Bassil, said it was a pity there were people who defended Israel and placed the responsibility on the "resistance," instead of everyone thinking together about how to oppose Israel. He added that the fear was not of losing the war to Israel, but the economy would suffer, and herein lay the problem with Hezbollah, because Hezbollah could not build the country (Lebanese News Agency, June 29, 2024).

## UNIFIL

- ▶ A delegation from the French ministries of defense and foreign affairs met in Lebanon with the director general of the Lebanese foreign ministry, Hani Chemaitelly, ahead of the discussions regarding the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate, which are expected to begin during August 2024. The delegation stated that France accepted the responsibility for formulating the UN Security Council's draft resolution to extend the mandate (al-Jadeed, June 26, 2024).

## The Lebanese Army

- ▶ The commander of the Lebanese Army, General Joseph Aoun, has decided to remove Brigadier General Maroun al-Kobayati, the commander of the southern Litani region sector, from his position on the grounds of approaching retirement age. It has been claimed that the real reason was to prevent him from becoming a candidate for the position of next commander of the Lebanese army (al-Akhbar, June 29, 2024).
- ▶ A delegation from the Lebanese defense ministry and the French foreign ministry met in Lebanon with the commander of the Lebanese Army, General Joseph Aoun, to discuss the general situation in Lebanon and the region (al-Nashra, June 26, 2024).

► UNIFIL delivered vehicles, spare parts and computer equipment to the Lebanese army. The announcement stated that the equipment would assist the army as it worked with UNIFIL to restore stability in south Lebanon (UNIFIL Telegram channel, June 25, 2024).



**The transfer of vehicles from UNIFIL to the Lebanese army  
(UNIFIL's Telegram channel, June 25, 2024)**

## Syria

### **Attack on a Jihad al-Bina Association target**

► A Syrian military source reported that during the night of June 26, 2024, Israeli aircraft launched missiles from the Golan Heights at several targets in southwest Syria. Two people were killed, a Syrian army officer was injured and material damage was caused (Telegram SANA Agency, June 27, 2024).

► The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that the target which had been attacked belonged to Hezbollah's Jihad al-Bina Association<sup>5</sup> and the pro-Iranian militias in the al-Sayyidah Zaynab area, south of Damascus, and that three people had been killed: a non-Syrian operative of the pro-Iranian militias, a man with a Syrian identity card and an elderly woman from the countryside around Aleppo; 11 people were injured (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, June 27, 2024). One of the casualties was Hussein Alba, aka Abu Ali, a Hezbollah terrorist operative in Syria (Haitham Abu Sayid's X account, June 27, 2024).

► According to another report, the target of the attack was the headquarters of Jihad al-Bina, which is directly managed by the pro-Iranian militias, which customarily store weapons in the

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<sup>5</sup> The Jihad al-Bina Association, founded as a branch of the Iranian Construction Jihad Association, is one of Hezbollah's leading social institutions. For more information, see the ITIC June 12, 2019 report, "[Jihad al-Bina Association in Lebanon: A Hezbollah social foundation engaged in construction and social projects among the Shiite community, being a major component in Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure.](#)"



headquarters and transport them under cover of the institution (Alaa al-Diab's X account, June 27, 2024). The target was about 700 meters (about .4 miles) from the al-Sayyidah Zaynab mosque (Lebanon Debate, June 27, 2024).

► A Syrian security source confirmed that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards used Jihad al-Bina and its service, charity and development projects as a civilian cover for military engineering activity, especially in southern Syria. Some time ago the organization built warehouses in the al-Sayyidah Zaynab region which were used by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps to store weapons and ammunition, including two warehouses in a military camp for the Syrian army, which were attacked by the Israeli Air Force at the end of February 2024 to destroy a shipment of guided missiles and UAVs hours after their arrival in Syria. At the end of 2023, the organization completed the preparation of underground hangars for use as military storage warehouses and for short-range aerial defense systems in three places surrounding the town of al-Sayyidah Zaynab. In addition, according to reports the 840<sup>th</sup> unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' Qods Force, which is responsible for receiving military cargo arriving from Iran at Damascus International Airport and transporting them to their destinations throughout Syria or in southern Lebanon, relies mainly on Jihad al-Bina trucks (Syria TV, June 27, 2024).



**Right: The site which was attacked (Ayn al-Sham Telegram channel, June 27, 2024). Left: Hezbollah operative Hussein Mustafa Alba (Haitham Abu Sayid's X account, June 27, 2024)**

## International Action against Hezbollah

### **The Arab League does not designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization**

► On June 29, 2024, the Arab League announced that for the first time since March 2016, Hezbollah was no longer designated a terrorist organization. The announcement was made after the visit of the Arab League's assistant secretary general, Hussam Zaki, to Lebanon, where

he met with the head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, Muhammad Raad, as well as other senior figures, including Najib Mikati, the prime minister of the transitional government, and Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament. Zaki said the Arab League members had decided to change Hezbollah's designation to enable communication with the organization, and added that the Arab League did not have a list of terrorist organizations (Lebanon Debate June 2024; Arab League website, June 28, 2024).

### **Hezbollah operatives jailed in Germany**

► On June 28, 2024, a court in Hamburg convicted two men of membership in Hezbollah. They were the first convictions since the German ministry of the interior outlawed Hezbollah four years ago and banned the organization's activities in Germany. One of the convicts, a 50-year-old sentenced to five and a half years in prison, provided military training for children and young people in Lebanon before arriving in Germany in 2016 and liaising between Hezbollah and Lebanese associations. He also served as a preacher in an association in Bremen inspired by Hezbollah and which was managed by the other convict, 56 years old, who was sentenced to three years in prison. The two were also linked to the Islamic Center in Hamburg, which, according to the ministry of the interior, is under Iranian control (DW, June 28, 2024).

► According to Mustafa al-Amer, a member of the National Security Council of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Berlin and an expert on international security, Hezbollah operates many networks in Germany that manage fundraising, youth recruitment, drug trafficking and money laundering through Islamic associations and clubs in Hamburg, Berlin and other places in the country (al-Hadath YouTube channel, June 28, 2024).