



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah April 28 – May 5, 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating to counter the presence of Hezbollah in south Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire and to thwart the organization's renewed attempts to strengthen its military capabilities. Several Hezbollah terrorist operatives were eliminated.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed that Israel had violated the ceasefire more than 3,000 times. He accused the Lebanese state institutions of failing to exert sufficient diplomatic pressure to stop the attacks but did not say Hezbollah would take action against Israel.
- ▶ Members of the Lebanese leadership met with the American general who headed the ceasefire monitoring committee and with his successor, noting the need to pressure Israel to stop its attacks and withdraw from the five points it holds in south Lebanon to enable the Lebanese army to complete its deployment.
- ▶ Disarming Hezbollah: Senior figures in the organization said a dialogue on a national defense strategy could take place only after the completion of the Israeli withdrawal but continued to oppose disarming Hezbollah. Lebanese President Aoun noted that the decision regarding the state's monopoly over weapons was irreversible. The Lebanese army claimed to have dismantled more than 90% of Hezbollah's infrastructure south of the Litani River.
- ▶ The Lebanese Supreme Defense Council warned Hamas against taking actions which would undermine the country's sovereignty and national security. Hamas handed over two operatives involved in firing rockets at northern Israel at the end of March 2025.
- ▶ For the first time since 2016, municipal elections are being held in Lebanon: candidates from Hezbollah and Amal's list won in all councils in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, the Shi'ite suburb of southern Beirut.

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

The Ceasefire

The IDF

► IDF continued operating in south Lebanon against Hezbollah violations of the November 27, 2024, ceasefire agreement which prohibits the organization's presence south of the Litani River. Two Hezbollah operatives, including a member of its elite Radwan Force, were eliminated in attacks in the village of Meiss al-Jabal (IDF spokesperson, May 1, 2025). One of the fatalities was allegedly affiliated with Lebanese Civil Defense (Lebanese News Agency, May 1, 2025). Channels affiliated with Hezbollah claimed the two as organization operatives (South Lebanon – Observer of the Enemy Telegram channel, May 1, 2025).



Right: An attack in Meiss al-Jabal (NBN Lebanon X account, May 1, 2025). Left: Hezbollah mourning notice for the two operatives (South Lebanon – Observer of the Enemy Telegram channel, May 1, 2025)

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah continued to accuse Israel of thousands of "violations" of the ceasefire, primarily citing ongoing Israeli aerial attacks. Hezbollah criticized the conduct of Lebanese state institutions and called for increased diplomatic pressure to be exerted on Israel:

- ◆ In a recorded speech, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed that Israel had "violated" the ceasefire more than 3,000 times, while Hezbollah and Lebanon had adhered to the agreement. He claimed the Israeli attack on the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia on April 27, 2025, was unjustified and its objective had been to exert political pressure. He said Hezbollah's first priorities were stopping the Israeli "aggression," Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon and the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel. However, he added, Lebanon "cannot rise" as long as the "occupation" continued its attacks. He claimed the Lebanese institutions' response to the "violations" was "soft and ineffective," and greater pressure had to be exerted on the United States, France, the UN and the Security Council to halt the strikes (al-Manar, April 28, 2025).



Speech by Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem (al-Mayadeen, April 28, 2025)

◆ Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed that the Israeli attack on the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia was linked to the ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States over the Iranian nuclear program, but claimed Hezbollah would not allow Israel to dictate a timetable. He claimed Israel sought to pressure Lebanon and use the attacks to undermine Lebanon's internal stability. In light of the Israeli "violations," he said the state, the people and the "resistance" would opt for confrontation "by all possible means." He said the Lebanese foreign minister should summon foreign ambassadors and clarify Lebanon's commitment to the ceasefire in the face of the Israeli "violations" (Sputnik in Arabic, April 28, 2025).

◆ Hussein al-Hajj Hassan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the state had to lead the response to Israeli attacks, enforce Israel's withdrawal, secure the return of Lebanese prisoners and demand that the countries guaranteeing the ceasefire agreement exert pressure on the "Israeli enemy." He questioned the achievements of the ceasefire monitoring committee, given the more than 3,000 Israeli "violations." He also criticized "parties and political forces" which, he said, failed to condemn the "enemy's aggression" while daily attacking the "resistance" (Lebanese News Agency, May 1, 2025).

The Lebanese leadership

► The Lebanese leadership complained that continued Israeli attacks threatened Lebanon's stability and claimed Israel's presence at five points on the Lebanese side of the border was preventing the Lebanese army from fully carrying out its duties in the south:

◆ Joseph Aoun, president of Lebanon, met with an American delegation headed by Major General Jasper Jeffers, chairman of the committee monitoring the ceasefire in Lebanon. Jeffers introduced his successor, Major General Michael J. Leeney, formerly a

CENTCOM official. Aoun noted the importance of the committee's work and exerting continued pressure on Israel to halt its attacks, withdraw from Lebanese territory and release Lebanese prisoners held by Israel. According to Aoun, the Lebanese army was fulfilling all its missions in the south, especially south of the Litani River, and continued efforts to seize weapons in the area (Lebanese Army X account, April 30, 2025).



Right to left: Leeney, Aoun and Jeffers (Lebanese Army X account, April 30, 2025)

◆ Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, met with Jeffers and Leeney to discuss the latest developments in south Lebanon in light of Israel's ongoing "aggression and violations." Berri accused Israel of not honoring the ceasefire and failing to complete its withdrawal from the areas it "occupied" in south Lebanon, while Lebanon had met all its obligations. He accused Israel of sabotaging Lebanon's path to "recovery, stability, reform and sovereignty," and called on the United States to compel Israel to implement the agreement immediately. Leeney reportedly noted that the monitoring committee would begin holding regular meetings to follow developments (al-Nashra, April 30, 2025).

◆ President Aoun also met in Beirut with a delegation of American researchers from the Middle East Institute (MEI) in Washington. He said the Lebanese army was performing all its duties in south Lebanon but Israel was delaying the deployment of the army in remaining areas with its presence at the five points. Aoun repeated his call for the United States to exert pressure on Israel to withdraw so the army could assume full security responsibility in coordination with UNIFIL (al-Nashra, April 29, 2025).

◆ In a televised interview, Aoun said the Lebanese army controlled 85% of south Lebanon, and that the only obstacle to full deployment was the IDF presence at the five points. He said Lebanon had approached France and the United States to pressure Israel

to withdraw. According to Aoun, the Lebanese people were tired of wars, which was why they chose the route of diplomacy, even though it was longer (Sky News Arabic, April 30, 2025).

◆ Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the ceasefire monitoring committee had to stop Israel's attacks. He added that Lebanon sought to end the Israeli "occupation" of the five points and all Lebanese territory, and that Israel had to fulfill its responsibilities under the ceasefire. He warned that if Israel did not fully withdraw it would endanger regional stability. He said diplomatic efforts were continuing with key powers to halt the "aggression" (al-Nashra, April 29, 2025).

The Lebanese army

► Lebanese Army Commander General Rodolph Haykal visited an observation post in al-Khiyam and the headquarters of the 7th Infantry Brigade in Marjayoun, south Lebanon. He noted the army's importance for the strength of the state and promised the army would continue its mission. He was also briefed on the army's deployment and its efforts to implement international resolutions in light of Israeli attacks in Lebanon (Lebanese Army X account, April 28, 2025).



**The commander of the Lebanese army tours south Lebanon
(Lebanese Army X account, April 28, 2025)**

► An "official security source" claimed the Lebanese army had dismantled more than 90% of Hezbollah's infrastructure south of the Litani River. The source added that the army had reinforced control in south Lebanon to prevent arms smuggling from north of the river. The source claimed Hezbollah no longer had military facilities south of the Litani (Agence France-Presse, April 30, 2025). The Lebanese army reportedly raided more than 500 Hezbollah positions south and north of the Litani River, including in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut (al-Hadath, April 29, 2025).

► General Haykal met in his office with outgoing monitoring committee chairman Major General Jeffers and his successor Major General Leeney to discuss developments in south Lebanon and the stages of implementing the ceasefire agreement (al-Nashra, April 30, 2025).

UNIFIL

► Ambassadors and representatives of 38 countries, including UN Security Council members and UNIFIL donor states, visited the UN force's headquarters and two of its positions along the Blue Line, the first such visit since the outbreak of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in October 2023. UNIFIL Commander Aroldo Lázaro welcomed the diplomats and said their presence was a testament to growing stability in south Lebanon and to the progress made in implementing the understandings which led to the ceasefire. He said support for UNIFIL was essential to maintaining stability (UNIFIL website, April 29, 2025).



Visit of the diplomats to UNIFIL (UNIFIL Telegram channel, April 29, 2025)

Disarming Hezbollah

► The issue of Hezbollah's weapons continues to dominate political discourse in Lebanon. Government officials emphasized the need to disarm the organization and ensure that the state held the monopoly on weapons. Hezbollah expressed willingness to discuss the issue under conditions which included the withdrawal of IDF forces from Lebanon, a halt to Israeli attacks and the release of Lebanese prisoners.

Hezbollah

► In a recorded speech, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said that Israel had to fulfill its part before implementing all aspects of Resolution 1701 could be discussed, including the question of a monopoly on weapons. He urged patience and added that Lebanon would not enter a civil war, saying those attempting to sow discord between "the resistance"² and the

² Hezbollah and the Palestinian operatives operating in Lebanon which seek the destruction of the State of Israel.

Lebanese army should be ignored (al-Manar, April 28, 2025). He told the press that Hezbollah's weapons were for "resistance" against Israel and had nothing to do with internal Lebanese affairs. He said the organization would act according to its national vision to safeguard Lebanon's sovereignty and independence (Iqtadar, May 2, 2025).³

► Mahmoud Qamati, deputy head of Hezbollah's political council, said "any hand that tries to touch for the resistance's weapons will be cut off." He claimed that "the enemy" sought to disarm Lebanon, Gaza, Judea and Samaria to advance "its regional project," and that it was pressuring Lebanon with daily attacks (al-Aqsa TV, April 29, 2025). Speaking at a festival in the Beqa'a Valley, Qamati said Israel wanted to dismantle the "resistance's" weapons without paying a price and was using Lebanon's reconstruction as leverage. He added that "the resistance" would not give up its weapons at any price, regardless of pressure, adding that retaining the weapons was "national logic" (Sawt Beirut International, May 3, 2025).

► Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, head of Hezbollah's political council, claimed the group was open to dialogue on a national defense strategy, but several issues had to be resolved first, chiefly "the ongoing Israeli occupation of certain areas and instability in the Palestinian situation." He added that dialogue "under occupation and aggression" had limited significance, whereas its importance increased once such conditions ended. Hezbollah, he said, was unwilling to engage in dialogue until then. He said Israel was not afraid of "the resistance's" weapons but [allegedly] of the people wielding them, "and the more they fall, the stronger they become" (al-Manar, May 3, 2025).



Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid (al-Manar, May 3, 2025)

³ Iqtadar is a Hezbollah bi-monthly electronic magazine which began publication in April 2025. It focuses on the "intellectual, cultural and political literature" of former Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah.

The Lebanese government

- ▶ Joseph Aoun, president of Lebanon, told researchers from the Middle East Institute that the decision for state monopoly on weapons was irreversible because it enjoyed broad support from the Lebanese public and nations friendly to Lebanon. He said transferring the weapons to the state would not disrupt security and would be accomplished through dialogue (al-Nashra, April 29, 2025). He told the press that the top priority was to achieve control over all medium and heavy weapons throughout the country, with particular focus on disarming south Lebanon, adding that weapons held by Palestinians also had to be addressed, not only those held by Hezbollah (Sky News Arabia, April 30, 2025).
- ▶ “Lebanese sources” reported that President Aoun had sent a message to Hezbollah that the issue of disarmament had to be discussed, and Hezbollah replied that they were prepared for dialogue and cooperation. Hezbollah’s condition for the dialogue, however, was Israel’s withdrawal from the five outposts it captured in south Lebanon (MTV, April 30, 2025).
- ▶ Nawaf Salam, Lebanese prime minister, said Hezbollah consistently stated it supported the state, and noted that the government had already made its final decision to disarm the organization (al-Nashra, April 29, 2025).
- ▶ Major General Jasper Jeffers, the outgoing head of the ceasefire monitoring committee, met with Lebanese officials and said that from the perspective of the American administration, the timeframe for Hezbollah to surrender its weapons was growing shorter (Nidaa al-Watan, April 30, 2025).

Hezbollah

Challenges

- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Na’im Qassem delivered a recorded speech in which he criticized the Lebanese government, accusing it of stalling the post-war reconstruction efforts. He called for the immediate formulation of a plan and timetable for rebuilding civilian infrastructure. He said Hezbollah had provided shelter for more than 50,000 people whose homes were completely destroyed and had renovated 332,000 homes, resulting in 350,000 people returning to their homes or receiving shelter (al-Mayadeen, April 28, 2025).
- ▶ Qassem told the press that the “resistance”⁴ was the foundation for a broad alliance with Sunnis, Shi’ites and all of humanity, since belief in “resisting the Israeli enemy” was shared by

⁴ Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi’ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

all [sic]. He claimed that after the death of secretary general Hassan Nasrallah, the “resistance” had regained its strength and continued striking at the heart of “the [Israeli] entity” until the ceasefire. He spoke out against normalization with Israel, warning that its objective was to “eliminate” the Palestinian issue and pledged that Hezbollah would continue to confront the “American-Israeli project” seeking to promote “occupation, displacement and normalization.” Qassem admitted that given the blows Hezbollah had received in the war, it could not continue at the same pace in security, military, political and cultural areas. He said a thorough review of previous stages had to be conducted to enable a transition to the next phase, but said the organization’s “principles,” chief among them the “resistance,” remained unchanged, and that all methods for implementing them were open for discussion and revision based on evaluation (Iqtadar, May 2, 2025).

► Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, head of Hezbollah’s political council, said that although the war had weakened the organization, the current generation would continue joining the “resistance.” He urged Hezbollah leaders to treat their support base as the driving force and said, “the people are Hezbollah, and Hezbollah is the people.” Regarding reconstruction, he said Hezbollah was contacting partners in Lebanon and abroad, coordinating with the state to monitor the process and engaging with countries expected to participate in reconstruction. He reiterated that the state should lead reconstruction and said Hezbollah had heard accounts different from those in the media, which claimed that aid was conditional on disarming the “resistance.” Regarding normalization, al-Sayyid called it a euphemism for Israel’s “regional domination” and urged Arab states to reassess their strategy toward the conflict with Israel (al-Manar, May 3, 2025).

Municipal elections in Lebanon

► On May 4, 2025, the first round of Lebanon’s municipal elections was held, for the first time since 2016. The elections were held in the Mount Lebanon governorate, including the southern suburb of Beirut (the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia), considered a Hezbollah stronghold. According to unofficial results, Hezbollah and Amal’s joint list, Development and Loyalty, won in all municipal councils in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, in some cases without competition. Hezbollah-

and Amal-backed lists also won in Jbeil District in Mount Lebanon (al-Akhbar and al-'Ahed, May 4-5, 2025).



Right: Voting in the local elections in Mount Lebanon (NBN, May 4, 2025). Left: Development and Loyalty candidates celebrate their win in Ghobeiry by visiting the graves of Hezbollah shaheeds (al-Manar, May 4, 2025)

► Qassem addressed the municipal elections in a recorded speech, claiming Hezbollah's slogan was "responsibility and service," and that the goals of the elections were to "fight discrimination against the poor, implement reforms in the administration of municipalities and service providers, and promote innovative management based on competence, integrity and honesty [sic]." He claimed Hezbollah could build a coalition of skilled persons and establish a homogenous local council, adding that by cooperating with Amal they could confront crises together (al-Manar, April 28, 2025).

► According to reports, Shi'ite opposition figures and groups are preparing to participate in the municipal elections either by supporting local candidates close to them or running directly as independents in their villages. According to the report, it is a calculated step whose objective is to establish a grassroots presence and prepare the ground for a broader political challenge, the Lebanese parliamentary elections scheduled for 2026. "Informed sources" confirmed that the move was being carried out quietly, with the intent to break the dominance of the "Shi'ite duo" [Hezbollah and Amal] in the Lebanese Parliament. Analysts noted that it could mark a new phase in which rivals of the "Shi'ite duo" sought to present a viable alternative from within the Shi'ite community itself (Lebanon 24, May 1, 2025).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam attended the Lebanese Supreme Defense Council, which convened to discuss Hamas activity in Lebanon and the disarmament

of armed Palestinian “factions”⁵. Muhammad Mustafa, Council director general, said they had decided to recommend the government formally warn Hamas not to use Lebanese territory for activities which threatened national security. He said the state would take the necessary measures to stop any action sabotaging Lebanese sovereignty. Prime Minister Salam stated that Hamas, or any other “group,” could not be allowed to endanger Lebanon’s national security or stability. He added that while Lebanon respected the Palestinian issue, illegal weapons had to be collected to prevent Palestinians from dragging Lebanon into wars that put it at risk (al-Nashra, May 2, 2025).

► Major General Hassan Choucair, head of Lebanon's General Security Directorate, summoned Hamas representative in Lebanon, Ahmad Abd al-Hadi, and warned him against actions which could destabilize Lebanon and undermine its sovereignty. Abd al-Hadi agreed to hand over the four Palestinians wanted for firing rockets at northern Israel at the end of March 2025, including the operative who orchestrated the attack. He claimed the rocket fire was an “individual act” not ordered by the Hamas leadership. Hamas also reportedly pledged not to violate Lebanon’s sovereignty in the future (al-Arabiya, May 3, 2025).

► The wanted operatives reportedly went underground in the Ain al-Hilweh and al-Mieh Mieh refugee camps near Sidon (al-Sharq al-Awsat, May 4, 2025). One of the suspects is reportedly a Palestinian sheikh (al-Hadath, May 3, 2025). Later reports indicated that Hamas had handed over two of the four suspects to the Lebanese army, one of whom had been in the Ain al-Hilweh camp (Lebanese army X account, May 4–5, 2025).

► The Lebanese army reportedly seized approximately 800 rockets from the al-Beddaoui Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon. Palestinian “factions” denied the report (al-Hadath, May 2, 2025).

► “Palestinian and Lebanese sources” stated that the Saudi Arabians had asked Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas to visit Lebanon on May 19 to meet with President Aoun and other officials and announce the disarmament of Fatah and other Palestinian “factions” in the refugee camps. The sources said that Mahmoud Abbas would also call on “factions” fighting the “Israeli occupation” to disarm. He is expected to form a security committee to oversee the disarmament process and set a timetable for surrendering weapons. The sources noted that the Lebanese army would take action against any group which refused to disarm (Middle East Eye, May 4, 2025).

⁵ Terrorist organizations.