



## Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah June 30 – July 7, 2025

### Overview

- IDF forces attacked Hezbollah facilities and eliminated organizational terrorist operatives as part of continued activity against Hezbollah's presence in south Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire understandings, and against renewed efforts by the organization to reconstruct its military capabilities. Facilities were attacked in south Lebanon and in the Beqa'a Valley, and an operative smuggling weapons for Iran's Qods Force was eliminated.
- Hezbollah took advantage of the Shi'ite Ashura ceremonies to protest the government's handling of the "Israeli violations" and to justify the continuation of the "resistance."<sup>1</sup> The Lebanese leadership reiterated the position that Israeli attacks and the presence at five outposts in south Lebanon made it difficult to achieve stability. The United States special envoy, Thomas Barack, admitted that the ceasefire was "a complete failure."
- Disarming Hezbollah: Lebanese President Aoun conveyed to American Envoy Barack his country's response to the American proposals regarding disarmament. Barack expressed satisfaction but noted that the United States would not impose its will and the Lebanese should resolve the issue themselves. Senior Hezbollah figures said they were not willing to discuss the possibility of disarming, and secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed that the missiles were "the foundation of our defense capabilities [sic]," but Hezbollah was reportedly discussing the dismantling of heavy weapons, which had become a "burden."
- Hezbollah's challenges: According to reports, ten thousand of the organization's fighters have been taken out of action since the fighting with Israel began, and Hezbollah has lost all its heavy and medium weapons south of the Litani River. The United States imposed sanctions on senior figures in Hezbollah's economic wing, and Lebanese security forces seized \$8.2 million which had been smuggled in suitcases to the airport in Beirut.

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<sup>1</sup> Terrorist attacks.

► The Lebanese government claimed the collection of weapons from the Palestinian refugee camps was a fait accompli, and the delay was due to disputes within the Fatah movement and the inability of the Palestinian leadership to unify all factions to implement the decision.

## Implementing the Ceasefire

### The IDF

► The IDF continued operating against Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon, in violation of the ceasefire agreement of November 27, 2024, which prohibited the organization's presence south of the Litani River, and against Hezbollah's capabilities and efforts to rebuild its military capabilities. Over the course of the week, military sites and weapons depots belonging to Hezbollah in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley were attacked, and a Radwan Force<sup>2</sup> operative was eliminated. In addition, in a attack near Beirut, a Lebanese civilian operating on behalf of Iran's Qods Force, who had been involved in smuggling weapons into Lebanon and into Judea and Samaria, was eliminated (IDF spokesperson, June 30–July 7, 2025). The Lebanese Ministry of Health reported two killed and 22 wounded in the IDF attacks during the week (al-Nashra, June 30–July 7, 2025).

### Hezbollah

► Between Israel's ongoing military pressure and the internal and international pressure regarding the organization's weapons, senior Hezbollah figures took advantage of events marking the first ten days of the month of Muharram and the Ashura<sup>3</sup> to increase criticism of the Lebanese leadership and reject the possibility of normalization with Israel, while reiterating to the organization's supporters the importance of the "resistance:"

◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem claimed that Hezbollah "confronted" Israel not only because it "occupies our land" but because it "is a genuine strategic danger to the entire region and the world." He added that Israel could not interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs and the Lebanese would handle them themselves. Qassem declared that Hezbollah "will not agree to be humiliated and will not relinquish its land or its weapons to the Israeli enemy," and would not allow anyone to threaten it (al-Manar, July 3, 2025). In another speech, he said they "will continue to defend and resist," and added that "liberation is a duty, no matter how long it takes." He also asked how

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<sup>2</sup> Hezbollah's elite unit.

<sup>3</sup> Ashura: the tenth day of the first month (Muharram) in the Muslim calendar. The Shiites commemorate it as a day of mourning for the death of Imam Hussein bin Ali and many other members of the family of Ali bin Abu Talib in the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

anyone could expect Hezbollah to stop while Israel was attacking. Qassem added that the organization would not accept normalization since it was "humiliating," and Hezbollah "is ready for peace and to build a state, but at the same time is also ready for confrontation and defense, and we will not give up our rights, no matter the sacrifices." He claimed that without the "resistance,"<sup>4</sup> which was minimally capable of defending itself, Israel would have attacked Lebanese villages and towns (al-Manar, July 6, 2025).



**Na'im Qassem in a speech marking the days of Ashura (al-Manar, July 3, 2025)**

◆ Ibrahim al-Mousawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed that "the resistance has set deterrent equations and has been a source of pride and dignity for many years." He added that the Lebanese people had the right to defend Lebanon, and that the state had to defend its sovereignty without surrendering to the dictates of the "enemy." He accused certain elements of "marketing normalization with the enemy" as a path to peace and prosperity, but said they would not agree to be humiliated and would not surrender to the United States or Israel. He claimed that those who signed peace agreements with the "enemy" brought only humiliation and hunger (al-Nashra, July 1, 2025).

◆ Rami Abu Hamdan, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, warned against normalizing relations with the "Zionist entity," saying "Lebanon will never be Israeli or American." He also criticized the ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel and urged the Lebanese state to "liberate the land and the prisoners and restore the dignity of the state" (al-'Ahed, July 3, 2025).

◆ Hussein Jishi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that when the Lebanese state relied on international relations and diplomacy to "liberate the lands," without possessing internal strength, it was gambling on "illusions." According

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<sup>4</sup> Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

to him, seven months had passed since the ceasefire, and all those "gambles" had yielded no progress, and therefore, "adherence to the resistance" was the only option that had proven effective. He added that it was a national, humanitarian, moral choice to defend the homeland and protect its dignity (al-Nashra, July 4, 2025).

### The Lebanese leadership

- After meeting with President Joseph Aoun in Beirut on July 7, 2025, Thomas Barack, acting United States special envoy to Lebanon, said that the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon, which ended the fighting at the end of November 2024, was not moving in the right direction, and that the mechanism involving Israel, Hezbollah, and the Lebanese army had also failed. According to Barack, the American president was committed to helping build peace and prosperity in Lebanon, calling this "a critical time for Lebanon and the region," adding that there was an opportunity to end the conflict with Israel and move towards peace and stability (al-Jadeed and Sawt Beirut International, July 7, 2025). In an interview prior to his visit, Barack said the ceasefire agreement was "a complete failure" because Israel continued to attack Lebanon and Hezbollah had violated the terms of the agreement (The New York Times, July 4, 2025).
- Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said that stability in Lebanon could not be achieved as long as Israeli "violations" continued, the "Israeli occupation" remained in parts of Lebanese territory, and Lebanese prisoners were being held in Israeli jails. Salam added that Lebanon was intensifying its political and diplomatic pressure to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and was providing everything required to rebuild what had been destroyed by "Israeli aggression" (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 3, 2025).



**Lebanese Prime Minister Salam: "The region is undergoing a regional transformation, and Lebanon cannot remain on the sidelines." The Arabic on the locomotive reads, "The regional change train" (al-Joumhouria, July 3, 2025)**

- British Foreign Minister David Lammy visited Lebanon and met with President Joseph Aoun. Aoun stated that the "Israeli occupation" and continued attacks in Lebanon made it difficult

for the state to extend its sovereignty, protect its citizens, and implement its decisions, including the state's monopoly on weapons. Aoun said the current situation in the country and region necessitated the continued presence of the UNIFIL force. According to him, about 10,000 Lebanese army soldiers would be deployed in the south of the country, and they would be the only armed force there, alongside UNIFIL (Lebanese Presidency X account, July 5, 2025).

► Lebanese Information Minister Paul Morcos said the number of Lebanese army soldiers in the area south of the Litani River would reach ten thousand and there would be no armed force there other than the Lebanese army, in addition to UNIFIL. He added that the continued "occupation" of the five IDF outposts in south Lebanon prevented security and stability in the area, in addition to Israel's refusal to release the Lebanese "prisoners" it was holding. He said that hindered the full deployment of Lebanese army forces in south Lebanon and the implementation of international decisions to which the Lebanese government had committed and remained committed (al-Jazeera, July 6, 2025).

## UNIFIL

► UNIFIL reported that since February 2025, its forces in the western sector under the command of General Nicola Mandolizzi had carried out more than 5,700 joint operations with the Lebanese army. They included patrols over more than 434 km, redeployment at 120 fixed sites, discovery of 250 illegal weapons and ammunition depots, 77 operations to locate weapons and ammunition, 56 operations to locate tunnels, and the removal of nearly 100 barricades and obstacles. In addition, medical treatment was provided to more than 2,800 civilians. UNIFIL emphasized that their actions were essential for improving mobility, supporting the redeployment of the Lebanese army, and facilitating the return of civilians to villages from which they had been displaced by the fighting (Lebanon Debate, July 4, 2025).

## Disarmament of Hezbollah

► On July 7, 2025, Thomas Barack, acting United States special envoy to Lebanon, arrived in Beirut for a visit. He met with President Joseph Aoun, who gave him Lebanon's response to the proposal Barack had presented during his previous visit in June 2025, which focused on the disarmament of Hezbollah. After the meeting, Barack, who also serves as United States ambassador to Turkey and special envoy to Syria, said he was pleased with Lebanon's response, describing it as "very responsible and consistent with the direction we are trying to proceed in." He said the United States would carefully review the details to formulate a comprehensive arrangement. Regarding the disarmament of Hezbollah, Barack said the

United States was not dictating how Lebanon should address the issue and that no external actor, not the United States, Britain, or France, would intervene to dismantle a major political party. He said Lebanon was not required to act according to any timeline and that the United States would help it find a solution. However, he added that it was a problem the Lebanese had to handle themselves and it had to be done responsibly, since anyone who failed to implement change might suffer losses. Barack added that Lebanon could become "the pearl of Western Asia" (al-Jadeed and al-Arabiya, July 7, 2025).



**Barack at the press conference in Beirut (MTV Lebanon, July 7, 2025)**

► Lebanon's response to Barack was not officially published, but Lebanese media presented its alleged key points, which were conveyed to the American envoy. They were a Lebanese commitment to the November 2024 ceasefire agreement based on Resolution 1701, the importance of renewing UNIFIL's mandate and supporting the Lebanese army to expand its deployment south of the Litani, dismantling Hezbollah facilities south of the Litani and establishing a zone free of any weapons not under state control, Israeli withdrawal from the five outposts in south Lebanon and from all disputed territories, especially the Shebaa Farms and Kafr Shuba Hills (Mount Dov), a demand for the release of all Lebanese held in Israeli prisons and the provision of information on all missing Lebanese, emphasis on implementing the Taif Agreement<sup>5</sup> and Resolution 1701, activation of the ceasefire monitoring committee and halting Israeli attacks, alongside a call for the United States to play an influential role in pressuring Israel to stop its attacks, a Lebanese call for Arab sponsorship in establishing relations with Syria in a way that would ensure the safe and dignified return of Syrian refugees to Syria and preserve the Syria-Lebanon border, full adoption of the content of President

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<sup>5</sup> Negotiated in Taif, Saudi Arabia, it was designed to end the 15 year-long Lebanese Civil War, and reassert the Lebanese government's authority in south Lebanon, which was controlled at the time by the Christian-separatist South Lebanon Army.



Aoun's inauguration speech and the government's guiding principles, especially regarding preserving sovereignty, implementing reforms, and strengthening the state and its institutions, the promotion of economic and financial reforms, rebuilding trust in the Lebanese economy, and restoring its connection to the global financial system, emphasis on the need for reconstruction and facilitating Lebanon's ability to resolve the issue of weapons held by Palestinian organizations, in line with the Taif Agreement and the provisions of Resolution 1701 (al-Jadeed, July 6, 2025).

► In an interview before his visit, Barack noted that disarming Hezbollah would include Lebanese army house-to-house searches for weapons. He explained that the process was expected to encounter resistance in the Shi'ite communities, but to enable their participation, the United States was seeking financial aid from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to support reconstruction in south Lebanon. He said that the Shi'ites in Lebanon would cooperate if they stood to gain something from the process (The New York Times, July 4, 2025). In another statement, Barack said, "There is now an opportunity. This is a historic moment. Fulfill the hope for one state, one people, and one army. Lebanon is a wonderful place and its people are great..." (Thomas Barack's X account, July 5, 2025).

► "Sources close to senior Lebanese officials" said that Barack's real threat lay in his statement that no Arab or foreign country would be willing to provide Lebanon with financial aid or advance reconstruction as long as Lebanon did not fulfill the requests he had presented to the leadership. The "sources" claimed that Lebanon's room for maneuver in its response was limited because Barack had made it clear that the American administration would not tolerate stalling, dialogue, or internal understandings (al-Akhbar, July 2, 2025). Saudi Arabia reportedly called on Lebanon to take practical steps to reach an agreement with Hezbollah on its disarmament and warned of escalation and the end of United States involvement if an agreement were not reached (al-Jadeed, July 4, 2025).

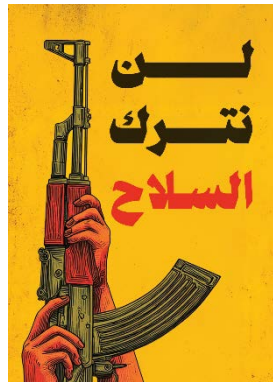
► Ahead of Barack's visit, the advisors of President Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri discussed the formulation of Lebanon's response to the American document. They reportedly agreed on a response which was intended to "provide a historic opportunity that would guarantee Lebanon's stability for the next fifty years" (MTV, July 2, 2025). Government officials also noted the need to ensure the state's monopoly on weapons:

- ◆ Prime Minister Salam said the Lebanese state was continuing its efforts to extend its full sovereignty over all its territory, with the goal of ensuring that the government had exclusive control over weapons (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 3, 2025). During a visit to the Beqa'a Valley, Salam said that the path to rebuilding the state passed through the completion of the Taif Agreement and the correction of what had been distorted. He added that there was no choice but to limit weapons to the state (al-Madan, July 6, 2025).
- ◆ Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said Lebanon had to meet the United States' conditions. He admitted, "We are not in a position of power to refuse or agree. We do not have the military or economic strength to bargain" (MTV, July 2, 2025).
- As part of formulating Lebanon's response, Parliament Speaker Berri held talks with Hezbollah to learn what the organization's position was. He reportedly conveyed a message stating that if Hezbollah did not respond, they would proceed regarding the reply without it (al-Hadath, July 5, 2025). "Informed sources" confirmed that Hezbollah had not provided an official response to Barack's document (Sawt Beirut International, July 7, 2025). However, Hezbollah officials used the Ashura events over the past week to highlight the organization's position rejecting any surrender of its weapons, as that would constitute "capitulation:"
  - ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem replied to all those asking Hezbollah to disarm, "We are the resistance in the face of the Israeli occupation, which must be fought. Since when does defense require permission? It does not." He said no one could ask them to stop the "resistance," and that it was necessary "to ask the aggressor to leave." He added, "We will never accept a decision of surrender. We are not afraid of our enemies and we will not give up our rights." He stated that once an effective alternative for defending the homeland was proposed, the organization would be ready to discuss details, adding that they were not far from such a point (al-Manar, July 4, 2025).
  - ◆ In another speech, Qassem said, "Threats from Israel and the United States will not lead to surrender." He added that Hezbollah could not be asked to mitigate its position or lay down its weapons "while the aggression continues." He claimed they had been surprised by the demand to relinquish their missiles, which he said "form the basis of our defense capabilities." Qassem emphasized that only after Israel implemented the first stage of the ceasefire agreement, withdrew its forces, halted the "aggression," released the Lebanese prisoners, and reconstruction began, would Hezbollah be ready to begin discussions about the future of its weapons (al-Manar, July 6, 2025). In response to



Qassem's remarks, Charles Jabbour, head of the media apparatus of the Christian Lebanese Forces party, said that all illegal weapons had to be treated as tools of terrorism. Jabbour stated that anyone who spoke in favor of the "resistance" should be investigated and prosecuted for inciting violence and terrorism (Sada News Instagram account, July 4, 2025).

◆ Ali Ammar, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament whose son was killed in the pager attack in September 2024, said that weapons would remain in Hezbollah's hands "as long as the aggression and Israeli occupation persist." He said Hezbollah would not agree to a "step-by-step" plan as proposed by United States envoy Barack, who, he claimed, "represents the Israeli position, which we do not accept" (MTV, June 30, 2025).



**Hezbollah notices rejecting disarmament (Right: Telegram channel of South Lebanon – Observer of the Enemy, July 7, 2025; Left: Hussein Farhat's X account, July 5, 2025)**

◆ A "parliamentary source in Hezbollah" said that the organization was holding discussions about its weapons. According to the source, the top priorities were Israel's withdrawal and the cessation of its attacks, and they required concrete guarantees on those issues. He added that the matter of Hezbollah's weapons was a Lebanese internal matter to be addressed within the framework of a national strategy. He said there were rights that could not be waived, and that the state also bore responsibility not to give them up (al-Araby al-Jadeed, July 4, 2025).

◆ Hassan Ezzeddine, member of the Loyalty to the Resistance faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that no one could impose normalization on Lebanon or dismantle the "resistance's" weapons. He called "the Zionist enemy" "a predator which understands only the language of force, and only those with the ability to stand up to it can deter it." He added, "We will not capitulate to threats or blackmail, not from America and not from

its agents at home or abroad, because we are the ones with the right, and we will not give up our dignity" (al-Akhbar, July 5, 2025).

◆ Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Loyalty to the Resistance faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that "the discussion about the weapons of the resistance is not on the table and will not be." He said the only discussion taking place was about a "defense strategy," and it was an internal Lebanese issue in which no external actor, Arab or Islamic, had the right to intervene, even under the pretense of offering advice. He added that Hezbollah faced two choices, danger or humiliation, and that they were not willing to surrender "like a humiliated person." He said Hezbollah's enemies wanted the organization to disarm, and thus Lebanon "would be slaughtered on the altar of Israeli and American interests," but their wish would not be fulfilled (al-Nashra, July 5, 2025).

► In addition to public statements, "sources" claimed that Hezbollah was considering handing over a large part of its arsenal as it had become a burden, and had even begun a strategic review of the matter. Hezbollah was considering that it would cease functioning as an armed organization without fully disarming. The organization was reportedly discussing the possibility of handing over some of its weapons, including missiles and UAVs, on the condition that Israel withdraw from south Lebanon and halt its attacks on the country. The organization's internal discussions have reportedly not yet matured into a decision, but they reflect the immense pressure being exerted on it from within, in addition to military pressure from Israel and economic pressure from the United States. "Another source close to the Lebanese organization" said that several secret discussions had been held about the next steps, and small working groups had been formed to discuss issues including the structure of the leadership, its political and social role, development work, and the future of the weapons (Reuters, July 4, 2025).

► Amid discussions about the future of Hezbollah's weapons, a media storm broke out when, during Ashura events in Beirut, a parade of Hezbollah supporters was seen openly carrying weapons (al-Nahar, July 4, 2025). Prime Minister Salam condemned the armed parade, stating that such actions were unacceptable (Lebanese government website, July 5, 2025), and the Lebanese intelligence services questioned those involved in the parade (Lebanon Debate, July 5, 2025). "Senior legal sources" said that Hezbollah had to understand that "the days of security lawlessness and armed displays in the streets are over for good, and the state is determined to

assert its authority and enforce the law throughout Lebanese territory" (Nidaa al-Watan, July 5, 2025).



**Hezbollah "supporters" displaying weapons in Beirut (al-Nahar, July 4, 2025)**

► The parade also sparked criticism within Lebanon's political system:

- ◆ Ahmed Hariri, secretary general of the Sunnis' Future Movement, said, "The weapons parade in Beirut is disgraceful and unacceptable in every respect." He called on the state to take decisive action and not settle for statements (Ahmad Hariri's X account, July 5, 2025).
- ◆ Ghassan Hasbani, former deputy Prime Minister and member of the Lebanese Forces faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the government had to take a clear position regarding the issue of weapons in the capital and the security forces and the army had to enforce the law, confiscate the weapons, and arrest those who carried them (Ghassan Hasbani's X account, July 5, 2025).
- ◆ Fouad Makhzoumi, a member of the National Dialogue Party faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said possessing and displaying weapons in Beirut's streets was absolutely unacceptable, and the state had to act immediately to arrest and prosecute those carrying weapons. He said the state had to begin exercising its authority. He also addressed "those who think they can take control of areas of the capital," declaring that "the era of excessive force is over, and the safety and dignity of Beirut's residents is a red line" (al-Nahar, July 5, 2025).

## Challenges for Hezbollah

### **Hezbollah's status after the fighting**

► "Informed sources" reported that nearly 10,000 Hezbollah fighters were completely hors de combat since the fighting with Israel began on October 8, 2023, and the organization's current number of fighters stood at around 60,000, compared to approximately 100,000 in October

2021. According to the sources, about 4,000 fighters were killed in the fighting, including commanders and unit leaders, and more than 3,000 were wounded. Additionally, some 2,000 fighters left Hezbollah after the elimination of secretary general Hassan Nasrallah in late September 2024 and refused to return. The report also noted that Hezbollah had closed most of its training bases in the Beqa'a Valley and south Lebanon due to Israeli attacks, and that the organization was also suffering economically due to tightened supervision at border crossings. "Military sources" stated that more than 80% of the territory south of the Litani River was currently under the control of the Lebanese army, and all of Hezbollah's heavy and medium weapons were either seized by the Lebanese army or destroyed by Israel (al-Hadath, July 3, 2025).

### **The economic challenge**

► The United States Treasury Department imposed sanctions on seven Lebanese officials in the al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's financial arm, which was also a target of IDF attacks during the Lebanon campaign in fall 2024. Among those designated was Nehme Ahmad Jamil, head of the audit and business department in the association. Sanctions were also imposed on a company he owned and two other senior al-Qard al-Hassan officials who were added to the designated list in 2021. The statement said the action underscored the Treasury Department's commitment to disrupting the network which enabled Hezbollah to evade sanctions and to supporting the Lebanese government's efforts to limit the organization's influence (United States Treasury Department website, July 3, 2025).

► According to reports, Hezbollah's financial distress led to the suspension of aid to homeowners whose properties were damaged in the fighting with Israel. Residents of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, a Hezbollah stronghold in southern Beirut, complained that the body appointed by Hezbollah to carry out reconstruction work had informed them that funding had been halted and therefore construction could not continue nor could promised compensation be paid. According to them, aside from minimal rent assistance, they had received no support so far (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 2, 2025).

### **Blocking Hezbollah's smuggling routes**

► A "source in the Lebanese judicial system" reported that \$8.2 million in cash was seized at Beirut airport, found in the luggage of three passengers, two arriving from Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the third from Istanbul. According to the source, the suspects claimed they routinely transferred funds for Lebanese businessmen working in

Africa and provided investigators with the identities of those who had given them the money and the intended recipients. A "banking source" stated that Hezbollah had cooperated with businessmen working in Africa and had helped them transfer funds using private planes or commercial flights. Over the years, Hezbollah benefited from a network of collaborators at Beirut airport, but since the end of the fighting, its influence had significantly diminished. According to the report, Hezbollah used to pocket 20% of the funds it transferred from abroad, mainly from African and Latin American countries, which served as a source of income in addition to Iranian funding, which provided the lion's share of Hezbollah's budget (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 1, 2025).

► Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji stated that the United States announcement of the lifting of sanctions on Syria, which is expected to improve its economic situation, would also lead to a decrease in smuggling across the Lebanon-Syria border. Rajji noted that Lebanon had received border maps from France's archives and marking the border was a top priority. He added that the Syrian government had expressed willingness to work with Lebanon to demarcate a shared border (Sky News Arabia, July 1, 2025). Qassem Hashem, a member of the Amal faction in the Lebanese Parliament, protested the possibility that the Shebaa Farms and Kfar Shuba Hills would be transferred to Syria, claiming it was due to "American and Western dictates and instructions serving the Israeli enemy." He demanded that the Lebanese government act quickly to affirm its commitment to the Lebanese identity of those areas and to reject any attempt to annex them to another entity (al-Nashra, July 3, 2025).



**Foreign Minister Rajji: Lebanon and Syria are strengthening their ability to preserve their borders once and for all (al-Joumhouria, July 2, 2025)**

► Lebanese Prime Minister Salam said his government had increased control over Beirut's Rafic Hariri Airport and the road leading to it using security measures to prevent smuggling and improve public safety. He added that Lebanon had strengthened cooperation with Syria to

secure the border crossings, combat smuggling, and enable the safe and dignified return of the displaced (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 3, 2025).

### **The challenge of reconstruction**

► A "source familiar with Hezbollah's situation" said that reconstruction in affected areas, especially in south Lebanon and in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, had been stalled by a "political blockade" and external conditions which prevented the state from taking action. According to the source, although rubble and debris had been partially cleared and roads reopened following the end of the fighting with Israel, actual reconstruction had not begun despite an obvious need for construction and engineering repair, particularly in buildings that had been severely damaged. George Okais, member of the Christian Lebanese Forces' Strong Republic faction in the Lebanese Parliament, accused Hezbollah of "blackmailing the Lebanese" by linking the issue of reconstruction to the fate of its weapons. According to him, it was Hezbollah's last remaining bargaining chip, and the organization was trying to buy time and subordinate any economic or financial discussion to the logic of keeping its weapons (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 3, 2025).

## **Lebanon and the Israel-Iran War**

► Hezbollah senior officials used the Ashura events to promote the narrative of "Iranian victory" in the campaign against Israel:

- ◆ In his Ashura speech, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem sent greetings to Iran, to its leader Khamenei, and to the Iranian people for standing firm and resolute and for successfully preventing Israel from achieving its goals. He also congratulated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iranian security forces, as well as "intellectuals and workers," saying their unity "foiled Israeli aggression." He claimed that Iran was once again "strong and respected, and its brilliance will continue" (al-'Ahed, July 6, 2025).
- ◆ Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, head of Hezbollah's political council, said that "the first reason for Iran's victory is leader Khamenei, the second is the patriotic people, the third is the armed forces, and the fourth is the state of Iran." He claimed the war against Iran began because of its support for "Palestine" and its aid to the "oppressed" around the world. He added that Iran's significance lay in the fact that its existence was based on independence, and that Iran was a state which could not be subdued. He claimed all "resistance" movements in Lebanon, "Palestine," Iraq, and Yemen represented an era of

"resistance," courage, and heroism, led by the "sacred martyr" Hassan Nasrallah (Hezbollah's combat information Telegram channel, July 3, 2025).

► With the objective of maintaining good diplomatic relations with Iran, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun sent Lebanese Health Minister Firas al-Abyad to the Iranian embassy in Beirut to offer condolences for the casualties in the Israeli attacks against Iran. Al-Abyad wrote in the condolence book on behalf of the president that "Lebanon will defend Iran and its people and is also committed to regional stability and peace" (al-'Ahed, July 2, 2025).

## The Palestinians in Lebanon

► "Lebanese sources" said the state had obtained a decision from the highest Palestinian leadership, led by Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, that weapons in the Palestinian refugee camps would be collected and be put under the exclusive supervision of the state, and that there was no turning back. According to the sources, delays were due to differing views within the Fatah movement in Lebanon regarding how and where to collect and store the weapons, and to the Palestinian leadership's inability to unify all factions for them to accept Abbas' decision. It was also noted that Lebanese officials were surprised when Abbas' office announced that a broad security and political delegation was expected to arrive in Beirut to conduct an assessment of the situation in the camps, especially concerning disagreements within the Fatah movement. Three sources also noted that Lebanese security services were continuing to monitor movement into and out of the refugee camps, particularly in the south of the country, to prevent infiltration into villages and the launching of rockets at Israel (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 3, 2025).

► "Informed security sources" stated that there were light and medium weapons in all the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, while heavy weapons were concentrated primarily in the Ain al-Hilweh camp in Sidon and the al-Rashidieh camp in Tyre. Dr. Sarhan Youssef, head of the Popular Committees in Lebanon, said the Palestinian factions were seriously committed to the Lebanese state's decision to expand its authority over Lebanese territory and control weapons through dialogue and coordination with the relevant Lebanese security authorities. He claimed the delay was the result of "procrastination," but rather of the Israel-Iran War and the regional tensions which had delayed the Palestinian delegation's arrival in Lebanon (TRANSPARENCY NEWS website, July 3, 2025).

► "Informed sources" noted that the decision came from the desire of the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah to separate diplomatic from organizational roles. It was further noted



that the decision to dismiss Ashraf Dabbour, the Palestinian Authority ambassador to Lebanon, was a first step toward restoring balance between the security and organizational dimensions in the refugee camps, in light of Lebanese pressure to disarm the factions and prevent security chaos in the camps (Quds Agency, July 6, 2025).



**Mahmoud Abbas' decree removing Dabbour from office (Quds Agency, July 6, 2025)**