



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah July 21-28, 2025

Overview

- IDF forces attacked Hezbollah facilities and eliminated terrorist operatives as part of the continuing activity against Hezbollah's presence in south Lebanon in violation of the ceasefire agreement understandings and against the organization's efforts to renew their arsenal and military-terrorist capabilities.
- Hezbollah reportedly raised its alert level and ordered its operatives to be prepared for any development.
- Lebanese President Joseph Aoun stated that ten thousand Lebanese soldiers were expected to deploy in the south of the country by the end of the year and that illegal weapons were being collected everywhere the forces were deployed.
- While in Beirut, American special envoy Thomas Barrack said the United States had no demands from Lebanon but warned that "time was running out" regarding Hezbollah's disarmament. According to reports, Barrack's meetings with the Lebanese leadership were tense and he warned that without progress, the United States would cease its involvement in Lebanon.
- Hezbollah denied the report that it was not willing to give up its weapons and was prepared for a confrontation with the Lebanese state. Hezbollah accused Barrack of being biased and claimed that relinquishing weapons would bring about the state's destruction.
- Hezbollah reportedly stopped paying university tuition for the children of the organization's shaheeds because of its economic crisis.
- The Lebanese army reportedly uncovered a military camp of Hamas and of the military wing of the Jama'a al-Islamiyya in the Mount Lebanon area. Both movements denied the allegations.

The Ceasefire in Lebanon

The IDF

- The IDF continued to act against Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon, in violation of the November 27, 2024 ceasefire agreement which prohibited the organization's presence south of

the Litani River, and against Hezbollah's efforts to restore its arsenal and military-terrorist capabilities. The IDF attacked military-terrorist sites in south Lebanon, including weapons depots and a rocket launcher, and five Hezbollah military-terrorist operatives were eliminated, three in the Bint Jbeil area, and two operatives of the Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force (IDF spokesperson, July 21–28, 2025). The Lebanese ministry of health reported six fatalities in the IDF strikes in south Lebanon (al-Nashra, July 21–28, 2025).

Hezbollah

► "Sources" reported that Hezbollah had raised its military alert level and its operatives were instructed to be prepared for every development. They added that the decision by al-Qard al-Hassan, Hezbollah's economic branch, to suspend payments was also part of the preparations for a "military event." However, the reason for the raised alert was not specified (al-Hadath, July 27, 2025).

The Lebanese Leadership

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun visited Bahrain and met with King Hamad bin Isa. The king said Bahrain supported Lebanon's sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity, and opposed any foreign interference in its internal affairs. In particular, he said Bahrain supported Lebanon's efforts to maintain the ceasefire with Israel, ensure Israel's withdrawal from "the occupied territories," implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, restrict the holding of weapons to the state and expand its control over all Lebanese territory. The king said support should be given to the Lebanese army and UNIFIL's role should be strengthened (Bahrain News Agency, July 23, 2025).

► During a conversation with newspaper editors in Bahrain, Aoun said that any political solution had to be backed by guarantees, claiming Israel had not yet fully implemented Resolution 1701 and still controlled five hills in south Lebanon, while the Lebanese army had already deployed south of the Litani River. He claimed that by the end of 2025 there would be ten thousand Lebanese soldiers in the south and wherever the army was deployed, illegal weapons were being collected and there was no armed presence which did not belong to the army (Lebanon Debate, July 22, 2025).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam claimed Lebanon was committed to the ceasefire, Hezbollah did not respond to Israeli violations, and so far Israel had not held up its end of the agreement (al-Nahar, July 24, 2025).

► Prime Minister Salam met in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron. He thanked France for its continued support of Lebanon's security, sovereignty and prosperity. Salam said he was returning to Beirut satisfied with Macron's commitment to help Lebanon renew UNIFIL's mandate and strengthen bilateral relations, especially regarding security and the economy (Nawaf Salam's X account July 24, 2025). They discussed the importance of renewing UNIFIL's mandate and strengthening the ceasefire monitoring mechanism. Macron said that France would contribute €75 million to Lebanon for the Bank of Lebanon's emergency aid project to support the rehabilitation of areas damaged by the "aggression," and France planned to hold an international conference in Paris in support of Lebanon (al-Nashra, July 25, 2025)



Macron and Salam (X account of Nawaf Salam, July 24, 2025)

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army announced that its forces had found and dismantled a camouflaged espionage device equipped with a camera, which it claimed was placed by Israel in the Hasbaya area (Lebanese News Agency, July 23, 2025).



The alleged espionage device found near Hasbaya (Lebanese News Agency, July 23, 2025)

Disarming Hezbollah

Barrack meets with the Lebanese leadership

► On July 21–22, 2025, Thomas Barrack, American envoy to Lebanon, held a series of meetings in Lebanon to discuss Hezbollah's disarmament. In addition to his meetings with President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam,¹ Barrack also met with Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, and ministers and members of the Lebanese Parliament. Barrack told the media that his meeting with Berri had been "excellent" and "exceptional" and said the Lebanese government was responsible for implementing the law which stipulated the existence of a single military body in the country. He said the United States had no demands from Lebanon and was committed to assisting the Lebanese army and UNIFIL, but added that "time was running out" and therefore an agreement had to be reached. He also denied that he had any contact with Hezbollah and said that the organization had to participate in the process willingly so that Lebanon could advance (al-Nashra and al-Jadeed, July 22, 2025).

► Despite Barrack's positivity, media reports indicated that his meetings with senior leaders had been tense and he had avoided providing the guarantees the Lebanese demanded in exchange for progress on Hezbollah's disarmament. He reportedly warned that the United States might end its involvement in Lebanon:

◆ "Lebanese sources" claimed that Barrack's meetings with senior officials took place in an unpleasant atmosphere but that efforts continued in the hope of making progress. Barrack received the draft of a document from the Lebanese leadership reiterating the demand for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon as a top priority before any discussion on Hezbollah's disarmament could be held. However, Barrack refused to provide guarantees for the Lebanese demands and said he could not pressure Israel because the committee monitoring the ceasefire was not holding meetings (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 21, 2025).

◆ According to reports, the general atmosphere was "negative," especially in the meeting with Aoun, and matters became more complicated when Aoun demanded guarantees. Barrack's response was negative, he said the Lebanese demands were clear and that he had taken great pains to ensure the success of his mission (Nidaa al-Watan, July 22, 2025). "Official Lebanese sources" reported that Barrack wanted rapid practical steps

¹ For further information, see the ITIC report, "[Spotlight on Terrorism – Hezbollah and Lebanon, July 14–21, 2025](#)."

from Lebanon regarding Hezbollah's disarmament, including determining a timetable and implementation mechanisms, beginning with removing heavy weapons from the south and north of the Litani River, heavy weapons from Beirut and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, and then from the Beqa'a Valley, with each step by Lebanon to be met by a step from Israel. "The sources" said Lebanon demanded the complete cessation of "Israeli aggression" and the withdrawal of IDF forces from the five outposts in south Lebanon so that the Lebanese army could complete its deployment and carry out its missions (al-Jadeed, July 22, 2025). "Lebanese sources" reported that Barrack pressured the Lebanese leadership to translate its declared intention to restrict weapons into practical measures (LBCI, July 21, 2025).

◆ Meeting with Barrack, Nabih Berri proposed that Israel stop its flyovers in Lebanese airspace and its attacks for two weeks starting August 1, 2025, and that in return Berri would hold talks with Hezbollah during that time to persuade the organization to take initial steps to hand over its weapons if Israel was committed to the agreement. "The sources" added that the idea was consistent with Barrack's expectations and it might prompt the Lebanese government to set a timetable for implementing a disarmament agreement (al-Hadath, July 22, 2025).



Berri and Barrack (al-Nashra, July 22, 2025)

◆ Lebanon was reportedly waiting for Barrack's visit to Israel in order to receive a response to the proposals he received from the Lebanese. "Sources" reported that there were no positive expectations and it appeared that Israel would not accept what was in the Lebanese document (al-Naba', July 26, 2025).

► Even after Barrack's visit, the Lebanese leadership continued to emphasize their commitment to implementing the state's monopoly on weapons, while linking it to a cessation of Israeli strikes in Lebanon and to the withdrawal of the IDF from the five positions in the south of the country:

◆ Lebanese President Aoun said they were still waiting for the American response to the Lebanese reply that was given to Barrack. Aoun said he had conducted direct contacts with Hezbollah to advance a solution to the issue of disarmament and claimed there had been some progress, but it was slow going. Aoun further noted Lebanon's demand for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and for Israel's withdrawal from the five hills in south Lebanon. He said the UNIFIL forces were deployed throughout the country except in the areas under Israeli control, which delayed the completion of their deployment (al-Nashra, July 25, 2025). In response, Barrack stated that the credibility of the Lebanese government rested on its ability to put theory into action. He said that as long as Hezbollah kept its weapons, words would not suffice, the government and Hezbollah had to fully commit and take action now "so as not to leave the Lebanese people in their current situation" (Thomas Barrack's X account, July 27, 2025).

◆ According to Lebanese deputy prime minister Tarek Mitri, the greatest and most important effort of the Lebanese army was taking place south of the Litani River, where the army was dismantling Hezbollah's military bases and confiscating or destroying its weapons. He said the army had completed more than 85% of its mission, but there were still several areas that required more work, and there were the areas in which Israel was still present. Mitri added that the Lebanese army was also carrying out missions north of the Litani River under the broader heading of "deployment of the state's sovereignty over its territory" (al-Arabiya, July 22, 2025).

◆ Kamal Shehadeh, from the Christian Lebanese Forces Party and minister for displaced persons, said there would be no back-peddling from the decision to disarm. He said Hezbollah's weapons stockpile had not defended Lebanon but rather had destroyed it, adding that Lebanon conducted its defense through diplomacy. He added that Hezbollah insisted on retaining its weapons and that "did not lead us to a positive result," claiming "there was still room for diplomacy" (al-Arabiya, July 24, 2025).



A dark tunnel leading to Lebanon, as American envoy Barrack welcomes the Lebanese "to the future" (al-Jumhuriya, July 25, 2025)

► Within the Lebanese political system, particularly among Hezbollah's opponents, there was continued emphasis on the need to complete the task of disarming the organization:

◆ Samir Geagea, leader of the Christian Lebanese Forces Party, said the illegal weapons in Lebanon were not an American or Israeli problem, but primarily a Lebanese one. According to him, the presence of armed organizations and illegal militias in Lebanon, led by Hezbollah, had "shattered the face" of the state and continued to do so. He added that the existence of the organizations was detrimental the country's strategic decisions and the majority of Lebanese demanded they be disbanded, as did all countries friendly to Lebanon, East and West, especially the Gulf States (Nidaa al-Watan, July 22, 2025).

◆ Sami Gemayel, Leader of the Christian Phalange Party, said Lebanon was at a watershed moment in the state's history which required that people be told the truth. He said the Lebanese were perpetually waiting on hold and unable to develop and prosper like other countries because an independent armed force held the state hostage and prevented the construction of the state. He said Hezbollah's weapons had not defended Lebanon and would not help it and were the reason for the continued Israeli presence. He called on the state to be firm and enforce the law against anyone who bore arms, whether they were Lebanese, Palestinian or anyone else. He said Lebanon had sovereignty and independence and had to bear its responsibility as a state and others had to respect it. He said to the Lebanese people, "Do not let propaganda from Syria influence or frighten you, because no one can preserve the state except the state itself and its army" (Phalange website, July 24, 2025).

◆ Veteran Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, former head of the Progressive Socialist Party, said Hezbollah had to accept the fact that retaining its heavy weapons would bring disaster to Lebanon. He said he did not believe it was possible to disarm the organization

by force. He claimed the Lebanese government had dismantled the main stockpiles of Hezbollah's weapons in the south but the security forces were still unable to dismantle Hezbollah's weapons north of the Litani River and in areas where the IDF was in control (al-Arabiya, July 26, 2025).

Hezbollah's position

► Hezbollah reportedly made it clear to Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, that they would not hand over its weapons and that they were also prepared to confront the Lebanese state. According to "sources," Berri then told Barrack that he could not guarantee Hezbollah could be disarmed north of the Litani River. The Lebanese leadership was also angry with Hezbollah's insistence because the "opportunity had been wasted," but was still willing to continue its public commitment to ensure the state's monopoly on weapons (al-Hadath, July 23, 2025). A "source" later claimed that the report was untrue and merely "baseless rumors." He emphasized that there was optimism following Barrack's meetings and that the Lebanese proposal reflected the unified, unopposed Lebanese position, even Hezbollah had accepted it (al-Nashra, July 23, 2025). Hezbollah also issued an official statement strongly denying the report about "its willingness to confront the Lebanese state and other lies" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 23, 2025).

► "Sources" later reported that Hezbollah had ignored the verbal remarks conveyed by Barrack to Berri. It was noted that although Berri appeared eager to avoid an "explosion," he had no real pressure he could exert to mitigate Hezbollah's position (al-Liwaa, July 26, 2025).

► Hezbollah criticized Barrack's conduct and strongly reiterated that the organization had no intention of giving up its weapons and was prepared to act alongside the Lebanese army as part of a "national strategy:"

◆ Ghaleb Abu Zainab, a member of Hezbollah's Political Council, said patience was part of "resistance"² and was required at the current stage. He added that the American envoy's performance in Lebanon and Syria had been unsuccessful and Hezbollah would not negotiate with Barrack or the American administration (al-Nour, July 23, 2025).

◆ Mahmoud Qamati, deputy head of Hezbollah's Political Council, said that the organization would not give up "the strength of the Lebanese people" and would not surrender to anyone, no matter how much they threatened it. He added that if Hezbollah gave up its power and its weapons it would mean "Lebanon's destruction." He claimed

² Anti-Israeli terrorism and violence.

Hezbollah was not an arm serving any country in the world, claiming "Lebanon was threatened from all sides." He said Hezbollah was willing to discuss defense strategy and how the organization could be a pillar in Lebanon's defense policy alongside the Lebanese army (al-Akhbar, July 25, 2025).



Mahmoud Qamati (al-Akhbar, July 25, 2025)

► Ihab Hamadeh, member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Hezbollah did not regard the United States as a mediator or a neutral party, but as "an actor with a regional project, with the Israeli entity [sic] as its extended arm." Hamadeh claimed that the current policy was "to use both force and politics to allow Israel to dominate the region and redraw the maps in the context of the new Middle East, under the label of a demilitarized zone similar to the West Bank, a geographic occupation." He claimed a confrontation with the Lebanese army was impossible, and that anyone calling for the disarmament of the "resistance" by force was calling for civil war in Lebanon (al-Nashra, July 25, 2025).

Hezbollah

Statements from Naim Qassem regarding the Gaza Strip

► Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah secretary general, claimed that the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip were subject to "American-Israeli aggression, hunger and killing." He said it was not enough for states to call for an end to the war, but concrete steps were needed to stop "the crimes" by imposing sanctions on Israel, putting it on trial and severing relations with it. He added that the greatest responsibility lay with the Arab and Islamic countries, their rulers and their public, and called on them not to stand idly by, to halt normalization and to unite in support of the Gaza Strip (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 22, 2025).

Hezbollah's economic challenges

► According to "sources," Hezbollah informed the families of the organization's shaheeds that it would halt all tuition payments for their children. According to the report, Hezbollah's

Martyrs Foundation³ which provides social and economic support for the families of the organization's shaheeds, told the families it was suspending payments for studies at private universities, and that the decision applied to all children of shaheeds from Hezbollah's founding in 1982 to the latest "campaign" against Israel. Instead, parents were asked to enroll their children only in the Lebanese University or in al-Maaref University, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, where only registration fees were required. The decision reportedly caused resentment among the families, who did not hide their surprise, with one mother saying that a senior official in the Martyrs Foundation had admitted that "the situation was difficult and we are under siege" (al-Arabiya, July 27, 2025).

► Given the Bank of Lebanon directive from July 15, 2025, which prohibits any connection with financial institutions operating without a license from the Bank, including al-Qard al-Hassan Association, Hezbollah's economic arm, "Western diplomatic sources" noted that the Bank's position was a political message directed solely at the United States. According to the sources, it did not mark a significant change, since even beforehand any connection with al-Qard al-Hassan could have led to sanctions. They added that the association could still send its clients to regulated banks or organize personal transfers among its members, and it might not be possible to prevent them from doing so, or prove it constituted illegal activity (Beirut International Desk, July 23, 2025). In the opinion of economic analyst Muhammad Fahili, ordinary citizens would continue to conduct business with al-Qard al-Hassan as usual, mainly by taking out loans and routine activities (Nidaa al-Watan, July 23, 2025).

► Sami Gemayel, leader of the Phalange Party called on the Bank of Lebanon to close al-Qard al-Hassan's offices, claiming they were an illegal financial system used for money laundering and exposed Lebanon to sanctions and attacks (MTV Lebanon, July 24, 2025).

Preventing smuggling weapons into Lebanon

³ For further information, see the March 2019 ITIC report, [Hezbollah's Martyrs Foundation: purpose, mode of operation and funding methods](#)

► A "security source" reported that a Syrian Internal Security Force unit in the al-Nabk area on the outskirts of Damascus intercepted a weapons shipment which was destined for Lebanon (Syrian state television, July 26, 2025).



Weapons seized in Syria en route to Lebanon (Syrian state television, July 26, 2025)

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► "Lebanese sources" reported that Azzam al-Ahmed, secretary general of the PLO Executive Committee, responsible for the "Lebanese file," decided not to go to Beirut as planned because he believed Fatah's political and organizational apparatus in the country suffered from weakness, power struggles, corruption, security breaches and a lack of leadership capable of implementing the movement's control over the refugee camps. As a result, Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, sent a large security-political delegation from Ramallah. It consisted of 16 members who toured most of the refugee camps and held meetings with senior security officials in Lebanon, but did not discuss the issue of collecting weapons, only the rehabilitation of the Fatah movement. The "sources" further noted that Hamas and its partners had significant influence within Fatah's political and organizational apparatus in Lebanon, which disrupted the implementation of Mahmoud Abbas' commitment to disarm the refugee camps. According to the report, the PLO had no choice but to unite under the umbrella of the Lebanese state to collect the weapons and not hide behind Hezbollah (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 24, 2025).

► A "Lebanese legal source" reported that the Lebanese army exposed and dismantled a Hamas camp and of the military wing of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in the Aley area in Mount Lebanon. According to the "source," the camp was equipped with equipment for training terrorist operatives from Hamas and the al-Fajr forces, evidence of the intention of both movements to rebuild their military-terrorist capabilities. He stated that ten suspects had been arrested, most of them from Beirut, in addition to Jordanian suspects, adding that the fathers of some of the

detainees had previously fought in south Lebanon and had been killed by IDF fire in the most recent clash (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 26, 2025). In response, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya denied any connection to military training facilities in Lebanon. It claimed the movement did not conduct armed training and was committed to cooperating with the relevant authorities in Lebanon. It added that the movement called for the adoption of a security strategy consistent with the remarks of Lebanese President Joseph Aoun regarding national security (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya Telegram channel, July 26, 2025). Hamas also denied the report and claimed it did not operate camps on Lebanese soil. It claimed the movement was committed to Lebanon's sovereignty, security and stability, saw it as in the best interests of the Palestinian people and Lebanon, and maintained strict cooperation with the Lebanese state (al-Mayadeen, July 28, 2025).