



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah January 12-20, 2026

Overview¹

- This past week the IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley to enforce the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 and to prevent the organization's renewed military buildup. A Hezbollah operative was eliminated, and the forces attacked Hezbollah weapons depots, training camps, launch sites and military facilities in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley.
- Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem warned that the organization's patience was running out in view of the continued Israeli "aggression." He accused Lebanese state institutions of failing to do their duty and claimed that Lebanon had lost its sovereignty.
- While the Lebanese army continues preparations for the phase of the plan for the state's monopoly on weapons north of the Litani River, secretary general Na'im Qassem remained defiant and intransigent, absolutely refusing to disarm the "resistance," arguing that only it could prevent Israel from taking over the entire country. According to reports, Hezbollah is no longer cooperating with the Lebanese army and is preventing forces from reaching sites which were attacked.
- The president of Lebanon stated that the government's decision regarding the state monopoly of weapons was an achievement in Lebanon unprecedented during the past 40 years, adding that Lebanon was committed to the ceasefire agreement, despite the difficulties and Israel's actions.
- The Lebanese foreign minister said Hezbollah's weapons no longer protected the state but had become a burden, provoking the anger of senior organization figures who accused him of working against Lebanese interests and called for measures to be taken against him.
- Hezbollah expressed support for the Iranian regime and claimed that "American and Israeli agents were escalating the violence in the Islamic Republic. Reportedly, within the circle of the

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

Lebanese president, there are doubts regarding the extent of Hezbollah's commitment to non-involvement in the event of an American-Israeli attack on Iran.

The Tension between Israel and Hezbollah

The IDF

► This past week the IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets as part of enforcing the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 and preventing Hezbollah's renewed military buildup. The IDF attacked Hezbollah weapons depots, some of them underground, and launch sites, training camps and other military facilities in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley, and demolished buildings in villages near the border. It was also reported that a Hezbollah operative engaged in rebuilding terrorist facilities was eliminated (IDF spokesperson, January 12–20, 2026). The Lebanese ministry of health reported two fatalities and several wounded in the IDF attacks (*al-Nashra*, January 12–20, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem warned that the organization would not be able to "restrain itself" for much longer in the face of the Israeli attacks. In a speech for the day "Allah sent the Prophet Muhammad," he said "aggression" against people and property was unacceptable and could not continue, and they had "the right to defend" themselves. He added that the state had to demand that the countries guaranteeing the ceasefire agreement put an end to the attacks, adding that "everything has limits, and this cannot continue without limit." Qassem also accused the ceasefire monitoring mechanism of following only Israel's requests and passing them to the Lebanese army and UNIFIL to search for weapons, while demanding nothing from Israel. Qassem also rejected claims that Israel was acting because of Hezbollah's presence and alleged that the "resistance" was born because of the Israeli presence and the "resistance" protects Lebanon (al-Manar, January 17, 2026).



Na'im Qassem in a speech (al-Mayadeen, January 17, 2026)

- Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Israel understood only the language of force and diplomacy alone had failed to curb its violations of Lebanon's sovereignty. He said Hezbollah was currently giving the state and the army an opportunity to do their jobs in defending the borders, but reserved the right to resume action if it saw Lebanese sovereignty was not being protected. He concluded by noting that Hezbollah remained dynamic and adapted to changing situations (*al-Nashra*, January 15, 2026).
- Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said the organization was currently entrusting the management of affairs to the state, based on the concept that the defense of Lebanon was a shared national responsibility requiring coordination between the "resistance" and the official institutions. He warned against what he called "Israel's right to attack any potential risk" and criticized the failure of the monitoring mechanism to restrain Israel. He also called on the president and the prime minister to assume responsibility for achieving an Israeli withdrawal (*al-Jumhuriya*, January 17, 2026).
- Head of Hezbollah's Sharia Council, Muhammad Yazbek, said Hezbollah would not agree to humiliation and surrender because they belonged to a culture of death. He said national Lebanese sovereignty would be achieved only after the IDF withdrew from Lebanon and returned the "prisoners" [Lebanese detainees held in Israel], adding that Hezbollah would refuse to accept any proposal which did not meet its conditions (*al-Manar*, January 19, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

- Hezbollah's daily newspaper *al-Akhbar* quoted "sources" who claimed that in practice, the work of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism had been suspended and no date had been set for a meeting at the military or civilian level. The paper further claimed that Israel refused to discuss any issues related to disputed points under the ceasefire agreement, including withdrawal from the five points in south Lebanon and the cessation of attacks, and that it wanted discussions to be limited to economic cooperation within a vision of regional peace (*al-Akhbar*, January 20, 2026).
- Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, stated that internal unity was Lebanon's primary source of strength in the face of the "war of violations" that Israel had been waging since the ceasefire, and accused the monitoring mechanism of failing to enforce the agreement. He said Lebanon and its army had met their commitments, and called for prioritizing Israel's withdrawal from the areas it held in south Lebanon, the release of prisoners

held in Israel and reconstruction, while presenting the "resistance" as the "defender of all Lebanese" (*al-Jumhuriya*, January 13, 2026).

► Speaking before the annual meeting with members of the diplomatic corps stationed in Lebanon, Lebanese president Joseph Aoun said the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 was an international agreement honored by Lebanon to prevent the state from "being dragged into suicidal adventures" which had already caused it to pay a high price. He said Lebanon would continue in the same manner in the coming year to bring the state's control over all Lebanese territory, to return the prisoners held in Israel and to rebuild what had been destroyed by "attacks and adventures" (Lebanese News Agency, January 20, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese Parliament finance and budget committee discussed the budgets of the ministries of defense and public works. The committee chair, Ibrahim Knaan, noted that in light of the expansion of the Lebanese army's missions and the preparations being made for UNIFIL's departure, the army's responsibility for implementing government decisions and defending borders and the population was increasing. He said that at the request of the ministry of defense, the committee had approved the transfer of 560 billion Lebanese pounds (about \$6.25 million) from reserves to support the army's activity and deployment in south Lebanon, while giving full support for the move (*al-Nashra*, January 13, 2026).

► Lebanese president Joseph Aoun held a meeting with the advisor to Saudi foreign minister Prince Yazid bin Farhan, French envoy Jean-Yves Le Drian, United States ambassador to Lebanon Michael Issa and the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and France, and with the Qatari assistant foreign minister. They discussed preparations for the international conference to support the Lebanese army and internal security forces, led by French President Macron and planned to be held in Paris on March 5, 2026, and ensuring the broadest possible international participation (Lebanese Presidency X account, January 14, 2026).



Aoun at the meeting (Lebanese Presidency X account, January 14, 2026)

UNIFIL

► This past week UNIFIL complained to Israel about a number of "violations" of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. UNIFIL claimed that two IDF mortar shells struck the helicopter landing pad and the gate of a UN position near the village of Yaroun in south Lebanon. There were no casualties, but UN soldiers were forced to enter shelters. In another incident, an IDF tank reportedly fired at a UNIFIL position near the village of Shuba, with one round hitting a soldier's living quarters, which was empty at the time. UNIFIL said it had approached the IDF with a demand to halt the attacks and noted its duty to ensure the safety of UN soldiers and to avoid endangering its forces (UNIFIL Telegram channel, January 13 and 16, 2026).

Disarming Hezbollah

Preparations for Disarmament North of the Litani River²

► Lebanese president Joseph Aoun said the government decision on the state's monopoly of weapons was an achievement unprecedented in Lebanon during the past 40 years. At the annual meeting with members of the diplomatic corps stationed in Lebanon, Aoun said that despite campaigns of "distortion, harassment and misinformation," and despite Israel's "not complying" with the ceasefire agreement, the truth was that not a single bullet or rocket had been fired from Lebanese territory since he took office in January 2025, except for two isolated cases handled in March 2025. He said that showed that the Lebanese army and security forces were the sole operational authority in the south of the country, and the objective had been achieved despite "provocations, continuous attacks, doubts, accusations of treason, insults and slander" (Lebanese News Agency, January 20, 2026).

► Hezbollah's daily newspaper *al-Akhbar* claimed that President Aoun and the army commander, Rodolph Haykal, had committed to taking a certain action in the area north of the Litani River even before Haykal was due to travel to Washington for a working visit in early February 2026. According to the paper, Israel expanded its attacks to areas north of the Litani River to pressure for the demilitarization of the area up to the Awali River, and if the army did not confiscate Hezbollah's weapons and destroy the organization's facilities even at the price of direct confrontations, the Israeli attacks were expected to escalate (*al-Akhbar*, January 20, 2026).

► A "senior Lebanese military source" said the Lebanese army was conducting a situation assessment, after which a scenario would be formulated for the phase of disarming Hezbollah

² See the January 2026 ITIC report, [The Completion of the First Phase of Hezbollah's Disarmament](#)

north of the Litani River. According to the "source," the Israeli attacks and Hezbollah's lack of cooperation could delay implementation of the phase, which also required broad national understandings and international assistance for the army. He further noted that the army would reinforce its checkpoints in all areas to prevent the transfer of weapons northward and would confiscate any weapons seized. He also warned that if no alternative to UNIFIL were found, confrontations could develop between the Lebanese army and the IDF, and they needed to recruit 4,000 soldiers in preparation for the withdrawal of the UN forces (al-Jazeera, January 14, 2026).

- A "source" said the Lebanese army was using caution in preparing for the phase of monopoly on weapons north of the Litani River, in view of opposition from Hezbollah and Palestinian [terrorist] organizations and fears of friction with Hezbollah's Shi'ite support base. According to the "source," although Hezbollah formally approved the government platform, in practice it opposed any move north of the river, while Hamas exploited the disagreements to delay implementation of the plan (al-Anbaa, January 16, 2026).
- A "political source" said that Egypt was expected to play a central role in advancing solutions to the issue of disarmament in Lebanon, especially in the area north of the Litani River, as part of a regional trend favoring political arrangements and avoiding escalation. According to the source, Egypt's active involvement could help remove obstacles delaying implementation of the plan to strengthen state authority and its rehabilitation (al-Anbaa, January 18, 2026).



The Arabic in the upper right corner reads, "The American ambassador on the exclusivity of weapons north of the Litani River, "God willing, they will start quickly and finish quickly," and Prime Minister Salam responds, "What are you doing, opening a fast food restaurant?" (al-Jumhuriya, January 13, 2026)

Hezbollah's Position

- With the internal and international pressure to move to the second phase of the plan to concentrate weapons in the hands of the state, Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem

continued to firmly oppose the demand to disarm the organization, calling it an American-Israeli demand whose objective was to "strangle the resistance." He claimed that even if weapons were concentrated in the hands of the state, Israel would continue to say there were weapons "here and there." He said there was no point in making any further concessions, as any concession would only weaken Lebanon, which was unable to restore its sovereignty. He said "we are the resistance and we will remain the resistance, and Lebanon cannot exist without the resistance," which alone had caused Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon without an agreement and which alone would prevent Israel from continuing its takeover of Lebanon. He added that collecting weapons could not end until Lebanon "ended" (al-Manar, January 17, 2026). Hezbollah's media department hastened to state that his remarks had been distorted and taken out of context, and he meant that from Israel's perspective the issue of Hezbollah's weapons would remain a constant pretext for pressure and intervention until Lebanon as a whole submitted to Israeli hegemony (Hezbollah on the Ground Telegram channel, January 17, 2026).

- ▶ A "security source" stated that Hezbollah was blocking the phase of disarmament north of the Litani River, conditioning any cooperation on an Israeli withdrawal from the five points it held and threatening to reactivate its terrorist networks south of the river. According to the "source," the organization was following instructions from Iran to preserve and rehabilitate its military capabilities in preparation for a future confrontation, while delays in army deployment and the absence of international assistance endanger the entire process (Aram News, January 12, 2026).
- ▶ Reportedly, the postponement of the American attack on Iran surprised elements in Lebanon and delayed the conditions for advancing the phase of disarmament north of the Litani River. According to the report, Hezbollah claimed the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 applied solely to south of the Litani River, and it refused to cooperate or discuss the army's plan for the second phase as long as Israel had not stopped its attacks and withdrawn from the five "occupied" sites (*al-Diyar*, January 17, 2026).
- ▶ "Diplomatic circles" reported that the cooperation which had existed between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah in the south regarding the identification of sites and weapons depots had recently been affected. According to the report, following Israeli aerial attacks, mainly in areas included in the second phase of the plan, Hezbollah operatives blocked the attack sites and for a time prevented access by Lebanese army forces until mediators intervened. In addition, a

reported incident in the town of Kfar Hatta east of Sidon involved an Israeli attack which exposed an ammunition depot and led to a severe internal confrontation between residents opposing the storage of weapons in the heart of residential areas and elements supporting it (*al-Jumhuriya*, January 19, 2026).

Growing Tension between Hezbollah and the Lebanese State Leadership

► Na'im Qassem gave a speech attacking state institutions, claiming they were not fulfilling their duty and were not acting to deter "aggression." He claimed Lebanon had had no national sovereignty for more than 13 months because the "aggression" continued against Lebanon and against the UN force, adding that the state bore responsibility for restoring sovereignty. He added that Hezbollah had helped elect the president and the government and had not violated the ceasefire agreement, and said he hoped Lebanon's leaders would "act wisely," like Hezbollah [*sic*] (*al-Manar*, January 17, 2026).

► The deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political council, Mahmoud Qamati, warned that pushing the president and the government to disarm the organization before a full Israeli withdrawal and the release of prisoners could lead to instability and civil war. He accused the Lebanese leadership of capitulating to American-Israeli dictates, said the role of the Lebanese army was to confront Israel and not to implement external pressures, and called for internal dialogue and agreement on a national defense strategy (RT, January 14, 2026).

► The Lebanese foreign minister, Youssef Rajji, angered Hezbollah when he said the organization's weapons no longer protected the Shi'ite community or Lebanon and had become a burden. According to Rajji, the ceasefire agreement with Israel required the organization to disarm, and the demand for a state monopoly on weapons was a general Lebanese wish, since the continued existence of Hezbollah's weapons provided Israel with a pretext to continue its attacks and paralyzed the political system and the economy. Rajji further stated that he had made it clear to Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi that Tehran had to cease its interference in Lebanon, noting that while the United States armed the Lebanese army, Iran armed an armed organization operating outside the framework of the state (Sky News Arabic, January 12, 2026). Hezbollah was quick to criticize Rajji and accuse him of incitement against the "resistance" and of harming Lebanon:

- ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem accused Rajji of recognizing only Israel's right to attack Lebanon and accepted only the Israeli interpretation of the ceasefire

agreement, thereby inciting civil war and acting against Lebanese interests. He demanded that the Lebanese government deal with "this mistake" and replace him or take other measures against him, since, according to Qassem, he was one of the reasons for the government's weakness (*al-Manar*, January 17, 2026).

◆ Ali Ammar, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Rajji's remarks were a "political, national and moral failure" and in effect legitimized Israel's attacks. According to him, instead of defending the state's sovereignty in the international arena, Rajji justified Israel's actions and harmed Lebanon's standing and dignity. Ammar called on President Aoun to intervene and set clear limits on such discourse, and accused the foreign minister of adopting the enemy's narratives and of ignorance regarding the ceasefire agreement (*al-Nashra*, January 13, 2026).

◆ Hezbollah member of parliament Hussein Jishi rejected the claims that Hezbollah's weapons had lost their effectiveness and become a burden, arguing that even technological superiority did not prevent attacks. He said that just as Israeli defense systems had not prevented attacks on Tel Aviv and Netanya, it was impossible to expect any weapon to completely prevent attacks. Jishi said the continued international pressure to disarm indicated the threat the weapons posed, and the "resistance's" capabilities were what had forced Israel to agree to a ceasefire. He said claims the weapons had lost their relevance were intended to psychologically weaken resistance members, but did not reflect reality (*al-Modon*, January 14, 2026).

◆ Ihab Hamadeh, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said absurdity had reached its peak when someone who defended his country was portrayed as a criminal, while the foreign minister justified Israeli "aggression" outside Lebanon and promoted the "enemy's" policy, yet presented himself as a legitimate representative of citizenship and sovereignty (*al-Diyar*, January 18, 2026).

However, an "official source" reported that at this stage the government would only convey a message to the foreign minister to exercise restraint and in his public statements, take the sensitivity of the situation into account, out of concern for internal escalation, without acting to remove him or curtail his powers (*al-Diyar*, January 18, 2026).



Foreign Minister Rajji interviewed by Sky News Arabic
(Youssef Rajji's X account, January 13, 2026)

- According to an op-ed piece in Hezbollah's daily *al-Akhbar*, Qassem renewed the "resistance's" commitment to its weapons, emphasized the state's responsibility and Israel's failure to implement the ceasefire, and warned that Israeli "aggression" had limits and the right to self-defense would be exercised if it continued. The article claimed that Qassem's remarks had been deliberately distorted to present them as a threat of civil war and detrimental to the Lebanese public by taking them out of context and portraying them as a call for Lebanon's nonexistence without disarmament. It further claimed that the campaign served the American-Israeli narrative and its purpose was not only political struggle but the creation of a mindset of submission and the justification of continued Israeli "aggression," while blaming the victim (*al-Akhbar*, January 19, 2026).
- A different op-ed piece stated that in Hezbollah's view, silence or ambiguity on the issue of sovereignty and weapons was no longer acceptable, and the organization was prepared for direct political confrontation and to question the government's continued existence if it continued to weaken the "resistance" and provide cover for Israeli "aggression" (*al-Liwa*, January 19, 2026).
- Meanwhile, a "political source" said that following the tension between President Aoun and Hezbollah in recent weeks, indirect contacts were being held through mediators to calm the atmosphere. According to the "source," there was no substantive crisis in relations between the presidency and the organization's leadership. "Sources in the presidential palace" said the president's position regarding the state monopoly of weapons was not new (*al-Diyar*, January 18, 2026).



Lebanon stands between a storm of Israeli threats and the internal confrontation over weapons and sovereignty, while the state itself fails to provide an umbrella to protect its citizens (al-Modon, January 14, 2026)

Hezbollah's opponents

- Sami Gemayel's Phalange Party welcomed President Aoun's efforts to restore state sovereignty and strengthen its authority in decision-making on war and peace, and called on him to persist in expanding state control over all Lebanese territory. The party praised the implementation of the phase of the state monopoly of weapons south of the Litani River and demanded accelerating the phase north of the river. It further noted that dismantling every militia and imposing the state's exclusive authority were a constitutional and national duty, independent of sectarian considerations or international pressure (*al-Nashra*, January 13, 2026).
- The secretary of the Democratic Gathering bloc in the Lebanese Parliament, Hadi Abu al-Hassan, said Hezbollah's weapons had lost their deterrent purpose and become a burden on Lebanon, and that only a state monopoly of weapons could strip Israel of its pretexts for "aggression." He said transferring the weapons to the army and imposing exclusive state authority would obviate Israeli justifications, even if Israel wanted to exploit the continued existence of the weapons for its own needs. He noted that Hezbollah could operate in the political arena like any other party, but the existence of an armed force outside the framework of the state was no longer legitimate (*al-Jarida*, January 15, 2026).
- Strong Republic bloc member Ghiyath Yazbek attacked Hezbollah over the organization's positions against the government and claimed that verbal and moral incitement against ministers from the Lebanese Forces party exceeded the bounds of legitimate discourse and could pave the way for physical harm to them, undermining state institutions and sovereignty. He said ministers represented the honor of the state and defended its values, and whoever engaged in such discourse collaborated with malicious elements and worked to destroy

Lebanon, as did their predecessors "who ended up in the garbage bin of history" (al-Modon website, January 17, 2026).

► Joseph Jbeily, a senior figure in the Lebanese Forces party, said issues of sovereignty, war and peace lay solely in the hands of the legitimate president and government, and not with Na'im Qassem. He said if Qassem regarded himself as Lebanese he had to respect the state, its laws and its decisions, and stop imposing a foreign security policy which isolated Lebanon in the Arab world and placed it in the Iranian camp (Radio Free Lebanon, January 19, 2026).

Hezbollah–Iran Relations

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem accused the United States and Israel of an ongoing attempt to collapse Iran through sanctions, the spread of internal chaos and the exploitation of economic protests, after having failed for more than four decades to subdue it by military and political means. He claimed "American and Israeli agents" were operating in Iran's streets to escalate violence, but the recent mass demonstrations in support of the regime proved the unity of the people around leader Ali Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (al-Manar, January 17, 2026).

► Hezbollah welcomed the "marches of millions" in support of the regime in Iran, which it said reflected popular support for the regime, and accused the United States and Israel of attempting to undermine internal stability and overthrow the Islamic Republic. The organization declared its opposition to foreign intervention in Iran's internal affairs (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, January 13, 2026).

► A "source close to Hezbollah" said diplomats sought assurances from the organization that it would not take action if Iran were attacked, in view of United States threats of a possible attack. The source said that Hezbollah had not provided such assurances (*al-Nashra*, January 14, 2026). Meanwhile, "officials in the Lebanese presidency" said Hezbollah had assured them it would not be drawn into a confrontation in the event of an American-Israeli attack on Iran, and would take a stance similar to that during the Iran-Israel War in June 2025, with no involvement in fighting outside Lebanese territory. However, the report noted that among circles close to President Joseph Aoun, doubts remained regarding the extent of the organization's commitment to its declaration. It was further reported that parliament speaker Nabih Berri played a central role in efforts to prevent harm to the Lebanese home front, especially a mass displacement of south Lebanon residents (*al-Anbaa*, March 14, 2026).

► Lebanese Forces party spokesman, Charles Jabbour, claimed that were it not for the outbreak of protests in Iran, Israel would have already launched another broad campaign against Hezbollah, but priority was now given to the Iranian arena to prevent Tehran from exploiting a confrontation in Lebanon as a distraction for internal repression. He said in any event, the fall of the regime in Iran would obviate a war with Hezbollah, since its collapse would also bring about the collapse of the organization and its branches, which depended on Iran ideologically, financially and militarily (Aram News, January 15, 2026).

The Challenge of Hezbollah's Reconstruction

► Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, denied reports regarding changes within the organization, particularly the rumors concerning the status of the head of the coordination and liaison unit, Wafiq Safa. He claimed there were no divisions within Hezbollah and what was taking place was a routine assessment of the situation and reorganization following the "campaign" against Israel (*al-Akhbar*, January 17, 2026).

► According to various assessments, the delay in payment of housing allowances to Lebanese from Hezbollah's support base who were affected by the fighting reflected not an administrative malfunction but a deep crisis in the organization's funding system, given the economic siege and the increasing disappearance of its external sources. Researcher Khaled Zein al-Din claimed that there were commitments to cover rent and furniture for evacuees, and since the beginning of the campaign against Israel on October 8, 2023, and all the more with the intensification of American-Israeli pressure, key funding channels had been shut down, including the al-Qard al-Hasan Association, and oversight of money transfers and flights to Lebanon had been tightened. He said the arrest of Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, and sanctions on economic networks linked to Hezbollah in Africa and Latin America, alongside developments in Iran, further tightened the financial stranglehold. He warned that the organization's inability to meet its payments indicated severe damage to its ability to reconstruct the combat zones and a dangerous erosion of its support base, and claimed that continued possession of weapons could lead to a complete loss of its popular and economic backing (Aram News, January 16, 2026).³

³ See the January 2026 ITIC report, [Hezbollah's Activity in Venezuela and How the Recent American Arrest of Maduro May Affect It](#)