



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah

January 26 – February 2, 2026

Overview

- ▶ The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon and in the Beqa'a Valley to enforce the ceasefire agreement from November 2024 and prevent the organization's renewed military-terrorist buildup. The forces attacked facilities and engineering equipment, and eight Hezbollah terrorist operatives were eliminated.
- ▶ Hezbollah is ambiguous regarding its possible involvement in a regional confrontation with Iran, but hinted it was making preparations should one break out. Hezbollah's secretary general declared full religious-ideological loyalty to Iran and said the organization would employ force if it were approved by the Iranian leadership.
- ▶ Hezbollah's secretary general claimed any threat to Iran was a direct threat to Hezbollah, rejected the concept of independent Lebanese sovereignty and prepared the ground for a possible regional escalation, stating that the organization would not be neutral in any future confrontation and would decide whether and when to intervene.
- ▶ Political sources in Lebanon reported that the secretary general's speech had a negative impact on efforts to rehabilitate relations with the president of Lebanon and caused delays in political contacts with the organization's leadership. The president of Lebanon said decisions of war and peace rested solely with the state, adding that Lebanon would no longer serve as an arena for regional confrontations.
- ▶ During Hezbollah's reorganization there have been disputes within the organization's leadership and tensions with field-level ranks.
- ▶ Lebanon's representative in the ceasefire monitoring committee was practical and confrontational in his approach to Hezbollah, expressed willingness to advance confidence-building measures with Israel and raised the possibility of direct dialogue and choosing diplomatic paths to resolve the crisis with Israel.
- ▶ Sources in Lebanon pointed to internal Hezbollah power struggles and tensions in the organization's upper echelons as the leadership reorganizes.
- ▶ In Syria the arrest of an armed cell near Damascus was reported, apparently linked to Hezbollah. According to claims, the organization operates drug- and weapons-smuggling networks in Syria.

The Tension between Israel and Hezbollah

The IDF

- ▶ The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets to enforce the ceasefire agreement of November 2024 and prevent Hezbollah's renewed military-terrorist buildup. The

forces attacked Hezbollah facilities and engineering equipment and eight Hezbollah terrorist operatives were eliminated, including an artillery team commander in the village of al-Kharash in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, January 26–February 2, 2026). Reportedly, an Egyptian civilian was killed in one of the attacks (al-Jazeera, January 26, 2026).



An attack on Hezbollah facilities and engineering equipment in the Mazra'at al-Daoudiya area in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, January 30, 2022)

Hezbollah Regarding a Possible Confrontation between the United States and Israel, and Iran

- ▶ Lebanese and Iraqi sources reported that coordination meetings were recently held by key actors in the "resistance axis," under the supervision of the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, to formulate a framework for regional response to a possible American attack on Iran. Reportedly, they agreed that any confrontation with Tehran would be met with a collective, multi-arena response, graduated and not necessarily simultaneous, with roles divided among the arenas. Hezbollah's secretary general, Na'im Qassem, gave a speech hinting that the organization was flexible regarding intervention. According to the sources, initially Hezbollah would prefer active monitoring and deterrence, but would take action if it became clear that the attack was badly damaging Iran (Aram News, January 27, 2026).
- ▶ According to observers, Na'im Qassem did not state an immediate operational commitment, but boosted morale and sent a political signal. Political figures in Lebanon said the organization's stance toward Iran was primarily based on "economic dependence," and the objective of his declarations of solidarity was to reaffirm Hezbollah's commitment to Tehran. According to experts, a substantial blow to Iran could undermine Hezbollah's foundations of existence, both in economic and operational terms, and the religious and political legitimacy on which it has relied since its establishment (al-Nashra, February 27, 2026).
- ▶ Lebanese sources reported hectic contacts in the upper echelons of the Lebanese government held to prevent Lebanon from being drawn into a regional war. The president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun, said Lebanon would not serve as an arena for or provide assistance to Iran. Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, reportedly took action regarding Hezbollah in an attempt to contain the situation and prevent the Shi'ite community from being drawn into a "destructive adventure." However, according to the sources, the efforts have limited chances of

success, since the Hezbollah's decisions are subject to Iran's supreme leader. It was also claimed that Hezbollah had lost a significant portion of its military-terrorist capabilities, and in the event of an order from Tehran to intervene the organization would view it as an existential war (Nidaa' al-Watan, January 28, 2026).

- ▶ Nawaf al-Mousawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, avoided making an unambiguous statement regarding the organization's involvement in the event of an American strike on Iran, and saying only that "we'll cross the bridge when we come to it." He said such an attack, if carried out as a result of a "miscalculation," would lead to a "regional volcano," although he claimed China provided Iran with support which would enable it to cope effectively with an attack (al-Mayadeen, January 28, 2026).
- ▶ Nawaf al-Mousawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament (al-Mayadeen, January 28, 2026)



The Hezbollah's Secretary General Pledges Loyalty to Iran, and Reactions

- ▶ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah's secretary general, delivered a speech in which he declared loyalty to Iran and to the supreme leader Ali Khamenei. He said Hezbollah was subordinate to the rule of the "jurisprudent" (*wilayat al-faqih*) and the organization had no authority to act, shed blood or conduct confrontations without a religious permit from the Iranian leader. He said any threat to Khamenei was a threat to Hezbollah and to millions of followers, and said an attempt to assassinate him would be met with a "broad response." He accused the West of ongoing attempts to topple the Islamic Republic through wars, sanctions and internal incitement, and said Iran had the right to develop nuclear capability and produce long-range missiles. Iran, he said, led the resistance axis,¹ as opposed to the approach of Israel and the United States, which viewed Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Syria and Iran as a single arena (al-Mayadeen, January 26, 2026).
- ▶ Lebanese sources told al-Hadath that the upper echelons of the Lebanese government had disliked Na'im Qassem's speech, particularly regarding the hint at the possibility of opening a Lebanese front in a regional confrontation. According to the sources, his remarks were viewed as a serious violation of state sovereignty and the authority of its institutions. The Lebanese presidency stated that it would not allow the Lebanese people

¹ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq, all of whose objective is the destruction and elimination of the State of Israel.

to be dragged into "the wars of others," and that any party attempting to do so would bear full responsibility for the consequences (al-Hadath, January 26, 2026).

- Political sources in Lebanon reported that Qassem's speech damaged efforts to rehabilitate relations between the organization and the president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun, and led to the postponement of a planned meeting between the president and the chairman of Hezbollah's parliamentary faction, Mohammad Raad. According to the sources, Aoun said issues of war and peace rested solely with the state, and through Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, and other intermediaries, he sent Hezbollah the unequivocal message that Lebanon would not again serve as a "support arena" for regional confrontations. Reportedly, Berri himself opposes Hezbollah's involvement in any possible confrontation against Iran due to its destructive implications for Lebanon. Given that situation, the president's office and the prime minister's office strengthened their resolve that the plan to restrict weapons in the country should be advanced, and in the past day contacts with the Lebanese army were accelerated to complete its next stages. Meanwhile, diplomatic warnings were received regarding the possibility of Hezbollah's involvement in a regional war. The sources noted that Qassem's speech renewed discussion in Israel about the possibility of taking preemptive action against Hezbollah, prior to a possible strike against Iran (*Nidaa 'al-Watan*, January 28, 2026).

Opponents of Hezbollah criticized Qassem's remarks:

- ◆ The chairman of the Kataeb Party, Sami Gemayel, said, "If you want to defend your leader, go to him. If you want to commit suicide, do it alone, but leave Lebanon out of it" (Gemayel's X account, January 26, 2026).
- ◆ The chairman of the Free Patriotic Movement, Gebran Bassil, said adopting the concepts of "unity of arenas" and "support war" had brought destruction upon the organization and Lebanon alike, undermined the perception that the weapons in the organization's hands created deterrence and illustrated an ongoing strategic failure. He warned against repeating the "crime" of dragging Lebanon into further destruction and called for adopting a neutral position (Gebran Bassil's X account, January 27, 2026).
- ◆ The former chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party, Walid Jumblatt, called Qassem's speech "irresponsible," while warning against dragging the Shi'ites and Lebanon as a whole into a dangerous regional confrontation. He said Qassem's rhetoric inflamed Israel, led to unnecessary escalation at a sensitive time, and endangered the government program to regulate the security situation in the south, which he said had so far made tangible progress on the ground (lebanondebate, January 27, 2026).
- ◆ Michel Moawad, a member of the Lebanese Parliament, accused Qassem of making Lebanon subservient to the interests of the Iranian regime at the expense of citizens' lives, property and security, particularly the residents of the south and the Beqa'a Valley. He called it irresponsible conduct which placed Lebanon in direct danger, and called on Qassem to stop dragging the state into confrontations which did not serve the national interest (Michel Moawad's X account, January 27, 2026).
- ◆ The chairman of the Lebanese Forces Party, Samir Geagea, strongly criticized Qassem, calling his speech a blatant violation of the law and an attempt to strip the state of the exclusive authority to decide war and peace. He said the very

existence of weapons outside the state framework prevented the rehabilitation of the state, undermined the trust of the Gulf States in Lebanon and deepened its isolation. He called on the government to take political and military steps to dismantle Hezbollah's military-terrorist wing, and warned that any involvement by the organization in a regional confrontation would be a crime against Lebanon and its own [Shi'ite] community. He said security strategy was determined solely by the army and the government, and added that ending the state of war was an essential condition for rehabilitating the south and receiving international assistance (MTV, January 29, 2026).

- ◆ Hezbollah supporters defended the organization's position and expressed resentment over the criticism directed at the organization's secretary general:
- ◆ Ali al-Miqdad, a member of the Loyalty to the Resistance faction in the Lebanese Parliament, called for implementing the government's guiding principles. He accused the government and the international community of silence in the face of Israel's actions after the ceasefire, and claimed the Security Council reduced events to "violations" instead of recognizing a "war" against Lebanon. He said ministers who legitimized Israel's actions harmed the state, and a clear official position was required which would defend Lebanon and prevent continued aggression against it (lebanondebate, January 27, 2026).
- ◆ Commentator Imad Marmal, affiliated with Hezbollah, wrote that Qassem's speech was deliberately ambiguous ambiguity, leaving room for military involvement alongside Iran if it were determined that circumstances required it. He said Hezbollah regarded any war against Iran as a direct existential threat, and acted from a perception of "legitimate self-defense," while maintaining full flexibility regarding the timing and nature of intervention. He said for Hezbollah non-participation in the event of an attack on Iran would be strategic suicide, and the message was also intended to deter Israel and the United States (*al-Jumhuriya*, January 28, 2026).

Hezbollah – Activity and Organization

- ▶ Sources close to Hezbollah reported that in recent weeks the organization's leadership had tightened control and oversight over forces deployed on the southern front, prohibited independent initiatives by field-level officers and ordered that any initiated response be subject to decisions of the organization's leadership. According to the sources, the organization was adopting a policy of "full readiness without a decision for war" and focusing on containment and preventing deterioration lest an uncalculated local incident forced an undesirable escalation. Meanwhile, the prolonged alert, the multitude of friction points and pressure on units in the field make full control difficult and increase the risk of mistakes. According to the sources, Hezbollah's central challenge today is not offensive initiative, but the ability to prevent a war that could be imposed on it due to incidental friction (Aram News, January 28, 2026).
- ▶ Security sources in Lebanon reported that Hezbollah had recently begun operating units in south Lebanon and in the western Beqa'a Valley called "UAV hunters," quiet preparations for a possible regional confrontation linked to Iran. Unlike a classic aerial defense array, the units are decentralized and flexible, focusing on disruption and harassment through selective fire, electronic warfare and

ambushes, to damage intelligence collection and the precision of Israeli attacks, not necessarily to down every aircraft. According to the sources, the organization has identified Israel's air and intelligence superiority as the decisive component in the opening stages of any war, and therefore seeks to prevent a rapid "smart" blow by reducing signature, dispersing forces and limiting movement. The approach reflects a shift from an offensive pattern to a strategic defensive posture intended to buy time and prevent early decision (Aram News, January 29, 2026).

- ▶ Ali al-Miqdad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said Israel continued its "aggression" and the organization would not allow security or intelligence penetration of its ranks. He said the "resistance"² would continue to defend Lebanon and called for internal unity in the face of the enemy, which he claimed sought to realize its Greater Israel project. He reiterated that Hezbollah was determined to prevent any Israeli foothold on Lebanese territory and to continue firm deterrence (lebanondebate, January 31, 2026).
- ▶ "Sources" reported that Hezbollah's leadership was waging an internal struggle over the distribution of authority and centers of influence, focusing on curtailing the role of Wafiq Safa, who heads the Liaison and Coordination Unit. The move, led by Na'im Qassem as part of reorganizing the organization's leadership, is intended to cut off power centers identified with the era of Hassan Nasrallah and install a leadership more loyal to the new framework. According to reports, limiting Safa's authority sparked tension, leading to threats of resignation and his seclusion, and illustrated the depth of the schism among the Hezbollah leadership at a particularly sensitive time (al-Arabiya, al-Hadath, January 27, 2026).



Wafiq Safa (al-Arabiya, January 27, 2026)

- ▶ Reports indicate an escalation of intelligence penetrations into Hezbollah's ranks, exposed since the last war with Israel and reaching command levels and sensitive units. According to the sources, it is not a technological failure but wide-scale human penetration, which led the organization to open covert internal investigations and secret trials to prevent damaging the trust of its supportive environment. Within the organization, the "agents file" is perceived as one of the most serious security threats in recent years, at a risk level similar to the implications of the fighting itself, and is accompanied by a crisis in internal trust and recognition of ongoing vulnerability to Israeli intelligence, in a manner liable

² Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

to force deep structural changes (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, January 27, 2026, Aram News, January 29, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

- ▶ The president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun, meeting with the family of retired Lebanese officer Ahmed Shukr, who according to reports in Lebanon was recently abducted by the Mossad in connection with the disappearance of Ron Arad, said the issue of detainees and prisoners held by Israel was being monitored daily and raised within contacts with the committee overseeing the ceasefire agreement. Aoun said Lebanese security forces had exposed the circumstances of Shukr's abduction and were investigating a detainee connected to the affair (Lebanese National News Agency, January 30, 2026).
- ▶ The prime minister of Lebanon, Nawaf Salam, met with a delegation from the committee of prisoners' families, with the participation of Hezbollah faction member Hussein al-Hajj Hassan. Hassan claimed 20 Lebanese prisoners from the confrontation since October 8, 2023 were currently held by Israel, along with three prisoners from previous periods whose detention was not officially recognized. Of the recent detainees, ten were captured during the last war (nine on the battlefield and one abducted from the al-Batroun area), and ten were detained on Lebanese territory after the ceasefire on November 27, 2024. It was further claimed that some were wounded or ill and that Israel refused Red Cross visits. Salam said he was in favor of making the prisoners' file a national priority and committed to direct follow-up with government ministries and diplomatic and legal channels to advance the issue (prime minister's office X account, January 29, 2026).
- ▶ The UK Middle East minister spoke with the Lebanese foreign minister, Youssef Rajji, about the security and political situation in Lebanon. Rajji said Lebanon was trying to achieve full state monopoly over weapons and called for a halt to the arming and financing of Hezbollah. He said he had approached the Iranian foreign minister with a demand to restrain the organization and return it to the rule of law, while clearly hinting at Iran's responsibility for the continued instability. In Rajji's assessment, the regional arena is being reshaped (Lebanon Debate, January 27, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

- ▶ president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun, met with the commander of the Lebanese Army, Rodolph Haykal, to discuss security in the south, given the ongoing Israeli strikes. They also discussed preparations for the army commander's upcoming visit to Washington and the planned meetings with senior officials in the American administration, as part of efforts at security and political coordination (Lebanese Presidency X account, January 30, 2026).

The Ceasefire Monitoring Committee

- ▶ Lebanon's representative on the monitoring committee, former ambassador Simon Karam, presented pragmatic political ideas and said negotiations were at a standstill but Lebanon was prepared to advance mutual confidence-building steps, especially an Israeli withdrawal from "occupied" sites and the release of prisoners, in return for progress in the second stage of the plan to restrict weapons

north of the Litani River. Karam said he was speaking on behalf of the state and not on behalf of Hezbollah, he cast doubt on the extent of the organization's cooperation with the army, and said its public statements provided Israel with pretexts for action. However, he showed willingness for direct dialogue and holding talks in Tel Aviv, reflecting an attempt to establish state sovereignty and to prefer diplomatic solutions over military escalation (*al-Akhbar*, January 31, 2026).

- ▶ The Lebanese president's security and military advisor, Antoine Mansour, met with the assistant to the chairman of the quintet committee overseeing the ceasefire, David Leon Klingensmith. The meeting reviewed progress in the committee's work and cooperation with the Lebanese side, while noting the importance President Aoun attributed to the monitoring committee as central to establishing stability and security (Lebanese presidency X account, January 27, 2026).
- ▶ The United States embassy in Beirut and United States Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed that the framework for military coordination established in the ceasefire agreement of November 27, 2024 continued to operate fully, while maintaining the same objectives, participants and command levels. The next meeting of the coordination committee will take place in Naqoura on February 25, 2026, and additional dates were subsequently set for March 25, April 22 and May 20, with the meetings continuing to serve as the central forum for military coordination between the sides (U.S. Embassy in Lebanon X account, January 30, 2026).
- ▶ official Lebanese source welcomed the renewal of the coordination committee's meetings and said it refuted assessments regarding disruption of the committee's work or the end of its mission. He added that the mere setting of a meeting date was positive, but the goal was a substantive change in the committee's functioning and the application of real pressure on Israel to meet its commitments as a condition for progress in the next stages of the Lebanese army's plan to restrict weapons south of the Litani River (*al-Jumhuriya*, January 31, 2026).
- ▶ Diplomatic sources reported that the United States was exerting pressure on Lebanon to raise the level of representation in negotiations with Israel to the ministerial level and to consider moving the talks to Germany, particularly Munich, while the monitoring committee would remain focused on military-technical aspects and continue to operate from Naqoura (*al-Jarida*, February 1, 2026).

Disarming Hezbollah

- ▶ In his Friday sermon, the deputy chairman of the Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council in Lebanon, Ali al-Khatib, attacked the position of the authorities in Beirut and claimed that Lebanon and the "resistance"³ had fulfilled their commitments under the ceasefire agreement south of the Litani River, while Israel continued attacks and the holding of territories. He said instead of pressuring Israel, the state was exerting pressure to restrict Hezbollah's weapons north of the Litani River, which he described as "weakness and defeatism." He called for rejecting discussions of weapons north of the Litani River until the completion of a full Israeli withdrawal,

³ Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

the establishment of army control in the south, the return of the displaced and the release of Lebanese prisoners (al-Diyar, January 30, 2026).

- ▶ A security source said Lebanon's stability depended on understandings with Hezbollah and on advancing the principle of exclusivity of weapons in the hands of the state, which was a necessary condition for the continuation of American assistance and the rehabilitation of Lebanon. He said an additional delay of 15 days was possible for coordination between the army and Hezbollah, but failure could lead to the suspension of support for the army. The visit of the Lebanese army commander, Rodolph Haykal, to Washington was described as a "turning point," and the possibility was raised of postponing the Paris conference and the committee's discussions if there were no progress by February 25, 2026 (al-Diyar, January 30, 2026).
- ▶ deputy chairman of the Lebanese Kataeb Party, Nabil Hakim, said a state could not exist and function as long as there were weapons outside the framework of the state, adding that exclusive authority over war and peace had to be in the sole hands of the government. He said Lebanon would not serve again as an arena for the wars of others, and the public and local authorities should not be burdened with the costs of security "adventures." Hakim placed responsibility for rehabilitation on those who caused the destruction, and warned that without full security sovereignty, development, investment and stability will would be possible (Nidaa' al-Watan, January 31, 2026).

The Reconstruction of Lebanon

- ▶ Lebanese government approved the structure and institutional mechanism for the state's reconstruction, after introducing significant changes to the original framework. The mechanism for intervention and implementation of the reconstruction plan was approved, despite attempts to postpone the decision. In that way the government sought to demonstrate governance and functionality precisely at a time of security tension and political uncertainty, and in an effort to accelerate the mobilization of international assistance for rehabilitation efforts (al-Madan, January 30, 2026).
- ▶ The advisor to the president of Lebanon for reconstruction affairs, Ali Hamieh, noted that reconstruction stood at the top of the presidency's priorities. He said the first stage had already been launched with the approval of a law passed in July granting exemptions from taxes and fees, and the Council of the South had begun mapping and damage surveys in the field. He added that the mechanism approved by the government was the framework for the next stage and allowed those affected to submit documents to the Council of the South and to the Relief Committee for the purpose of determining financial assistance (al-'Ahed, January 30, 2026).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

- As part of state measures to regulate Palestinian weapons and apply sovereignty in the refugee camps, the Lebanese army informed "factions"⁴ in the al-Badawi camp that the army would assume security responsibility at the camp entrances by placing two

⁴ Palestinian terrorist organizations.

main checkpoints and closing secondary access routes, in a move carried out with full coordination and without resistance. The commander of the Palestinian National Security Forces, al-Abed Ibrahim Khalil, visited the Ain al-Hilweh camp, noted the forces' readiness and cooperation with the Lebanese authorities, and said the security of the camps was an integral part of Lebanese security. The measures reflect heightened state oversight and an attempt to establish institutionalized security control in the Palestinian arena in the north and south of the country (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, January 30, 2026).

Syria-Lebanon

- The Syrian ministry of interior reported the arrest of a cell that planned to attack the al-Mezzeh neighborhood and the military airport near Damascus, including UAVs ready for launch. Initial investigations link the cell members to Hezbollah (Naharnet, February 1, 2026). The commander of internal security in the rural Damascus Governorate, Brigadier General Ahmed al-Dalati, accused Hezbollah of operating drug- and weapons-smuggling networks in Syria, using sleeper cells of Syrian civilians operating in areas with security vacuums. He said most of the cells' offensive operations were coordinated with the arrival of foreign delegations to the country, adding that the organization was familiar with the terrain and could recruit local manpower. Hezbollah publicly denied any connection or activity in Syria and claimed that the organization had no presence on Syrian soil and was committed to preserving the security and unity of the neighboring state (Lebanon Debate, February 1, 2026).



Armed UAVs located by Syrian security forces (Naharnet, February 1, 2026)