



Spotlight on Terrorism: Lebanon and Hezbollah February 9-16, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ In south Lebanon the IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets and eliminated two of the organization's terrorist operatives, part of enforcing the ceasefire agreement from November 2024 and preventing Hezbollah's renewed military-terrorist build-up. Several terrorist operatives from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) were eliminated in the Beqa'a Valley near the border with Syria.
- ▶ Hezbollah continued criticizing the Lebanese regime because of the ongoing Israeli attacks and the plan to disarm the organization. The organization's secretary general, Na'im Qassem, called on the government not to yield to Western pressure and to rely on the capabilities of the "resistance."
- ▶ Lebanon's prime minister and army commander held meetings with foreign officials in preparation for the international conference to support the Lebanese security forces which will be held in Paris in early March 2026.
- ▶ The commander of the United States Central Command praised the Lebanese army for exposing another giant Hezbollah tunnel in south Lebanon.
- ▶ Hezbollah launched its campaign for the general parliamentary elections to be held this coming spring and agreed with the Amal Movement on full coordination.
- ▶ Hezbollah's secretary general announced that the organization would pay rent for three months for anyone whose house was damaged in the fighting with Israel, however residents in Shi'ite areas protested there was no long-term commitment and raised claims of unequal distribution of payments.
- ▶ The United States Treasury imposed sanctions on a Lebanese company converting Hezbollah's gold reserves into liquid assets for the organization's reconstruction.

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Israel-Hezbollah Tensions

The IDF

► The IDF continued attacking Hezbollah targets to enforce the November 2024 ceasefire agreement and prevent Hezbollah from renewing its military-terrorist buildup and replenishing its arsenal. The forces attacked weapons depots and rocket launchers in various areas in south Lebanon and eliminated a Hezbollah terrorist involved in reconstructing military facilities. PIJ terrorist operatives were eliminated in an attack on a vehicle in the Beqa'a Valley near the border with Syria (IDF spokesperson, February 9–16, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Hezbollah condemned the recent Israeli attacks in south Lebanon, calling them a "dangerous escalation" and a transition to a phased ground incursion, "abductions" and direct attacks on "civilians." The organization called on the government to abandon its "policy of silence," take deterrent political and legal measures, and assume full responsibility for protecting citizens (Lebanon Debate, February 9, 2026).

► Hezbollah's secretary general, Na'im Qassem, gave a speech at the inauguration of a medical center in Hadath in south Lebanon, claiming that the main threat was "Israeli aggression" and only "strength, unity and resistance" ensured the state's sovereignty, not political measures or international pressure. He opposed the demands to disarm, calling them an American-Israeli move. He noted Hezbollah's alliance with Amal, denied any rift with Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun and praised the visit of Prime Minister Nawaf Salam to south Lebanon (al-Manar, February 9, 2026).



Na'im Qassem (al-Manar, February 9, 2026)

► Senior Hezbollah figures continued to criticize the Lebanese regime for the Israeli attacks and the plan to disarm the organization:²

² See the February 2026 ITIC report, [Rising Tensions between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Government](#)

- ◆ At a ceremony held by Hezbollah and its scouting movement, the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts, former minister Mustafa Bayram gave reserved support for Prime Minister Salam's visit to the south of the country, while demanding a shift from words to action and assertive diplomacy regarding Israel. He said priority should be given to a strong and well-equipped state and army, but in the absence of state capability, the people "will defend themselves," representing the "resistance"³ as a social culture and not merely a party framework. He praised the army commander, accused the United States of complicity in the "escalation" and of attempting to sow internal division, and said Hezbollah adhered to its bargaining chips and calculated patience until the appropriate time for dialogue on a national security strategy (*al-Diyar*, February 9, 2026).
- ◆ The acting chairman of Hezbollah's executive council, Ali Damoush, criticized the conduct of the state and claimed that Lebanon was collapsing under the "continued aggression and lack of state responsibility," both in defense and in citizen welfare. In a Friday sermon in the Dahiye al-Janoubia, he said that after the ceasefire agreement, responsibility had been handed to the state within a "new national equation," but it had not met public expectations and allowed Israel to continue attacks, hold positions and prevent residents from returning. He represented the "resistance" as the most important factor deterring Israel and as a legitimate right anchored in national identity, and warned against widening the gap between the state and its people. Regionally, he linked the Lebanese arena to a broader struggle against the United States and Israel, claiming that the focus on Iran was an attack on the "resistance axis"⁴ and that any attempt to impose war on it would meet "firm resolve" (Lebanese News Agency, February 13, 2026).

³ Promotion of efforts to destroy the State of Israel.

⁴ Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.



An angry Lebanese person responds to a report about "Zionist settlers who planted trees in Kharaj Yaroun" asking how it was possible "to remain silent," criticizing the helplessness of the Lebanese state and presenting the event as an infringement on Lebanese sovereignty (*al-Liwa*, February 14, 2026)

► Claims were made that Hezbollah was maneuvering politically to gain time, similar to its strategies in the military arena, i.e., concealment, deception and delay until conditions were more favorable. According to the report, Hezbollah coordinated with Iran, and both were absorbing military and political pressure with renewed preparedness and by creating the appearance of internal change. There were hints of a possibility of regulating the weapons issue in a way which would leave them in warehouses under some supervisory mechanism, alongside personal changes in the leadership and the highlighting of figures with a more political orientation. Reportedly the move was intended to prevent a possible Israeli attack and to postpone decisions regarding implementation of the plan to limit weapons north of the Litani River (*al-Jumhuriya*, February 14, 2026).⁵

The Lebanese Government

► Lebanon's prime minister, Nawaf Salam, met with the UN special coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, to discuss the work of the ceasefire monitoring committee, preparations for the March 5, 2026 Paris conference to support the Lebanese army, and the period after UNIFIL's mandate ends in December of this year (X account of Lebanon's prime minister, February 11, 2026).

► Lebanon's prime minister, Nawaf Salam, met on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference with the chairman of Yemen's presidential leadership council, Dr. Rashad al-Alimi, with Kuwait's prime minister, Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah and with the prime minister of the Netherlands, Dick Schoof. They praised Lebanon's efforts at reconstruction and

⁵ See the February 2026 ITIC report, [The Reorganization of Hezbollah Leadership and the Resignation of Wafiq Safa](#)

to apply its sovereignty, and said they supported the Lebanese army (Lebanese News Agency, February 13–14, 2026).

► Lebanon's president, Joseph Aoun, hosted the outgoing Iranian ambassador, Mojtaba Amani, at a farewell meeting (X account of the Lebanese presidency, February 11, 2026).



Aoun with Iran's outgoing ambassador (X account of the Lebanese presidency, February 11, 2026)

► According to reports, Egypt's president, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, was acting with the United States president for Lebanon's reconstruction and to strengthen the army even before Hezbollah was fully disarmed, attempting to rely on the flexibility shown by the American administration toward Hamas in Gaza. Reportedly, President Aoun was optimistic because during meetings held by the army commander, Rodolph Haykal, in Washington, no binding schedules were set for completing the state's monopoly north of the Litani River, seen in Beirut as additional room to maneuver (*al-Diyar*, February 13, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► The commander of United States Central Command (CENTCOM), Admiral Brad Cooper, congratulated the Lebanese army on exposing another giant Hezbollah tunnel, the second within two months. He said dismantling facilities used for storing ammunition, missiles and UAVs by non-state actors contributed to stability and security in Lebanon and the region (X account of CENTCOM, February 9, 2026). His statement was published after a "senior American official" revealed that United States intelligence had assisted the Lebanese army in locating a large cache of weapons in a warehouse in al-Khalousiyeh in south Lebanon.

► The commander of the Lebanese army, General Rodolph Haykal, visited Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the Saudi Arabian chief of staff and participated in an international security exhibition. Haykal met with the Saudi army commander to discuss expanding military cooperation, given the security challenges in Lebanon and in connection with the international support conference for the army to be held in Paris on March 5, 2026. They noted the importance of strengthening the military institution as a stabilizing factor responsible for

applying state sovereignty, combating terrorism and preventing smuggling (X account of the Lebanese army, February 10, 2026).



The meeting between Haykal and the chief of staff of the Saudi Arabian army
(X account of the Lebanese army, February 10, 2026)

► The Lebanese army closed several illegal crossings on the border with Syria in the northern Beqa'a Valley. The move was meant to heighten security along the land borders, given the concern over the smuggling of weapons, drugs and various goods, and amid internal and external pressure to strengthen state control in the border areas (Lebanese army website, February 12, 2026).

UNIFIL

► UNIFIL spokesperson Kandice Ardiel said the force was planning to gradually reduce its presence in Lebanon after its mandate ended in December of this year, and to complete the withdrawal of most of its components by mid-2027, with full departure by its end. Accordingly, transferring positions and equipment to the Lebanese authorities will begin, after which the force will carry out only limited tasks, focusing on protecting UN personnel and managing a safe exit (Agence France-Presse, February 10, 2026).

Disarming Hezbollah

The Lebanese Army Deploys for the Second Phase

► Reportedly, at the present time, the second phase of the army's plan to limit weapons will remain only at the level of review. The army commander, General Rodolph Haykal, is expected to present a report regarding the transition from activity south of the Litani River to the area north of the Litani River as far as the Awali River, but without specifying specific areas or schedules. Meanwhile, a "senior source" said no substantive decisions were expected regarding beginning the phase north of the Litani River, since conditions were not yet ripe because the first phase south of the Litani River had not been completed, as Israel still held

points in the field and the addition of new positions would limit limited the army's deployment (*al-Diyar and al-Jumhuriya*, February 14, 2026).

- According to a different report, Haykal was expected to tell the government that implementing the second phase required significant strengthening of the army's capabilities, both in manpower and equipment. "American military sources" said that in addition to Hezbollah's refusal to cooperate, there were large gaps in the army's deployment, and only about 3,000 soldiers were stationed north of the Litani River, compared to about 10,000 soldiers to its south (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, February 16, 2026).
- The minister of information, Paul Morcos, said the government would decide regarding the second phase of the plan for state sovereignty and to limit weapons, which would apply to the area north of the Litani River. He said there would be no confrontation between the Lebanese army and Hezbollah, adding that the objectives were state sovereignty and stability (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, February 11, 2026).
- In preparation for the government meeting, the Lebanese army reported on a series of security actions in the area of Taria in Baalbek, which included raids on homes and confiscation of weapons, as well as the arrest of two suspects in possession of ammunition. The measures were part of expanding the army's enforcement activity in areas identified with Hezbollah's support base, and showed determination to implement the principle of exclusivity of weapons in practice (MTV Lebanon, February 16, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

- Hezbollah secretary general, Na'im Qassem, said the Lebanese state should not stand against Hezbollah but rather rely on it. In a speech commemorating senior Hezbollah figure Ali Salhab, Qassem said if the state wanted to strengthen and reconstruct itself it should benefit from the capabilities of the "resistance" as an experienced and willing security pillar, and not yield to Western pressure to disarm. Qassem said no one had the right to dictate that Lebanon weaken its "defensive capabilities," and any concession required a national consensus which did not exist. He again presented the tripart motto of "the army, the people and the resistance" as the basis for the state's future (*al-Madan*, February 10, 2026).
- The deputy head of Hezbollah's political council, Mahmoud Qamati, again represented disarmament as an American-Israeli demand, and argued that whoever believed understandings with Israel could "superficially" be reached ignored the fact of "ongoing occupation." He claimed Lebanon would be an "occupied" state as long as Israel held territory

and 13 disputed points along the border, and therefore the "resistance" remained "legitimate," both under the Lebanese constitution and under international law (al-Jazeera, February 11, 2026).

Hezbollah's Opponents

- ▶ The minister of emigrants from the Christian Lebanese Forces Party, Kamal Shehadeh, said control of the borders and full application of sovereignty were Lebanon's duty, not as a concession to Israel or the international community, but as basic sovereign policy. He added that despite Israel's military strength, neither the Lebanese army nor Hezbollah had stopped the attacks, and said Hezbollah's involvement in the war alongside the Gaza Strip had brought destruction to south Lebanon without creating effective deterrence (al-Arabiya, February 9, 2026).
- ▶ The political bureau of the Christian Lebanese Phalanges Party publicly supported the Lebanese army and its efforts for exclusivity of weapons in the hands of the state, while calling for mobilizing international support before the army assistance conference to be held in Paris on March 5, 2026. The bureau demanded that the government accelerate implementation of limiting weapons north of the Litani River and dismantle Hezbollah's military[-terrorist] array throughout Lebanese territory, particularly before the general elections in the spring. The party also praised the prime minister's visit to the south and presented the reception he received as an expression of residents' support for applying state sovereignty (*Nidaa' al-Watan*, February 11, 2026).
- ▶ Former Lebanese prime minister and leader of the al-Mustaql (Future) Party, Saad al-Hariri, spoke at the ceremony marking 21 years since the assassination of his father, former prime minister Rafic al-Hariri. He called for full implementation of the Taif Agreement⁶ and for limiting weapons to the hands of the state, alongside abolishing political sectarianism and rejecting any attempt to lead the country into sectarian confrontation (Lebanon24, February 14, 2026).
- ▶ In his speech at the Hariri memorial, Lebanese Parliament member from the Phalanges Party, Nadim al-Gemayel, called for an end to illegal weapons in Lebanon, which he said had been a central factor leading to the assassination of the former prime minister. He said the weapons of the Lebanese state had to be the sole and exclusive protector of all its citizens, and

⁶ The Taif Agreement, also known as the National Reconciliation Charter, was signed on October 22, 1989 in Taif, Saudi Arabia and symbolizes the end of the Lebanese civil war that began in 1975.

supported a state monopoly on force. He also linked the struggle against non-state weapons to the realization of al-Hariri's vision, which sought to anchor an entire community within a sovereign state framework, at a time when Lebanon faced significant political and strategic shifts (Lebanon24, February 14, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Preparing for the General Elections in Lebanon

► Hezbollah began its campaign for the general elections scheduled for this coming spring, with an event in the town of al-Jiyeh whose slogan was, "Your vote... loyalty to them." Former minister Mustafa Bayram called for electoral mobilization and said participation in the elections and raising voter turnout were central to the struggle for the character of the Shi'ite and national arenas. He represented the contest as a "value-based mission" of ideological commitment and not only of tactical considerations, hinting at rival attempts "to distance the public" from the ballot boxes (Lebanon Debate, February 13, 2026).



**Hezbollah's election campaign begins in the town of al-Jiyeh
(Lebanon Debate, February 13, 2026)**

► "Hezbollah and Amal sources" said despite reports of tension, the alliance between the two organizations remained stable and was a "strategic anchor." They said that although there were disagreements on specific political issues, full coordination continued, in both the composition of the government and distribution of portfolios and in preparation for the parliamentary elections, viewed as an existential test for Shi'ite representation. A joint monitoring committee had been appointed since both aspired to preserve the achievements of the 2022 elections and their control of a full parliamentary bloc (al-Diyar, February 11, 2026).

► A Shi'ite political event was held in Beirut when more than 500 participants from different areas of Lebanon arrived at a meeting convened by the group called Toward Salvation. Beyond the scope of participation, the organized, public nature of the discourse was prominent, calling

for strengthening the idea of the state, partnership in decision-making and avoiding being drawn into repeated wars. While at this stage it did not constitute a direct electoral challenge to the existing power structure led by Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, the event reflected an attempt to break the political monopoly within the Shi'ite environment and to open an alternative space for discourse (Lebanon Debate, February 11, 2026).



The meeting initiated by Toward Salvation (Lebanon Debate, February 11, 2026)

Reconstructing Lebanon

► Hezbollah secretary general, Na'im Qassem, announced that the organization would pay rent for the months of February, March and April 2026 to anyone whose house had been destroyed during the fighting with Israel or determined to be unfit for habitation, and to those still unable to return to their houses. He said care for shelter should be the state's responsibility, but due to its limitations Hezbollah saw itself as responsible for finding a way to assist, since they were not prepared to stand aside and watch (*al-Manar*, February 10, 2026). However, residents in Shi'ite areas did not hide their dissatisfaction with the lack of commitment to longer-term assistance, and expressed anger over the unfair distribution of previous payments. For example, a resident of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia admitted that they did not know if what had been paid was the full grant or only a partial payment or arrangement, as they had not received official notification (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, February 12, 2026).

► Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said reconstruction was a national issue which should be removed from political context. He placed primary responsibility on the government for full implementation of its commitments to housing and infrastructure. He said Hezbollah had already funded housing for tens of thousands of families and was now advancing budget allocations for reconstruction, especially the payment of rent, restoration of buildings and facilities and the reconstruction of houses which had been destroyed, mainly in villages along the border line. He said delays resulted not only from a lack of resources but also from external political pressure, adding that the

organization would continue to exert pressure in the governmental and parliamentary arena until the deadlock had been broken (*al-Diyar*, February 11, 2026).

- Under the shadow of the continued distress in the border areas, graffiti were sprayed on the municipality building in the town of al-Taybeh calling for housing assistance "without favoritism." The mayor called it an individual act which did not reflect organized protest or a political message, but rather the release of growing economic distress. The event, although isolated, reflected the cumulative emotional fatigue of those who lived on the confrontation line in south Lebanon, who suffered delays in reconstruction, damage to livelihoods and a feeling of ongoing neglect (Lebanon Debate, February 10, 2026).
- According to reports, there has been a significant increase in rental prices in the Dahiye al-Janoubia, after the destruction of about 99,610 housing units during the fighting and the continuation of security threats. According to a survey, rents currently ranged between \$300 and \$600 and even more, high relative to the official minimum wage of about \$312 and to the dire economic situation. Interviewees said the prices did not correspond to income levels, to the cost of living and to the security uncertainty, and they changed sharply according to the degree of tension and fear of escalation (*al-Akhbar*, February 14, 2026).

International Activity against Hezbollah

- The United States Treasury Department continued to take action against Hezbollah's finances with sanctions to block its sources of funding. The Department exposed the activity of a gold trading company established by al-Qard al-Hasan, Hezbollah's financial arm, which had received a governmental license in Lebanon, whose objective was to convert the organization's gold reserves into liquid assets that could be realized for Hezbollah's reconstruction. One of the company's owners, Muhammad Nayef Majed, was added to the sanctions list. Sanctions were also imposed on a Russian citizen working in a company linked to Hezbollah together with Ali Kasir, a member of Hezbollah's financial team based in Iran. The two were involved in projects to procure weapons from Russia and to sell goods to obtain profits for the organization. Sanctions were also imposed on a company based in Turkey engaged in exporting fertilizer from Iran to Turkey under the guise of cargo that had departed from Oman, on another company based in Turkey and its vessel involved in the export, and on a company based in Panama and its vessel where the fertilizer had been loaded. The United States Secretary of the Treasury said the United States would take action to disconnect Hezbollah

from the global financial system, and noted that the organization continued "to masquerade as a civilian organization" to ensure its cash flow (United States Treasury, February 10, 2026).

► Hezbollah's daily *al-Akhbar* criticized Kuwait's decision on February 8, 2026 to add eight Lebanese hospitals to its terrorist list and accused it of escalating a "regional-international siege" against Hezbollah's support base. According to the paper, it was a political measure, reflecting alignment with Saudi Arabia and the UAE and intended to attack financial support sources and social facilities identified with the "resistance." "Sources" opined that the decision had been American-inspired and it signaled an expansion of pressure to the health and civilian services sectors beyond the military and financial spheres. Hospital administrations and the association of hospital owners expressed surprise and claimed that no prior notification had been received from Kuwait, while the Lebanese ministry of health claimed it had not received advance warning (*al-Akhbar*, February 9, 2026).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► A Palestinian delegation headed by Yasser Mahmoud Abbas, the son of the chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Mahmoud Abbas, and the Palestinian ambassador to Lebanon, Muhammad al-Asaad, met with Lebanese Parliament member Neemat Frem to discuss regional developments and Lebanese-Palestinian relations. The delegation members presented the PA's position supporting the transfer of Palestinian weapons in Lebanon to the hands of the state and said the practical implementation of the decision had already begun. It was further noted that the PA supported the application of Lebanese state sovereignty over its entire territory and opposed any attempt at permanent settlement or naturalization of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Frem welcomed the move and called for accelerating mechanisms for transferring weapons in all the camps, while strengthening the concept of the state and its authority. He also mentioned additional Palestinian initiatives, including promoting the voluntary return of about 25,000 Palestinians who had arrived from Syria, adding that the work of the joint committees would be continued to improve refugee living conditions while preserving Lebanese sovereignty and the rule of law (Lebanese News Agency, February 14, 2026).