



The Israel-Lebanon Ceasefire Agreement: Reactions and Insights

April 20, 2026

Overview¹

- ▶ On April 16, 2026, the United States announced a ten-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon to advance direct bilateral talks for a peace agreement. The American administration said in a statement that Israel would retain its right to self-defense, but the United States "prohibited" Israel from attacking in Lebanon.
- ▶ IDF forces remained in south Lebanon and eliminated terrorists who posed a threat. Two IDF soldiers were killed in two incidents after the start of the ceasefire.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Qassem said the organization's operatives would remain in the field to respond to any "violation" and reiterated its usual demands: an end to the "aggression," the withdrawal of IDF forces to the border, the release of Lebanese held in Israel, the return of the displaced and the reconstruction of the country. Hezbollah claimed that Iranian pressure helped achieve the ceasefire and warned President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam not to continue direct negotiations with Israel.
- ▶ Lebanese President Aoun claimed the ceasefire showed that Lebanon would determine its own fate and ignored Iran when he thanked the countries that helped stop the fighting. Aoun and Prime Minister Salam were reportedly preparing for the continuation of the talks with Israel. Parliament Speaker Berri reiterated Iranian assistance in achieving the ceasefire and his opposition to direct negotiations.
- ▶ Opponents of Hezbollah said they hoped the ceasefire would allow the state to implement its sovereignty and disarm Hezbollah.
- ▶ Thousands of displaced civilians returned to south Lebanon despite warnings from the IDF and the Lebanese army, while residents of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia admitted they were still afraid to return to their homes for fear of renewed fighting.

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

► A French UNIFIL soldier was killed and three were wounded in a shooting in south Lebanon. The President of France and the IDF pointed to Hezbollah as responsible for the incident, which the organization denied.

► Iran and the "resistance axis"² organizations welcomed the ceasefire in Lebanon, claiming it was the result of Hezbollah's "steadfastness."

► **In ITIC assessment, Hezbollah will continue to represent the ceasefire as a Hezbollah-Iran achievement while attempting to challenge IDF forces maintaining the agreement to be able to accuse Israel of "violating the agreement." At the same time, Hezbollah can be expected to escalate internal criticism against the Lebanese leadership, which will raise the tension in Lebanon between Hezbollah's supporters and opponents. The Lebanese government will try to use the momentum to advance direct talks with Israel and implement the state's monopoly on weapons, especially applying its sovereignty in south Lebanon to convince the United States to pressure Israel to withdraw to the border.**

The Ceasefire Agreement

► On April 16, 2026, the United States announced that Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had agreed on a ten-day ceasefire starting at midnight April 17. The president said he had instructed the vice president, the secretary of state and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to work with Israel and Lebanon for lasting peace between the countries (Truth Social, April 16, 2026).

► According to the American administration and with the agreement of the governments of Israel and Lebanon, during the talks held between the ambassadors of the two countries with American mediation on April 14, it was agreed that efforts should be made to create conditions for peace, mutual recognition of sovereignty, the territorial integrity of each country and security along the border, while preserving Israel's right to self-defense. The challenge to regional and Lebanese security from "non-state armed groups"³ was noted and both countries agreed that only Lebanese security forces would be permitted to bear arms. Both countries said they were not at war with each other and were committed to holding direct negotiations to achieve a comprehensive agreement. The following points were agreed on (State Department website, April 16, 2026):

² Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

³ Terrorist organizations.

- ◆ Israel and Lebanon will implement the ceasefire starting at midnight for an initial period of ten days, as a gesture of goodwill by the Government of Israel to enable negotiations in good faith.
- ◆ The period may be extended by mutual agreement if progress is made in the negotiations and Lebanon effectively demonstrates its ability to implement its sovereignty.
- ◆ Israel will retain its right to take all necessary steps for self-defense, at any time, against planned, immediate or ongoing attacks which will not be limited by the ceasefire. It will not take offensive actions against Lebanese targets, including civilian, military or other state targets, in Lebanese territory, on land, in the air or at sea.
- ◆ Beginning with the ceasefire and onward, the government of Lebanon, with international assistance, will take "meaningful steps" to prevent Hezbollah and other rogue non-state armed groups in Lebanese territory from attacks, operations or hostile acts against Israeli targets.
- ◆ All parties recognize that the Lebanese security forces have exclusive responsibility for Lebanon's sovereignty and national security. No other state or group may claim to be guardians of Lebanon.
- ◆ Israel and Lebanon request that the United States organize further direct talks between the countries to resolve the remaining issues, including the delineation of the international land border, to complete a comprehensive agreement which will ensure lasting bilateral security, stability and peace.
- ◆ The American president said he hoped Hezbollah would "behave very well," and it would "be a great moment for them if they do." He added that the United States would work with Lebanon and handle the situation with Hezbollah "in the appropriate manner." At the same time, he declared that "Israel must not bomb Lebanon anymore. The United States forbids [*sic*] them from doing so. Enough!" (Truth Social, April 18, 2026).

The IDF during the Ceasefire

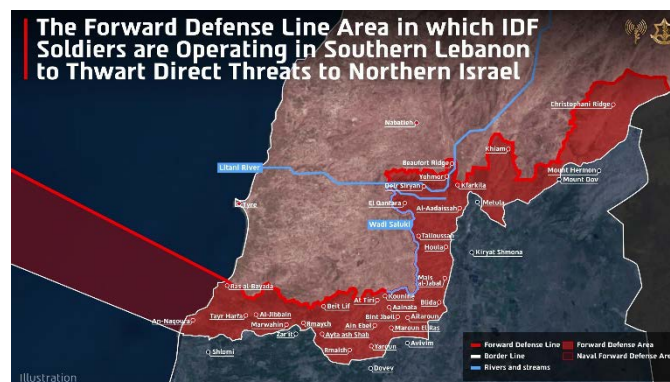
► Israeli Minister of Defense Israel Katz said that during the ceasefire IDF forces would remain in a 10-kilometer security zone in south Lebanon and would continue to destroy buildings and terrorist infrastructure in villages near the border (Israeli media, April 17, 2026). The IDF spokesperson in Arabic warned the residents of south Lebanon that despite the ceasefire, IDF

forces would remain in their positions and for their own safety they were requested not to move back to the area south of the Litani River (X account of Avichay Adraee, April 17, 2026).



Summary of IDF activity in Lebanon between March 2, 2026 and the ceasefire
(IDF spokesperson, April 17, 2026)

► Since the start of the ceasefire, IDF forces have attacked terrorists who violated the understandings and were identified approaching the Lebanese Yellow Line⁴ (the area under IDF control). It was noted that the IDF was "permitted to take the necessary measures to defend" the State of Israel and the forces, and that such actions "are not limited by the ceasefire" (IDF spokesperson, April 18, 2026). An IDF soldier was killed and three others were wounded by explosive devices planted in a building in the village of Jibin in south Lebanon before the ceasefire, and another IDF soldier was killed and nine were wounded from the explosion of a device in the village of Kfar Kila (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, April 18-19, 2026).



The Yellow Line area in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, April 19, 2026)

Hezbollah

► After the start of the ceasefire, Hezbollah claimed it had carried out 2,184 "military" attacks against "occupation forces" in Lebanese and Israeli territory since the start of the hostilities on March 2, 2026, and had attacked "settlements" and Israeli cities with UAVs and missiles to a

⁴ There is a Yellow Line in Lebanon as well as in the Gaza Strip.

range of 160 km from the border. It further stated that on average the "Islamic resistance" had attacked 49 times a day, despite the intelligence monitoring of the "Israeli war machine" and the "military violence," and that they remained "steadfast to defend the homeland and the people." Hezbollah said "the fingers of the jihad fighters will remain on the trigger, ready to confront the enemy," and the "fighters" were prepared to raise the flag of "resistance"⁵ until their "last breath" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 17, 2026).



Right: Summary of alleged Hezbollah attacks. Left: Map of alleged Hezbollah attacks (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel April 18, 2026)

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem declared that the temporary ceasefire would not have occurred without the "jihad of the resistance fighters on the southern borders, in a performance that surprised the world, and with steadfastness of self-sacrifice in the face of the Israeli-American enemy, despite the disparity of the military balance of power." He praised the "heroes of the resistance," who he claimed "broke" the advance of the "Israeli enemy" and prevented it from reaching the Litani River during the hostilities and thanked the residents for their sacrifice. He thanked Iran for linking the continuation of negotiations with the United States to a ceasefire in Lebanon and claimed that led to "the American surrender and forcing the Israeli enemy to stop." Qassem also rejected direct negotiations with Israel, told the government it was "a slope with no end" and called for maintaining solidarity between the army, the people, the "resistance" and a "political authority that wants Lebanon's independence and its liberation." Qassem said Hezbollah "fighters" would remain in the field, ready to respond to "violations or aggression" and would not agree to return to the status quo of the ceasefire in November 2024. He reiterated yet again Hezbollah's five familiar demands: a permanent cessation of the "aggression" in Lebanon, the withdrawal of the "Israeli enemy from the occupied territories," the release of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel, the return of residents

⁵ Anti-Israel terrorism and violence.

of south Lebanon to their homes, and the reconstruction of the country with international support national responsibility. He claimed Hezbollah was prepared for "maximum cooperation" with the Lebanese government to prevent a civil war and to formulate a national security strategy (website of the Hezbollah secretary general, April 18, 2026).

► Hezbollah claimed the ceasefire was the result of the "heroic steadfastness" of the "organization's fighters"⁶ during the hostilities and of Iranian pressure on the negotiations with the United States. Hezbollah criticized the intention of the Lebanese government to continue direct negotiations with Israel:

- ◆ Mahmoud Qamati, deputy chairman of Hezbollah's political council, claimed the organization was committed to the ceasefire as long as Israel "does not continue to violate the agreement, as happened previously," adding that the credit for the ceasefire belonged "to Iranian pressure" on the United States. He denied communications between Hezbollah and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun since the decision to negotiate with Israel. He said it was the Lebanese who were supposed to agree on the issue of the "resistance's weapons" as part of a defense strategy in Lebanon, but added that if Hezbollah's demands were met, the organization would be prepared to cooperate with the state and disarm (BBC Arabic channel, April 17, 2026). He also accused that the state of "running and rushing toward humiliation and disgrace, and toward giving up sovereignty step by step." He accused President Aoun of thanking the United States for the ceasefire, and not Iran, "which saved us." Qamati stated that Hezbollah was not prepared to return to the status quo ante of the hostilities, regardless of the price it would pay, and that "the finger of the resistance will remain on the trigger" (al-Akhbar, April 18, 2026).



"Lebanon is the soul of Iran:" Hezbollah supporters thank Iran
(Telegram channel of Hezbollah in the field, April 18, 2026)

⁶ Hezbollah terrorist operatives.

✦ The Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament claimed the ceasefire was the result "of Iranian pressures and contacts." It noted its "commitment to the ceasefire," while conditioning it on it being "inclusive for all Lebanese areas, including the border area," would "include a cessation of hostilities and a restriction of the enemy's freedom of movement" and would serve as a prelude to an "Israeli" withdrawal. The faction accused the Lebanese regime of "submitting to American dictates" when it agreed to direct negotiations with the "Zionist enemy" even before the ceasefire and the withdrawal of the "enemy," and therefore brought the country "into a new and very dangerous phase of its existence as a sovereign, free, independent country, and for its territorial integrity, the security of its people, its internal cohesion and its national unity." Members of the faction praised the "heroic steadfastness" of the "resistance," which "prevented the enemy from establishing footholds, while it searched for the image of a victory image that would compensate for its failures." They especially emphasized the battles in Bint Jbeil, the town which was "a living example of the will of the resistance and the sacrifices of its people, unbroken and unwavering." The faction also accused the international community and human rights organizations of responsibility "for the crimes, killing and destruction and the methods adopted by the Zionist enemy in Lebanon" (website of the Loyalty to the Resistance faction, April 17, 2026).

✦ Wafiq Safa, a member of Hezbollah's political council, claimed Israel had failed to achieve its military objectives and warned that the organization would not agree to a ceasefire which would allow Israel freedom of action. He said "no one can disarm Hezbollah" and added that it was not possible to hold discussions about the organization's weapons "until a real and comprehensive ceasefire takes place, and until an Israeli withdrawal, and before the return of the prisoners and the displaced, and before the reconstruction." According to Safa, Hezbollah had as its objective the "Lebanese interest," but added that since Iran conditioned entering negotiations on a ceasefire in Lebanon, it assisted Lebanon and the organization (BBC Arabic channel, April 17, 2026).

✦ Nawaf al-Mousawi, holder of the resources and borders portfolio in Hezbollah, stated that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz was what caused the ceasefire, and declared that "we prevented the United States and Israel from achieving their objectives." He claimed that "only the resistance is capable of confronting the Israeli, fighting him on the ground

and demonstrating steadfastness against him" and that anything else was "surrender." Al-Mousawi also attacked Lebanese President Aoun and accused him of not representing all Lebanese, warning that if Aoun acted alone regarding talks with Israel and a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, he "will no longer be a president acceptable to anyone in Lebanon." Al-Mousawi also claimed Aoun was not more important than Anwar Sadat, the President of Egypt who was assassinated after signing a peace agreement with Israel (al-Manar, April 17, 2026).

◆ Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in parliament, warned against negotiations with the "Israeli enemy" and said they would fight anyone who cooperated with Israel, as they had against the agreement with Israel on May 17, 1983.⁷ At a press conference in the town of Tebnine in south Lebanon, he said what was achieved reflected "a picture of victory, honor and freedom" and claimed that "the Israeli enemy did not succeed in advancing more than four [sic] kilometers and or in establishing any presence on the ground." He added that "we chose the path of 'resistance' alone, and we did not ask anything from the regime except that it not stab us in the back" (al-Akhbar, April 18, 2026).



Fadlallah in south Lebanon (al-Jadeed, April 18, 2026)

► Ibrahim al-Amin, the editor-in-chief of Hezbollah's daily al-Akhbar, claimed in an op-ed piece that "the United States surrendered first, and Israel appeared once again as an obedient tool to American dictates; and Benjamin Netanyahu was forced to adhere to White House instructions and declare his defeat in Lebanon at the hands of resistance fighters." Al-Amin said that for a complete end to the war, there had to be full, rapid withdrawal "from the occupied territories," the release of the prisoners and ensuring the safe return of residents of the south, the Beqa'a Valley and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia to their homes. He also warned that if after the

⁷ It was never implemented.

truce the "enemy" tried to return to the status quo ante of the current hostilities, it "would give the 'resistance' the right to respond without asking permission from anyone." Al-Amin called the Lebanese administration the "ruling occupation regime" and said that if it did not stand by the residents, it should be removed. He also called for the establishment of a "national unity government, distinctly political, which will include the various forces reflecting the representation of the people," which "will put an end to American-Saudi sponsorship" and discuss national defense without dictates (al-Akhbar, April 17, 2026).

► On another occasion, al-Amin referred to the Israeli attack after the ceasefire following the explosion of the explosive device in which several fighters were injured and warned that it would not go unanswered since "the resistance ensures that the enemy understands that if it believes it can return to what was before March 2, it would do well to wait for responses that will make it clear that it lost the war." He added that as long as the "enemy" delayed its withdrawal from Lebanese territory, it "will hear in the near future about the launch of liberation operations⁸ by Hezbollah and perhaps by other resistance forces" and "within hours the settlers in the north of occupied Palestine" will become targets for attack. According to al-Amin, the central achievement of the "resistance" in the current hostilities was the restoration of deterrence, "even if within Lebanon there are supporters of the enemy who want it to return to war and not stop until Hezbollah is eliminated." He said President Aoun was acting to replace the prime minister, Nawaf Salam, and that the speaker of Parliament, Nabih Berri, also believed that preserving civil peace in Lebanon and the proper management of any negotiations with Israel required a government headed by a person "who is not weak and not confrontational," as Salam was toward the "resistance." According to al-Amin, the former prime minister, Najib Mikati, was acceptable to Aoun, Hezbollah and many in the political system, including Hezbollah's opponents (al-Akhbar, April 18, 2026).

⁸ Terrorist attacks.



"The ceasefire agreement, and the beginning of violations?!!" (al-Joumhouria, April 18, 2026)

The Lebanese Administration

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun delivered a speech to the nation and thanked the United States, Saudi Arabia and additional Arab countries for the ceasefire, without mentioning Iran. He said it was the result of great efforts by the Lebanese leadership and its friends around the world, and with it Lebanon had restored its ability to determine its fate after nearly half a century. He declared that "today we conduct negotiations on our own behalf, and decide for ourselves. We are no longer a card in anyone's pocket, and not an arena for anyone's wars, and we will never return to that." Aoun also defended the decision to conduct direct negotiations with Israel and said it was not weakness or concession, but concern for the Lebanese people and the responsibility to protect the state. He added that he was "ready to go anywhere required to liberate my land, protect my people and save my country" and pledged that "there will be no agreement that harms our national rights," with the objectives being the cessation of the Israeli "aggression," an Israeli withdrawal, the deployment of the state's authority over all its land by its independent forces alone, the return of the "prisoners," and the return of the displaced to their homes. Aoun did not explicitly refer to Hezbollah, however he warned against "those who exploit your emotions to glorify themselves at the expense of your stability" and said no one had the right to drag Lebanon [into war] "with the pretext of a slogan, a suicidal impulse or loyalty to any factor other than Lebanon and its people." He added that "only the state project in Lebanon is the strongest, the most enduring and the most promising for all" (Lebanese presidency website, April 17, 2026).



Right: Aoun speaks to the nations. Left: The response of Hezbollah supporters, "This suits you because you're a Zionist dog" (Lebanese presidency website, April 17, 2026)

► Prime Minister Nawaf Salam welcomed the ceasefire, noting it was a central Lebanese demand which also arose in the meeting between the ambassadors in Washington. He thanked the regional and international efforts which helped achieve the ceasefire and specifically mentioned the United States, France, European Union countries, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar and Jordan, without mentioning Iran. Salam said he hoped that the displaced would be able to return to their homes soon (Facebook page of Nawaf Salam, April 16, 2026).

► President Aoun met with Prime Minister Salam to review the latest security and diplomatic developments. They also discussed Lebanon after the ceasefire and the ongoing efforts at stabilization. Salam reported that the meeting had also dealt with Lebanese preparedness for negotiations with Israel and monitoring the implementation of government decisions, especially the decision calling for strengthening enforcement of the state's sovereignty over the Beirut district and limiting weapons to itself alone. Salam also said he hoped that the displaced would be able to return to their homes soon, after stabilization of the ceasefire, and pledged that the state would accompany their return and assist them as required (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 18, 2026).



Aoun and Salam (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 18, 2026)

► Sources in the government reported that Aoun had said Lebanon was ready to enter direct negotiations as soon as a date was set, and the members of the Lebanese delegation would be determined according to the members of the Israeli delegation. Reportedly, the delegation will include Ambassador Simon Karam as chairman, an aide and an officer from the Lebanese army, because Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, refused to include a Shi'ite representative. According to the sources, the Lebanese document for the talks is already ready and focuses on stabilizing the ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and the return of the prisoners, in addition to a clause concerning the 13 disputed points between Lebanon and Israel along the Blue Line (the current international border). Regarding the possibility of a meeting between Aoun and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the sources said that the matter was not currently on the agenda (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 18, 2026).

► Meeting with members of parliament from Beirut, Aoun called the ceasefire an opportunity for progress in the negotiations and said it enjoyed local and external support. He added that the Lebanese army would play a central role after the withdrawal of Israeli forces regarding its deployment up to the southern border, ending the presence of "armed elements" and providing the residents of the south with security upon their return to their villages and towns. Aoun said "we must not miss this opportunity, as it may not return" (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 17, 2026).

► Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, leader of the Shi'ite Amal Movement and an ally of Hezbollah, was "cautiously" satisfied and called it a step in the right direction. He said that hours before the official announcement, he had spoken with Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who said the ceasefire was part of the overall ceasefire between Iran and the United States. Berri reiterated his opposition to direct negotiations with Israel (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 16, 2026). He also called on residents of south Lebanon, the Beqa'a Valley and the Dahiye al-Janoubia to wait, for their own safety, before returning to their settlements and homes "until matters become clear" in accordance with the ceasefire agreement (al-Akhbar, April 16, 2026). During a reception for a delegation of the "We Are All Beirut" association, Berri warned of the danger of civil war and said any discourse or actions which could threaten internal cohesion should be avoided. He thanked Beirut, the mountain area and north Lebanon for "adopting and embracing" the displaced (Lebanon Debate, April 17, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► Immediately upon the announcement of the ceasefire, the Lebanese army called on residents to wait before returning to the villages and towns in south Lebanon for fear of Israeli strikes and unexploded ordnance (X account of the Lebanese army, April 16-17, 2026). Later, an army unit assisted in the restoration of the al-Qasmiyeh Bridge over the Litani River, which had been attacked by the IDF. Reportedly, the army acted in cooperation with the municipalities and with "civilian" associations, although some of the activists were documented with symbols identified with Amal. Army units also helped open roads and repair bridges over the Litani River (X account of the Lebanese army, April 17-19, 2026).



**The Lebanese army helps repair the al-Qasmiyeh Bridge and clear rubble
(X account of the Lebanese army, April 17, 2026)**

► The commander of the Lebanese army, General Rodolph Haykal, toured the headquarters of the Fifth Intervention Regiment in the village of Kafr Dounine in the Bint Jbeil area and examined the activity in the area after the start of the ceasefire. He met with officers and soldiers and praised their "sacrifice, courage and steadfast faith in their mission and in the homeland, despite the difficulties and challenges" and added that the army remained "strong and united despite limited means" (X account of the Lebanese army, April 18, 2026).



Haykal visits the regiment headquarters (X account of the Lebanese army, April 18, 2026)

Hezbollah's Opponents

- ▶ The chairman of the Christian Lebanese Forces party, Samir Geagea, said "the most difficult stage has already passed, and that the state is close to reaching a new day." He reiterated the need to disarm Hezbollah and said that "were it not for Hezbollah and its weapons, we would not have needed a ceasefire, and were it not for Hezbollah and its weapons, there would have been no Israeli occupation, and were it not for Hezbollah and its weapons, we would have had no prisoners, and were it not for Hezbollah and its weapons, we would have had no displaced persons, and were it not for Hezbollah and its weapons, we would not have needed reconstruction" (al-Nashra, April 18, 2026).
- ▶ The chairman of the Christian Phalange party, Sami Gemayel, congratulated President Aoun on the ceasefire and praised Lebanese diplomacy for "saving Lebanon from the war caused by Hezbollah's militia." He called the ceasefire "the beginning of restoring Lebanon's control over its decisions and its future" (X account of Sami Gemayel, April 16, 2026).
- ▶ Charles Jabbour, responsible for information in the Lebanese Forces, said the ten days of ceasefire were a historic opportunity for the Lebanese state to prove it was a state in practice and the countdown had begun for the implementation of the decisions regarding the disarmament of "the Iranian party." He warned that if the state failed, the war would return and Lebanon would again fall "into a vortex of destruction" (X account of Charles Jabbour, April 16, 2026).
- ▶ Lebanese journalist Marcel Ghanem attacked Hezbollah at the opening of his program on MTV and said that those who wanted peace were not criminals. "Hezbollah did not consult with us when it entered the war. Under what law are we supposed to consult with them when we want peace between a legitimate state, Lebanon, and Israel, the state that lies on its border?" he asked. He added that while Hezbollah and Iran planted the idea of death and martyrdom within the people and opposed peace and normalization, they were now prepared to discuss with "the Great Satan" [the United States]. He said that while Hezbollah called for the liberation of the land, Bint Jbeil fell. "Should we not give priority to the return of the residents to the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia before that?" adding that Hezbollah was "Iran's party in Lebanon" (MTV Lebanon, April 16, 2026).

The Displaced

► Despite calls to residents from the IDF, the Lebanese army and Parliament Speaker Berri, not to return to the southern area, within hours of the ceasefire thousands of displaced persons were seen making their way toward south Lebanon. Engineering units of the army and organizations affiliated with Amal and Hezbollah and the Litani River Authority, restored the al-Qasmiyeh Bridge in the Tyre area, but vehicles crossed the river through the water. Many of those returning waved Hezbollah flags and in many localities Hezbollah flags were flown along with Iranian flags (Lebanese media, April 17, 2026).



Right: Traffic jams as displaced persons from the Tyre area return (al-Nahar, April 17, 2026). Left: Hezbollah flags for the returning displaced in the Barja area in south Lebanon (al-'Ahed, April 17, 2026)

► Layla Muslimani, displaced from the town of al-Sha'itiya in the Tyre district, said she was joyful and hurrying to return to her home, even if it was only a temporary ceasefire. She said she packed her belongings into the car with her five family members and waited for the announcement that the road south had opened. Jamal Bashir, displaced from the town of al-'Abbasiyah, admitted that although he was happy about the ceasefire, he was still afraid of returning home. He said he believed some waiting was preferable to a sudden and unorganized departure (al-Araby al-Jadeed, April 19, 2026).

► Residents of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, Hezbollah's stronghold in south Beirut which had been attacked by the IDF during the hostilities, returned after the start of the ceasefire, but many of them said they had come to collect belongings and still did not know when they would return because the security situation was unclear. Samah Hajoul, displaced from the al-Laylaki area [part of the Dahiyeh], who is living with her children in a tent on the seaside promenade, said she only brought summer clothes for her children when they left, but she was still afraid to return. Hassan, who is staying with his son in a displaced persons center in a school shelter,

said they were afraid because of violations of the ceasefire and if they returned home, they could lose their place in the shelter (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 18, 2026).

UNIFIL

► On April 18, 2026, French President Emmanuel Macron reported that a French soldier from the UNIFIL force had been killed and three others wounded in a shooting in south Lebanon. He noted that all the signs indicated that Hezbollah was responsible for the shooting and demanded that the president of Lebanon and the prime minister ensure the safety of the UNIFIL soldiers in Lebanon (X account of the president of France, April 18, 2026).

► UNIFIL reported that a patrol engaged in clearing munitions near the village of Ghandouriya was attacked by small-arms fire from "non-state actors." One of the soldiers died and three others were wounded, two of them critically. The UN force condemned the deliberate attack on peace observers and said an investigation of the circumstances had begun, while the initial assessment alleged Hezbollah involvement. UNIFIL called on the Lebanese government to investigate the incident and urged all actors to follow international law (UNIFIL Telegram channel, April 18, 2026).

► Lebanese President Aoun told French President Macron that his country categorically rejected any attacks UNIFIL, was committed to preserving the safety of the forces and ensuring the appropriate conditions for the fulfillment of their missions. He said he had issued instructions to the relevant bodies to investigate the immediately and determine responsibility, and emphasized that Lebanon would show no tolerance in pursuing those involved and bringing them to justice (X account of the Lebanese presidency, April 18, 2026). Prime Minister Salam and Parliament Speaker Berri also strongly condemned the attack (al-Nashra, April 18, 2026).

► Hezbollah denied any connection to the incident and called for the "exercise of extreme caution in judgment and attribution of responsibility, pending the investigations of the Lebanese army to fully clarify the circumstances of the event." Hezbollah noted the cooperation between the residents, UNIFIL and the Lebanese army, and the need for coordination between the Lebanese army and UNIFIL in the movements of the peacekeeping force, "especially under sensitive circumstances" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, April 18, 2026). Sources said the French force had entered the town unaccompanied by the Lebanese army, which displeased local residents and led to a confrontation (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 18, 2026).

► The IDF said that an operational and intelligence inquiry confirmed that a Hezbollah cell shot at a UNIFIL force engaged in clearing unexploded ordnance in the Ghandouriya area (IDF spokesperson, April 19, 2026).

Responses to the Ceasefire from Iran and the "Resistance Axis" Organizations

► Iran was quick to claim that the ceasefire in Lebanon was the result of its demand to include Lebanon in the ceasefire between the Islamic Republic and the United States. According to an article published by Iran's Tasnim news agency, since the negotiations between the Iranian and American delegations in Pakistan, Tehran had pressed for a ceasefire in Lebanon as a condition for any progress and "forced the United States and the Zionist regime" to announce the ceasefire. It added that "Iran once again showed that it stands by its basic principles and that resistance pays off" (Tasnim, April 16, 2026). Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi declared the opening of the Strait of Hormuz in consequence of the ceasefire in Lebanon (X account of Abbas Araghchi, April 17, 2026).

► The "resistance axis" organizations congratulated Hezbollah on the "victory" of the ceasefire and claimed it was the result of Hezbollah's "steadfastness" along with pressure from Iran:

- ◆ Hamas claimed the ceasefire was the result of the "steadfastness" of the Lebanese people and the sacrifice of the "resistance," which "kept the Zionist aggression from achieving its objectives." Hamas called the "aggression" against Lebanon and the Palestinian people an attempt "to advance a single project and impose hegemony by force." Hamas praised the "steadfastness" of the Lebanese people and Hezbollah and said they stood by them (Hamas Telegram channel, April 17, 2026).

- ◆ The military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) congratulated "our brothers" in Hezbollah on the "victory of will and steadfastness" and praised "their tremendous achievement." The PIJ added that the jihad fighters in Lebanon, the residents of the south and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia "carry the banner of the resistance aloft and with honor" despite "the wounds caused by the enemies." The military wing said "we will remain a united front with a common goal and strong will toward victory" (Telegram channel of the PIJ's Jerusalem Brigades, April 18, 2026).

- ◆ The secretary general of Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhadaa, Abu Alaa al-Wala'i, rejected the American position that the ceasefire was the result of the direct talks between Lebanon

and the "usurping regime" and called it "a pathetic spectacle." According to him, it was the result of "the surrender of the American and Zionist occupation" to the steadfastness of Hezbollah's "resistance" fighters and Iran's insistence in setting it as a condition. He added that the "resistance" was the great victor of the ceasefire, while "the two occupations" [the United States and Israel] were the losers, along with the Lebanese government, which made "regrettable concessions without justification" (X account of Abu Alaa al-Wala'i, April 17, 2026).

◆ The spokesperson of the Hezbollah Brigades, Abu Mujahid al-'Assaf, said Hezbollah's steadfastness had established "a new school in asymmetric warfare, which forced the enemies to accept the agreement." He called it a "victory" for Hezbollah, despite the external circumstances, the internal complexities and the weak government in Lebanon (Instagram account of Abu Mujahid al-'Assaf, April 18, 2026).