

Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

September 23 – October 5, 2026

Trending

- Hezbollah used the events commemorating Nasrallah's death to emphasize the role of the "resistance" and reject demands that it disarm, while the government refused to rescind its decisions on the state's monopoly on weapons.
- Lebanon wants to link an Israeli withdrawal to the expansion of state authority in south Lebanon.
- Hezbollah focuses on preserving its strength and adapting by reorganizing and decentralizing its military structures.

Overview¹

- Hezbollah marked two years since the deaths of former secretary general Nasrallah and his successor, Safi al-Din. Current secretary general Qassem noted Hezbollah's commitment to the path of the "resistance" and conditioned a dialogue on disarmament on an Israeli withdrawal from the south and the rescinding of the government decisions restricting the organization.
- IDF forces continued operations against Hezbollah infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon. Hezbollah launched an explosive UAV at the forces; there were no casualties.
- Before the resumption of direct talks between Lebanon and Israel, Lebanese Prime Minister Salam presented a plan for a gradual, reciprocal framework which linked together an Israeli withdrawal, the expansion of the Lebanese army's responsibility and the implementation of the state's monopoly on weapons.
- The Lebanese government said the decisions on the state's monopoly on weapons were irreversible and would be implemented with minimum damage. The issue continues as an obstacle to the resumption of dialogue between Hezbollah and Lebanese President Aoun.

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

- Hezbollah said reconstruction was the responsibility of the state, but it would provide its own assistance to families according to its available resources.
- Representatives of a Lebanese Shi'ite organization opposing Hezbollah's dominance met with American officials.
- The Syrian ministry of defense arrested a Hezbollah cell preparing to launch rockets; Hezbollah denied any connection.
- In preparation for the end of UNIFIL's mission, Lebanon wants an international presence under the UN umbrella which will support the army and prevent a security vacuum.
- A Hamas representative in Lebanon rejected the demand to disarm.

The Second Anniversary of Hassan Nasrallah's Death

► Thousands of Hezbollah supporters participated in events marking two years since the deaths of Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah and his successor, Hashem Safi al-Din, which were held at Nasrallah's tomb complex in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut. The events focused on renewing loyalty to Nasrallah's "path" and continuing the "resistance"² despite the blows the organization sustained over the past two years (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 27, 2026).



Right: Hezbollah poster, the Arabic reads, "We are faithful to the promise, Nasrallah" (al-'Ahed, September 27, 2026). Left: Thousands at the ceremony marking two years since the deaths of Nasrallah and Safi al-Din (*al-Nashra*, September 27, 2026)

► The keynote speech was given by the organization's secretary general, Na'im Qassem, who stated his commitment to continuing the path of the "resistance" and opposition to disarmament under the current conditions. He claimed Hezbollah had preserved its ability to fight and prevent Israel from establishing its presence in south Lebanon, and rejected

² Attempts to destroy the State of Israel.

disarmament at the hands of the Lebanese army. He said he was willing to engage in an internal Lebanese dialogue on the issue of the state's monopoly on weapons, but it was conditional on an Israeli withdrawal from the south and the residents' return to their homes, as well as the rescinding of the government decisions of August 5 and 7, 2025 regarding disarming Hezbollah and the March 2, 2026 decision to outlaw the "military wing." He called for freezing the direct negotiations with Israel and shifting to indirect negotiations, claiming the seven rounds of direct talks had yielded nothing and the framework agreement had weakened Lebanon's leverage (*al-Diyar*, September 27, 2026).



Qassem delivers his speech (website of the Hezbollah secretary general, September 27, 2026)

► The speech was criticized by the opposition camp. Lebanese Forces Party chairman Samir Geagea claimed that the continued existence of Hezbollah's independent "military apparatus" made it difficult for the state to achieve an Israeli withdrawal and obtain international support for reconstruction. Kataeb Party chairman Sami al-Gemayel and Lebanese Parliament member Fouad Makhzoumi said they supported President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and continuing the effort to restore weapons, security and military decision-making to state authority (*Nidaa al-Watan*, Lebanon Debate and Fouad Makhzoumi's X account, September 28, 2026).

► Ali Daamoush, chairman of Hezbollah's executive council, spoke at a gathering of the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts Association and reiterated Hezbollah's commitment to the path of "resistance" as a "national choice," declaring the "resistance project" had not and would not end, despite all attempts. He claimed the fundamental issues were the "liberation" of south Lebanon from the "occupation" and the return of its people to their villages, boasting they would not hesitate to confront the "Zionists." He complained that the state was incapable of fulfilling its responsibility and the framework agreement had stripped it of sovereignty, and therefore the Lebanese people had no choice but to "defend their land" (*al-Manar*, October 4, 2026).

► The tension between President Joseph Aoun and Hezbollah was also manifested by the organization's not inviting Aoun to the ceremonies. Sources close to the president recommended that senior officials in the security establishment and government not attend the event, but deputy director of State Security Murshid Suleiman did attend the main event in civilian clothes (*al-Nahar*, September 29, 2026; Lebanon Debate, October 1, 2026).

► Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel issued a message from the organization's operatives, who renewed their loyalty to secretary general Qassem as Nasrallah's successor and their commitment to continuing the "resistance" and refusing to disarm, declaring their readiness to obey the organization's leadership (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 30, 2026).



From the video (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 30, 2026)

The Military Situation in South Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued aerial and ground operations against Hezbollah facilities and assets in the security zone in south Lebanon, completing a targeted operation in the Litani River and Beaufort Ridge area. Sites used to launch explosive UAVs and anti-tank missiles were attacked in response to the launch of an explosive UAV at IDF forces; there were no Israeli casualties. During September 2026, the Israeli Air Force attacked more than 370 Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, September 23-October 5, 2026). Lebanese media reported continued airstrikes, artillery fire, ground incursions and the demolition of buildings at several locations in the south, including al-Mansouri, al-Qantara, Baraachit, Haddatha, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Beit Yahoun, al-Khiyam, Meis al-Jabal and Deir Mimas. In some cases, buildings were booby-trapped and demolished, and helicopters, UAVs and ground forces were active (*al-Nahar* and *al-Madan*, September 23-October 5, 2026).

Hezbollah

► According to an unverified report, the command of the Badr Unit, which is responsible for the area north of the Litani River, was moved to the mountainous interior of the Jezzine District, with command, communications and equipment components dispersed throughout the Iqlim al-Tuffah–al-Rayhan–Jabal Safi area (Erem News and *al-Nahar*, September 28, 2026).³

► Hezbollah reportedly will not act as a "support front" should there be a renewed confrontation between the United States and Iran, and follows a strategy focused on preserving the organization's weapons and freedom of action. The organization also denied a deal had been reached regarding the Ali al-Taher Ridge and was preparing for the possibility of an expansion of Israeli activity toward the al-Rayhan and Jabal Safi Ridges (*al-Joumhouria*, October 2, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► A Lebanese army unit dismantled two unexploded bombs in Majdal Selm and al-Ghandouriyeh, and in Wadi Zibqin the army located and dismantled an Israeli observation device equipped with a solar energy system. The army also announced that a soldier and three civilians were wounded in al-Nabatiyeh al-Fawqa by the explosion of a suspicious object while the army was accompanying residents who had come to inspect their properties (Lebanese army X account, September 25–30, 2026).

Direct Negotiations and the Israel-Lebanon Agreement Framework

Political Contacts

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun called on the United States to increase pressure on Israel to implement the agreement, including a gradual withdrawal matching the Lebanese army deployment. He said delaying implementation made it difficult for the state to extend its authority in the south and return the displaced residents (Lebanese presidency X account, September 29, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's visit to Washington focused on moving from the principles of the framework agreement to practical implementation. He met with American Secretary of State Marco Rubio and presented a framework based on reciprocity and gradual

³ The Badr Unit's former command and control center on the Ali al-Taher Ridge was destroyed by the IDF in September 2026.

implementation, under which the Israeli withdrawal, the expansion of state authority and the implementation of the state's monopoly on weapons would proceed simultaneously, with a verification mechanism to document each phase. American sources said support for Lebanon and progress toward an Israeli withdrawal would depend on tangible, measurable measures to reduce Hezbollah's independent "military apparatus," not solely on the deployment of the Lebanese army. The inclusion of international parties in the verification mechanism was also examined (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 28–30, 2026; Erem News, October 1, 2026; *Nidaa al-Watan*, October 2, 2026).

► A diplomatic source reported that the discussions in the United States examined linking an Israeli withdrawal from areas south of the Litani River to parallel measures to remove Hezbollah's weapons from areas north of the river, as well as operating the verification mechanism under the UN umbrella and with the participation of other countries, although no agreement was reported. Lebanon also sought to advance funding for the reconstruction of roads, electricity and water networks and public services in areas which would be transferred to state responsibility (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 29–October 1, 2026).

► Lebanese Prime Minister Salam said the framework agreement was based on reciprocity and a gradual approach, but it was not known when Israel would withdraw. He said a timetable was necessary to translate the agreement into practical measures with visible progress on the ground. He said Lebanon had not linked the withdrawal to the collection of weapons, adding that the expansion of state authority was a prior internal Lebanese commitment unrelated to external parties. Salam said he would have worded many parts of the framework agreement differently, including emphasizing that Israel had to withdraw to the internationally recognized borders rather than the current wording stating "outside Lebanese territory" (NBN, October 4, 2026).

► Sources close to parliament speaker and Amal leader Nabih Berri claimed there had been no practical progress in implementing the framework agreement and said continued Israeli activity and the difficulties of residents to return to villages in the south exposed its limitations. The sources reiterated Berri's reservations about the agreement but said he supported diplomatic efforts to achieve an Israeli withdrawal and an end to the attacks (*al-Madan*, October 4, 2026).

► Direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel are reportedly expected to resume in Tampa, Florida, apparently on October 20, 2026, although no official confirmation has yet

been issued. The talks are expected to deal with military-security issues and focus on the operational aspects of implementing the framework agreement, including designating areas from which Israel will withdraw and be transferred to the responsibility of the Lebanese army, schedules for the deployment of forces and the verification mechanism which will document the completion of the measures in each area before proceeding. One unresolved issue is the mechanism for searches and inspections of private property, as the Lebanese army seeks to avoid an arrangement which would lead to friction with residents or circumvent state authority (Erem News, October 1, 2026; *al-Diyar* and MTV, September 30, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

► Hezbollah rejected disarmament as a precondition for an agreement with Israel, but did not exclude a future discussion of the state's monopoly on weapons. Senior figures linked such a discussion to an Israeli withdrawal, an end to the attacks and the state's ability to establish an effective presence and protect the residents of the south. Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that after an Israeli withdrawal the organization would be prepared for dialogue on a national security strategy (Lebanese News Agency, September 25-30, 2026; Hezbollah faction website, October 3, 2026).

► Hezbollah currently rejects opening a direct channel with the United States and wants parliament speaker Nabih Berri as the main channel for contacts with Washington. Reports of attempts leading to a direct channel received no official confirmation (*al-Akhbar*, October 3, 2026).

► Channels affiliated with Hezbollah attacked Lebanese ambassador to the United States Nada Moawad, who reportedly called Israeli ambassador to the United States Yechiel Leiter, with whom she conducts the direct negotiations, to ask about the condition of his son, who was critically wounded in a vehicular ramming terrorist attack at the Maccabim checkpoint on Route 443 on September 23, 2026. She was accused of "courting" the representative of the "entity waging war on her country and her people" (SIMIA Telegram channel, Hezbollah's electronic warfare unit, September 29, 2026).

Lebanese State Monopoly on Weapons

► Addressing the UN General Assembly, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the restoration of state authority and national decision-making was one of the government's main objectives, there would be no authority above the state, no weapons outside its forces and no declaration of war and peace outside its constitutional institutions. He said the government had translated those principles into practical decisions regarding the state's monopoly on weapons as a condition for restoring sovereignty, stability and the state's ability to make independent decisions (Lebanese News Agency, September 25, 2026).

► Meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Salam reiterated the government's position on extending state authority throughout Lebanese territory and restricting weapons to the state, while demanding a full Israeli withdrawal and an end to the attacks. He said Lebanon did not want to be an arena for regional confrontations or to transmit messages, and called for relations between their countries to be based on mutual respect for sovereignty and independence, and non-interference in internal affairs (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 24, 2026).

► Senior Lebanese government officials said the principle of the state's monopoly on weapons was no longer open for discussion, while shifting the focus to implementation and a schedule. Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said disarmament and dismantling Hezbollah's decades-old financing apparatus could not be accomplished in a short period of time, but the government was determined to continue the process (Youssef Rajji's X account, September 25, 2026). Justice Minister Adel Nassar said handing Hezbollah's weapons over to the state had been decided and now the objective was to implement it with minimum damage. He, rejected the claim that the process was directed against the Shi'ite community (*al-Diyar* and MTV, September 30, 2026).

► The dialogue between the Lebanese presidency and Hezbollah over weapons remains at an impasse, although attempts were made to renew it. President Aoun said he was prepared to resume talks with the organization, but rejected the demand to reverse the decisions on the state's monopoly on weapons or halt negotiations with Israel as preconditions. An attempt was made to formulate a set of reciprocal measures which would enable the resumption of dialogue, but no progress was made because of the disagreement over the

conditions for beginning the talks (Asas Media, September 23, 2026; *al-Nahar* and *al-Diyar*, September 28–30, 2026; Lebanon Debate and *al-Joumhouria*, October 1–2, 2026).

► Veteran Druze leader Walid Jumblatt called on Hezbollah to respond to President Aoun's call and begin a dialogue with the state leadership, which he described as "possible and necessary" for both the organization and the state. He said the scale of destruction in the south required action which would reduce further damage, and said he was in favor of continuing the negotiations if they led to a full Israeli withdrawal, although he had reservation because the framework agreement did not refer to the 1949 Armistice Agreement (Lebanon Debate, September 23, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Internal Rehabilitation

► Commentators and sources close to Hezbollah noted that secretary general Na'im Qassem had maintained leadership continuity and cohesion, but Hezbollah now operated within a more restricted sphere than during the Nasrallah era and had to contend with military, political and economic pressures and with the internal dispute over its weapons. Changes were reported in the "military" and political structures, along with tighter secrecy surrounding commanders and capabilities, the rebuilding of the chain of command and a reassessment of relations with the presidency and the government and of the organization's network of alliances (*al-Sharq al-Awsat* and *al-Madan*, September 26, 2026; *al-Nahar*, Ici Beyrouth and Independent Arabia, September 27, 2026).

► Lebanese military expert Brig. Gen. (ret.) Said Qazah said Hezbollah still possessed "significant military capabilities" in the internal Lebanese arena, but its ability to conduct another campaign against Israel had been "considerably impaired." He said the organization's rocket capabilities in the Beqa'a Valley were unclear and their use was largely subject to an Iranian decision. Sources noted that despite the increased monitoring of smuggling routes, the transfer of weapons into Lebanon across the land borders or by sea could not be completely prevented (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 1, 2026).

Economic Pressure

► Reportedly, in accordance with instructions from secretary general Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah began mapping real estate and commercial assets registered in the names of businessmen, commanders and associates. The organization also increased its rate of

converting cash and financial assets into gold to reduce its exposure to the banking system (*Nidaa al-Watan*, September 28, 2026).

► American Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called on the Lebanese government to disrupt the financial networks of Iran and Hezbollah and advance reforms in the Lebanese financial system (Erem News, September 29–30, 2026; *Nidaa al-Watan*, October 2, 2026).

Hezbollah's Involvement in Reconstruction

► Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem said the organization would participate in providing assistance to families whose homes were destroyed in the war, while continuing to place primary responsibility for reconstruction on the state. According to reports, the organization has already begun reviewing the files of those affected and plans, initially, to resume housing allowance payments to families who lost their homes, apparently before the end of 2026, while the scope of the assistance and its funding sources have not yet been announced. The move comes after a period in which the payments were suspended because of the financial pressure facing the organization, which had to address the needs of its support base (*al-Sharq al-Awsat* and *al-Nahar*, October 1, 2026).

► Hezbollah said reconstruction was the responsibility of the state, but announced the organization would operate its own assistance program in accordance with available resources, including participation in funding housing for families affected by the war (Hezbollah faction website, September 25, 2026; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 1, 2026).

Tension with Political Allies

► There are signs Hezbollah's relations with some of its allies in the Lebanese arena have deteriorated. Reportedly, the events marking the anniversary of the deaths of Nasrallah and Safi al-Din were attended by only a limited number of political allies previously identified with the organization, with representatives of the Amal Movement and Suleiman Frangieh. Tension with the Free Patriotic Movement and mutual accusations with Gebran Bassil also continued, although channels of communication between the sides reportedly remained open as Hezbollah sought to avoid a complete rupture and preserve the possibility of renewed political cooperation (*al-Nashra*, September 27, 2026; Lebanon Debate, September 28, 2026; *al-Nahar*, October 2, 2026; *al-Sharq al-Awsat* and Lebanon 24, October 4, 2026).

Challenges within the Shi'ite Community

► Tensions between supporters of Hezbollah and Amal continued in the south. In the town of Houmine al-Fawqa in the al-Nabatiyeh District, intervention by the judicial system and security agencies was required following a confrontation that began with a dispute over the

display of Amal and Iranian flags. In recent months, disputes were reported in several communities in the south over the war and negotiations with Israel, some of which developed into exchanges of gunfire. The Amal and Hezbollah leaderships worked with the authorities to contain the incidents and prevent economic and social disputes from spilling over into strikes and demonstrations (*al-Madan*, September 26, 2026; *al-Diyar*, September 29, 2026).

► Representatives of the independent Nahwa al-Inqadh (Towards Salvation) Shi'ite group, which opposes Hezbollah's dominance, met in Washington with officials from the State Department and the Senate and presented a position supporting strengthening state institutions, the state's monopoly on weapons and an Israeli withdrawal from the south. However, officials involved in the contacts said there was currently no united Shi'ite opposition front or Western decision to support an alternative framework to the Hezbollah-Amal partnership, and the contacts focused primarily on examining possibilities for coordination among various figures and groups (*al-Madan*, October 2, 2026).

► A personal dispute between two Hezbollah operatives in al-Nabatiyeh developed into an armed confrontation after other operatives joined, leading to exchanges of gunfire in which several people were wounded. Hezbollah officials intervened to end the confrontation and, according to reports, detained some of those involved and dealt with the incident internally, while the Lebanese security agencies made no arrests. The incident occurred because of the reorganization of Hezbollah's military structure, in which operatives and smaller units were reportedly dispersed within villages and towns (al-Janoubia and Erem News, October 1, 2026).



Hezbollah carries the crises on its shoulders — the weapons, the south, the displaced residents and the Israeli withdrawal — while Iran pulls the strings (*al-Joumhouria*, September 26, 2026)

Hezbollah and Syria

► The Syrian ministry of the interior announced that its general intelligence and internal security forces had arrested three suspects belonging to a Hezbollah terrorist cell planning acts of sabotage in the Yarmouk Basin area of Daraa Governorate. The operation followed surveillance of the cell members' attempt to prepare rocket-launching positions, and security personnel neutralized the launchers and transferred the suspects for interrogation (SANA, September 29, 2026). Hezbollah denied the Syrian ministry of the interior's announcement linking the organization to the arrested terrorists. The organization's media relations department claimed Hezbollah had no presence whatsoever in Syrian territory and was not involved in any security or military activity in the country. It further claimed that the security, stability and safety of the Syrian people were important to Hezbollah, and the organization called on the Syrian authorities to investigate the attempts to implicate Hezbollah, blaming Israel (al-Manar, September 30, 2026).

► Syrian, American and Lebanese sources claimed that representatives of Hezbollah and the Syrian government met secretly in Turkey during September 2026 under Turkish security auspices, in an effort to reduce tensions. The report claimed the sides agreed they did not want a confrontation and Damascus made it clear that it would not intervene militarily in Lebanon to disarm Hezbollah (Reuters, October 1, 2026). The Syrian presidency categorically denied contacts or talks with Hezbollah had taken place and claimed its policy toward Lebanon was based solely on relations with the state and its institutions. The Syrian foreign ministry and the office of the Turkish president also denied the report (Lebanon Debate, October 3, 2026).

The Lebanese Army

► International assistance to strengthen the capabilities of the Lebanese army continued. As part of American assistance programs, 47 ATVs and five trucks arrived at the Port of Beirut to reinforce its operational capabilities and the preparedness of its units (Lebanese army X account, September 29, 2026). The training of army forces ahead of their deployment in the south continued at the al-Zahrani training facility established with British assistance (al-Markazia, September 29, 2026).



Vehicles from the United States (Lebanese army X account, September 30, 2026)

► The Lebanese army prevented approximately 245 kg of TNT, four explosive devices, eight detonators and wiring for their activation from being smuggled into Lebanon from Syria. The seizure followed surveillance along the northern and eastern borders, and the smugglers fled into Syrian territory when the army force arrived. The army statement did not indicate for whom the explosives were intended or the purpose of smuggling them and stated that efforts to locate those involved were continuing (Lebanese army, October 1, 2026).



**Some of the explosives seized on the Syria-Lebanon border
(Lebanese army X account, October 1, 2026)**

Preparing for the Day After UNIFIL

► Visiting the UN General Assembly, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam noted the need to prevent a security vacuum and maintain an international presence to assist the Lebanese army in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and extending state authority in the south. Salam said various formats were being considered, including a European force of French, Italian or other forces, but said Lebanon wanted any future framework to operate under the umbrella of a Security Council resolution and retain monitoring, reporting and liaison capabilities (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 23, 2026).

► According to Lebanese sources, the United States opposes the continuation of UNIFIL in its current format, but is willing to consider proposals for an alternative framework, while

Italy, France and Germany are willing to assist in formulating an arrangement which would prevent a security vacuum. Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji said that after efforts to extend UNIFIL's mandate were unsuccessful, Beirut was working to find something to replace it in the south, under UN auspices insofar as possible (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, September 23 and 25, 2026; Youssef Rajji's X account, September 25, 2026).

► UN undersecretary general for peace operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix said continued military activity, the dangers of unexploded ordnance, restrictions on movement and the fact that the Lebanese army has not yet deployed throughout all areas of the south were major challenges ahead of UNIFIL's departure. The UN said that after the mission ended it would be necessary to retain capabilities currently provided by UNIFIL, including monitoring and reporting, liaison and coordination, addressing explosive hazards and supporting the Lebanese army, adding that the alternatives for the continued implementation of Resolution 1701 were under consideration by the Security Council (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, September 25, 2026; Nidaa al-Watan, October 1, 2026).

► Hezbollah is reportedly holding contacts with China and Russia regarding the future of the international presence in the south after the end of UNIFIL's mission. The organization informed Beijing that it did not oppose an expanded Chinese presence in the south, while a delegation on its behalf visited Moscow. The contacts focus on the identity of the countries which would participate in the future arrangement and the powers granted to the force, with Hezbollah opposing a mandate which would include broad powers to search for and monitor its weapons. The organization previously expressed opposition to the participation of British and Azerbaijani forces, while China and Russia support maintaining a significant UN presence in the south after the end of the current mission (Erem News, September 30, 2026).

The Civilian Situation in South Lebanon

► Lebanese President Aoun said the continued presence of residents of the border villages defended Lebanese sovereignty and noted the state's commitment to those who remained in their villages and those who were displaced from them (Lebanese presidency X account, October 2, 2026). Lebanese Prime Minister Salam said strengthening the army alone was insufficient and rehabilitating infrastructure, restoring economic activity and livelihoods, and enabling families to return to their homes were also necessary to strengthen the state's presence and the confidence of local communities in it (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, September 23, 2026; al-Markazia, September 30, 2026).

► Visiting al-Nabatiyeh, Prime Minister Salam reported practical measures to expand the state's presence and reconstruct the area, and said the process had moved from assessing the damage and setting priorities to implementation. Government and security institutions resumed operations in the city and 23 tenders were announced, including the rehabilitation of roads and housing centers and the provision of medical and communications equipment, as well as 12 tenders planned for October 2026, including the rehabilitation of five hospitals. Projects to repair water and electricity networks, establish a new civil defense center and strengthen the presence of the internal security forces in the area are being advanced (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, October 2, 2026).



The gap between the government's efforts to strengthen the state's presence and reconstruction in the south and skepticism regarding its ability to translate its declarations into tangible change on the ground (*al-Liwa'*, October 2, 2026)

► In Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh, the first of pilot zone town, a gradual transition began from army deployment to the return of residents and civilian reconstruction. About 60 of approximately 450 families reportedly returned to the town, and by the end of September 2026 about 100 families were reported to have returned, while an estimated 85% of the homes had been destroyed. The council for the south began providing temporary housing units for families whose homes were uninhabitable, with 18 units installed in the first phase. However, shortages of electricity, water and sanitation infrastructure, along with continued security instability in the area, continue as obstacles to the large-scale return of the population (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 24, 2026; MTV, September 30, 2026).



Delivery of mobile home to Zawtar al-Gharbiyeh (al-Markazia, September 23, 2026)

The Palestinians in Lebanon

► Hamas representative in Lebanon Ahmed Abd al-Hadi rejected the demand to disarm the movement and linked it to the effort to restrict all weapons in Lebanon to the state. He said Hamas viewed the continuation of the "occupation" as justification for retaining its weapons and did not accept the demand for disarmament as part of the discussion on sovereignty and the state's monopoly on weapons (Lebanese News Agency, September 25, 2026).