Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah and Lebanon

October 12 - 19, 2026

Trending

►Tension between Hezbollah and Lebanese state institutions has risen over the issue of the state's monopoly on arms and national sovereignty.

►Lebanon is working to promote international pressure on Israel to halt its strikes and withdraw its forces ahead of direct military talks between the two countries.

►Hezbollah is trying to maintain its hold on the Shi'ite population through an aid program for displaced persons

Overview[1]

► Hezbollah admitted that the truck carrying hundreds of kilograms of explosives seized on the Damascus-Beirut highway belonged to the organization, but claimed they were intended for use against IDF forces; the organization continues to oppose the demand to disarm. The Lebanese army seized 200 kilograms of explosives smuggled across the border with Syria, and a suspicious tunnel was discovered east of Beirut.

► Hezbollah warned that if the authorities did not stop their "bullying," the situation could lead to an already-imminent eruption.

► Lebanese President Aoun said a meeting between military delegations from Lebanon and Israel would take place in Florida on October 20, 2026, during which Lebanon would demand an end to the Israeli attacks and the withdrawal of IDF forces. He noted that the framework agreement was not perfect, but had helped stop the expansion of Israeli activity.

► The complaint filed in Lebanon against its ambassador to the United States for violating the boycott law after she spoke with the Israeli ambassador, whose son was in a terrorist attack, was dropped.

[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.

► IDF forces continued ground and aerial activity against terrorist infrastructure in the security zone in south Lebanon. Hezbollah reportedly continues to organize its forces in preparation for the possibility of renewed fighting.

► Hezbollah said an aid program for displaced persons whose homes had been destroyed had been formed, but some people criticized the amount of the aid and the eligibility requirements.

► The Lebanese president and foreign minister spoke with the Iranian foreign minister and demanded Tehran stop providing aid to Hezbollah. Lebanon's central bank revoked the operating license of a major Iranian bank.

► Lebanese government officials said it was necessary to ensure an international presence in south Lebanon after the end of UNIFIL's mandate at the end of 2026.

The Lebanese Government vs. Hezbollah Regarding State Sovereignty

The Affair of the Hezbollah Truck Loaded with Explosives

► The seizure of a truck carrying hundreds of kilograms of explosives at the Dahr al-Baydar checkpoint on the Damascus-Beirut highway continues to cause tension between Hezbollah and state institutions. Hassan Fadlallah, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, confirmed the explosives belonged to Hezbollah and claimed they were for use against IDF forces in south Lebanon. He demanded that the vehicle and its contents be returned to the organization and the detained Hezbollah operatives be released (*al-Akhbar*, October 15, 2026). The Lebanese prosecutor said that any request for the return of the explosives required a formal application to the prosecution and would be examined in accordance with legal procedures. A source in the United States State Department said Secretary of State Marco Rubio told President Joseph Aoun not to return the explosives to the organization and to prosecute those responsible for transporting them (Lebanon Debate and Eram News, October 17, 2026).

► Security and political sources said investigators also sought to identify those who had ordered the shipment and those who were supposed to receive it, but no formal summonses had been issued to senior Hezbollah figures so far (Eram News and *Nidaa al-Watan*, October 17, 2026).

► Ibrahim al-Moussawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, demanded the Lebanese authorities stop pressuring Hezbollah supporters and submitting

to public pressure, warning it would lead to an already-imminent "eruption." He said that any senior official who felt he was under external pressure should resign, since otherwise he would be committing "treason." Al-Moussawi claimed that while Hezbollah's truck carrying the explosives was detained, Israel blew up houses in Zawtar al-Sharqiya, but no Lebanese official condemned it. He added that some people claimed they represented the state but should openly admit they were "corrupt failures who merely take orders" (al-Manar, October 19, 2026).

► Other Hezbollah figures and allies continued their criticism of the pressure exerted on the organization and the demand that weapons be concentrated in the hands of the state.

- Former Hezbollah minister Mustafa Bayram said the organization would adhere to its "path,"[2] criticized American pressure and attempts to repeal the law prohibiting ties with Israel and warned against attempts to drag Lebanon into an internal confrontation. He also rejected calls for the state to have exclusive possession of weapons, claiming that served the interests of Israel and the United States (*al-Diyar*, October 17–18, 2026).
- Ibrahim al-Amin, editor in chief of the Hezbollah-affiliated *al-Akhbar*, accused President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam of yielding to American and Saudi Arabian pressure to take action against Hezbollah and warned against undermining stability (*al-Akhbar*, October 16, 2026).
- Jafari Mufti Sheikh Ahmad Qabalan criticized the Lebanese leadership, defended Hezbollah's continued possession of weapons and warned that measures against the organization could lead to an internal confrontation (*al-Joumhouria*, October 16–17, 2026).
- A protest was held in Baalbek against the installation of cameras on the Dahr al-Baydar road and inspections of trucks traveling from the Beqa'a Valley to Beirut, claiming the measures were directed against Hezbollah. Demonstrators warned against escalating internal tensions and threatened to escalate measures if the "resistance"[3] was harmed (*al-Nashra*, October 16, 2026). Hezbollah operatives held

[2] The campaign to destroy the State of Israel through violence and terrorism.
[3] Hezbollah and the other terrorist organizations in Lebanon whose objective is to destroy the State of Israel.

motorcycle convoys in several Beirut neighborhoods to protest the arrests in the "truck affair" (*al-Diyar*, October 17, 2026).

► However, the affair was criticized by Hezbollah's political opponents, who demanded state authority be enforced and the investigation completed. The Kataeb Party called for the case to be transferred to the Judicial Council (*al-Seyasseh*, October 13, 2026). Lebanese MP Fouad Makhzoumi demanded that an emergency government meeting be convened (Makhzoumi's X account, October 13, 2026).

► Because of the crisis, President Joseph Aoun, concerned about escalating internal tensions, was reportedly willing to consider interim solutions which would allow the resumption of dialogue with Hezbollah. According to the Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar*, Aoun claimed his previous calls for dialogue had gone unanswered because of the organization's conditions, but he did not rule out a renewed consideration of the disputes, including Hezbollah's demand to revoke the government's decisions of March 2, 2026 concerning its military activity (*al-Akhbar*, October 15, 2026).

Hezbollah Terrorist Operatives Clash with Lebanese Security Forces

► In the upscale al-Jnah area of Beirut, a clash was reported between security forces personnel and Hezbollah-affiliated gunmen during an operation to seize substandard medications. Hezbollah denied any connection to the medication warehouse and claimed the operation was initially conducted without the required security coordination in the area. The operation was completed after coordination had been arranged (*al-Joumhouria* and al-Manar, October 16, 2026).

► A day later, during a raid by the judicial police on a medication warehouse in the Galerie Semaan area of Beirut, at the entrance to the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, members of the security forces clashed with gunmen who identified themselves as Hezbollah operatives. The forces demanded they leave and surrounded them until the arrival of Lebanese army reinforcements. Following the incident, prosecutor Ahmad Rami al-Hajj instructed military intelligence and police investigators to identify the gunmen and investigate the circumstances of the obstruction of the legal operation, with a view to taking possible measures against them (Lebanon Debate, October 17, 2026). The son of Hezbollah secretary-general Na'im Qassem, Muhammad Na'im Qassem, denied the accusations of member of parliament Paula Yacoubian, who claimed he was connected to the medication warehouse (Beirut Time, October 18, 2026).

► Given the growing tensions, the Lebanese army announced that its units conducted foot and motorized patrols and set up temporary checkpoints in Beirut and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia to maintain security and locate wanted persons (Lebanese army website, October 17, 2026).

Lebanese army patrol in Beirut (Lebanese army website, October 17, 2026)

Negotiations between Lebanon and Israel and the Framework Agreement

Preparations for the Meeting of Military Delegations

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun reported that the next round of direct talks with Israel would take place in Tampa, Florida, on October 20, 2026. Meeting in Beirut with a French delegation headed by Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, he said a Lebanese military delegation would participate in the talks and present Lebanon's demands for an end to the Israeli escalation. The Lebanese objective was to achieve results consistent with the framework agreement (Lebanese presidency X account, October 17, 2026).

► Reportedly, the sequence of the planned steps continues as the main bone of contention. Lebanon demands an end to the attacks and an Israeli withdrawal, while Israel conditions any progress on security arrangements concerning the disarmament of Hezbollah and preventing it from rebuilding its military capabilities. The real test of the talks will apparently be whether a timetable can be formulated that combines the Lebanese demand with the operation of a mechanism that will monitor compliance with decisions and address violations (Lebanon Debate, October 18, 2026).

► Sources confirmed that military delegations from Lebanon and Israel would hold technical discussions at the headquarters of the United States Central Command in Tampa, Florida, on October 21–22, 2026, with General Joseph Clearfield heading the American delegation. The Lebanese are expected to state that all reports indicate the IDF did not

comply with the requirements in the first pilot zone, and even attacked and reentered it, and that a Lebanese civilian was killed (LBCI Lebanon, October 19, 2026).

Lebanese Government's Position

► President Aoun defended the decision to hold negotiations with Israel, stressing that continued fighting could not lead to a solution. He said that while the framework agreement was not perfect, it helped curb the expansion of Israeli activity. He said Lebanon's main objectives remained achieving an Israeli withdrawal, the release of detainees, the return of displaced persons and the reconstruction of the south (Lebanese presidency X account, October 13, 2026).

► Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Mitri claimed Israel had tried, unsuccessfully, to exploit the direct talks to create an alliance with the Lebanese state against Hezbollah. He acknowledged Lebanon was caught between the Israeli demand for Hezbollah's disarmament and the organization's insistence on an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, and that prevented the negotiations from progressing. He added that the United States had not yet exerted sufficient pressure on Israel to make it implement the commitments it undertook under the framework agreement, especially withdrawal from Lebanese territory, and accused Israel of preventing the Red Cross from visiting the Lebanese detainees being held or providing their names to Lebanon (Al Jazeera, October 18, 2026).

► Lebanese foreign minister Youssef Rajji met in Moscow with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, and with Andrey Denisov, chairman of the Federation Council's foreign affairs committee. He requested Russian support for efforts to achieve an Israeli withdrawal, an end to the attacks and greater stability in Lebanon. Rajji noted the Lebanese government's commitment to extending its authority throughout the state and to the exclusive possession of weapons by its institutions, and said he hoped Russia would play a positive role in the diplomatic contacts, without making the Lebanese issue subordinate to broader regional arrangements. The Russian representatives said they supported Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, but no new practical Russian commitments were reported (Youssef Rajji's X account, October 12 and 14, 2026).

► The Hezbollah-affiliated daily *al-Akhbar* claimed concern was growing among parts of the Lebanese government over the lack of progress in the negotiations with Israel and the absence of new American commitments to advance an Israeli withdrawal. Proposals were raised to slow the pace of the talks until appropriate guarantees had been received (*al-*

Akhbar, October 15, 2026). However, President Aoun said that while regional and international developments and the elections in Israel had slowed the negotiations, they had not halted them and Lebanon continued to pursue diplomacy in accordance with its interests (Lebanese presidency X account, October 15, 2026).

► American State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said Washington continued to work to advance negotiations between Lebanon and Israel as part of the tripartite mechanism and regarded the disarmament of Hezbollah as a key condition for achieving stability and rebuilding south Lebanon. He said the United States was in contact with its partners in the Gulf states and Europe to raise billions of dollars to rebuild the affected areas and was also committed to strengthening the capabilities of the Lebanese army, adding that the issue of verifying the Israeli withdrawal was discussed in the technical talks, but did not present a timetable for the withdrawal, arranging the sequence of steps for disarmament or the provision of additional military aid (Sky News Arabia, October 13, 2026).

Hezbollah's Position

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, criticized statements and posts from official and unofficial figures who, he claimed, had "fallen into the trap of direct talks with the Zionist enemy and submission to conditions that relinquished national sovereignty and legitimize the occupation of Lebanon." He accused them of "insulting the resistance" to undermine its role and deny its achievements. He claimed the resistance was "a necessary, legitimate option for national defense" and any attempt to criticized it was "a national moral crime driven by Zionism." He claimed the legitimacy of the "resistance" was the "mother source" of all legitimacy and denying the right to resistance was "aggression against life" [*sic*] (al-Manar, October 19, 2026).

Boycotting Israel

► The complaint filed in Lebanon against Nada Hamadeh Mouawad, the ambassador to the United States, alleging a violation of the law boycotting Israel following the report of her conversation with the Israeli ambassador in Washington after his son was wounded in a terrorist attack, led to American criticism and a discussion in Lebanon over the limits of contacts with Israel. The Lebanese foreign ministry said she had acted with President Aoun's authorization and the consent of Prime Minister Nawaf Salam. The government representative at the military court, Judge Claude Ghanem, decided to drop the complaint due to the lack of a sufficient evidentiary basis for further proceedings (Sky News Arabia and

Lebanese foreign ministry X account, October 14, 2026; Lebanese presidency X account and *al-Diyar*, October 15, 2026).

► Michel Issa, the American ambassador to Lebanon held a meeting with 11 Lebanese MPs and told them that Washington regarded the delay in disarming Hezbollah as a major factor in the difficulties in implementing the ceasefire agreement. He reportedly raised the issue of repealing the 1955 law boycotting Israel because of the contacts between the countries and the legal proceedings initiated against Ambassador Mouawad. The MPS disagreed over the timing of lifting the boycott. Some were in favor of promoting the measure, while others said Lebanese leverage should not be relinquished before agreements with Israel had been reached, and its withdrawal and an end to its attacks were ensured. Reportedly, the ambassador also criticized missed previous diplomatic opportunities, including the possibility of a meeting between President Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu (*al-Akhbar,* October 16, 2026).

The Military Situation in South Lebanon

The IDF

► IDF forces continued ground and aerial activity to destroy terrorist facilities and assets located in the security zone in south Lebanon. Interceptors were launched at suspicious aerial targets and false targets in the area of operations in south Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, October 12–16, 2026). Lebanese media reported continued aerial and artillery attacks and the demolition of buildings at various locations in the south, including Kafr Tebnit, Wadi al-Saluki, Wadi al-Hujeir, al-Khiyam, Haddatha, al-Mansouri, Baraachit, Beit Yahoun and Majdal Zoun (Lebanese News Agency and Hezbollah in the Field Telegram channel, October 12–19, 2026).

Hezbollah

► Reportedly, Hezbollah continues to reorganize its forces in preparation for renewed large-scale hostilities, emphasizing building a flexible defensive array in south Lebanon. Sources said the explosives seized at Dahr al-Baydar might have been intended for military activity, including the use of explosive devices and systems operated by FPV drones, but no evidence was presented to confirm the intended use of the shipment (*al-Diyar*, October 15, 2026). Diplomatic sources said Hezbollah continued to conduct UAV training in the Beqa'a Valley region, reporting that a malfunction during one of the training exercises caused a UAV to crash in the town of Chlifa in the northern Beqa'a Valley (*al-Joumhouria*, October 15, 2026).

► Reportedly, through Qatari mediation, the possibility of an arrangement for transferring Hezbollah positions in Jabal al-Rihan to the control of the Lebanese army is being examined, similar to contacts previously held concerning the Ali al-Taher Ridge. However, no agreement or practical steps to implement the arrangement have been reported do far (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 16, 2026).

The Lebanese Government

► After the explosion of munitions in Froun and Ain Ebel killed two Lebanese and another died in an Israeli attack in Yater, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the continued attacks and unexploded ordnance left from the war endangered the lives of local residents and made it difficult for them to return to their villages and cultivate their land (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, October 12, 2026).

Challenges for Hezbollah

Hezbollah's Aid and Reconstruction Program

► Sheikh Ali Damoush, chairman of Hezbollah's executive council, announced the "promise and commitment" aid program for families whose homes were destroyed or had become uninhabitable. The program provides assistance for renting alternative housing and purchasing furniture, with a maximum of $14,000 per family in Beirut and the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia and $12,000 in other areas, according to eligibility criteria. The assistance is intended for those affected by the 2023–2024 war and the fighting in March 2026 and will be provided in four installments over a period of one year. Damoush criticized the government, claiming that it had not yet formulated an orderly mechanism to compensate the affected and rebuild their homes, and its activity focused primarily on clearing rubble and restoring infrastructure. He said responsibility for reconstruction rests with the state, alongside the organization's commitment to assist the affected population (al-Manar, October 13, 2026). Hussein al-Nimr, a Hezbollah figure in the Beqa'a Valley, said the program would also include Lebanese families displaced to Syrian territory (*al-Diyar*, October 15, 2026).

Damoush presenting the program (al-Modon, October 13, 2026)

► Some of the displaced persons in the al-Nabatiyeh and Tyre areas reportedly expressed disappointment with the amount of assistance Hezbollah intended to provide and the disparities between the regions, while families whose homes were partially damaged protested their exclusion from the program. Supporters of the organization noted its financial limitations and efforts to assist the affected (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 16, 2026).

► Hezbollah's decision to initially focus the program on families whose homes were destroyed or are uninhabitable, without rebuilding partially damaged buildings or fully settling financial commitments remaining from previous programs, also reflects the organization's desire to preserve resources in view of concern over renewed large-scale fighting, and not only its budgetary limitations (al-Diyar, October 14, 2026).

► The aid program raised questions regarding its sources of funding and the size of its budget, which allegedly amounts to $600–800 million. The organization did not publish official figures confirming the amounts or the amount of funds actually made available (*al-Akhbar*, October 14, 2026; *al-Nahar*, October 15, 2026). Lebanese MP Fouad Makhzoumi called on the Lebanese authorities to investigate the sources of the funding and the methods used to transfer the money, out of concern over the use of financial networks operating outside state oversight (Fouad Makhzoumi's X account, October 13, 2026).

► Before the announcement of Hezbollah's aid program, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam met with a joint delegation of the Hezbollah and Amal factions in the Lebanese parliament to discuss reconstruction of the areas affected by the war and assistance to displaced persons. The meeting dealt with civilian and economic issues, without discussion of the political and security disputes between the sides. Salam noted the state's budgetary limitations, stating that tenders for infrastructure reconstruction under the Lebanon Emergency Assistance Project (LEAP) were being advanced and could reach approximately $70 million by the end of 2026. Hezbollah and Amal representatives asked for a program for

the structural rehabilitation of approximately 600 residential buildings, at an estimated cost of $48 million, which would enable approximately 9,000 families to return to their homes. Salam did not commit to approving the program and said it depended on the available resources. Hezbollah representatives said the assistance the organization provided did not relieve the state of its responsibility for reconstruction (*al-Joumhouria*, October 16, 2026). Pasted text

Salam meets with a delegation of Amal and Hezbollah members of parliament (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, October 14, 2026)

Economic Pressure on Hezbollah

► American officials reportedly told the Lebanese government that Lebanon's continued progress in combating money laundering and terrorism financing could prevent a deterioration in its status on international watchlists, which also affected its ability to receive foreign investment. Lebanese Finance Minister Yassine Jaber had reservations about the government's ability to implement broad measures against Hezbollah institutions, given their political and social implications (*al-Akhbar*, October 13, 2026).

Lebanon-Iran Relations

► Lebanese President Joseph Aoun spoke by telephone with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss the current regional situation and agreed that diplomatic solutions were the best way to put an end to the current conflicts (Lebanese presidency X account, October 14, 2026).

► Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh visited Beirut and was received by senior Amal and Hezbollah figures. He met with Nabih Berri, speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and leader of the Amal movement, and with senior Shi'ites. He said Tehran remained committed to its support of Lebanon and the Lebanese arena remained a priority in any agreement reached with the United States. Khatibzadeh linked Hezbollah's continued possession of weapons to the Israeli occupation in Lebanon and said the "resistance" would

continue as long as the "occupation" continued (*al-Diyar* and *al-Akhbar*, October 14–15, 2026).

► Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji met with Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi on the sidelines of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation conference in Baghdad to discuss disputes between their countries. The meeting took place at Araghchi's request and they agreed to continue contacts. Addressing the conference, Rajji demanded Iran stop its interference in Lebanon's affairs and its supply of weapons and money to Hezbollah, while calling on Israel to stop its attacks and withdraw from Lebanese territory. Rajji said declarations of war and peace and the possession of weapons should be under the exclusive authority of the state (Youssef Rajji's X account, October 17, 2026; *Nidaa al-Watan* and Lebanon Debate, October 18, 2026).

Right: Berri and the Iranian deputy foreign minister (Iranian embassy in Lebanon X account, October 15, 2026). Left: The Lebanese and Iranian foreign ministers (Lebanon Debate, October 18, 2026)

► Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Mitri said his country had asked Iran to appoint a new ambassador to Beirut, adding that efforts were being made to resolve the diplomatic disputes between the countries. He said the objective of Lebanese decision to halt Iranian flights to Beirut was to prevent Israeli attacks on the international airport (Al Jazeera, October 18, 2026).

► Karim Souaid, governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, said the Lebanese operating license of Bank Saderat Iran, one of Iran's largest banks and subject to international sanctions, had been revoked. He said the objective was to tell the world that Lebanon was determined to protect its banking sector from any entity which could expose it to risks, as Lebanon sought to be removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list (Bloomberg, October 15, 2026). Bank Saderat, which operated on a limited scale in Lebanon, had previously been linked to suspicions concerning transfers of funds to elements close to Hezbollah, but no information was published indicating that the revocation of its license

resulted from any specific activity carried out by the organization (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 15, 2026).

Iranian funding and Hezbollah's armament vs the destruction in Lebanon and the protest of the civilian population (Sa'er Sabil's X account, October 13, 2026)

The Lebanese Army

► The Lebanese army announced that its forces in the al-Qasr-al-Hermel area on the Syria-Lebanon border had seized approximately 200 kilograms of explosives ready for smuggling from Syria into Lebanon. The smugglers reportedly fled into Syrian territory and efforts to locate and arrest them are continuing (Lebanese army X account, October 12, 2026). Prime Minister Nawaf Salam praised the army and called for the investigation to continue and for those involved to be prosecuted (Lebanese prime minister's office X account, October 13, 2026).

► Lebanese security forces began an investigation after a tunnel was discovered in a forest in the al-Fanar-al-Rouaysat area east of Beirut, an area where Hezbollah is active. Police forces located the tunnel after receiving information from a person passing through the area, army intelligence and engineering personnel were deployed to the site and initiated an investigation. When the forces arrived "an individual" was seen fleeing. The tunnel was apparently dug recently but its purpose is unknown (Janoubia and MTV Lebanon, October 19, 2026).

Entrance to the tunnel (al-Jadeed, October 19, 2026)

► EU foreign ministers approved the formation of an advisory and assistance mission in Lebanon for an initial period of three years to reinforce the capabilities of the Lebanese army and internal security forces in territorial control, border security and internal security. The mission is separate from discussions on UNIFIL's future and is not intended to replace the UN force in south Lebanon (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 12, 2026).

► The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced that Germany had allocated an additional €5 million to support the Lebanese army, bringing the total amount of German assistance under the program to €10 million. The funds will improve the living conditions of army personnel and their families regarding food, health, education and housing, as well as the purchase of equipment for clearing rubble and unexploded ordnance. The program will continue until February 2028 and will assist approximately 81,500 army personnel and their families laboring under the economic crisis and the expansion of the army's missions in south Lebanon (*al-Joumhouria*, October 15, 2026).

Preparing for The Day After UNIFIL

► During the visit to Lebanon of Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN undersecretary general for peace operations, President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri noted the need for a continued international presence in south Lebanon after UNIFIL's mandate ends on December 31, 2026. Aoun asked that a temporary extension of the operational mandate be considered out of concern that a security vacuum could develop, while Salam expressed willingness to accept a new international framework, provided it operated under a Security Council mandate with monitoring, reporting and coordination powers. Berri noted Lebanese support for the continued UN presence and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Lacroix said alternatives for a continued international presence had been presented to the Security Council and Lebanon's request would be taken into account in the discussions (Lebanese presidency and Lebanese prime minister's office X accounts, *al-Joumhouria*, October 14, 2026).

Aoun meets with Lacroix and UNIFIL force commander in south Lebanon General Diodato Abagnara (Lebanese presidency X account, October 14, 2026)

► Efforts to formulate an alternative international mechanism in south Lebanon continue, but the Security Council has not yet agreed on its nature and powers. The United States reportedly wants a mechanism limited in scope and cost, while Russia said it was willing to support a continued UN presence in the south (Eram News, October 15, 2026). French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot and French Minister for the Armed Forces Alice Rufo told President Aoun, Defense Minister Michel Menassa and Lebanese Army Commander Rodolphe Haykal that France supported the formulation of an international mechanism which would prevent a security vacuum after the end of the UNIFIL mission, and was prepared to contribute to future arrangements and to strengthening the Lebanese army. The Lebanese noted their preference for a temporary extension of the existing mandate until an alternative under UN auspices could be formulated (Lebanese presidency X account and Lebanese army website, October 17, 2026; *al-Diyar*, October 18, 2026).

► Brigadier General Andrea Bertazzo, commander of UNIFIL's western sector, said the force would continue to carry out its missions until the mandate ended on December 31, 2026. The reduction of forces would begin on January 1, 2027 and take place gradually because of the logistical and operational complexity involved in withdrawing the forces and equipment, adding that the presence of the forces would not end immediately when the mandate expired. He said the new European assistance mission was expected to focus on cooperation with the Lebanese army and state institutions, rather than fulfill UNIFIL's current role. Alessandra Viezzer, *head of cooperation at the EU delegation in Lebanon*, said it was necessary to continue humanitarian assistance and support the restoration of residents' lives in the south (*Nidaa al-Watan*, October 17, 2026).

Concern in Lebanon over the end of the UNIFIL mission without an alternative and reliance on the UN presence to maintain stability in the south (*al-Liwaa*, October 15, 2026)

The Civilian Situation in South Lebanon

► Muhammad Dargham, chairman of the union of the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia municipalities, said the union had mapped approximately 11,400 housing units which were destroyed or became uninhabitable during the 2023–2024 war. He said the rehabilitation and reinforcement of an additional 10,768 housing units was estimated to cost approximately $92 million, and partial demolition work is required in buildings containing 2,482 housing units at an estimated cost of approximately $70 million. He criticized the lack of an organized government compensation mechanism for Lebanese affected by the two wars with Israel, adding that so far only approximately $2 million had been transferred to the union to address dangerous buildings, alongside a pledge for $9 million more. He said approximately 95% of the rubble had been removed from the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, but some debris was still stored in the al-Mreijeh area because there was no permanent solution for its removal (*al-Akhbar*, October 14, 2026).

► The al-Khiyam municipality launched a program to assist small business owners affected by the war with loans on favorable terms ranging from $1,000 to $3,500, from a fund established with donations from local town residents and its residents living abroad. According to Mayor Abbas al-Sayyed Ali, the goal is to increase the fund to $300,000 and assist approximately 100 local businesses. Meanwhile, the municipality promotes employment for displaced persons through a job database and vocational training in computing, electronics and electricity (*al-Akhbar*, October 13, 2026).