

## *Lebanon: Extremism and Terrorism*

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On July 27, 2024, a rocket fired from Lebanon killed at least 12 and wounded more than 30 on a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in Israel's Golan Heights. All the fatalities were between the ages of 10 and 20. Hezbollah initially claimed responsibility for launching a barrage of Katyusha rockets and a single heavy Falaq rocket at a nearby military base, but the terror group denied responsibility for the strike on the soccer field. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed Hezbollah's denial and promised Hezbollah would "pay a heavy price, the kind it has thus far not paid." The rocket strike was Hezbollah's deadliest since it began launching rockets toward Israel in October 2023 after the October 7 Hamas terror attacks. U.S. officials warned that the attack could spark a full-on Hezbollah-Israel war. Following the Hezbollah attack, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called for Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to "pay with his head." Smotrich also said that "Lebanon as a whole has to pay the price." Nasrallah dismissed the threat, saying he is ready and waiting. U.S. officials warned that the July 27 attack could spark a new Middle East war. Israeli officials told Reuters that they were preparing for the possibility of a few days of fighting after the attack but hoped to avoid an all-out war. On July 29, an Israeli drone strike killed two and wounded three in the southern Lebanese town of Shaqra. (Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of India](#))

Since October 2023, Hezbollah has killed 23 civilians and at least 17 soldiers in Israel. Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel have also displaced approximately 80,000 people. Israeli retaliations have reportedly killed 350 Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon and more than 100 civilians. Hezbollah began its months-long rocket assault on Israel after Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel killed at least 1,200. Hezbollah's Nasrallah praised Hamas for its strike against Israel, calling it a message against normalization with Israel. On May 15, 2024, a Hezbollah drone fired two missiles at the Ilaniya military base near Tiberias in northern Israel. The attack wounded three and marked Hezbollah's deepest incursion since the start of the fighting in October 2023. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [BBC News](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Associated Press](#), [Anadolu Agency](#))

On June 5, 2024, a gunman attacked the U.S. embassy in Beirut. The Lebanese army detained the attacker after an almost half-hour-long firefight that wounded one of the embassy's Lebanese guards. The attacker was also wounded in the battle. The embassy closed for the rest of the day but planned to reopen for normal operations on June 7. Authorities identified the attacker as a Syrian national. No group initially immediately claimed responsibility, but the attacker reportedly had "ISIS" in English and "Islamic State" in Arabic written on his clothes. The Lebanese army said it was investigating possible links to ISIS. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#))

## **Overview**

Decades of sectarian fighting in Lebanon have undermined Lebanese sovereignty and allowed global extremist groups to flourish in the country. The competing interests of Lebanon's Shiite, Sunni, and Christian populations—as well as Lebanon's large number of Palestinian refugees—have spurred significant political unrest, created multiple paths to radicalization, and allowed Hezbollah—a Shiite political party and terrorist group—to emerge as the main military and political power in the country. In addition, multiple terror groups, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the 1970s and al-Qaeda in the 2000s, have used Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps as safe havens.

Clashes between the PLO and Christian militias during the 1970s sparked Lebanon's 15-year civil war, which began in 1975. During the civil war, Hezbollah successfully established itself as an alternative to the fractured Lebanese government, providing social services to Lebanon's Shiite community while simultaneously launching violent attacks on American, French, and Israeli interests in Lebanon. The war also led to the decades-long occupation of Lebanon by both Syria and Israel. Though the civil war ended in 1990, Lebanon remains a highly sectarian nation and the fallout of the war continues to affect the Lebanese political sphere. (Source: [BBC News](#))

Lebanon's government is largely divided between factions supporting the agendas of foreign powers. After Syria ended its occupation of Lebanon in 2005, pro- and anti-Syria alliances formed in Lebanon's parliament. Hezbollah and its pro-Syria March 8 alliance are backed by Iran and Syria itself, while Prime Minister Saad Hariri's Future party heads the anti-Syria March 14 alliance, which is backed by Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah has used its political influence to shape Lebanon's government and to collapse it when it acts contrary to the group's agenda. For example, in 2016, Hezbollah's political faction orchestrated the election of Lebanese President Michel Aoun, whose Free Patriotic Movement is allied with the terror group. Hariri also accuses Hezbollah and Syria of orchestrating the February 2005 assassination of his father, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. While on a trip to Saudi Arabia in November 2017, Hariri unexpectedly resigned as prime minister, accusing Hezbollah and Iran of destabilizing Lebanon. Iran and Saudi Arabia themselves also blamed each other for Lebanon's precarious political situation. However, Hariri returned to Lebanon and his post as prime minister a few weeks later. Lebanon then entered a period of political instability as successive prime ministers in 2020 and 2021 failed to form a stable government coalition, leading Lebanon deeper into political and financial crisis. In September 2021, Prime

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Minister-designate Najib Mikati announced he had formed a governing coalition. Hezbollah nominated two ministers in the new 24-member government—Agriculture Minister Abbas Al Hajj Hassan and Public Works and Transport Minister Ali Hamieh. The Hezbollah-aligned Amal movement nominated Hezbollah member Moustafa Bayram as labor minister. Hezbollah and Amal maintained their combined 27 seats in Lebanon's May 2022 parliamentary elections, though their allied Shiite political bloc lost its majority. Nonetheless, regional observers expected Lebanon's political deadlock to continue. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [Newsweek](#), [New York Times](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [National](#))

Iran cultivated a fledgling Hezbollah with training, funding, and weaponry in the 1980s, and as the region's principal Shiite power, remains Hezbollah's primary backer and patron today. Consequently, as relations between Iran and the region's Sunni powers have deteriorated, relations between Lebanon and the region's Sunni powers have deteriorated as well. In November 2017, Saudi Arabia accused Lebanon of declaring war because of Hezbollah's aggression in the region on behalf of Iran. Hezbollah has further involved Lebanon in regional conflicts with Israel and in the neighboring Syrian civil war, which have resulted in mass casualties and the destruction of Lebanese infrastructure. Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war in particular has made Lebanon a target for ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other Syrian rebel groups, which have carried out suicide bombings and other attacks on Lebanese cities and villages. (Source: [Reuters](#))

Although the Lebanese government has successfully disrupted multiple terror networks in the country, including ISIS networks, Hezbollah's involvement in Lebanese politics prevents the Lebanese government from acting to counter Hezbollah itself. However, there have been international financial sanctions designed to curb Hezbollah's activity. The U.S. government alone has designated more than 100 Lebanese financial institutions, entities, and individuals linked to Hezbollah since 2001, and in 2015, passed specific legislation—the Hizbollah International Financing Prevention Act (HIPFA)—to target Lebanese banks linked to the group. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Reuters](#))

Hezbollah is overwhelmingly supported by Lebanon's Shiite population. As of 2014, public opinion polling showed that 86 percent of Lebanese Shiites held favorable views of Hezbollah. Although the group draws little support from Lebanese Sunnis, it also draws moderate support from Lebanese Christians, over half of whom supported Hezbollah's intervention in Syria and believed that the group was protecting Lebanon from ISIS as of 2014. The Lebanese population therefore remains divided along sectarian lines regarding Hezbollah and its involvement of Lebanon in the Syrian civil war, as well as its role in Lebanon itself. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Al-Akhbar English](#))

## **Radicalization and Foreign Fighters**

### *Radicalization*

Lebanon's history of civil war, foreign occupation, and terrorism have created multiple paths toward radicalization in the country. Hezbollah has capitalized on political, religious, and social divisions to enhance its position while simultaneously functioning as part of and as an alternative to the government. Additionally, Hezbollah runs a network of schools and youth programs that aim to indoctrinate Lebanese youth in the group's ideology from a young age. Though Hezbollah is the largest and most organized extremist group operating in Lebanon, it is not the only source of radicalization in the country. Because Lebanese law limits the Lebanese army from acting in the country's 12 Palestinian refugee camps, these camps have become incubators for terrorist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Fatah al-Islam, and the Abdullah Azzam Brigades. The U.S. Department of State has classified Lebanon as a safe haven for terrorism, and lists at least nine specific terrorist groups that use the refugee camps as "safe havens to house weapons, shelter wanted criminals, and plan terrorist attacks." (Sources: [American University in Cairo](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

### *Ethnic and Religious Tensions*

Lebanon is a deeply sectarian country with 18 officially recognized religious groups. In 1932, 11 years before Lebanon achieved statehood, Shiite Muslims comprised only 19.6 percent of the population. By 2017, Shiites made up approximately 27 percent of Lebanon's approximately 6.2 million population, according to CIA demographic data. Sunni Muslims made up another 27 percent, while Christians comprised 40.5 percent. Lebanese Shiites—as well as Hezbollah itself—are concentrated in Beirut's southern suburbs, the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon, and southern Lebanon below the Litani River. According to June 2017 Israeli military estimates, Hezbollah has a military presence in 240 villages in southern Lebanon. (Sources: [Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies](#), [CIA](#), [Newsweek](#))

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Hezbollah and Iran have promoted the message that Shiites are an endangered minority outside of Iran, according to a 2016 interview with Subhi al-Tufayli, Hezbollah's first secretary-general. Tufayli has criticized Hezbollah—which he led from 1989 to 1991—for exploiting Lebanese sectarianism at Iran's behest, and accused Iran of “only investing in Lebanon's Shia to serve its own interests.” While Hezbollah enjoys widespread support from the Lebanese Shiite community, dissent does exist. Sheikh Ali al-Amine, the Shiite mufti of the Jabal Amel district of south Lebanon and a former teacher of Hezbollah leader [Hassan Nasrallah](#), has criticized the group for seeking to “capture all the Shiite sect and push it into the unknown.” (Sources: [Christian Science Monitor](#), [Middle East Eye](#), [Arab Weekly](#))

Sunni sectarianism has also resulted in violent protests against Hezbollah and the Lebanese state. In August 2014, Sunni clerics led protests against the Lebanese army's bombardment of the Lebanese border town of Aarsal, which had been infiltrated by Sunni Syrian rebels. The militant Lebanese Sunni cleric Ahmad al-Assir has accused the Lebanese military of protecting Hezbollah. Throughout 2012 and 2013, Assir led protests against Hezbollah that drew thousands of Lebanese Sunnis. After the government accused him of inciting violence against the army, Lebanese security arrested Assir in 2015 as he was trying to escape the country. He was convicted, and sentenced to death by a Lebanese court in September 2017. (Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Guardian](#), [Reuters](#), [Al-Monitor](#))

### *Palestinian Refugees and the PLO*

Lebanon is host to approximately 450,000 Palestinian refugees. Though Palestinian refugees make up about 10 percent of the Lebanese population, the Lebanese government does not permit Palestinians to attain Lebanese citizenship or work in at least 20 professions, according to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). In 2001, the Lebanese parliament forbade Palestinians from owning property. According to UNRWA, 53 percent of the Palestinian population in Lebanon lives in the country's 12 registered refugee camps, which are subject to overcrowding, poor maintenance, and unemployment. Extremist groups have capitalized on Palestinian despair to breed radicalism and extract support. (Sources: [UNRWA](#), [Reuters](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its associated factions began using the Lebanese refugee camps as bases of operations as early as 1968. Though the PLO leadership at the time was based in Jordan, PLO guerillas carried out several cross-border attacks into Israel from Lebanon. After Jordan forced the PLO out of the country in September 1970, the PLO leadership fled to Lebanon. Approximately 150,000 Palestinian refugees also flooded into Lebanon from Jordan in the 1970s. The PLO conscripted young Palestinians within the refugee camps and turned public buildings into storehouses for weapons. The group also set up its own security checkpoints and assumed responsibility for the security of the camps. Lebanese police refused to confront PLO guerillas, and Lebanese businesses reported higher rates of armed robbery by Palestinians in the 1980s. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC](#), [Christian Science Monitor](#), [New York Times](#))

On May 8, 1970, members of the PLO faction the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) crossed from Lebanon into Israel. On May 12, they attacked an Israeli school bus and killed 12 people—mostly children. Israel retaliated by shelling four Lebanese villages, killing 13. In May 1974, DFLP members again crossed into Israel from Lebanon and took 85 hostages at a school in Ma'alot, ultimately killing 26 and wounding more than 70 others. The attack resulted in an Israeli strike against seven Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon that killed 27. Palestinian attacks on Israel continued, and Palestinian guerillas also began to clash with Lebanese militant organizations that believed that the PLO was attempting to create its own state within Lebanon. These sectarian clashes between Palestinian guerillas and Christian Lebanese militants led to the Lebanese civil war in 1975. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC](#), [BBC](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Times of Israel](#))

The PLO's attacks led to two Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. By 1982, almost 15,000 PLO guerillas were based in Lebanon. Israeli forces invaded Lebanon on June 6, 1982, and forced the PLO into the western half of Beirut. On August 5, 1982, U.S. President Ronald Reagan called on the PLO to withdraw from Lebanon. By September 1, 1982, PLO forces had left Lebanon. Reagan praised the successful “evacuation” of the PLO as a “peaceful step.” (Sources: [United Nations](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

Nonetheless, extremism and factional fighting have continued to flourish in the Palestinian refugee camps. Today, the main governing Palestinian body—the Palestinian Authority—and its main faction, Fatah, are responsible for security in Lebanon's refugee camps. Usbat al-Ansar (the League of Partisans) is a Sunni Palestinian militant group that formed in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps in the 1980s in opposition to the PLO and regional Arab powers. Iran and Hezbollah initially supported Usbat al-Ansar until the group severed ties after the 1991 assassination of its founder, Hisham Sharaydi. In 2002, Jund al-Sham (the Army of Greater Syria) formed in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp as a splinter group from Usbat al-Ansar. Jund al-Sham is responsible for bombings around Lebanon, both in the refugee camps and in city centers. In May 2006, the group clashed with Fatah security forces in the Ain al-Hilweh camp, which the group attempted to take over in 2015. In December 2016, UNRWA suspended its

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operations in the Ain al-Hilweh camp because of violence between Palestinian factions. In 2017, Jund al-Sham continued to challenge Fatah in multiple camps. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Maan](#), [Washington Post](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [UNRWA](#), [Daily Star](#))

An influx of Syrian Palestinian refugees has further swelled the camps' populations. By December 2016, Lebanon had received more than 56,000 new Palestinian refugees from Syria. (Sources: [Maan](#), [ReliefWeb](#))

### *The Lebanese Civil War*

Lebanon's civil war began with armed clashes between the PLO and the Christian Phalange militia affiliated with Lebanon's 'izb al-Kat?'ib al-Lubn ?n?ya, a.k.a. Kataeb political party. In April 1975, the Christian Phalange movement alleged that Palestinian guerillas had attacked a church in the Beirut suburb of Ain el-Rammaneh and killed a bodyguard of Kataeb leader Pierre Gemayel. In retaliation, Phalangist gunmen attacked a bus carrying mostly Palestinian passengers, killing 27. Dubbed the Ain el-Rammaneh Incident, the attacks sparked a series of sectarian clashes and the beginning of Lebanon's 15-year civil war, which pitted Shiite, Sunni, and Christian militias against each other for control of Lebanon. The Lebanese civil war gave way to two major occupations of Lebanon by Israel and Syria. Though it officially ended in 1990, the civil war created divisions in Lebanon that have continued to affect Lebanese politics and security ever since. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Daily Star](#), [BBC](#), [Al-Monitor](#))

Hezbollah's origins are in the Lebanese civil war. The Amal Shiite political party, which was created in 1974, formed a militia that also fought in the war. Future Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah initially joined Amal in 1978, but broke away in 1982 to join a Shiite network being cultivated by Iranian Ayatollah [Ruhollah Khomeini](#). In 1982, this network formed the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO), a precursor to Hezbollah. Under Iranian direction, the IJO claimed credit for the October 23, 1983, bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 U.S. service personnel, as well as the September 20, 1984, bombing of the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut, which killed 24. After receiving Khomeini's approval, Hezbollah officially announced its establishment in 1985, pledging allegiance to the Iranian supreme leader. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [CNN](#), [United Nations](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [Los Angeles Times](#))

In 1976, the Lebanese army began to fragment. General Saad Hadad broke away from the main Lebanese army to form the South Lebanon Army (SLA). With Israeli funding and weaponry, the SLA fought against PLO and Shiite militants and began capturing territory in southern Lebanon. SLA fighters claimed loyalty to Lebanon and defended their actions in international media as protecting their villages from Palestinian and Shiite militias. On April 18, 1979, Hadad declared a nine-mile area of southern Lebanon controlled by his forces to be Independent Free Lebanon, which did not receive international recognition. Antoine Lahad took command of the SLA after Hadad's death on January 15, 1984. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [New York Times](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#))

The Lebanese civil war also gave way to two major occupations of the country that have continued to influence and divide Lebanese politics ever since. In June 1976, Syria entered Lebanon as part of an Arab peacekeeping mission. That October, the Arab League approved Syria's continued occupation of Lebanon in an endeavor to maintain peace between the warring factions. In addition to the Syrian occupation, Israel also occupied Lebanon twice during the civil war. On March 14, 1978, Israel launched Operation Litani, invading Lebanon to push back the PLO to north of the Litani River. The invasion was in response to an attack carried out in Israel three days prior known as the Coastal Road Massacre, in which PLO guerrillas murdered 38 people on a bus, as well as to recent the shelling of northern Israel by the PLO and other Palestinian groups. After Israeli forces, aided by Phalangist militants, blockaded Beirut in order to drive out the PLO that summer, the United Nations enacted a ceasefire and created the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to monitor Israel's withdrawal. However, on June 6, 1982, Israel again invaded Lebanon in response to Palestinian guerilla attacks and the attempted assassination of Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [ABC News](#), [BBC News](#), [United Nations](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#))

In 1985, Israel mostly withdrew from Lebanon but established a security zone in the south of the country in coordination with the SLA in order to prevent attacks into its territory. The SLA acted as an Israeli proxy and continued to violently clash with Hezbollah and other Islamic militias in Lebanon during and after the civil war. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#))

In September 1989, Lebanese parliamentarians met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and negotiated the Taif Agreement to end the civil war. The contentious negotiations resulted in widespread protests in Lebanon as various factions decried any loss of power. The agreement reorganized the government to allow it to extend its authority over the entirety of the country and called for the disarmament of all militias in the country and the withdrawal of Israeli forces. The agreement also affirmed the "special relationship" between Lebanon and Syria and called for neither country to harm the security of the other. (Sources: [United Nations](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

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Despite the Taif Agreement, neither Israel nor Syria withdrew their forces from Lebanon. Israel argued that its security zone was necessary to prevent militant attacks across the border, while Syria argued that its forces balanced the Israeli occupation and maintained security in Lebanon. In 1992, Lebanon held its first free elections since before the start of the war. Hezbollah and Amal both entered Lebanese politics during these elections, and Amal leader Nabih Berri has remained Lebanon's parliamentary speaker since 1992. Nonetheless, Amal occasionally joined Hezbollah in attacks against Israeli forces and SLA positions throughout the 1990s, which often drew deadly responses. (Sources: [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#), [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [Lebanese Republic National Assembly](#))

In 1999, newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak pledged to withdraw his country from Lebanon by July 2000. SLA militiamen sought asylum in Israel out of fear that Hezbollah would slaughter them without Israeli protection. The SLA began withdrawing from its own positions north of the Israeli security zone. In June 1999, Hezbollah attacked SLA and Israeli soldiers after the SLA withdrew from around the village of Jezzine. Israel completed its withdrawal on May 23, 2000. The next morning, Hezbollah forces entered the Lebanese town of Marjayoun, the former base of the SLA. Hezbollah tore down a statue of SLA founder Hadad and ransacked the homes of SLA leaders. More than 3,000 SLA members fled into Israel, while several hundred turned themselves over to Lebanese authorities to avoid Hezbollah retaliation. (Sources: [Los Angeles Times](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#))

Immediately following the Israeli withdrawal, Hezbollah fighters took control of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah set up medical clinics, architectural firms, and other social services to fill the vacuum left by the Israeli withdrawal and the Lebanese state's inability to extend its own control. As a result, Hezbollah built grassroots support in southern Lebanon that allowed it to continue to grow militarily and maintain a qualitative military edge over the Lebanese Armed Forces. Calls for Syria's withdrawal grew stronger in Lebanon following Israel's withdrawal. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [ABC News](#), [New York Times](#))

### *Hezbollah*

The Shiite terrorist group [Hezbollah](#) ("the Party of God") emerged in Lebanon in 1982. Its ideology was modeled on Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 Iranian revolution. Iran viewed Hezbollah as an opportunity to extend its influence and cultivated the group with funding, training, and weaponry through the [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#) (IRGC). Hezbollah was officially founded in February 1985, when it pledged loyalty to Khomeini, demanded the expulsion of foreign forces from Lebanon, called for Israel's destruction, and called for the creation of an Islamic state in Lebanon. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Hezbollah led a guerilla campaign against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon during Israel's 18-year occupation. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Atlantic](#), [CIA](#), [Arab Weekly](#), [CIA](#), [Al-Akbar English](#), [Frontline](#), [United Nations](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#))

Hezbollah and its Loyalty to the Resistance political bloc first entered Lebanon's parliament in the Lebanese elections of 1992, which were the country's first free elections since 1972. Hezbollah has maintained a political presence in the Lebanese government ever since. Though it has not yet won a mandate to lead the Lebanese government, Hezbollah and its March 8 parliamentary alliance are strong enough to ensure representation in Lebanese coalition governments. In 2009, for example, the opposing Future movement and its anti-Syrian March 14 alliance won a plurality in Lebanon's parliamentary elections, but the political reality forced Future to include Hezbollah in the formation of a unity government. Hezbollah then collapsed the unity government two years later by resigning from it. (Sources: [United Press International](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

After former Lebanese President Michel Suleiman's term ended in May 2014, Hezbollah blocked the parliament from electing a new president for two years until it could guarantee the election of its political ally Michel Aoun, whom Nasrallah called Hezbollah's "natural candidate." In October 2016, Lebanon's political parties acceded to Hezbollah's demands in a power-sharing agreement that led to Aoun's election as president and the appointment of Saad Hariri of the anti-Syria Future party as prime minister. Aoun publicly thanked Nasrallah and Hezbollah for aiding his election. Lebanon held parliamentary elections in May 2018 for the first time since 2009. Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 seats in Lebanon's 128-seat parliament and then delayed the formation of a new governing coalition for eight months to ensure an influential position in the new government. On January 31, 2019, Lebanese leaders announced a new government that awarded Hezbollah control over Lebanon's health ministry, which has the fourth-largest budget of any government ministry and gave Hezbollah a larger sphere of influence over Lebanese daily life. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Ya Libnan](#), [Daily Star](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Daily Star](#), [Daily Star](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Daily Star](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Associated Press](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

On October 29, 2019, Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned after two weeks of anti-government protests that began after his government proposed a 20 percent tax on phone calls using the messaging app WhatsApp. Thousands of Lebanese called for the resignation of the government and the entire ruling political class. At one point during the protests, Hezbollah supporters attacked protesters, claiming they would not allow criticism of Nasrallah, who accused foreign powers of supporting the protests. Protesters praised Hariri's resignation but vowed to remain until all of their



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demands were met. (Sources: [Forbes](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Hezbollah is able to maintain a strong base of support and continually gain recruits by targeting Lebanese youth. Hezbollah runs networks of schools, camps, and religious programs throughout Lebanon, and even has a youth wing called the “Mahdi Scouts”—similar in organization to the American Boy Scouts—that seeks to indoctrinate youth in the group’s ideology. From a very young age, Lebanese youth are therefore introduced to anti-Israel sentiments and inculcated with the notion that Hezbollah is an important patron of Lebanese society. Hezbollah recruiters also travel across Lebanon, where they seek out candidates with the desired values of piety and modesty and cultivate relationships with potential recruits, who then begin a regiment of religious education and undergo basic military training. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [American University in Cairo](#), [Cairo Review of Global Affairs](#))

As the strongest military power in Lebanon, Hezbollah has also instigated deadly conflicts, including the 2006 war against Israel. In July 2006, Hezbollah launched a cross-border attack into Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and capturing two others. In response, Israel launched a 34-day war that devastated Lebanon’s civilian population. The war destroyed 130,000 Lebanese homes, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless. More than 1,100 Lebanese people—the majority of whom were civilians—died in the conflict. International NGOs such as Human Rights Watch reported a “handful of instances” of Hezbollah using Lebanese civilians as human shields. U.N. humanitarian relief coordinator Jan Egeland accused Hezbollah of “cowardly blending” among Lebanese civilians and of being “proud because they lost very few fighters and that it was the civilians bearing the brunt of this.” The war ended with U.N. Resolution 1701, which reaffirmed previous resolutions demanding Hezbollah’s disarmament and charged UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces with ensuring that no unauthorized weapons are present in southern Lebanon. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [U.N. Security Council](#), [Associated Press](#))

Hezbollah’s weapons remain a divisive issue for the Lebanese government despite multiple international treaties and resolutions calling for the disarming of all militias in Lebanon. Nonetheless, Hezbollah has publicly maintained its armament in Lebanon, arguing it is for the country’s defense. In June 2009, Aoun argued that “Hezbollah’s weapons will no longer be a problem when the causes behind its existence disappear....” In November 2009, Hezbollah released an updated political manifesto, which declared the necessity of its arms. On May 21, 2023, ahead of the anniversary of Israel’s May 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah invited Lebanese and foreign journalists to a military demonstration in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah used live ammunition to show off heavy weapons, missiles, and drones. The exercise took place in a Hezbollah military camp in the Aaramta area, north of the Litani River, where UNIFIL does not have a mandate to operate. In response to questions from U.S. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wronecka, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned any action that “undermines the authority and sovereignty of the state.” He said the issue of Hezbollah’s weapons requires a “comprehensive national consensus, and it must be a priority for the upcoming phase.” (Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Arab News](#))

Hezbollah has at times also turned its weapons against the Lebanese state. In May 2008, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora banned Hezbollah’s private telecommunications network. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah called the move an act of war, and Hezbollah responded by launching weeks of violent clashes in and around Beirut, capturing sections of the city and attacking media offices affiliated with the ruling Future movement. The Lebanese government labeled Hezbollah’s actions as an attempted coup. The fighting ended with a Qatari-negotiated agreement that brought Hezbollah into a unity government and gave it veto power. Lebanese international law researcher Yara Saab described the conflict to BBC News as a “prime indication” of Hezbollah’s “readiness to use violence in order to achieve political gains.” (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

Hezbollah has also lent its support to Syria in the country’s civil war. In August 2012, the U.S. government sanctioned Hezbollah for its support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and said that Hezbollah has “directly trained Syrian Government personnel inside Syria” and “facilitated the training of Syrian forces by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.” The United States also accused Hezbollah of playing “a substantial role in efforts to expel Syrian opposition forces from areas within Syria.” (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

Hezbollah’s campaign in Syria has spilled over into Lebanon. The group has clashed with the [Nusra Front \(Jabhat Fateh al-Sham\)](#), ISIS, and other rebel forces within Lebanon’s borders. In June 2013, Syrian rebels fired 18 rockets and mortars into eastern Lebanon. A Hezbollah member and 17 Nusra Front fighters were reportedly killed in ensuing battles inside Lebanon. In May 2015, Hezbollah and Nusra Front fighters fought in eastern Lebanon, about 30 miles from the Syrian border. Anti-Syrian militant groups have also set off suicide bombs in Hezbollah strongholds in southern and eastern Lebanon, which have killed Lebanese civilians. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#))

Hezbollah’s intervention in the Syrian war has inflamed Lebanon’s own sectarian divisions. In 2012, Lebanese Sunni militants armed with black-market weapons began clashing with militias comprised of Lebanese Alawite supporters of Assad. In 2013, Sunni militias took control of portions of the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli and executed Alawite civilians in the street. Bassem Shabb, a Lebanese parliamentarian of the anti-Syrian Future movement, warned in 2014 that the Syrian civil war threatened lasting peace in Lebanon. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Reuters](#))

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During the summer of 2017, Hezbollah fought a major ground offensive to push Syrian rebel forces away from the Lebanese border. The Lebanese army reportedly played a supporting role, which Hezbollah credited as contributing to its eventual victory. Hezbollah and the Syrian army fought against the Nusra Front in the Lebanese-Syrian border area, eventually expelling the group from the mountainous Lebanese territory of Jund Aarsal. In September 2017, Hezbollah declared victory in the Syrian war. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Daily Star](#), [Reuters](#))

In addition to its involvement in Syria, Hezbollah is also suspected of aiding Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen's civil war. In December 2017, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri condemned Hezbollah's involvement in foreign conflicts: "Lebanon can no longer tolerate the interferences of a party like Hezbollah in the affairs of the Gulf countries.... We must not pay for the actions of Hezbollah." Also that month, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir declared that Lebanon had been "hijacked" and would "only survive or prosper if you disarm Hezbollah." (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

Hezbollah is also suspected of coopting the Lebanese export industry to serve its smuggling activities. According to Saudi security expert Muhammad al-Qubban, 75 percent of the shipments that Lebanon sends to the Gulf contain drugs or weapons and other prohibited items. In July 2020, Italian authorities seized \$1.1 billion worth of Captagon pills arriving at an Italian port from Syria. Though Italian authorities initially suspected ISIS of responsibility for the drugs, the quantity raised suspicions of other groups with larger production capabilities. In April 2021, Saudi authorities seized more than 5 million Captagon pills hidden in a pomegranate shipment from Lebanon. In response, Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Lebanese produce. Sources told regional media there was no doubt Hezbollah was responsible. Hezbollah has denied any involvement in the drug trade, and Nasrallah has publicly stated it is "religiously banned to manufacture, sell, buy, smuggle and consume" drugs. Nonetheless, regional analysts and legal authorities accuse Hezbollah of profiting from international drug smuggling. According to a 1994 FBI report, Hezbollah's religious authorities had ruled drug trafficking was "morally acceptable if the drugs are sold to Western infidels as part of a war against the enemies of Islam." (Sources: [Media Line](#), [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Daily Star](#), [Al-Arabiya](#), [BBC News](#))

The U.S. government has passed a number of sanctions on Lebanese businesses and individuals tied to Hezbollah. In December 2015, the U.S. government passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act (HIFPA) of 2015. The legislation makes disrupting Hezbollah's financial and logistics networks a U.S. policy goal by utilizing "diplomatic, legislative, and executive avenues to combat Hizballah's criminal activities in order to block that organization's ability to fund its global terrorist activities." The legislation threatens sanctions on any financial institution that deals with Hezbollah or its Al-Manar media arm. Lebanese lawmakers have sought to lobby Congress to loosen sanctions against Hezbollah because of the threat to Lebanon's economy. Hariri has argued that sanctions on financial institutions linked to Hezbollah would increase economic hardships for Lebanese citizens. The U.S. government passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act in October 2018, targeting government agencies and foreign persons that knowingly support the terror group. In July 2019, the United States for the first time sanctioned two Lebanese legislators affiliated with Hezbollah. In November 2020, the U.S. government sanction-designated Gibran Bassil, president of the Hezbollah-allied Free Patriotic Movement. The government accused Bassil of corruption and helping "to erode the foundation of an effective government that serves the Lebanese people." Bassil had previously told media that working with Hezbollah was an unavoidable political reality in Lebanon. (Sources: [Congress.gov](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

Hariri and Saudi Arabia have also accused Iran of attempting to use Hezbollah to influence the Lebanese government and "kidnap" Lebanon from the Arab world. In December 2017, the Arab League issued a statement accusing Hezbollah of terrorism and denouncing Iranian interference in Arab countries. Lebanese President Michel Aoun defended Hezbollah as necessary to Lebanon's defense. Iran and Hezbollah insisted that Saudi Arabia had pushed Hariri's 2017 resignation in order to damage Hezbollah, though Saudi Arabia and Hariri both denied the charge. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

On October 17, 2019, thousands of Lebanese citizens staged anti-government protests across Lebanon after the government proposed a 20 percent tax on phone calls using the messaging app WhatsApp. The government quickly abandoned the plan, but protests continued, accusing the government of widespread corruption and calling for the resignation of the entire ruling political class. On October 28, Hezbollah supporters reportedly attacked protesters in Beirut. Security forces responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. Hariri resigned on October 29 after two weeks of protests, but protesters vowed to remain until all their demands were met. On November 24, Lebanese security forces fired tear gas amid confrontations in central Beirut between supporters of Hezbollah and Amal. The violence began when supporters of Hezbollah and the other main Shiite faction, Amal, attacked protesters who had blocked a main Beirut thoroughfare known as the Ring Road—a move the protesters said was aimed at exerting pressure on politicians to form a new government. (Sources: [Forbes](#), [New York Times](#), [CNN](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Huffington Post](#))

On December 19, 2019, Aoun appointed university professor Hassan Diab as the country's new prime minister following extensive parliamentary negotiations. On January 22, 2020, Diab convened his new government, which included two Hezbollah ministers and members of Hezbollah-allied parties. Hezbollah received the portfolios for the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Industry. Hariri's Future Movement and other pro-Western parties remained outside of the cabinet, drawing international concern that Hezbollah's agenda would dominate Lebanon's new cabinet. (Sources:

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[New York Times](#), [NBC News](#), [Gulf News](#), [Reuters](#))

Despite the formation of the new government, protests continued across the country as it grappled with a national quarantine amid the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020. Lebanon declared a state of emergency on March 16 and ordered a two-week nationwide lockdown. Throughout March, protesters broke curfews to protest the government's failure to provide financial aid to businesses that have closed as a result of the lockdown, which exacerbated Lebanon's financial crisis. Prison riots also erupted as prisoners protested overcrowding and health conditions. Hezbollah deployed hundreds of doctors, nurses, and paramedics throughout Lebanon to combat the outbreak. Pro-reform Lebanese protesters expressed concern that Hezbollah would use the health crisis to further consolidate power in the government. (Sources: [Middle East Monitor](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Voice of America](#))

On August 4, 2020, an explosion in Beirut's port killed at least 200 people, wounded more than 6,000 others, and destroyed much of the port. Lebanese officials suspect the explosion was caused by negligence in the storage of the explosive fertilizer chemical ammonium nitrate but did not immediately rule out the possibility of terrorism. Suspicion also fell upon Hezbollah, which allegedly used multiple buildings in the port for illegal drug smuggling and other criminal activities. Hezbollah reportedly controls buildings in the port housing weapons and fireworks and some regional intelligence officials suspect a fire at one of the Hezbollah warehouses sparked the explosions. Hezbollah had previously threatened to target ammonium nitrate storage facilities at Israel's ports. Hezbollah had also reportedly sought to use Lebanon's agricultural ministry to import ammonium nitrate into Lebanon from Syria. Anti-government protests spread across Beirut the weekend after the blast, leading two government ministers and seven members of parliament to resign. On August 10, Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab dissolved the government after attributing the explosion to widespread corruption. On August 31, Aoun designated Lebanon's ambassador to Germany, Mustapha Adib, as the country's new prime minister after Adib received the backing of several former prime ministers, including Hariri. Adib's attempts to quickly form a government were delayed by Hezbollah's demands for several ministries. Adib resigned in September 2020. Parliament named Hariri as the new prime minister the following month. A January 2021 U.K. investigation found that the ammonium nitrate had been imported to Beirut through a suspected British shell company linked to Syrian ISIS financier George Haswani, who had previously been designated for supporting both the Assad regime in Syria and ISIS. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Fox News](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

In February 2021, Lebanon's justice minister appointed Judge Tarek Bitar to investigate the explosion. Hezbollah has called for Bitar's removal, accusing him of being politically motivated. On September 23, 2021, Wafiq Safa, the head of Hezbollah's Liaison and Coordination Unit, reportedly sent a threatening message to Bitar through an anonymous journalist. According to the message, Hezbollah has "had enough of you; we will go to the end of the legal path, and if that does not work, we will remove you by force." In October 2021, Bitar summoned for questioning multiple former government ministers, including two allied with Hezbollah. On October 14, at least seven people were killed during gun battles that erupted during Hezbollah-led protests calling for Bitar's removal. Hezbollah's opposition to Bitar's investigation again paralyzed Lebanon's government as Hezbollah's cabinet ministers have sought to open debate on removing Bitar. Bitar's investigation has been suspended multiple times amid lawsuits from Hezbollah allies. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [France 24](#), [France 24](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Arabiya](#))

In May 2021, Israeli television station Kan reported Hezbollah had dug a series of tunnels hundreds of kilometers long from Beirut to southern Lebanon. According to the report, Hezbollah dug the tunnels to quickly move its forces to southern Lebanon for a confrontation with Israel. Hezbollah reportedly built the tunnels at the same time it built six tunnels into Israel, which Israel destroyed in 2018. On May 10, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad began launching thousands of rockets toward Israel from the Gaza Strip, prompting Israeli retaliatory strikes. On May 13, militants fired three rockets toward Israel from near the Rashidiyah Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. The rockets fell into the sea. Hezbollah denied responsibility. A senior Lebanese political official later told Britain's *Asharq al-Awsat* newspaper that Hezbollah had no interest in getting involved in the confrontation between Israel and militants in the Gaza Strip. The official confirmed ongoing coordination between UNIFIL, the Lebanese army, and Hezbollah and the Amal movement, which largely control southern Lebanon. (Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#), [Asharq al-Awsat](#))

### *Hezbollah and Lebanon's Political Crisis*

After almost nine months of failing to form a government, Hariri resigned as prime minister on July 15, 2021. Later that month, Hezbollah supported the parliamentary nomination of former prime minister Najib Mikati to be the new prime minister. Mikati pledged to form a government of technocrats, while Hezbollah claimed it would not stand in his way. The World Bank has blamed Lebanon's economic collapse on the political stalemate. Lebanese leaders agreed on a new Mikati-led government on September 10, 2021. Hezbollah nominated two ministers in the new 24-member government and received a third nomination from the Amal party. (Sources: [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [National](#))



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In June 2021, the European Union voted in favor of travel bans and asset freezes for Lebanese politicians accused of corruption and obstructing efforts to form a government, financial mismanagement, and human rights abuses. Some voices in the European Parliament viewed the formation of a government in September 2021 as an opportunity to loosen sanctions on Lebanon. However, the majority of the parliament voted on September 16, 2021, to maintain the pressure of sanctions against Lebanon until the new government proves itself to be functional. A majority of the parliament voted for the non-binding resolution recognizing Lebanon's financial crisis is man-made and warning "the introduction of targeted sanctions for obstructing or undermining the democratic political process remains an option." The resolution also recognized Hezbollah's role in destabilizing Lebanon through the control of key ministries in the government, its terrorist designation by several EU member states, and Hezbollah's ideological allegiance to Iran. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [European Parliament](#))

Hezbollah has taken advantage of Lebanon's economic crisis to bring the country further under Iran's influence. On August 19, 2021, Hezbollah announced it would begin importing fuel from Iran to distribute in Lebanon to alleviate the country's fuel crisis. The first of three Iranian ships carrying fuel departs Iran that day. Nasrallah warned the United States and Israel against interfering with the shipments. After Hezbollah's announcement, the United States announced it is in talks with Egypt and Jordan to provide alternative sources of fuel to Lebanon. U.S. officials and Hariri both warned the Iranian fuel risks triggering further sanctions on Lebanon and deepening the country's economic crisis. On August 27, Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati stated he is against anything that would harm Lebanon's interests and requested critics of the Hezbollah-Iran fuel deal provide alternatives. As of September 1, the caretaker Lebanese government reported it had received no requests for Iran to export fuel to Lebanon. Regional media reports accused Iran of attempting to enshrine Nasrallah as Lebanon's savior while also seeking to bypass U.S. sanctions. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Bloomberg News](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

Hezbollah's continued prominence in the Lebanese government has caused rifts between Lebanon and other Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia. On October 31, 2021, Saudi Arabia expelled the Lebanese ambassador and banned all imports from Lebanon in response to Lebanese Information Minister George Kordahi referring to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the aggressors in war in Yemen. Kordahi also claimed the Iran-backed Houthi militia, which has targeted Saudi and Yemeni civilians, has acted in self-defense. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Kuwait took similar actions in solidarity with Saudi Arabia. Speaking with Saudi media on October 31, Saudi Prince Faisal bin Farha blamed the crisis in Lebanon on "the dominance of Iranian proxies over the scene." The following day, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib rejected Saudi demands to reduce Hezbollah's role in Lebanon. He told Reuters, "Hezbollah is a component of politics in Lebanon. It has a regional armed dimension, yes, but this is beyond what we can resolve." On November 3, the political bureau of Lebanon's Kataeb party issued a statement blaming Lebanon's rift with Saudi Arabia on the government's "total surrender to the will of Hezbollah." (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#), [Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International](#))

In January 2022, Hezbollah and its allies withdrew their objections and Lebanon's government convened for the first time in months to discuss the country's budget. That month, Saad Hariri announced he would not run in Lebanon's upcoming May 2022 parliamentary elections and called on his Future Movement party not to run either. The decision removed Lebanon's largest Sunni party from the electoral field, prompting fears of a "political void" for Sunni representation. Lebanese voters and international observers also expressed fears of Hezbollah—and Iran—gaining greater influence in the Lebanese government. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#))

In a May 2022 report to the U.N. Security Council, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Hezbollah's control "of sizeable and sophisticated military capabilities outside the control of the government of Lebanon remains a matter of grave concern." He called on the Lebanese state to "increase its efforts to achieve a monopoly over the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout its territory." Guterres further called on countries in the region with close ties to Hezbollah—primarily Syria and Iran—to encourage the group to disarm and become "a solely civilian political party." Guterres warned Lebanon's worsening political polarization has resulted in the Lebanese people "struggling daily to meet basic essential needs." A May 11 report by U.N. Special Envoy on Poverty Olivier de Schutter accused the Lebanese government and Central Bank of the "callous destruction" of Lebanon's economy by failing to secure the rights of Lebanese to social security, health care, and an adequate standard of living. De Schutter accused the government and the Central Bank of human rights violations by impoverishing the Lebanese people. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [United Nations](#), [Reuters](#))

Following Lebanon's May 15, 2022, parliamentary elections, Hezbollah maintained its 13 seats in Lebanon's parliament, but its allied political bloc won only 61 seats and lost its majority in the 128-member parliament. The Hezbollah-allied Amal Party maintained its 14 seats. The Hezbollah-allied Free Patriotic Movement of President Michel Aoun lost three seats, dropping to 18. FPM party leader Gebran Bassil blamed the losses on outside forces, writing on Twitter the FPM is not at war with other parties but "with America, Israel and its allies." The Lebanese Forces party and an allied independent won 19 seats to become the largest party in the parliament. Lebanese analysts expected the country's political paralysis to continue as tensions remained high between the Lebanese Forces and Hezbollah. In a sign of Hezbollah's continued but mixed influence, Amal party head Nabih Berri won reelection as parliamentary speaker on May 31, but by only a 65-vote majority. In 2018, he received 98 votes to win the

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position. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Anadolu Agency](#))

Following the parliamentary elections, Christian Forces Party head Samir Geagea told Agence France-Presse, “All strategic decision-making should return to the Lebanese state... and security and military matters should be handled exclusively by the Lebanese army.” While the Christian Forces Party’s alliance did not win an outright majority, the reduced showing of Hezbollah and its allies presented Hezbollah opponents an opportunity to ponder extricating the Iran-backed terror group from control over Lebanese politics. Lebanon’s parliament designated Mikati as its choice for prime minister on June 23, marking his fourth nomination to the position. At the end of June, Mikati submitted a draft coalition proposal to Aoun, who rejected the proposal. Lebanon had yet to form a new governing coalition as of July 19, prompting a delegation from the American Task Force for Lebanon to emphasize the importance of “establishing a social economic program before it is too late.” Lebanon’s caretaker government planned to meet on December 5 for the first time since the elections but had no plans to address Lebanon’s ongoing financial crisis. (Sources: [Agence France-Presse](#), [Foreign Policy](#), [Reuters](#), [Arab News](#), [Reuters](#))

Lebanon’s political stalemate also stalled the selection of a new president after Aoun’s term concluded on October 31, 2022. Lebanon’s president installs a new government’s ministers, and the parliament is responsible for electing the president. But Hezbollah and its allies prevented a quick selection of a successor to Aoun. Western-backed parties supported Hezbollah critic Michel Moawad, but he failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority support in the parliament. Following a failed fifth attempt to elect a president in parliament, Nasrallah declared on November 11 that his group sought a president who would “reassure” Hezbollah. After the parliament failed in its eighth attempt to elect a president on December 1, Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem declared his group would not support a president who would be subservient to the United States or Israel. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Press TV](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#))

As Lebanon attempted to form a government, it also remained engaged in U.S.-sponsored mediation with Israel over its maritime border. Lebanon has asserted Israel’s Karish gas field in the Mediterranean Sea is in Lebanese waters, while Israel claims it is in its territorial waters. The United States began mediation between Israel and Lebanon over the field in 2000. Despite the ongoing negotiations, however, Hezbollah has threatened Israel over Karish. In response to the June 5, 2022, arrival of a tanker ship to produce natural gas from Karish, Nasrallah declared in a June 9 televised speech Hezbollah is “not afraid of war” and can stop Israel from extracting gas from the maritime field. Nasrallah accused the ship’s parent company, London-based hydrocarbon exploration company Energean PLC, of being “a partner in this attack on Lebanon” and threatened “consequences” for Energean. Nasrallah’s warning followed a June 6 declaration from Naim Qassem Hezbollah is ready to use force if Israel drills in the disputed area and the terror group is waiting only for Lebanon to clarify its position. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Maritime Executive](#), [Reuters](#))

On July 2, 2022, Israeli forces shot down three unmanned Hezbollah drones that crossed into Israel from Lebanon. Initial Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reports did not believe the drones were armed. The drones were launched toward Israeli territorial waters as Lebanon and Israel continued an international disagreement over their maritime border. The drones were shot down several kilometers away from the Karish gas field. The IDF suspected they were deployed for Hezbollah propaganda purposes. Nasrallah subsequently warned Hezbollah would continue to target the Karish. Lebanese Foreign Minister Bou Habib condemned as “unacceptable” any interference in the negotiations with Israel over the maritime border. On July 18, Israeli forces shot down another Hezbollah drone that crossed the Lebanese border into Israel. During a July 19 visit to the Israel-Lebanon border, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid called Hezbollah’s aggression “unacceptable” and warned his country would act against any threat. On October 27, 2022, Lebanon and Israel signed an agreement giving Israel oil and gas rights in the Karish field, while Lebanon gets access to the Qanaa prospect area of the Mediterranean. Lebanon also agreed to pay—through an intermediary—17 percent of the profits from Qanaa to Israel. Both Lebanon and Hezbollah denied the agreement signaled recognition of Israel. A Hezbollah spokesman declared his group and Israel remain enemies and Hezbollah would not hesitate to retaliate against any Israeli aggression. Nasrallah declared the maritime matter closed and said Hezbollah would end its “exceptional measures and mobilizations” during negotiations between Israel and Lebanon. (Sources: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))

In March 2023, Hezbollah announced its support for pro-Syria Christian politician Suleiman Frangieh to become the country’s next president. Frangieh is a former Lebanese minister and reportedly a friend of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Nasrallah called him the “natural candidate.” Lebanon’s government remained frozen as of the beginning of June 2023 when a group of 32 Christian and independent legislators endorsed International Monetary Fund official Jihad Azour for the presidency. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

On June 21, 2023, Israeli media revealed a cell of Hezbollah fighters had infiltrated northern Israel approximately two weeks earlier and set up a small military camp in the disputed Shebaa Farms area south of the U.N.-recognized Blue Line separating Israel and Lebanon. According to media reports, the area is not close to any Israeli residential areas and therefore not considered an immediate security threat. It is also surrounded by the IDF. Israel lodged a complaint with the United Nations over the incursion. Hezbollah reportedly evacuated one of two tents in early July. On July 10, the commander of UNIFIL relayed a message to the Lebanese government from Israel to have Hezbollah remove the remaining tent. Hezbollah

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has refused to evacuate the tent. In a July 12, 2023, speech, Nasrallah warned Hezbollah fighters would retaliate if Israel attempted to remove the tent. (Sources: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Associated Press](#), [Naharnet](#))

During a televised speech on July 12, 2023, marking the start of the 2006 war with Israel, Nasrallah said Hezbollah had faith in former president Michel Aoun that “the back of the resistance was secure and would not be stabbed.” He reaffirmed Hezbollah’s choice of Suleiman Frangieh as Lebanon’s president but said his group is open to discussion and “will not use the force of the resistance to impose anything inside the country.” Nasrallah also refuted rumors Hezbollah wants to cancel the Taif Agreement—the 1989 accord that ended Lebanon’s civil war—and end Lebanon’s system of “tripartite power-sharing.” On July 17, the five-nation U.N. group on Lebanon met in Doha, Qatar, and issued a statement calling on Lebanese leaders to overcome their disagreements and elect a president. The group said they had discussed several measures against politicians and groups who were obstructing the election of a new president. The declaration followed a July 11 European Parliament resolution accusing Hezbollah and its allies of resorting to “unconstitutional tactics” to delay a parliamentary vote for president. (Sources: [Naharnet](#), [United Nations](#), [Reuters](#), [European Parliament](#))

In April 2024, the ambassadors of the United States, Egypt, France, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia met with representatives of Lebanon’s government to urge a resolution to the country’s political crisis. A month later in May, those five countries reiterated that Lebanon must elect a president if it wants to be represented in international affairs. (Sources: [U.S. Embassy in Lebanon](#), [Al-Arabiya](#))

### *Hamas*

The Palestinian terrorist group Hamas maintains a representative inside Lebanon who supports the group’s ties to the Lebanese government and Hezbollah. For example, in July 2017, Hamas’s representative, Ali Barakah, met with Lebanese President Michel Aoun to hand-deliver a letter from Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh. That November, senior Hamas official Musa Abu Marzouk told media that Hamas and Hezbollah have “ongoing contacts and understandings” and “coordinate our positions regarding the Palestinian cause.” In March 2017, a Hamas delegation met with Aoun and other Lebanese leaders in Beirut to discuss Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Hamas’s support for Lebanese unity. The following month, a Hamas representative met with Ayman Shqair, Lebanon’s human rights minister and a member of the Hezbollah-aligned Progressive Socialist Party, in Lebanon. Jerusalem-based journalist Khaled Abu Toameh, who has covered Hamas and Palestinian affairs for the *Jerusalem Post* and Gatestone Institute, believes that Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran are looking to create a unified front. Hamas and Hezbollah leaders have maintained open relations and continue to meet on occasion inside Lebanon. (Sources: [Hamas website](#), [Hamas website](#), [Hamas website](#), [Al-Quds Al-Arabi](#), [Gatestone Institute](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Hamas also maintains armed positions within Lebanon. On December 10, 2021, an alleged Hamas weapons cache in the Burj Shamali Palestinian refugee camp in Tyre exploded, killing or wounding at least a dozen people. The state prosecutor in southern Lebanon asked security agencies and arms experts to inspect the arms storage site. A Palestinian official denied there were weapons stored in the camp. The following day, a Hamas representative told the Lebanese *Al-Akhbar* newspaper the weapons were for “defense” and the explosion was caused by a fire. A Hamas statement said the fire was caused by an electrical fault in a warehouse containing oxygen and gas cylinders for coronavirus patients, as well as detergents and disinfectants. According to resident reports, a fire started in a diesel tanker and spread to a nearby mosque controlled by Hamas, triggering the explosion of weapons stored inside. Israeli officials have also accused Hamas of directing rocket fire by Palestinian militants in Lebanon. After an April 24, 2022, rocket strike from Lebanon into northern Israel, the Israeli army launched dozens of artillery shells into southern Lebanon. There were no claims of responsibility for the Lebanese rocket fire, but Israeli military sources suspected Palestinian factions in Lebanon while some officials specifically accused Hamas. (Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#), [Hamas](#), [Times of Israel](#), [UNIFIL](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Haaretz](#))

On June 22, 2022, Hamas’s Haniyeh met with Nasrallah in Beirut to discuss the “axis of resistance” to Israel and boosting their groups’ ties. In July 2022, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned Hezbollah and Hamas were strengthening their military ties to boost Hamas’s control of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. In late August 2023, Hezbollah’s Al-Manar reported Israel was considering targeting Hamas leaders inside Lebanon. According to Al-Manar, Israel specifically sought to target Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aroui. Nasrallah warned of a “strong reaction” from Hezbollah if Israel targeted a Lebanese, Palestinian, Iranian, Syrian, or any other person in the country. (Sources: [Haaretz](#), [Hamas](#), [Al-Manar TV](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))

On August 16, 2023, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned Lebanese environmental group Green Without Borders and its leader, Zuhair Subhi Nahla, because of their support for Hezbollah. Green Without Borders was created in 2013, ostensibly to protect and enhance Lebanon’s environment. According to the Treasury Department, the group has acted as a cover for Hezbollah activities in southern Lebanon along the Blue Line separating Lebanon from Israel. Further, Green Without Borders’ tree-planting activities have provided a protective wall for Hezbollah. According to the Treasury Department, Hezbollah operatives have manned Green Without Borders outposts along the border. These outposts have

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hidden Hezbollah underground warehouses and weapons storage facilities, while also hindering UNIFIL from oversight of the outposts. Nahla has previously denied he and Green Without Borders are part of Hezbollah, but he has acknowledged the group's affiliation with Hezbollah. (Source: [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#))

The U.N. Security Council renews UNIFIL's mandate annually. In August 2022, the council amended the mandate to allow UNIFIL to act independently, without prior authorization from the Lebanese government. In a compromise among council members, Article 16 of the renewal included language that UNIFIL would continue to coordinate with the Lebanese government while acting independently of the Lebanese Armed Forces. In August 2023, the U.N. Security Council began its annual debate over the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate, which was set to expire on August 31. Hezbollah warned against renewing UNIFIL's mandate. Nasrallah called the peacekeeping force a "foreign armed force that moves on Lebanese territory without authorization of the government and Lebanese army," and accused UNIFIL of infringing on Lebanese sovereignty. According to Nasrallah, the people of southern Lebanon "will not allow the mandate to be applied...." In an August 25 address to the United Nations in New York, Lebanese caretaker Foreign Affairs Minister Abdallah Bou Habib called for a "good relationship between UNIFIL, the authorities and the residents of Lebanon," but sought to remove Article 16, drawing accusations and fears of a weakened UNIFIL. On August 30, reports circulated of a French compromise proposal. However, the United States and United Arab Emirates argued the French compromise resolution weakened UNIFIL's freedom of movement. The Security Council renewed UNIFIL's mandate on August 31 after a compromise under which the French resolution keep language that UNIFIL should coordinate with the Lebanese government, while France added text that all parties allow "announced and unannounced patrols" by U.N. forces. (Sources: [LBCI](#), [i24news](#), [i24news](#), [New Arab](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

### *Al-Jamaa al-Islamiya*

*Al-Jamaa al-Islamiya*, or the Islamic Group, is a Sunni political and militant group. As of May 2024, it had one seat in Lebanon's 128-seat parliament. The Islamic Group also maintains an armed wing called the Fajr Forces, which was created in 1982. The Fajr Forces have carried out multiple attacks on Israel since October 2023. The Islamic Group draws inspiration from the Muslim Brotherhood and has close ties to the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, which launched a largescale attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people. While the Islamic Group's leaders claim it is independent, they acknowledge that the group coordinates closely with Hezbollah and Hamas's Lebanese branch. Nevertheless, the Islamic Group maintains that its weapons are its own and it does not receive military assistance from other groups. According to Islamic Group Secretary-General Sheikh Mohammed Takkoush, Islamic Group has coordinated several attacks with Hamas. On October 8, 2023, Hezbollah began almost daily rocket attacks on northern Israel, which resulted in the displacement of 80,000 people and the deaths of at least 25 people in Israel. In March 2024, the Islamic Group announced it would join Hezbollah in its attacks on Israel. Takkoush said his group joined the fight "as a national, religious and moral duty." He also accused Israel of seeking to seize territory in Lebanon. Israel subsequently began targeting the Islamic Group in Lebanon. Takkoush has called his group's cooperation with Hamas "an honor." Takkoush credited Hamas's war with boosting cooperation between the groups "in support of our brothers in Gaza." (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Associated Press](#), [Press TV](#))

### *ISIS*

ISIS has created an active recruitment network in Lebanon, which has resulted in attacks on Hezbollah strongholds within the country. On November 12, 2015, twin suicide bombings in Beirut's Bourj al-Barajneh district—a known Hezbollah stronghold—killed 44 and wounded 239. Within 48 hours, Lebanese security forces arrested 11 people—mostly Syrians and two Lebanese—suspected of organizing the bombings and smuggling the bombers across the border from Syria. On November 17, 2017, Lebanese authorities arrested a Syrian network that had been planning attacks within Lebanon on behalf of ISIS. Lebanese security services have arrested multiple ISIS agents in Lebanon, including two high-level ISIS figures in September and November 2016, according to the U.S. State Department. The U.S. State Department also credits the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) with disrupting a 2016 ISIS plot against Western targets in and around Beirut. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Daily Star](#), [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#))

### *Al-Qaeda*

[Al-Qaeda](#) recruits in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camps. In the 2000s, Lebanese Sunnis began to become radicalized by al-Qaeda ideology, giving rise to several al-Qaeda-inspired groups. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades, al-Qaeda's Lebanese branch, which also operates in the Arabian Peninsula, formed in 2009. The group has launched numerous rockets into Israel from Lebanon and threatened to kidnap U.S. and British tourists across the Middle East. The Brigades claimed a November 19, 2013, double suicide bombing outside of the Iranian embassy in Beirut that killed 23 people, including Iranian cultural attaché Sheikh Ibrahim al-Ansari. The Brigades demanded that Iranian forces leave Syria. (Sources: [Time](#), [BBC News](#),



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[Guardian](#), [Reuters](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Fatah al-Islam formed in the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in 2006 after breaking away from the Syrian-backed Fatah al-Intifada. Led by Shakir al-Abssi, who previously belonged to al-Qaeda, Fatah al-Islam carried out numerous bombings targeting the Lebanese military. Abssi told Reuters that his group's goal was to institute sharia (Islamic law) in the Palestinian refugee camps and then confront Israel. Lebanese officials have accused Fatah al-Islam of links to al-Qaeda, although the group denies any official ties. Nonetheless, Abssi was convicted and sentenced to death in absentia alongside deceased al-Qaeda in Iraq leader [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#) in the 2002 assassination of U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley in Jordan. In 2007, Abssi told the *New York Times* that America needs to be punished for its interference in the Islamic world. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [NPR](#), [NPR](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#))

Members of Fatah al-Islam claimed responsibility for two February 2007 bus bombings in Beirut that killed three people. In May 2007, the Lebanese army began a 15-week campaign against Fatah al-Islam in the refugee camps, which ended when the army captured the Nahr al-Bared camp from Fatah al-Islam that September. The fighting displaced 27,000 Palestinians and reportedly destroyed 95 percent of the camp. It also resulted in the deaths of 170 soldiers, 220 militants, and at least 42 non-combatants. In January 2008, Abssi threatened revenge against Lebanese forces. The group has since remained active in Syria. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Foreign Policy](#))

### *Syrian Refugees*

Lebanon is host to more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees who fled the neighboring civil war. Anti-refugee attitudes have increasingly led to violence. Because Lebanon has no official Syrian refugee camps, the refugees are spread throughout the country. According to the United Nations, more than 70 percent live below the poverty line. Lebanese citizens and communal leaders have increasingly called for the refugees to return to Syria amid accusations that they are a drain on Lebanon's economy. Online petitions calling for Syrian refugees to leave Lebanon have garnered thousands of signatures. In July 2017, Patriarch Beshara al-Rai, head of Lebanon's Maronite Christian church, accused Syrian refugees of "snatching (the Lebanese people's) daily bread from their mouths, throwing them into a state of poverty and deprivation." Refugees have reported their fear of harassment and arrest, as well as direct threats of violence. According to the International Rescue Committee, one in four Syrian children have experienced violence in Lebanon. In July 2017, a cellphone video calling for violence against Syrians spread across multiple social-media platforms. Shortly after, a group of Lebanese men physically assaulted a refugee. That October, Lebanese President Michel Aoun called for Syrian refugees to return home as Lebanon "cannot handle it anymore." (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees](#), [NPR](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

### *Foreign Fighters*

By September 2015, 900 Lebanese citizens had joined the conflicts in Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters, according to a December 2015 report by The Soufan Group. These numbers do not include Lebanese Hezbollah fighters involved in the Syrian civil war. In August 2015, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad told media that his government had invited Hezbollah's aid in the civil war. By January 2016, there were reportedly between 7,000 and 9,000 Hezbollah fighters in Syria, and by the end of 2016, at least 2,000 Hezbollah fighters had reportedly been killed in the Syrian civil war. (Sources: [Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty](#), [The Soufan Group](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [YNet News](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [New Yorker](#))

Iran and Hezbollah have also made Lebanon a destination for foreign fighters. In 1982, Iran sent 1,000 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) soldiers to Lebanon to train and equip the fledgling Hezbollah. During the Syrian war, hundreds of Sunni militants allied with ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other groups have entered Lebanon to fight against Hezbollah. These militants have reportedly hidden within Palestinian refugee camps, where they have violently clashed with Lebanese forces. For example, the al-Qaeda-inspired Fatah al-Islam, which includes Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian fighters, rose to prominence in 2007 by fighting the Lebanese army from its base at one of the camps. In September 2015 and again in April 2016, members of the secular Palestinian faction Fatah clashed with members of the al-Qaeda-linked Jund al-Sham in the Ain al-Hilweh camp. In June 2017, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah declared that a new war with Israel could draw an influx of "hundreds of thousands" of foreign fighters into Lebanon to fight alongside Hezbollah. Lebanese Forces chief Samir Geagea condemned Nasrallah's statement, saying that "it is not up to anybody to open Lebanese borders [for foreign fighters], even the Lebanese Cabinet." (Sources: [Frontline](#), [The National](#), [Daily Star](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Brookings Institution](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Maan](#), [Al-Monitor](#))

## **Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents**

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Since declaring independence from France in 1943, Lebanon has been besieged by terrorism and extremism. According to the United Kingdom's travel warning for Lebanon, "terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks" in the country. (Sources: [Gov.UK](#), [BBC News](#))

### *Hezbollah and the October 7, 2023, Hamas Attack*

On October 7, 2023, one day after the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War, Hamas—with Iranian support—launched a multi-pronged attack on Israel, killing at least 1,200 and taking more than 240 hostages into Gaza. After blowing up a portion of the Gaza-Israel border fence, Hamas fighters crossed into Israel on motorcycles, pickup trucks, paragliders, and speed boats in an unprecedented assault by the terror group during the Jewish holidays of Simchat Torah and Shabbat. Hamas gunmen infiltrated at least 22 Israeli towns and military bases within 15 miles of the Gaza border, killing civilians and soldiers. During the first few days of the war, Hezbollah sent messages to Israel that it was ready to join the conflict if Israel launched a ground assault on Gaza. Nasrallah praised Hamas for its strike against Israel, calling it a message against normalization with Israel. On October 11, the United States announced that it was sending two aircraft carriers to the Mediterranean to provide support and to deter foreign intervention against Israel. The United States specifically warned Hezbollah against intervening in the war. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

Despite U.S. warnings, Hezbollah began launching missiles and anti-tank rockets toward northern Israel on October 8 "in solidarity" with the Palestinian people. Hezbollah's continued attacks on northern Israel have displaced approximately 80,000 people. Between October 8, 2023, and January 9, 2024, Hezbollah attacks killed four Israeli civilians and nine IDF soldiers. In that same time span, Hezbollah acknowledged Israel had killed 158 of its members in Lebanon and Syria. At least 19 members of other terror organizations, one Lebanese soldier, and at least 19 civilians have also been killed. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#))

Hezbollah's attacks continued through 2024, prompting Israeli officials to threaten a wider conflict in Lebanon in response. In March 2024, the Sunni political and militant group *al-Jamaa al-Islamiya*, or the Islamic Group, announced it would join Hezbollah in targeting Israel. Islamic Group Secretary-General Sheikh Mohammed Takkoush said his group joined the fight "as a national, religious and moral duty." On May 15, 2024, a Hezbollah drone fired two missiles at the Ilaniya military base near Tiberias in northern Israel. The attack wounded three and marked Hezbollah's deepest incursion since the start of the fighting in October 2023. The Israeli military accused Hezbollah of increasing its attacks in recent weeks and escalating the situation in northern Israel. As of June 5, 2024, Hezbollah's rocket fire since October had killed 10 civilians and 15 soldiers in Israel. In the first week of June, at least 11 people were hospitalized in Israel from Hezbollah rocket attacks, which also caused widespread wildfires throughout northern Israel. Hezbollah acknowledged Israel had killed least 330 of its members since October 2023. Most of the deaths occurred in Lebanon, but some also reportedly occurred in Syria. According to media reports, another 62 operatives from other terror groups, one Lebanese soldier, and at least 60 civilians had also been killed. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Associated Press](#), [Anadolu Agency](#))

### *2004-2008 Bombings and Assassinations*

A series of 25 bombings carried out between 2004 and 2008 resulted in multiple high-profile political and security assassinations. The bombing campaign began after the September 2004 parliamentary decision to extend the term of pro-Syrian Lebanese President Emile Lahoud by three years. Between October 2004 and October 2005, 13 bombings killed at least 38 people. The Syrian opposition in Lebanon blamed many of the bombings on pro-Syrian supporters, alleging that they were purposefully inciting violence in an attempt to demonstrate that a continued Syrian occupation in Lebanon was necessary to maintain law and order. On February 14, 2005, a car bomb killed anti-Syrian former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others in Beirut. Hezbollah was suspected of involvement in the attack, which led to the Cedar Revolution and the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. Hezbollah denies participation in the attack. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Daily Star](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [Telegraph](#))

On June 30, 2011, the U.N.-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) indicted four men—Hussein Hassan Anaissy, Assad Sabra, and suspected Hezbollah members Mustafa Badreddine and Salim Ayyash—for the 2005 Beirut bombing that killed Hariri and 21 others. In February 2012, the STL agreed to try the four in absentia. Suspected mastermind Badreddine died in 2016 while fighting in Syria and the STL chose not to pursue the criminal case against him after his death. Municipal officials in Beirut created a domestic controversy in 2018 when they named a street after Badreddine. The street itself led to Rafik Hariri Hospital. In October 2013, the STL filed charges against suspected Hezbollah member Hassan Habib Merhi and subsequently added him in absentia to the trial of Anaissy, Sabra, and Ayyash. On August 4, 2020, an explosion in Beirut's port killed at least 135 people, wounded more than 5,000 others, and destroyed much of the port. In response, the STL delayed handing down its verdict, which had originally been scheduled for August 7. On August 18, the STL released its verdict finding Ayyash guilty of all counts. The STL found

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Merhi, Anaissy, and Sabra not guilty. The STL did not find direct evidence that the leadership of Hezbollah or Syria played a role in orchestrating the bombing. The STL sentenced Ayyash in absentia to five consecutive life sentences on December 11, 2020. Ayyash remains at large. The prosecutor appealed the decision to find Merhi and Anaissy not guilty. On March 10, 2022, the STL Appeals Chamber found Anaissy and Merhi guilty, ruling they were members of the conspiracy aimed at committing the terrorist act in downtown Beirut. On June 16, 2022, the STL sentenced Anaissy and Merhi to life in prison. Both men remain at large. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [BBC News](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [New York Times](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [BBC News](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#))

On February 25, 2021, the STL scheduled a new trial for Ayyash in relation to attacks on Lebanese politicians Marwan Hamadeh, Georges Hawi, and Elias El-Murr between October 2004 and July 2005. The trial was scheduled to begin June 16, 2021. On March 2, Hezbollah fighters reportedly opened fire on Lebanese forces attempting to arrest Ayyash in Beirut. Hezbollah acknowledged Lebanese forces had attempted to arrest a suspect but denied its fighters had fired on them. Ayyash remains at large. In early June 2021, the STL cancelled its upcoming trial of Ayyash because of a lack of funds. (Sources: [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [Arab News](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#))

### *Political Assassinations*

Lebanon has had a history of political assassinations dating back to the 1951 assassination of the country's first prime minister, Riad Solh, after he had left office. Mikail el-Dib, a Lebanese, and Mohammed Adib es-Salah, a Palestinian, shot and killed Solh in his car on his way to the airport after meeting with Jordan's King Abdullah in Aman. On June 16, 1976, members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine kidnapped and shot to death U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis E. Meloy, his economic counselor, Robert O. Waring, and their Lebanese driver, Zoheir Moghrabi. On September 4, 1981, four gunmen shot and killed Louis Delamare, the French ambassador to Lebanon. On September 14, 1982, a bomb outside the Beirut headquarters of the Kataeb Christian political party killed Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel and 32 others. Hezbollah is suspected of having carried out the February 14, 2005, car bombing that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. On January 25, 2008, Captain Wissam Eid, Lebanon's chief terrorism investigator, was also killed in a car bombing. Eid had been investigating Hezbollah's involvement in the assassination of Hariri. Most recently, on November 3, 2017, Prime Minister Saad Hariri alleged that Hezbollah had attempted to assassinate him a few days earlier. (Sources: [Los Angeles Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Daily Star](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Daily Star](#), [Guardian](#), [Guardian](#), [Los Angeles Times](#), [Associated Press](#))

### *Hezbollah's 2008 Coup Attempt*

In late April 2008, Lebanese security forces reportedly discovered a remote-controlled Hezbollah camera at Beirut's international airport. On May 3, the Lebanese government accused Hezbollah of spying on planes at the airport in preparation for an attack. On May 6, the government sought to dismantle Hezbollah's private telecommunications network. On May 8, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah called the network integral to his group's fight against Israel and called the government's attempt to dismantle it a declaration of war. Shortly after Nasrallah's speech, gun battles erupted between Hezbollah fighters and Sunni pro-government supporters. Hezbollah fighters captured sections of western Beirut, set fire to a newspaper officer affiliated with the governing Future movement, and shut down the Future movement's affiliated television station. Fighting also erupted in Sidon and the Bekaa Valley. The clashes left 65 people dead across the country. The Lebanese government called Hezbollah's actions "an armed and bloody coup," while media reported the conflict as the worst sectarian fighting in Lebanon since the end of its civil war. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [YNet News](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#))

On May 21, Hezbollah and the Lebanese government concluded several days of Qatari mediation with the announcement of the Doha Agreement. The accord brought Hezbollah's political party into a national-unity government and gave it veto power in a new cabinet. The agreement also resulted in the election of army chief General Michel Suleiman as Lebanon's president and called for a new election law that divides Lebanon into smaller electoral districts. Hezbollah's critics argued that the agreement rewarded the terror group for violence against the Lebanese state. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#))

### *2006 Hezbollah-Israel War*

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah launched a cross-border raid into northern Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and capturing two others. On July 13, Israel and Hezbollah began a 34-day war, during which Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets, supplied by Iran, into Israeli territory. During the course of the war, Hezbollah killed 40 Israeli civilians and 119 soldiers, while Israel killed more than 1,100 Lebanese—most of whom were

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reportedly civilians. Multiple NGOs reported that Hezbollah deployed their weapons from civilian areas in Lebanon and used Lebanese civilians as human shields. (Sources: [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Washington Post](#), [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#))

The U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 1701 on August 11, 2006, calling for the immediate cessation of attacks by both Hezbollah and Israel. The resolution reaffirmed previous calls for Hezbollah to disarm and expanded UNIFIL's mandate to ensure that southern Lebanon is free of all unauthorized weapons. The resolution also charged the Lebanese Armed Forces with the responsibility of aiding UNIFIL. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [United Nations](#), [Newsweek](#), [Times of Israel](#))

- **October 1, 2024:** Hezbollah launches multiple rockets toward central Israel, wounding two. The injuries are caused by shrapnel from intercepted rockets. Sirens sound in Tel Aviv, Herzliya, Kfar Saba, Ra'anana, and other cities in central Israel. Israeli police respond to multiple calls in Sharon area where fragments of the rockets fall. Hezbollah claims it targeted the Gilot military base near Herzliya with Fadi-4 missiles. Gilot base is home to the IDF's Unit 8200 and Mossad headquarters. Following the attack, the IDF institutes restrictions limiting gatherings across central Israel, including in Jerusalem, one day before the start of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. The restrictions are put in place until after the holiday. Source: [Jewish News Syndicate](#)
- **September 30, 2024:** Israeli ground forces enter southern Lebanon for "limited, localized, and targeted ground raids" to push Hezbollah away from the border, according to the Israeli military. U.S. officials expect the operation to last for days, not weeks. During a televised broadcast from an undisclosed location, deputy leader Naim Qassem says that Hezbollah will select a new secretary-general and replenish its leadership ranks as soon as possible. Sources: [NBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 27, 2024 - September 29, 2024:** On September 27, Hezbollah launches approximately 65 rockets toward Israel, wounding two. In the morning, Hezbollah launches at least 10 rockets toward Tiberias in northern Israel. Israeli defenses intercept the rockets, but one person is wounded in Tiberia by shrapnel. Another rocket lands in the Sea of Galilee. No injuries or damage are reported. Separately, Hezbollah launches at least 10 rockets toward Haifa. Most of the rockets targeting Haifa are intercepted or land in open areas. One lands in the sea. There are no reports of injuries, though Israeli emergency services reports of some shrapnel falling in Haifa. Later in the evening, at least 30 rockets target Safed, wounding at least one and damaging a house. IDF fighter jets target Hezbollah rocket launchers and weapons depots in southern Lebanon. In between the rocket salvos, an Israeli strike in a Beirut suburb kills Nasrallah and Abbas Nilforoshan, a U.S.-sanctioned senior member of Iran's IRGC who served as a military adviser during the Syrian civil war. On September 28, Israel confirms Nasrallah died in the strike. A few hours later, Hezbollah confirms Nasrallah's death, calling him a "sacred martyr." U.S. President Joe Biden calls Nasrallah's death a "measure of justice" for Hezbollah's victims. Hezbollah issues a statement that it will continue to fight against Israel "in support of Gaza and Palestine, and in defense of Lebanon and its steadfast and honorable people." Also on September 28, an Israeli strike in Lebanon's Dahiyeh region kills senior Hezbollah intelligence leader Hassan Khalil Yassin. According to the IDF, Yassin worked with Hezbollah's offensive units to personally plan terror attacks against Israeli civilians on the northern border and deep within Israeli territory. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [White House](#)
- **September 25, 2024 - September 26, 2024:** On September 25, Israeli air defenses intercept a Hezbollah surface-to-surface missile near Tel Aviv as sirens sound in the city and the nearby city of Netanya. There are no reports of injuries or damage. Hezbollah confirms it had fired a Qadr 1 ballistic missile targeting the headquarters of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. It is the first time Hezbollah has fired toward Tel Aviv and marks the first time the group fired a ballistic missile toward Israel. Hezbollah claims the attack is "in support of our steadfast Palestinian people in Gaza" and in "defense of Lebanon and its people." Following the attack, Israel strikes at least 280 Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. At least 51 people are killed in the retaliation. The United States and France call for a 21-day ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel. On September 26, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz rejects the proposed ceasefire. Israeli airstrikes in Beirut kill Mohammad Surur, head of one of Hezbollah's air force units. The strikes reportedly kill one other person and wound 15 others, according to Lebanese officials. On the Israeli side of the border, the army stages a simulation of a ground invasion of Lebanon. Netanyahu says Israel will use "full force" against Hezbollah and will not stop until Israeli residents can safely return to their homes in the north. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 20, 2024 - September 23, 2024:** On September 20, after a barrage of Hezbollah rockets targets northern Israel, a targeted Israeli airstrike in Beirut kills Ibrahim Aqil, whom Israel calls the head of Hezbollah's operations. Separately, an Israeli airstrike in Beirut kills Ahmed Wahbi, the head of Hezbollah's training unit and a former Radwan Force commander. The strike also kills 10 other top Radwan Force commanders. Israeli President Isaac Herzog accuses the commanders of planning an October 7-style attack on Israel. On September 23, an Israeli airstrike on Beirut kills Hezbollah commander Ali Karaki, a member of Hezbollah's Jihad Council and acting head of Hezbollah's Southern Front in southern Lebanon. The IDF warns Lebanese civilians to evacuate Hezbollah strongholds in southern Lebanon. According to Israel, the IDF strikes 1,300 Hezbollah targets, destroying cruise missiles, explosives-laden rockets, long- and short-range rockets, and attack drones. The targets include homes and other civilian buildings where Hezbollah stores weapons, including rockets, missiles, and drones. Hezbollah launches almost 200 rockets at Israel, mostly targeting northern Israel but at least 10 long-range projectiles target West Bank settlements. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **September 17, 2024 - September 18, 2024:** At approximately 3:30 p.m. on September 17, pagers belonging to thousands of Hezbollah members across Lebanon simultaneously explode, killing at least 12 and wounding 2,700. Hezbollah and Lebanon blame Israel, which does not comment on the coordinated attack. Hezbollah confirms the deaths of at least two of its fighters. One of the casualties is the son of Hezbollah parliamentarian Ali Ammar. Hezbollah official Hussein Khalil calls the attack "targeting the whole nation," while promising Hezbollah "deal with the enemy in the language it understands." Another Hezbollah official tells the Wall



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Street Journal that the affected pagers all came from a new batch the terror group had recently received. The official suspected malware implanted on the devices. Another Hezbollah official tells Reuters that the attack is Hezbollah's biggest security breach since it started attacking Israel in October 2023. Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was also reportedly injured in the blasts. Hezbollah says Israel will receive "its fair punishment" for the attack. The attack in Lebanon occurred hours after Israeli security services announced that they had foiled a Hezbollah plot to assassinate a former senior defense official. Hezbollah launches rockets toward Israeli artillery positions in response to the explosions. On September 18, handheld walkie-talkies belonging to Hezbollah explode across Lebanon, killing at least 14 and wounding 450.

Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)

- **September 10, 2024:** Hezbollah launches at least 30 rockets toward Sasa and Meron in northern Israel. No injuries are reported. In response, Israeli jets target Hezbollah rocket launching sites and a Hezbollah military structure in southern Lebanon. Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **September 9, 2024:** Two explosive-laden drones strike an apartment building in Nahariya, causing damage but no injuries. Hezbollah claims responsibility, calling the strike a response to IDF shelling of Lebanon. Hezbollah says it targeted the Shraga military base almost two miles south of Nahariya and not Nahariya itself. In a separate attack, three explosive-laden drones strike near the border community of Shlomi, wounding two soldiers. Hezbollah claims responsibility. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **September 8, 2024:** Hezbollah launches more than 20 rockets toward Israel's Western Galilee, the Kiryat Shmona area, and the Galilee Panhandle. No injuries are reported. In Lebanon, Hezbollah launches a surface-to-air missile toward an Israeli fighter jet, forcing it to retreat. No injuries are reported. Israel strikes several buildings and observation posts belonging to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon's Kafr Kila, while Israeli tanks shell a Hezbollah observation post in Kafr Shouba. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **September 8, 2024:** Hezbollah launches a barrage of rockets toward Kiryat Shmona and Shamir in northern Israel. No casualties are reported. Hezbollah calls the attack a response to an Israeli strike that killed emergency workers in the Lebanese village of Froun the day before. Source: [France 24](#)
- **August 25, 2024:** Hezbollah launches hundreds of rockets and drones toward northern Israel as about 100 Israeli jets strike Hezbollah targets across Lebanon. At least one Israeli naval soldier is killed and two are wounded, while at least three Hezbollah fighters are confirmed killed in Lebanon during the exchange. Israel's government calls the preemptive strikes necessary to avert a larger Hezbollah attack. Nasrallah calls the overnight attacks a response to Israel's assassination of senior Hezbollah operative Fu'ad Shukr in July. Nasrallah declares that the attack had been completed "as planned." He also claims that Israel's strikes had little impact on Hezbollah. Nasrallah says that Hezbollah's strikes are targeted toward an intelligence base in central Israel. Netanyahu declares that Israeli defenses shot down all the drones targeting a strategic location in central Israel in the overnight barrage. Hezbollah and Israel reportedly exchange messages that neither side wants to see a larger escalation. The Iranian government declares that Israel has lost its deterrence in the region. Sources: [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#), [Fox News](#), [WaReuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters shington Post](#)
- **July 27, 2024 - July 30, 2024:** On July 27, a rocket fired from Lebanon kills at least 12 and wounds more than 30 on a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in Israel's Golan Heights. All the fatalities are between the ages of 10 and 20. Hezbollah initially claims responsibility for launching a barrage of Katyusha rockets and a single heavy Falaq rocket at a nearby military base, but the terror group denies responsibility for the strike on the soccer field. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismisses Hezbollah's denial and promises Hezbollah will "pay a heavy price, the kind it has thus far not paid." The rocket strike is Hezbollah's deadliest since it began launching rockets in October 2023. U.S. officials warn that the attack could spark a full-on Hezbollah-Israel war. Following the Hezbollah strike on northern Israel, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich calls for Hezbollah leader Nasrallah to "pay with his head." Smotrich also says "Lebanon as a whole has to pay the price." Nasrallah dismisses the threat, saying he is ready and waiting. On July 29, an Israeli drone strike kills two and wounded three in the southern Lebanese town of Shaqra. Israeli officials say the Hezbollah rocket strike may lead to several days of fighting, but Israel seeks to avoid a full-on war. On July 30, Israel strikes Beirut, killing Fuad Shukr, Hezbollah's reported No. 2 military commander. Israel accused Shukr of masterminding the July 27 rocket attack. Shukr was also involved in the 1983 Beirut bombings of a Marine barracks bombing that killed 241 U.S. military personnel. Hezbollah confirms Shukr's death on July 31. Shukr is buried on August 1 in Beirut's southern suburbs. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of India](#); [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#), [Fox News](#), [Washington Post](#)
- **July 16, 2024 - June 17, 2024:** On July 16, after an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon kills five Syrian civilians, Hezbollah launches at least 100 rockets in four waves toward northern Israel. During a televised speech on July 17, Nasrallah threatens to target Israeli towns that have not yet been hit by Hezbollah rockets if Israel continues to target civilians in Lebanon. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **June 30, 2024:** A Hezbollah armed drone wounds at least 18 soldiers in northern Israel. According to Hezbollah, the drone targeted the headquarters of the 91st Brigade in northern Israel. Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **June 11, 2024 - June 12, 2024:** On June 11, Israel targets four Hezbollah fighters, including senior commander Taleb Sami Abdullah, in southern Lebanon. On June 12, Hezbollah launches at least 215 rockets into northern Israel, one of its largest attacks since October 2023. No injuries are reported. During Abdullah's funeral in Lebanon, a senior Hezbollah commander warns that Hezbollah will increase the frequency and intensity of its attacks. Sources: [Anadolu Agency](#), [BBC News](#)
- **June 5, 2024:** A gunman attacks the U.S. embassy in Beirut. The Lebanese army detains the attacker after an almost half-hour-long firefight that wounds one of the embassy's Lebanese guards. The attacker is also wounded in the battle. Authorities identify the attacker as a Syrian national. No group initially immediately claims responsibility, but the

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attacker reportedly had “ISIS” in English and “Islamic State” in Arabic written on his clothes. The Lebanese army says it is investigating possible links to ISIS. The embassy closes for the rest of the day but plans to reopen for normal operations on June 7. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)

- **June 5, 2024:** Hezbollah launches explosive-laden drones toward northern Israel, wounding 11 in the Druze-majority town of Hurfeish near the Lebanese border.  
Hezbollah calls the attack a response to Israeli strikes in southern Lebanon the day before. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **June 2, 2024:** Hezbollah launches drones toward military barracks in Israel’s Golan Heights.  
A Hezbollah statement claims the group launched “an air attack with a squadron of assault drones on the headquarters of the Military Gathering Battalion in the Yarden barracks in the occupied Golan Heights opposite the Lebanese border.” Source: [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **May 15, 2024:** A Hezbollah drone fires two missiles at Israel’s Ilaniya military base in near Tiberias in northern Israel, wounding three. It is Hezbollah’s deepest incursion into Israel since it started launching rockets in October 2023. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Anadolu Agency](#)
- **May 8, 2024:** Hezbollah launches anti-tank guided missiles and mortars at the northern Israeli community of Malkia, killing one soldier and wounding another.  
Israeli jets strike Hezbollah targets around southern Lebanon, killing two Hezbollah members three PIJ members in Lebanon. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **May 6, 2024:** Hezbollah claims to launch dozens of Katyusha rockets toward a military base in northern Israel.  
Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **May 5, 2024:** Hezbollah launches 20 rockets toward Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel and about 40 more projectiles toward the area. No casualties are reported. Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **April 23, 2024:** An Israeli airstrike kills Hussein Azqul in southern Lebanon, while another strike kills Muhammad Attiya, reportedly a member of the aerial unit of Hezbollah’s elite Radwan force.  
Israel calls Azqul a “central terrorist” in Hezbollah’s air defense unit. Israel accuses both Attiya and Azqul of being involved in the preparation and execution of terrorist attacks. Hezbollah acknowledges Attiya and Azqul’s deaths. After the strikes, Hezbollah launches drone attacks on IDF bases near the cities of Acre and Nahariya along Israel’s western coast, representing one of Hezbollah’s deepest attacks into Israel since October 2023. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **April 13, 2024:** Hezbollah sends multiple drones and rockets toward northern Israel.  
An explosives-filled drone detonates in the Hanita kibbutz, wounding one. Hezbollah claims it targeted a building used by Israeli forces. Another drone strikes near Kfar Blum, while rockets target Israel’s western Galilee region. No injuries are reported. Hezbollah claims it launched suicide drones and rockets from Lebanon toward northern Israel. Israel launches airstrikes on buildings used by Hezbollah in Tayr Harfa, Aalma ash-Shab, and Yarine in southern Lebanon. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **March 27, 2024 - March 28, 2024:** On March 27, Israel launches airstrikes against a Sunni political and militant organization called the Islamist Group, which Israel accuses of joining Hezbollah in cross border attacks.  
The strikes kill two Hezbollah fighters and 14 others. Hezbollah launches rockets into the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona and a military base, killing one. On March 28, Hezbollah launches rockets with heavy warheads toward towns in northern Israel. No injuries or casualties are reported. Hezbollah says it is the first time it has used the warheads against civilian targets. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **March 19, 2024:** A Hezbollah rocket attack strikes an army position near the Israeli border community of Menara, wounding one. Hezbollah also claims responsibility for six other attacks that day, though no casualties are reported. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **February 26, 2024:** Hezbollah fires 60 rockets toward the Israel-held Golan Heights.  
No injuries are reported. Hezbollah claims it targeted an IDF base in retaliation for Israeli strikes near the Lebanese city of Baalbek the day before. Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **February 15, 2024:** Hezbollah fires a barrage of rockets toward Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel, causing damage.  
There are no reported casualties. Israel strikes dozens of Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, killing five Hezbollah fighters. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **February 14, 2024:** Militants in Lebanon launch a barrage of rockets toward Safed in northern Israel, killing one and wounding eight others. No groups immediately claim responsibility, but Israel launches retaliatory strikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. Sources: [United Press International](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 13, 2024:** Hezbollah launches anti-tank rockets toward Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel, wounding a mother and her 16-year-old son.  
Sources: [Jewish News Syndicate](#), [New York Times](#)
- **January 9, 2024:** The IDF carries out a series of strikes on Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon’s Kafr Kila, hitting a Hezbollah drone squad before it can launch an attack.  
Separately, a Hezbollah explosives-laden drone detonates in the IDF Northern Command headquarters in Safed, Israel. The strike causes minor damage. No casualties are reported. Hezbollah claims it launched “a number of explosive attack drones” in response to the January 8 killing of senior Hezbollah operative Wissam al-Tawil and the January 2 killing of Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aroui in Lebanon. Hours later, a suspected Israeli drone strike in Khirbet Selm, Lebanon, kills Ali Hussein Barji, commander of Hezbollah’s aerial forces in southern Lebanon. Barji was responsible for dozens of explosive drone attacks on northern Israel, including that morning’s attack. Hezbollah announces Barji was killed “on the road to Jerusalem.” Israel carries out strikes on multiple Hezbollah targets in Kafr Kila and Yaroun in Lebanon, while shelling other Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah announces the deaths of members Sharif Sayyid Nasser, Issa Ali Nour a-Din, and Hassan Abdel Hussein Ismail, who were reportedly killed that day in a targeted strike on their vehicle in Ghandouriyeh in southern Lebanon. Source: [Times of Israel](#)

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- **January 8, 2024:** A missile strikes an SUV in Madjal Selm, Lebanon, killing Wissam al-Tawil, a commander of Hezbollah's Radwan force, an elite unit stationed along Israel's northern border.  
Radwan had reportedly been planning an attack on northern Israel but paused its plans after Hamas's October 7 attack. Hezbollah confirms Tawil's death but provides few other details. Lebanese media report that a second Hezbollah commander is killed in the strike. According to media reports, Tawil is one of the most senior members of Hezbollah killed since the eruption of fighting on October 8. Images circulate of Tawil meeting with Nasrallah, deceased Hezbollah military commander Imad Mughniyeh, and assassinated Iranian general Qasem Soleimani. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz acknowledges Israel's responsibility for Tawil's death. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **January 6, 2024:** A Hezbollah missile barrage strikes an IDF base in Mount Meron, Israel, damaging the facility.  
Hezbollah releases video of multiple impacts on the air force base. Source: [Haaretz](#)
- **December 28, 2023:** Hezbollah launches two drones and approximately 50 rockets and missiles toward northern Israel, causing damage in Kiryat Shmona.  
No injuries are reported. Warning sirens also sound in Haifa, Acre, towns in the Upper Galilee, and other areas. Israel intercepts a drone near Haifa. Israel launches airstrikes against the sources of fire in Lebanon. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **December 26, 2023 - December 27, 2023:** On December 26, an Israeli airstrike kills Australian brothers Ibrahim and Ali Bazzi in the southern Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil.  
The strike also kills Ibrahim Bazzi's Lebanese wife, Shorouq Hammoud. Hezbollah claims Ali Bazzi as one of its fighters. Hezbollah flags are draped over the three coffins. In response to the strike, on December 27 Hezbollah launches dozens of rockets toward the northern Israeli towns of Rosh Hanikra and Kiryat Shmona. At least 18 rockets target Rosh Hanikra. Hezbollah claims the rockets targeted an Israeli naval base in the city. Several hours later, Hezbollah launches at least 16 rockets toward Kiryat Shmona, damaging several buildings. Israel intercepts three of the rockets. Hezbollah claims it launched 30 rockets toward Kiryat Shmona. No injuries are reported in either attack. The rocket volley is reportedly the largest from Lebanon since the start of the Hamas-Israel war on October 7. Hezbollah also claims responsibility for three explosive-laden drones that hit Israel's Mount Dov area, where several IDF positions are located. Hezbollah claims the attacks are "in response to the enemy's repeated crimes." Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **November 26, 2023 - November 28, 2023:** Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claims Israel had killed more than 100 Hezbollah fighters and destroyed dozens of Hezbollah observation posts, weapons depots, and other sites since the Hamas war began.  
According to a Reuters report, 80 of the 100 Lebanese fatalities were Hezbollah fighters. The fighting between Hezbollah and Israel is reportedly the worst it has been since the 2006 war. The violence subsides after a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel goes into effect on November 24. Senior Hezbollah politician Hassan Fadlallah says on November 28 that Hezbollah wanted to ceasefire to continue. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#)
- **November 23, 2023:** Hezbollah launches at least 80 rockets, mortars, and missiles toward northern Israel in what is reportedly one of its largest attacks since the start of the Hamas war.  
A barrage of 35 rockets crosses into Israel in one salvo. Hezbollah claims responsibility and claims it had launched 48 rockets toward an IDF base near the Israeli city of Safed. A mortar attack against Kibbutz Menara in the Upper Galilee causes damage to some buildings. A Hezbollah anti-tank missile targets the Biranit army base. Israel responds with drone, helicopter, and tank strikes against the Hezbollah cell that launched the missile. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **November 21, 2023 - November 22, 2023:** In a November 21 address to the U.N. Security Council, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen calls for Hezbollah to be disarmed and removed from southern Lebanon.  
On November 22, Israel kills at least five Hezbollah fighters, including the son of a Hezbollah member of parliament and a commander in Hezbollah's Radwan commando force. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **November 18, 2023:** Hezbollah launches at least 25 rockets toward northern Israel from Lebanon.  
Hezbollah claims it shot down an Israeli drone early in the morning. Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **November 17, 2023:** Militants in southern Lebanon launch anti-tank rockets toward northern Israel.  
No casualties are reported. Israel attacks Hezbollah launch sites in southern Lebanon in retaliation. Source: [Haaretz](#)
- **November 12, 2023:** Hezbollah fires a mortar from southern Lebanon toward Manara in northern Israel, wounding seven IDF soldiers and 10 others.  
Israel intercepts four of 15 projectile launches from Lebanon while the others fall in open areas. Hezbollah launches 12 anti-tank missiles toward Moshav Dovev in Israel's Upper Galilee, wounding 14 civilians. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Jewish News Syndicate](#)
- **November 10, 2023:** Hamas launches rockets toward Tel Aviv, wounding two.  
Hamas calls the rockets a response to rising civilian deaths in Gaza. According to the Israeli military, militants in Gaza and in Lebanon have fired approximately 9,500 missiles, rockets, and drones at Israel since October 7. The Israeli air defenses have shot down 2,000 of the projectiles, while about 12 percent have landed in Gaza itself. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **November 6, 2023:** Hamas's Lebanon branch announces it has launched 16 rockets from southern Lebanon toward the Israeli cities of Nahariya and Haifa.  
The IDF says it intercepted 30 rockets from Lebanon over the course of an hour and responded with artillery fire toward the origin points. Israel announces it killed Hamas's Deir al Balah battalion commander, Wael Asfeh, during an overnight airstrike in Gaza City. According to the IDF, Asfeh and other commanders of the so-called Central Camps Brigade participated in sending terrorists of Hamas's elite Nukhba forces into Israel during the October 7 attack. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **November 5, 2023:** Hezbollah announces multiple missile attacks on Israeli border positions.  
Israeli air defenses intercept a drone approaching Israel from Lebanon. An anti-tank missile from Lebanon strikes the Yiftah area of northern Israel. An Israeli airstrike targets a car in southern Lebanon, killing three children and their grandmother. The children's mother is wounded.

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Israel's military says it had targeted "a suspected transport for terrorists" and would investigate the civilian deaths. Hezbollah promises revenge and launches a barrage of grad rockets toward Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel. It is the first Hezbollah acknowledgement of using grad rockets since fighting began on October 8. Source: [Reuters](#)

- **November 3, 2023:** Nasrallah gives his first public speech on the war.  
Calling Hamas's October 7 surprise attack a "heroic act," Nasrallah declares Hezbollah had been engaged in the war since October 8. Nasrallah reiterates Hezbollah is not intimidated by American threats. He threatens to strike U.S. forces. Nasrallah also warns Israel against going further, promising to kill "a civilian for a civilian." Sources: [Fox News](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **October 29, 2023:** Militants launch multiple rockets from southern Lebanon into northern Israel, triggering alerts in the Israeli towns of Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, Shlomi, Tuba-Zangariyye, Rosh Pina, Ayelet Hashahar, and Hatzor Haglilit.  
One rocket strikes a home in Kirya Shmona but no casualties are reported. Israeli air defenses intercept several of the rockets, while the others fall in open areas. The IDF responds with artillery fire toward the source of the rocket launches. Israeli jets target Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **October 25, 2023:** Nasrallah meets with Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri and PIJ leader Ziad al-Nakhalah in Beirut.  
They discuss achieving "victory" over Israel. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **October 17, 2023:** Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) blame an Israeli airstrike for destroying the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, killing at least 500 people.  
Israel provides evidence that the explosion was caused by an errant PIJ rocket attack. According to the IDF, approximately 450 Palestinian rockets have landed inside Gaza since October 7. In response to the hospital explosion, Hezbollah declares "a day of unprecedented anger" on October 18. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Reuters](#)
- **October 16, 2023:** Hezbollah releases video of its fighters destroying Israeli surveillance cameras at five points along the border and inside Israel.  
The Israeli military ordered people living in 28 communities within 1.2 miles of the Lebanese border to evacuate. Hezbollah referred to its increased attacks as a warning. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **October 15, 2023:** Hezbollah launches multiple anti-tank missiles from Lebanon toward the northern Israeli moshav of Shtula and IDF positions in northern Israel, wounding at least four and killing two.  
Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **October 13, 2023:** Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem proclaims Hezbollah is "fully ready" to join the war and U.S. warnings would have no effect on its decision.  
Source: [Reuters](#)
- **October 11, 2023:** Hezbollah launches anti-tank missiles at Israeli positions in northern Israel.

Hezbollah claims the strike is in response to the deaths of three Hezbollah fighters in an Israeli strike on October 9. Israel responds with a drone strike on a Hezbollah outpost. Source:

[Times of Israel](#)

- **October 10, 2023:** Hezbollah fires an anti-tank missile at an unoccupied IDF armored vehicle on the Lebanon border.  
The attack follows the launch of 15 rockets from Lebanon by Hamas fighters. Israel strikes three Hezbollah outposts in response. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **October 9, 2023:** Israeli retaliatory strikes kill three Hezbollah members.  
Hezbollah acknowledges the deaths of three members "martyred as a result of the Zionist aggression on south Lebanon Monday afternoon."  
Hezbollah strikes two Israeli barracks guided missiles and mortar shells. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claims responsibility for a failed attempt to infiltrate Israel from southern Lebanon, while Hezbollah denies responsibility for fighting at the border. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **October 8, 2023:** Hezbollah launches guided rockets and artillery toward three Israeli posts in the Shebaa Farms "in solidarity" with the Palestinian people.  
Israel returns fire, reportedly wounding multiple people in Lebanon. According to Lebanese officials, Israel hit a Hezbollah tent previously set up in the Shebaa Farms. Hezbollah immediately builds a replacement. UNIFIL reports it had "detected several rockets fired from southeast Lebanon toward Israeli-occupied territory" and retaliatory artillery fire from Israel into Lebanon. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **August 9, 2023:** A Hezbollah truck passing through the Christian village of Kahaleh overturns. Hezbollah gunmen engage village residents who reportedly surrounded the truck, leaving a Hezbollah fighter and a villager dead.  
Local lawmakers from the Christian Forces political party accuse Hezbollah of transporting weapons in the truck. Hezbollah accuses "militias" in the village of attacking its property as the truck passed through. Hezbollah does not acknowledge the contents of the truck. Kahaleh is situated along a highway connecting Lebanon to Syria, which Hezbollah has used to transport weapons into Lebanon. After the incident, Kahaleh residents call for the highway to remain closed in protest. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **July 30, 2023 - :** On July 30, fighting erupts between Palestinian factions in Lebanon's Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near the southern port city of Sidon.  
The militants are armed with assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and hand grenades. At least six are killed and more than 30 wounded during the clashes, which continue into the evening. The fighting broke out after an unidentified gunman had reportedly tried to kill Islamist militant Mahmoud Khalil, but instead killed a companion of Khalil's. After the incident, militants kill a Palestinian military general affiliated with the Fatah party, which governs the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. The militants also kill three others walking with the general. The fighting damages multiple homes and two U.N. schools in the camp, as well as military barracks outside the camp. A Lebanese soldier is wounded when a mortar strikes the barracks. That night, the Palestinian factions in the camp agree to a ceasefire, mediated by the



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Amal movement and Hezbollah, but sporadic fighting continues into the next day. A Fatah statement calls the clashes part of a “bloody scheme that targets the security and stability of our camps.” Islamist groups Jund al Sham and Shabab al Muslim emerged as the primary agitators against Fatah. As the fighting continues through the first week of August, thousands are forced to flee and at least 12 people are killed. On August 3, the Lebanese government calls the fighting a “flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty” and warns Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas the army would have to intervene if the Palestinians did not end their confrontations. Sources: [Agence France-Presse](#), [Associated Press](#), [United Nations](#), [Associated Press](#)

- **July 15, 2023:** Lebanese Parliamentarian Qassem Hashem of the Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party led a group of approximately 18 on a tour of the border area with Israel, crossing over the U.N.-mandated Blue Line into Israeli territory. The IDF reportedly uses other riot dispersal means after the group refuses to leave. The group returns to Lebanon without further incident. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **July 12, 2023:** On the 17th anniversary of the start of the Second Lebanon War, approximately four members of Hezbollah set off explosives at the security fence separating Lebanon and Israel. The explosives fail to break through the fence and Israeli soldiers reportedly use non-lethal means to repel the militants from the area. At least three of the Hezbollah members are reportedly wounded, but it is unclear whether it was by the explosives or Israeli dispersal methods. During a televised speech later that day, Nasrallah says the incident is under investigation. UNIFIL calls on all sides to avoid escalating an “extremely sensitive situation.” Later that day, unidentified individuals reportedly attempt to use fireworks “and other means to engage or disrupt” the Israeli presence at the border. The fireworks blow back onto the Lebanese side of the border. No damage or casualties are reported by the Israelis. Sources: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Reuters](#)
- **July 6, 2023:** Unidentified militants in southern Lebanon fire two rockets toward northern Israel. One of the rockets lands inside Lebanon while the other lands in the disputed town of Ghajar on the Israeli side of the border. No damage or injuries are reported. Israel responds with artillery fire in the area from which the rockets had launched, adjacent to Ghajar. No injuries are reported, and Hezbollah makes no comment about the rocket attack. Separately, Hezbollah condemns “dangerous measures” by Israeli forces erecting a wire fence and building a cement wall in Ghajar. Lebanon considers Ghajar occupied Lebanese territory, though the United Nations has ruled the town was originally Syrian. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **July 5, 2023:** Approximately 30 uniformed and armed members of the LAF mixed with unarmed suspected members of Hezbollah cross the Blue Line border with Israel into Israeli territory. The group was reportedly aware it had entered Israeli territory, but it did not breach the Israeli border fence. According to media reports from the IDF, the incident was resolved after “a conversation” with UNIFIL officials in the area. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
- **May 21, 2023:** Ahead of the anniversary of Israel’s May 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah invites Lebanese and foreign journalists to a military demonstration in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah uses live ammunition to show off heavy weapons, missiles, and drones. The exercise takes place in a Hezbollah military camp in the Aaranta area, north of the Litani River, where UNIFIL does not have a mandate to operate. In response to questions from U.S. Special Coordinator for Lebanon Joanna Wroncka, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemns any action that “undermines the authority and sovereignty of the state.” He says the issue of Hezbollah’s weapons requires a “comprehensive national consensus, and it must be a priority for the upcoming phase.” Mikati calls on the U.N. Security Council to create a permanent ceasefire in the south and pressure Israel to halt its violations of Lebanon’s sovereignty. Source: [Arab News](#)
- **April 6, 2023 - April 8, 2023:** On April 6, Palestinian militants in Lebanon launch at least 30 rockets toward northern Israel overnight. It is the first rocket strike from Lebanon since April 2022. On April 7, the Israeli army strikes multiple Hamas targets in southern Lebanon. Lebanese media report the strikes targeted the areas of al-Qulayla and the al-Rashidiyah refugee camp, south of Tyre. No injuries are reported. The Lebanese army announces the discovery of a rocket launcher and multiple unlaunched rockets in the Marjayoun area, north of Metula. Hezbollah denies involvement in launching the rockets, but says it holds Israel “fully responsible for the repercussions of this dangerous escalation.” Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem claims “the entire axis of resistance remains vigilant.” On April 8, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah meets with Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders in Beirut to discuss coordinated “resistance” against Israel. On April 14, Nasrallah claims Israel hit neither Hamas nor Hezbollah targets and instead hit “banana groves” and a water irrigation channel. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Hamas](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Naharnet](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **January 22, 2023:** At approximately 9:10 p.m., two unidentified individuals on a motorcycle throw a grenade at the headquarters of Lebanese International Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) in the town of Adma, north of Beirut. The grenade explodes in the parking lot, damaging LBCI vehicles. No casualties are reported. Prime Minister Najib Mikati promises an investigation and continued protection for press freedoms. Sources: [LBCI](#), [LBCI](#), [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)
- **December 14, 2022:** Two UNIFIL armored vehicles, carrying eight peacekeeping soldiers, come under small arms fire near the southern village of Al-Aqbieh in southern Lebanon. One of the vehicles is separated and surrounded by a mob, which causes the vehicle to swerve and crash into a shop. One Irish UNIFIL soldier is killed by gunfire while three others are wounded in the crash. Hezbollah denies involvement. A senior Hezbollah official claims the soldier’s death resulted from an “unintentional incident” between Al-Aqbieh residents and the Irish unit. Irish officials launch an investigation. Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati says the perpetrators will be punished. UNIFIL launches an investigation in coordination with the LAF. In late December, the Lebanese military arrests a suspect. Hezbollah claims it cooperated in the arrest and the suspect is not a member. On January 5, 2023, Lebanon’s military tribunal charges the suspect and six others in absentia in the attack. According to recordings of the attack, the gunmen could be heard identifying themselves as Hezbollah. On June 1, Lebanon’s military tribunal charges five Hezbollah-linked men with killing the peacekeeper. Suspect Mohamad Ayyad is already in Lebanese custody, while suspects Ali Khalifeh, Ali Salman, Hussein Salman, and Mustafa Salman remain at large. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [UNIFIL](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)

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### Associated Press

- **July 18, 2022:** Israeli forces shoot down a Hezbollah drone that crossed the Lebanese border into Israel. During a July 19 visit to the Israel-Lebanon border, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid calls Hezbollah's aggression "unacceptable" and warns his country would act against any threat. Sources: [Jerusalem Post](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **July 2, 2022:** Israeli forces shoot down three unmanned Hezbollah drones that crossed into Israel from Lebanon. Initial IDF reports did not believe the drones were armed. The drones were launched toward Israeli territorial waters as Lebanon and Israel continued an international disagreement over their maritime border. Source: [Jerusalem Post](#)
- **April 24, 2022 - April 25, 2022:** At night on April 24, unidentified militants fire a rocket from Lebanon into Israel. The rocket lands in an open area near Kibbutz Matzuva, close to the border, without causing damage or injuries. The Israeli army responds by launching dozens of artillery shells into southern Lebanon. UNIFIL calls for restraint on both sides. There are no claims of responsibility for the Lebanese rocket fire, but Israeli military sources suspect Palestinian factions in Lebanon while some officials specifically accuse Hamas. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [UNIFIL](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Haaretz](#)
- **December 10, 2021:** An alleged Hamas weapons cache in the Burj Shamali Palestinian refugee camp in Tyre explodes. There are conflicting reports of casualties. The state-run National News Agency reports an unspecified number of deaths, while other reports say there are up to 12 people killed and 12 wounded. Reuters reports 12 people are wounded but also that there are no fatalities, according to local media and civil defense workers on the scene, as well as a security source. The state prosecutor in southern Lebanon asks security agencies and arms experts to inspect the arms storage site. A Palestinian official denies there were weapons stored in the camp. The following day, a Hamas representative tells the Lebanese Al-Akhbar newspaper the weapons were for "defense" and the explosion was caused by a fire. A Hamas statement says the fire was caused by an electrical fault in a warehouse containing oxygen and gas cylinders for coronavirus patients, as well as detergents and disinfectants. According to resident reports, a fire started in a diesel tanker and spread to a nearby mosque controlled by Hamas, triggering the explosion of weapons stored inside. Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#), [Hamas](#)
- On October 14, seven Shiite Muslims are shot dead during hours-long gun battles in the streets of Beirut as protesters gather at the behest of Hezbollah and the Amal movement against an investigation into the August 4, 2020, Beirut port explosion. Among the dead from the clashes are two Hezbollah fighters and three from Amal. The Lebanese army deploys around Beirut to end the violence. Hezbollah blames the violence on the Lebanese Forces party, which Hezbollah senior official Hashem Safieddine accuses of seeking to incite a civil war. The Lebanese Forces blame the violence on Hezbollah "incitement" against Judge Tarek Bitar, the lead investigator in the port explosion investigation. On October 18, Nasrallah accuses the Lebanese Forces party and its leader, Samir Geagea, of seeking to ignite a civil war. Nasrallah claims Hezbollah has 100,000 forces in Lebanon to defend the country from external attack, not fight in a civil war. Geagea denies responsibility and says his party has no armed fighters. Nasrallah calls the Lebanese Forces party the biggest threat to Christians in Lebanon. Hezbollah supporters in the Beirut suburb of Dahiya, a Hezbollah stronghold, fire guns in the air to celebrate the start of Nasrallah's speech. Geagea says his party's confrontation with Hezbollah is purely political and must remain so. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **August 4, 2021 - August 6, 2021:** On August 4, unidentified militants fire three rockets toward Israel, two of which land inside Israel. Israeli forces respond with artillery fire, reportedly causing a fire in the Lebanese village of Rashaya al-Fukhar. The Lebanese army says it is investigating the source of the rocket fire. The Lebanese army said it is investigating the source of the rocket fire. On August 5, Israel launches airstrikes in southern Lebanon against the areas from which the rockets were launched, reportedly striking an empty area in Lebanon's Marjayoun district. On August 6, Hezbollah launches at least 19 rockets into Israel. Hezbollah claims the rockets strike in open areas of the disputed Shebaa Farms area. No casualties are reported. Hezbollah calls the rockets retaliation for the August 5 Israeli airstrikes, but does not take responsibility for the previous day's rocket attack. Videos appear on social media of Druze residents in the Shwaya village in Lebanon's Hasbaya region claiming, "Hezbollah is firing rockets from between homes so that Israel hits us back." In response, Hezbollah claims it had fired the rockets from remote areas and sought to avoid harming Lebanese civilians. The U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the international peacekeeping force in the country, reports witnessing the rockets fired into Israel and Israeli retaliatory airstrikes, but claims the rockets were fired from outside its operating area in southern Lebanon. Sources: [UNIFIL](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **July 31, 2021 - August 1, 2021:** On July 31, a man from a Sunni tribe in the town of Khaldeh opens fire at a wedding party in a club in the town, killing Hezbollah fighter Ali Chebli. Chebli had allegedly killed a 15-year-old relative of the attacker a year earlier, and the attack on the wedding party was reportedly revenge. Police apprehend the attacker, whose family says Lebanese police never arrested Chebli for the death of their relative because he was under Hezbollah's protection. During Chebli's funeral on August 1, gunmen kill at least five and wound at least four others. At least three of the fatalities are Hezbollah members. The Lebanese army arrests two suspects in relation to the funeral attack after Hezbollah calls on the army to arrest those responsible. Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati calls for calm and warns against sectarian "discord." Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#)
- **March 2, 2021:** Hezbollah fighters reportedly open fire on Lebanese forces in Beirut attempting to arrest fugitive Salim Ayyash in connection with the 2005 murder of Rafik Hariri. Hezbollah acknowledges Lebanese forces had attempted to arrest a suspect but denies its fighters had fired on them. Source: [Arab News](#)
- **September 22, 2020:** A Hezbollah arms depot explodes in the village of Ain Qana in south Lebanon. Reuters reports there are multiple people wounded in the blast, though Hezbollah denies there are any casualties. Hezbollah blames the explosion on a "technical error" at the depot. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **November 26, 2019:** Ali Kourani, a U.S. citizen and New York resident who spied for Hezbollah, is sentenced to 40 years in federal prison.

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- Kourani was recruited, trained, and deployed by Hezbollah to plan and execute acts of terrorism around New York City. After spending years conducting surveillance on the city's critical infrastructure, federal buildings, international airports, and even daycare centers, he is now the first Islamic Jihad Organization operative to be convicted and sentenced for his crimes against the United States. Source: [NBC News](#)
- **November 24, 2019:** Security forces fire tear gas amid confrontations in central Beirut between supporters of Hezbollah and Amal. The violence began when supporters of Hezbollah and the other main Shiite faction, Amal, attacked protesters who had blocked a main Beirut thoroughfare known as the Ring Road—a move the protesters said was aimed at exerting pressure on politicians to form a new government after Prime Minister Saad Hariri offered his resignation October 29. The overnight violence gave a preview into a worst-case scenario for Lebanon's crisis, with the country's U.S.-trained military increasingly in the middle between pro- and anti-Hezbollah factions. Source: [Huffington Post](#)
  - **October 31, 2019:** Hezbollah fires an anti-aircraft missile at an Israeli drone flying over Nabatieh in southern Lebanon. The Israel Defense Forces denied Hezbollah's claim that the aircraft had been shot down over the Lebanese village of Nabatieh. Footage from Nabatieh that was shared on social media appeared to show an anti-aircraft missile being fired into the air. An explosion was also heard in the area, residents told local media. The exchange occurred amid heightened tensions between Israel and Iran, and amid a rapidly deteriorating political situation in Lebanon, where nearly two weeks of nonstop protests have paralyzed the country. Source: [Times of Israel](#)
  - Hezbollah supporters attack anti-government protesters in Beirut calling for the government's resignation. The Hezbollah supporters throw rocks and proclaim they will not allow criticism of Nasrallah, who accused foreign powers of supporting the protests. After two weeks of protests, Hariri resigns on October 29. Sources: [CNN](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **September 1, 2019 - September 2, 2019:** On September 1, Hezbollah fires rockets at a military base and ambulance in Israel after an alleged Israeli drone strike in Lebanon, for which the Israeli military denies responsibility. Israel returns fire at Hezbollah positions. There are no reported casualties on either side. Hezbollah claims the attack is in response to an Israeli strike on Iran-backed forces in Syria the week before. Hariri declares that the Lebanese government is not responsible for the rockets on Israel and Hezbollah is not just Lebanon's problem but a regional problem. Sources: [CNBC](#), [Washington Post](#), [Jewish News Syndicate](#)
  - **June 3, 2019:** A gunman attacks a bank, a police station, and an army vehicle in Tripoli, killing four members of the security forces before exploding a suicide vest. The gunman is identified as Abdul Rahman Mabsout, who had briefly been detained upon his return from Syria in 2016. ISIS is suspected but there are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - - : Israeli forces discover six underground tunnels built by Hezbollah from Lebanon into Israel. The tunnels are destroyed. Sources: [NBC News](#), [NBC News](#)
  - A group of about 20 suspected Hezbollah militants ambush a UNIFIL patrol convoy in the village of Majdal Zun about five miles from the Lebanese-Israeli border, smashing windows and lighting one of the cars on fire. The convoy was attacked allegedly because the peacekeepers were taking pictures. There are no injuries reported. UNIFIL says the Lebanese military failed to identify the attackers but U.S. sources suspect Hezbollah. Source: [Fox News](#)
  - On November 3, Prime Minister Saad Hariri flees to Saudi Arabia. The following day, he announces his resignation, accusing Hezbollah and Iran of destabilizing Lebanon and alleging that Hezbollah attempted to assassinate him a few days earlier. Hezbollah rejects the claim and accuses Saudi Arabia of directing Hariri to resign in order to weaken Hezbollah. Hariri returns to Lebanon on November 22 and rescinds his resignation. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **June 30, 2017:** Five suicide bombers attack Lebanese forces in Syrian refugee camps in the town of Aarsal. A sixth attacker throws a grenade at a Lebanese patrol. One of the suicide bombers kills a child after blowing up amidst a refugee family. Seven soldiers are wounded. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **August 31, 2016:** A bomb outside the city of Zahle in the Bekaa Valley kills one and injures several others. Security officials believe the bombing targeted Shiite participants traveling to an Ashura celebration event in southern Lebanon. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **June 27, 2016:** Eight suicide bombings in the Christian village of Al Qaa in the Bekaa valley kill five and wound at least 28. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Hezbollah blames at least one of the bombings on ISIS. Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **June 12, 2016:** A bomb explodes outside of a Blom Bank branch in downtown Beirut. The bomb damages the office but inflicts no casualties. It is suspected that the bomb was set off by Hezbollah in an attempt to discourage Lebanon's banking industry from abiding by U.S. financial sanctions against the terror group. Sources: [Independent](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **November 12, 2015:** Twin suicide bombings explode within minutes of each other in Beirut's Bourj al-Barajneh district, a Hezbollah stronghold. The blasts kill 44 people and wound 239. One of the suicide bombers whose explosives did not go off tells Lebanese security that he was recruited by ISIS. ISIS later claims responsibility. The bombings are reportedly the worst terror attack in Beirut since the end of Lebanon's civil war. Within 48 hours, Lebanese authorities arrest 11 people, mostly Syrians, in connection to the bombings. Authorities believe the original target was a hospital in Beirut. Sources: [CNN](#), [Daily Star](#), [Reuters](#), [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#)
  - **January 10, 2015:** Two suicide bombers blow themselves up at Café Omran in Beirut, killing at least nine and wounding 35. The Nusra Front claims responsibility. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **August 2, 2014 - August 4, 2014:** Lebanese forces arrest an ISIS member, prompting the terror group to launch attacks in Lebanon and seize the Lebanese city of Aarsal along the Lebanese-Syrian border. The Lebanese army retakes Aarsal on August 9. At least 19 Lebanese soldiers are killed and 25 are wounded in the battle. Additionally, at least 42 civilians are killed and 400 are wounded. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Daily Star](#), [Daily Star](#), [Reuters](#)
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- **December 27, 2013:** Former Lebanese finance minister and ambassador to the United States Mohamad Chatah dies in a Beirut car bombing. Chatah had prominently voiced his support for the United States and his opposition to Hezbollah. Hours before the bombing, Chatah tweeted that Hezbollah had been “pressing hard to be granted similar powers in security & foreign policy matters that Syria exercised in Lebanon for 15 yrs.” There are no claims of responsibility, but former Prime Minister Saad Hariri blames Hezbollah for Chatah’s murder. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **November 19, 2013:** A double suicide bombing outside of the Iranian embassy in Beirut kills 23, including Iranian cultural attaché Sheikh Ibrahim al-Ansari.  
More than 150 are wounded. The al-Qaeda-linked Abdullah Azzam Brigades claims responsibility and demands that Iranian forces leave Syria. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **October 19, 2012:** A car bomb kills senior Lebanese intelligence official General Wissam al-Hassan, who had investigated Hezbollah’s role in the 2005 Hariri assassination and reportedly supported rebel forces against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Syria’s civil war. Violent protests erupt during Hassan’s funeral. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Guardian](#)
  - **September 29, 2008:** A remote-controlled car bomb in Tripoli destroys a nearby bus carrying Lebanese soldiers, killing five and wounding 35 others.  
The bombing is almost identical to one in August that killed 15 people. Source: [Telegraph](#)
  - **August 13, 2008:** A bomb hidden in a suitcase explodes at a bus stop in Tripoli, killing 18 people and wounding at least 45.  
Sources: [Telegraph](#), [Al-Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
  - Hezbollah launches violent street battles against Lebanese forces after a government decision to dismantle the group’s private telephone network.  
Hezbollah fighters capture sections of western Beirut and attack media offices affiliated with the governing Future movement in clashes that leave 65 people dead across the country. The fighting ends with a Qatari-negotiated agreement that brings Hezbollah’s political party into a national-unity government and gives it veto power in a new cabinet. Sources: [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **January 25, 2008:** A car bomb detonates near an overpass in Beirut as Captain Wissam Eid, Lebanon’s chief terrorism investigator, drives by. The bomb kills Eid and three others. There are no claims of responsibility, but Eid had been investigating Hezbollah’s involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Daily Star](#), [Reuters](#), [Guardian](#)
  - **June 13, 2007:** A bomb in the car of anti-Syrian politician Walid Eido kills him and at least nine others in Beirut.  
At least 11 are also wounded. Anti-Syrian parliamentarian Wael Abou-Faour accuses the Syrian government of responsibility. During Eido’s funeral, protesters call for revenge against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, whom they believe is allied with Syria. Sources: [Telegraph](#), [Guardian](#)
  - - : On May 20, militants from the al-Qaeda-linked Fatah al-Islam attack Lebanese army positions near the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp.  
The army responds with a three-month siege of Nahr al-Bared. On June 9, five Lebanese soldiers are killed in clashes with the militants. By September 3, the army completes its takeover of the camp, expelling or killing almost 300 Fatah al-Islam fighters from the camp. More than 20 civilians are killed and some 40,000 residents of the camps flee during the three-month-long fight, which is reportedly the worst internal violence Lebanon has experienced since the end of the civil war. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Brookings Institution](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#)
  - - : On July 12, Hezbollah launches a cross-border raid into northern Israel, killing eight Israeli soldiers and capturing two others.  
On July 13, Israel and Hezbollah begin a 34-day war. Sources: [New York Times](#), [United Nations](#), [Newsweek](#), [Times of Israel](#)
  - **December 12, 2005:** An explosives-filled car is remotely detonated in the eastern Beirut suburb of Mkalles.  
The explosion kills four people, including anti-Syrian parliamentarian Gebran Tueni, and wounds 32 others. Lebanese anti-Syrian protesters blame Syria for the assassination. A statement faxed to foreign media claims the attack on behalf of the hereto unknown group Strugglers for the Unity and Freedom of al-Sham. The statement also threatens other opponents of “Arabism” in Lebanon. Sources: [CNN](#), [Financial Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#)
  - **July 12, 2005:** A bomb explodes in the Beirut suburb of Antelias as the motorcade of the pro-Syrian outgoing Deputy Prime Minister Elias Murr drives by, wounding Murr and killing two others.  
At least a dozen others are also wounded. Sources: [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#)
  - On June 2, a bomb planted in the car of anti-Syrian journalist Samir Qasir outside his home in Ashrafiyeh kills Qasir and a passerby.  
On June 21, a bomb planted in the car of former Communist Party leader George Hawi in Beirut kills Hawi, who was known for his anti-Syrian views. The bombing takes place hours after a new pro-Syrian parliament takes office in Lebanon. Druze parliamentarian Ghazi Aridi of the Progressive Socialist Party claims that Hawi’s murder is part of a plot to eliminate all Syrian opposition in Lebanon. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#)
  - **March 23, 2005:** A bomb explodes in the Alta Vista shopping center in the Christian village of Kaslik, killing three foreign workers and wounding four other people.  
The roof of the mall collapses after the explosion. The anti-Syrian movement blames supporters of the Syrian occupation, alleging that they incited violence in order to demonstrate the need for Syria to maintain order in Lebanon. Sources: [Daily Star](#), [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [McClatchy](#)
  - **March 19, 2005:** A car bomb explodes in New Jdeidah, a predominantly Christian suburb of Beirut, wounding nine people.  
Sources: [CNN](#), [Guardian](#)
  - **February 14, 2005:** A bombing in Beirut kills former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others.
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In June 2011, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) issues arrest warrants for four men, including two Hezbollah members, who are suspected of involvement in the bombing. In August 2020, the STL convicts Hezbollah member Salim Ayyash in absentia but finds three other defendants not guilty. The court does not find direct evidence of the involvement of Hezbollah's leadership in the bombing. The STL sentences Ayyash in absentia to five consecutive life sentences on December 11, 2020. Sources: [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#), [BBC News](#)

- **October 1, 2004:** A car bomb in Beirut wounds former government minister Marwan Hamadeh and kills his driver as they drive by. Lebanese analysts believe the bombing is a message against political cooperation between Lebanese Christians and Muslims. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Fox News](#)
- **March 20, 1996:** A Hezbollah suicide bomber blows himself up near the village of Taibeh, Lebanon, next to an Israeli army convoy, killing one soldier and wounding one civilian. Hezbollah says the bombing is in response to the international anti-terrorism conference held in Egypt the week before. Lebanon refused an invitation to the conference. Source: [CNN](#)
- **November 22, 1989:** A remote-controlled bomb explodes in a Beirut shop near the passing motorcade of Lebanese President Rene Mouawad, killing the newly elected president and 23 others. Sources: [Los Angeles Times](#), [Time](#)
- **September 20, 1984:** A suicide car bomb blows up in the annex of the U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 24 and wounding dozens more. The Islamic Jihad Organization, a.k.a. Hezbollah, claims responsibility in a phone call hours after the attack. Sources: [New York Times](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
- **October 23, 1983:** A Hezbollah suicide truck bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut kills 241 U.S. service personnel. Simultaneously, another suicide bomber drives an explosives-filled pickup truck into a building housing French paratroopers, killing 58 French soldiers. Source: [CNN](#)
- **April 18, 1983:** A Hezbollah suicide attack against the U.S. embassy in Beirut kills 63 and wounds 120. Sources: [START](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 5, 1983:** A car bomb explodes outside the PLO headquarters in Beirut, killing 20 and wounding 115. The explosion also destroys a building across the street housing Jana, the Libyan press agency, and the temporary Libyan embassy. The Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners claims responsibility. Sources: [Christian Science Monitor](#), [New York Times](#)
- **September 14, 1982 - September 18, 1982:** On September 14, a bomb outside the Beirut headquarters of the Kataeb Christian political party kills Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel and 32 others. In retaliation, Christian Phalangist forces enter the Sabra and Shatilla Palestinian refugee camps on September 15 and kill at least 350 people over the course of three days. The exact fatality figure remains disputed, ranging from 350 to thousands. Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Daily Star](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- On September 4, four gunmen attack the car of Louis Delamare, the French ambassador to Lebanon, and kill him. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. On September 19, a car bomb explodes outside of the PLO headquarters in Sidon, killing 25 and wounding 100. Also that day, a bomb explodes at a cement factory in Chekka, killing 10 and wounding 10. On September 20, a bomb explodes in the Salwa movie theater in west Beirut, killing four and wounding 25. On September 21, a bomb explodes outside of a gas depot in Tripoli, causing damage but no casualties. The Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners claims responsibility for the bombings in Sidon, Chekka, and Beirut. Police suspect the Front of the Tripoli bombing as well. Sources: [New York Times](#), [United Press International](#)
- **June 16, 1976:** U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis E. Meloy, his economic counselor, Robert O. Waring, and their Lebanese driver, Zoheir Moghrabi, are kidnapped and shot to death. Authorities later discover the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is responsible. In 1994, Bassem Farkh and Namek Kamal are sentenced to death for the attack. In 1996, a Lebanese appeals court rules that the attack is covered under a 1990 amnesty agreement for political crimes and frees Farkh and Kamal. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Daily Star](#), [Los Angeles Times](#)
- **April 13, 1975:** Six PLO guerillas fire rifles in the air while driving by the Christian Maronite Church of Notre Dame de la Delivrance. In response, Christian Phalangist militants attack a bus carrying mostly Palestinians in Beirut, killing 26. The attack marks the beginning of the Lebanese civil war. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Daily Telegraph](#)
- On May 15, three members of the DFLP travel from Lebanon and attack a school in Ma'alot, Israel. The three take 85 students hostage, demanding the Israeli government release Arab prisoners. The attackers kill 22 children and four adults, and wound more than 70 others before security forces drive them out. The following day, Israeli planes bomb seven Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in response, killing 27 people. Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **May 8, 1970 - May 12, 1970:** On May 8, members of the PLO faction the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) cross from Lebanon into Israel. On May 12, the DFLP members attack an Israeli school bus with RPGs, killing 12 people and wounding more than 20, mostly children. Israel retaliates by shelling four Lebanese villages, killing 13. Later in the month, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan warns the Lebanese government to control its borders. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
- **July 8, 1958:** A bomb explodes at the ABC department store in Beirut, wounding at least 20 people. Source: [New York Times](#)
- Lebanese Muslims demand the government join the newly formed United Arab Republic formed by Egypt and Syria. Maronite Christians opposed to the move begin violently clashing with Islamic rebels, who launch a wave of attacks to try to force the resignation of Christian President Camille Chamoun. In July, the United States sends a peacekeeping force. The fighting ends July 31 after both sides accept Lebanese army commander General Fuad Chehab as Lebanon's new president. The fighting claims the lives of 2,000 to 4,000

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people. Sources: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#)

- Former prime minister Riad Solh, Lebanon's first prime minister, is assassinated while in Amman, Jordan. Members of the Syrian National Socialist party are suspected.

Sources: [Los Angeles Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Daily Star](#)

### **Domestic Counter-Extremism**

According to the U.S. Department of State, because Lebanon lacks a comprehensive counterterrorism law, the government relies on sections of its criminal code to prosecute terrorism. However, the State Department also notes that Lebanon's confessional system of government can make the implementation of the criminal code difficult. The State Department acknowledges that the Lebanese security services have disrupted multiple terror networks in Lebanon, including ISIS networks, but notes that Hezbollah's involvement in Lebanese politics prevents the Lebanese government from fully exercising its authority within the country. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

The Lebanese criminal code punishes terrorist financing with sentences of hard labor and fines. According to the U.S. State Department, Lebanon improved its Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) strategies in 2016. In October 2016, the Lebanese parliament passed a new tax law strengthening Lebanon's AML/CFT. Additionally, Lebanon has participated in the U.S. State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance program since 2006. The program provides aid for border security enhancements and law enforcement. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#), [MENAFATF](#))

### **International Counter-Extremism**

#### *International Bodies*

Lebanon is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), a Financial Action Task Force-style regional body. MENAFATF evaluated Lebanon's AML/CFT processes in 2009 and is due to undertake a second evaluation in the future. Lebanon's financial intelligence unit, the Special Investigation Commission (SIC), is a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, and Lebanon participates in the international Counter-ISIS Finance Group. The Lebanese government also makes an annual payment to support the U.N. Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which is investigating the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. In 2016, Lebanon contributed approximately \$32.5 million to the U.N. Special Tribunal. (Source: [MENAFATF](#), [MENAFATF](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Lebanon held the presidency of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) in 2018. The Financial Intelligence Unit of Lebanon's Central Bank—the Special Investigation Commission (SIC)—is a member of the Egmont Group, an informal network of 164 financial intelligence units. Lebanon is also a member of the Defeat-ISIS Coalition's Counter-ISIS Finance Group. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

#### *Financial Sanctions and Hezbollah*

Lebanon has been the subject of international sanctions aimed at disrupting Hezbollah's financial networks. The U.S. government alone has designated more than 100 Lebanese financial institutions, commercial entities, and individuals linked to Hezbollah since 2001. In 2015, the U.S. government passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act (HIFPA), which targeted Lebanese banks. The Lebanese Central Bank directed the country's financial institutions to comply with HIFPA. In early 2016, Lebanese media reported that some banks were refusing to open new accounts for suspected Hezbollah supporters, and that June, the Central Bank announced the pending closure of 3,000 Hezbollah-linked accounts. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Reuters](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Asharq Al-Awsat](#))

After HIFPA's passage, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah defiantly responded that Hezbollah's members were not invested in Lebanese financial systems. But Hezbollah parliamentary leaders simultaneously warned that sanctions could push Lebanon toward bankruptcy and cause a "wide rift" in the country if Lebanese citizens stopped patronizing Lebanese banks out of fear of sanctions. One member of a Lebanese parliamentary delegation that met with U.S. officials after HIFPA's passage warned that sanctions on Lebanon's banking sector could cause "a total collapse of the Lebanese state." (Sources: [Middle East Eye](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Al-Monitor](#))

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### **Public Opinion**

#### *Religious and Political Divisions*

Lebanese politics are largely divided along sectarian lines. In the 2009 parliamentary election, 76 percent of Lebanese Sunnis voted for the anti-Syria Future movement and its March 14 coalition. The Christian community split its vote with 49.4 percent voting for parties affiliated with the Hezbollah-led March 8 coalition and 46.1 percent voting for the March 14 coalition. Though the Future movement won the largest share of seats in the election, Hezbollah and its allies combined to win second place, forcing the creation of a coalition government. (Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Associated Press](#))

Ahead of the 2009 election, pundits believed that Hezbollah could win a majority in the Lebanese parliament with the help of Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, the only Christian party aligned with Hezbollah. Christian voters were reportedly divided on Hezbollah, particularly regarding the issue of disarming the group. Aoun argued that "Hezbollah's weapons will no longer be a problem when the causes behind its existence disappear, including the borders' issues." A statement by the Maronite Christian Church ahead of the election alluded to the threat of Iranian influence over Lebanon if Hezbollah won. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Associated Press](#))

Between 2006 and 2016, Lebanese belief that the government is corrupt held steady above 80 percent. According to a September 2016 Gallup poll, only 25 percent of Lebanese citizens approved of the country's elected leadership. (Sources: [Gallup](#))

#### *ISIS*

According to an August 2017 Pew Research Center poll, 97 percent of Lebanese citizens believe that ISIS poses the major threat to their country. (Source: [Pew Research Center](#))

#### *Hezbollah*

According to a 2014 Pew Research Center poll, 86 percent of Lebanese Shiites held favorable views of Hezbollah, compared with 31 percent of Lebanese Christians and only 9 percent of Lebanese Sunnis. Nonetheless, a 2014 Beirut Center for Research and Information survey found that approximately two-thirds of Lebanon's Christians believe Hezbollah is protecting the country from ISIS. The survey also found that 66 percent of Christians supported Hezbollah's intervention in Syria, compared with only 39 percent in June 2013. In January 2015, Hezbollah Executive Council chief Sheikh Nabil Qaouk stated his belief that many Lebanese Sunnis will willingly join Hezbollah in its next conflict with Israel. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Al-Akhbar English](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))