



## The main points of Hassan Nasrallah's speeches (January 3 and 5, 2024)

January 8, 2024

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

► Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah delivered two televised speeches, one on January 3 and the other on January 5, 2024. The first, entitled "On the road to Jerusalem" was given to mark the fourth anniversary of the deaths of Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Qods Force, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq and the commander of the pro-Iranian militia, the Hezbollah brigades. The second was delivered during a memorial service for Muhammad Hussein Yaghi, one of the founders of Hezbollah who died at the end of December 2023 after an illness.

► The speeches were prompted by the war in the Gaza Strip, the ongoing fighting between Hezbollah and Israel and the killing attributed to Israel of Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau and responsible for the movement's activities in Judea and Samaria; he was killed in the Dahiyeh, a Shi'ite suburb in south Beirut, on January 2, 2024.<sup>2</sup>

► The speeches were substantially different from one another:

- ◆ In the first speech, Nasrallah praised the actions of the "resistance axis"<sup>3</sup> during the past months and presented the "picture of victory" of Hamas, as part of the axis, against Israel. He reiterated that the "resistance movements" [terrorist organizations] and countries operated autonomously and were not Iranian proxies, another attempt to claim that Iran had no involvement in and bore no responsibility for the terrorist attack and massacre of October 7, and perhaps to justify Hezbollah's current form of intervention, which has not yet turned into an all-out war.

- ◆ In the second speech, Nasrallah focused on the conflict between Israel and south Lebanon, appealed to the Lebanese population, praising the firm stand of the

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

<sup>2</sup> For further information, see the January 4, 2024 ITIC report, "[Reactions to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri](#)," and the November 3, 2023 report, "[Profile of Saleh al-Arouri, a Senior Hamas Terrorist](#)."

<sup>3</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

residents of the villages in south Lebanon, some of whom were forced to leave their homes, and claimed that Hezbollah's intervention in the war in the Gaza Strip was intended to protect south Lebanon. He threatened Israel with punishment and a harsh response to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri, and elaborated on the achievements of "Operation al-Aqsa Flood."



Hassan Nasrallah on January 3, 2024 (left) and January 5, 2024 (right) (al-Manar TV, January 3 and 5, 2024)

## Nasrallah' Main Points<sup>4</sup>

### Hezbollah's fighting in Lebanon

- ▶ On the strategic-political level, Nasrallah said Hezbollah had intervened in the conflict on October 8, 2023 to achieve two goals:
  - ◆ To exert pressure on the Israeli government to stop the war in the Gaza Strip.
  - ◆ To engage the IDF on another front to reduce the military pressure on Hamas.
- ▶ Nasrallah boasted that Hezbollah's quick action and intervention in the conflict on October 8 had prevented Israel from attacking [Hezbollah]. He claimed Israel had seen a "historic opportunity to get rid of the Hezbollah," but was reluctant to do so after losing the element of surprise. He revealed that on October 8 Hezbollah put its rocket launching units on alert and began preparing for war against Israel. He boasted that thus they had opened a front [west to east] from the Mediterranean Sea to the Hermon, and proved they were brave and capable, not afraid of anyone and not deterred.
- ▶ Nasrallah said that the dead, wounded and the many displaced residents in Israel were a heavy burden and exerted pressure on the Israeli government and the IDF. He gave the examples of the shooting of the three Israeli hostages and cases of "friendly fire" during the fighting in the Gaza Strip as "proof" that Israel was "weary and under stress." He again boasted that for the first time in the history of the conflicts with Lebanon, the Israeli

<sup>4</sup> The source for both speeches was al-Manar TV, which broadcast them on January 3 and 5, 2024.

settlements near the border had been forced to evacuate, and thereby creating a "security zone" on the Israeli side of the border at a depth of three to seven kilometers in some places, instead of on the Lebanese side. He focused on the internal situation in the "settlements" [cities, towns and villages] in northern Israel, clearly considering it a major Hezbollah achievement in the current conflict. He claimed Hezbollah's intervention had another "positive outcome," which was "strengthening the equation of deterrence," that is, forcing Israel to fight with "rules of engagement" dictated by the organization.

► On the operational level, Nasrallah said that since October 8, 2023, Hezbollah has attacked along a distance of more than 100 kilometers [60 miles], focusing on three types of targets: military targets such as IDF posts; military targets inside Israeli "settlements" where IDF forces were stationed; and Israeli civilians, but only in response to attacks on Lebanese civilians. He claimed Hezbollah had carried out approximately 670 attacks during the three months of war, an average of six to seven per day, attacking 48 IDF posts and 17 Israeli "settlements."

► Nasrallah praised the Hezbollah operatives' shooting ability and accuracy, and elaborated on their success in attacking "expensive intelligence and military equipment" at IDF posts. He mocked those who claimed Hezbollah was "attacking poles and cranes," claiming the attacks were significant and painful for the IDF. He also added that the organization's operatives attacked IDF forces stationed inside Israeli "settlements," claiming they had "good intelligence" regarding the location of Israeli forces in such places, and also boasted of the great destruction caused to Israeli vehicles and tanks.

► Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah had caused Israel more casualties than it was willing to admit. He [falsely] claimed that Israel's policy was to hide the number of its dead and wounded, both in the fighting with Hezbollah and in the fighting in the Gaza Strip, and by revealing the [alleged] "fact" he was embarrassing the IDF and the Israeli government, and exerting pressure on it. To prove his statement he cited a January 5, 2024 article in the Israeli media stating that than 12,000 people in Israel were expected to be defined as disabled [without noting the type of disability].

► Regarding the situation in the villages in south Lebanon, Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah did not require any resident of south Lebanon to evacuate or stay in the village where he lived. He praised the residents of the villages who "pay a direct price in their daily lives" in the conflict, adding that they "understand what the campaign is and what it means." He said

that if Israel won in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon would be the next target for its "aggression," especially the area south of the Litani River. "The campaign started for Palestine, but it is for south Lebanon," he said, adding that "this is a campaign in Lebanon just as it is a campaign in Gaza." The appeal to the south Lebanon population may have come in the wake of publications in the Arab press earlier this week stating that Hezbollah demanded the residents of villages to evacuate their homes because of the conflict.

► In his first speech, Nasrallah also warned Israel against waging an all-out war with Israel, saying that "If the enemy thinks he will start a war against Lebanon, our war will be without limitations, without borders, without rules." He noted that whoever was thinking of starting a war with Hezbollah would regret it, adding that it was also "in the Lebanese interest to wage the war to the end, without borders."

### **"The day after"**

► In the long term, Nasrallah claimed, the deterrent equation which had become stronger in recent months opened the possibility of liberating all Lebanese lands, starting from point B1 in Naqoura in the west to the Sheba Farms in the east. "We are facing a historic opportunity to liberate every inch of Lebanese land," he said. He also rejected the possibility of reaching a political settlement before the cessation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip, stating that "Any discussion, negotiation or dialogue on the issue will be useless before the cessation of 'aggression' in the Gaza Strip."

► In another reference to the inability of political negotiations to protect Lebanon, he noted the inability of the international community to protect the Gaza Strip, claiming it also held a message for Lebanon. "The international institutions, laws community are incapable of protecting any nation. This is also relevant for Lebanon," and as a hint to the possibility of implementing Resolution 1701 to push Hezbollah north of the Litani River, he said, "If you are weak, no one in the world will protect you."

### **The killing of Saleh al-'Arouri**

► Nasrallah called the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri in Beirut "a dangerous violation that will not go unanswered and unpunished," explaining in his second speech that a Hezbollah silence would mean that "all Lebanon is exposed" to killing, and that Hezbollah "will be on the battlefield" in this regard, because on the morning of January 6, 2024, the organization launched about 62 missiles at the IDF base on Mount Meron as an "initial response."

## **Qassem Soleimani and the fashioning of the "resistance axis"**

► In his first speech, Nasrallah spoke at length in praise of Qassem Soleimani, former commander of the IRGC Qods Force, as the commander and designer of the "resistance axis," who had made sure that every country and every organization within the axis would be autonomous both in making decisions and in the ability to wage combat without support from others. Nasrallah reiterated that each axis movement or country made its own decisions according to its interests, "whether to open a front or not, to fight or not." He claimed that although the members of the "resistance axis" cooperated, each movement and country made decisions according to its own unique conditions. He claimed the recent attacks of the Houthis in the Red Sea were not dependent on or directed by Iran, as was Hezbollah's decision on October 8 to intervene in the war to express support for the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip. Nasrallah harshly criticized those who portrayed the "resistance" movements Iranian proxies, claiming, "There are no slaves in the resistance axis, only commanders and martyrs who bring victory to their nation." He mocked the enemies of the axis who "are unable to understand that."

► He again praised Soleimani's leadership which had "led to a path of victories," including the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, Israel's disengagement the Gaza Strip, and the victory of the Iraqi resistance [over the United States], which he claimed had been ignored "due to internal differences of opinion in Iraq." Nasrallah also attributed the "firm adherence" of the "resistance" in Yemen and Syria to Soleimani, "all blessings brought by the resistance axis."

## **Achievements of Operation al-Aqsa Flood**

► Nasrallah devoted part of his second speech to the achievements and results of the Operation al-Aqsa Flood attack [and massacre]. He asked to "look at things objectively," and noted 15 things which were good for the "resistance axis" and bad for Israel. On the positive side he counted the revival of the Palestinian issue, with "the whole world" looking for a solution to the problem, in contrast to the situation before October 7. He claimed the attack proved there was no "new Palestinian generation" or "Internet generation" which was prepared to give up its land. He also noted the increase in support for the Palestinian "resistance" [terrorist organizations] and the "resistance" as an idea in general, and the fatal damage to Israel's efforts to normalize relations with countries in the Arab world.

►He claimed Israel's image had been fatally damaged because until October 7, the global media had praised Israel for being a "state of law and democracy which protects human rights," but today, he claimed Israel was represented to the world as a country which "kills children, starves people and is responsible for the greatest 'genocide' of the century." He enthusiastically mentioned the findings of a public opinion poll conducted among young Americans showing unprecedented support for the Palestinians.

►Nasrallah again emphasized the damage to Israeli deterrence, which, he claimed, began to crack in 2000 and continued to deteriorate in 2006 in the Second Lebanon War, and today continued collapsing in the Yemeni, Lebanese and other arenas. He claimed Israel's intelligence superiority had been damaged, as had the prevailing perception that "Israel knows everything," as had the Israeli security perception that strives for a quick, decisive, clear victory. He claimed that after three months of fighting in the Gaza Strip, Israel had not achieved anything significant, and "No one in Israel thinks there will be a victory."

►According to Nasrallah, the most important "achievement" of the October 7 attack was the unprecedented lack of trust between the people of Israel and the army and security forces. Nasrallah claimed that the connection of the Israelis to their land is "fake and false," and bragged that even Lebanon, Syria and Iraq managed to survive a civil war, predicting that Israel will disintegrate because it is an "artificial entity."