



Spotlight on Terrorism : Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria May 20-27, 2024

The Northern Arena*

- 1,579 attacks
- 311 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 72 operatives of other terrorist-organization killed
- Three non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

***Updated from October 8, 2023**

Overview¹

► This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 75 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel using anti-tank missiles, mortar shells, UAVs and various types of rockets, including heavy rockets; some were barrages of dozens of rockets. There were no casualties, but there was considerable property damage. In response, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hezbollah military facilities in south Lebanon and eliminated senior operatives in targeted attacks.

► Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, delivered a speech in which he noted the so-called "Palestinian achievements" in the war, promised more "surprises" for Israel, expressed contempt for the assessments of Israel's military and political establishment and claimed that continuing Israeli "aggression" would lead it to the "abyss."

► According to a UN report, 93,881 south Lebanese have been displaced from their homes since the beginning of the fighting; about 1,700 buildings have been destroyed and 14,000 damaged; 355 people have been killed and more than 1,100 injured.

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

► Senior "resistance axis"² figures, including Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, met on the sidelines of the funeral of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi with the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and the commander of the Qods Force. They decided to continue the coordinated fighting "until victory."

► A senior Syrian army officer was killed when a car exploded in Damascus. According to reports, he had been close to Hezbollah. Two attacks on Hezbollah targets in the al-Qusayr region were reported, one involving a car and a truck and the other targeting the organization's headquarters.

South Lebanon

Hezbollah attacks

► During the past week (as of 1 p.m., May 20-27, 2024) Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 75 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared to 68 attacks the previous week. The attacks were carried out with anti-tank missiles, shells, UAVs and various types of rockets, including heavy rockets. There were no casualties but there was considerable property damage (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20-27, 2024):

- ◆ May 27, 2024 (until 1:00 p.m.): **Two attacks** in the Margalioth-Malkia region.
- ◆ May 26, 2024: **16 attacks**, including rockets and mortar shells fired at IDF positions in response to the death of a terrorist operative and damage to civilians in al-Naqoura. Buildings in Avivim and Margalioth were attacked in response to the IDF attack in Aita al-Sha'ab, and dozens of rockets were fired at Kiryat Shmona and IDF bases.
- ◆ May 25, 2024: **Eight attacks** on IDF posts and civilian buildings in Metula and Manara because "soldiers were there."

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



Right: Damage to a house in Moshav Avivim (Marom HaGalil spokesman's unit, May 26, 2024), Left: An anti-tank missile about to hit an IDF engineering APC (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 25, 2024)

- ◆ May 24, 2024: **Ten attacks** in which explosive UAVs and heavy rockets were fired at IDF headquarters and bases; anti-tank missiles were launched at a Merkava tank near Shtula.



Launching Falaq rockets at an IDF base (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 25, 2024)

- ◆ May 23, 2024: **11 attacks** in which dozens of precise heavy rockets were launched at an IDF headquarters in response to targeted IDF attacks in the al-Nabatiyeh region; shots were fired at civilian buildings in Metula and Evan Menachem.
- ◆ May 22, 2024: **Eight attacks** in which UAVs were launched at IDF facilities used for artillery fire; civilian buildings were attacked in Avivim and Kfar Giladi.
- ◆ May 21, 2024: **Seven attacks** on IDF posts and soldier assembly sites.
- ◆ May 20, 2024: **13 attacks** in which heavy Burkan rockets were launched at IDF headquarters and posts.



Burkan rocket hit in the Biranit camp
(Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20, 2024)

UAVs manufactured by Hezbollah

► A video on the Hezbollah-affiliated SPOTSHOT YouTube channel claimed that the organization did not rely only on Iran for its supply of UAVs but produced dozens in Lebanon every month and had thousands of aircraft used for attack and intelligence gathering purposes. It was also reported that Hezbollah had larger UAVs capable of carrying missiles (SPOTSHOT YouTube channel, May 24, 2024).

IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets and operatives. Among the targets attacked were terrorist facilities, military buildings, munitions warehouses, observation posts, launching positions and rocket launchers (IDF spokesperson, May 20-26, 2024).



Israeli Air Force attack in al-Adeisa (IDF spokesperson, May 20, 2024)

Hezbollah casualties

- This past week Hezbollah reported the deaths of 18 operatives.
- Israeli Air Force aircraft carried out targeted attacks to eliminate senior Hezbollah operatives:

◆ On May 20, 2024, **Qassem Saqlawi, Hezbollah's rocket and missile commander in the coastal sector of Hezbollah**, was attacked in the Tyre region. He was responsible for planning and executing to and anti-tank missile fire at Israel from the coastal area in Lebanon (IDF spokesperson, May 21, 2024). Hezbollah confirmed the death of Saqlawi, born in 1987 in Deir Qanoun (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20, 2024).



Right: The remains of Saqlawi's motorcycle (Omar_Madaniah's X account, May 20, 2024). Left: Qassem Afif Saqlawi (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20, 2024)

◆ On May 23, 2024, **Muhammad Ali Nasser Faran, who in recent years dealt with the manufacture of strategic, significant weapons for Hezbollah**, was attacked in the al-Nabatiyeh region (IDF spokesperson, May 23, 2024). Hezbollah confirmed the death of Faran, born in 1989 from al-Nabatiyeh (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 23, 2024).



Right: Faran's car as it burns (@jihanhodrog's X account, May 23, 2024). Left: Muhammad Ali Nasser Faran (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 23, 2024)

► Sixteen other terrorist operatives were killed, most of them from south Lebanon and some from the Lebanon Valley (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20-26, 2024).

- ◆ Hussein Nabih Fawaz, aka Shaheed, born in 1988 in Tibnin.
- ◆ Abbas Mahdi Mahdi, aka Abu al-Fadhel, born in 1997 in al-Naqoura.

- ◆ Ra'ef Abd al-Nabi Maliji, aka Rabi', born in 1957 in al-Naqoura.
- ◆ Hussein Ali Ali Hassan, aka Abu Ali al-Karar, born in 1989 in Bednayel in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Muhammad Abbas Abbas, aka Muhammad Jawad, born in 1997 in Barish.
- ◆ Milad Adnan al-Hajiri, aka Hadi, born in 1993 in Ba'albek.
- ◆ Muhammad Ali Bu Ta'em, aka Nur al-Zahraa', born in 2000 in al-Taybeh.
- ◆ Ali Hassan Sultan, aka Sajed, born in 1991 in al-Sawanah.
- ◆ Hassan Adel Al-Shaabi, aka Jawad Ali, born in 2000 in Tir Harfa and a resident of al-Qlaileh.
- ◆ Hussein Nabil al-Mula, aka Shamran, born in 1996 in Harbata in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Bilal Amin Murad, aka Nasser, born in 1987 in Aitaroun.
- ◆ Muhammad Hassan Bidoun, aka Alaa, born in 1989 in Bint Jbeil and a resident of Haboush.
Wasem Ali Hamid, aka Malak, born in 1988 in Bint Jbeil.
- ◆ Ali Yusuf Harb, aka Haidar, born in 1983 in Bint Jbeil.
- ◆ Tareq Bassam Awad, aka Mujahed, born in 2003 in Houla.
- ◆ Hussein Salman Mustafa, aka Haidar, born in 2004 in Houla.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, May 20-26, 2024)

Hezbollah and Iran

Senior "resistance" figures meet on the sidelines of Raisi's funeral

► Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, attended the funeral of Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, and of Hossein-Amir Abdollahian, the Iranian foreign minister, which was held in Tehran.³ Qassem was seen in a video next to Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau (Lebanon 24, May 22, 2024).

³ The two were killed with other senior Iranian figures in a helicopter crash on May 19, 2024.

► On the sidelines of the funeral, Qassem met with leaders of the "resistance axis" and Hussein Salami, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC); and Esmail Qaani, commander of the IRGC Qods Force. The meeting was also attended by Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau; Muhammad Abd al-Salam, the Houthi spokesman; and Amin al-Hindi, the deputy secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), as well as representatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and of the pro-Iranian Iraqi militias. According to reports they discussed the situation in the Gaza Strip, Operation al-Aqsa Flood and the "resistance axis" activity. They agreed on the importance of continuing the jihad until "complete victory" in the Gaza Strip with the participation of all the "resistance" organizations in the region (al-Sharq al-Awsat, May 23, 2024; al-Mayadeen, May 23, 2024).



**Right: Na'im Qassem (turban) and Ismail Haniyeh (right) at the funeral (Al-Hadath, May 22, 2024).
Left: Senior "resistance axis" figures meet in Tehran (al-Sharq al-Awsat, May 23, 2024)**

Raisi's visit to south Lebanon in 2018

► Following the death of Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, a 40-second video was released documenting his visit to Hezbollah bases in south Lebanon in 2018. He was seen examining the organization's including artillery, including a multi-barrel launcher and anti-tank missiles (al-'Ahed, May 22, 2024; al-Manar, May 24, 2024).



Right: Raisi at a Hezbollah base in south Lebanon next to an anti-aircraft gun. Left: Raisi next to an anti-tank missile launcher (al-Manar, May 24, 2024)

Statements by Senior Lebanese Figures

Nasrallah's speech

► Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, gave a speech on May 24, 2024 for "Resistance and Liberation Day" [marking Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000].⁴ He began with a eulogy for the Iranian president and foreign minister, who were killed in a helicopter crash, and said "Resistance and Liberation Day" celebrations would not be held this year because of the "security situation." Nasrallah related to the following issues:

- ◆ **The IDF withdrawal from Lebanon:** Nasrallah claimed Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon on May 25, 2000 was a victory for the "resistance" and a defeat for the "Zionist enemy."
- ◆ **"Operation al-Aqsa Flood" achievements for the "resistance:"** He listed three main achievements of the fighting: the recognition of a Palestinian state by European countries and the vote to upgrade the status of "Palestine" in the UN General Assembly, the global pro-Palestinian demonstrations and the prosecution of Israel in international courts.
- ◆ **Hezbollah's goals in entering the war:** He said that the "resistance's" first goal was to support the Gaza Strip "resistance" and the second was to prevent any "proactive" action by Israel against Lebanon. Others were to chalk up "achievements" for Lebanon's national security, to reclaim lands and protect Lebanon's sovereignty.
- ◆ **A threat of "resistance surprises" for Israel:** He claimed the statement of the Israeli prime minister that there was a detailed plan to attack Lebanon was mere psychological

⁴ Hezbollah marks May 25 as the day it claims to have "forced Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon."

warfare, and continuing "aggression" would lead Netanyahu to an "abyss" and disaster. He added that "**the enemy must expect [additional] surprises from the resistance.**"

◆ **The Israeli military-political establishment:** He claimed that despite its intelligence and military capabilities, Israel was surprised by the "resistance" in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen and the Iranian response to the attack against the Iranian consulate in Syria.⁵

◆ **The role of Iran:** Nasrallah praised the activities of Iranian President Raisi and his great commitment to the Palestinian issue and the various "resistance" movements, and noted that those who thought that Iran would weaken and stop supporting "Palestine" were delusional.



Hassan Nasrallah during the speech (al-Manar, May 24, 2024)

Statements by other senior Hezbollah figures

► Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, claimed the "resistance" was strong and powerful, today stood before Israel on the conflict lines in south Lebanon and provided aid to the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and "Palestine." He added that the "resistance" controlled the types and extent of attacks (al-'Ahed, May 26, 2024).

► Nabil Qaouq, a member of Hezbollah's Central Council, claimed that Israel was weaker today than in 2000 [the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon], and that Hezbollah was stronger than in 2000. He pointed out that the world was silent in the face of the "crimes of the occupation" and that the "resistance" had ended [the "crimes"] [sic]. He said all the "resistance" fronts were united in support of the Gaza Strip and operated at the highest level of cooperation and coordination (al-'Ahed, May 26, 2024).

⁵ A reference to the elimination of Mohammed Rada Zahedi, the Qods Force commander in Syria and Lebanon, in an attack attributed to Israel on a building near the Iranian embassy in Damascus, April 1, 2024.

► Hussein al-Khalil, political aide to Nasrallah, claimed Hezbollah received direct messages from European countries and indirect messages from the United States trying to stop the fighting from south Lebanon. He said Hezbollah would act in accordance with "the interests of Lebanon and the Islamic nation," adding that Israel did not expand the war because it knew what Hezbollah's response would be and what its "defense" capabilities were (al-'Ahed, May 25, 2024).

Hezbollah's position on an Israel-Lebanon border arrangement

► "Informed sources" said that Hezbollah's senior figures had firmly rejected all the "serious" initiatives put forward so far to resolve the situation in south Lebanon and that the organization was not prepared to make concessions. The sources also said that Hezbollah would negotiate only after a ceasefire had been reached (Lebanon 24, May 26, 2024).

24 Years Since Israel's Withdrawal from South Lebanon

► Hezbollah marked "Resistance and Liberation Day" for the withdrawal of IDF forces from south Lebanon in May 2000. The organization represented the withdrawal as its "divine victory" over Israel and the first of further victories. It also represented itself as the "defender of Lebanon" in an attempt to improve its image in the internal Lebanese arena, which was damaged by the fighting. One of the notices Hezbollah published for the event linked the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, the liberation of the mountainous area in east Lebanon from ISIS operatives in August 2017 and the "future liberation" of Mt. Dov (the Sheba Farm). Another notice showed Lebanese celebrating the exodus of Israel with the inscription "Victory 2000 is Lebanon's victory. This resistance was and will remain the power of the people " (Hezbollah Telegram channel, May 25, 2024).



Right: A notice marking the withdrawal of IDF forces, the liberation of eastern Lebanon from ISIS and the "future" liberation of Mt. Dov. Left: Hezbollah is represented as the "defender of Lebanon" (Hezbollah Telegram channel, May 25, 2024)

► The Amal Movement published an announcement for "Resistance and Liberation Day" in which it related to the "resistance" [anti-Israel violence and terrorism]. It claimed that the movement chose "resistance," which led to "victory" [i.e., the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon], and added that "this is an epic written by generations of 'resistance fighters,' martyrs, wounded [operatives] and prisoners, who inflicted a bitter defeat on Israel." The announcement claimed Amal was committed to international resolutions, especially Resolution 1701, and that there was no need to discuss or mark the border with Israel again, since every centimeter would be restored, as summarized in international agreements (NBN Lebanon X account, May 25, 2024).

Death of Nasrallah's Mother

► Following the death of Nahdia Safi Al-Din, Hassan Nasrallah's mother, on May 25, 2024, officials in Iran and the "resistance axis" offered their condolences. Nasrallah himself did not attend the funeral, which was held in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, the Beirut southern Shi'ite suburb which is a Hezbollah stronghold, and was attended by other senior Hezbollah figures (NBN, May 26, 2024).

South Lebanon

► The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published a report (updated to May 14, 2024) according to which 93,881 residents of south Lebanon have been evacuated from their homes since the beginning of the fighting on October 8; about 1,700 buildings were destroyed and 14,000 were damaged; 1,472 people were physically injured, of whom 355 were killed, including 83 civilians (reliefweb.int, May 21, 2024). On the other hand, Hezbollah's reports show that the number of dead for the organization is 311, and reports from

other organizations show that 72 terrorist operatives were killed (Hamas, PIJ, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and Amal).

The Lebanese Government

Contacts for an Israel-Lebanon border agreement

- ▶ "American sources" said that the agreement to regulate the border in south Lebanon was almost ready, and that it included a road map and information regarding the disputed points on the Israel-Lebanon border (al-Jadeed X account, May 22, 2024).
- ▶ Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and chairman of the Amal Movement, stated that Lebanon renewed its commitment and adherence to all the conditions of UN Resolution 1701. He claimed Israel had violated the resolution more than 30,000 times (Naharnet, May 24, 2024). Lebanon considers any entry of an Israeli aircraft into its airspace and any shooting at Lebanon from the direction of Israel as a violation of Resolution 1701.

Criticism of Hezbollah

- ▶ Gebran Bassil, the chairman of the Free National Movement in Lebanon, criticized Hezbollah's decision to start fighting against Israel as a show of solidarity with the Gaza Strip. He stated that although he supported the "resistance" against Israel, connecting the front in south Lebanon and the Gaza Strip was wrong, as was the connection made by Hezbollah between the election of a new Lebanese president for Lebanon and the results of the war in the Gaza Strip (al-Ra'i, May 24, 2024).

The Lebanese Army

- ▶ Joseph Aoun, commander of the Lebanese Army, stated for "Resistance and Liberation Day" that the duty of the army was to bear its national responsibility, continue to perform its duties and coordinate with UNIFIL according to Resolution 1701. He added that the exceptional circumstances obliged everyone to unite their efforts and avoid narrow thinking, because it was the only way to help Lebanon and its institutions (al-Nashra, May 23, 2024).
- ▶ The al-Jadeed network reported that Qatar had responded positively to the Lebanese army commander's request to extend the period of aid to the army, which includes giving \$100 to each soldier and a supply of fuel for six months (al-Jadeed, May 21, 2024).

Syria

► A source in the Damascus police said that a person had been killed when a bomb exploded under a car in the al-Mazah area in western Damascus (Sana, May 25, 2024). It was later reported that the casualty was Lieutenant Colonel Louay Zuheir al-Nayef, 50 years old (Ahmad_1alshble's X account, May 25, 2024). Another source reported that he had been affiliated with Hezbollah and that the explosion occurred about 500 meters from the Iranian embassy (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), May 25, 2024). Local sources stated that he had been an officer in the Syrian army's recruitment department and lived in the town of al-Busayrah in the rural area of Deir ez-Zor.



Right: The car after the explosion (Ahmad_1alshble's X account, May 25, 2024). Left: Lieutenant Colonel Louay Zuheir al-Nayef (Haitham Abu Syrian army's X account, May 25, 2024)

► According to reports, on May 25, 2024, Israeli UAVs attacked a Hezbollah vehicle and truck in the al-Qusayr area, about 20 km south of Hams, while they were en route to the al-Dab'ah military airport. About four km of al-Qusayr. Two Hezbollah operatives and a Syrian civilian were killed (SOHR, May 26, 2024).

► At noon on May 20, 2024, an attack by an Israeli aircraft was reported on Hezbollah headquarters on the outskirts of al-Qusayr, after the entrance of a vehicle coming from the direction of Lebanon. The report stated that eight Hezbollah operatives were killed in the attack (SOHR, May 20, 2024).