



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria September 9 - 16 , 2024

The Northern Arena*

2,420 attacks

- 427 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 90 terrorist operatives of other organization killed
- Five 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 **65 attacks** on military and civilian targets in Israel, including towns and villages which were attacked for the first time since the beginning of hostilities on October 8, 2023. Three IDF soldiers were injured, one of them in the reserves, and property damage was reported. The military wings Hamas and al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya also claimed responsibility for attacks on Israeli territory.
- ▶ Israeli Air Force aircrafts attacked Hezbollah terrorist targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. Hezbollah announced that six of its operatives were killed during the past week.
- ▶ **The situation in south Lebanon:** According to the UN, more than 113,000 people have been displaced from their homes and 589 have been killed since the beginning of the fighting. The Lebanese media published figures for aid worth tens of millions of dollars given by Hezbollah to the families who remained in their homes in south Lebanon and to the displaced families.
- ▶ Hezbollah continued to promote the false claims that its retaliation for the elimination of Fuad Shagr killed more than 20 people at an IDF base, and linked "the killing" to the resignation of the commander of Unit 8200.

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

► The EU foreign minister visited Lebanon and met with senior government officials who stated that they did not want a war.

► **Syria:** A terrorist operative in the Hezbollah organization in the Golan Heights was killed in an Israeli attack. Syria and Iran denied reports that Israeli special forces raided a military facility for the production of weapons in Masyaf in western Syria.

South Lebanon

Hezbollah attacks

► This past last week (September 9-16, 2024), Hezbollah claimed responsibility for **65 attacks** on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared with 57 attacks the previous week. Hezbollah attacked with anti-tank missiles, artillery, UAVs and various types of rockets (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 9-16, 2024). Three IDF soldiers were injured in the attacks, one of them a reservist. Damage to property was reported and fires broke out in the north of the country:

◆ **Attacks on new targets:** On September 12, 2024, Hezbollah attacked a kibbutz near the Lebanese border with barrages of Katyusha rockets in response to injury to civilians in south Lebanon. According to Hezbollah, it was the first attack on the site, despite the fact that the kibbutz had been evacuated when the fighting began in October 2023 (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 12, 2024; Israeli media, September 12, 2024). On September 14, 2024, Hezbollah claimed responsibility for firing barrages of Katyusha rockets at an IDF base north of the Sea of Galilee. Media in Lebanon reported it was the first time the base had been attacked (Eram News, September 14, 2024). Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, gave a speech on July 17, 2024, in which he said that if Israel attacked civilians, Hezbollah would respond with attacks on cities, towns and villages which had not previously been attacked.

◆ **Attacks using electric-powered drones:** This past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for three explosive drone attacks on three IDF bases in the north of the country. According to pictures taken in two of the attacks, Hezbollah used Shahed 101 drones, which have electric motors (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 10-13, 2024).



Two of the Shahad 101 electric-powered explosive drones en route to attacking the IDF base on September 10, 2024 (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 11, 2024)

Attacks carried out by other terrorist organizations²

- ▶ The al-Fajr Forces, the al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya's military wing, claimed responsibility for firing a barrage of rockets at Kiryat Shmona "in response to the massacres of the residents of Lebanon and Palestine and in support of the residents of Gaza and the West Bank." According to the claim, there were direct hits (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, September 9, 2024)
- ▶ On September 11, 2024, the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, claimed responsibility for firing 30 rockets at an IDF headquarters in the Western Galilee. The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades issued a video short 107 mm rockets fired from a 12-barreled launcher mounted on a trailer (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, September 11 and 14, 2024).



Right: Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives in Lebanon attach fuses to rockets before firing. Left: Preparation for firing the rockets (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, September 14, 2024)

IDF response

- ▶ In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force aircraft struck Hezbollah terrorist targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. Among the targets attacked were

² For further information, see the August 2024 ITIC report, "[The Organizations Assisting Hezbollah in Combat Against Israel.](#)"

armed terrorist squads, terrorist infrastructures, buildings used for military purposes, munitions warehouses, observation posts, launching positions and rocket launchers (IDF spokesman, September 9-16, 2024). Media in Lebanon claimed that non-combatant civilians, including children and teenagers, had also been killed and injured in the attacks (YouNews and al-Akhbar news agency, September 11, 2024; al-Nashra, September 14, 2024).



Israeli Air Force strikes on al-Mahmoudiyeh in south Lebanon (Lebanon On-News X account, September 15, 2024)

Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah announced the deaths of six of its operatives in attacks in Lebanon this past week (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 9-16, 2024).

Hezbollah attempts to prevent targeted attacks

► According to reports, in light of the significant damage done to Hezbollah terrorist operatives and some of its senior commanders by Israel, Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, ordered the forces in the field to increase their level of information security and preparedness and that a number of measures be taken to reduce the chances of their being injured: operatives would be replaced and moved between sectors after no less than a month, and not as often as currently (a week or ten days), and the use of mobile phones would be reduced to a minimum. The operatives were also ordered not to talk to their families about any military matter or anything concerning the front (Janoubia, September 10, 2024).

The Situation in South Lebanon

Hezbollah calls for the evacuation of local residents

► According to reports, on September 12, 2024, Hezbollah called on the residents of south Lebanon to evacuate as a precaution against more intense attacks by Israel, adding that the threat level had risen because of Israel's preparations for war in Lebanon (al-Nahar, September 13, 2024). However, Hezbollah's combat information office issued a statement claiming the report was "completely false and baseless" (al-'Ahed, September 13, 2024).

The extent of casualties and damages in south Lebanon

► The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), quoting data from government ministries in Lebanon, reported the extent of casualties and damage in south Lebanon: 113,059 persons displaced; 589 dead, including 23 children, three journalists and 21 health sector workers; 1,977 injured; 4,000 buildings completely destroyed; 18.42 square kilometers of land burned; 340 thousand farm animals died; 72 private and public schools in south Lebanon closed, some partially and some completely; six first aid centers in Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil closed and more than 200,000 people in al-Nabatieh and south Lebanon without running water, as 16 water facilities had been destroyed (OCHA website, September 7, 2024).

Hezbollah helps the residents of south Lebanon

► The Hezbollah-affiliated daily newspaper al-Akhbar published data of Hezbollah's aid to 3,340 families which remained in south Lebanon and to 7,734 families displaced since the beginning of the war. The aid was worth tens of millions of dollars, and included 288,617 food packages, 79,906 monetary gifts (monthly payments), 112,309 meals and the payment of 6,171 electricity bills. In addition, Hezbollah provided compensation for the renovation of 4,604 damaged houses, paid annual rent to owners of 408 houses which had been damaged, and provided compensation for furniture in 524 damaged houses (al-Akhbar, September 11, 2024).

Hezbollah Addresses its Retaliation to the Elimination of Fuad Shukr

► Hezbollah continues to promote the false narrative that its drones successfully struck two IDF bases, one of them an intelligence base, as part of its retaliation for the elimination of Fuad Shukr on August 25, 2024. The Hezbollah-affiliated al-Mayadeen website, which is close to the "resistance axis,"³ quoted "trusted European sources" who claimed that the attacks on the two bases were a "tremendous success" and that there were 22 dead and 74 wounded in the attack on the intelligence base (al-Mayadeen, September 12, 2024):

- ◆ Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, claimed the report was "accurate and reliable," and asked why Israel did not conduct a tour of journalists or members of the government at the two bases to deny Hezbollah's claims, and why "the 'occupation' imposed a security blockade on the place if the operation had failed, as it claimed." He

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

also asked why the commander of Unit 8200 had announced his resignation now and not earlier, even though it was reported that the resignation was related to the unit's failures to prevent the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 (al-Mayadeen, September 14, 2024).

◆ On another occasion Qassem stated that Hezbollah had been able to carry out the plan despite Israel's preliminary strike and that all the desired objective had been achieved (al-'Ahed September 9, 2024).

◆ Ibrahim al-Mousawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed Hezbollah had data showing the report of the Israeli losses in the attack on the intelligence base was "very accurate." He claimed information received from "sources" in Israel and abroad was consistent with the report in al-Mayadeen, and that Hezbollah was waiting for additional information it could reveal regarding the damages caused in Israel. He also claimed that if Israel had succeeded in intercepting all the missiles and UAVs, the commander of Unit 8200 would have been praised and would not have resigned (al-Mayadeen, September 13, 2024).

Israel's Problems in Fighting Hezbollah

Senior Hezbollah figures

► Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general, said the residents of northern Israel would not be able to return to their homes unless the war in the Gaza Strip ended, and warned that starting a war with Hezbollah would not lead to the return of the displaced but rather would increase their number (al-'Ahed, September 9, 2024).

► Ali Damoush, deputy head of Hezbollah's Executive Committee, claimed Israel was "delusional" if it thought that killing operatives, killing senior figures and attacking Hezbollah's facilities would weaken the organization. He emphasized that Israel would not be able to "challenge the capabilities of the resistance" and would not be able to destroy the Imad 4 facility and other facilities where precision strategic missiles were waiting for Hezbollah's leadership to order them to be used. He said that in view of the increase in Israeli attacks in Lebanon, Hezbollah was also increasing its responses and bringing new and non-evacuated settlements in Israel into the circle of attacks and carrying out "high-quality" attacks on military bases "deep in northern Palestine" (al-'Ahed, September 15, 2024).

► Nawaf al-Mousawi, in charge of resources and borders in Hezbollah, said that Hassan Nasrallah had appointed Fuad Shukr to lead the "resistance" when the time came. He added that Israel would not be able to defeat the "resistance" by eliminating senior officials, because

in the "resistance" every senior figure had a replacement. He added that Hezbollah was aware Israel had the capabilities to track every commander at any given moment both in and out of Beirut, and said the "resistance" was constantly discussing the question of "how to deal with Israeli aggression." He claimed Israel would not be able to "eliminate the resistance" if the United States did not stand by its side in the war and accused the United States of being a full partner in killing Lebanese (al-Manar, September 10, 2024).

► Muhammad Fneish, a senior Hezbollah figure, said that any action taken by Israel would be answered "with a fitting response" to make Israel return to the [Hezbollah-dictated] "rules of confrontation." He claimed that Hezbollah's attacks were not directed against civilians so as not to give Israel an excuse to attack civilians or infrastructure, since "the resistance is waging a struggle that takes national interests and Lebanese society into account" (al-'Ahed, September 9, 2024).

► Muhammad Raad, head of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed that Israel was now "lost" and that the situation might continue until the United States presidential elections. He noted that "Israel moves between the north of Gaza and the south, then launches a campaign without horizons in the West Bank and threatens to expand the war in the north against Lebanon and all this even though it is powerless and the uncertainty of its existence only grows" (al-'Ahed, September 10, 2024).

► A "parliamentary source in Hezbollah" said that although Israel had expanded its attacks in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley, Hezbollah still rejected the possibility of a comprehensive war since "the enemy is not capable of conducting it against the resistance." He added that it is about "pressure and threats in the air," but Hezbollah was prepared for all possibilities (al-Araby al-Jadeed, September 16, 2024).

Media commentary

► The Hezbollah-affiliated daily newspaper al-Akhbar claimed Israeli intelligence was unable to deal with the challenges posed by Hezbollah since the beginning of the fighting, especially since the reaction to the killing of Fuad Shukr. According to the paper, Israel had been dealing with the strengthening the "resistance" and the weakening of Israel since October 7, 2023, adding that Hezbollah had successfully convinced Israeli intelligence that its assessments of the "resistance" and its bank of targets were inaccurate. In addition, Hezbollah had maintained its high-quality arsenal, especially the accurate heavy ballistic missiles, which had not yet been used and were still stored in fortified strategic facilities. The paper claimed that the missiles

were more accurate than the "old" UAVs that Israeli intelligence was unable to deal with them, and that the missiles constituted the "most serious threat to the modern state of Israel." It was also noted that despite the Israeli attempts to disrupt Hezbollah's activities by killing operatives, in the last two weeks it had doubled the effectiveness of the attacks and reduced the number of operatives killed. According to al-Akhbar, Hezbollah currently operated only a small minority of its fighting force and the organization as a whole was capable of bearing the burden, unlike the state of Lebanon itself (al-Akhbar, September 13, 2024).

► A "military source in Lebanon" stated that Hezbollah had moved from the "war of support" in the Gaza Strip that began on October 8, 2023 to an "existential war" against Israel. According to the source, Hezbollah was aware that Israel had moved to a new stage in the fighting in the north and its objective was to uproot and eliminate the organization. However, the "source" claimed that was an unrealistic goal and that any Israeli ground invasion would have "disastrous consequences" for the Israeli army because of Hezbollah's experience in fighting on the ground (al-Diyar, September 13, 2024).

The Palestinians in Lebanon

Possible integration of Palestinians in Lebanon in the fighting

► "High-ranking political sources" in Lebanon stated that the escalation of fighting in south Lebanon had begun to awaken political and security interest in the issues of the Palestinians in Lebanon. According to the "sources," it was highly likely that if Israel attacked Lebanon extensively as far as waging a comprehensive war, the Palestinian refugee camps, and in particular the camps in south Lebanon, would move from support to an overall integration in the combat operations against Israel (al-Nashra, September 9, 2024).

Tensions in the Ein al-Hilweh refugee camp

► On September 11, 2024, clashes broke out, including the drawing of weapons without firing in the Palestinian refugee camp Ein al-Hilweh in the Sidon region, because of the opposition of members of the Army of the Levant (Jund al-Sham) to the fact that members of the Fatah movement in the camp would install surveillance cameras near the Safed school. According to the report, the incident and similar ones point to an attempt by the Army of the Levant to take control of the camp and carry out a coup against Fatah, similar to the events in July-August 2023. In practice, the Army still controls a large part of the school complexes inside the refugee camp. It was also reported that the operatives of the Army and the Muslim Youth (al-Shabab al-Salam), an Islamic-oriented organization, have built new fortifications inside the schools

and turned them into military facilities. Nevertheless, Fatah movement reportedly does not want a conflict, but will not remain silent in the face of aggression (Lebanon 24, September 12, 2024).

The Lebanese Government

The EU foreign minister visits Lebanon

► On September 11-12, 2024, Josep Borrell, the EU foreign minister, paid a visit to Lebanon, and met with senior government officials:

- ◆ Borrell met with Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, who called on him to increase international pressure on Israel to make it stop its "ongoing aggression" against Lebanon (al-Nashra, September 11, 2024).



Mikati and Borrell meeting (al-Nashra, September 12, 2024)

- ◆ Borrell met with Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament to discuss the situation in Lebanon and the region. Berri said that Lebanon did not want war, but "it has the right and the ability to defend itself" (al-Nashra, September 12, 2024).
 - ◆ Borrell met with Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, who told Borrell his country was fully committed to the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. He also called for "ending the occupation" and working seriously to establish a Palestinian state. Bou Habib said the Lebanese people wanted peace and stability, not war, and feared further escalation in the region. He said that the leadership of Lebanon wanted the interests of the country and not of anyone else (al-Nashra, September 12, 2024).
 - ◆ General Joseph Aoun, commander of the Lebanese Army, met with Borrell to discuss the current situation in Lebanon and throughout the region, and the latest developments in the fighting in South Lebanon (MTV, September 12, 2024).
- The Hezbollah-affiliated daily al-Akhbar cited "sources" who stated that no messages had been transmitted during Borrell's visit since he had not visited Israel, and that he only spoke in

general about the situation in south Lebanon and the need to achieve a ceasefire. According to "the sources," some of the participants in the meetings held by Borrell had expressed their displeasure that he had come to hear what the officials in Lebanon had to say and not to tell them something new as they had expected (al-Akhbar, September 13, 2024).

Statements by senior Lebanese government figures

► Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, convened a briefing for the representatives of the Security Council countries, where he noted the need to take more effective and decisive steps "to deal with Israeli violations and attacks on Lebanese civilians." He said that Lebanon was committed to peace, stability and the protection of its inhabitants, and noted the importance of international cooperation on the issue. Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, said after the briefing that the government wanted the war to end. He pointed out that the government had expressed a willingness to conduct indirect negotiations with Israel for the purpose of protecting Lebanese civilians, adding that it had also appealed to the Security Council with a request to prevent deliberate harm to civilians. He claimed that Israel rejected a new Security Council resolution in the event of a ceasefire, and that in his assessment Hezbollah would also reject it. However, he added that Hezbollah "is not a country that can say yes or no" and that Lebanon would decide, and therefore if there were a good resolution, Lebanon would accept it and work to convince Hezbollah to accept it (Lebanese government X account, September 9, 2024).

► Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, said that in his assessment Israel would not invade Lebanese territory. He noted that the state was demonstrating a unified position and that "as long as there are occupied lands, there will be resistance." He added that the use of force would not allow Prime Minister Netanyahu or anyone else to return the evacuated Israeli residents of the north to their homes (NBN, September 15, 2024).

UNIFIL

► According to reports, on September 9, 2024, a UAV fell in the town of Deir Kifa. Later it turned out that the UAV belonged to the French battalion of the UNIFIL force. According to claims, it was the French battalion attempt to provide itself with intelligence without the knowledge of the Lebanese government. For that reason, a Lebanese army unit receive orders to act "decisively" to prevent a deviation from the course of action agreed upon for years between the Lebanese and the international forces (Lebanon Debate, September 9, 2024).

Syria

Hezbollah-network terrorist operative eliminated in the Golan Heights

► On October 12, 2024, an Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked the Quneitra region and eliminated Ahmed al-Jaber, an operative in Hezbollah's Golan File⁴ unit in Syria (IDF spokesperson, September 12, 2024). According to reports an Israeli aircraft struck a vehicle with civilian license plates near Khan Arnabeh in the al-Quneitra region, killing two people, including a "military figure" belonging to Hezbollah or the Islamic Resistance for the Liberation of the Golan (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 12, 2024).



Attack on Ahmed al-Jabber in Syria (IDF spokesperson, September 12, 2024)

► "Informed sources" said that Syria had received threats in recent months to prevent it from allowing groups of "resistance axis" operatives to attack the Golan Heights from its territory (Lebanon 24, September 14, 2024).

Reactions to the attack on Masyaf attributed to Israel

► According to reports, the attack attributed to Israel on military sites in the Syrian city of Masyaf on the night of September 8, 2024, included airstrikes and a raid by Israeli special forces on a military installation belonging to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). A "security source" claimed that the facility was used to manufacture ballistic missiles and UAVs for Hezbollah and that the forces seized documents and equipment and destroyed the facility (Eva J. Koulouriotis' X account, September 11, 2024). "Two sources" said that a number of Syrian security guards had been killed in the raid but there were no Hezbollah or Iranian casualties, and the Israeli fighters destroyed the facility. It was also claimed that the American administration received an early update on the operation (Axios, September 12, 2024).

⁴ The Golan File is a military network that Hezbollah established in the Golan Heights in the summer of 2018. It has dozens of armed operatives living in the northern villages of the Golan Heights and its objective is to allow Hezbollah to deal with Israel on the Golan Heights front in an emergency.

"Sources" told the Syrian opposition television network that three Syrians had been killed in the exchange of fire and that the Israelis had captured two Iranians (Syria TV, September 11, 2024). The Syrian and Iranian media reported the following:

- ▶ A "Syrian military source" denied the information circulated about the landing of Israeli forces in Masyaf in Syria (YouNews News Agency, September 12, 2024).
- ▶ The IRGC issued an official denial of reports that Iranians were taken captive in the attack in Masyaf (Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps website, September 12, 2024).
- ▶ Mohamed Jaffar Asadi, a senior IRGC operative, said that "the crimes of the Zionists will not go unanswered and they will receive a slap in the face at the appropriate time and place." He added that "supporters of the Zionist regime will also suffer" (Iranian defense ministry website, September 11, 2024).
- ▶ The Iranian embassy in Damascus accused Israel of spreading lies, stating that "after condemning the crime of the 'Zionist entity' in the bombing of Masyaf in Syria, in which not a single Iranian adviser was harmed, we announce that the entity's claims are false, and are published only by 'anonymous' media outlets that are mouthpieces of the entity" (Iranian embassy in Syria X account, September 12, 2024).
- ▶ "Informed security sources" claimed that Israel was trying to promote a security and military achievement by leaking "inflated and highly exaggerated narratives." According to the "sources," it was part of the campaign waged against Israel even before the start of the war in the Gaza Strip, and that Israel's objective was to prevent the "resistance" forces and the Syrian army from equipping themselves with advanced anti-tank weapons. They claimed the current war had revealed how Israel was failing in its mission (al-Akhbar, September 13, 2024).

America Imposes Sanctions on Hezbollah

▶ On September 11, 2024, the United States Treasury Department announced the imposition of sanctions on a network involved in oil and gas smuggling which allowed Hezbollah to profit financially. The sanctions were imposed on Muhammad Ibrahim Habib al-Sayyed, who serves as the coordinator of Hezbollah's commercial activities; on Ali Zgheib, a petrochemical expert who manages secret financial activities and has assisted Hezbollah's economic unit since the end of 2019; and on Butrus George Ubeid, who is involved in the promotion of Hezbollah's agreements in the field of energy and is a partner with Zgheib in owning several companies. Sanctions were also imposed on five companies and two tankers used by Hezbollah for smuggling (United States Treasury Department website, September 11, 2024).