



## Hezbollah Communications Devices Explode

September 19, 2024

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

- ▶ On September 17, 2024, thousands of pagers used by Hezbollah operatives for internal communications exploded, killing 12 people and injuring thousands in Lebanon and Syria. The next day, Hezbollah walkie-talkies exploded throughout Lebanon and according to reports, at least 25 people were killed and hundreds were injured.
- ▶ Hezbollah announced that at least 38 operatives were killed within 48 hours, most of them by the explosions. The organization claimed Israel was responsible and threatened a harsh response, even though senior figures continued to refrain from calling for a total war. A commentator affiliated with Hezbollah warned that Israel had launched a "war of extermination" and a "battle without borders" by attacking "civilians."
- ▶ The Iranian ambassador to Beirut was injured in a pager explosion and was taken to Tehran for medical treatment. Senior officials in Iran accused Israel of a "terrorist attack" and said that they reserved the right to respond to the attack on the ambassador. Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other "resistance axis"<sup>2</sup> organizations condemned Israel and expressed support for Hezbollah and Lebanon.
- ▶ **In ITIC assessment, the extensive damage to Hezbollah's communication systems will force the organization to rethink Israel's internal security and intelligence capabilities. In an attempt to understand how Israel successfully penetrated its intelligence and to what extent, the organization will investigate, and will decide how to respond. In the short term, Hezbollah's ability to deploy its forces at the tactical and operational level could be damaged. However, Hezbollah still states that it does not intend to start a total war against Israel. In ITIC assessment, Hezbollah can be expected to react strongly, both to preserve the "balance of deterrence" it has achieved so far with Israel, and given the harm to civilians, to preserve its image as "Lebanon's defender." Hezbollah may attack**

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

**"quality targets" in Israeli territory directly and indirectly, and extend the range and intensity of its attacks because of what it regards as widespread damage to the civilian population in Lebanon.**

## Timetable

### Pagers explode

►On September 17, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., thousands of pagers used by Hezbollah operatives exploded in the Dahiye al-Janoubia in Beirut and areas in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. Videos and photos were uploaded to the social media showing the results of the explosions, including fires and injuries to people's hands, faces and midsections. Virtually simultaneously, similar explosions were reported among Hezbollah operatives in Syria (Sky News in Arabic, September 17, 2024).

►Firass Abiad, Lebanese minister of health, reported 12 killed, including two children, and approximately 2,300 wounded, 300 of whom were in serious condition. He said some of the wounded were transferred from the Lebanon Valley to Syria and from there to Iran for medical treatment (Lebanon MTV, September 18, 2024; al-Nashra, September 19, 2024). Syrian "sources" reported that 18 Lebanese Hezbollah operatives had been hit by "the Israeli cyberattack" in the rural area south of Idlib in northwestern Syria (al-Jazeera, September 18, 2024). According to another report, at least 14 people were injured in the explosions, most of them in the Damascus area (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, September 18, 2024).



**Right: Man injured in pager explosion (Mr. Sinha's X account, 17 September 2024). Left: Evacuating wounded to Iran (Iranian Red Crescent Instagram account, September 18, 2024)**

### Walkie-talkies explode

►On September 18, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., hundreds of walkie-talkies belonging to Hezbollah operatives and commanders in Beirut, south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley exploded. Some of the explosions occurred during the funerals of the casualties of the previous

explosions, and photos of vehicles and apartments that caught fire were uploaded to the social networks. The Lebanese ministry of health reported that at least 25 people had been killed and more than 600 injured (al-Nashra, September 18-19, 2024).



**Right: A car catches fire in al-Nabatieh after a walkie-talkie explodes (al-Jazeera, September 18, 2024). Left: A man wounded by an exploding walkie-talkie lies in the street during a funeral in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia (al-Jadeed, September 18, 2024)**

## Hezbollah Reactions

- ▶The pager explosions caused confusion and panic among Hezbollah operatives, and its social network Simia issued a notice instructing operatives "not to say names, not to talk about places and not to contact other operatives" because the enemy was monitoring them (Simia Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).
- ▶According to Hezbollah's initial response, pagers used by operatives in its units and institutions had exploded, killing a girl and her two brothers and wounding many individuals. It was also reported that the organization had launched an extensive investigation to reveal the circumstances of the events and called on the Lebanese public to beware of rumors and false information, as they aided the psychological warfare of the "Zionist enemy" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).
- ▶After a short time, Hezbollah issued another announcement assigning full responsibility to Israel "for the aggression that harmed civilians and caused deaths and a large number of injuries." The organization threatened "the treacherous and criminal enemy [which] would receive expected and unexpected punishment for its sinful aggression," adding that "the shaheeds and the wounded symbolize the struggle, and support for the Palestinian 'resistance' will remain a source of pride" (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).



- ◆ Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, spoke at the funeral of some of those killed in pager explosions, threatening that Zionist aggression would have consequences and the retaliation would be "special." He said the explosions were a "divine test" for the Lebanese people and the "nation of resistance," assuring his listeners that the wounded would "return to their jihad activities and complete their journey." He told Israel that attempts to stop aid to the Gaza Strip would fail and that "the resistance is strong and present" (al-'Ahed, September 18, 2024)
- ◆ Hussein al-Khalil, political aide to Hassan Nasrallah, said that the organization was monitoring its response [sic], and that the "enemy" should expect "everything" from Lebanon after the "crimes" it committed against the Lebanese people (al-Jadeed, September 17, 2024).
- ◆ Ibrahim al-Musawi, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, claimed that "the act of aggression harmed civilians and can be defined as mass destruction, as in the Gaza Strip." He added that responsibility now rested with the State of Lebanon, because what happened was a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and called on the Lebanese to "unite in assigning responsibility to the Israeli enemy" (Almanar, September 17, 2024).
- ◆ Ali Fayyad, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, accused Israel of "shattering" the [Hezbollah-dictated] rules of engagement. He said the conflict had entered a new phase, new measures would be used and that all existing options had to be taken into account. He said Hezbollah was still investigating the events, but the explosions did not change anything for the "resistance" and it continued "as if nothing had happened" (al-Jadeed, September 19, 2024).
- ◆ A "parliamentary source in Hezbollah" insisted the organization did not want a war "despite the enemy's insistence," but said the organization was prepared for such a possibility (al-Araby al-Jadeed, September 18, 2024).
- After the first series of explosions, Ibrahim al-Amin, the editor-in-chief of the Hezbollah-affiliated daily al-Akhbar, published an article accusing Israel of not wanting to obey the rules prohibiting attacks on civilians or civilian facilities and of not understanding the difference "between a front-line fighter and an office worker." He claimed that Israel "wants to change the 'equation' " and did not attack only military personnel. However, he said that "despite the great anger caused by the attack, and considering the magnitude of the events, no rash move

or reaction will be seen, as the resistance does not surrender to emotions." He added "the enemy knows very well that we are facing a completely new situation" (al-Akhbar, September 18, 2024).

►After the second series of explosions, which al-Amin dubbed "Operation Fatal Call," he wrote an article claiming it was "the largest espionage operation in the history of the conflict with the 'resistance forces' in the region." He admitted that the operation was a success for Israel "both on the battlefield and in the battle for hearts and minds," since for the first time it had been able to undermine "the trust the Lebanese people and Hezbollah supporters had in the 'resistance'," According to al-Amin, Israel had successfully penetrated Hezbollah itself with the result that some of its "military" leaders were under surveillance, and thus Israel had disrupted "sensitive resistance activities." He added that Israel was transitioning to a new phase in the conflict with Hezbollah, and that by attacking "more than ten thousand [sic] civilians and military personnel," Israel decided "to put us into a battle without borders or ceilings, and maybe it was a mistake to let the enemy roll the dice first" (al-Akhbar, September 19, 2024).



**"Preparations to deter the enemy," the front page of al-Akhbar, September 19, 2024**

►In recent month Hezbollah has been concerned about Israeli intelligence infiltration of the organization's communication networks, which helped it eliminate Hezbollah operatives and senior commanders. According to reports, Hezbollah strengthened its security procedures, blocked security camera access to the Internet and ordered people not to take pictures and post them on smart phones. Hezbollah also prevented its operatives and their families from using smart phones, ordering them instead to use walkie-talkies, encrypted mail and the organization's wired network. In addition Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, ordered his men to store their phones in steel boxes for long periods of time (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 27, 2024).

► Hassan Nasrallah is scheduled to give a speech on September 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. in the wake of the "recent developments" (al-'Ahed, September 18, 2024).

## Reactions in Lebanon

► The Lebanese leadership reacted angrily to the exploding beepers and the high number of casualties, and accused Israel of deliberately attacking "civilians:"

- ◆ During the cabinet meeting on September 17, 2024, Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, informed the ministers about the pager explosions. According to reports, he spoke with the heads of the security establishment and instructed the minister of health to mobilize to treat the wounded in the hospitals. The government also condemned the "criminal Israeli aggression" and it was reported that talks had been initiated with UN member states to prosecute Israel (Lebanese News Agency and Lebanon 24, September 17, 2024).

- ◆ After the walkie-talkies exploded, Mikati said that no one could express the "brutality of the crime." He said that Lebanon had been at war for 11 months now as a result of "what the residents of south Lebanon are experiencing," and that the government had ordered a complaint be submitted to the UN Security Council, calling on it to convene to discuss "aggression." In addition, he said Lebanon sought peace and not war, and accused Israel of ignoring international law (Lebanon24, September 18, 2024).

- ◆ The Lebanese foreign ministry reported that Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, had gone to New York to participate in the emergency UN Security Council meeting which would convene at Lebanon's request on September 20, 2024, to discuss the latest events (Lebanese foreign ministry X account, September 19, 2024). Habib expressed concern that the attacks were "a prelude to war" and stated that Lebanon did not want war, adding that the government could not hold talks with Hezbollah as it had before, since the organization "received a strong blow, which necessitates a response" (CNN, September 18, 2024).

- ◆ Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, claimed "the Israeli occupation habitually chooses terrorism, killing and betrayal in a way that violates all moral conventions and humanitarian laws." He accused Israel of committing a "war crime" and called on the international community to act urgently to "stop Israeli terrorism, because if it continues, it will take the entire region along a bad course, which will only get worse" (NBN Lebanon, September 17, 2024). According to a statement issued by

Berri's Amal Movement, "the crime will not deter the Lebanese from continuing their resistance" (NBN Lebanon, September 17, 2024).

◆ A "Lebanese source" stated that the "Israeli cyberattack" on Lebanon was "an expression of the expansion of Israeli aggression against the country." He added that the whole world "put the reins of its capabilities in the hands of Israel, so it is not surprising that it will commit such acts," and expressed fear of further escalation (Sputnik, September 18, 2024).

◆ Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Druze community in Lebanon, called the attack a "blow" and noted that Lebanon "does not want war but is determined to defend itself" (al-Nashra, September 17, 2024).

◆ Gebran Bassil, chairman of the Free National Movement, who recently expressed criticism of Hezbollah's continued fighting against Israel, said that it was "an attack on everyone." He added that "at times like these there are no parties or disputes in Lebanon, the pain is too great" (al-Nashra, September 17, 2024).

◆ Suleiman Frangieh, chairman of the Marada Movement, commenting on the events, said that the movement was and always would be with the 'resistance,' which "decides the direction and defends Lebanon." He said that he condemned the "Zionist aggression" and consoled the families the dead and wounded (al-Nashra, September 17, 2024).

◆ The Lebanese Forces Party of Samir Geagea said that "the shock the operation [sic] of October 7 caused Israeli society is the same as the shock the operation of September 17 caused [Hezbollah's] society." The Party expressed concern lest recent events lead the region into a major war and noted that Lebanon and the entire region were now in a dangerous period which would last until the United States presidential elections (Lebanese Forces Party X account, September 18, 2024).

► The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyya movement, the branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Lebanon which is affiliated with Hezbollah and Hamas, condemned the "Zionist crimes" and said that it had put all its youth and aid mechanisms on alert to help the victims. Bassam Hamoud, deputy head of the movement's political bureau, said that "this cowardly crime will only increase the efforts of the 'resistance' to protect our people and help our people in the Gaza Strip." The movement issued the statement during a tour of a delegation led by Hamoud to a



number of hospitals "to ensure that we do everything necessary to help the victims" (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Sidon Telegram channel, September 18, 2024).

- ▶The Lebanese army announced it was carrying out controlled explosions of "suspicious" pagers and walkie-talkies in several centers throughout Lebanon. Citizens were asked to stay away from the blast sites and report any suspicious device (Lebanese Army X account, September 19, 2024).
- ▶The Lebanese Aviation Authority announced that all airlines operating at the Rafiq al-Hariri International Airport in Beirut had to inform their customers that they were prohibited from boarding planes with walkie-talkies or pagers (al-Nashra, September 19, 2024).
- ▶Although no days of mourning were announced because of the explosions, the education system was shut down and cultural institutions were closed as "an act of protest against the Israeli crime" (MTV Lebanon and al-Nashra, September 17-18, 2024). The Union of Public Administration Employees announced a day of mourning and a work stoppage on September 18, 2024 in Lebanon to express condemnation of the "crimes of the Zionist enemy that harmed the Lebanese in the ugliest way" (al-Nashra, September 17, 2024).

## Reactions from the "Resistance Axis" Organizations

### Iran

- ▶Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, was injured by a pager explosion. The Iranian embassy in Beirut claimed he was superficially injured and that his general condition was good (Iranian embassy in Beirut X account, September 17, 2024). According to another report, he was injured when a pager belonging to one of his companions exploded (Tasnim, September 17, 2024). However, "sources" in Tehran said that the ambassador had suffered serious injuries, especially to his eyes (al-Mayadeen, September 18, 2024), but the Iranian embassy denied the "rumors" (Iranian embassy in Beirut X account, September 18, 2024). The Iranian Red Crescent airlifted Amani to Iran for medical treatment, along with more than 90 others injured in the explosions (SNN, September 19, 2024).



**A wounded Amani is taken to a hospital (X account of Riyan al-Masri, September 17, 2024)**

- ▶ Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' spokesman Ali Mohammad Naeini said that no member of the Revolutionary Guards was killed in the pager explosions in Lebanon. He claimed that "contrary to the rumors published by some of the media and the atmosphere on social networks, not a single member of the Revolutionary Guards was killed in the pager terrorist attack" (Tasnim, September 18, 2024).
- ▶ Masoud Pezeshkian, president of Iran, said that the incident in Lebanon "shames the Western countries, especially the United States, which does not spare any means to promote its inhuman goals." He added that "the fact that a device was used which was designed to make communication more convenient indicates the collapse of humanity" (IRNA, September 18, 2024).
- ▶ Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian foreign minister, spoke with Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, and condemned the "terrorist action of the Zionist regime" in blowing up pagers in Lebanon. He said Iran was prepared to help the wounded or transfer them for medical treatment on its territory (snn.ir, September 17, 2024).
- ▶ Nasser Kanaani, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman, condemned the "terrorist action" in Lebanon, and claimed that it was a follow-up of "integrated Zionist regime actions" against all moral and humanitarian principles and international law. Kanaani called the attack "mass murder" which "proved" that the "Zionist regime" threatened regional and international peace and security. He said Israel had to face an international criminal trial and be punished (IRNA, September 17, 2024).
- ▶ Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of the Iranian Majlis [parliament], condemned the "terrorist act of the Zionist regime" and expressed solidarity with Lebanon. He claimed that "terrorism and genocide of innocents [sic] are an inseparable part of the evil nature of the

Zionist regime" and added that "as long as this regime continues to exist, it will not stop its genocide" (Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf's X account, September 18, 2024).

►Iran's ambassador to the UN, Amir-Saeed Iravani, told the UN secretary general and the president of the Security Council that Tehran would "seriously investigate the Israeli attack on the Iranian ambassador in Beirut." He said Iran maintained its rights under international law "to take the measures required to respond to the crime" and called on them to condemn the terrorist acts and crimes committed by Israel" (IRNA, September 18, 2024).

## The Palestinians

►The Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other Palestinian organizations condemned the pager explosions in Lebanon:

- ◆ Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman, ordered all Palestinian hospitals in Lebanon to be opened and all medical teams to be on standby to receive the wounded. He also called on Palestinians in Lebanon to donate blood. Ashraf Dabbour, the PA ambassador to Lebanon, said that the Palestinian hospitals, Palestinian Red Crescent and clinics in the refugee camps in Lebanon were prepared to provide care for the injured (Wafa, September 17, 2024).

- ◆ Fatah expressed its condolences and condemned the "act of aggression" against Lebanon, which it called "the historical incubator of the struggle of our Palestinian people." The message also stated that "an injury to the Lebanese body is a pain that affects the Palestinian heart and body" (Wafa, September 17, 2024).

- ◆ Hamas accused Israel of committing a "crime," and stated it was part of the policy of Israeli "aggression" policy supported by the United States. Hamas expressed solidarity with Hezbollah and the Lebanese people, and praised their struggle and support of the Gaza Strip. Hamas added that "Israeli crimes" would not break the spirit of "resistance" of the free nations (Shehab Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).



**Notice issued by the Hamas-affiliated Quds Agency: "Palestine and Lebanon – one blood and one destiny" (Akhbar Jenin Telegram channel, September 17, 2024)**

- ◆ The PIJ called the exploding pagers a "malicious war crime" which injured "civilians" inside their homes, and claimed that Israel chose the course of action it had because it was desperate and had no options after having been attacked by several "fronts" which "support the Palestinian people." The PIJ expressed confidence that the Islamic "resistance" in Lebanon and Syria would be able to deal with the consequences and respond according to the magnitude of the crime, especially because "civilians" were harmed, including the families of "resistance fighters" (PIJ Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).
- ◆ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) claimed that the widespread explosions in Lebanon constituted a "dangerous Zionist escalation," carried out in coordination with the United States and Western forces. The PFLP added that the events confirmed Israel's intention to exert pressure on Lebanon and carry out broad attacks, creating conditions which would serve its security and military interests, implementing "Zionist" cabinet policy. The PFLP also said it was confident the "resistance" was capable of containing the attack and reacting strongly, and would continue its support for the Gaza Strip (PFLP central information department Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).



**Support for Lebanon: "The unity of blood is a step on the way to victory; long live the joint Lebanese-Palestinian struggle against Zionist terrorism" (PFLP central information department Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).**

- ◆ The Palestinian Mujahideen Movement claimed that the explosions in Lebanon had "Zionist fingerprints" and were part of the war led by the Netanyahu government with the support of the American administration. The Movement stated that Israel's attempts to break the spirit of "resistance" and prevent Hezbollah and Lebanese support for the Gaza Strip would not succeed, and that Israel had to pay for its "crimes" against the Palestinian people (Safa Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).

## Other "resistance axis" organizations

- ▶ The Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq warned that Israel would pay a "double price" for harming the "civil resistance" in Lebanon. According to the militia, the exhaustion of the "Zionist entity" after 11 months of fighting against the "resistance" in Lebanon had led it to attack the Lebanese in their "civilian environment." It was also reported that the "horrible crime" increased recruitment, "resistance" and anger among the "resistance axis" public and made Hezbollah stronger than ever. The militia also promised that they were giving Hezbollah all their means [weapons] and were prepared to "accompany them to the end" (Kaf Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).
- ▶ The Nobles Movement (al-Nujaba ) expressed solidarity with the Lebanese people and with Hezbollah's "heroic jihad fighters." The militia said it stood by Hezbollah in the fight against "the Zionists, the Americans and their allies" and that "such terrorist attacks would have no effect beyond strengthening the stability, pride and honor of the brave men of the resistance" (Telegram channel Saber News, September 17, 2024). Akram al-Kaabi, al-Nujaba secretary general, threatened that they would attack Israeli cities, towns and villages "all over Palestine" using cutting-age weapons, missiles and rockets (Taghridah al-Hashad Telegram channel, September 17, 2024). The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed responsibility for two

UAV attacks on targets in Haifa (Telegram channel of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, September 18, 2024). The IDF confirmed that Israeli Air Force fighter jets had intercepted a UAV that was launched from Iraq and entered Israel in the Sea of Galilee region. There were no casualties (IDF spokesperson, September 18, 2024).

►The Sayyid al-Shuhada' Brigades claimed that "the moral and ideological degradation of the Zionist enemies of Allah has reached a level that has crossed all borders." The militia admitted that "the enemy's use of the imported pager technology used by the 'resistance' makes us think about abandoning all Western technology and adopting local technologies in their place by rapidly advancing our technological situation" (al-Amid Telegram channel, September 17, 2024).

►Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abd al-Salam said "We condemn the Israeli attack on Lebanon which targeted civilians [sic] and is a clear crime and a violation of Lebanese sovereignty. We share the grief of the families of those in the Islamic resistance who were killed and wish the wounded a speedy recovery. We are confident in Lebanon's ability to meet every challenge, deter the hostile Zionist entity and exact a heavy price from it in the event of escalation against Lebanon." (Mohammed Abd al-Salam's X account, September 17, 2024).

►Mohammed al-Bakhiti, a member of the political bureau of the Houthis, issued a message in English, in which he said that Israel's booby-trapping electronic devices and detonating them "randomly among civilians" [sic] in Lebanon was dangerous. He warned that if the world did not take a firm stand it would be dragged into a series of "dirty wars." In a message in Arabic, he said they were aware that they were dealing with "an enemy that possesses superior technological and military capabilities and lacks any moral values," but he said they would continue " jihad for the support of the Gaza Strip" (Mohammed al-Bakhiti's X account, September 17, 2024).



**Cartoons by Kamal Sharaf, a Yemeni cartoonist who supports the "resistance axis" (Kamal Sharaf's X account, September 17 and 18, 2024)**

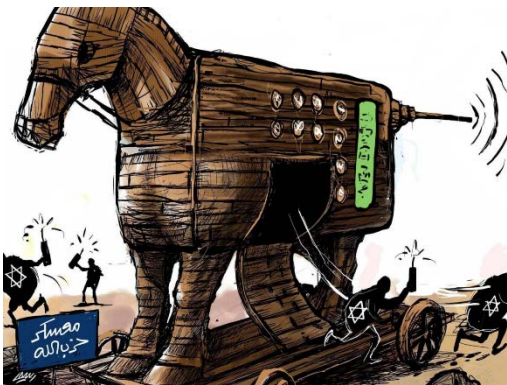
## Arab Reactions

► Arab countries condemned the explosions in Lebanon and some sent medical aid to Lebanon:

- ◆ A Jordanian Air Force plane carrying eight tons of food and medical equipment landed in Beirut in accordance with instructions of King Abdullah II. Ayman al-Safady, the Jordanian foreign minister, spoke with Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, and said Amman "supports the security, sovereignty and stability of Lebanon, and sympathizes with it and the Lebanese people." He condemned "any action that threatens the welfare of Lebanese citizens" and called for a halt to "Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip and the escalation in the West Bank" and for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (Petra Agency, September 18, 2024).
- ◆ Badr Abdelatty, the Egyptian foreign minister, spoke with Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, and Abdallah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, and said that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi emphasized Egypt's full support for Lebanon's security and stability. He warned against the danger of a regional escalation and the deterioration into a widespread war (Egyptian foreign ministry Facebook page, September 17, 2024).
- ◆ The Syrian foreign ministry strongly condemned the "new crime committed by the Zionist entity" against "civilians" [sic] in Lebanon and expressed support for the Lebanese people "who stand for their right to defend themselves." The ministry accused Israel of wanting to expand the war and called on the countries of the world to condemn the "aggression" (SANA, September 17, 2024).

◆ The Iraqi government sent plane to Lebanon with a medical team and 15 tons of medical equipment (al-Nashra, September 18, 2024). Iraqi government spokesman Bassem al-Awadi said that his government was following the dangerous security developments and the "Zionist cyberattack" "with concern." He called for urgent international intervention to prevent the deterioration of the situation and the expansion of the war (Shafaq News, September 17, 2024).

► Arab media and cartoonists known for their opposition to Hezbollah and the "resistance axis" published cartoons mocking the pager explosions.



Right: Hezbollah's symbol with an exploding pager instead of a rifle (Independent in Arabic, September 18, 2024). Left: A Trojan horse in the form of a walkie-talkie (al-Sharq al-Awsat, September 18, 2024)



A cartoon by the Kurdish Dijwar Ibrahim (Dijwar Ibrahim's X account, September 17, 2024)