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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Lebanon – January to June 2024

30 June 2024

08 January 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

There are also regular exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

The diplomatic rhetoric on both sides continues to point to the possibility of an agreement being reached on the border after the war between Israel and Hamas comes to an end. Within Lebanon, there are many calls for Hezbollah to refrain from targeting the civilian infrastructure when attacking Israel. So far, this request seems to have been met, for the most part. After Saleh al-Aroui, one of the most important leaders of Hamas, was killed in a drone attack in Beirut on 02.01.24 along with two other Hamas commanders and four Hamas members, the Israeli side said that this was not an attack on the Lebanese state. In the days that followed, Hezbollah stepped up its attacks on targets in Israel, but the accompanying statements issued by Hezbollah and above all the statements by Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah still did not indicate any intention to escalate the violence beyond the current level.

Attacks on both sides continue to occur on a daily basis. In the meantime, more than 175 people have been killed in Lebanon, including around 20 civilians; 14 people have been killed so far in Israel, including five civilians. Since the conflict began, around 36 strikes have been carried out on Lebanese army positions, resulting in the death of one Lebanese soldier so far. This has led to growing international criticism and is fuelling fears that the conflict could escalate.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and a similar number of people in Israel have been internally displaced as a result of the escalation in fighting along the border. Most of the internally displaced persons in Israel are being accommodated in hotels. Around 80% of displaced Lebanese are staying with relatives in more northern parts of the country, while only around 2% are able to be housed in publicly-owned shelters.¹

15 January 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

On the Lebanese side, more than 190 people have now been killed in Lebanon, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups. So far, 19 Israelis have been killed, seven of whom were civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to AP, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border.²

22 January 2024

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, developments will be summarized.

Diplomatic sources have repeatedly reported that all sides have indicated they do not want the situation to spiral into full-scale war. Meanwhile, 82% of the Lebanese population is experiencing multidimensional poverty, a situation that is further exacerbated by the ongoing attacks being carried out by both sides. Various important figures from all major denominations and ethnic groups continue to advocate that Lebanon maintain neutrality in the war between Hamas and Israel.

Attacks from both sides are a daily occurrence. On 20.01.24, another targeted attack was carried out on a senior Hezbollah member around 20 km north of the border. On the Lebanese side, more than 197 people have now been killed, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups; on the Israeli side, over 19 people have been killed so far, seven of them civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to press reports, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border. However, donor pledges undertaken at a recent donor conference for WFP aid were significantly lower than those undertaken in previous years, which is making it more difficult to provide assistance to Lebanon.³

29 January 2024

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Regular exchanges of fire continue unabated between Hezbollah and the Israeli army.

Hezbollah announced on 25.01.24 that it would also be using Fajr-1 missiles (unguided air-to-ground missiles of Iranian origin with a range of around 10 km) in future. This led to an intensification of attacks with dozens of attacks being carried out on Israeli territory that were met by corresponding counterattacks from the Israeli side the following day. The political debate is focusing on the plight of the civilian population and the damage to the infrastructure in the south. Furthermore, the political consensus is that Lebanon itself should be kept out of the war between Hezbollah and Israel.

Attacks from the Israeli and Hezbollah sides are a daily occurrence. In the meantime, on the Lebanese side, at least 206 people have been killed, including around 20 civilians and more than 150 Hezbollah militants, one Lebanese soldier and fighters of various other militant groups; on the Israeli side, over 19 people have been killed so far, seven of them civilians.

According to aid organisations, around 76,000 people inside Lebanon and according to press reports, 115,000 people in Israel remain internally displaced by the escalation along the border.⁴

05 February 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to engage in regular exchanges of fire

It is becoming increasingly possible to quantify some of the damage caused by the ongoing exchanges of fire. On the Lebanese side, for example, around 2,000 hectares of forest and agricultural land have reportedly been burnt, around three times the amount contaminated with explosives. Around 55,000 olive trees that were between 25 and 250 years old have reportedly been destroyed. Estimates say this has reduced the production of Lebanese olive oil by around 20 percent. The tobacco industry has also been particularly hard hit, as more than half of the land used to grow tobacco is currently unusable. The corresponding tobacco-growing areas are concentrated in the region a few kilometres north of the border. On the Israeli side, economic life along the border has also ground to a halt, with at least 512 buildings damaged by Hezbollah fire to date.

Hezbollah has repeatedly announced that it would abide by a ceasefire in the Gaza war. Israel, on the other hand, is seeking a ceasefire that would allow the civilian population to return to the region.⁵

Dispute over taxation of petroleum companies

The adoption of the new budget law for 2024 has introduced a tax for petroleum companies that benefitted from the heavily subsidised exchange rate for petroleum products in 2020 and 2021. However, the wording is ambiguous and the exact interpretation is unclear. This has led to considerable protests among oil companies which announced on 31.01.24 that they would cease supplying petrol stations. However, according to a press release issued by the responsible interest group on 04.02.24, this threat has not been carried out, at least not for the time being. Nevertheless, it is feared that there could be a return to long queues and fuel shortages.⁶

12 February 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to trade fire on a regular basis.

A study, the results of which were presented on 08.02.24, put the economic costs of the conflict in the border region at around USD 1.2 billion to date; this is largely due to damage caused to infrastructure, but markedly also due to the decline in business activity.

On 10.02.24, an airstrike was targeted at several Hamas members and one Hezbollah militant in Jadra, about 60 km north of the border. One Syrian and one Lebanese national were killed and the suspected target, a Palestinian Hamas commander, was wounded. One civilian was killed and nine were wounded in a drone attack on the town of Houla on 11.02.24. Since fighting began in Lebanon, 227 people have been killed, 200 of them fighters.⁷

Violent protest

Protests by retired army personnel against further cuts to their pensions turned violent on 08.02.24 when around 2,000 protestors attempted to prevent a cabinet meeting from taking place. Several ministers were initially prevented from attending, while others managed to avoid the protestors, partly because they kept a low profile. The police used tear gas to disperse the crowds and the cabinet meeting was held after an hour's delay.⁸

19 February 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to trade fire on a regular basis. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, only events that show new trends or that affect civilians will be summarized.

The highest number of civilian casualties to date was recorded on 14.02.24. A total of 10 civilians were reportedly killed in an airstrike in Nabatieh (in which a Hezbollah commander and two other fighters were also killed) and in another airstrike carried out in Sawaneh. This marks a significant increase in the number of civilian casualties. In the days that followed, mutual shelling intensified. In the meantime, 268 fatalities have been reported on the Lebanese side, including 40 civilians, and 10 soldiers and six civilians have been killed on the Israeli side.⁹

26 February 2024

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and allied Islamist militia on the one side continue to trade nearly-daily fire with Israeli armed forces on the other. Due to the large number of incidents taking place, only events that report on civilian fatalities will be summarised.

On 21.02.24, an Israeli airstrike killed a Hezbollah fighter in the Lebanese village of Majdal Zoun. A civilian woman and a six-year-old girl were reportedly killed in an another airstrike.

On 23.02.24, two paramedics and a Hezbollah fighter were killed in an airstrike on the border town of Blida. The medics belonged to the "Islamic Health Committee", which is run by Hezbollah.

Since the fighting began on 08.10.23, a total of 276 people have been killed in Lebanon, 44 of them civilians. In Israel, 16 people have been killed so far, six of them civilians.¹⁰

04 March 2024

Situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and Israeli armed forces continue to trade fire.

On 29.02.24, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati spoke to the press about the future development of the conflict. He stated that, in his opinion, Hezbollah would adhere to a ceasefire if one was agreed for Gaza. Furthermore, such a ceasefire would probably lead to third party-led negotiations on the land border between Lebanon and Israel. From the Israeli side, the withdrawal of Hezbollah behind the Litani River is seen as an essential prerequisite for a ceasefire on the border.

Since the fighting began, a total of 285 people have been killed in Lebanon, 44 of them civilians. In Israel, 10 soldiers and six civilians have been killed so far.¹¹

11 March 2024

Security situation along the border between Lebanon and Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli armed forces continue to trade fire on a regular basis. On 09.03.24, a family of four was killed in an airstrike.

In the meantime, on the Lebanese side, 303 people have been reported killed, including 50 civilians; 10 soldiers and seven civilians have been reported killed on the Israeli side.¹²

08 April 2024

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to fire at each other. Recently, there has been a trend towards a higher number of casualties and a greater intensity of strikes.

The actions of Hezbollah and its allied militias continue to be strongly criticized within Lebanese politics. Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah recently confirmed on 06.04.24 that Hezbollah would remain militarily active at a comparable level as long as fighting continued in Gaza. In contrast, other Lebanese politicians, such as those from the Christian-dominated Free Patriotic Movement and Lebanese Forces parties, have now made clear demands for a ceasefire regardless of the situation in Gaza.

On 07.04.24, a representative of the Lebanese Forces was abducted in Byblos by unidentified individuals. Protests by supporters of the Lebanese Forces led to road blockades in the night of 08.04.24.

On 07.04.24, the Israeli army confirmed that it was now in a "new phase" of preparations for a possible war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, in which a transition from defensive to offensive measures was conceivable.

In total, at least 354 people, 68 of them civilians, have been reported dead on the Lebanese side, and ten soldiers and eight civilians on the Israeli side.¹³

15 April 2024

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to fire at each other regularly. At least 363 casualties, among them 70 civilians, have now been reported on the Lebanese side; ten military personnel and eight civilians have been killed on the Israeli side.¹⁴

Political unrest after murder of LF official

Following the killing of a prominent representative of the Lebanese Forces (LF) on 07.04.24 under initially unclear circumstances, tensions have increased between different ethnic groups in Lebanon.

According to the current state of the investigation, the Christian official was killed in an attempted vehicle hijacking by Syrian criminals. Since these circumstances have become known, attacks on Syrians have increased significantly in many parts of Lebanon. Various videos posted on social media show physical attacks, some of which are brutal

but not fatal. While politicians from all parties have called to refrain from violence, many representatives of the LF have stated at the same time that it was a political murder.¹⁵

06 May 2024

Israeli air strike in southern Lebanon: At least three civilians killed

Media report at least three civilians killed and others injured in an Israeli airstrike on the southern Lebanese village of Mays al-Jabal on 05.05.24. According to the Israeli military, the attack targeted Hezbollah's military infrastructure. On the same day, Hezbollah stated that it had carried out at least ten attacks on the Israeli military along the Lebanese-Israeli border. The Israeli military, on the other hand, said that some 40 rockets had entered Israeli airspace.¹⁶

13 May 2024

Security situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. In response to the Israeli takeover of the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt, Hezbollah has announced the mobilisation of its forces.

At least 402 people are now reported dead on the Lebanese side, among them 79 civilians, and 14 military personnel and nine civilians on the Israeli side. The financial damage caused by the conflict to Lebanon's infrastructure and economy is now estimated at USD 1.5bn.¹⁷

27 May 2024

Situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange artillery fire.

At least 440 people, among them 84 civilians, have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, and 14 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.

On 26.05.24, Israel celebrated the Jewish feast of Lag BaOmer, when many Jews traditionally make a pilgrimage to Mount Meron. The area had been closed due to the threat posed by Hezbollah. However, a group of several thousand pilgrims attempted to enter the area, leading to violent clashes with Israeli security forces.¹⁸

03 June 2024

Situation on the Lebanese-Israeli border

Shelling between Hezbollah and the Israeli army continues.

At least 451 people have now been reported killed on the Lebanese side, including at least 84 civilians, and 14 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.¹⁹

10 June 2024

Situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Intense shelling between Hezbollah and the Israeli army has continued.

At least 458 people have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, including at least 90 civilians, and 15 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.²⁰

17 June 2024

Situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border area

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. After a high-ranking Hezbollah commander was killed in an Israeli military strike on 11.06.24, mutual shelling intensified significantly in the following days.

At least 471 people, including at least 91 civilians, have now been reported dead in the border area on the Lebanese side, and 15 soldiers and eleven civilians on the Israeli side.²¹

24 June 2024

Security situation in the Lebanese-Israeli border region

Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue to exchange fire. There has been a marked escalation in rhetoric on both the Israeli and Hezbollah sides. In a television interview, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said that the reduced intensity of the fighting in Gaza following the Rafah offensive would set free forces to be deployed to the north. According to various sources, mediator Amos Hochstein's last trip to Lebanon was also accompanied by clear warnings that time was running out for a peaceful solution.

At least 480 people have now been reported dead on the Lebanese side, among them 93 civilians, and 15 military and 11 civilians on the Israeli side.²²

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