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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Lebanon – July to December 2023

31 December 2023

03 July 2023

Clash in Qornet al-Sawda

In the disputed area of Qornet al-Sawda the inhabitants of two small towns (Danniyah and Bsharri) exchanged fire at least twice on 02.07.23, leaving two young men dead. The Lebanese army intervened. The circumstances of both deaths are unclear.

10 July 2023

Gunfire in mosque

On 07.07.23, a man opened fire on worshippers in a mosque in Bar Elias in eastern Lebanon. One man was killed and several others were injured. During the ensuing exchange of fire with security forces the shooter was wounded and arrested.

His motive is still unclear. Local media had initially reported that the victims were Syrians, but this could not be confirmed during the day.

Tensions with Israel

On 06.07.23, both parties exchanged fire at the Israeli-Lebanese demarcation line. After a mortar was fired from the Lebanese to the Israeli side, Israel returned fire targeting the suspected firing position. According to Lebanese sources, 15 artillery shells hit Lebanese territory.

17 July 2023

Tensions with Israel

Incidents continue to occur at the Israeli-Lebanese demarcation line.

On 12.07.23, three Hezbollah members were injured by Israeli fire in an incident near the village of Al-Bustan. According to Israeli sources, they had approached the border fence and tried to sabotage it.

On 15.07.23, Israeli security forces fired smoke grenades at the Lebanese MP Kassem Hachem of the Baath Party near the village of Ghajar in the vicinity of the disputed Shebaa Farms. Ghajar is currently a focal point of conflict. The village was annexed by Israel along with the Golan Heights, but the population later spread north in what was then a disputed area, which has been in Lebanese territory since the agreement of the "Blue Line" between Lebanon and Israel. Due to several security incidents, Israel has started to build a wall around the northern part of the village, which Lebanon considers an attempt to annex Lebanese territory.

24 July 2023

Bank raids

Raids on banks by depositors demanding their money back continue in various Lebanese cities. Four such incidents became known nationwide between 17.07. and 20.07.23 alone. Among other things, hostages were taken; the youngest known person involved was 13 years old. In most cases, at least part of the money was paid out, thus settling all of the incidents peacefully.

Tensions with Israel

Several security incidents occurred near Kfar Chouba on the ceasefire line between Lebanon and Israel. On 18.07.23, Israel started to build a concrete wall along the ceasefire line. On 20.07.23, the local Lebanese administration responded by starting the construction of a passage fit for driving along the same line. Over the following days, several smoke grenades were fired from the Israeli side when people approached from the Lebanese side.

31 July 2023

Clashes in Ain al-Hilwa

On the night of 30.07.23, Fatah and an armed Islamist group clashed in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain al-Hilwa near the southern Lebanese town of Sayyida/Sidon. According to reports, assault rifles, grenades and mortar shells were used in the fighting, which continued until Sunday evening. Official reports say that five Fatah members and one member of the Islamist group died and others were injured.

The Lebanese military has no access to the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. These are under self-administration and regularly experience escalating violence.

07 August 2023

Escalations and volatile situation in Ain al-Hilwa

Fighting in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilwa continues (cf. BN 31.07.23). None of the various ceasefires agreed on 30.07. and 31.07.23, lasted more than a few hours. So far, 13 people are believed to have been killed in the fighting between Fatah and various Islamist groups, although this is a minimum figure. Several thousand of the approximately 54,000 inhabitants fled the camp or sought refuge in mosques. The damage caused by the fighting also includes a school complex run by UNRWA (currently there are no classes, because of the summer holidays in Lebanon). No new fighting has been reported since 04.08.23, the situation in the camp is described as "tense".

14 August 2023

Situation in Ain al-Hilwan

Since no further firefights were reported for the time being, the director of UNRWA in Lebanon made a first assessment of the consequences of the escalation of violence in Ain al-Hilwa on 12.08.23 (cf. BN of 31.07. and 07.08.23).

According to the report, the situation remains tense and about half of the camp is currently inaccessible for the UN relief agency. About 400 houses were damaged during the fighting, which claimed 13 lives. UNRWA's aid services, which have been severely restricted due to the lack of funding, can only be resumed on a limited basis for the time being.

Firefight in Kahale

On 10.08.23, a firefight broke out in Kahale, a majority Christian town on the road connecting Beirut and the Bekaa Plain. A lorry crashed and tipped over sideways. As residents approached, the three occupants of the lorry and local residents engaged in a verbal argument that escalated into a shoot-out. One of the lorry drivers and a Kahale resident died and several others were injured.

The background is that the lorry and its drivers belonged to Hezbollah, while the town of Kahale is a stronghold of the Christian "Lebanese Forces", which are hostile to Hezbollah. The army intervened and seized the lorry. Hezbollah confirmed that the lorry was their property and that the drivers were members. The army, in turn,

confirmed that the lorry was carrying ammunition. Politicians of all factions involved were quick to call for a calming of the situation.

21 August 2023

Situation in Ain al-Hilwa

On 18.08.23, UNRWA formally suspended all activities inside Ain al-Hilwa, stating that the security of its own staff cannot be guaranteed as gunmen are still present in various UNRWA facilities and refuse to leave.

On 20.08.23, UNRWA announced that eight UNRWA schools in Ain al-Hilwa had been taken over by armed groups which also vandalised and looted the premises. Under the current circumstances, the school year for several thousand children cannot begin, UNRWA said.

Shootout in Kahale

The armed incident in majority Christian Kahale on 10.08.23 (cf. BN of 14.08.23) triggered a far-reaching political response.

Leaders of all relevant political parties stated that no escalation was desired, but at the same time blamed each other vehemently. The army was unanimously praised for its quick intervention. An investigation into the incident was ordered, but is already causing resentment, because as a first step, several innocent bystanders were summoned for questioning.

According to various sources, a Hezbollah truck was on its way to Ain al-Hilwa carrying machine gun and anti-aircraft ammunition. The ammunition was allegedly intended to replenish the depots of Hezbollah's allies in the camp after recent fighting had depleted the reserves significantly.

28 August 2023

Jnoud el-Rab

On the evening of 23.08.23, the Christian group Jnoud el-Rab ("Soldiers of the Lord") verbally attacked the guests of a bar in Beirut's Mar Mikhail district which is also known as a local meeting place for homosexuals. The street is dominated by nightlife activities.

A video taken by someone in the group and spread online, shows patrons of the pub barricading themselves inside. The group has been making news for several months and is said to number around 100 people. The video set off an intense public debate. Lebanon is considered one of the most LGBTIQ-friendly countries in the region, but rhetoric directed against sexual minorities has increased drastically in recent years. In the political debate as well as online, both extremist Islamic as well as Christian camps expressed considerable support for the group, as did many secular voices. Most often the methods used by the group rather than its objectives were criticised or concern was voiced about the interference with economically important nightlife activities. However, there was also public support for the attack's victims, as well as general condemnation of attacks on people. Overall, the situation for LGBTIQ persons tends to deteriorate.

04 September 2023

Location in Ain al-Hilwa

Tension is still running high between different Palestinian militias in the Ain al-Hilwa camp. On 30.08.23 an ultimatum for some Islamist militias to hand over the killers of Fatah commander Abu Ashraf al-Armoush expired. In the meantime, all parties involved are bringing in supplies on a considerable scale. Fortifications and improvised entrenchments are reported. The situation is very tense and a renewed outbreak of violence seems highly likely. UNRWA says it needs about USD 15.5 million to deal with the immediate aftermath of the fighting. This includes repairs to UNRWA buildings as well as the provision of classrooms and teaching materials for some 6,000 children from the camp, as all eight UNRWA-run schools there are currently occupied by militias and have been partially looted and damaged in the fighting. A regular start of school operations is therefore impossible for the foreseeable future.

11 September 2023

Fighting in Ain al-Hilwa

Since 07.07.23, tensions in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ain al-Hilwa have turned violent again. The fighting left at least five people dead and 52 wounded, including both militiamen and civilians. In addition, three shells hit a Lebanese army checkpoint and injured three soldiers, one of them seriously.

UNRWA tried to accommodate residents who had fled the camp in a tent city near Sidon. However, the local authorities closed it down. Currently, many residents are staying in shelters improvised by UNRWA. According to recent reports, a ceasefire has been agreed.

18 September 2023

Fighting in Ain al-Hilwa

After the latest fighting in the Ain al-Hilwa refugee camp (cf. BN of 11.09.23) resulted in 17 deaths and over 100 injured, according to the Red Crescent, a renewed ceasefire was agreed as of 14.09.23, 3pm local time, which so far seems to be holding.

The suspects in the murder of Fatah commander Abu Ashraf al-Aramoushi, which triggered the recent fighting, have still not been surrendered. Several thousand people have fled the camp and are being cared for in the surrounding area, as the situation is currently too volatile to return safely. The clashes must be seen in the larger context of rivalry between Fatah and various Islamist groups. Since Fatah must fear to lose control over the camp, considerable resources are being expended to maintain it.

25 September 2023

Gunfire at Shebaa Farms

On 23.09.23, Lebanese and Israeli forces exchanged of smoke grenade fire in the Shebaa Farms area. Both sides accuse each other of crossing the respective demarcation line. Both sides agree that a Lebanese construction vehicle 6 was carrying out works under Lebanese escort, but they could not agree on whose side of the demarcation line this took place. No one was injured.

The Shebaa Farms area is a 28 km² strip of land disputed between Lebanon, Israel and Syria and currently uninhabited. It is repeatedly the scene of skirmishes, especially between Hezbollah and Israel.

09 October 2023

Hostilities at border between Lebanon and Israel

By its own account, Hezbollah fired a number of guided missiles and artillery munitions at Israeli positions in the Shebaa Farms territory on 08.10.23. Israel responded with artillery fire into southern Lebanon, injuring a number of people according to the Lebanese army. The Shebaa Farms territory is an uninhabited strip of land to which both Lebanon and Israel lay claim and which has been occupied by Israel since 1967. The most recent cross-border exchange of fire between Israel and Hezbollah occurred at the end of September 2023 (cf. BN of 25.09.23). According to Hezbollah, the latest attacks are linked to the fighting between Hamas and Israel.

16 October 2023

Security situation at the border between Lebanon and Israel

The security situation has worsened at the border between Lebanon and Israel, with cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and the Israeli military an almost daily occurrence. On 09.10.23 a number of Palestinians crossed the border into Israel. In the ensuing fighting two Palestinian fighters and one Israeli soldier were killed. On the same day, three Hezbollah fighters were killed by Israeli shelling. According to information from the Israeli side, 15 rockets were fired at Israel from Lebanese territory on 10.10.23. Israel responded with artillery fire. After Hezbollah fired rockets at Israeli military posts on 11.10.23, Israel carried out air raids on Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon, in the course of which civilians were also injured.

On 13.10.23 a journalist of the Reuters news agency was killed in southern Lebanon by rocket fire from the direction of Israel. Six other journalists, including employees of Al Jazeera and Agence France-Presse, were injured. Israel has announced that an investigation will be carried out into the incidents.

Following further rocket attacks by Hezbollah on Israeli military posts and a village on 15.10.23, in which one civilian was killed, Israel responded with counter-attacks in southern Lebanon. The headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was also hit in the cross-border fighting. On the same day, Israel declared the Lebanese-Israeli border a military exclusion zone. On 16.10.23 Israel subsequently announced the evacuation of civilians from towns and villages close to the border.

Iran-backed Hezbollah, which is a declared enemy of the state of Israel, possesses substantial military capabilities due to its arsenal of weapons and its fighters with combat experience from the Syrian civil war.

23 October 2023

Situation at the border with Israel

Lebanese domestic politics is dominated by the situation in Gaza and Hezbollah's response. Large demonstrations are practically a daily occurrence, although they do not generally lead to violent clashes.

Many people who live in the regions bordering with Israel are currently leaving the area as a consequence of border fighting between the Israeli army and Hezbollah. Civilians have also died in this fighting. The Lebanese government's capacity to provide emergency accommodation is very limited on account of the tense overall situation. On the Israeli side, the evacuation plans have been expanded. On 20.10.23 the evacuation of the city of Kiryat Shmona was ordered.

Of the numerous border incidents which have occurred, only those involving fatalities are stated below:

On 17.10.23 the Israeli village Metulla came under fire from the Lebanese side. At least three people were injured, including one civilian. According to Hezbollah, five of their fighters were killed when fire was returned.

According to information from the Lebanese army, a group of journalists came under Israeli fire near to the village of Hula on 20.10.23 and one member of the group died. UNIFIL has confirmed the incident, but reports only one civilian casualty. The survivors were evacuated out of the danger zone by UNIFIL forces.

After a rocket attack was launched against Israeli territory from Lebanon on 21.10.23, return shelling from the Israeli side ensued, resulting in an unclear number of casualties.

On the night of 22.10.23 the Israeli army launched at least two air raids on Hezbollah positions, including one in the Shebaa Farms territory. According to information from the Israeli side, the air raids targeted two Hezbollah cells which were preparing an attack on Israeli territory with rocket launchers and anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM). Other Hezbollah cells were allegedly also hit. No reliable information on casualties is available at the time of going to press.

Independently of these attacks, there are daily exchanges of fire along the border, for the most part involving light arms and manpads (one-man ground-to-air rockets). There have been repeated attempts at infiltration from the Lebanese side.

An international news agency has reported that the escalation between Hezbollah and Israel has claimed at least 22 lives since 07.10.23, including four civilians. At least three people have been killed on the Israeli side.

30 October 2023

Effects of the conflict between Israel and Hamas

The ongoing conflict around the Gaza Strip continues to influence every aspect of political life in Lebanon. The tourism sector, which accounts for around 20 % of Lebanon's GDP, is particularly severely affected, especially as a result of most airlines having suspended or heavily reduced flights to and from Lebanon. Various groups in Lebanese society, from political parties to trade associations, are consequently calling for an escalation of the conflict to be prevented, especially in view of the fact that the country has substantial supply problems and only very limited reserves. Lebanon depends on imports for a large proportion of its food supply. Many countries are calling on their nationals to leave Lebanon. The UN currently estimates that at least 29,000 people have been internally displaced as a result of the fighting in the south of Lebanon. These circumstances alone are sufficient to exacerbate the already strained economic situation.

To compound this, fighting occurs on an almost daily basis, as Hezbollah troops attempt to stage attacks, above all on lookouts and comparable facilities. No fighting occurred on the day after a total of eleven Hezbollah fighters were killed on 25.10.23. Hezbollah has announced a change of strategy, with teams of two to be deployed instead of small groups in future, so as to minimise its losses. To date, at least 50 Hezbollah fighters and four Israeli soldiers have died in the hostilities. Civilian casualties are currently in single figures on both sites. Israel has responded to every attack with retaliatory attacks on Hezbollah positions. Rocket attacks on Israeli territory remain an almost daily occurrence. Since 28.10.23 at the latest, such attacks have also been carried out by the Lebanese branch of Hamas' Al-Qassam Brigades and the Lebanese Sunni organisation Al-Jamā'ah al-islāmīyah, each of whom have claimed responsibility for a number of attacks.

Towns and villages in the north of Israel are continuing to be evacuated.

06 November 2023

Address by Hassan Nasrallah

Following a public address by Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary-general of Hezbollah - his first such address since the beginning of the war between Israel and Hamas on 03.11.23 - it would appear that there will be no escalation beyond the current level. In the address, Nasrallah stressed that Hamas had not informed Hezbollah or any other groups in advance and that the conflict is first and foremost a Palestinian issue. He said Hezbollah was already playing an actively supportive role by tying down Israeli forces. Although he did not rule out a further escalation, observers consider the address to be on the whole de-escalatory in nature. In the weeks before, business organisations, civil groups and representatives of practically all other political parties had repeatedly urged that Lebanon should be kept out of the war between Hamas and Israel, if at all possible.

The Lebanese currency stabilised at around 90,000 Lebanese pounds to one US dollar.

Armed clashes at border with Israel

There are many reports of individual incidents along the border every day. In most cases, only short exchanges of fire take place. The number of combatants killed on both sides remains unclear, as Hezbollah and the Israeli Army (IDF) regularly report different figures. In the wake of Nasrallah's address, a brief surge in intensity occurred on the afternoon of 03.11.23 and on 04.11.23. According to Hezbollah, this culminated in attacks with anti-tank guided missiles targeting six Israeli military posts and Israeli military vehicles, to which the IDF responded with air strikes. On 05.11.23 a drone attack by Israel led to civilian casualties when a car carrying a woman and three children was hit. These are the only civilian victims reported this week.

Towns and villages in the north of Israel are continuing to be evacuated.

13 November 2023

Effects of the war between Israel and Hamas

The military conflict between Israel and Hamas remains the overriding domestic policy issue in Lebanon.

Following a further public address by Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary-general of Hezbollah, it appears that Hezbollah has no plans to escalate hostilities into a full-blown war at the country's southern border. While most Lebanese political parties are attempting to work towards peace, many Palestinian groups are calling for an escalation. Recent forecasts estimate that the Lebanese economy will shrink by up to 23 % of GDP due to the effects of the Gaza conflict. While tourism is the most severely affected sector here, the conflict is also having an adverse effect on large parts of southern Lebanon and impacting supply chains and potential investments.

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

In view of the large number of individual armed clashes and military developments at the southern border of Lebanon/northern border of Israel, developments are summarised in brief here:

There are many reports of individual incidents along the border every day. In most cases, only short exchanges of fire take place. Missile systems are now being used to an increasing extent from the Lebanese side. Both sides have increased the range of their strikes, with attacks now possible up to approx. 45 km north of the Lebanese border and, according to Hezbollah, as far as Akkon in Israel.

In addition to the increased frequency of attacks by Hezbollah, it is particularly noticeable that other groups are also participating to a greater extent in attacks on Israel. Hamas' military arm in Lebanon, which has claimed responsibility for a number of missile attacks, plays a particularly prominent role in this context. For the first time, a member of the militia belonging to the Shiite AMAL movement – the second-largest Shiite party in Lebanon after Hezbollah – has been killed by an Israeli drone strike.

The number of combatants killed on both sides remains unclear, as the information from Hezbollah and the Israeli Army respectively is rarely consistent. The death toll on the Lebanese side now stands at around 100. 11 of the dead have been identified as civilians, while the remainder are comprised for the most part of Hezbollah fighters. On the Israeli side, hundreds of people are believed to have been injured, while the death toll remains in single or low double-digit figures.

Towns and villages in the north of Israel are continuing to be evacuated. The Israeli defence minister has sent out a clear warning to Hezbollah not to escalate the situation any further.

20 November 2023

Effects of the war between Israel and Hamas

The repercussions of the war between Hamas and Israel continue to overshadow the entire domestic agenda in Lebanon. Aside from Hezbollah, the general political consensus is that involving Lebanon in the war is not in Lebanon's interest. Representatives of the Sunni, Druze and various Christian segments of the populations have voiced sharp criticism of the border clashes.

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

In view of the large number of individual armed clashes and military developments at the southern border of Lebanon/northern border of Israel, a summary of developments is provided below:

There are many reports of individual incidents along the border every day. In most cases, only short exchanges of fire take place. Missile systems are now being used to an increasing extent from the Lebanese side. The scale and range of the strikes have increased over the course of time. For the first time since 2006, the Israelis have hit the city of Nabatieh – the deepest strike in Lebanon so far.

With regard to the death toll, an international news agency has revised the previous week's figures (cf. BN of 13.11.23) and now assumes that 90 people have been killed in all on the Lebanese side since 07.10.23. On the Israeli side, it is believed that six soldiers have been killed to date and three civilians have also died. 553 Israeli strikes against Lebanese territory were counted between 08.10. and 10.11.23. In Israel, the evacuation orders for more than 40 settlements in the north of the country remain in force. There are calls for Hezbollah to retreat behind the Litani River, which flows around 13 km north of the border, on the grounds that this would be in accordance with the agreement between Hezbollah and Israel after the war of 2006.

27 November 2023

Effects of the war between Israel and Hamas

The repercussions of the war between Hamas and Israel continue to overshadow the entire domestic political agenda in Lebanon. The deaths of three journalists as a result of Israeli shelling on 21.11.23 sparked general outrage in the political sphere. The death of a high-ranking Hezbollah MP's son is being lamented to maximum effect in the media. The father has praised his son's "martyrdom". He was killed together with four other fighters belonging to the military branch of Hezbollah, which is classified in Germany as a terrorist organisation, in a retaliatory strike carried out by Israel in response to attacks from Lebanon. Following the announcement of the temporary ceasefire in Gaza, Hezbollah stated that it would adhere to the ceasefire on condition that there were no further attacks by Israel. The ceasefire was welcomed with relief across all parties.

On 25.11.23 the Lebanese health ministry published accumulated figures for casualties of hostilities on the Lebanese side since 07.10.23. The total number of casualties is stated at 385 (this includes any form of injury requiring treatment), including 84 victims who are still receiving treatment and 92 deaths. According to the figures, 91 % of casualties are male, 96 % are Lebanese nationals and 66 % are aged between 25 and 44.

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

According to the Israeli defence minister, Gallant, Hezbollah has fired more than 1,000 projectiles (rockets and antitank guide missiles) at Israel to date. The following course of development was observed between 20.11. and 26.11.23:

Up until 23.11.23 fighting remained at a level comparable to that in the previous week. Shortly after the news of the death of the Hezbollah MP's son a marked intensification took place, only to recede again when the ceasefire came into force on 24.11.23. Since then there have only been isolated incidents, usually involving exchanges of fire with light arms.

04 December 2023

Effects of the war between Israel and Hamas

The repercussions of the war between Hamas and Israel continue to overshadow the entire domestic political agenda in Lebanon. The end of the ceasefire has rekindled fears of the war spreading to Lebanon. France has pushed for Resolution 1701 to be applied – which provides for the withdrawal of armed groups from the Israeli border – stating that a broadening of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) would be conceivable in order to enforce the resolution, should it fail to be implemented.

The war is also giving rise to increased migratory pressure. The Lebanese army has prevented the departure of a boat containing 110 Syrian refugees. Following the resurgence of fighting, the tourism sector, which is an extremely important factor in the Lebanese economy, fears that the Christmas season will to all intents and purposes be cancelled. The Christmas season is vitally important in this country, which has a Christian heritage and a substantial number of biblical sites. In addition, the various rescue services complain that they lack the personnel and material resources to address the consequences of the fighting in the south of Lebanon.

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

The end of the ceasefire also led to a resumption of fighting between Hezbollah and the Israeli army. Israel was attacked repeatedly from Lebanon and responded with return shelling. On the Lebanese side, three Hezbollah fighters and the mother of one of the fighters were killed in the hostilities last week.

11 December 2023

Effects of the war between Israel and Hamas

The repercussions of the war between Hamas and Israel continue to overshadow the domestic political agenda in Lebanon. According to various reports, the situation appears to be leading to a new initiative to reach an agreement on the land border between Israel and Lebanon. Various public institutions reportedly staged a nationwide strike in solidarity with the population of Gaza on 11.12.23. International observers are of the view that this represents a largely symbolic gesture, in view of the fact that a large proportion of public service employees only actually go to work sporadically and given that the institutions are rarely operational due to a shortage of electricity and work resources. A call by Hamas to deploy troops in Lebanon has been denounced by diverse political parties as a breach of Lebanon's sovereignty.

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

There have once again been exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli army.

05.12.23 witnessed the first fatal casualty among the Lebanese armed forces. Israel expressed its regret about the attack and emphasized that the Lebanese army had not been the target of the attack.

On 07.12.23 an Israeli civilian died in an attack in which an anti-tank weapon was fired from Lebanon.

According to information from aid organisations, 55,000 people are presently internally displaced in Lebanon as a result of the escalation in hostilities, while the corresponding number in Israel is around twice as high. The current death count on the Lebanese side since the beginning of the escalation in hostilities stands at around 120, including 85 Hezbollah fighters. On the Israeli side, six members of the armed forces and four civilians have died.

18 December 2023

The situation in the south of Lebanon and the north of Israel

Exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli army continue. In view of the large number of incidents, the course of events is summarised here.

The political rhetoric in Lebanon and domestic political debate continue to centre on limiting the escalation of hostilities and avoiding a war. Statements have since emerged from the higher ranks of Hezbollah to the effect they do not want all-out war, either.

The Israeli side is stressing that it is prepared to defend itself and ready to escalate hostilities as and when necessary. There are numerous diplomatic initiatives and signals which indicate that negotiations on the land border similar to the treaty on the maritime border between the two countries cannot be ruled out after the end of the war in the Gaza Strip. In its analysis of a new poll, UNICEF notes, among other developments since the escalation of hostilities, that the number of households which are unable to send their children to school has risen to around 26 % (April: 18 %). This is largely attributable to the closure of schools in the south of Lebanon.

Both sides are launching attacks on a daily basis. In all, more than 120 people have died on the Lebanese side, including 17 civilians. The death toll to date on the Israeli side stands at eleven, including four civilians. Israel is facing substantial international criticism over its repeated attacks on Lebanese army positions. Israel has admitted errors in this connection on repeated occasions.

According to information from aid organisations, the number of people who are internally displaced in Lebanon as a result of the escalation in hostilities still stands at 64,000, while the corresponding number in Israel is around twice as high.

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Briefing Notes
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