HEZBOLLAH DISARMAMENT: CHALLENGES, ACTORS AND PROSPECTS IN LEBANON

26. 11. 2026, Anežka Kořenková and Filip Sommer

Introduction – Current situation

Since October 2023, Hezbollah has been engaged in almost continuous conflict with Israel, largely as a result of its support for Hamas, within the Axis of Resistance (AoR) framework of Unity of Squares1 . Despite several ceasefire agreements and attempts to bring the conflict to an end, tensions in the region remain high, with periodic escalations of varying intensity. Although a ceasefire agreement was reached in November 2024, which required Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to withdraw from southern Lebanon, Israel did not do so. In 2026, the IDF significantly expanded its ground presence in southern Lebanon. In March and April 2026, Israeli strikes destroyed the main bridges and road crossings over the Litani River, cutting off southern Lebanon from the rest of the country. A particularly significant development came in May and June 2026, when the IDF advanced further north, crossed the Litani River, and announced that they had taken control of Beaufort Castle. To cement its presence, Israeli forces established a Yellow Line, a zone of its direct and indirect control.

Since the beginning of the conflict, two key conditions have been repeatedly raised as necessary for ending the escalation: the complete disarmament of Hezbollah2 and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory. However, Hezbollah's disarmament remains a major obstacle. The group has consistently rejected calls to give up its weapons, while Lebanese political parties remain divided over the issue, as the Table no.1 shows. As a result, disarmament remains a highly contentious question, and its practical feasibility is far from clear. Thus, the whole situation reminds the Catch 22 - while Hezbollah claims that it will disarm after the IDF will withdraw from Lebanon, Israel insists on disarmament before it would decrease (or fully withdraw) its troops from the south of the country.

The role of political actors and their position on disarmament problematic

Table no.1 The role of political actors



Positions on Hezbollah's Disarmament in Lebanon

Comparative breakdown of key Lebanese political actors, alliances, official stances, and proposed pathways

Political Actor	Alliances & Support	Official Position on Disarmament	Proposed Approach	Stance
President Joseph Aoun	Government, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)	Supports state monopoly on weapons	Gradual implementation through state institutions	Pro-State Monopoly
Prime Minister Nawaf Salam / Government	Presidency, LAF, international partners	Supports disarmament of Hezbollah	State-led disarmament; diplomacy & int'l support	Pro-Disarmament
Hezbollah	Iran; political alliance with Amal	Rejects disarmament under current conditions	Links negotiations to Israeli withdrawal & end of attacks	Rejects Disarmament
Amal Movement / Nabih Berri	Hezbollah; parliamentary institutions	Opposes unilateral or destabilising disarmament	Dialogue, negotiation & preservation of civil peace	Opposes Unilateral
Lebanese Forces (LF)	Kataeb and pro-sovereignty parties	Strongly supports full disarmament	Rapid implementation of state decisions	Full Disarmament
Kataeb Party	Lebanese Forces and pro-sovereignty parties	Strongly supports state monopoly on weapons	Accelerated disarmament across Lebanon	Pro-State Monopoly
Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)	Former ally of Hezbollah; strained relationship	Position requires qualification; critical of Hezbollah	Political solution and stronger state authority	Conditional / Critical
Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)	State institutions; cross-sectarian dialogue	Supports addressing weapons through a political process	Dialogue, de-escalation and state-building	Dialogue / Process
Sunni politicians / independent MPs	Generally support state institutions and sovereignty	Mostly support state monopoly on weapons	Strengthen the army and pursue diplomatic solutions	Pro-State Monopoly

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun supports the disarmament of Hezbollah, while emphasizing the need to avoid a confrontation between the group and the Lebanese state. He also strongly supports reaching a security agreement with Israel. However, he has raised concerns about a potential security vacuum in southern Lebanon following an Israeli withdrawal and the end of the United Nations

[1] Ali-Khan, V. and Cambanis, T. (2025) 'Down but Not Out: Reassessing the Axis of Resistance', *The Century Foundation*, 19 March. Available at: https://tcf.org/content/report/down-but-not-out-reassessing-the-axis-of-resistance/.

[2] Reuters (2026) 'What's in the deal between Israel and Lebanon?', *Reuters*, 29 June. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/whats-deal-between-israel-lebanon-2026-06-29/.

Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) mission, calling for assistance from international actors.[3]

The Lebanese government shares the president's position on disarmament. Its main objective is to bring all weapons under state control and ensure that their possession is regulated by the state.

Hezbollah, which has both a political (represented by "the Loyalty and Resistance bloc") and an armed wing, rejects disarmament in principle. The group operates in Lebanon almost like a state within a state. Its main argument for retaining its weapons is the need to protect Lebanon's Shi'a Muslim population. However, Hezbollah has indicated that it may be willing to consider giving up its weapons, provided that Israel first fully withdraws from southern Lebanon and all IDF forces leave the area, as mentioned previously.

The political party Amal has long been frenemies with Hezbollah, despite a few disputes, frequently supporting its political actions and adopting similar positions on key issues. It also shares Hezbollah's position on disarmament. Although the party publicly expresses support for de-escalation, it maintains demands similar to those put forward by Hezbollah as a precondition for disarmament, leaving little room for compromise.

In contrast, the Lebanese Forces (LF), led by Samir Geagea, take a different approach to the issue. In September, the party expressed support for Hezbollah's disarmament, viewing it as the only viable way to achieve a functioning framework agreement with Israel.4

The Kataeb Party shares a similar position with the LF on the issue of Hezbollah's disarmament. It firmly supports disarmament, and its leader, Samy Gemayel, has criticised the Lebanese government for failing to take concrete steps towards disarming Hezbollah and other armed groups. He has also questioned why the government has not disarmed Hezbollah in areas where it is able to do so.[5]

The Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), which previously supported Hezbollah and acted as one of its political allies, has gradually shifted its position. These days, the FPM cautiously supports establishing a state monopoly on arms, while its relationship with Hezbollah has deteriorated significantly. Nevertheless, its position on Hezbollah's disarmament remains less uncompromising than that of the LF or Kataeb. In September 2026, FPM leader Gebran Bassil publicly criticised Hezbollah for dragging Lebanon into war.[6]

The Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) does not view disarmament as a simple matter of forcing Hezbollah to comply unilaterally. Instead, it acknowledges the need to address the issue of Hezbollah's weapons while emphasising dialogue between the parties involved. From this perspective, the key to stabilising the situation is not disarmament alone, but also the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

Sunni and independent politicians, such as the Prime Minister (PM) Nawaf Salam, Najib Mikati, Ibrahim Mneimneh (Future Movement) 7 and others, have generally supported bringing the use of force under state authority. This position echoes Max Weber's

[3] L'Orient Today staff (2026) 'Joseph Aoun wants to reach "security agreement" with Israel', *L'Orient Today*, 16 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1547714/joseph-aoun-wants-to-reach-a-security-agreement-with-israel.html.

[4] L'Orient Today staff (2026) 'Geagea: We support the government, but ...', *L'Orient Today*, 7 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1546741/geagea-we-support-the-government-but.html.

[5] LBCI (2025) 'MP Samy Gemayel: Lebanon's government must establish a clear strategy to disarm Hezbollah', *LBCI*, 4 April. Available at: https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/lebanon-news/847355/mp-samy-gemayel-lebanons-government-must-establish-a-clear-strategy-to/en.

[6] L'Orient Today staff (2026) '"Nobody likes him," Mussawi says; "rhetoric based on illusions," FPM responds as Bassil, Hezbollah clash openly', *L'Orient Today*, 27 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1548790/nobody-likes-him-mussawi-says-rhetoric-based-on-illusions-fpm-responds-as-bassil-hezbollah-clash-openly.html.

[7] Houssari, N. (2026) 'MPs, parties welcome Lebanon's decision to ban Hezbollah's military wing', *Arab News*, 2

classic definition of the state as an entity that successfully claims a monopoly on legitimate use of force within a giver territory8. They emphasise that decisions on security and the possession of arms should be made by the legitimate government and through Lebanon's political institutions. They also oppose Lebanon being used as a tool to advance Iran's interests.[9]

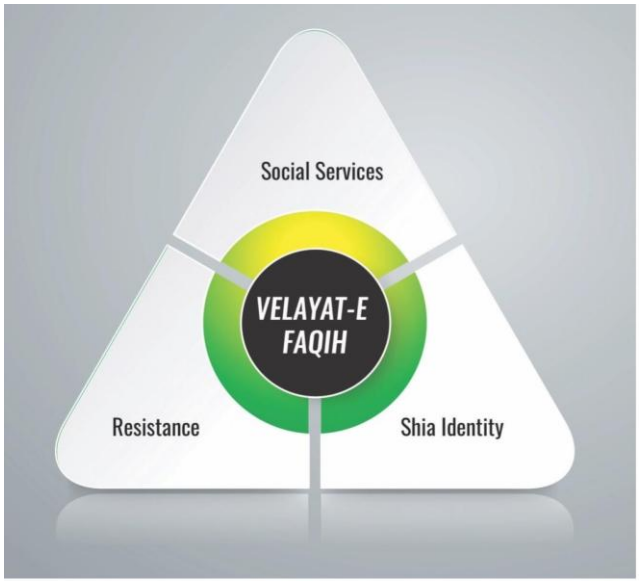
The potential disarmament of Hezbollah: is it even possible?

Hezbollah power is based on a wider structure than political and military power in the region. Hezbollah operates in Lebanon since the 1980s and its position in Lebanon represents a parallel state structure. The organization is trying to show its charity side, social institutions and keep hidden its military side as prison, police, intelligence and military power. For example, in 2020, al-Qard al-Hassan installed ATMs in Dahiyah in Beirut, but the currency was not connected with the central bank or any other official state institution. It shows Hezbollah's parallel economy and financial structure in Lebanon. It should not be omitted from the wide influence of Iranian media, many of them have their residence in Dahiyah.[10]

Since 2023, and still ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, Hezbollah has intensified its propaganda and invested significant resources to cement its support within parts of Lebanese Shi'a population. To maintain such support, the organization builds upon three strong pillars - resistance, social services and Shi'a identity (see figure no. 2), rooted in velayat-e faqih ideology11, that represents Shi'a collective history.[12]

Due to those pillars, Hezbollah's role for the Shi'a community is not only an important political actor, which stands to their interests, and a military force that protect their entitlement, but also represents a strong organization with faith to be functional as a state. So, the organization provides a wide network of health care services including hospitals, health centers or dental clinics.[13]

Figure no. 2 Visualizing Pillars of Popular Support for Hezbollah[14]



On October 13, 2026, Hezbollah announced a financial assistance programme for displaced Lebanese civilians. According to the Institute for the

March. Available at: https://www.arabnews.com/middle-east/mps-parties-welcome-lebanons-decision-to-ban-hezbollahs-military-wing-2635024.

[8] Weber, M. (1946) 'Politics as a Vocation'. In: Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C. Wright (eds and trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 77–128.

[9] Gebeily, M. and Bassam, L. (2025) 'Lebanon's cabinet meets to discuss Hezbollah's arms after US pressure', *Al-Monitor*, 5 August. Available at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/08/lebanons-cabinet-meets-discuss-hezbollahs-arms-after-us-pressure.

[10] Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March. ISBN: 979-8-9854474-1-5.

[11] *Velayat-e faqih is a doctrine rooted in Shia Islam that legitimises the political authority of Islamic clergy and has formed the basis of Iran's system of governance since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. It is also central to understanding Iran's influence on Shia networks abroad.*

[12] Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March. ISBN: 979-8-9854474-1-5.

[13] ibid.

[14] Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March. ISBN: 979-8-9854474-1-5. (p. 53)

Study of War (ISW), the initiative is likely intended to compete with the Lebanese government's reconstruction efforts and help Hezbollah regain public support. Under the programme, families in Beirut and its southern suburbs may receive up to $14,000, depending on their needs. Since 2024, Hezbollah has announced similar financial assistance programmes several times, although payments have repeatedly been delayed or suspended due to the group's financial difficulties.[15]

Financial assistance is also an important tool for Hezbollah to maintain support within Lebanon's Shi'a community. By providing housing allowances and reconstruction payments, the group seeks to reinforce its position as a provider of social services and a representative of local interests. Also, ISW assessed that Hezbollah push an incentive to discourage civilians from cooperating with the Lebanese government and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), which are pursuing efforts to disarm the group.[16]

According to Reuters, Hezbollah reportedly received $200 million from Iran in September 2026, intended to support displaced Lebanese families affected by the war. If confirmed, this transfer would demonstrate Iran's continued financial support for Hezbollah despite mounting economic pressure and difficulties in transferring funds. However, the US government has disputed the report, and the transfer has not been independently confirmed. Nevertheless, the reported funding highlights the continuing importance of Iran's relationship with Hezbollah and Tehran's role in sustaining its Lebanese ally.[17]

In conclusion, Hezbollah is an organisation that provides a wide range of services and fulfils multiple functions. Given its complex role in Lebanese society, its disarmament appears increasingly difficult to achieve. A more realistic question may therefore be how Hezbollah could be transformed in a way that ensures peaceful coexistence between the Shi'a community, the rest of Lebanon and Israel. This also raises the question of what Lebanon could offer its Shi'a population to ensure that they no longer depend on Hezbollah's extensive network of services and support to secure their livelihoods.

The role of other actors

UNIFIL

The United Nations provide the international legal and institutional framework for the process, primarily through Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1559 and 1701. United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) monitors the cessation of hostilities, reports violations, supports coordination between the LAF and IDF, and assists the Lebanese army in deploying in southern Lebanon. Its mandate includes helping establish an area between the Blue Line and the Litani River free of armed personnel, weapons and military assets other than those belonging to the Lebanese government and UNIFIL. However, UNIFIL is not tasked with forcibly disarming Hezbollah throughout Lebanon. Its role is to support implementation of its mandate and assist the Lebanese state. Under UNSCR 2790, UNIFIL's mandate is due to end on 31 December 2026, followed by an orderly drawdown and withdrawal during 2027. The future international presence therefore remains a key issue in discussions about security and disarmament. [18]

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has called for continued international involvement in the region. Although Lebanon's preferred option is to extend UNIFIL's mandate, the government is also open to an alternative international force working in

[15] Institute for the Study of War (2026) 'Iran Update, October 13, 2026', *Critical Threats*, 13 October. Available at: https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-13-2026.

[16] ibid.

[17] Bassam, L. and Gebeily, M. (2026) 'Lebanon's Hezbollah gets $200 million from Iran to help displaced, sources say', *Reuters*, 7 October. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-hezbollah-gets-200-million-iran-help-displaced-sources-say-2026-10-07/.

[18] United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (n.d.) 'UNIFIL Mandate'. Available at: https://unifil.unmissions.org/en/unifil-mandate.

coordination with the LAF. Such a mission could support the army, monitor security developments and help prevent further escalation along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Israel and the United States have criticised UNIFIL for failing to prevent Hezbollah from expanding its military infrastructure in southern Lebanon. However, the mission's mandate focused on monitoring hostilities and assisting the Lebanese army in implementing UNSCR 1701, it was not designed to independently disarm Hezbollah. Its scheduled withdrawal therefore raises an important question: who will take over its monitoring and coordination responsibilities?[19]

France and Italy have proposed an alternative multinational force that would focus on supporting the LAF, monitoring the situation and facilitating de-escalation. However, its establishment would require an agreed legal framework and sufficient international support. Its effectiveness would also depend on the Lebanese army's capabilities and cooperation from the parties involved.[20] International assistance may therefore remain essential after UNIFIL's withdrawal, but it cannot replace a political solution within Lebanon.

IRAN

Iran is a key external actor in the disarmament of Hezbollah, providing the group with long-standing financial, military and political support. Despite Hezbollah's significant weakening, Tehran views Hezbollah as a central instrument of its regional influence and deterrence against Israel. Its current policy aims to preserve Hezbollah's military capabilities and political relevance, preventing its disarmament from undermining Iran's position in the Levant. In November 2026, Iranian officials continued to link an end to the conflict in Lebanon to a potential agreement with Washington.21 Reuters also reported in October 2026 that Hezbollah had received additional Iranian funding to rebuild its capabilities and prepare for a possible resumption of hostilities with Israel. Iran therefore opposes disarmament both diplomatically and through material support, complicating the Lebanese government's efforts to establish a state monopoly on the use of force.[22]

USA

The United States plays an important role in Lebanon through its support for Israel, assistance to the LAF and diplomatic efforts to reduce regional tensions. Washington considers Hezbollah's independent military capabilities a threat to the Lebanese state and regional stability. It therefore supports strengthening the LAF and implementing UNSCR 1701, while criticising UNIFIL for failing to prevent Hezbollah's military build-up. The United States also acts as a mediator between Lebanon and Israel, supporting negotiations on Israeli withdrawal, security arrangements and Hezbollah's disarmament. Even though the US president Donald Trump have expressed his disputes about Israeli tactics in Lebanon[23] Its close relationship with Israel and Hezbollah's refusal to disarm create significant obstacles to the whole process.

[19] Loft, P. (2026) 'Lebanon and the end of UN Interim Force in Lebanon's mandate in 2026', *House of Commons Library*, 24 September. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10348/.

[20] Farhat, B. (2026) 'Lebanon's PM calls for international force to replace UNIFIL: What to know', *Al-Monitor*, September. Available at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/09/lebanons-pm-calls-international-force-replace-unifil-what-know.

[21] Reuters (2026) 'Iranians have left Doha talks, draft proposal for US deal being circulated, official says', *Reuters*, 2 November. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranians-have-left-doha-talks-draft-proposal-us-deal-being-circulated-official-2026-11-02/.

[22] Security Council Report (2026) 'Lebanon', *Monthly Forecast*, November. Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-11/lebanon-41.php.

[23] Pamuk, H. (2026) 'Trump criticizes Israel's tactics in Lebanon, says it is killing civilians', *Reuters*, 16 June. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/trump-criticizes-israels-tactics-lebanon-says-it-is-killing-civilians-2026-06-16/.

FRANCE

France remains actively involved in Lebanon due to its historical ties, strategic interests and concerns about regional stability. Paris seeks to preserve Lebanese sovereignty, prevent the collapse of state institutions and maintain its diplomatic influence amid growing US involvement.[24] France supports the disarmament of Hezbollah and the establishment of a state monopoly on weapons. France argues that disarmament must be led by Lebanon and accompanied by Israeli withdrawal, political negotiations and the strengthening of the LAF. France opposes both Hezbollah's armed autonomy as well as a continued Israeli military presence in Lebanon.

France's main practical contribution is military and diplomatic support for the Lebanese state. On 21 October 2026, President Emmanuel Macron announced that France would organise an international conference to support the Lebanese army, enabling it to assume greater responsibility for national security.[25] France is also seeking arrangements to maintain international security support following the planned end of UNIFIL's mandate. Nevertheless, its ability to shape developments remains limited, particularly as the United States plays the leading role in negotiations.[26]

COUNTRIES OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar are no less important state actors involved in Lebanon's problems. KSA advocates strengthening the Lebanese government and army so that the state can gain control over weapons within its territory. The UAE supports the stability of the Lebanese government and the country's economic recovery. Qatar focuses primarily on diplomatic negotiations, conflict mediation, and supporting the Lebanese army. In the past, it helped broker the 2008 Doha Agreement, which ended the political crisis in Lebanon at the time. All three countries support strengthening Lebanese state institutions and limiting Hezbollah's military power. Qatar and KSA have also discussed the possibility of financing economic projects in southern Lebanon that could create jobs for people affiliated with Hezbollah in the event of its disarmament. [27]

Rebuilding State Authority and Reducing Hezbollah's Autonomy

Hezbollah's military capabilities and political position have been weakened, creating an opportunity for the Lebanese state to expand its authority. However, the group's influence rests on more than its military capacity. It also provides security, social services and political representation to parts of the Shi'a community, while maintaining ties to Iran. A sustainable strategy must therefore address the conditions that allow Hezbollah to act autonomously, rather than treating disarmament as a stand-alone military task[28].

Hezbollah's civilian institutions connect finance, healthcare, reconstruction and social assistance to its wider support network. These include al-Qard al-Hasan (already mentioned), Jihad al-Bina, the Islamic Health Committee, the Women's Committee, the Association for the Wounded and

[24] Delval, T. (2026) 'France and Lebanon: Where Legacy Meets Its Limits', *International Centre for Defence and Security*, 1 July. Available at: https://icds.ee/en/france-and-lebanon-where-legacy-meets-its-limits/.
[25] Le Monde with AFP (2026) 'France to organize conference to support Lebanese army, Macron announces', Le Monde, 21 October. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2026/10/21/macron-says-france-to-organize-conference-to-support-lebanese-army_6760987_7.html.
[26] Delval, T. (2026) 'France and Lebanon: Where Legacy Meets Its Limits', International Centre for Defence and Security, 1 July. Available at: https://icds.ee/en/france-and-lebanon-where-legacy-meets-its-limits/.
[27] Aly, Z., Brecher, J. and Wilson, A. (2026) 'The Gulf Cannot Afford to Retreat from Lebanon', *Middle East Institute*, 25 June. Available at: https://mei.edu/publication/the-gulf-cannot-afford-to-retreat-from-lebanon/.
[28] Khatib, L. (2021) 'How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state', *Chatham House*, 30 June. Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/06/how-hezbollah-holds-sway-over-lebanese-state (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

the Martyrs Foundation[29]. Their role illustrates why state authority cannot be rebuilt through security measures alone: public institutions must also provide reliable services in southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and Beirut's southern suburbs.

Restoring state oversight of Beirut's airport, seaports and land crossings with Syria is a central part of extending Lebanese sovereignty. These entry points matter for controlling the movement of people, goods, weapons and money. Weak oversight and political interference have allowed armed and political actors to exploit state institutions and customs systems. The state should strengthen inspection and financial monitoring, including enforcement of regulations affecting al-Qard al-Hasan and other Hezbollah-linked networks30. While the 2025 LAF's proposed phased disarmament plan may provide a framework for deployment, a geographic sequence cannot by itself resolve the political and institutional obstacles to implementation. The plan's timeline remains uncertain, while the government has sought to avoid a direct confrontation with Hezbollah and Amal. A more effective approach would connect phased deployments with clear political commitments, technical support for the LAF and parallel steps to strengthen civilian oversight[31].

For the state to replace Hezbollah's security role, Shi'a communities must have confidence that state institutions can protect them. The perception that Hezbollah offers protection from Sunni jihadist groups may remain politically significant, even if it does not represent the views of all Shi'a citizens. The LAF is widely respected, but a forced confrontation with Hezbollah could create serious risks for the army and for Lebanon's fragile sectarian balance. Expanding the LAF's capacity and presence should therefore be part of a wider political strategy, not a substitute for one[32]. Political pluralism is another part of this challenge. Smaller Shi'a movements, including the Taharror Movement, the Lebanese Democratic Coalition and the Movement for a Change in the South, have limited space to compete with Hezbollah and Amal[33]. Electoral reform and protections for political competition could gradually widen that space. The future of Amal after Nabih Berri may also change the balance among Shi'a political actors, although leadership succession or fragmentation should be treated as possibilities rather than predictions.[34]

Reconstruction should be administered through transparent public institutions, with clear rules for funding, procurement and beneficiary selection. The Council for the South is particularly important because its role in distributing reconstruction resources can influence both where public money goes and which political actors receive credit. Public funding should strengthen state institutions and reach affected residents without becoming a source of partisan patronage[35].

The scale of destruction in southern Lebanon makes this a pressing task. Residents' ability to return depends on reconstruction as well as on security conditions along the border. One interviewee

[29] Norton, A. R. (2014). Hezbollah: A Short History (3rd ed.). Princeton University Press.
[30] Khatib, L. (2021) 'How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state', *Chatham House*, 30 June. Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/06/how-hezbollah-holds-sway-over-lebanese-state (Accessed: 8 November 2026).
U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2007). "Twin Treasury Actions Take Aim at Hizballah's Support Network."
[31] Ghaddar, H. (2025). "Without a Hezbollah Disarmament Deadline, Lebanon Should Face Repercussions." The Washington Institute. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/without-hezbollah-disarmament-deadline-lebanon-should-face-repercussions (Accessed: 8 November 2026).
[32] Based on various interviews with Lebanese academics and political experts in February 2026.
[33] Levornik, Z. (2026) 'Lebanese Elections – January 2026', *Alma Research and Education Center*, 1 February. Available at: https://israel-alma.org/lebanese-elections-january-2026/ (Accessed: 8 November 2026).
[34] Based on various interviews with Lebanese academics and political experts in February 2026.
[35] Ghaddar, H. (2026). "Countering Hezbollah's Reconstruction Politics and the Council for South Lebanon." The Washington Institute. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/countering-hezbollahs-reconstruction-politics-and-council-south-lebanon (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

estimated that 70–80 % of the south had been destroyed and that around 200,000 people had lived in the affected area.[36]

Ideology and regional dynamics

As mentioned, Hezbollah's political identity combines its claim to resist Israel, its provision of services and a Shi'a ideological framework associated with wilayat al-faqih. Greater visibility for alternative Shi'a religious authorities, including those in Iraq, could contribute to a more plural religious landscape. It should not, however, be framed as the state imposing a replacement ideology37. Iran's role remains central to Hezbollah's military and regional position. The organization is now fully controlled by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Quds Forces (IRGC-QF), mainly through support of smaller allied groups and changing operational arrangements[38].

The border situation also shapes the prospects for restoring Lebanese sovereignty. The continued Israeli presence complicates the Lebanese state's effort to present itself as the sole provider of security in the south[39].

Recommended policy implications

A viable strategy should combine four efforts: stronger state oversight of security and financial channels; credible state protection for communities; transparent service provision and reconstruction; and greater political and religious pluralism. LAF deployments can form part of this process, but they will not by themselves displace Hezbollah's sources of influence. The objective should be to rebuild state authority and reduce Hezbollah's autonomy over time.

[36] Based on various interviews with Lebanese academics and political experts in February 2026.

[37] Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. Policy Focus 172. Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. ISBN 979-8-9854474-1-5.

[38] Azizi, H. (2026) 'How War is Reshaping Iran's "Axis of Resistance"', *International Crisis Group*, 16 October. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/middle-east-north-africa/iran/how-war-reshaping-irans-axis-resistance (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

[39] Based on various interviews with Lebanese academics and political experts in February 2026.
Fabian, E. (2025) 'IDF to remain in five strategic posts in south Lebanon after Tuesday withdrawal', *The Times of Israel*, 17 February. Available at: https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-to-remain-in-five-strategic-posts-in-south-lebanon-after-tuesday-withdrawal/ (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

References

Ali-Khan, V. and Cambanis, T. (2025) 'Down but Not Out: Reassessing the Axis of Resistance', *The Century Foundation*, 19 March. Available at: https://tcf.org/content/report/down-but-not-out-reassessing-the-axis-of-resistance/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Aly, Z., Brecher, J. and Wilson, A. (2026) 'The Gulf Cannot Afford to Retreat from Lebanon', *Middle East Institute*, 25 June. Available at: https://mei.edu/publication/the-gulf-cannot-afford-to-retreat-from-lebanon/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Azizi, H. (2026) 'How War is Reshaping Iran's "Axis of Resistance"', *International Crisis Group*, 16 October. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/middle-east-north-africa/iran/how-war-reshaping-irans-axis-resistance (Accessed: 8 November 2026)

Bassam, L. and Gebeily, M. (2026) 'Lebanon's Hezbollah gets $200 million from Iran to help displaced, sources say', *Reuters*, 7 October. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-hezbollah-gets-200-million-iran-help-displaced-sources-say-2026-10-07/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Delval, T. (2026) 'France and Lebanon: Where Legacy Meets Its Limits', *International Centre for Defence and Security*, 1 July. Available at: https://icds.ee/en/france-and-lebanon-where-legacy-meets-its-limits/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Delval, T. (2026) 'France and Lebanon: Where Legacy Meets Its Limits', *International Centre for Defence and Security*, 1 July. Available at: https://icds.ee/en/france-and-lebanon-where-legacy-meets-its-limits/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Fabian, E. (2025) 'IDF to remain in five strategic posts in south Lebanon after Tuesday withdrawal', *The Times of Israel*, 17 February. Available at: https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-to-remain-in-five-strategic-posts-in-south-lebanon-after-tuesday-withdrawal/ (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

Farhat, B. (2026) 'Lebanon's PM calls for international force to replace UNIFIL: What to know', *Al-Monitor*, September. Available at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/09/lebanons-pm-calls-international-force-replace-unifil-what-know (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Gebeily, M. and Bassam, L. (2025) 'Lebanon's cabinet meets to discuss Hezbollah's arms after US pressure', *Al-Monitor*, 5 August. Available at: https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/08/lebanons-cabinet-meets-discuss-hezbollahs-arms-after-us-pressure (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March. ISBN: 979-8-9854474-1-5.

Ghaddar, H. (2022) *Hezbollahland: Mapping Dahiya and Lebanon's Shia Community*. Policy Focus 172. Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near

Ghaddar, H. (2025). "Without a Hezbollah Disarmament Deadline, Lebanon Should Face Repercussions." The Washington Institute. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/without-hezbollah-disarmament-deadline-lebanon-should-face-repercussions (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

Ghaddar, H. (2026). "Countering Hezbollah's Reconstruction Politics and the Council for South Lebanon." The Washington Institute. Available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/countering-hezbollahs-reconstruction-politics-and-council-south-lebanon (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

Houssari, N. (2026) 'MPs, parties welcome Lebanon's decision to ban Hezbollah's military wing', *Arab News*, 2 March. Available at: https://www.arabnews.com/middle-east/mps-parties-welcome-lebanons-decision-to-ban-hezbollahs-military-wing-2635024(Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Institute for the Study of War (2026) 'Iran Update, October 13, 2026', *Critical Threats*, 13 October. Available at: https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-october-13-2026 (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

International Crisis Group. "Containing Domestic Tensions in War-hit Lebanon." February 27, 2025. https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/lebanon/b094-containing-domestic-tensions.

Kataeb.org. "Gemayel: No One Can Block Lebanon's Sovereign Decision on Disarmament." August 29, 2025. https://en.kataeb.org/articles/gemayel-no-one-can-block-lebanons-sovereign-decision-on-disarmament.

Kataeb.org. "Salam Says Hezbollah Must Become Political Party Without Armed Wing." October 22, 2025. https://en.kataeb.org/articles/salam-says-hezbollah-must-become-political-party-without-armed-wing.

Khatib, L. (2021) 'How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state', Chatham House, 30 June. Available at: https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/06/how-hezbollah-holds-sway-over-lebanese-state (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

L'Orient Today staff (2026) '"Nobody likes him," Mussawi says; "rhetoric based on illusions," FPM responds as Bassil, Hezbollah clash openly', *L'Orient Today*, 27 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1548790/nobody-likes-him-mussawi-says-rhetoric-based-on-illusions-fpm-responds-as-bassil-hezbollah-clash-openly.html(Accessed: 15 November 2026).

L'Orient Today staff (2026) 'Geagea: We support the government, but ...', *L'Orient Today*, 7 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1546741/geagea-we-support-the-government-but.html (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

L'Orient Today staff (2026) 'Joseph Aoun wants to reach "security agreement" with Israel', *L'Orient Today*, 16 September. Available at: https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1547714/joseph-aoun-wants-to-reach-a-security-agreement-with-israel.html (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

L'Orient Today. "Bassil Aligns Himself with Hezbollah on Issue of Disarmament." November 6, 2025. https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1483942/bassil-aligns-himself-with-hezbollah-on-issue-of-disarmament.html.

L'Orient Today. "Geagea Says Hezbollah Must Disarm 'As Soon as Possible.'" October 7, 2025. https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1480163/lebanon-christian-leader-says-hezbollah-must-disarm-as-soon-as-possible.html.

LBCI (2025) 'MP Samy Gemayel: Lebanon's government must establish a clear strategy to disarm Hezbollah', *LBCI*, 4 April. Available at: https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/lebanon-news/847355/mp-samy-gemayel-lebanons-government-must-establish-a-clear-strategy-to/en (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Le Monde with AFP (2026) 'France to organize conference to support Lebanese army, Macron announces', *Le Monde*, 21 October. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2026/10/21/macron-says-france-to-organize-conference-to-support-lebanese-army_6760987_7.html (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Levornik, Z. (2026) 'Lebanese Elections – January 2026', *Alma Research and Education Center*, 1 February. Available at: https://israel-alma.org/lebanese-elections-january-2026/ (Accessed: 8 November 2026).

Loft, P. (2026) 'Lebanon and the end of UN Interim Force in Lebanon's mandate in 2026', *House of Commons Library*, 24 September. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10348/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Norton, A. R. (2014). *Hezbollah: A Short History* (3rd ed.).Princeton University Press.

Pamuk, H. (2026) 'Trump criticizes Israel's tactics in Lebanon, says it is killing civilians', *Reuters*, 16 June. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/trump-criticizes-israels-tactics-lebanon-says-it-is-killing-civilians-2026-06-16/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Reuters (2026) 'Iranians have left Doha talks, draft proposal for US deal being circulated, official says', *Reuters*, 2 November. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iranians-have-left-doha-talks-draft-proposal-us-deal-being-circulated-official-2026-11-02/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Reuters (2026) 'What's in the deal between Israel and Lebanon?', *Reuters*, 29 June. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/whats-deal-between-israel-lebanon-2026-06-29/ (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Reuters. "Hezbollah Says Lebanon Cabinet Decision to Limit Arms to State Is 'Grave Sin.'" August 6, 2025. https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-says-lebanon-cabinet-decision-limit-arms-state-is-grave-sin-2025-08-06/.

Security Council Report (2026) 'Lebanon', *Monthly Forecast*, November. Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-11/lebanon-41.php (Accessed: 15 November 2026).

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. "Lebanese Positions on Disarming Hezbollah." May 11, 2025. https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/lebanese-positions-on-disarming-hezbollah/.

U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2007). "Twin Treasury Actions Take Aim at Hizballah's Support Network." United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (n.d.) 'UNIFIL Mandate'. Available at: https://unifil.unmissions.org/en/unifil-mandate(Accessed: 15 November 2026).

Various interviews with Lebanese academics and political experts in February 2026.

Weber, M. (1946) 'Politics as a Vocation'. In: Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C. Wright (eds and trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 77–128.

Weber, M. (1946) 'Politics as a Vocation'. In: Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C. Wright (eds and trans.), *From Max*

Weber: Essays in Sociology. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 77–128.