

Lebanon at War

Crisis Update

February 2025



Credit: AFP

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The Monthly Lebanon Crisis Update provides an overview of economic and political developments to alert the international aid response to new and emerging challenges that could impact the humanitarian situation in Lebanon. In the context of the multiple crises affecting Lebanon, the update tracks the impact of political developments on the economy, relevant international developments, updates on service delivery and governance issues, and analysis of the drivers of humanitarian need as they develop. The report also aims to provide nuanced forecasting on contextual shifts relevant to shifting needs and the implementation of humanitarian programming. The report draws upon a desk review of currently available literature, analysis of relevant quantitative data, and key informant interviews with a range of experts and individuals with knowledge of Lebanon's economy.

The Lebanon Crisis Analytics Team (LCAT) provides reactive and in-depth context analysis to inform the aid community in Lebanon. The information and analysis contained in this report is therefore strictly to inform humanitarian and development actors and associated policymaking on Lebanon.

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Key Takeaways:

- The Israeli military did not fully withdraw from southern Lebanon by February 18 – the deadline for Israeli forces to leave Lebanese territory in accordance with the cessation of hostilities (CoH) agreement. Instead, Israeli units have retained positions on five hilltops near or along the southern border. Hezbollah has publicly rejected the continued presence of Israeli troops in Lebanese territory but has not threatened to take direct military action, stating that it will respond on its own terms.
- Despite the CoH remaining in effect, Israeli airstrikes intensified in February. Since November 27, Israel has conducted 177 airstrikes in Lebanese territory, including 100 north of the Litani river. Ninety-seven people have been killed and 296 wounded by Israeli fire since the start of the CoH on November 27, 2024.
- Widespread destruction in the south has left nearly 99,000 people displaced, with essential services like water, electricity, and healthcare severely damaged. Local officials have warned residents about the dangers of unexploded ordnances, as seen in Teir Harfa, where four returnees were killed by a hidden mine.
- On February 26, Lebanon's new government secured the backing of 95 out of 128 MPs. Hezbollah MPs voted for Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's cabinet, despite its ministerial statement omitting any mention of the "resistance" – a departure from past governments.
- On February 6, Syrian forces launched an operation in the Syrian village of Hawik, which escalated into four days of clashes with Lebanese clans whose members reside in the area. The fighting resulted in casualties on both sides and Syrian forces also shelled Lebanese territory. On February 7, the presidents of Syria and Lebanon agreed to coordinate efforts to control the situation, and by February 10, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) had deployed to the northeastern border region.
- President Joseph Aoun met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh to discuss strengthening bilateral relations, support for the LAF, and economic cooperation, including resuming Lebanese exports to Saudi Arabia. Aoun also secured pledges of military and economic support from Qatar, Jordan, and Egypt at an emergency Arab summit in Cairo.



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The Central Bank issues circulars barring commercial banks and financial institutions from paying out dividends

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Israeli military aircraft break the sound barrier over Beirut for the first time since the cessation of hostilities came into effect

Lebanon suspends inbound commercial flights from Iran

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The Central Bank issues circulars increasing monthly withdrawal limits for eligible depositors beginning in March

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Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government receives a vote of confidence in parliament

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Source: AP / Bilal Hussein

Conflict Updates :

Cessation of Hostilities

Israeli forces failed to complete their withdraw from southern Lebanon by February 18 as required by the CoH, instead maintaining positions on five hilltops near or along the border region.¹ Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz implied that his country's military would not withdraw from these outposts until Hezbollah fully redeploys north of the Litani river and is disarmed by the LAF.² While the CoH demands Hezbollah's disarmament – starting in southern Lebanon³ – Hezbollah interprets the agreement as only applying to its arms south of the Litani.⁴ Hezbollah has rejected Israel's continued military presence in southern Lebanon but has so far refrained from directly threatening military action against the hilltop outposts. On February 23, Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem characterized his organization as patient, stating it would initiate military action when conditions were deemed favorable, while emphasizing that responsibility for ensuring Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanon rested with the Lebanese state.⁵ The new Lebanese cabinet's ministerial statement calls for "taking all necessary measures to liberate all Lebanese territory" with state forces, without mentioning any military role for Hezbollah, as past ministerial statements did.⁶

For the first time since the CoH came into effect on November 27, Israel on February 15 assassinated an alleged Hezbollah military official.⁷ Since then, Israeli airstrikes have killed an alleged Hamas official in Saida⁸ as well as three alleged Hezbollah military officials in northeastern Lebanon and southern Lebanon.⁹ Israel has also continued to strike alleged Hezbollah military infrastructure.¹⁰

¹ Al Jazeera, [Israel refuses to fully withdraw from Lebanon: Here's what to know](#) February 18, 2025

² Times of Israel, [IDF withdraws from Lebanon border villages, keeps 'buffer zone'](#) February 18, 2025

³ The National, [Revealed: Full text of the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement](#) November 27, 2024

⁴ Al-Manar, [الشيخ قاسم: المقاومة ثبتت وانتصرت... ولننضم بالإبواء والإعمار](#) December 5, 2024

⁵ NNA, [قاسم في تشييع نصي الله وصفي الدين: المقاومة لم تنته وهي تكتب بالدماء ولن نسمح باستمرار قتلنا واحتلالنا ونحن نتفرج وسنشارك في بناء الدولة القوية العادلة](#) February 23, 2025

⁶ Lebanon24, [النص الكامل للبيان الوزاري لحكومة الرئيس نواف سلام](#) February 25, 2025;

The National, [Lebanon scraps "armed resistance" from ministerial statement](#) February 19, 2025

⁷ Times of Israel, [2 said killed as IDF strike targets prominent Hezbollah operative in south Lebanon](#) February 15, 2025

⁸ L'Orient Today, [Saida strike: Israeli army claims to have killed Hamas commander](#) February 17, 2025

⁹ Times of Israel, [IDF strike kills senior Hezbollah member](#) February 26, 2025;

Times of Israel, [IDF drone strike in north Lebanon kills Hezbollah weapons operative](#) February 28, 2025;

Times of Israel, [Hezbollah naval commander killed in Israeli strike](#) March 4, 2025

¹⁰ Times of Israel, [IDF confirms it carried out airstrikes on Hezbollah targets](#) February 23, 2025;

Times of Israel, [IDF says it carried out strike on Hezbollah operatives](#) February 25, 2025

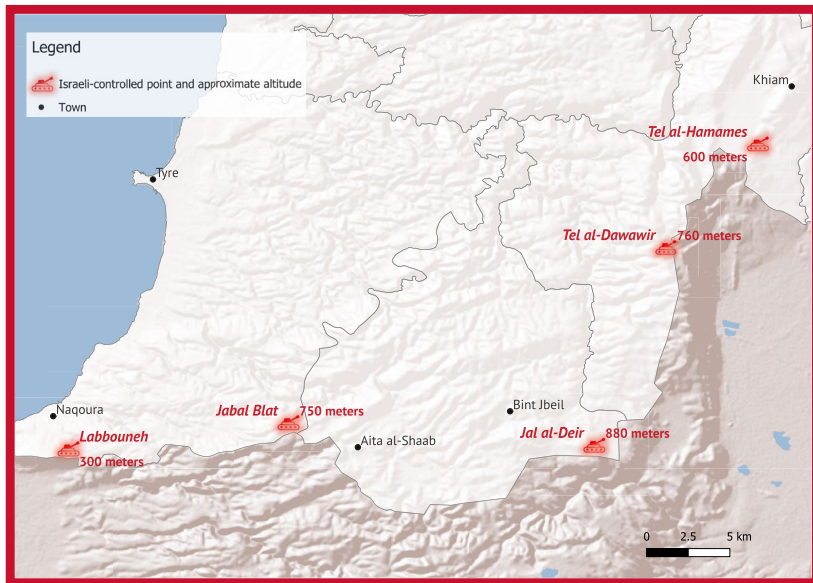


Figure 1: Locations of Israeli military outposts in southern Lebanon and their approximate altitude.

The CoH mandates the LAF with dismantling Hezbollah's military infrastructure and prohibits Israel from conducting offensive military strikes.¹¹ However, the US – which brokered the CoH – reportedly offered Israel confidential guarantees that it could conduct airstrikes against perceived Hezbollah threats.¹² Since the start of the CoH through March 6, Israel has conducted 181 airstrikes, 100 of them north of the Litani.¹³

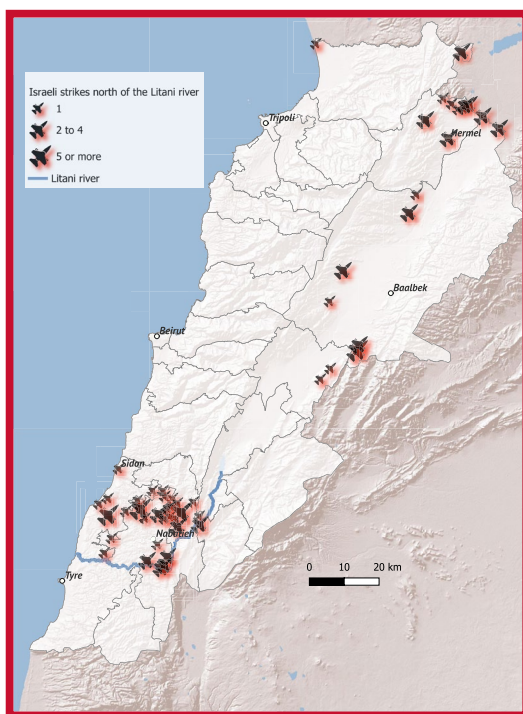


Figure 2: Israeli airstrikes north of the Litani river from the start of the CoH on November 27 through March 6.

The number of Israeli strikes north of the Litani river increased in February compared to January, with Israeli forces conducting 44 such strikes on 12 separate days, its highest monthly rate since the end of the 2024 Israel-Hezbollah War.^{14,15} As of March 6, at least seven people have been killed since the deadline for Israel's withdrawal.¹⁶ In total, 98 people have been killed by Israeli airstrikes and small arms fire since the start of the CoH on November 27 and 301 have been wounded. Similar to its stance on Israeli outposts in southern Lebanon, Hezbollah has adopted an ambiguous position on a potential response to Israeli airstrikes throughout Lebanon. During a speech at former Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah's funeral on February 23, Qassem labeled Israeli airstrikes an aggression, but did not outline a policy of retaliation, as Hezbollah had done up to the start of the CoH.¹⁷

¹¹ The National, [Revealed: Full text of the Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement](#) February 27, 2025

¹² YNet News, [Cease-fire in Lebanon began at 4 a.m.: These are the 13 provisions of the agreement, and the US guarantees](#) November 26, 2024

¹³ LCAT logs all incidents of Israeli gunfire, artillery and tank fire, airstrikes, and demolitions and bulldozing reported by Lebanon's National News Agency, L'Orient Today, and Al-Mayadeen.

¹⁴ LCAT logs all Israeli airstrikes reported by Lebanon's National News Agency, L'Orient Today, and Al-Mayadeen. LCAT logged 44 airstrikes north of the Litani river in February 2025, 16 in January 2025, 32 in December 2024 and seven between November 27, 2024 and November 30, 2024.

Israel conducted airstrikes north of the Litani on 12 separate days in February 2025, 5 in January 2025, 10 in December 2024, and 2 between November 27, 2024 and November 30, 2024.

¹⁵ Israeli jets broke the sound barrier over Beirut on February 12, the first time this psychological warfare tactic has been employed since the start of the CoH. Additionally, Israeli jets flew over the Lebanese capital at low altitude during the funeral for assassinated Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah on February 23. BBC, [Israel seeks another extension for Lebanon withdrawal, source says](#) February 12, 2025;

NPR, [Huge crowds gather in Lebanon for funeral of slain Hezbollah leader](#) February 23, 2025

¹⁶ LCAT logs all reports by the Ministry of Public Health, National News Agency, L'Orient Today and Al-Mayadeen of casualties caused by Israel's strikes. When reports differ between sources, LCAT uses the numbers reported by the Ministry of Public Health.

¹⁷ NNA, [قاسم في تشييع نصر الله وصفي الدين: المقاومة لم تنته وهي تكتب بالدماء ولن نسمح باستمرار قتلنا واحتلالنا ونحن نتفرج ونشارك في بناء الدولة القوية العادلة](#) February 23, 2025

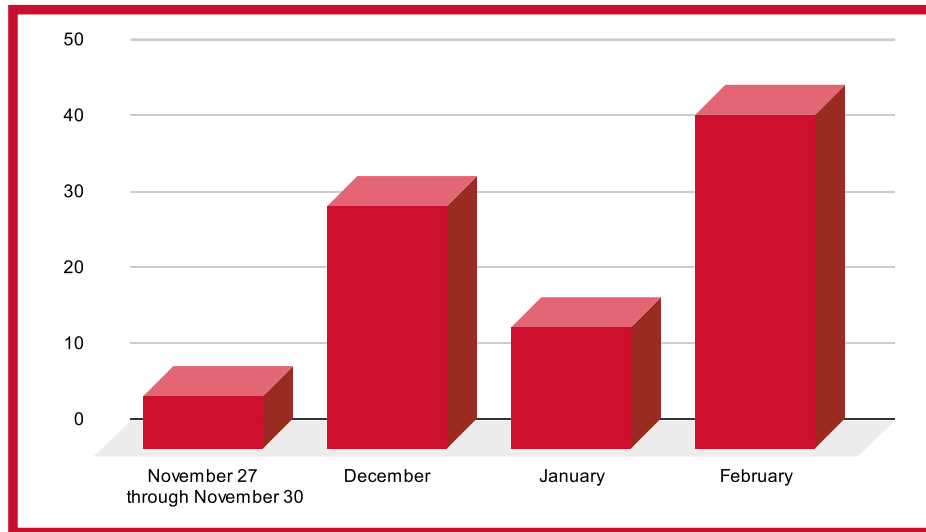


Figure 3: The number of Israeli airstrikes north of the Litani river, per month, since the start of the CoH on November 27, 2024.

Barrier to Returns

While Israel withdrew its military from villages and towns in southern Lebanon by February 18, 2025, its continued military actions threaten the safety of returning residents. As of March 6, Israel has opened small arms fire along the border at least 15 times since the deadline for its withdrawal, injuring three people near Wazzani and Kfar Kila.¹⁸ On February 19, an Israeli unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) struck a vehicle in Aita al-Shaab, killing a resident of the town – who Israel claimed was a Hezbollah member¹⁹ – and injuring his wife.^{20,21}

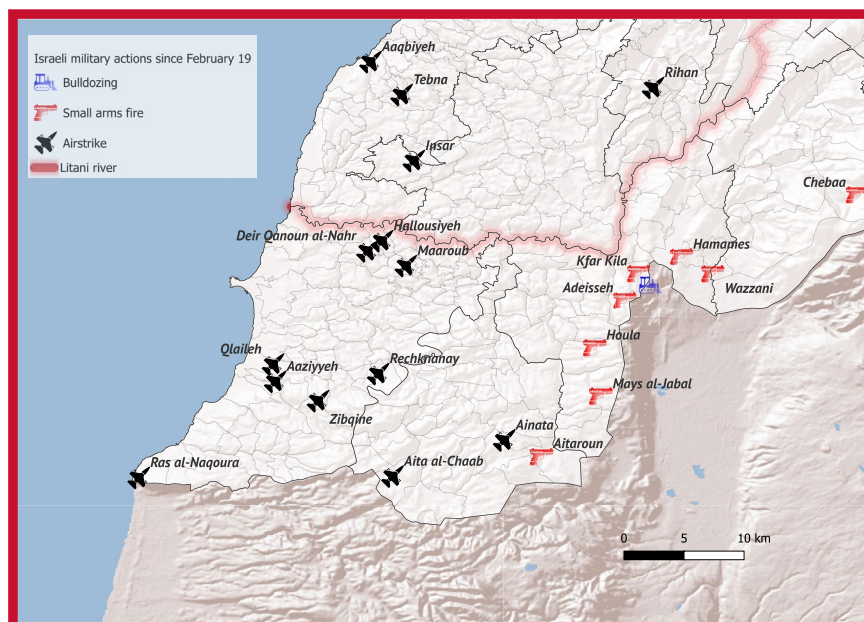


Figure 4: Israeli airstrikes, small arms fire, and bulldozing in south Lebanon from February 19, the day after the Israeli military's partial withdrawal, through March 6.

¹⁸ LCAT logs all reports by the Ministry of Public Health, National News Agency, L'Orient Today, and Al-Mayadeen of casualties caused by Israel's strikes. When reports differ between sources, LCAT uses the numbers reported by the Ministry of Public Health.

¹⁹ Times of Israel, [IDF strike kills Hezbollah member in southern Lebanon](#) February 19, 2025

²⁰ L'Orient Today, [One killed by Israeli strike on car in Aita al-Shaab](#) February 19, 2025

²¹ Israel has also employed psychological warfare tactics in the south since its partial withdrawal, flying UAVs over southern villages on March 3, broadcasting messages warning residents that Hezbollah was endangering their safety by allegedly violating the CoH.

L'Orient Today, [Israel says it struck a military site in Qardaha](#) March 3, 2025



Internally displaced people (IDP) from southern Lebanon are faced with widescale property and infrastructure destruction in their home villages. As of February 26, 98,875 people remain displaced.²² According to a February 17 Human Rights Watch report, a lack of water, electricity, telecom, and health infrastructure has been preventing the return of residents even if their homes had not been damaged during the 2024 Israel-Hezbollah war.²³ At least 33% of water facilities and assets and 60% of public electricity facilities and networks have been damaged or destroyed in the southern districts of Nabatieh, Marjaayoun, and Bint Jbeil according to an initial United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assessment.²⁴ Relevant local and national authorities have continued to warn returning residents of the dangers of unexploded ordnances and possible booby-traps.²⁵ On February 7, four returning residents of Teir Harfa were killed by a mine embedded in a couch in their home.²⁶

State-led reconstruction efforts have so far been stalled amid the change of government and as damage assessments are still underway. On December 7, the outgoing Najib Mikati cabinet referred a draft law to the parliament to establish a legal framework for reconstruction. However, the bill – which has yet to be passed – does not cover key issues such as indemnities, their distribution, and funding sources.²⁷

Syria Impacts

The fall of the Assad regime has precipitated a volatile security situation along the 375-kilometer-long Lebanese-Syrian border, a remote, rugged area that is not demarcated – parts of which are claimed by both countries – and where smuggling is widespread.²⁸ The new Syrian government's security operations are targeting both Assad loyalists²⁹ and smugglers,³⁰ including along the border with Lebanon. Armed clashes previously broke out between the LAF and unidentified gunmen along the Syrian border on December 26 in Wadi al-Aswad and January 3 in Maaraboun.³¹



Figure 5: Dates and localities of cross-border clashes from the fall of the Assad regime (December 8, 2024) through March 3, 2025.

²² IOM, [Displacement Tracking Matrix – Mobility Snapshot – Round 78](#) February 27, 2025

²³ Human Rights Watch, [Lebanon: Destruction of Infrastructure Preventing Returns](#) February 17, 2025

²⁴ UNDP assessed that 36 out of 76 public electricity facilities and networks as well as 40 out of 118 public water facilities and assets were damaged or destroyed in the districts of Nabatieh, Marjayoun, and Bint Jbeil.

UNDP, [From Crisis to Recovery: Local Authorities Confronting Post-War Realities in Lebanon](#) January 22, 2025

²⁵ NNA, [الجيش: الوحدات العسكرية تستكمل الانتشار في البلديات الحدودية الجنوبية](#) February 19, 2025;

El-Nashra, [توجيهات من بلدية ميس الجبل إلى المواطنين عشية انتشار الجيش داخل البلدة: لانتباه من وجود منازل مفخخة](#) February 17, 2025;

NNA, [بلدية بني حيان تدعو الاهالي الى عدم دخول البلدة بسبب المسح من القذائف والمفخخات](#) February 9, 2025;

NNA, [بلدية طلوسة دعت الاهالي الى عدم الصعود الى البلدة](#) February 9, 2025

²⁶ L'Orient Today, [The ruins in south Lebanon bear the marks of Israeli occupation](#) February 18, 2025

²⁷ Presidency of the Council of Ministers, [الرئيس ميقاتي يرأس جلسة لمجلس الوزراء في ثكنة بنوا بركات في مدينة صور](#) December 7, 2024; MTV, [Details of the Reconstruction Draft](#) December 7, 2025

²⁸ Middle East Directions, [Lebanon's border areas in light of the Syrian war: new actors, old marginalisation](#) March 2018

²⁹ AFP, [Syria forces launch security sweep in Homs](#) January 2, 2025;

The National, [Fears of sectarian violence reigniting in Syria as dozens of Alawites and HTS fighters reportedly killed](#) January 26, 2025

³⁰ Middle East Monitor, [6 killed in clashes between Syria security forces, gunmen in rural Homs](#) January 22, 2025

³¹ LAF via X, [LAF Statement](#) December 26, 2024 / LAF via X, [LAF Statement](#) January 3, 2025

On February 6, Syrian security forces launched an operation targeting alleged smugglers in Hawik, a Syrian village populated by Lebanese persons near the border town of Al-Qasr in northeastern Lebanon.^{32,33} The operation escalated into four days of heavy cross-border fighting with Lebanese clans, during which at least 3 Lebanese nationals and a member of Syria's security forces were killed, while 10 other Lebanese were injured.³⁴ Syrian security forces also shelled Lebanese territory, including in the vicinity of Al-Qasr,³⁵ Qanafez,³⁶ and Zakia.³⁷ On February 7, the presidents of both countries agreed to "coordinate efforts to control the situation and prevent attacks on civilians."³⁸ The LAF announced on February 10 that it had completed its deployment in the northeastern border region, while the clans had withdrawn from the area.³⁹

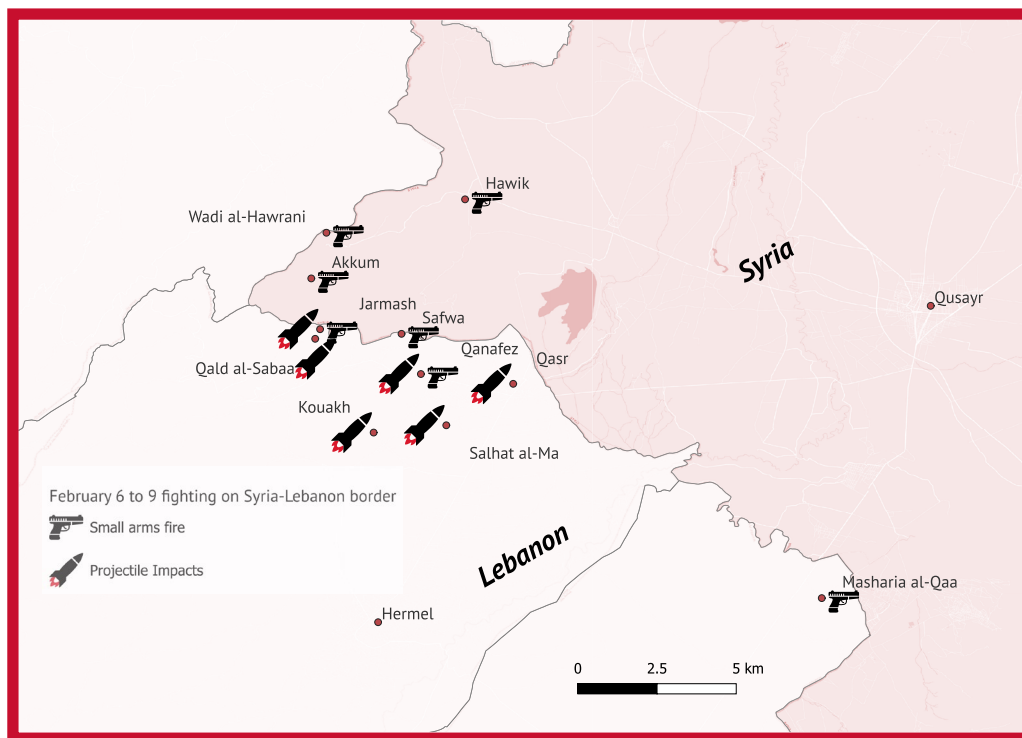


Figure 6: Fighting between Syrian security forces and Lebanese clans spanned both sides of the Syrian-Lebanese border from February 6 to February 9.

³² Al-Wehda, [بيان المكتب الإعلامي بمحافظة حمص](#) February 6, 2025

³³ Thirty-three Orontes River basin villages in the Homs governorate were annexed to Syria from Lebanon by French colonial authorities in 1934 but have since remained populated by Lebanese nationals with cross-border familial ties to Lebanon.

An-Nahar, [نازحون من سوريا بعد سقوط النظام](#) January 1, 2025;

An-Nahar, [نزحوا في انتظار جلاء التطورات السورية](#) December 9, 2024

³⁴ L'Orient Today, [Third day of fighting between Lebanese clans and Syrian forces along the border](#) February 8, 2025;

L'Orient Today, [New clashes erupt between Lebanese clans and Syrian forces](#) February 9, 2025

³⁵ NNA, [تعرض بلدة جرماش الحدودية لهجوم بالصواريخ والمسيرات](#) February 8, 2025

³⁶ NNA, [قصف بلدة قنافذ اللبنانية على الحدود الشمالية للهرمل](#) February 8, 2025

³⁷ NNA, [قصف عشوائي على بلدات عند الحدود اللبنانية سورية](#) February 8, 2025

³⁸ L'Orient Today, [Third day of fighting between Lebanese clans and Syrian forces along the border](#) February 8, 2025

³⁹ NNA, [الجيش اللبناني يستكمل انتشاره في المنطقة الحدودية الشمالية للهرمل](#) February 10, 2025



Source: NNA

Economic Updates:

On February 6, the Central Bank issued Circulars 726 and 727, banning commercial banks and financial institutions from distributing dividends to shareholders for the period 2019 to 2025.⁴⁰ Acting Central Bank Governor Wassim Mansouri has previously stated these institutions should earmark profits to freeing up trapped US dollar (USD)-denominated deposits.⁴¹

On February 20, the Central Bank issued two circulars increasing withdrawal limits for eligible commercial bank depositors. For the month of March, Circular 728 allows Circular 166 beneficiaries to withdraw USD 250 instead of USD 150.⁴² Intermediate Circular 729 allows Circular 158 beneficiaries to withdraw USD 500 from their special subsidiary accounts.^{43,44} Previously, Circular 158 beneficiaries who subscribed before August 2023 could withdraw USD 400, while those who subscribed after that date could take out USD 300.

Circular and subscription	Old withdrawal limit (USD)	New withdrawal limit (USD)
166	150	250
158 (pre-August 2023)	400	500
158 (post-August 2023)	300	500

Table 1: New withdrawal limits from USD-denominated accounts in commercial banks.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Banque du Liban, [Circular 726](#) February 6, 2025;

Banque du Liban, [Circular 727](#) February 6, 2025

⁴¹ Nidaa al Watan, [تعميمان لِحَاكَم مَصْرَف لِبْنَان بِالْإِثَابَةِ... وَهَذَا مَا جَاءَ فِيهِمَا](#) February 8, 2025

⁴² Banque du Liban, [Intermediate Circular 728](#) February 20, 2025

⁴³ Commercial bank account holders who are signatories of Circulars 158 and 166 are assigned a special subsidiary account with a maximum eligible deposit total of USD 50,000.

⁴⁴ Banque du Liban, [Intermediate Circular 729](#) February 20, 2025



On February 25, the Ministry of Finance announced an addendum to the Financial Agency Agreement for Lebanese Eurobonds. The addendum suspends the Lebanese State's right to use the statute of limitations as a legal defense against bondholder claims until March 9, 2028, effectively extending the default period.⁴⁶ This decision primarily affects Eurobond holders, many of whom are international investors that purchased the bonds following Lebanese government's decision to default on its debt repayment in March 2020. The move aims to reduce legal risks from bondholder lawsuits and provide time to restructure the Eurobond portfolio. It also follows the publishing of a leaked Association of Lebanese Banks circular on February 13, which outlined a plan for commercial banks to initiate legal action against the Lebanese government over unpaid interest on Eurobonds.⁴⁷

On February 28, Minister of Finance Yassine Jaber met with World Bank representatives to discuss a USD 1 billion reconstruction initiative for Lebanon. Some USD 250 million of the fund will be provided by the World Bank and the rest by international donors. The initiative includes projects in sectors such as public finance management, water, energy, and agriculture.⁴⁸

The consumer price index increased by 1.1% in January, and by 16% compared to January 2024. Prices increased by 0.61% in Beirut, 1.44% in Mount Lebanon, 1.05% in North Lebanon, 0.15% in the South, and 2.62% in Nabatiyeh.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Nidaa al Watan, [مصرف لبنان يرفع سقف السحوبات 200 و100 دولار](#), February 20, 2025

⁴⁶ Ministry of Finance, [Press Release Supplement to FAA -Arabic.pdf](#), February 25, 2025

⁴⁷ L'Orient Today, [ABL announces plans to sue the Lebanese state over eurobond rights](#), February 20, 2025

⁴⁸ NNA, [جاس: البنك الدولي يعمل على تأسيس صندوق بقيمة مليار دولار ومهمتنا إنجاز الإصلاحات](#), February 28, 2025

⁴⁹ Central Administration of Statistics, [CPI](#), January 2025



Political Updates:

On February 26, Lebanon's newly formed government won a vote of confidence in the parliament, receiving support from 95 out of 128 MPs. Hezbollah MPs were among the legislators supporting Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government, despite its ministerial statement not containing reference to the "resistance", marking a shift from previous cabinets that had acknowledged Hezbollah's role in defense and decision-making on war and peace.^{50,51}

On February 13, Lebanon denied permission for commercial flights originating in Iran to land at Beirut International Airport, sparking protests along Beirut's airport road.⁵² One day later, a UNIFIL convoy was attacked in the capital's southern suburbs, leaving two Nepalese peacekeepers, including the deputy force commander, injured, and one vehicle set ablaze. The incident drew both international and domestic condemnation⁵³ and prompted the Lebanese Military Court to file charges against 20 suspects, all of whom are charged with forming a criminal gang, attempted murder, terrorism, and theft of USD 30,000 from the deputy force commander.⁵⁴ On February 17, Lebanon announced that the ban on Iranian commercial flights had been extended, without specifying for how long.⁵⁵

On February 14, Future Movement leader Saad Hariri announced that his party will participate in upcoming elections. The Future Movement claims strong support in Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli, though it has not run candidates for national political office since withdrawing from the 2022 parliamentary elections.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Al Jazeera, [Lebanon's new government wins confidence vote in parliament](#) February 26, 2025

⁵¹ Asharq Al-Awsat, [For First Time in 25 Years, Lebanese Govt Drops 'Resistance' Clause from Ministerial Statement](#) February 18, 2025

⁵² L'Orient Today, [Hezbollah supporters protest banning Iranian planes from landing in Beirut](#) February 14, 2025

⁵³ UNIFIL, [UNIFIL statement \(14 February 2025\)](#) February 14, 2025;

L'Orient Today, [At least 25 arrested after attack on UNIFIL convoy](#) February 15, 2025

⁵⁴ The New Arab, [Lebanon court charges 20 over attack on UNIFIL vehicle which injured deputy commander](#) February 28, 2025

⁵⁵ Asharq, [لبنان يمدد تعليق الرحلات الجوية مع إيران ويوجه بتفتيش الطائرات](#) February 17, 2025

⁵⁶ L'Orient Today, [Hariri announces Future Movement return to politics, including "all upcoming elections"](#) February 14, 2025



On March 3, 2025, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh. The two leaders discussed bolstering bilateral relations and regional cooperation, support for the LAF, resuming Lebanese exports to Saudi Arabia, facilitating Saudi tourism to Lebanon, and advancing economic reforms and transparency. President Aoun also invited Crown Prince Mohammed to visit Lebanon.⁵⁷ A revival of diplomatic ties could lead to the reactivation of bilateral agreements suspended since 2016, including frameworks covering finance, security, and agriculture between the two countries.⁵⁸

President Aoun then attended the emergency Arab summit in Cairo on March 4, where he secured pledges of military and economic support from Qatar, Jordan, and Egypt.⁵⁹ On the sidelines of the summit, Aoun and Syrian President Ahmad Al-Sharaa agreed to establish joint committees for border security and refugee coordination. Al-Sharaa called for international pressure on Israel to withdraw from southern Syria and emphasized the need to ensure regional stability to address Lebanon's security and humanitarian challenges.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ NNA, [بيان سعودي - لبناني مشترك أكد أهمية تطبيق اتفاق الطائف والقرارات الدولية وحصر السلاح بيد الدولة وضرورة الانسحاب الكامل للجيش الإسرائيلي من الجنوب](#) March 4, 2025

⁵⁸ L'Orient Today, [Hundreds of millions of export dollars for Lebanon to reclaim with Saudi Arabia](#) March 5, 2025

⁵⁹ NNA, [الأنباء: لبنان عاد إلى حضنه العربي... وخطة غزة في مواجهة العراقيل الإسرائيلية](#) March 5, 2025

⁶⁰ NNA, [الشرق الأوسط: رئيسا لبنان وسوريا يؤكدان ضرورة ضبط الحدود بين البلدين لمنع التجاوزات](#) March 5, 2025



Source: Christina Cavalcanti/The Public Source

Access to Services:

Lebanon is facing one of its worst water shortages in 80 years due to reduced winter rainfall levels. According to Mohammed Kanj, head of the estimates department at the Beirut International Airport's Meteorological Department, Lebanon would still face a 40% deficit compared to its annual precipitation average, even if February and March rainfall reach normal levels.⁶¹ Lebanon's severe drought is expected to have major repercussions, particularly on electricity production and agriculture. According to Litani River National Authority Director General Sami Alawiyeh, reduced water levels at Lake Qaraoun and other sources will hamper hydroelectric power generation, forcing Electricité du Liban to replace 270 million kilowatt-hours of lost energy with fuel-based production, resulting in over USD 27 million in additional expenses. Additionally, a shortage of water in springs and lower Litani river levels will disrupt water distribution, which will negatively impact drinking water supply and irrigation for 6,000 hectares of farmland along the southern coast.⁶²

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is bolstering its support for public healthcare by increasing funding and enforcing compliance with hospital pricing regulations. As of February 27, the NSSF had paid the fourth financial installment of 54 billion Lebanese pounds (LBP) to contracted hospitals, bringing total payments from the beginning of the year to LBP 441 billion.⁶³ The goal is to cover 90% of hospital bills for insured patients.⁶⁴

As part of the NSSF's measures to ensure compliance with its hospital pricing regulations, the fund's Director General, Mohamad Karaki, issued a series of contract terminations and warnings to several hospitals at the end of January, after NSSF claimed they violated the terms of their agreements.⁶⁵

⁶¹ MTV, لبنان: أمام أرقام صادمة... إنها الأسوأ في الـ 80 سنة الماضية, February 4, 2025

⁶² Almanar, موجة الجفاف تُنذر بأزمة كهربائية ومائية في لبنان, February 4, 2025

⁶³ This includes LBP 206 billion for surgical procedures and LBP 235 billion for dialysis treatments. Annahar, كركي: 441 مليار ليرة للمستشفيات والأطباء منذ مطلع العام, February 28, 2025

⁶⁴ NNA, كركي: 84 مليار ل.ل. سلفات مالية للمستشفيات منذ مطلع العام 2025, February 4, 2025

⁶⁵ NNA, كركي: 200 مليار ليرة لغسل الكلى وزيادات على تعرفات الدواء والاستشفاء في الأسابيع المقبلة, February 21, 2025



Looking Forward:

- Lebanon could face two periods of price increases for vegetables and grains – one during Ramadan due to recent snowstorms and increased demand, and another later in the year driven by insufficient rainfall.⁶⁶ Drought conditions and barriers to farmers returning to the South are limiting agricultural production and supply. Prolonged dry conditions could lead to further food price inflation in the coming months. Rising food prices and declining agricultural yields will deepen food insecurity for vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees, increasing their reliance on humanitarian aid and straining existing response efforts. Worsening economic hardship may fuel social tensions in host communities, underscoring the need for expanded food assistance, livelihood programs, and conflict mitigation initiatives.
- Israel is expected to continue its policy of assassinating alleged Hezbollah military operatives and striking the organization's military infrastructure in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. Israel could also conduct targeted assassinations of Hamas officials in Lebanon, as it did in Saida on February 17. Such strikes could target Beirut, in a reprise of Israel's January 2, 2024 assassination of senior Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri in the southern suburbs of Lebanon's capital. Israel has also reportedly passed warnings to Lebanese officials that it could target Hezbollah's political leaders.⁶⁷ Any such strike could force Hezbollah into a position where the organization feels compelled to retaliate militarily, raising the potential of a severe Israeli counter response. Following a March 4 targeted assassination of an alleged Hezbollah military operative, an official in the organization said that the Lebanese government and CoH Monitoring Committee are responsible for ending such strikes and if they do not, Hezbollah may opt to retaliate.⁶⁸
- Israeli military actions in southern Lebanon – especially in the strip of mostly destroyed villages stretching five kilometers deep from the border – will complicate and obstruct reconstruction efforts. Israel's February 19 airstrike of an alleged Hezbollah member in Aita al-Shaab likely serves as a warning that Tel Aviv will pursue a policy of targeting returning residents it alleges are Hezbollah operatives. Israeli Defense Minister Katz has referred to his country's continued military presence at five military outposts in southern Lebanon as a "buffer zone," meaning Tel Aviv will likely conduct military actions to secure this vaguely defined area.⁶⁹ As Israel's military outposts are not directly on the border, the Israeli military could use force to secure supply lines to these points. Israel may also strike residences rebuilt near the border that it suspects could be used by Hezbollah. Since Israel's partial withdrawal from southern Lebanon on February 18, Israeli bulldozers have reportedly crossed the border near Kfar Kila and Blida to raze buildings and level land.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ L'Orient Today, [Vegetable and grain prices to increase due to lack of rainfall, low temperature](#) February 28, 2025

⁶⁷ Al-Arabiya, [نقاط إسرائيلية جنوب لبنان ولا تأجيل الانسحاب](#) February 13, 2025

L'Orient Today, [Israeli withdrawal: The state yields the weapon of diplomacy](#) February 19, 2025

⁶⁸ NNA, [عز الدين: إلى متى ستبقى الدولة تتغاضى عن خروقات العدو دون أن تحرك ساكناً أو تعلن موقفاً](#) March 4, 2025

⁶⁹ Times of Israel, [Welcome to the era of the buffer zone](#) February 18, 2025;

The Jerusalem Post, [Israel's bold new defense policy: Will buffer zones bring security or more conflict?](#) March 2, 2025

⁷⁰ Al-Mayadeen via X, [انقلاب آلية عسكرية إسرائيلية أثناء تسليها إلى بلدة كفر كلاً](#) February 26, 2025;

Al-Mayadeen via X, [جرافة عسكرية إسرائيلية ترافقها دبابات «ميركافا» تقوم بتجريف أراضٍ](#) March 3, 2025



- Israel will likely apply sustained pressure on Lebanese authorities over Iran's alleged shipment of cash to Hezbollah, which could disrupt air traffic to Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport. On February 13, Lebanon banned Iranian civilian flights from arriving to Lebanon's only civilian airport after repeated warnings by Israel that Iran was using the flights to fund Hezbollah.⁷¹ Hezbollah Secretary-General Naim Qassem said that Israel had relayed a threat to Lebanon's government that it would strike the airport's runways if such flights were granted clearance to land.⁷² On February 28, Reuters reported that Lebanon seized USD 2.5 million bound for Hezbollah on a passenger arriving at the airport.⁷³ This came after Katz on February 17 warned that Iran was attempting to smuggle money into Lebanon via Turkey.⁷⁴ Israel may up its pressure campaign by blocking flights from Istanbul, a key hub to and from Lebanon's capital. While the possibility of an Israeli strike on the Beirut airport appears remote for the time being, humanitarian actors should not completely rule out the possibility of a targeted strike against the facility in the future.

⁷¹ L'Orient Today, [Iranian planes banned from Beirut airport](#) February 14, 2025;

Times of Israel, [Lebanon tells Iranian flight it can't land](#) February 13, 2025

⁷² An-Nahar, [نعيم قاسم: رئاسة الحكومة أبلغت أن إسرائيل ستضرب مدرج مطار بيروت إذا هبطت الطائرة الإيرانية](#) February 16, 2025

⁷³ Reuters, [Lebanon seizes \\$2.5 million bound for Hezbollah, sources say](#) February 28, 2025

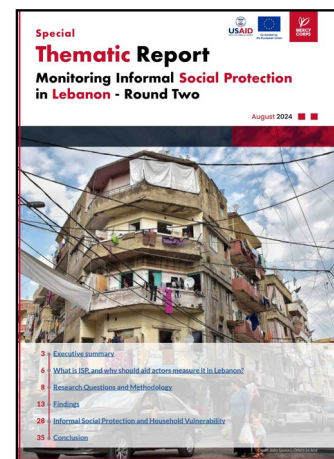
⁷⁴ Times of Israel, [FM Sa'ar to US senators: Turkey cooperating with Iran to smuggle money to Hezbollah](#) February 18, 2025



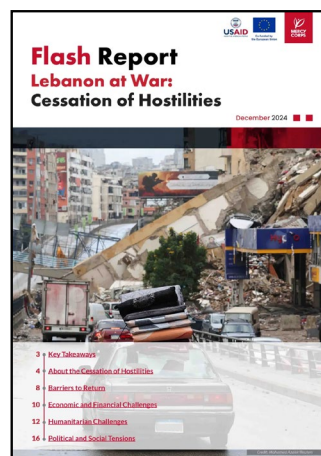
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