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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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Qassem Qassem

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Threats of another Israeli war in Lebanon are just noise

Despite media hysteria and political theatrics, Israel lacks the capacity, justification, and public will to launch a new war on Lebanon. When in doubt, always check out signals from the northern front.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

Is a new Israeli war on Lebanon imminent? Will the Israeli military launch a ground invasion to seize territory south of the Litani River?

In recent months, anxiety and anticipation have gripped the Lebanese public. This has been stoked by some political analysts aligned with the Lebanese resistance who have publicly speculated about the possibility of a new war.

These fears were exacerbated by reports from Washington, citing leaks that Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer [informed](#) US officials of Tel Aviv's intent to launch an invasion up to the Litani.

The September surprise: What really shook Lebanon

But do these claims hold weight? Are there credible indicators on the ground pointing to an Israeli war effort? And more critically, does Tel Aviv even possess the capacity to achieve such an incursion?

To understand the roots of current Lebanese anxieties, one must revisit the events of [23 September](#) last year. That day, Tel Aviv launched [Operation Arrows of the North](#) against Hezbollah across Lebanon. Within 24 hours, the occupation state's warplanes had bombed nearly 1,600 targets in the Bekaa, Beirut, and southern Lebanon, displacing close to a million people from the south to the capital.

In the lead-up to this operation, several signs of an impending [escalation](#) were evident. For starters, Israel refrained from using its munitions stockpiled on the northern front, even as its southern front against Gaza suffered shortages due to Washington's delays in arms shipments.

Meanwhile, the occupation state took extraordinary home-front measures: relocating northern hospitals to underground shelters and tunnels, and conducting large-scale simulations for missile attacks on sensitive infrastructure. The occupation army even ran drills simulating 3,000 rockets falling daily on northern occupied Palestine. Authorities instructed settlers to stock up on bottled water and generators in preparation.

Despite these glaring signals, a prevailing belief persisted in Lebanon that Tel Aviv was deterred and unwilling to escalate. This illusion was shattered within days.

Israeli political factions, both opposition and loyalist, had advocated strikes against the Lebanese resistance for several reasons: First, Hezbollah's attrition of the northern front over the past year had badly impacted Israeli morale. Second, the financial and societal burden of hosting tens of thousands of displaced northern settlers indefinitely had taken its toll. Third, the regular disruption to daily life in major cities like Haifa and Acre, with residents rushing to bomb shelters frequently.

Thus, on 22 September, the Israeli political and security cabinet responded by announcing a strategic shift of military focus to the north.

So what has changed?

But today, the landscape is markedly different. Historically, Tel Aviv initiates ground-level preparations before any major operation against Lebanon. Yet, as of 25 May, Israeli Army

Radio reported that the army's Northern Command [restored](#) full control of the Lebanon border back to the Galilee Brigade (91), reverting to the pre-7 October 2023 status quo.

The brigade had previously been relegated to the eastern sector, while the 146th Reserve Brigade oversaw the western front to coordinate targeting and intelligence. This shift back to routine operations suggests a return to business as usual.

The recent trauma of the September campaign continues to loom large in the [Lebanese psyche](#), fueling endless speculation. But this war threat rhetoric is largely psychological fallout – not grounded in current military realities.

Calls by [opposition leader Yair Lapid](#) to revive Israel's old proxy, the 'South Lebanon Army,' and a US ultimatum to [disarm Hezbollah](#) or face war, further illustrate the pressure campaign Tel Aviv and Washington are coordinating within Lebanon.

But what would be the rationale behind a new war? And what would Israel hope to achieve? Again, context is key. Last year, Hezbollah's actions displaced 100,000 settlers from northern occupied Palestine. The coordinated regional fronts deployed by Lebanon, Gaza, Yemen, and Iraq vastly amplified military pressure on Tel Aviv, offering it a pretext to escalate.

The Ansarallah-aligned army in Yemen, part of the Axis of Resistance, has consistently targeted Israeli-linked shipping in the [Red Sea](#) and launched long-range missile and drone strikes toward occupied territories, thereby stretching Israeli defenses and complicating its operational priorities. Yemen's resistance campaign has become a central pillar of anti-Israel pressure.

Today, however, the resistance in Lebanon has [refrained](#) from initiating hostilities, deferring responses to Israeli violations to the Lebanese state. Without a compelling pretext, Tel Aviv cannot easily justify a war to the international community or to Washington.

Israel also usually adheres to rigid war objectives and exit strategies – lessons learned from its [failures in the 2006 July War](#) and articulated in the Winograd Commission's findings. In its most recent war, Tel Aviv's declared objectives were to push Hezbollah's elite Radwan Forces and anti-armor missile units away from the border, degrade the resistance's rocket capabilities, and politically separate the Gaza and Lebanon fronts.

Grandiose goals like “eliminating Hezbollah” were notably absent, as Tel Aviv is acutely aware of the limits of its military strength and the capabilities of its adversaries.

What, then, could Israel possibly hope to achieve now that it could not accomplish over 66 days of war? If the current aggression cannot deliver strategic gains, what would a broader campaign offer?

Moreover, Israeli society is weary. Over 18 months of war have drained morale and sparked growing demands for an end to the fighting and for the return of Israeli captives. The prolonged conflict has triggered a socio-economic crisis, severely impacting reservists and their families.

A reservist, once expected to serve 40 days, now finds himself deployed for 250 to 300 days – causing mass job losses, missed school years, and deep disruption to daily life. This strain has forced the occupation army to seek new recruits from ultra-Orthodox communities, provoking tensions within Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fragile coalition government.

Even if Tel Aviv overcomes these hurdles and conscripts tens of thousands more – Netanyahu announced the approval to recall [450,000 reservists](#) as of 27 May, exceeding the 360,000 called up after 7 October – questions remain.

Can Israel still fight on two fronts?

Can the occupation military, after 18 months of attritional warfare, truly mobilize and sustain such a force? And where would it prioritize deployment: Gaza, where its prisoners remain in resistance custody, or Lebanon?

Clearly, Tel Aviv's immediate focus is Gaza. As *The Cradle* recounted in [Mind Games: The Resistance Axis's cognitive war on Israel](#), psychological operations and regional coordination increasingly shape resistance strategy. Any success in liberating captives, whether through negotiation or force, would bolster Netanyahu ahead of elections.

[Hundreds killed in thousands of Israeli violations](#) of the ceasefire with Lebanon makes it plain: Will Tel Aviv escalate to war on Lebanon when it can do this kind of targeting under cover of a Lebanese government that enjoys US cover?

Unlikely. Israel has never experienced the current level of operational freedom it has in Lebanon and will continue targeting resistance assets. The old rules of engagement have collapsed. Following the martyrdom of Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, Tel Aviv faces a [new Hezbollah leadership](#), the dynamics of which it does not fully grasp. It is probing this new configuration through assassination strikes and bombings in [Dahiye](#), testing the resistance's red lines.

To move beyond reactive politics, Lebanon would benefit from creating an independent strategic assessment unit, similar to the internal strategic planning bodies Israel developed in response to its failures during the 1973 October War. Such a body would objectively evaluate military and political data, bypassing public sentiment and media frenzy, thus ensuring Lebanon remains alert without succumbing to psychological warfare.

Beirut must find a balance: stay alert without amplifying Tel Aviv's propaganda, and prepare without overreacting. [A US stranglehold on Lebanon](#) also highlights the importance of resisting externally imposed agendas.

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