

Summary

The surprise attacks conducted by Hamas on October 7 incited Hezbollah to join the conflict and embark on a military campaign against Israel. In response to Hezbollah's military operations, the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) has been carrying intense bombardments all along Lebanon's southern borders. So far, the conflict's toll surpassed 115 casualties, including civilians and journalists. Possible scenarios range from increased tensions in the South, to a potential full-scale war, possibly impacting Lebanon's infrastructure.

Recent events and developments

Following the October 7 attacks, Lebanon's Hezbollah joined the ongoing conflict the next day, by firing rockets at the disputed area of Shebaa farms, southeast of the country, prompting Israeli forces to respond with heavy artillery shelling on several areas in Southern Lebanon. Since the start of the clashes, Hezbollah and the IDF have been engaging in intense retaliatory attacks on a daily basis, in what is considered as the second front of this conflict. As of November 22, more than 115 people have been killed in Southern Lebanon. While most of the deaths on Lebanese territory can be attributed to Hezbollah and Palestinian fighters, civilians and journalists have also been targeted. In fact, two journalists and two civilians were killed by an Israeli airstrike on 21 November in the southern village of Tayr Harfa. Also, on October 13, a Lebanese photographer working for an international news agency was killed by a missile strike in Alma Al-Shaab, leaving six others injured. While most of the conflict has been confined to the border regions, the IDF successfully targeted deeper locations within Southern Lebanon, leading to a gradual escalation of hostilities. For instance, for the first time since the 2006 War, on November 19, the southern city of Nabatiyeh was struck by a drone strike. Air strikes, drone strikes, artillery and phosphorus bombs shelling have been used by the IDF in Lebanon.

Impact assessment

Compared to the 2006 War, both sides have demonstrated relative caution when it comes to fighting on the Lebanese borders. The IDF from one side, and Hezbollah and Hamas from the other, have mostly engaged in tit-for-tat attacks for the time being. Yet, in his first speech following the Hamas attacks, Hezbollah SG Nasrallah stated that part of their strategy is to attract the IDF's attention to the north to ease pressure on Gaza. Consequently, in light of today's hostage release and 4-day ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, hostility on the Lebanon-Israel borders has increased. Yesterday, Hezbollah launched one of the largest rocket attack waves at Israeli military posts following an airstrike that killed five Hezbollah fighters. Due to the unpredictable nature of the conflict, we can conceive of various scenarios, ranging from heightened tensions on the borders, to the potential outbreak of a full-scale war. In case of the latter, Israeli targets in Lebanon would primarily, yet not exclusively encompass Shia dominated areas, such as the South and Baalbek governorates, as well as Beirut's southern suburbs. As the case of the 2006 War, Lebanon's main infrastructure, including bridges, the airport, and main highways could be targeted.

Advice from Forth Global

- Avoid non-essential travel to Lebanon. If a trip is necessary, refrain from traveling to the South.
- Make sure all employees travelling to Lebanon undertake several-days HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Ensure contingency and evacuation plans are up to date and adequately distributed to all employees.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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