

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

[Khalil Harb](#)

30.10.2024

## The western diplomatic offensive on Lebanon fails

To control Lebanon's sovereignty from within, the US and Israel seek a plain new wartime president, styled after the sycophantic figure of PA President Mahmoud Abbas. But as western diplomats pitching this deal have just learned, Lebanon has many cards left to play.

\*\*\*\*\*

The diplomatic maneuvers led by Washington and other western capitals, alongside the sprawling US embassy in Beirut, are built on a faulty premise – that Lebanon is fractured and vulnerable, ripe for a kind of 'Palestinianization.'

This illusion has emboldened Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who believes that with steadfast diplomatic support from western powers – notably, the Israeli-born US envoy [Amos Hochstein](#) – he can gain political ground in Lebanon, especially as his Palestinian war remains unresolved after a year, a perpetual thorn in his side.

Netanyahu is betting on Lebanon's divisions, exploiting [sectarian](#), religious, and demographic tensions and banking on the complicity of pro-west Lebanese figures who portray themselves as defenders of "sovereignty."

Yet, their ambitions hardly exceed those of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the president of the Palestinian Authority (PA), who remains, improbably, the most visible sycophant of all Arab leaders in West Asia. Some of these Lebanese figures are champing at the bit, ready to act as Lebanon's version of Abu Mazen – willing to cede power by [disarming the resistance](#), accepting limited sovereignty akin to that of the PA, and allowing enemy forces to enter cities and villages at will, carrying out assassinations and raids under Tel Aviv's orders.

This scenario is not just theoretical. What Israel wants from Lebanon, according to sources speaking to *The Cradle*, resembles the ill-fated [17 May agreement of 1983](#) – a controversial

peace deal signed between Beirut and Tel Aviv under US mediation which aimed to end hostilities but effectively undermined Lebanon's sovereignty, deepened internal divisions, and sparked widespread backlash, eventually fueling a new phase of resistance.

### **Israel's strategy to destabilize Lebanon**

Current events, coinciding with Israel's [intensified aggressions](#) on Lebanese territory, although met with [formidable resistance](#) by Hezbollah, point to a deliberate western strategy aimed at destabilizing Lebanon. This is evident through several key developments:

First, the "[Maarab meeting](#)" – hosted by the Lebanese Forces Party's Samir Geagea at its headquarters – brought together resistance opponents to discuss the "day after" a hypothetical defeat of Hezbollah. Geagea, of course, is the head of the Christian supremacist party-militia that butchered Palestinians in their refugee camps and never encountered a US-Israeli policy suggestion he didn't like.

Speaking at the event, titled 'In Defense of Lebanon,' the notorious [warlord](#) insisted that "all of this does not mean that one party will be victorious and another defeated. Rather, Lebanon will be the victor for the benefit of all its people, its security, stability, and prosperity."

Their agenda included electing an 'amenable' president – a top demand on Hochstein's wish list – and resurrecting international resolutions like UN [Resolution 1559](#), which "calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias" – a clear jab at Hezbollah – at the height of the battle against the Israeli invasion.

Geagea's timing, despite notable absentees, can only be seen as a political gamble to position himself as a presidential candidate amid Hezbollah's presumed defeat.

Second, Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) leader Gebran Bassil's sudden media appearances on Saudi channels Al Arabiya and Al-Hadath served to announce his [split from Hezbollah](#), effectively blaming them and Iran – but not Israel – for the current war. He also criticized Geagea and US-favorite Army Commander Joseph Aoun – both of whom are presidential hopefuls. Note that the FPM has been in a political alliance with Hezbollah since 2006 and that Bassil has been a key spoiler over several nominations in the past years.

Third, the western diplomatic flurry in recent months has been little more than a charade, devoid of genuine attempts to curb Israeli brutality and reach a ceasefire in either Lebanon or Gaza. Led by the US, these proposals center around stopping Hezbollah's support front for Gaza, sweetened with empty promises of aid for Lebanon's struggling electricity sector.

### **Diplomatic charades**

Recent [interventions](#) by US envoy Hochstein and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock also fell flat. Hochstein basically conveyed Israeli demands, while Baerbock had

the gall to arrive in Beirut after publicly [endorsing](#) Israel's right to attack civilians if 'terrorists' were supposedly among them. She came to Lebanon believing, as she [stated](#), that the occupation state had "greatly weakened Hezbollah by taking out Nasrallah."

Events since then have proved otherwise – it is the Israeli military that is on the run from southern villages where its troops have encountered deadly resistance.

Political analyst Dawood Ramal tells *The Cradle* that Hochstein carried a proposal to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which would dismantle Hezbollah's military wing and extend the "armed presence-free" zone to the Awali River, not just south of the Litani River, as originally stipulated.

Germany's proposals about monitoring Lebanon's ports and borders to prevent arms shipments – as well as tying reconstruction aid to Hezbollah's disarmament – align closely with US and Israeli interests. As Ramal points out, "They want a capitulation agreement that echoes the 17 May Agreement of 1983."

Lebanon's official stance remains that Resolution 1701 is the basis for any solution. Beirut is open to expanding the UN peacekeepers (UNIFIL) mandate but insists on reciprocal action from Israel – namely, ending its daily airspace violations and discussing the status of the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms.

Meanwhile, Israeli sources, through the US website [Axios](#), leaked a document outlining Israel's terms for ending the conflict. According to the report, citing an Israeli official, "One Israeli demand is that the IDF be allowed to engage in 'active enforcement' to make sure Hezbollah doesn't rearm and rebuild its military infrastructure in the areas of southern Lebanon that are close to the border."

The official added that Tel Aviv also demands its air force have "freedom of operation" in Lebanese air space. So much for sovereignty.

Western mediators dangled \$350 million in financial and military aid for the Lebanese army to bolster its southern deployments, while Hochstein pushed for expanded UNIFIL authority to move freely and conduct inspections [without](#) Lebanese army coordination.

While many reject the election of a president amid war, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reiterated his call for Lebanon to fill the presidential vacuum – a clear signal of misplaced priorities.

### **In search of a 'Lebanese Abu Mazen'**

Security analyst Abdullah Qamh tells *The Cradle* that Israel's calls to 'liberate' Lebanon from Hezbollah and elect a president aim to sideline Amal Party leader and Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, a longtime Hezbollah ally who has overnight become the most powerful

authority in the country. In response to Hochstein's demands, Berri firmly rejected the so-called '1701+', which involves amending the UN resolution to favor Israeli terms. He also dismissed any discussion of a presidential election while Lebanon remains under assault.

Israel opposes Berri's mediation role and prefers to secure a ceasefire with a compliant president, bypassing Hezbollah's allies. Qamh sums up Hochstein's mission as essentially an attempt to press the Lebanese state into exerting pressure on Hezbollah.

He points out that Berri's insistence on keeping Resolution 1701 unchanged was met by Israeli attacks targeting Amal Movement strongholds, from Beirut's Jnah area to the southern cities of Nabatieh and Tyre. According to Qahm, "Hochstein's mediation is over, as Berri described the American envoy's visit as a 'last chance.'"

Ramal, for his part, says that Berri is in the "danger zone," with Israel seeing him as Hezbollah's mouthpiece and, therefore, a potential target for Tel Aviv. The surge of foreign mediation activity came after three key developments: direct Israeli attacks on European-led UNIFIL forces, successful resistance strikes deep into Israeli territory (including [Netanyahu's Caesarea residence](#)), and Hezbollah's effective pushback against Israeli incursions in southern Lebanon.

Before and after Hochstein's visit, Israel sent clear signals – most notably, intense air raids on Beirut's southern suburbs – that "mediation" was more about gauging Lebanon's willingness to capitulate. But on the ground where the real battles take place, Hezbollah's resistance, far from defeat, was already bolstering Lebanon's negotiating stance.

Paradoxically, the caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati, a holdover from the last Lebanese government, [criticized](#) Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Qalibaf over Tehran's "blatant interference in Lebanese affairs and an attempt to establish an unacceptable guardianship over Lebanon," even as he welcomed Hochstein, a former Israeli tank crewman, and remained silent on the tons of US missiles aiding Israel's slaughter of thousands of Lebanese civilians.

The Lebanese fear their leaders may falter again, as Mikati recently did, undermining the unified stance that Berri has worked to maintain against external pressures. While Lebanon's resistance in the south remains a crucial asset, some politicians appear too eager to revisit the humiliations of the 17 May Agreement era or resign themselves to a weak, symbolic role akin to that of a Lebanese Abu Mazen.

**OCT 29, 2024**