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Ceasefire 101:

Israel fails at war goals, Hezbollah succeeds

Through its relentless military onslaught on Lebanon, Israel failed to create a land buffer in the south and return its northern settlers to their homes – while Hezbollah achieved its objectives of thwarting Israel's land invasion and retaining its military capabilities.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

Hezbollah has once again proven to be a handful for Israel, notwithstanding the [heavy blows](#) that were dealt to the resistance movement in the latest round of hostilities. A [ceasefire](#) deal that has come into effect after over two months of full-scale conflict on the Lebanese–Israeli front falls far short of what Israel had hoped to achieve in the earlier stages of this conflict when the momentum seemed to be on its side.

For its part, the Lebanese movement has managed to survive what was, without a doubt, the heaviest and most sophisticated onslaught ever launched in the history of warfare.

While the ceasefire deal is composed of 13 provisions, it centers around UN Security Council (UNSC) [Resolution 1701](#), which brought an end to the 2006 Israel war on Lebanon. This, in and of itself, points to a failure for Israel when viewed against its list of initial demands.

Israeli demands and UN involvement

One of those early [demands](#) was made during a UN session last month, when Tel Aviv called for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559, which effectively calls for the disarmament of Hezbollah (the actual wording of the resolution calls for the disarmament of ‘militias’ – an implicit reference to Hezbollah).

The enforcement mechanism of 1701 based on the new agreement, however, appears to differ somewhat from the language put in place 18 years ago. One of the provisions of the new deal is the establishment of an international committee to oversee its enforcement and guarantee that both sides live up to their commitments as stated in the provisions.

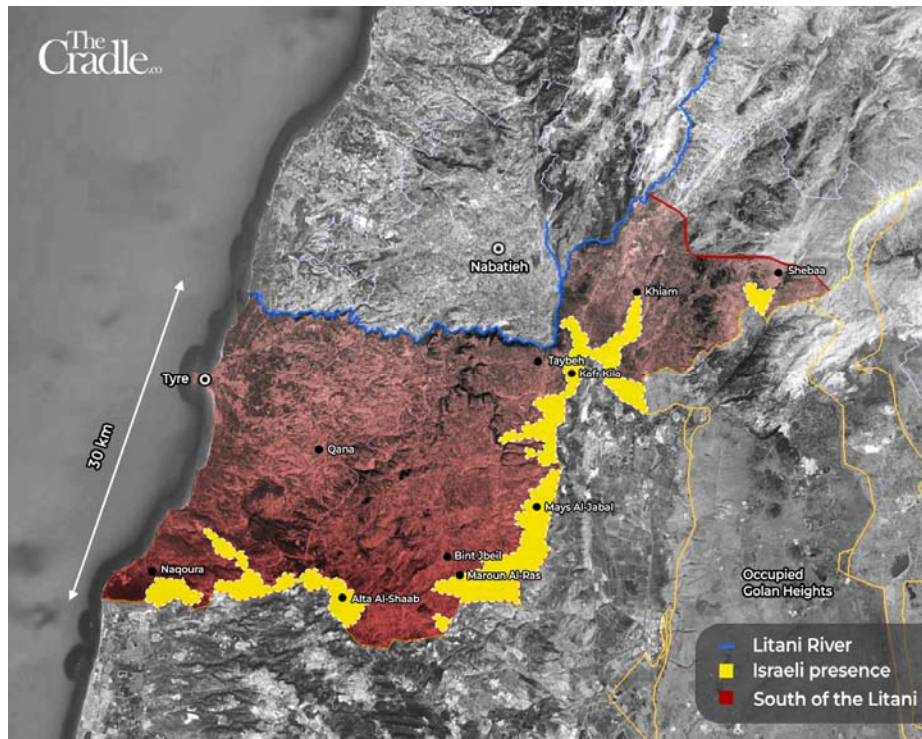
This effectively means more enhanced oversight of the commitment of both parties to 1701, given that the task of monitoring the implementation of this resolution since 2006 had fallen to the UN peacekeeping forces in south Lebanon (UNIFIL) without the involvement of other foreign parties.

In line with the recent agreement, an international committee will be led by the US, with France also playing a key role. Importantly, however, its mandate does not include actual enforcement authority – that role will remain reserved mainly for the Lebanese army. US President Joe Biden sought to emphasize this point in remarks he made from the White House, in which he [declared](#) the ceasefire deal had been reached.

“There will be no US combat troops in the area, but there will be military support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, as we've done in the past,” said Biden, adding that “in this case, it'll be typically done with the Lebanese army and in conjunction with the French military as well.”

According to retired Lebanese army general Mounir Shehadeh, the presence of a committee led by the US will translate into stricter enforcement measures in terms of ending any armed presence for Hezbollah south of the Litani River, which is one of the original provisions of 1701. As Shehadeh tells *The Cradle*:

“I don’t think the Lebanese army through its intelligence directorate and based on its own intelligence will proceed out of its own initiative to search for the possible whereabouts of weapons caches belonging to the resistance. But the Lebanese army and UNIFIL will be forced by this committee led by America to conduct searches of different locations.”



A map indicating where the Israeli forces are currently deployed in south Lebanon one day after the ceasefire took effect.

Tel Aviv’s unrealized goals

This, however, remains a far cry from Israel’s long-standing objective of having foreign troops deployed in Lebanon with a mandate that allows them to use force to end Hezbollah’s armed presence in the south.

For years, Israel has unsuccessfully [sought](#) to empower UNIFIL troops with a more robust enforcement role under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which would authorize them to use force to implement Resolution 1701. Western allies like the US have also failed to [achieve](#) this goal.

Even if the new deal ends Hezbollah’s armed presence south of the Litani River, this would not necessarily mean that the balance of deterrence with Israel would be significantly altered. As Shehadeh explains:

“It is clear that in the south of the Litani, missiles were launched from the valleys in the Eastern, Central, and Western strips. It will impact the resistance operationally but not weaken it. Should the resistance be forced to, I believe it will move these weapons from the south to the north of the Litani.”

It is also the case that violations from the Israeli side will now be under closer scrutiny with the formation of the international committee. Israel has violated this resolution on a near-daily basis for years, mostly through illegal overflights into Lebanese airspace.

Meanwhile, other Israeli objectives also appear to have failed to materialize. This includes a domestic Lebanese uprising against Hezbollah, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu explicitly [called](#) for in an address to the Lebanese people.

Tel Aviv also failed to return by force the tens of thousands of northern settlers who have been “displaced” by Hezbollah rocket fire, despite having [declared](#) publicly in September that this was a new goal in its war objectives.

Perhaps most importantly, Israel has not succeeded in severely undermining Hezbollah’s fighting capability. Last Sunday – just days before the ceasefire – the Lebanese resistance [launched](#) one of its heaviest, most potent missile attacks on Israel since the outbreak of the latest round of hostilities.

[According](#) to Hezbollah, several military sites in Tel Aviv were targeted, in addition to the Ashdod naval base, which lies even further south. Video footage and data from Israelis also showed unprecedented damage to structures and vehicles in key northern and central cities, such as Petah Tikva, Haifa, Nahariya, and Tel Aviv – the state's most important industrial, commercial, financial, and tech centers.

The Israeli military and media [confirmed](#) that air sirens went off in the suburbs of Tel Aviv and that around four million people – almost half of Israel's total population – were forced into shelters that day. Concurrently, in Lebanon's south, Hezbollah soldiers were putting up a strong fight against invading Israeli ground forces, [preventing them](#) from infiltrating deep into Lebanese territory or holding any significant ground.

The resistance lives to fight another day

These realities stand out as a significant failure on the part of Israel and an important feat on the part of Hezbollah, precisely because the latter had accumulated unprecedented heavy losses: the assassination of its former secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah and several senior military commanders, in addition to the [pager detonation operation](#) which took thousands of the resistance fighters out of combat.

But that the Lebanese movement managed to survive a security-intelligence war the likes of which the world had never seen should not come as that much of a surprise, given its sheer size.

As observers have [noted](#), Hezbollah has deep institutional and bureaucratic roots inside Lebanon that make targeted attacks and security operations – despite their level of

sophistication – insufficient in bringing the resistance to its knees. As Nasrallah often repeated, and as has since been [chanted](#) in the streets of Beirut after his martyrdom: “Never will we accept humiliation.”

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