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What US mediation? 1000 Israeli violations in Lebanon go unchecked

During a recent ceasefire committee meeting, Israeli officials denied any violations and argued there was no 60-day deadline for withdrawing their troops. Attending US officials did nothing – but they may have to act soon: Hezbollah vows 'resistance' against breaches once the truce expires.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

Under the supervision of US special envoy and former Israeli soldier Amos Hochstein, Beirut and Tel Aviv reached a ceasefire agreement on 27 November after almost 14 months of intense conflict against the backdrop of the war on Gaza.

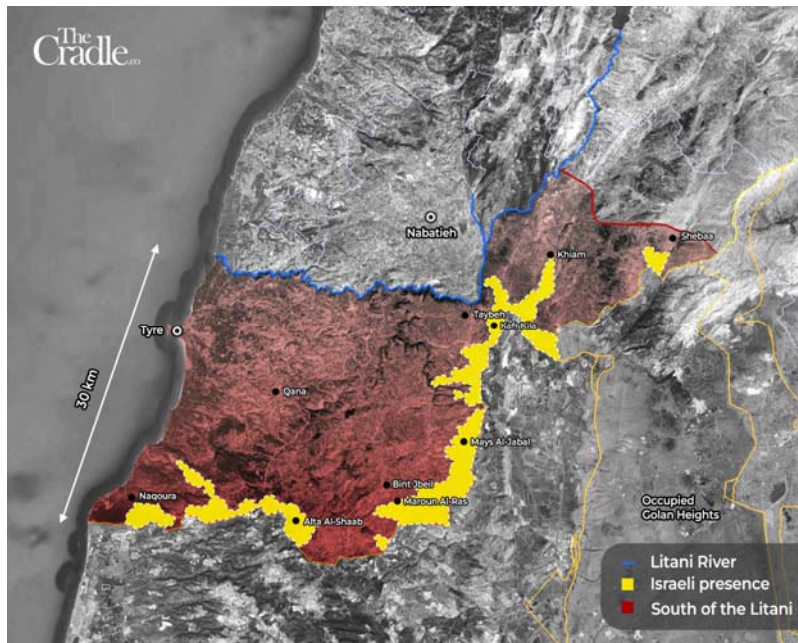
The Israeli military pledged to withdraw from Lebanese territory within 60 days of the agreement's enactment.

To ensure compliance, a monitoring committee led by US General Jasper Jeffers was established, focusing on enforcing the cessation of hostilities and the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Rampant Israeli violations

But Israel immediately undermined the truce, committing nearly 1,000 violations within the first month alone – one of many cases of the occupation state’s disregard for international agreements.

Additionally, occupation forces have continually obstructed the Lebanese army’s deployment at key points in southern Lebanon, and have leaked plans that Tel Aviv intends to maintain control over strategic areas in the country. Reports suggest there is an Israeli effort underway to establish a security buffer zone spanning from Abbad to the villages of Odaisseh and Kfar Kila.



Map showing areas of Israeli military presence (in yellow) south of the Litani River in southern Lebanon, following the declared ceasefire.

(Updated December 2024)

Meanwhile, from the onset of the ceasefire, Hezbollah assured the Lebanese government that it would not retaliate during the 60-day truce period, adhering strictly to the agreement terms and allowing the government and army to address Israel's daily provocations.

The ceasefire followed intense internal and international pressure on the resistance movement to halt its battle with Israel, especially as the latter began to dangerously expand its bombing targets across the country. Simultaneously, the Israelis – having failed to achieve their stated war objectives and taken daily troops losses in their ground invasion – were pushing hard for a truce, citing the need to prevent an escalation that could extend to Beirut, risking mass civilian casualties.

This agreement may not be ideal for either party, but it is feasible to implement. Israel achieved tangible successes but failed to crush Hezbollah or eliminate it as an organization. For Hezbollah, the priority was ending the war to halt the destruction, despite the damages it sustained.

Consequently, both sides reached an agreement that Hezbollah described as a reiteration of the 1701 Resolution. It was not a deal of humiliation or defeat, contrary to how the group's adversaries are eager to portray it.

It is important to note that Hezbollah chose a middle path between Hamas' call to ignite a broader conflict under the banner of "Al-Aqsa Flood" and a policy of non-intervention, given that the Palestinian movement's leadership did not involve Hezbollah in its decision to go to war.

Ethically, Hezbollah opted to open a limited support front, clearly defining its objectives: to exhaust the Israeli military and pressure it into halting the assault on Gaza. However, this calculation later proved to be flawed.

When the support front escalated into a full-fledged war, Hezbollah declared that its aim was to stop the conflict. When Israel requested a cessation of hostilities, Hezbollah agreed under acceptable conditions.

Ultimately, after over a year of conflict sparked by the Hamas-led Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, Hezbollah and Israel reached a 13-point agreement mediated by the US and France. While Tel Aviv agreed to withdraw from Lebanese territory within 60 days, its actions during the ceasefire depict a relentless drive to achieve militarily what it could not during the war.

The destruction of Lebanese homes and towns during the first month of the truce already far exceeds that caused during the conflict, with villages such as Bani Hayyan, Markaba, Shama, Al-Bayada, and Wadi al-Hujayr suffering devastating damage.

Israel's brazen violations are not just restricted to border towns. Its truce violations include the prohibited operation of war drones over Beirut and its southern suburbs, and substantial military strikes in villages across the eastern Bekaa Valley.

The US looks the other way

The ceasefire monitoring committee, led by Tel Aviv's staunchest allies, has faced significant challenges, largely due to Israel's unwillingness to comply with the terms of the truce.

Sources reveal to *The Cradle* that so far, two meetings have been held at the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) headquarters in Naqoura, southern Lebanon, with Israeli officers present, followed by a third meeting attended by Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati – without the Israelis present.

The sources added that the first meeting lasted just 40 minutes, limited to introductory discussions on core topics. The second session, however, was marked by discord, as the Israeli side failed to uphold previously agreed-upon terms.

During that meeting, it became apparent to all that while the Lebanese army had finalized and approved a deployment plan for the western, central, and eastern axes, the Israelis refused to present any withdrawal strategy. Instead, they shifted blame to the Lebanese army for what they called “slow deployment,” further suggesting that the 60-day truce deadline was merely symbolic, not binding for the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and intended only for the withdrawal of Hezbollah troops from south of the Litani River.

Israeli representatives went further, baselessly claiming that the Lebanese army had no intention of implementing the agreement’s provisions to withdraw Hezbollah from south of the Litani.

During the discussions, Lebanese General Edgar Lowndes is said to have stormed out of the meeting after heated exchanges with the Israeli side, which downplayed its repeated attacks in Lebanon as insignificant and refused to classify them as breaches of the agreement. The Israeli delegation specifically argued that their use of drones in Lebanese airspace was not a violation of the truce, suggesting that the air breaches would continue unchecked.

The lead US official – a general – brought Lowndes back to the meeting and tried to keep the proceedings more formal thereafter. Following the session, high-level contacts took place between various committee members, with Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati gathering French and American officers and the UNIFIL Commander to emphasize the need for Israel to respect the signed agreement that the Israeli army would withdraw from Lebanese territory within the agreed upon deadline.

In this context, the US general confirmed that envoy Hochstein would participate in the next committee meeting on 6 January to confirm the ambiguous issues, and agreed with his Lebanese counterparts that Israel is violating the ceasefire through its actions.

Patience amid provocation

While Hezbollah has exercised restraint and refrained from delivering any significant response beyond a single retaliation at the “Ruweisat al-Alam site belonging to the Israeli enemy army in the occupied Lebanese Kfar Shuba Hills,” Israeli provocations have continued to test the limits of the ceasefire on a daily basis. As a source close to Hezbollah informs *The Cradle*:

“We will be patient until the 60-day period expires and diplomatic opportunities are exhausted, and after that there is no solution but resistance.”

International mediators now face growing pressure to enforce the agreement, with Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri emphasizing the importance of French involvement in the monitoring process, given US partiality toward Israel.

The Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs filed a formal complaint with the UN Security Council, citing 816 violations between 27 November and 22 December. Prime Minister Mikati has called for the swift and complete implementation of Resolution 1701, cautioning that delays could destabilize the region further.

Beirut also called for “enhanced support for UNIFIL and the Lebanese army to guarantee the protection of its sovereignty and to create the necessary security conditions for restoring stability and normalcy in the south of the country.”

It is evident that Israel is leveraging its perceived upper hand to manipulate the ceasefire agreement, interpreting its terms to align with its strategic objectives. By acting as if the balance of power has irreversibly shifted in its favor, the occupation state not only challenges the Lebanese side but openly flouts the agreement with actions such as air violations, justified under the guise of self-defense.

These provocations, coupled with threats to reignite hostilities and forcibly expel Hezbollah, reveal a calculated effort to establish new facts on the ground that were never part of the original accord.

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