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Israel's military strategy in Lebanon: Escalation, propaganda, sedition

Tel Aviv's carefully calculated, multi-pronged political and military campaign against Lebanon aims to weaken Hezbollah, paralyze the state, and reshape West Asia's balance of power – one violation at a time.



Photo Credit: The Cradle

On the morning of 8 May, Israeli warplanes carried out a wide-scale air attack on the Nabatieh region in southern Lebanon. The violent raids came in two waves, targeting valleys,

heights, and forests extending between the towns of Kfar Tibnit, Nabatieh al-Fawqa, and Kfar Reman.

Just a week earlier, at its 2 May meeting, Lebanon's Supreme Defense Council – headed by President Joseph Aoun and attended by Prime Minister Nawaf Salam – had gathered to discuss pressing national issues. These included the country's upcoming municipal [elections](#), developments [in Syria](#), and recent incidents of [rocket fire](#) from Lebanon into Israel. There was no line item about the enemy's occupation of southern Lebanon or its non-stop attacks on the country.

After the session, the council issued a token warning to Hamas operatives in Lebanon and reviewed court cases involving the organization's [detainees](#). But in a stunning omission, the body failed to address the [more than 3,000](#) documented Israeli violations of the 27 November 2024 ceasefire agreement.

These breaches – ranging from manned and drone airstrikes to artillery fire, machine gun attacks, land incursions, and bulldozing – have claimed 152 Lebanese lives. Yet the very body tasked with protecting national sovereignty has offered no condemnation or action. The silence is not just diplomatic – it is strategic complicity.

Military pressure, political coordination

The occupation state's continued aggression in Lebanon is not isolated; it is part of a concerted regional strategy integrating US diplomatic coercion, Israeli military strikes, and Lebanese political actors hostile to the resistance. These three tracks function as a coordinated pressure machine aimed at one objective: [neutralizing Hezbollah](#).

Within this framework, Tel Aviv's military goals are clear. It seeks to eliminate specific Hezbollah operatives, destroy military infrastructure recently added to its target bank, and [prevent](#) the movement from rebuilding its arsenal following the ceasefire.

As the occupation army's Arabic spokesman Avichay Adraee explicitly stated last month on X:

“The Israeli army is intensifying its efforts to dismantle Hezbollah's infrastructure and prevent the group from rebuilding its military capabilities.”

Targeting standards vary by geography. South of the Litani River, the criteria appear to be more [permissive](#). North of the Litani and closer to Beirut, that threshold rises. Israeli sources openly acknowledge this scale – strikes on the capital, they claim, are reserved for “[unusual](#)” threats.

This is not just about tactical choices – it is a carefully calculated strategy to keep up the pressure without undermining Israel's local allies or triggering a wider regional conflict.

Shaping perception, manufacturing consent

Beyond battlefield calculations, Tel Aviv is waging a [psychological war](#) aimed at both Lebanese and Israeli audiences. Its second objective is to reshape public consciousness – to convince the Lebanese people, and especially Hezbollah’s support base, that resistance is futile and self-defeating.

The aim is deterrence by perception. By escalating strikes and issuing public threats, Israel wants to project Hezbollah as exposed, vulnerable, and constantly under surveillance. The ultimate goal is internalized deterrence, where Hezbollah refrains from action not out of fear of retaliation, but from the belief that it is permanently outgunned.

The occupation state simultaneously works to strip Hezbollah of its political and social legitimacy. Its narrative flips causality: Hezbollah’s rebuilding efforts, Israel insists, force it to strike preemptively. This inversion of blame recasts the aggressor as the defender and the resistance as the provocateur.

This messaging is also directed at the Lebanese state. By occupying key border positions and asserting unilateral control, Israel is [pressuring](#) the Lebanese government to either confront Hezbollah or accept continuous and escalating violations. The goal is to fracture internal unity and [isolate the resistance](#) politically.

At the civilian level, the constant bombardment of towns and cities – amplified by media coverage – aims to sow fear, erode social cohesion, and exhaust the population. The strategy is psychological attrition, not just physical destruction.

On the “home” front, Israel deploys what its national security literature calls “resilience management.” The military is staged theatrically – Merkava tanks and elite units positioned on southern hills – to reassure northern settlers and maintain morale. This display serves a dual purpose: expanding Israel’s protective envelope and performing deterrence.

Drawing on the Copenhagen School’s concept of “existential security,” the occupation state’s Defense Minister, Israel Katz, takes it further, linking [calm in the Galilee to peace in Beirut](#). This existential framing produces a “rally around the flag” effect – silencing dissent and consolidating domestic unity behind continued aggression.

Through this mix of physical reassurance, military theatrics, and existential rhetoric, Israel manages its domestic perception environment, portraying military action as essential to restoring normalcy in the north and justifying Lebanese incursions as “unavoidable defensive war.”

Weaponizing Lebanese politics

Israel's hard power is not limited to bombs and airstrikes. It feeds into a broader trilateral pressure system – American, Israeli, and local – designed to dismantle Hezbollah's base of support across military, political, and societal domains.

Strikes serve a dual purpose: strengthening the US negotiating position and empowering Lebanese factions aligned with the west. Figures from the right-wing Lebanese Forces (LF) party are particularly vocal, blaming Hezbollah for Israel's attacks rather than condemning Tel Aviv.

After the 27 April strike on Beirut's southern suburb, LF media head Charles Jabbour [accused](#) Hezbollah of plunging Lebanon into perpetual crisis – without a word on Israeli aggression.

This is not political commentary; it is part of a narrative war. LF leader [Samir Geagea's](#) repeated statements in the wake of Israeli assaults reinforce Tel Aviv's strategic messaging: that disarmament of Hezbollah is not only necessary, but urgent; that peace depends not on Israeli restraint, but on resistance surrender; that Israeli aggression is “justified” because Lebanon remains armed.

Such rhetoric ignores the most basic facts: The ceasefire agreement actually contains *no disarmament clause*. Yet this fiction is repeated ad nauseam to manufacture public consent for foreign demands and to delegitimize any national defense infrastructure outside state control.

Statements made by the Lebanese Forces Party leader Samir Geagea justifying Israel's agressions on Lebanon.

Date	Incident	Statement	How the statement serves the Israeli narrative
28-11-2024	Series of raids	"The era of failing to implement agreements and commitments is over. The government and parliament, along with Hezbollah, must take responsibility and work to carry out what was agreed upon in a way that serves Lebanon's interests and ensures its stability. According to the agreement, weapons must remain exclusively in the hands of the Lebanese army and security forces."	He is using Israel's attacks to blackmail the Lebanese state and the resistance, attempting to impose the enemy's conditions; and misleads public opinion by falsely claiming that the ceasefire agreement includes a clause on disarming the resistance - while no such provision exists in the deal.
01-12-2024	Series of raids & ground incursions	"What disappoints me is that no one wants to upset Hezbollah - including the government, which knew a year ago where things were heading and did nothing. Likewise, the Prime Minister's statement today that disarming Hezbollah requires internal consensus comes despite the fact that the government approved the ceasefire agreement, which stipulates the disarmament of Hezbollah and all illegal forces."	He is attempting to place the Lebanese state in opposition to the resistance, rejecting the logic of dialogue, and promoting the idea of heading towards internal conflict to meet the enemy's demands.
3-1-2025	Raids on the Nabatieh Governorate	"Implementing the ceasefire agreement requires sitting down with Hezbollah and discussing the handover of its weapons to the Lebanese army or their return to Iran."	He links the implementation of the agreement to Hezbollah's abandonment of its weapons, turning a non-existent clause in the text into a presumed "condition." This shifts the discussion from reinforcing the ceasefire and deterring Israeli violations to a core demand of Tel Aviv's ambitions: disarming Lebanon and the resistance. It also provides Israel with a pretext to continue its assaults. "We bomb because Hezbollah hasn't surrendered its weapons." This way, the occupying state is absolved of its violations.
22-1-2025	Series of raids across Lebanon	"The ceasefire agreement was signed by Hezbollah and the government it controls, and the agreement exists in both Arabic and English. The handover of weapons must take place. And according to the agreement issued by the 'Hezbollah's' Council of Ministers under prime minister Mikati, as well as UN Resolution 1701, it must cover areas both south and north of the Litani River - that is, all Lebanese territory."	He claims that the complete surrender of weapons is stipulated in the ceasefire document and Resolution 1701, even though the text does not include such a provision. In doing so, he gives a false legitimacy to the Israeli demand for the disarmament of the resistance across all of Lebanon - not just south of the Litani River - and justifies Israeli operations even in the Lebanese depth. Additionally, the focus on the "necessity of surrendering the weapons" diverts attention from the thousands of violations committed by Israel since 27 November, 2024, shifting the discussion from holding the aggressor accountable to questioning the victim.
24-1-2025	Series of raids across Lebanon	"Once again, the current government proves its absence, and the so-called 'Axis of Resistance' shows that it places no value on people's lives. For the sake of deceptive media presence, it does not hesitate to provoke events daily in an attempt to cover up the tragedies, and loss of lives and property it has caused."	He shifts the responsibility for civilian casualties from Israel to Hezbollah, reinforcing the Israeli narrative that the resistance movement "hides among civilians," therefore causing the casualties. This reduces the pressure on Tel Aviv and grants it legitimacy to kill Lebanese civilians.
1-4-2025	Raids on Beirut's southern suburb	"The group that has benefited the most over the past thirty years is Hezbollah's support base. If the parties supporting the resistance want the state to help them with reconstruction and other matters, they must 'leave the state alone' to do its job. If the situation continues as it is, the Israeli enemy will keep carrying out daily attacks on Lebanon. The only solution is for Hezbollah to hand over its weapons to the Lebanese state."	He presents the Israeli narrative in a clear conditional form: Attacks will continue until disarmament. In doing so, he promotes from within Lebanon the idea that bombing is a legitimate means of pressure on Hezbollah, rather than an aggression against the state's sovereignty.

A campaign without borders

Israel's operational strategy in Lebanon rests on four pillars: steady escalation to test responses, hybrid use of military and intelligence tools, US political cover, and Lebanese state paralysis or complicity.

The pattern is clear. Initial strikes in the south have incrementally grown to expand to the Bekaa Valley, then to Beirut's suburbs. Given Israel's [track record in Syria](#), it is clear these are not boundaries, but stages. Tel Aviv's appetite for escalation knows no geographical limits. Its goal is pressure without accountability, coercion masked as security.

Since the ceasefire, Israeli operations have leaned on aerial dominance and precision targeting. Drones and jets carry out daily raids across Lebanese territory. Most targets are selected through Israel's vast intelligence apparatus – [signal interception](#), drone surveillance, and Shin Bet databases. The [1 April strike on Beirut](#), for instance, was based on alleged intel about an imminent attack.

What encourages this escalation is not just intelligence – it is Lebanese inertia. When Israel senses paralysis in Beirut, it strikes harder. The defense minister’s reliance on the army’s “prestige” and the prime minister’s deferral of responsibility in real time are symptoms of a strategic vacuum; this emboldens the occupation state. Lebanese political actors hostile to Hezbollah seize on each attack to advance their agenda. Israeli missiles become both an external threat and internal leverage.

But one strategy has consistently proven its deterrent value: the unified front of the army, the people, and the resistance.

Hezbollah remains operationally ready. The majority of Lebanese still support defending sovereignty. All that is missing is for the state to shed its paralysis and embrace this formula – not as political rhetoric, but as a national doctrine capable of shielding Lebanon from the next phase of imposed [guardianship](#).

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