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Organizations and Networks in Conflict

ONC-003 - Hezbollah

Official / Primary Name: Hezbollah (Hizbullah / Party of God)

Primary Area: Lebanon, especially southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley, and Beirut's southern suburbs; regional support and logistics networks extend beyond Lebanon

Updated: 27 September 2026

ATLAS profiles in this series are living intelligence documents. Facts, reported claims, and assessments are separated where possible; the concluding assessment states the analytic judgment and confidence.

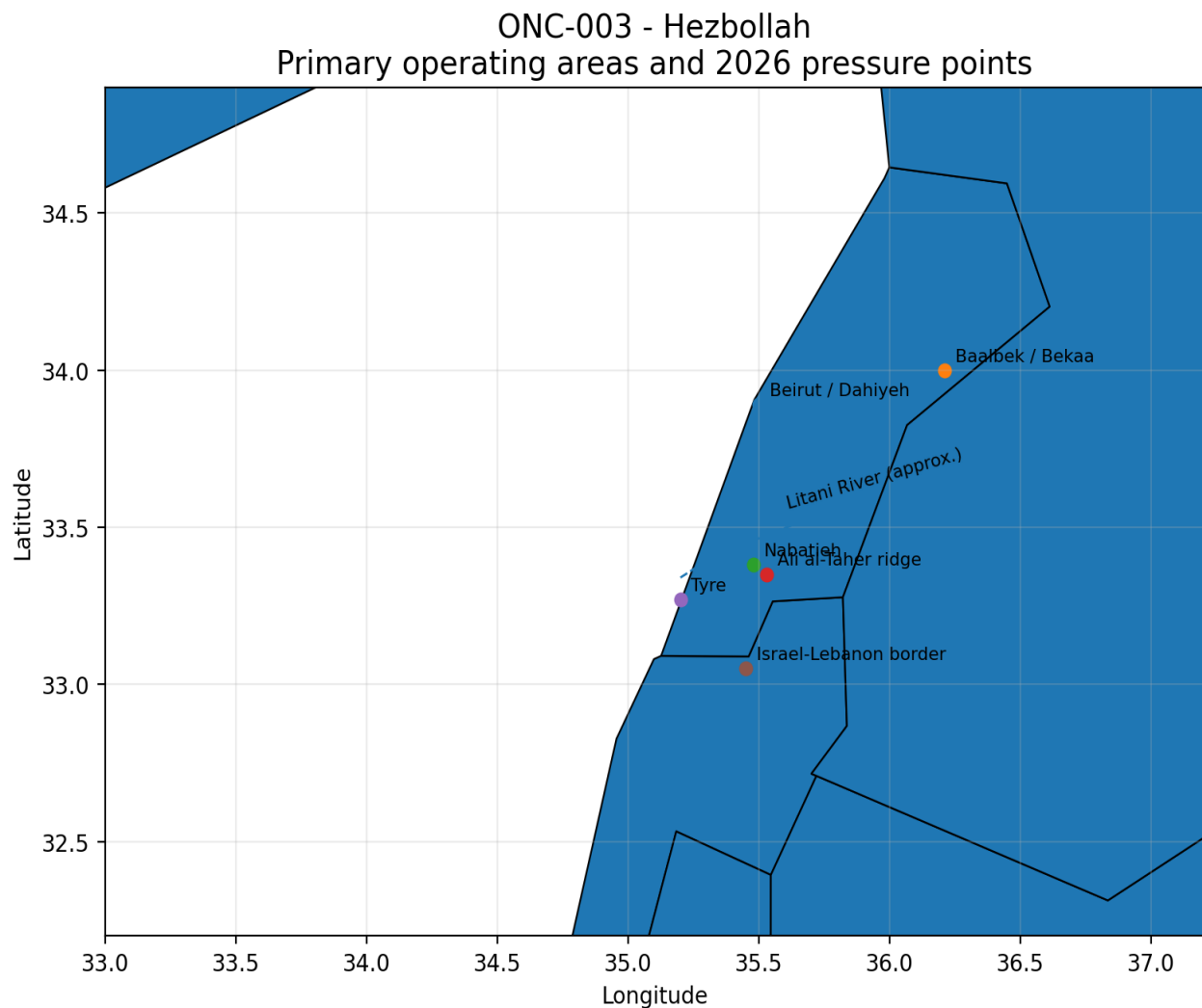


Figure 1. Locator map showing Hezbollah's principal Lebanese operating zones and selected 2026 pressure points. The Litani line and location markers are approximate and intended for orientation, not tactical use.

ENTITY

Hezbollah is a Lebanese Shi'a Islamist political movement, armed organization, social-service network, and regional security actor. It emerged in the early 1980s during Lebanon's civil war and Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, with substantial assistance from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Over four decades Hezbollah developed overlapping political, military, social, financial, religious, media, welfare, and security structures. It has participated in Lebanese elections and governments while maintaining an armed force outside the direct command of the Lebanese state.

The United States designated Hezbollah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997 and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2001. Other governments use differing legal frameworks and in some cases distinguish between political and military components. ATLAS therefore states designations by jurisdiction rather than treating them as universally identical.

In 2026 the organization is under severe military, political, financial, and organizational pressure. Its leadership and military infrastructure have suffered repeated losses, while Lebanon's government and foreign partners are pressing for disarmament and for the Lebanese Armed Forces to assume greater security control.

ACTIONS

Since October 2023 Hezbollah has fought repeated rounds of hostilities with Israel. The conflict expanded sharply again in 2026, producing large-scale Israeli strikes in Lebanon, Hezbollah missile, rocket, drone, and ground attacks, and prolonged fighting in southern Lebanon.

Reuters reported that Hezbollah intensified the use of low-cost first-person-view attack drones in 2026, including fiber-optic guided systems designed to reduce vulnerability to electronic jamming. These attacks demonstrated that relatively inexpensive unmanned systems can continue to impose tactical costs even after major losses to conventional infrastructure.

A U.S.-brokered Israel-Lebanon framework signed in June 2026 linked Israeli withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territory to Hezbollah disarmament and increased Lebanese state control. Hezbollah rejected the framework and continued to oppose compulsory disarmament.

By August and September 2026, international negotiations were considering verification mechanisms involving foreign states, while fighting and Israeli strikes continued. Reuters also reported Israeli operations against Hezbollah underground infrastructure at the Ali al-Taher ridge in southern Lebanon.

WHERE

Southern Lebanon. This remains the principal military confrontation zone. Hezbollah historically developed launch sites, fighting positions, tunnels, weapons storage, anti-armor teams, and local command structures across the south. Israeli operations in 2026 have reduced freedom of movement and destroyed or captured portions of this infrastructure, but armed activity persists.

Bekaa Valley. The Bekaa remains strategically important for training, logistics, weapons storage, movement, and links toward Syria. Pressure on cross-border supply routes directly affects Hezbollah's ability to reconstitute.

Beirut and southern suburbs. Beirut's southern suburbs remain an important political, administrative, social, and organizational center. Israeli strikes and leadership targeting have increased the cost of maintaining visible command infrastructure there.

Regional networks. Hezbollah maintains political, financial, procurement, training, and support relationships outside Lebanon, with Iran remaining the most important external state sponsor. Networks have also involved

Syria, Iraq, the Gulf, Türkiye, Europe, Africa, and the Americas to varying degrees. These relationships should not be treated as uniform: fundraising, residence, procurement, political contact, criminal facilitation, and military support are distinct forms of involvement.

ACTORS

Naim Qassem. Public reporting in August 2026 identifies Qassem as Hezbollah's Secretary-General. Because 2026 reporting has included conflicting claims about senior-leader deaths, ATLAS treats current leadership status as a collection priority and gives greater weight to subsequent public appearances and organizational statements.

Shura Council. Hezbollah's senior consultative body remains central to strategic, political, and organizational decision-making. Repeated leadership losses increase the importance of collective decision structures and succession mechanisms.

Military and security leadership. Israel has targeted multiple senior commanders and operational networks. Open-source identification of surviving military leadership is incomplete and often lags battlefield events.

Liaison and Coordination structures. Associated Press reported in February 2026 that long-time security official Wafiq Safa left his Liaison and Coordination Unit post and was replaced by Hussein Abdullah as part of a wider internal restructuring. The change is significant because the unit historically managed relationships with Lebanese security institutions and domestic political actors.

CAPABILITIES

Rockets and missiles. Hezbollah built one of the largest non-state rocket and missile arsenals in the world. Israeli strikes have destroyed substantial stocks, launch infrastructure, storage sites, and command nodes. The surviving inventory, precision capability, production rate, and sustainable launch tempo remain uncertain.

Unmanned systems. Hezbollah uses reconnaissance and one-way attack drones, including inexpensive FPV systems. Reuters reporting in 2026 indicates that fiber-optic guidance has complicated electronic countermeasures and created a persistent short-range battlefield threat.

Ground combat. Hezbollah retains infantry, anti-armor, sniper, engineering, mortar, and small-unit irregular warfare experience. Years of combat in Lebanon and Syria produced a cadre with operational experience beyond a typical militia.

Underground infrastructure. Tunnels, bunkers, storage sites, command posts, and concealed movement networks remain strategically important. Israeli operations against the Ali al-Taher ridge in September 2026 illustrate both the value of this infrastructure and the sustained pressure against it.

Finance and procurement. Hezbollah relies on Iranian support, informal financial channels, commercial networks, couriers, front companies, exchange houses, charitable structures, and domestic revenue sources. U.S. Treasury actions in 2026 targeted cash-smuggling, commercial, and financial networks believed to support reconstitution.

Political and social infrastructure. Hezbollah's political representation, welfare networks, schools, health services, reconstruction mechanisms, media, and community organizations provide resilience that purely military measurements do not capture.

External support. Iran remains the most consequential external source of money, weapons, training, technology, and strategic support. U.S. Treasury reporting in 2026 described renewed sanctions aimed at Hezbollah's financial networks and its relationship with the IRGC-Quds Force.

GOALS

Preserve armed deterrence. Hezbollah has long justified its independent military capability as necessary to deter or resist Israel. Disarmament therefore challenges a core organizational identity and source of political leverage.

Maintain political influence inside Lebanon. The organization seeks to preserve its parliamentary, governmental, community, and institutional influence while preventing a domestic coalition from dismantling its military structures by force.

Protect organizational survival. After heavy leadership and infrastructure losses, near-term priorities include succession, reconstitution, recruitment, finance, weapons preservation, and restoration of command-and-control.

Sustain the relationship with Iran. Hezbollah's partnership with Tehran provides material support and regional strategic depth, but the organization also has distinct Lebanese political constituencies and interests.

Shape the postwar security order. Hezbollah seeks to prevent an arrangement in which Israeli withdrawal is explicitly conditioned on externally verified disarmament and the permanent exclusion of its armed structures from southern Lebanon.

ATLAS ASSESSMENT

Hezbollah in September 2026 is substantially weaker than it was before the 2023-2026 wars, but available evidence does not support treating the organization as disarmed or strategically removed.

Military degradation has reduced senior leadership continuity, damaged missile and rocket infrastructure, exposed underground facilities, disrupted logistics, and increased financial pressure. Yet the organization continues to demonstrate armed activity, local command resilience, political influence, social infrastructure, and access to external support.

The most important analytic distinction is therefore between **destruction** and **replacement**. Destroying launchers, commanders, tunnels, or weapons caches weakens Hezbollah. It does not by itself transfer the functions Hezbollah has exercised to the Lebanese state.

ATLAS assesses that durable strategic change requires the Lebanese state to acquire and sustain control over five areas: weapons, territorial security, border and logistics routes, financial coercive capacity, and the political-security space in which independent armed command operates.

The June 2026 Israel-Lebanon framework makes disarmament the central test, but implementation is more important than formal agreement. Verification mechanisms, Lebanese Armed Forces access, weapons collection, tunnel clearance, financing disruption, and sustained state control will determine whether the process represents structural change or only temporary battlefield suppression.

Hezbollah's remaining asymmetric advantage lies in organizational depth. Even a much smaller force can preserve deterrent value through concealed weapons, drones, anti-armor systems, underground infrastructure, local cells, and external resupply.

The principal indicator to watch is whether the Lebanese state can maintain security control after Israeli forces withdraw from contested areas. If Hezbollah can regenerate armed infrastructure behind a state security screen, degradation will prove temporary. If the state can prevent rearmament and replace Hezbollah's coercive and security functions, the organization will face a qualitatively different strategic environment.

CONFIDENCE

OVERALL CONFIDENCE: HIGH

High confidence that Hezbollah has suffered major leadership, infrastructure, weapons, and financial losses since 2023.

High confidence that Hezbollah retains armed cells, political organization, social infrastructure, external support relationships, and meaningful financial networks.

Moderate-to-high confidence that significant underground and short-range unmanned capabilities remain, although exact quantities and readiness cannot be established from open sources.

Moderate confidence regarding current missile and rocket inventories, surviving precision-guided capability, senior military command continuity, and the scale of Iranian resupply.

Moderate confidence regarding the eventual implementation of the June 2026 disarmament framework. Negotiated commitments, battlefield access, and verified transfer of authority remain incomplete.

Collection Priorities

- Leadership succession and the actual functioning of the Shura Council.
- Surviving senior military command and regional-sector commanders.
- Rocket and missile inventories, especially precision-guided systems.
- FPV drone production, inventories, guidance methods, and launch infrastructure.
- Condition of tunnel and underground command networks.
- Weapons-storage and logistics nodes north and south of the Litani.
- Iranian funding, weapons, technical support, and advisory presence.
- Cross-border supply routes through Syria and alternative procurement channels.
- Cash-courier, exchange-house, commercial, and sanctions-evasion networks.
- Lebanese Armed Forces access to former Hezbollah military areas.
- Verified weapons collection and destruction under the 2026 framework.
- Transfer of local policing/security functions to Lebanese state institutions.
- Evidence of rearmament or renewed military construction after Israeli withdrawal.
- Hezbollah political influence over implementation of disarmament arrangements.

SELECTED OPEN-SOURCE REFERENCES

1. Reuters, 12 May 2026 - Evolving drone war in southern Lebanon clouds Iran peace prospects.
2. Reuters, 20 August 2026 - U.S. sanctions targeting Hezbollah and its ties to the Iranian government.
3. Reuters, 3 September 2026 - Iran warning over an Israeli offensive on the Ali al-Taher ridge.
4. Reuters, 6 September 2026 - Israeli strikes in southern Lebanon following reported Hezbollah drone attacks.
5. Reuters, 10 September 2026 - Israeli statement that underground Hezbollah infrastructure at Ali al-Taher was destroyed.
6. Reuters, 12 August 2026 - International states considered for a mechanism to verify Hezbollah disarmament.
7. U.S. Department of the Treasury, 20 August 2026 - sanctions on cash-smuggling networks supporting Hezbollah.
8. U.S. Department of the Treasury, 10 September 2026 - Operation Economic Outcast sanctions on networks enabling Lebanese Hezbollah.
9. United Nations Secretary-General, S/2026/160, 11 March 2026 - implementation of Security Council resolution 1701.
10. Associated Press, 6 February 2026 - Hezbollah internal restructuring and replacement of Wafiq Safa.

Analytic note: ATLAS uses open-source information only. Where evidence is incomplete, contested, or rapidly changing, the profile distinguishes reported information from ATLAS assessment and states the level of confidence.