

Armed Conflict

06

AUG

13:25 UTC

Israel & Lebanon Analysis: Hezbollah claims responsibility for rocket attack into Israel on August 6; broad escalation unlikely at current juncture

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Executive Summary:

- The Lebanese group, Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for a barrage of 19 rockets into Israel on August 6. The claim by the Iran-backed group is noteworthy as it has rarely engaged in armed hostilities with Israel along the Israel-Lebanon border since the 2006 war between the parties.
- The Hezbollah attack is an effort to push back against Israel's attempt to use more extensive force to deter Lebanon-based armed groups from firing rockets into Israel, which has occurred on several occasions in recent months. Israel had conducted retaliatory shelling and airstrikes into Lebanon following the most recent attack into Israeli territory.
- The Shiite militant group also stated that the two units that conducted the attacks were named after two Hezbollah fighters killed in the past year by Israel. Hezbollah seeks to preserve an equation that it will respond with force to the killing of any of its fighters by Israel in order to deter the latter from targeting its assets and infrastructure in Lebanon or Syria.
- Hezbollah has an active interest in distracting from the ongoing political and economic crisis in Lebanon and projecting itself as the defender of the country against perceived Israeli aggression. Its major patron, Iran, also aims to distract international attention away from its recent actions in the Gulf maritime zone, which have increased global scrutiny of Tehran.
- **Both Israel and Hezbollah have indicated their lack of interest in a major escalation of hostilities. Hezbollah deliberately fired towards open territories to avoid causing casualties or damage while Israel's response has been restrained. Large-scale armed conflict is thus less likely, although tensions remain high and a miscalculation perceived as the crossing of a red line by either side could trigger an unintended escalation.**



Please be advised:

- The Iran-backed Lebanese militant group, Hezbollah, released a statement claiming responsibility for the rocket attack into Israel during the late morning hours of August 6.
- In the statement, Hezbollah announced that the “Martyr Ali Kamel Mohsen” and “Martyr Muhammed Qasim Tahan” groups had fired dozens of rockets towards open land in the Sheeba Farms area in northern Israel. The attack was retaliation for the Israeli Air Force’s (IAF) strikes in southern Lebanon on [August 4-5](#).
- Sheeba Farms is a small strip of land located at the intersection of the Lebanese-Syrian border and the Golan Heights.
- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly stated that 19 rockets were fired towards Israel, of which ten were intercepted, six fell in open grounds in northern Israel’s Mount Dov and three fell within Lebanon.
- The IDF spokesperson added that Hezbollah is deterred because it fired at open territory and that the IDF has “no intention of going to war” and will not “turn the north into a line of confrontation”.

Assessments & Forecast:

1. This is the second time that rockets have been fired from Lebanon towards Israel within a two-day period. On [August 4](#), three rockets were fired towards northern Israel, which prompted retaliatory IDF [shelling attacks](#) and [airstrikes](#) in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah’s firing of a barrage of 19 rockets, itself an escalation from the previous rocket attacks over recent months by Lebanon-based groups, is a direct response to the rare IAF airstrikes in Lebanon that the Shiite group considers a violation of Lebanese sovereignty. These strikes were an increased use of Israeli force in response to hostilities from Lebanon and were aimed at deterring all armed groups in the area from launching attacks into Israeli territory. The current development shows that this effort at least partially failed.
2. The militant group’s attack against Israel and public claiming of responsibility is notable given that the group has rarely engaged in direct confrontations with Israel since the 2006 war between the parties, particularly indiscriminate rocket barrages into Israeli territory. The last significant armed

hostilities between the parties along the Lebanon-Israel border occurred in [September 2019](#), when Hezbollah took responsibility for firing anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) into Israel following the killing of two Hezbollah fighters in an IAF airstrike in Syria. Through the current attack, the Iran-backed group is sending a message to Israel that its more extensive artillery attacks and airstrikes in Hezbollah's stronghold of southern Lebanon will not be tolerated and will not yield deterrence. The Shiite group aims to itself deter Israel and push back against the latter's use of force to bring quiet to its northern border.

3. The two Hezbollah factions that took responsibility for the attack, Martyr Ali Kamel Mohsen and Martyr Muhammed Qasim Tahan, are named after two Hezbollah fighters. Ali Kamel Mohsen was killed in a reported Israeli airstrike near Damascus Airport in Syria on July 20 and Muhammed Qasim Tahan was killed by Israeli gunfire targeting unruly protesters who tried to breach the border fence between Israel and Lebanon on [May 14](#). Hezbollah aims to reinforce the equation that it has tried to create over recent years that the killing of its personnel in either Lebanon or Syria by Israel will exact a retaliation, at a time and place of Hezbollah's choosing.
 4. This stance is particularly important for the group at the current time as it aims to project itself as the defender of Lebanon and distract from the severe political and economic crisis in the country. This is even more the case in the days after the [one-day anniversary of the Port of Beirut explosion](#), which increased scrutiny of Hezbollah's outsized pernicious influence in Lebanon, as perceived by its domestic and international detractors. It is also likely an effort by Iran, Hezbollah's patron and backer, to distract from the global attention that is currently being directed toward Tehran's destabilizing activities following an attack on an [Israel-linked vessel in the Gulf](#) off the coast of Oman and an [attempted takeover](#) of another vessel near the UAE over recent days.
 5. Although Hezbollah's latest action will be viewed by Israel as an escalation, the firing of rockets into open areas indicates a deliberate effort by the Shiite group to prevent Israeli casualties or significant damage. Therefore, this attack is more a symbolic effort to show it is unfazed and remains committed to the path of resistance rather than an effort to start large-scale armed conflict. The group's overall interest is to avoid a broad escalation of armed conflict with Israel at this time. The IDF's statement that the militant group is deterred and thus fired into open territory, which is insufficient to go to a broader military operation, indicates that the Israeli authorities also intend to avoid an escalation along its northern borders.
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Recommendations:

Israel

1. Travel to Israel may continue at this time while adhering to security precautions regarding militant and rocket attacks.
2. Avoiding the immediate vicinity of the Syrian, Lebanese, and Egyptian borders due to the persistent risk for cross-border violence.
3. Those residing in the vicinity of Israel's northern borders with Lebanon and Syria are advised to monitor the situation due to the potential for further cross-border hostilities.
4. In the event of additional Color Red sirens, immediately seek a designated shelter. If there is no nearby shelter, go to a room with as few external walls, windows, and openings as possible, sit on the floor below the window line, and near an internal wall. Wait for at least ten minutes.
5. In an open area, lay down on the ground and cover your head with your hands. When driving, safely pull over and follow the same instructions. Adhere to all IDF Home Front Command guidelines regarding early warning sirens for incoming projectiles.
6. **Consult with us at intel@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434 for itinerary-based consultation and on-ground contingency support options.**

Lebanon

1. It is advised to avoid nonessential travel to Beirut and Tripoli due to significant political instability, the increased risk of civil unrest, and the underlying threat of militancy. Remain vigilant of the elevated risk of violent crime due to the shortage of basic goods and commodities.
2. Avoid nonessential travel to Beirut's southern Dahiyeh neighborhood as Hezbollah activists and infrastructure are concentrated in the area. Anti-Western sentiments are thus generally higher and there is also an increased potential for security incidents.
3. Avoid nonessential travel to the areas north of the Lebanon-Israel border until the Litani River due to the risk of cross-border hostilities, which may escalate into broader armed conflict.
4. Avoid entering refugee camps across Lebanon due to the high risk of armed clashes, militancy, crime, and widespread prevalence of anti-Western sentiments.