

Israel-Hezbollah Conflict: Re-emerging Conflict Threatens Unstable Region

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February 2025



THE GLOBAL POLICY HORIZONS LAB

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SUMMARY

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict reignited following the events of October 7 and deepened when Israel entered Lebanon in September 2024 and has been a constant security concern in the region. The latest iteration of the conflict was marked by substantial exchanges of daily rocket attacks, a sophisticated detonation of Hezbollah pagers by Israel, and an incursion into Lebanon by the IDF to destroy some of Hezbollah's capabilities and push them away from the border region. The conflict goes back decades due to the Lebanese Civil War and has long wreaked havoc on the country of Lebanon and proved to be a difficult problem for Israel. Most recently in 2006, previous wars have not accomplished much for either side, and the ceasefires implemented to stop them have not fully prevented further skirmishes. The recently reignited Israel-Hezbollah conflict came at a perilous time for the region, as it coincided with the ongoing war in Gaza. The interconnectedness of these wars has been an important theme in the region and is why a ceasefire in Gaza was likely not going to be possible before a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah conflict.

The conflict itself and the previous strength of Hezbollah can be tied directly to the weakness of Lebanon and key support from Iran. The gridlock in the Lebanese government aided Hezbollah in increasing its political power while also causing it to be unable to prevent the buildup of its military power. Iranian support has also been a key factor. Iran views Hezbollah as its most important factor. The act of daily rocket attacks on Israel by Hezbollah would likely not be possible without Iranian support, but it is also a reality that the attacks generate a much different response than what would occur if Iran were to repeatedly attack Israel.

The role of international power brokers has also been important. Unlike the War in Gaza, the UN and European countries such as France have had more success in reaching breakthroughs in negotiations due to closer ties with Lebanon as well as a framework in existence that has successfully been implemented during previous iterations of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict. Unlike the Israel-Gaza conflict, the international community was united in the steps it viewed as necessary to end the conflict in Lebanon, likely because it did not require a political solution, but rather an end to the current wave of fighting and a withdrawal of forces.

Another important aspect has been the level of success Israel has had in dismantling, at least in the short term, the capabilities of the Hezbollah conflict. These successes, through the pager attacks and operations within Lebanon, have allowed Israel to plausibly call the war a success, and move towards a ceasefire. This is a striking contrast to the war in Gaza where Hamas recruitment is soaring, and the level of destruction will surely not aid in helping the Israeli reputation.

The ceasefire itself, brokered by the US, regional partners, and other international players should have a reasonable chance at success as long as all parties remain committed to upholding the commitments outlined in it. Lebanon now has a chance to rebuild politically, and a fresh set of leaders will hopefully bring stability to the country in the near future. Israel can also begin to focus on winding down its war in Gaza and work with its allies and other regional players to determine the next steps in a region that has been through much upheaval and change in recent years, yet still faces the same fundamental challenges of security, sovereignty, and co-existence.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Josh Hayes is an undergraduate student studying in Political Science at Webster University in St. Louis, USA. His research focus is on stability in the Middle East, specifically in Israel and Palestine. With his policy-oriented research, he hopes to provide analysis for the underlying conflicts that have shaped the region for centuries as well as propose a framework for future pathways to peace and stability. Additionally, he is working on a research paper that explores the foreign policy of Israel and its impact on the broader region and global stakeholders.





ABOUT THE GLOBAL POLICY HORIZONS RESEARCH LAB

Webster University's Global Policy Horizons Lab is a policy-focused research entity where students, Lab researchers, affiliated faculty, as well as members of the policy community from across disciplines, can explore national and global security issues, generate original research, as well as produce peer-reviewed policy papers and commentaries. The Lab pursues innovative research focusing on unconventional threats, identity and security, role of technology in security, economic security, as well environmental and food security. The goal of the Lab is to become a knowledge hub that informs national governments and other members of the global policy community on contemporary and future security challenges.

The current Director of the Lab is Professor Dani Belo, PhD.

