

International Law and the Northern Threat to Israel from Lebanon

Adv. David Peter and Adv. Avraham Russell Shalev



December 2023

► 1 | Israel-Lebanon Border

The land border between Lebanon and Israel is popularly known as “the Blue Line”. This border is accepted by Israel, Lebanon, and the international community, albeit with some disagreement on localized border points.

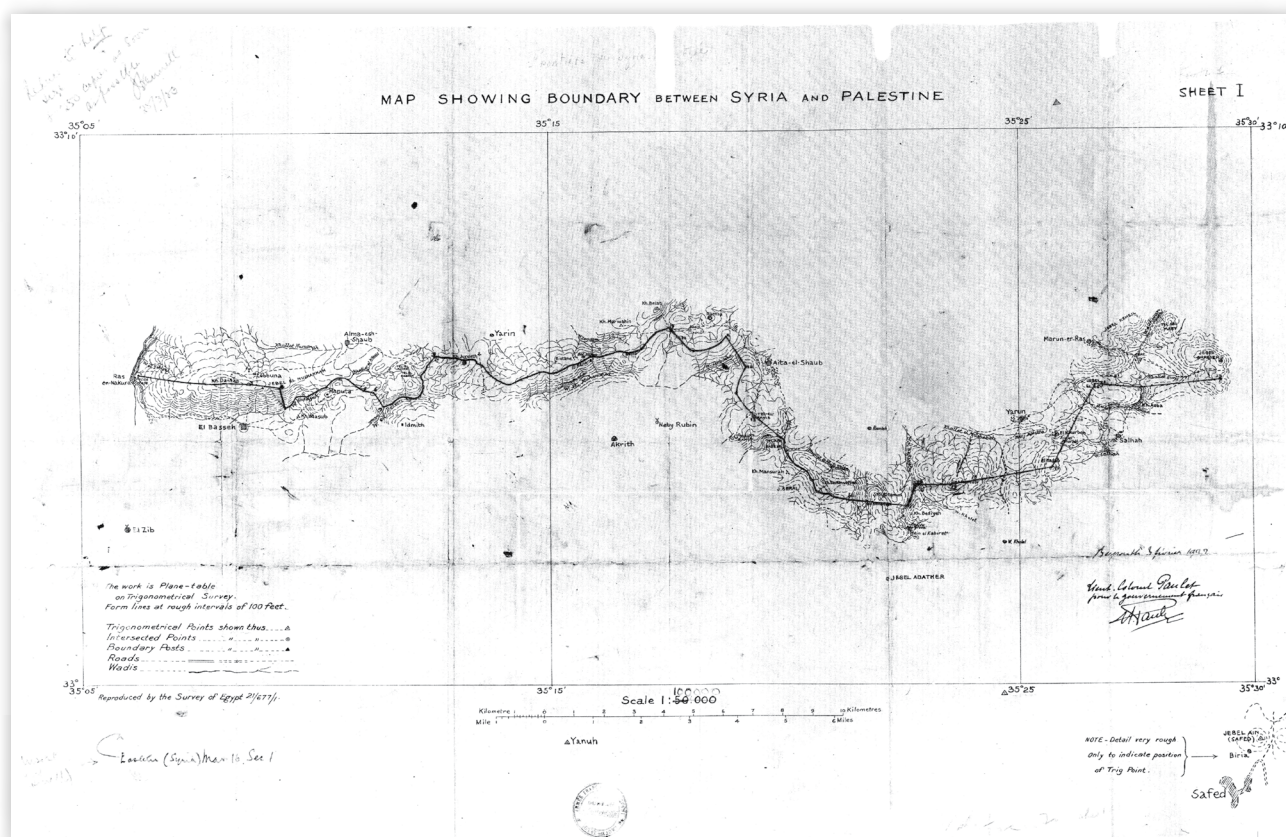
When Israel withdrew from the security strip in 2000, it demanded that the UN recognize the land border with Lebanon. The internationally accepted UN Secretary General’s conclusion on Israeli withdrawal was endorsed by the UN Security Council.¹ With slight variation, the Blue Line border follows the contours of an older border dating from the 1923 Newcombe-Paulet Agreement (a border agreement between the British Mandate of Palestine and the French Mandate of Lebanon and Syria).² This line, which also follows the armistice line of 1949, was endorsed in the Israel-Lebanon agreement in 1983, the agreement which brought the state of war existing between the two countries ever since the War of Independence to a close.³ The agreement was violated and hence failed, since it was contingent on Syria withdrawing from Lebanon, a condition that was not met, but it is testimony to Lebanon’s perception of the accepted border.⁴

1 UN Security Council Press Release SC/6878, 16 June 2000 <https://press.un.org/en/2000/20000618.sc6878.doc.html>

2 https://ecf.org.il/media_items/699

3 UN Doc S/1296 23 March 1949 <https://web.archive.org/web/20110726121052/http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/71260B776D62FA6E852564420059C4FE>

4 https://knesset.gov.il/tql/knesset_new/knesset10/HTML_27_03_2012_05-50-30-PM/19830516@19830516008@00



[Newcombe-Paulet Agreement Appendix I]

It should be noted that there are a number of border disputes between Israel and Lebanon – disagreement on thirteen minor territorial points, and a dispute regarding the “Shebaa farmlands”, (encompassing some twenty-five square kilometers) that Lebanon demands be returned to it although Israel took it from Syria during the Six Day War. According to the UN Secretary General report from May 22, 2000, the Shebaa farmlands had been in Syrian hands until 1967, yielding no justification for Lebanon’s territorial claims.⁵ In addition, Lebanon claims the return of the Kfar Shuba area and the northern part of the Rajr village (which is indeed beyond the Blue Line) and Hezbollah demands a return of “the seven villages” – seven Shi’ite villages in the Upper Galilee abandoned and taken over in the War of Independence. Notably, there is no dispute of the fact that these villages reside within the State of Israel’s borders. This claim has an ideological aspect for Hezbollah and signals their ambition to erase the outcome of the War of Independence.

The aforementioned Secretary General’s report endorsed by the Security Council on June 8, 2000, states that Israel has withdrawn from all Lebanese territory and has met the requirements established in resolution 425, the 1978 resolution adopted five days after “Operation Litani” began.⁶ In other words, the claims made by Lebanon or Hezbollah that Israel is occupying Lebanon territory in those thirteen contested border points are baseless.⁷

5 Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

6 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/368/70/PDF/NR036870.pdf?OpenElement>

7 “The Legal Status of the Shabaa Farms”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 08.04.2000. <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/the-legal-status-of-the-shabaa-farms-8-apr-2002#:~:text=The%20Shabaa%20Farms%20area%20is,Farms%20area%20as%20Syrian%20territory.>

Regarding the areas Israel captured from Syria, it should be clarified that Israel applied its government to the territory in **the Golan Heights Law**, with the US recently recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights⁸. In any event, that issue has no bearing on Lebanon.



[Map of Territorial Land Disputes – Alma Research Center⁹]

In summary, Israel and Lebanon share an undisputed, internationally recognized border. Hezbollah, despite the claim being rejected by the UN Secretary General and the UN Security Council, continues to assert that Israel occupies Lebanese territory, in order to justify its continued “resistance”, which is to say, terror attacks, strikes, and provocations against Israel.

It should be noted that the terror organization of Hezbollah has no legal international status that allows it to make territorial claims, certainly not to mount military attacks or defenses on their basis. The representation of Hezbollah as the guardian of Lebanon is a lie, meant to screen its violation of international law. As far as there is any dispute regarding the border, such dispute is between the State of Israel and the Republic of Lebanon. Hezbollah, bound to disarm itself by international agreements and UN Security Council resolutions, is a declared terror organization with no standing on policy issues.

8 <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-recognizing-golan-heights-part-state-israel/>

9 <https://israel-alma.org/2023/10/04/hezbollah-could-be-using-the-continental-dispute-mediation-efforts-as-a-diversion-to-prepare-for-confrontation/>

As of today, the border fence erected by Israel deviates slightly from the Blue Line into Israeli territory along a few points, mainly for topographic reasons. The fence creates enclaves of a sort – areas that are technically outside the physical border but within the Blue Line. In such an area, for instance, did the Hezbollah tent outpost incident occur.¹⁰

Recently, Israel and Lebanon deposited agreed upon geographical points for a maritime boundary five kilometers out to sea with the UN. The land disputes, including the demarcated maritime border up to five kilometers out remained in status quo.¹¹

In summation:

- A.** There is no formal border agreement between Israel and Lebanon
- B.** However, there is a historical, accepted, internationally recognized border.
- C.** After Israel withdrew from Lebanon, Hezbollah found itself in need of a new purpose for its existence and operations. Therefore, despite it being rejected by the international community, the terror organization perpetuates the claim that Israel occupies Lebanese territory, in order to justify its continued so-called resistance – meaning acts of terror, strikes and provocations against Israel.
- D.** A distinction must be made between border points disagreements, regarding which the UN Secretary General has accepted Israel's position, and territorial disputes. All territory formerly belonging to Syria is irrelevant to territorial disputes between Lebanon and Israel.
- E.** Both border points disagreements and territorial disputes are matters that pertain to the relations between the states of Lebanon and Israel. The terror organization Hezbollah has no status in this context.

10 <https://www.jns.org/israel-news/iran/23/6/21/297050/>

11 <http://main.knesset.gov.il/Activity/Documents/LebanonMBLAgreement.pdf>

▶ 2 | UN Security Council Resolution 1701

On July 7, 2006, Hezbollah launched an attack on Israel along the Lebanon border. During the attack three IDF soldiers were killed, and two reserve soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, were abducted. An Israeli tank giving chase encountered a land mine causing the instant death of four more soldiers. In the wake of this attack, Israel declared the “Second Lebanon War”.¹²

After close to a month of fighting, Israel withdrew from Lebanon back to the (Blue Line) border under UN Security Council Resolution 1701 provisions and with full reliance on its contents.¹³ Lebanon, on its part, also endorsed the Security Council resolution.¹⁴

While Resolution 1701 was not adopted under UN Charter Chapter VII (granting the authority to use force for enforcing its decisions) it did determine that the situation in Lebanon endangers international peace and security. This is a prerequisite for adopting decisions under Chapter VII.

The main points of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, 12.8.2006¹⁵ are as follows:

- A.** The Security Council stresses the importance of the full application of Lebanese sovereignty over all of Lebanon, including the dissolution of all military forces not subject to the Lebanese government. In other words: Hezbollah and other armed forces long residing in the country (Palestinian and Syrian among others) must be disarmed, in line with UN Security Council resolutions 1559¹⁶ and 1681¹⁷ as well as the Taif Agreement,¹⁸ which all carried similar provisions.
- B.** Security arrangements for the area between the Litani river and the Blue Line to prevent the resumption of hostilities. In this security strip, there shall be no presence of any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL.
- C.** The UNIFIL force will be increased to 15,000 soldiers to ensure the security arrangements and the security strip demilitarization apart from the Lebanon Army. In other words – the security strip must be a Hezbollah-free area. To fulfill this mission, UNIFIL activity may extend to the North of Lebanon, per the Lebanese government’s request.
- D.** The Security Council calls for the full implementation of the Taif Agreement as well as Resolutions 1559 and 1680, which called for the disarmament of all armed forces in Lebanon. In other words – dismantling Hezbollah.
- E.** An international embargo on any technical training, assistance, provision, maintenance, sale or supply of weapons and military equipment not authorized by the Government of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon, assisted by UNIFIL forces, is charged with securing its borders to prevent the entry of such unauthorized weapons and military equipment.

12 Government Decision 258, 12.07.2006 https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2006_des258

13 Government Decision 373, 13.08.2006 https://www.gov.il/he/departments/policies/2006_des373 <https://www.gov.il/en/Departments/General/behind-the-headlines-un-security-council-resolution-1701-12-aug-2006>

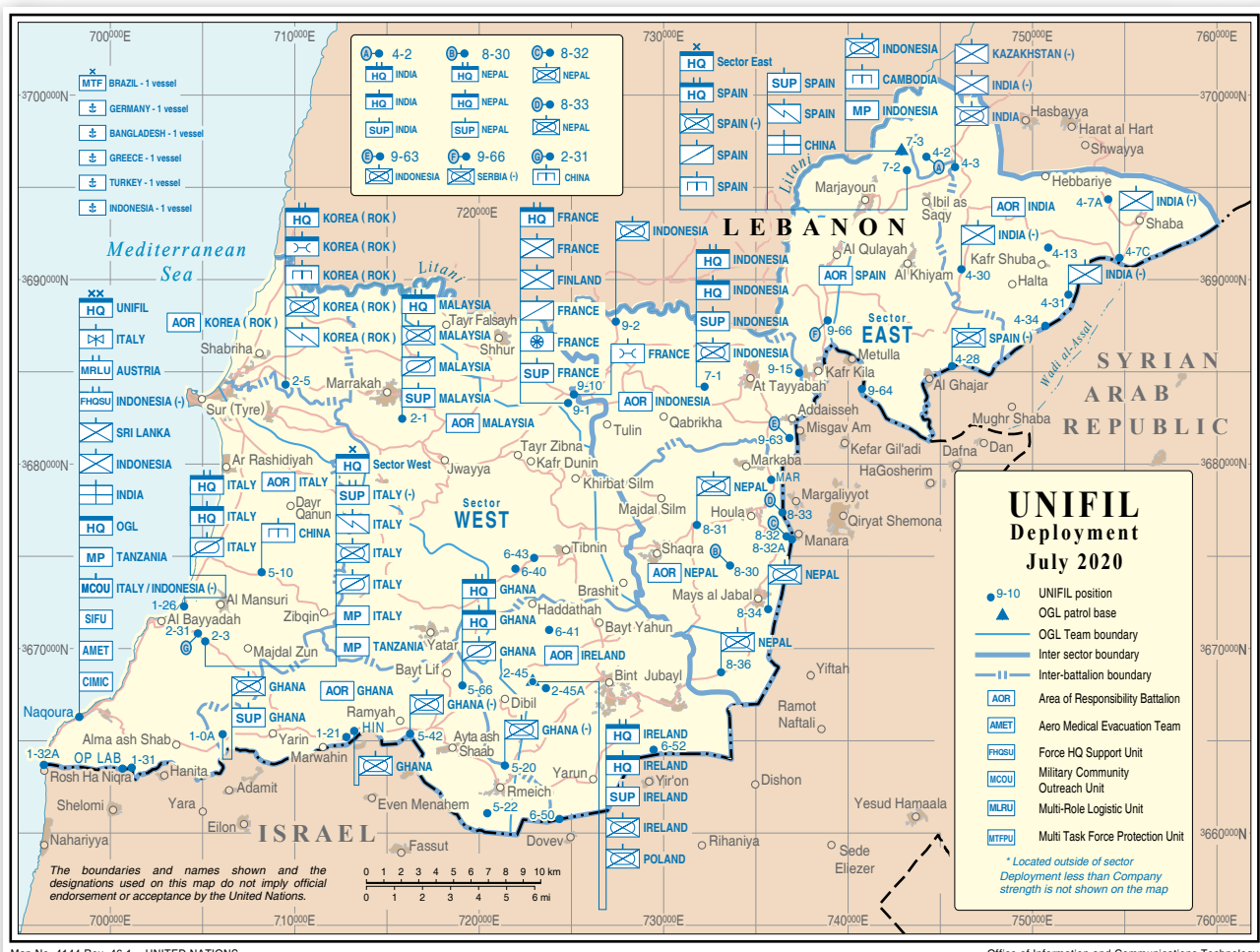
14 <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2006-08-13-voa9/400298.html>

15 Resolution 1701 (2006) / adopted by the Security Council at its 5511th meeting, on 11 August 2006. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/581053>

16 Resolution 1559 (2004) / adopted by the Security Council at its 5028th meeting, on 2 September 2004 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/529421>

17 Resolution 1681 (2006) / adopted by the Security Council at its 5450th meeting, on 31 May 2006 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/576176>

18 https://www.un.int/lebanon/sites/www.un.int/files/Lebanon/the_tauf_agreement_english_version_.pdf



[United Nations Geospatial Information Section ICTD Department of Field Support – UNIFIL deployment between the Blue Line and the Litani, per UN resolution 1701, July 2020]

However, since 2006, every single provision has, in fact, been violated by Hezbollah and the Government of Lebanon:

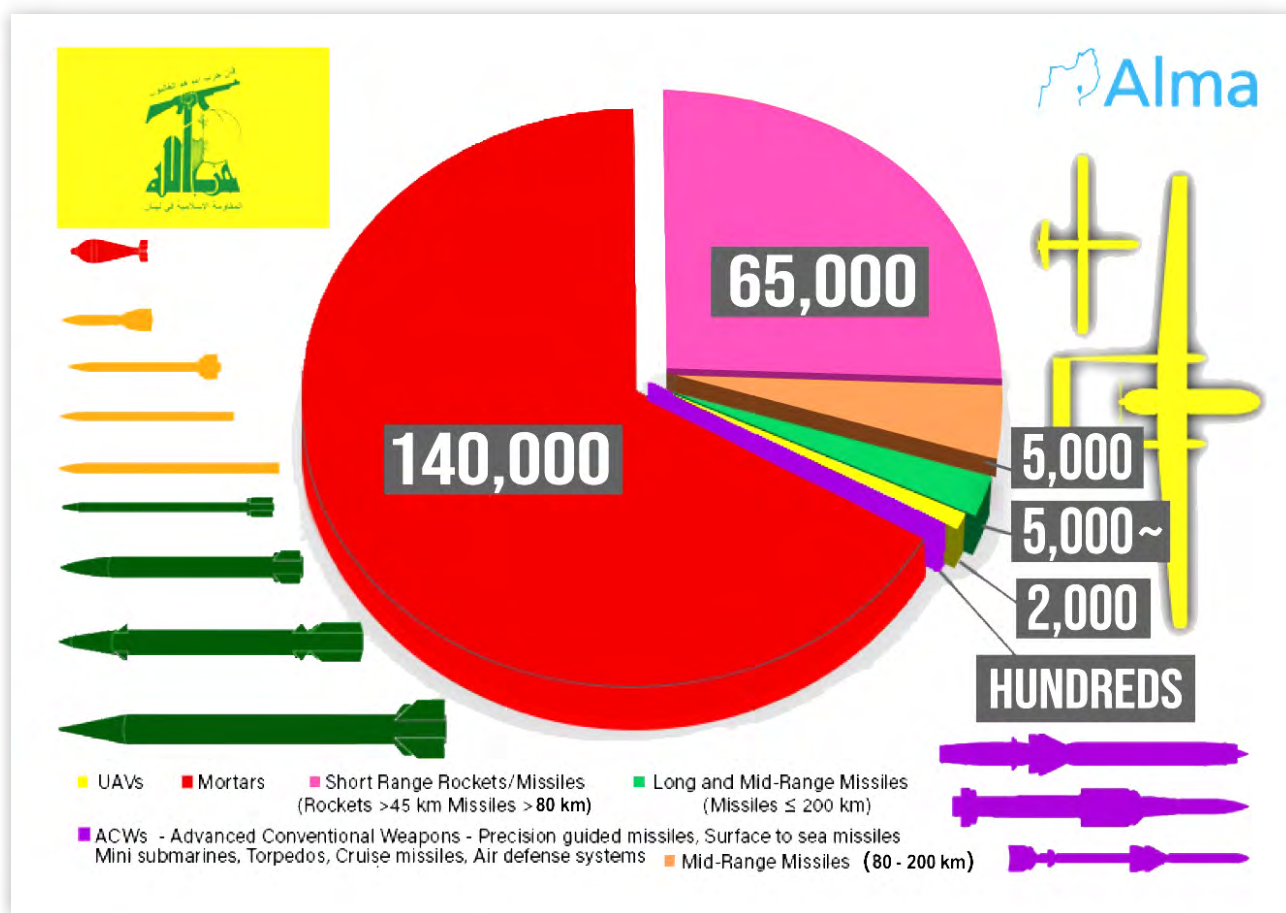
- A. The Government of Lebanon has not applied its sovereignty and has not disbanded Hezbollah, despite the numerous assurances it gave the international community, and despite the UN Security Council’s directive.
- B. The Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL have not created a demilitarized security strip between the Blue Line and the Litani river.
- C. A large, ever-growing amount of weaponry has been delivered to Hezbollah.
- D. Hezbollah has repeatedly conducted strikes on Israel, erected military facilities on the border, dug attack tunnels and sent raiding parties and UAVs into Israeli territory, and more.
- E. Hezbollah committed and continues to commit war crimes, including carrying out terror attacks on civilian non-combatants, preparing the infrastructure for capturing towns, launching artillery fire at civilian noncombatants and more.



[Attack tunnel route discovered by Israel - IDF spokesperson]



[Hezbollah military facilities in Southern Lebanon, from the Israeli delegation's UN presentation]



[Hezbollah weapons arsenal – Alma Research Center]

UN Resolution 1701 constituted an international anchor for the armistice agreement ratified simultaneously by Israel and Lebanon.

In implementing the armistice and the resolution's provisions, Israel did its part – ceased fire and withdrew behind the Blue Line, while Lebanon, Hezbollah and the international community did not carry out their obligations in the slightest.

This asymmetry in fulfilling the agreement is what created the severe security and strategic risk to Israel on its northern border. This risk materialized in the immediate aftermath of the Oct. 7 massacre, when Hezbollah opened daily fire on Israel, costing civilian and military lives.

Demonstrably, the international mechanisms have failed, and Israel has no choice but to defend its borders, its citizens, and the integrity of its territory on its own. Israel is justified in doing everything necessary on its own, while the international community, having failed to enforce its resolutions, must fully support their doing so.

▶ 3 | International Law and the Potential Widescale Israeli Attack on Hezbollah

Hezbollah is a Shi'ite Lebanese terror organization operating as a political party, an economic enterprise, and a military force numbering tens of thousands, which governs large Shi'ite majority areas of Lebanon. Its widespread military, political and social network is often referred to as a "state within a state".¹⁹ Hezbollah has been recognized as a terror organization in approximately thirty countries, among them the US, Canada, Great Britain, and Germany.²⁰

As noted above, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1701 in 2006, at the close of the Second Lebanon War. The resolution was meant to usher in a new reality in which the Government of Lebanon, assisted by UNIFIL forces, would be the sole sovereign of its territory, with the disarmament of Hezbollah and other armed organizations, and the creation of a demilitarized security strip between the Blue Line and the Litani river.

What actually transpired, however, was the severe violation of international agreements and resolutions. The dissolution and disarmament of Hezbollah was a marked failure, as the UN Secretary General himself reports twice every year.²¹ Various estimates put Hezbollah forces at around 50,000 soldiers and 150 thousand missiles.²²

Hezbollah has throughout the years repeatedly launched attacks from north of the border on Israel, maiming, killing and abducting Israeli soldiers, erecting military installations on the border, digging attack tunnels, sending raiding parties and UAVs into Israeli territory and more.

The day after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, Hezbollah launched rockets and shells at IDF posts.²³ Between the 7th and the 14th of November, 170 anti-tank missiles, shells, drones and rockets were launched at Israel. Under such circumstances, Israel was forced to evacuate all citizens living within five kilometers of the border.²⁴ In other words, Hezbollah's aggression has created a large number of internally displaced Israeli citizens.

Does international law grant Israel the right to initiate a war against Hezbollah aggression, including an incursion into Lebanon and attacks on Lebanese locations?

UN Charter's Article 51 grants the "inherent right" to self-defense from "armed attack"²⁵. The right to self-defense is not limited to defense from an attack by a state party but from a terrorist organization like Hezbollah as well. This is absolutely clear from the international community's general practice as it has been formed in the war against terror groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS.

19 "[What is Hezbollah?](#)", Council on Foreign Relations.

20 "[Global Designations of Hezbollah as a Terror Organization](#)", Eye on Hezbollah.

21 See [UNIFIL documents, bi-yearly reports on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701](#) (2006)

22 <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/security-aviation/2023-10-23/ty-article-magazine/150-000-rockets-and-missiles-the-weapons-israel-would-encounter-in-a-war-with-hezbollah/0000018b-573d-d2b2-addf-777df6210000>

23 "[Israel, Hezbollah exchange artillery, rocket fire](#)", Reuters, October 8, 2023

24 "[Gaza War Shows Heightened Risk of Escalation in the Region](#)", Andrew J. Tabler, Washington Institute. November 17, 2023

25 "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security".

Test Case: Al-Qaeda

Following the 9/11 terror attack, the UN Security Council passed Resolutions 1468 and 1373 condemning the al-Qaeda attack, stressing the right to self-defense in the face of a terror attack by a non-state entity and calling upon countries to act against international terrorism.

The US and the United Kingdom announced their invasion of Afghanistan in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, as the 9/11 attacks were carried out subsequent to the Taliban allowing Al-Qaeda to use its territory as a base of operations²⁶. As President George W. Bush said in his speech to the people on September 17, 2001, the US does not differentiate between the terrorists who carried out the attack and the ones who sheltered them:

“Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated... Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists... We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”²⁷.

The US, then, attributed the 9/11 attack to the state of Afghanistan itself, despite the fact that Taliban officials did not control al-Qaeda and denied any involvement in or prior knowledge of the attack.

Furthermore, for the first time since its foundation, NATO employed Article 5, according to which an attack on one member state would be considered an attack on all. Similar stances were taken by the Organization of American States and ANZUS alliance (US, Australia and New Zealand).²⁸

Following the invasion of Afghanistan, states developed the understanding that a state that had been attacked was permitted to use force against a terror organization operating in a third party state, when the third party state is unwilling or unable to fight it themselves (the “unwilling or unable” test).²⁹ This standard was officially endorsed by the coalition of countries that fought ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Test Case: ISIS

In 2014, the terror organization ISIS conquered large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria and systematically murdered Christians, Shi’ites, Yazidis, and other “infidels”. The US, along with the United Kingdom, France and others, conducted an offensive military campaign against ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq. Iraq called the Western countries to its aid, but Syria opposed external interference. Western countries could not therefore justify their actions in Syria as per the host country’s request or consent. In a letter to the UN Secretary General, American ambassador to the UN Samantha Powers justified the campaign against ISIS on the grounds that Syria was unwilling and unable to oppose the organization itself.³⁰

26 Letter dated 7 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2001/946 (7 Oct 2001); and Letter dated 7 October 2001 from the Chargé d’ Affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2001/947 (7 Oct 2001).

27 See “Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks” (11 Sept 2001), 37 Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 1301 (17 Sept 2001); “Authorization for Use of Military Force”, Public Law No 107–140, 115 Stat 224 (18 Sept 2001), para 2(a).

28 Scharf, Michael P. “How the war against ISIS changed international law”. *Case W. Res. J. Int’l L.* 48 (2016): p. 41.

29 See Bethlehem, Daniel. “Self-defense against an imminent or actual armed attack by nonstate actors”. *American Journal of International Law* 106.4 (2012): 770-777. Principles 11 and 12; Also, Wilmshurst, Elizabeth. “The Chatham House Principles of International Law on the Use of Force in Self-Defence1”. *International & Comparative Law Quarterly* 55.4 (2006): 963-972. Principle 6; and Schrijver, Nico, and Larissa Van Den Herik. “Leiden Policy Recommendations on Counter-terrorism and International Law”. *Netherlands International Law Review* 57.3 (2010): 531-550. Par. 32.

30 Letter from Samantha J. Power, Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, to Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (Sept. 23, 2014), available at <https://www.justsecurity.org/15436/war-powers-resolution-article-51-letters-force-syria-isis-khorasan-group/> [https://perma.cc/2Z37-LHPCJ].

In October and November of 2015, ISIS carried out terror attacks in France and the Sinai, killing over eight hundred people, following which the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2249, which designated ISIS “an unprecedented global threat” and called for “all possible means...to eliminate ISIS havens in Syria”.

Many countries explicitly endorsed the “unwilling or unable” standard, amongst them the US, Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Canada and Australia.³¹

Evidently, it follows that, according to customary international law, Israel may act against Hezbollah on Lebanese soil for the purposes of self-defense. There is no doubt that hundreds of attacks on Israeli towns and Israeli military targets constitute an “armed attack” for the purpose of the UN Charter’s Article 51, even if the border skirmishes are limited and not always sufficient to meet the definition.³²

This is even more definitively so in the current context, considering the scope of the hostilities and the adjacency to the war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. For nearly two decades, Lebanon has failed to carry out its obligations under resolution 1701 and is therefore unwilling or unable to act to disband Hezbollah or create the security arrangements that include demilitarizing the area between the Blue Line and the Litani river. Primarily, Hezbollah openly threatens millions of Israeli citizens.

In Summation:

- A.** States have the right to self-defense, in the sense of the laws of war, against non-state entities as well as state actors.
- B.** It is permissible to launch an attack on a state unwilling or unable to take on an entity residing within its borders which carries out attacks on another state.
- C.** UN Security Council resolutions obligate the disarmament of Hezbollah and the preservation of a security strip between the Blue Line and the Litani river. These duties have not been fulfilled.
- D.** Not only is Lebanon unwilling or unable to ensure Hezbollah does not attack Israel, but the international community has proved unequal to the task of creating effective enforcement mechanisms.
- E.** Therefore, under international law, Israel may conduct a full-scale military operation in Lebanon to ensure its security.

31 [“Which States Support the ‘Unwilling and Unable’ Test?”](#), Elena Chachko and Ashley Deeks, Lawfare, October 10, 2016

32 Dinstein Y. War, Aggression and Self-Defence. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2001.

► 4 | The Proposal of American Special Envoy Amos Hochstein

The Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, identified with Hezbollah, and the Saudi Al-Hadath channel reported that American Special Envoy Amos Hochstein proposed an outline for a comprehensive deal aimed at the resolution of the Israel-Lebanon conflict.³³ Under this proposal, Israel will make territorial concessions in exchange for the implementation of Resolution 1701 regarding the withdrawal of Hezbollah beyond the Litani river.

Analysis of the proposal's components:

A. Lebanon receives sovereignty of the contested Naqura Bay B1 point

As of today, Israel has full sovereignty over this point, which constitutes the initial point of the vector demarcating Israel's territorial waters. Conceding the point means conceding the "buoy line" recently agreed upon in the Israel-Lebanon maritime boundary deal. This maritime area is of significant importance to Israel's security, and Israel's government stressed the importance of preserving the buoy line as agreed upon in the deal.³⁴

B. Israel will withdraw from the thirteen contested points on the border along the Blue Line demarcation

The Secretary General's report, endorsed by the Security Council on June 18, 2000, stated that Israel withdrew from all Lebanese territory and fulfilled its obligations in accordance with Resolution 425, pursuant to the IDF withdrawal to the Blue Line after "Operation Litani" in 1978.³⁵ In other words, there is no basis for any claim, by Hezbollah or Lebanon, that Israel annexed Lebanese territory in these thirteen contested points.³⁶

C. Israel will withdraw from Shebaa Farmlands, handing them over to international forces

According to the UN Secretary-General's report from May 22, 2000, the Shebaa Farmlands were Syrian owned until 1967. Consequently, Lebanon has no justification for any territorial claim.³⁷ Regarding the areas Israel captured from Syria, it should be clarified that Israel applied its government to the territory in The Golan Heights Law, with the US recently recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.³⁸ That is to say, the territory is under Israeli sovereignty following the takeover from Syria and as such irrelevant to Israel-Lebanon relations, even more so when the claims are being made by a terror organization.

D. Resolution 1701 regarding the security strip between the Blue Line and the Litani river will be implemented

As previously detailed, Resolution 1701 has never been implemented. The resolution demands the full

33 <https://allisrael.com/discussions-for-solution-to-lebanon-issue-and-removing-hezbollah-forces-becoming-intense>

34 <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/13164415>
<https://www.inss.org.il/publication/israel-lebanon-agreement/>

35 <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/368/70/PDF/NR036870.pdf?OpenElement>

36 "The Legal Status of the Shabaa Farms", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 08.04.2000 <https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/the-legal-status-of-the-shabaa-farms-8-apr-2002#:~:text=The%20Shabaa%20Farms%20area%20is,Farms%20area%20as%20Syrian%20territory>

37 Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978)

38 <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-recognizing-golan-heights-part-state-israel/>

disarmament of Hezbollah, and a weapons embargo on all military forces not part of the Lebanon army, besides creating security arrangements between the Blue Line and the Litani river. It seems Israel is once more being promised the same broken promise to implement Resolution 1701. The reason Israel is strategically threatened on its northern border is precisely the weakness of international guarantees and promises. What good is another promise and how is such a promise equivalent to the Israeli concessions outlined in Hochstein's proposal?

The international community should demand the disarmament of Hezbollah in accordance with Resolution 1701 and not pressure Israel to grant Hezbollah and Lebanon strategic gains in reward for their aggression.

Moreover, the meaning of Hochstein's proposal is to grant a strategic award for Hezbollah's efforts to craft the narrative of being the ultimate "protector of Lebanon". This achievement would be gained by the Oct 7 massacre, Hezbollah joining the war and the failure to secure any concessions from Lebanon or Hezbollah. The events of October 7 and Hezbollah joining the war must be answered by a dramatic strategic deficit for the terror organization and its northern neighbor, not by gains.

It should further be noted that even if armed forces were indeed removed beyond the Litani, Hezbollah missiles would continue to pose a constant threat to the state of Israel, aside from the fact that in many areas, such as the one surrounding Metulla, the Litani river is in close proximity to the Israeli border.

Special Envoy Hochstein's proposal impairs Israel's strategic position. The proposal demands nationally, strategically, and consciously significant territorial concessions from Israel in exchange for a vague promise to implement a small portion of Resolution 1701, the implementation of said resolution having already been promised over and over in the past.

► 5 | The International Community's Obligations

Resolution 1701 failed in each of its components, and it is now incumbent upon the international community to see to its full implementation – first and foremost the complete dissolution of the Hezbollah organization and all other terror organizations on Lebanese soil. This in addition to enforcing the weapons embargo on all terror organizations in Lebanon and maintaining strict security arrangements between the Blue Line and the Litani river and beyond it in places where the two are in close proximity.

Such responsibility incumbent on the international community is based on its obligation to see to the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the need to halt a preventable war between Israel and Lebanon. Insofar as the international community shirks its responsibilities, two consequences will clearly come about. Firstly, it will become impossible to end wars by armistice agreements that are backed by international guarantees, since no country will rely on broken reeds for its security. Secondly, war will break out between Israel and Lebanon the consequences of which not only Hezbollah will suffer, but the entire country of Lebanon, its citizens and infrastructure.

The international community has a rare opportunity to act in real time to realize the original goal of international law – prevent unnecessary wars and minimize unnecessary harm. If the international community cannot rise to the occasion, Israel has not only the right but the obligation to see to the security of its citizens and clear its northern border of terror organizations, the consequences of the presence of which were just recently witnessed by the free West in the Gaza Strip.