



August 25 • Israel/Lebanon

Israel–Lebanon strikes raise concerns of major conflict

Background

On August 25, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) carried out a series of preemptive strikes against Lebanon-based Hezbollah forces in southern governorates of Lebanon ([Samdesk incident](#)) shortly before 5 am, local time, (2:00 GMT), alleging that the group was preparing to fire rockets into Israel in retaliation to the assassination of its senior military commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut in July. The operation involved dozens of fighter jets, targeting Hezbollah launch sites within Lebanon. In response, Hezbollah launched at least 320 Katyusha rockets against multiple Israeli military bases and barracks in northern regions of Israel, including an intelligence base at Gilot, near Tel Aviv, the Meron base, and four sites in Golan Heights ([Samdesk incident](#)).

Analysis

The exchange of fire between Israel and Hezbollah marked a significant escalation in the cross-border attacks that have been taking place since the October 7 attacks. During the clashes, a state of emergency was declared by Israel for 48 hours beginning at 6am, local time, local time, (03:00 GMT) ([Samdesk incident](#)). The crisis disrupted flights at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv for several hours, with some flights canceled and others diverted to Be'er Ora, southern Israel. ([Samdesk incident](#)). Similarly,

multiple flights to Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport were also canceled ([Samdesk incident](#)). Both sides reported minimal casualties and damage. An Israeli soldier was killed and two were injured when shrapnel from the Iron Dome interceptor hit a boat. In Lebanon, airstrikes killed at least three people in the south.

The event was short-lived with a return to tit-for-tat skirmishes at the border region between Israel and Lebanon. This situation is likely to be protracted as Hezbollah has vowed to fight until a settlement is reached in the Israel-Palestine conflict. It is also unclear how effective Israeli airstrikes were at diminishing Hezbollah's potential to carry out attacks. Before the strikes, the group was estimated to possess 135,000 to 150,000 [rockets](#) and missiles.

Despite vowing an armed response to the assassination of Shukur on July 30, Hezbollah's purported retaliatory attack on Israel took almost a month to pull together. During this time Israel carried out increased attacks within Lebanon and the US deployed more warships and fighter jets to the region.

On August 25, Hezbollah declared it had completed the "first phase" of its retaliation, and the situation de-escalated soon after. However, both sides have warned they are prepared to strike again.

Risk of escalation remains

Although both sides say they are keen to avoid an all-out war, further escalation, including an Israeli ground offensive, is possible, bearing in mind the following considerations:

- i) New Israeli strike that threatens the Hezbollah leadership
- ii. Mass Israeli civilian casualty incident

Iran's response

Amid the conflict in Lebanon, Iran had also previously warned of its own retaliation following the killing of the leader of Hamas' political wing, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran. Although fears of an all-out war have subsided, the United States still believes Iran is ready to launch an attack should it decide to. In such an event, Iran is likely to coordinate with Hezbollah, its best-trained and funded proxy group, to escalate military operations.

Escalation indicators

In the event of a further crisis, samdesk is monitoring for the following indicators:

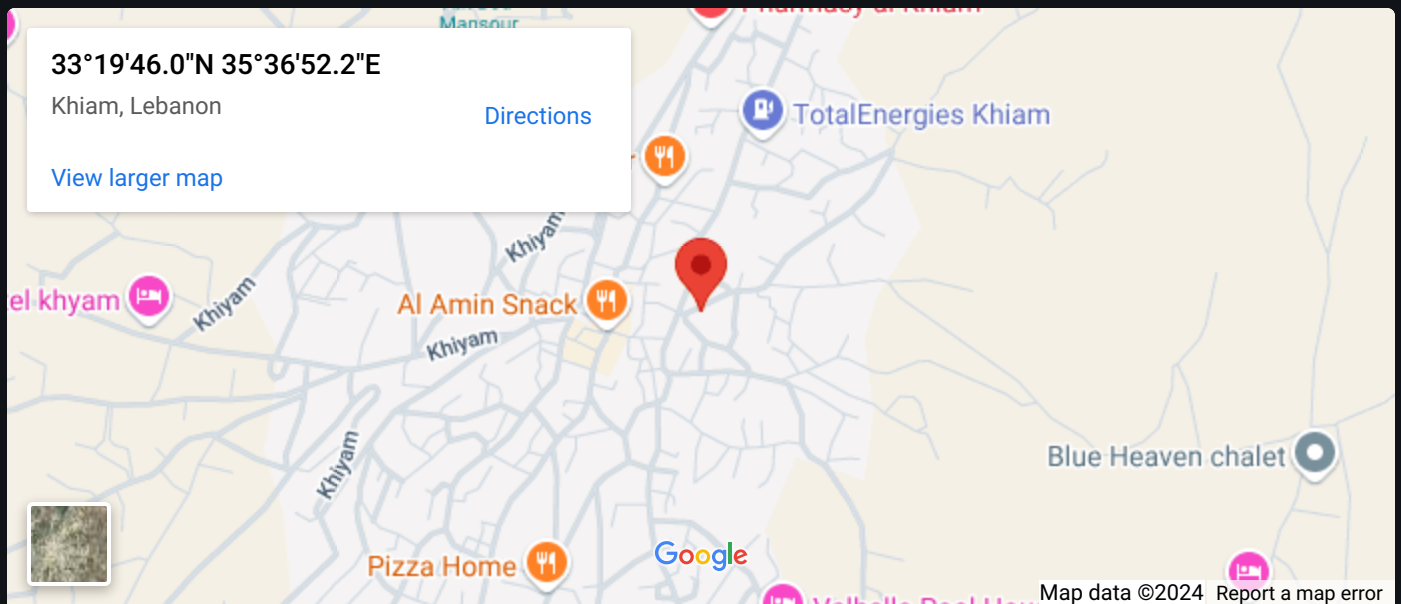
- Evacuation of US citizens and diplomats from Lebanon;
- Mass airstrikes/rocket attacks between the borders of Israel and Lebanon;
- Reports of Israeli troops crossing the border into southern Lebanon;
- Major communication disruptions in Lebanon.

Further reading

Five key takeaways from Nasrallah's speech after Hezbollah-Israel attacks

Israel, Lebanon to avoid further escalation for now but warn of future strikes

White House says Iran still 'poised' to attack Israel as top general says war fears have 'eased'



Interactive Map

View Map

Stream Suggestions

Topics

- ✓ Top Headlines
- ✓ Emergency and Safety
- ✓ Geopolitics

✓ Infrastructure

Locations

Beqaa Governorate, Lebanon; Nabatiyeh Governorate, Lebanon; South Governorate, Lebanon; North District, Israel; South District, Israel; Iran

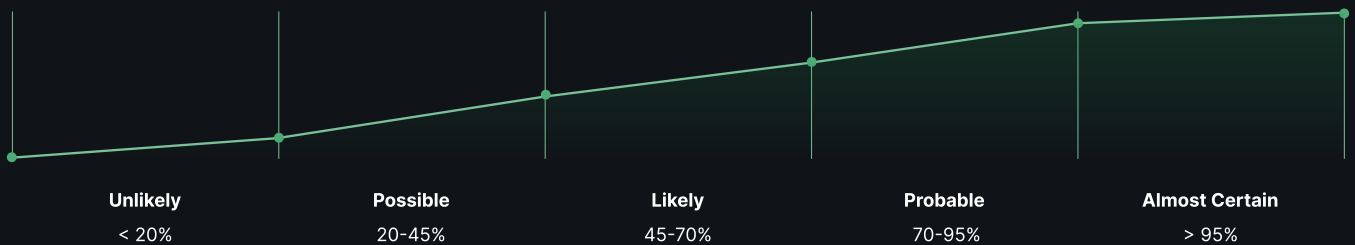
Keywords (Optional)

- Armed Clash
- Explosion
- Curfew
- Lockdown
- Military Action
- Air Raid Sirens
- Missile Threat
- State of Emergency
- Missile Strike
- Airspace Closure

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What we mean when we say:



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