

## Security provision in Southern Lebanon

### Surveying public opinion

In July 2006, following a series of cross-border incursions by Hezbollah into Israeli territory and the capture of two Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) personnel, Israel initiated a 24-day bombing campaign in Southern Lebanon.<sup>1</sup> During the campaign, Israel fired more than 100,000 shells from land and sea positions, destroying much of Southern Lebanon's physical infrastructure and displacing an estimated one million civilians.<sup>2</sup> An initial estimate put the number of Lebanese deaths—mostly civilian—at between 1,000 and 1,200, with more than 4,000 additional non-

fatal casualties. In response, Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Northern Israel, killing dozens of Israeli civilians and wounding hundreds more.<sup>3</sup>

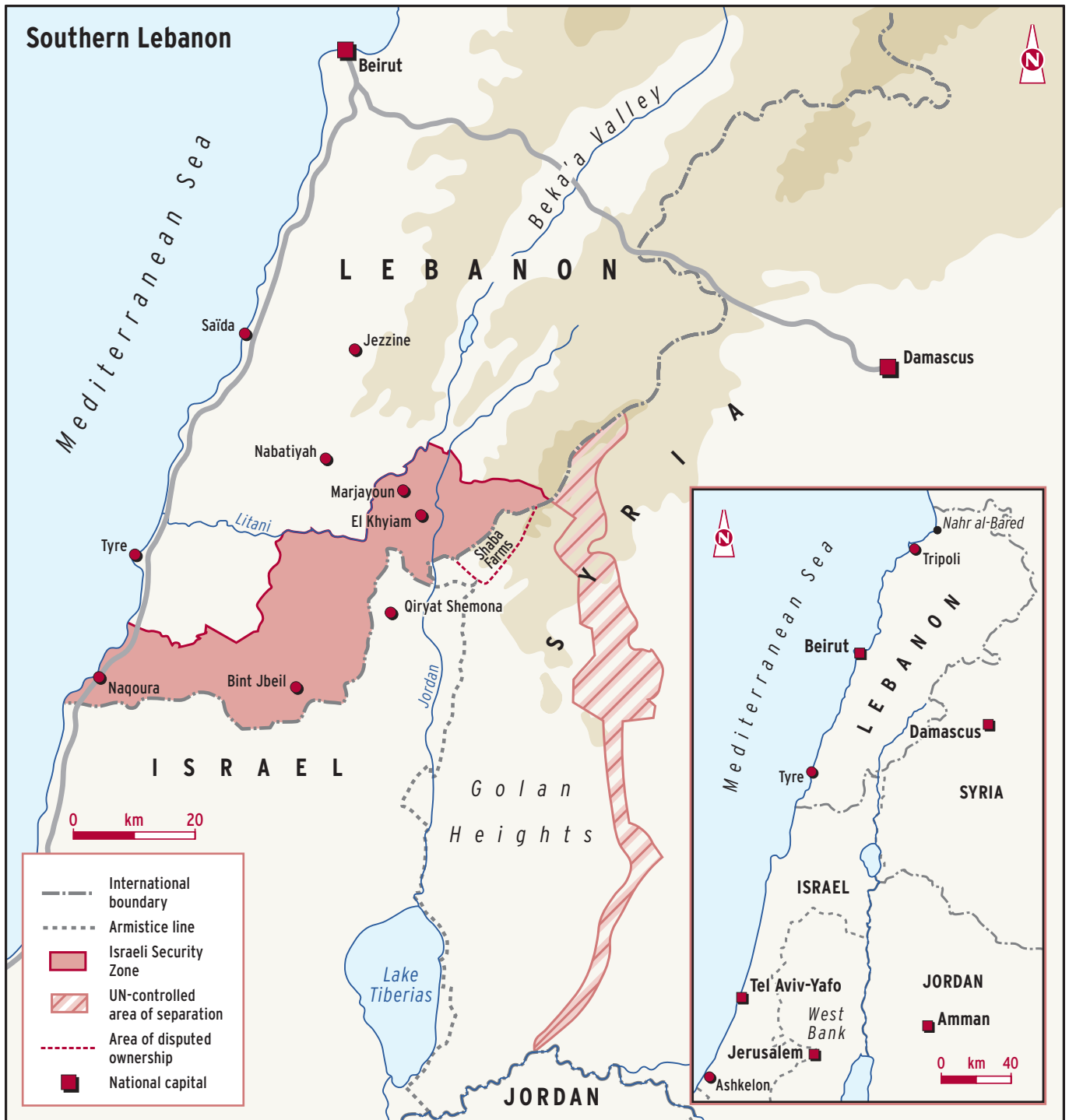
The 2006 war was the most serious encounter between Israeli forces and Hezbollah since the latter's formal establishment in 1985, raising a number of critical questions about security and arms holdings in Southern Lebanon. While Hezbollah was the de facto security provider in Southern Lebanon, it was unclear the extent to which their military actions were supported by the local population, or whether the

2006 war in fact increased southerners' favourable perception of Hezbollah. Further, although knowledge of illicit arms flows to Hezbollah was widespread, the conflict was the first significant, extended engagement in which the extent of Hezbollah's weapons capacity and reach was revealed. How would the conflict affect further weapons procurement by armed groups and individuals in Southern Lebanon?

Quantitative and qualitative research on arms, armed groups, and security provision in Southern Lebanon is extremely limited. Local sensitivities



Amal militants take cover and trade fire with government-aligned Sunni forces during the opposition's siege of Beirut in May 2008. © Matthew Cassel



surrounding arms issues are undoubtedly one reason for this. Many Lebanese, armed or otherwise, are suspicious of social scientists undertaking research in the south of the country.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since many weapons under civilian control are technically illegal, it is difficult to determine the number and type of small arms using traditional methods of investigation; most weapons are simply not registered and there is no official accounting for their ownership or transfer in the national firearms registry database.<sup>5</sup>

In order to bridge this research gap, in mid-2008 the Lebanon Armed Violence Assessment (LAVA) undertook the most extensive public survey to date on arms and security issues in Southern Lebanon.<sup>6</sup> The LAVA survey included interviews with some 1,388 households in southern and administrative districts ('qazas') under the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Security Council mandate. This first in a series of *Issue Briefs* discusses the key findings emerging from the survey as they relate to public attitudes towards

security provision.<sup>7</sup> Key findings include the following:

- Southern Lebanese, whatever their political affiliations, express strong support for public security institutions, with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and police consistently cited as preferred security providers.
- Although both supporters and non-supporters of Hezbollah said they would turn to the police if threatened physically, supporters of Hezbollah were eight times more



likely than non-supporters to indicate that they would first turn to a community elder for assistance.

- Less than a quarter of the population believes that expanding the presence of UNIFIL on the border with Israel would enhance community safety.
- Although it is often assumed that Hezbollah is broadly popular among southerners, it appears that support for non-state armed groups in general—and Hezbollah in particular—is at least partially overestimated.
- Hezbollah supporters were much less likely than non-party supporters to feel that an increased UN presence on the border with Israel would make their community safer.

This *Issue Brief* reviews the background to the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war, describing the key state and non-state security actors and armed groups present in Southern Lebanon. It then presents the LAVA survey and its results, followed by a brief discussion of the implications for Lebanese stakeholders and supporters seeking to improve human security in the region.

## Background

The recent conflict with Israel is intricately connected to Lebanese history and identity; in no part of the country is this truer than in the south. By the late 1960s Lebanon was home to some 300,000 Palestinian refugees, mostly unwanted by the Lebanese and increasingly militarized following the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964. The Cairo Agreement of 1969 granted the PLO a semi-autonomous base of operations in Southern Lebanon from which to organize its armed struggle, with growing military and financial support from Arab governments.<sup>8</sup>

Sectarian tensions ignited in 1975, precipitating a bloody multiphase, multiparty civil war that would last until 1990, claimed as many as 150,000 lives, and virtually destroyed representational government.<sup>9</sup> Vicious inter-sectarian militia violence soon drew in foreign actors, including Syrian troops

in 1976. Threatened by the proximity of Syrian forces and responding to PLO attacks, the IDF invaded the country in 1978, progressing as far as the Litani River, the traditional dividing line between Northern and Southern Lebanon. Although the IDF withdrew in compliance with UN Security Council resolutions,<sup>10</sup> Israel maintained influence through allied Christian Lebanese militias, leading to ongoing violence in the south. The Security Council-mandated UNIFIL was largely unable to provide adequate security.<sup>11</sup>

The IDF bombed and then invaded the country once again in June 1982 in an attempt to expel the PLO from Southern Lebanon. The fighting brought Israel into direct confrontation with Syrian, leftist, and Lebanese Muslim forces. In that same year, a multinational force composed of Italian, French, and US troops arrived to oversee the withdrawal of PLO fighters from Lebanon.<sup>12</sup> By 1985 Israel had withdrawn most of its troops, but established a Security Zone within Southern Lebanon, which it deemed crucial for its security and in which IDF troops patrolled. But much of Southern Lebanon remained in the hands of an Israeli-allied militia (the South Lebanon Army), which faced growing opposition from the emerging Shi'ite Islamist militia, Hezbollah.

Hezbollah came to dominate the Shi'ite landscape in Lebanon, sup-

planting the Amal Movement as the principal militia force in the south (see Box 1). It also waged low-intensity warfare against IDF forces in the Security Zone, prompting Israel to launch two short, but intensive, military campaigns in Southern Lebanon in July 1993 and April 1996. Israel unilaterally abandoned the Security Zone in 2000 in the face of protracted guerrilla engagement from Hezbollah. The Lebanese government was unable to fill the power vacuum in the border area and eventually ceded it to Hezbollah and Amal fighters. The south remained unstable and poorly serviced by the government.<sup>13</sup>

Hezbollah and Amal meanwhile pursued new grievances with Israel over the Shaba Farms, an Israeli-occupied area in the disputed Golan Heights zone. Only months after the IDF withdrawal in 2000, escalating Israeli–Palestinian violence sparked an engagement between the IDF and Palestinians on the Israel–Lebanon border, prompting Hezbollah to launch its first operation in Shaba, killing three Israeli soldiers.<sup>14</sup> In response, Israeli military patrols again began entering Lebanese airspace and waters. While tensions remained acute for the next six years, casualties on both sides were low. This was a period of ‘harassing fire, aggressive patrolling, and heated rhetoric’ from both parties within informally agreed boundaries.<sup>15</sup>



Israeli ordnance detonates in Zaharani, Southern Lebanon, during the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war.  
© AP Photo / Mohammed Zaatar

### Amal Movement

Harakat AMAL or the Amal Movement was founded in 1975 as the military wing of the Movement of the Disinherited. The latter consisted of a political reform group established by Iranian-born Imam Sayyed Mousa al-Sadr, Lebanese parliamentarian Hussein al-Husseini, and other young Shi'ites. At its outset the movement was distinctively Shi'ite, but communal in orientation, seeking to improve living conditions for all Lebanese.<sup>16</sup> Historically it was aligned with Syrian interests, but not exclusively so.

After Sadr's disappearance in Libya in 1978, the movement experienced a series of leadership changes. By 1980 Nabih Berri was in control and, with Syrian assistance, the group entered the Lebanese civil war against anti-Syrian Palestinian and left-wing groups such as the Druze-led Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). In 1982 Husayn al-Musawi, deputy head of Amal, broke away to form the Islamist-oriented Islamic Amal, supported by Iran. Islamic Amal quickly drew away much of the original movement's support base. By 1984 Islamic Amal was absorbed into Hezbollah, which was to clash with Amal within the context of the broader, ongoing Lebanese civil war.

In 1985-89 Amal engaged in the 'War of the Camps', a series of battles with Hezbollah- and PSP-supported Palestinian groups, prompted by years of mistreatment by Palestinians.<sup>17</sup> These battles formed an important component of the civil war's latter phase. Following the Ta'if Agreement that ended the civil war in 1989 and cemented Lebanese-Syrian relations, Amal became a mainstream political party in the national government. Nabih Berri was appointed a cabinet minister and elected speaker of the National Assembly in 1992, a position he still holds at the time of writing.

Since 2005 Amal has allied itself with Hezbollah in elections. Following Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 and Hezbollah's 2006 war with Israel, Amal entered into the Shi'ite opposition March 8 Alliance with its former enemy. It also participated in the Hezbollah-led May 2008 military occupation of the predominantly pro-government Sunni areas of West Beirut (described below).

### Hezbollah

Hezbollah was formed by defectors from Amal who were radicalized in response to the 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. During this period nationalist Palestinian and left-wing Lebanese groups failed to defend mainly Shi'ite communities located in the south, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the Beka'a Valley. Iran provided early financial and military support to the group and sent 1,500 members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to provide training in 1982, although a small number had already been in Lebanon since 1979.<sup>18</sup>

Early activities included suicide bombings against the US Marines and French forces in Beirut in 1983, the assassination of left-wing intellectuals and leaders in 1984-85, and the hijacking of a US passenger jet in 1985. Hezbollah was formally founded in February 1985. In its manifesto it undertook to expel colonial forces from Lebanon, avenge civil war killings committed by right-wing Lebanese Christian militias, and establish a consensual (rather than coercive) Islamic state in Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> The party was led by secretary general Sayyed Abbas al-Moussawi.

Soon after its inception, and following successful anti-Israeli guerrilla warfare in the south, Hezbollah challenged Amal in an intra-Shi'ite war from which it emerged victorious in 1989. While the Ta'if Agreement, adopted the same year, called for the disbandment of all non-state armed groups, the Lebanese government considered Hezbollah exempt as a 'national resistance group'.<sup>20</sup> In 1992 Moussawi was assassinated by Israel and succeeded by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

From the beginning, Hezbollah was able to shore up informal backing from poorer Shi'ite communities. In the absence of strong Lebanese state authority in most Shi'ite areas, and with the financial backing of Iran, the party was able to develop an elaborate social welfare network in poverty-stricken neighbourhoods and assist in the rebuilding of communities destroyed or damaged by Israeli bombardments.<sup>21</sup> Later it branched into road repair and other infrastructure projects. It is practically unique in Lebanon for its apparent resistance to corruption.<sup>22</sup>

Hezbollah rapidly acquired a considerable level of formal legitimacy in Lebanon. Following the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 and Syrian pullout in 2005, the party captured 14 out of 128 parliamentary seats in the 2005 elections and held

2 out of 24 cabinet ministries in the largely non-Shi'ite, anti-Syrian coalition government. While its perceived victory in the 2006 war with Israel further consolidated its influence and importance in Southern Lebanon and regionally, concern over Hezbollah's armed presence was growing in the Beirut government.

In May 2008 a long-standing political crisis exploded when the ruling coalition sought to shut down Hezbollah's military telecommunications network and remove an airport security chief allegedly close to the party. Hezbollah and its opposition partners responded by seizing control of most of pro-government West Beirut.<sup>23</sup> The domestic conflict, which threatened to return the country to civil war, ended only when the ruling majority agreed to key political demands of the Hezbollah-led opposition.<sup>24</sup> During the Israeli occupation, Hezbollah is thought to have had only 450-500 active fighters. In 2006 its strength was estimated to be 1,000-1,200 active members and 6,000-10,000 volunteers operating in reserve.<sup>25</sup>

### Lebanese Armed Forces

The LAF is historically regarded as a weak, poorly resourced, and ineffective fighting force. This weakness is a reflection of long-standing sectarian tension. From independence onwards, ruling elites expressed an interest in suppressing the army's power and authority, although Islamic groups in particular hoped the LAF would be competent enough to defend the country from Israeli attack.<sup>26</sup>

During the civil war, the LAF was divided along sectarian lines, with some soldiers siding with the government and others defecting to the militias. In 1987 the entire military consisted of an estimated 15,000-18,000 men, supplied with minimal US, British, and French weapons.<sup>27</sup> The LAF has rarely, if ever, undertaken offensive engagements; it has traditionally deployed to supervise elections.<sup>28</sup>

Prior to the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war there was no LAF presence in the former Israeli Security Zone and it was largely a bystander to the 2006 conflict.<sup>29</sup> For purposes of extending the government's control over the region, UN Security Council Resolution 1701 called for the deployment of Lebanese troops throughout Southern Lebanon, with UNIFIL support.<sup>30</sup> About 15,000 troops had been deployed south of the Litani River as of late 2007, with a further 8,000 in the Lebanese-Syrian border area.<sup>31</sup>

In May 2007, 2,000 LAF soldiers took part in suppressing a violent attack by Fatah al-Islam, an Islamist group of uncertain origin, in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp in Northern Lebanon. This episode, in which 169 LAF troops, 222 militants, and 42 civilians were killed, is the most significant military engagement the LAF has carried out in the post-civil war period. While the casualties were high, it demonstrated that the army could be effective, despite being ill-equipped and suffering from coordination difficulties.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, the LAF has shown that it is one of the few Lebanese institutions in the post-Syrian era that most citizens trust. One recent analysis finds that it has become more representative, balanced, and capable, although it is still far from being able to secure the state's monopoly on the use of force.<sup>33</sup> In 2008 the LAF had a combined strength of about 54,000 men.<sup>34</sup> The government ended mandatory conscription in 2007 and so the LAF is now composed entirely of voluntary recruits.

### UNIFIL

UNIFIL was created by UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426 of 1978 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces following their invasion of Southern Lebanon and to assist the government in asserting control over the region.<sup>35</sup> Since its inception it has been accused of bias by both parties to the conflict and has been unable to provide tangible security in the south.<sup>36</sup> During the 1982 invasion and subsequent occupation, UNIFIL remained behind Israeli lines and was largely prevented from fulfilling its mandate. In the wake of Israel's rapid unilateral withdrawal in 2000, the UN force confirmed the withdrawal and monitored violations. Lebanese security forces also deployed to the south, but left control of the border area to Hezbollah.<sup>37</sup> Following the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war, the Security Council increased UNIFIL's maximum troop strength to 15,000, although actual deployment remains at around 10,000.<sup>38</sup> It was again mandated to support the deployment of the LAF throughout the south and to help ensure humanitarian access to civilians and the return of displaced people.<sup>39</sup>

## The 2006 war

In July 2006 Hezbollah initiated a series of attacks and cross-border incursions into Israel that resulted in the killing of a number of Israeli military personnel and civilians. Two IDF personnel were kidnapped and taken back to Lebanon for the purposes of prisoner exchange.<sup>40</sup> A subsequent unsuccessful Israeli rescue operation led to the deaths of five more IDF soldiers. Israel then initiated a month-long massive bombing and ground campaign in Southern Lebanon.

Fatalities in all of Lebanon were estimated at between 1,000 and 1,200, the 'vast majority' of which were probably civilians, and there were 4,000–4,400 non-fatal injuries.<sup>41</sup> Southern Lebanon's infrastructure was also decimated and an estimated one million civilians were displaced.<sup>42</sup> Israel reported 12 IDF and 43 Israeli civilian deaths as a result of the 2006 conflict. It was the deadliest engagement between Israeli and Lebanon-based forces since the Israeli invasion of 1982.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701 marked the official end of the war. It called for a 'full cessation of hostilities' between Hezbollah and Israel, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, the withdrawal of Hezbollah to north of the Litani River, and the co-deployment of Lebanese and UNIFIL forces in the south.<sup>43</sup> The resolution also imposed an arms embargo on non-state groups in Lebanon (see Box 2).

## Political parties and security providers

Although Hezbollah and other parties in the March 8 Alliance have dominated recent elections, it is not understood how much popular support the various political parties garner in Southern Lebanon. One of the challenges in trying to understand who supports what party, and to what extent, is that traditional means for assessing political support are unreliable in Lebanon. Elections are not necessarily a valid indicator of support for particular political parties, because Lebanese electoral law requires that people vote where they were born, not where they

### Box 2 The arming of Hezbollah

By the time of the 2006 war the UN Security Council had repeatedly called for the withdrawal of foreign forces and influence from Lebanon and the disbandment and disarmament of all militias.<sup>44</sup> While Syria, a primary target of the UN resolutions, withdrew after international pressure and Lebanese protests prompted by the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri in February 2005, the Lebanese government took no steps to disarm Hezbollah.

UN Security Council Resolution 1701 of August 2006 again emphasized 'the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory' and underlined the need for the government 'to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon'.<sup>45</sup> The resolution also prohibited the supply of arms, related material, technical training, and assistance to any entity or individual in Lebanon not authorized by the Lebanese government or UNIFIL.<sup>46</sup>

The primary source of Hezbollah's weapons has always been thought to be Iran, operating with the cooperation of Syria and elements of the Lebanese government. Following Resolution 1701, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad pledged to honour the embargo.<sup>47</sup> Only a week after the end of the war, however, Turkish authorities reportedly intercepted five Iranian cargo planes and a Syrian aircraft carrying rocket launchers and crates of C-802 anti-ship missiles, the same weapon that disabled an Israeli vessel on the third day of the war. According to Nicholas Blanford, a long-time observer of Hezbollah, the group's traditional conduit for arms is Lebanon's eastern border with Syria, but 'the party has devised alternative means of procuring weapons in the event of a closed land route'.<sup>48</sup>

During the 2006 war Hezbollah landed some 3,970 surface-to-surface rockets in Israel.<sup>49</sup> The origin of smaller, 107 mm and 122 mm rockets is difficult to determine conclusively; the 70-year-old designs are widely manufactured. More distinctive are the larger rockets—some weighing several tons—of which at least 457 were fired into Israel in 2006. Based mostly on Chinese designs, these are produced in Iran and Syria.<sup>50</sup> Uzi Rubin reports that Hezbollah initially received Syrian-made 220 mm and 302 mm rockets, with ranges of 70–100 km. Later, Iranian-made 240 mm Fajr-3 and 320 mm Fajr-5 rockets were transferred through Syria. The existence of larger versions with ranges of more than 200 km is suspected.<sup>51</sup>

Other reports have indicated that Hezbollah possesses Russian-designed or -manufactured anti-tank systems (RPG-29 and Metis-M) and French-made Milan missiles, in addition to less reliable Russian Katyushas and Iranian-made Fajr-3 and Fajr-5 missiles.<sup>52</sup> It should be noted that Russian-labelled equipment may originate in any of several sympathetic Russian client states.

The clearest evidence of supply relationships comes from weapons uniquely produced in a single country. Hezbollah is reportedly in possession of several dozen Iranian Zelzal rockets, with a range of 200 kilometres and capable of carrying 1,300 lbs of explosives.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the presence in Hezbollah arms inventories of Iranian surface-to-surface rockets is important as evidence of an arms relationship otherwise largely kept covert.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah routinely emphasizes the scale of the group's arsenal, which appears to have grown considerably in recent years. In 2005 Nasrallah claimed that Hezbollah possessed 12,000 rockets; in 2006 he claimed 20,000; while in 2007 this number had grown to 33,000 rockets that could 'reach deep into Israel'.<sup>54</sup> He is more discrete about suppliers.

Israeli spokespersons have reported that Hezbollah is retransferring Iranian-made 122 mm, 20 km-range rockets to Hamas in Gaza.<sup>55</sup> These may be the rockets that began to hit Israeli cities from Gaza further from the border—notably Ashkelon—in late 2008.

currently reside. Similarly, political polls typically rely only on registered voters and not the population at large.<sup>56</sup> Under the 2008 election law, Palestinians, who make up 10 per cent of the population, are excluded from voting, as are individuals employed by Lebanon's armed forces, those who are members of civilian security forces, convicted criminals, naturalized citizens who have lived in the country for less than ten years, and individuals who have been declared by the court to be financially bankrupt.<sup>57</sup>

Relying on election results as an indicator of support is equally diffi-

cult. In many places, the boundaries of electoral districts were originally drawn by the pro-Syrian authorities and then redrawn following the Doha Agreement in 2008 by confessional leaderships, who imposed predetermined winning slates.<sup>58</sup> The use of these 'majority-list districts' has marginalized a large portion of the electorate.<sup>59</sup> As a result, Lebanese confessional parties have often won seats disproportionate to the actual vote received, forced voters to accept the reality of the parties' status quo, and disenfranchised others (secular groupings, sectarian minorities, or political opponents).





Hezbollah members march during a rally marking Hezbollah Martyrs Day in Dahiyeh, a southern suburb of Beirut, November 2009 © AP Photo / Bilal Hussein

While voter support is clearly essential for winning elections, the relation between votes and popular support within specific Lebanese regions is not altogether straightforward.

Similarly, the relationship between support for a particular political party and opinions about security provision is also unclear. A July 2008 International Peace Institute (IPI) survey of Lebanese attitudes regarding security and arms was the first attempt to understand these dynamics.<sup>60</sup> It detected strong support for UNIFIL: approximately 80 per cent of all respondents stated that they had a favourable opinion of the UN mission.<sup>61</sup> Lebanese throughout the country also expressed positive opinions on the effectiveness of the LAF, with more than 90 per cent stating that they were confident of its ability to provide security in their area.

The IPI survey appeared to reveal more confidence in the Lebanese state than Hezbollah on the question of security provision. Almost two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) stated that the government can provide security,

and only approximately a third (34 per cent) believed that Hezbollah can do so. Over three-quarters (76 per cent) believed that only the LAF, and not any other actors, should bear arms. However, the IPI survey was representative of the whole of Lebanon, not specifically Southern Lebanon, which has a strong Shi'ite presence.<sup>62</sup> Traditionally, Shi'ite support for non-state actors has been assumed to be higher than support from other groups.

Ultimately, it is critical to understand how overall support for a given political party affects opinions and attitudes on a variety of security and other civil matters. Claims by Hezbollah, Amal, and other political parties about their popular support may be self-serving and not reflect the actual or substantive support in the region. This *Issue Brief* focuses primarily on understanding the popular support Hezbollah and other non-state actors garner for both 'resistance' activities and police functions, as well as opinions and attitudes regarding UNIFIL operations in the south.

## The Lebanon Armed Violence Assessment

In May 2008 the LAVA instituted the Health, Human Rights, and Armed Violence Survey in Southern Lebanon<sup>63</sup> in order to better understand the scope and scale of victimization and attitudes towards security providers. The survey sampled representative households in UNIFIL-controlled *qazas* (administrative districts). It gathered data on more than 6,200 individuals, seeking to examine in detail the impacts on civilians of the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war and to carry out a more sophisticated analysis of perceptions of key security institutions.

A multistage approach, utilizing cluster sampling, identified households and main respondents.<sup>64</sup> The first stage selected towns, the second stage chose GPS locations within towns, the third stage selected households within 20 metres of each location, and the fourth stage sampled a primary respondent within each household. This randomly selected adult house-

hold member was interviewed about his/her experiences and opinions, as well as about the demographics of the household and the experiences of other household members during and after the war.<sup>65</sup>

Citing security concerns, Hezbollah representatives did not allow interviewers into the municipalities of Bint Jbeil and El Khyiam, both Hezbollah strongholds. Original plans called for the interviewing of 1,600 households (400 in Tyre, 200 each in Marjayoun and Bint Jbeil, and 16 in each of the smaller towns). Owing to interference, and ten households that refused to participate, the total households interviewed dropped to 1,388.<sup>66</sup>

## Findings

In Lebanon's confessional government, political parties have a vested interest

in claiming they have strong popular support. If political parties can demonstrate that they are popular, they can claim a greater share of ministerial posts and government resources. This is also true for Hezbollah, which has competed for parliamentary seats since 1992. In 2005 it won 14 out of 128 national parliamentary seats, while the Hezbollah–Amal alliance won all 23 seats in Southern Lebanon. Despite these victories, it has never been clear to what extent Hezbollah's security and military activities are representative of public opinion in Southern Lebanon. The LAVA-administered survey sought to explore these questions.

### Political party support

When asked whether they identified with or supported a particular political party, respondents were allowed to state any political party or organi-

zation without being prompted. The open-ended question was specifically designed to avoid guiding the respondent's response. Just over 60 per cent of respondents stated that their household was not affiliated with a political party at all. Of the 40 per cent who reported supporting a political party, slightly more than 80 per cent supported 'the resistance', Hezbollah, or 'opposition parties'. Just over 10 per cent supported Amal. Less than 2 per cent of households refused to answer. The term 'resistance' refers to the defence of Lebanese interests against Israel, including the return of disputed border territory (Shaba Farms); it is often shorthand for Hezbollah, which has largely taken on the mantle of resistance in recent years.

Some caveats are required in interpreting these results. Firstly, because the Hezbollah strongholds of Bint Jbeil and El Khyiam were off-limits, the study's estimates of support for the party are probably biased downwards. Secondly, Hezbollah and its allies may enjoy a degree of support for certain actions the party (or its militia wing) pursues, including actions against Israel, that is otherwise not expressed as overt support for the party. Favourable attitudes towards Hezbollah's social services arm may also affect responses to the question of political affiliation.

### Security provision

The survey explored perceptions of and attitudes towards security providers. In general, respondents showed a strong preference for public security institutions over non-state groups. When confronted with insecurity and crime, respondents indicated they were most likely to turn to the Lebanese police for assistance. Over 91 per cent of respondents said that the LAF should, ideally, be responsible for security (see Table 1). Almost 90 per cent felt that improving the capacity of the police or other government security services would make their community safer. By contrast, roughly a quarter (23.6 per cent) of all respondents felt that expanding UNIFIL's presence on Lebanon's border with Israel would enhance community safety.

Table 1 Security and crime: responses

Question	Response	Party supporters	Non-party supporters	Total*
First person you address/call if an important asset of yours is robbed.	Police	82.4%	68.2%	73.6%
	Other	17.0%	31.8%	26.1%
First person you address/call if someone threatened to hurt or kill you.	Police	85.4%	92.7%	89.9%
	Other	14.0%	7.2%	9.8%
	Community elders	13.0%	1.8%	6.1%
	Other	86.4%	98.1%	93.6%
Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security?	Army	89.9%	92.4%	91.5%
	Other	6.3%	4.3%	5.0%
Improving the capacity of police/security services would make my community safer.	Agree	88.3%	90.6%	89.7%
	Disagree	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%
An increased UN presence monitoring the border with Israel would make my community safer.	Agree	8.3%	32.7%	23.6%
	Disagree	63.5%	38.4%	47.7%
If Palestinian refugees left Lebanon, it would make my community safer.	Agree	37.5%	67.3%	56.5%
	Disagree	17.9%	12.6%	14.5%
A permanent peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon would make my community safer.	Agree	4.6%	4.2%	4.4%
	Disagree	91.9%	81.3%	85.4%

Note:

\* Percentages may not total 100 because responses such as 'I don't know' and 'I refuse to answer' were excluded.



Table 2 **Security and gun control: odds ratios**

	Response	Odds ratio	95 per cent CI*	p**
First person you address/call if an important asset of yours is robbed.	Police	2.266	2.232-2.301	<.01
First person you address/call if someone threatened to hurt or kill you.	Police	0.480	0.470-0.490	<.01
	Community elders	8.138	7.882-8.402	<.01
Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security?	Army	0.664	0.646-0.683	<.01
Improving the capacity of police/security services would make my community safer.	Disagree	1.208	1.107-1.317	<.01
An increased UN presence monitoring the border with Israel would make my community safer.	Disagree	6.485	6.353-6.620	<.01
If Palestinian refugees left Lebanon, it would make my community safer.	Disagree	2.543	2.495-2.592	<.01
A permanent peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon would make my community safer.	Disagree	1.032	1.002-1.064	.038

Notes:

\* CI = confidence interval.

\*\* p = probability.

Odds ratio values greater than 1.0 indicate a greater probability among party supporters, while values less than 1.0 indicate a greater probability among non-party supporters. In calculating odds ratios, 'refuse to reply' and 'don't know' responses were excluded.

Political inclinations did not appear to strongly alter these attitudes. Of those supporting a political party, 89.9 per cent stated that the LAF should be responsible for overall security, compared to 92.4 per cent of those who were not affiliated with a party. There was a somewhat greater difference of opinion between party supporters and non-supporters with regard to local security and crime. If personally threatened with violence, 85.4 per cent of party supporters stated that they would go to the police, compared to 92.7 per cent of non-supporters. In relation to stolen property, these tendencies were reversed, with 82.4 per cent of party supporters, versus 68.2 per cent of non-supporters, indicating they would seek police assistance.

The odds ratios for these responses illustrate some important differences between party and non-party support-

ers in relation to security (see Table 2). For example, as just noted, both groups, by large margins, said they would first seek assistance from the police if threatened with injury or death. Nevertheless, party supporters were more than eight times more likely than non-supporters to indicate that they would first turn to community elders. In essence, while both supporters and non-supporters heavily favour the police in such situations, party supporters are much more likely, when selecting another actor, to choose community elders.

Of all respondents, more than half (56.5 per cent) agreed that the departure of Palestinian refugees from the country would make them safer. Survey respondents, by an overwhelming margin, did not think that a comprehensive peace agreement with Israel would improve their security (4.4 per cent agreed and 85.4 per cent disagreed).

One of four Puma helicopters donated by the United Arab Emirates to the Lebanese Armed Forces arrives at Beirut International Airport, April 2010. © Anwar Amro/AFP/Getty Images







There was little difference between party supporters and non-supporters in this regard (4.6 per cent and 4.2 per cent agreement, respectively).

## Reflections

Although long described as the area with the strongest and most stable support for Hezbollah and its resistance activities, it appears that Southern Lebanese display more confidence in state security institutions than previously believed. Whether they were supporters of Hezbollah or not, most survey respondents said they would turn to the police when victimized. Given the generally low police presence in the south, the public's willingness to turn to them is perhaps a sign that a basis of confidence in the state and state institutions has been maintained.

One recent analysis finds that the LAF has become more representative, balanced, and capable, although it is still far from being able to secure the state's monopoly on the use of force.<sup>67</sup> The LAVA survey confirmed that the LAF is one of the few Lebanese institutions in the post-Syrian era that most citizens trust. Despite its failings and the international impression that the LAF is disorganized and weak, people in Southern Lebanon feel that the LAF is responsible for creating security in their region.

These findings suggest that additional assistance to public security institutions would be welcomed by southerners and would be a cost-effective way to enhance the already favourable perceptions of safety in the region. Although the specific type of assistance was not specified in the survey, the LAF has received financial and military equipment support from a number of states, including Belgium, France, Russia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>68</sup> In November 2009 the LAF commander-in-chief, General Jean Kahwaji, requested assistance from the international community to raise the combat capabilities of the army by modernizing its equipment, initiating specialized training, and increasing the LAF's ability to respond to terrorist attacks.<sup>69</sup>

If the search for safety is a driving factor in the acquisition of illicit small arms, investment in legitimate security providers is a promising avenue not only for increasing safety, but for decreasing demand for weapons. At the same time, the survey found that almost three-quarters of the population are currently satisfied with their access to security. Room for improvement may be limited.

Overall, the perceived support for armed non-state actors, most importantly Hezbollah, appears to be at least partially overestimated, and their actions may not reflect the will of many Southern Lebanese. Responses to Hezbollah's actions and future planning with regard to diplomatic initiatives with the Lebanese government over security and 'the resistance' should take into account these findings.

Similarly, trust in international agencies is low. It appears that UNIFIL may not be achieving its broad goals as an effective security force among southerners, even if previous studies suggest that it enjoys broad popular support. By a margin of almost 2 to 1, Southern Lebanese did not feel that supporting UNIFIL could improve their routine security.

Although the LAVA survey provided some insight into the reasons for and extent of Southern Lebanese support for various security providers, it raised additional questions. The role of Palestinians in the south needs to be explored further. More than half of respondents believed that if Palestinian refugees left Lebanon, their community would be safer. It is unclear whether this reflects the belief that the Israeli threat would be reduced in the absence of the Palestinians or that refugee camps harbour criminal elements. Whatever the underlying assumptions, the Palestinians remain a crucial factor in the Israel-Hezbollah conflict.

The role of community elders as a protective factor in resolving local conflicts also needs to be examined in more depth. It is clear that some people, including many Hezbollah supporters, find community elders to be more responsive than state security institutions,

especially when they are victimized. It appears that elders provide something that is lacking in traditional policing, but what this asset is and how it can be supported to help create credible, sustainable, responsive state security institutions remains to be explored. ■

## Notes

*This Issue Brief is based on the results of the Health, Human Rights, and Armed Violence in Southern Lebanon Survey, conducted for the Small Arms Survey and originally published in the Small Arms Survey 2009: Shadows of War.*

- 1 This *Issue Brief* draws heavily on Small Arms Survey (2009, ch. 10).
- 2 HRW (2007b, p. 4); LHRC (2009).
- 3 Hezbollah claims to have fired more than 8,000 rockets; Israel claims to have documented 3,917. See HRW (2007a, p. 30).
- 4 Researchers have been expelled from Southern Lebanon or prevented from carrying out their research by the Lebanese Armed Forces, various militias, police, and local government leaders. The perception of the south as an insecure or dangerous place may also dissuade researchers from initiating projects in the area.
- 5 Domestic arms laws and their enforcement will be highlighted in a future Lebanon *Issue Brief*.
- 6 Information about the LAVA project; its publications; and the Health, Human Rights, and Armed Violence in Southern Lebanon Survey is available at <<http://www.lebanon-violence.org>>.
- 7 Future *Issue Briefs* will highlight other aspect of the survey findings.
- 8 Cobban (1984, p. 47).
- 9 The number of direct deaths resulting from the Lebanese civil war is not known, but is widely reported to be between 100,000 and 150,000.
- 10 UNSC (1978a; 1978c).
- 11 ICG (2006).
- 12 ICG (2006).
- 13 Norton (2000–01, pp. 35, 39, 40).
- 14 Norton (2000–01, p. 41).
- 15 Butler (2006, pp. 57–58).
- 16 Collelo (1989).
- 17 Collelo (2003, p. 142).
- 18 Butler (2006, p. 60).
- 19 Hezbollah (1985).
- 20 Ta'if Agreement (1989); UNSC (2004b, para. 19).

- 21 Salamey and Pearson (2007).
- 22 Butler (2006, p. 59).
- 23 The invasion of West Beirut appears to have had minimal influence on the study findings. Almost all of the interviews had been completed by the time violence erupted.
- 24 BBC (2008).
- 25 Butler (2006, p. 62); Rao (2006).
- 26 Collelo (2003, p. 157).
- 27 Collelo (1989).
- 28 Collelo (2003, p. 157).
- 29 Nerguizian (2009, p. 12).
- 30 UNSC (2006b, para. 2).
- 31 Nerguizian (2009, p. 33).
- 32 Nerguizian (2009, pp. 17–18).
- 33 UNDPKO (2006).
- 34 Nerguizian (2009, p. 33).
- 35 UNSC (1978a; 1978b).
- 36 ICG (2006).
- 37 UNDPKO (2006).
- 38 Schneider (2010).
- 39 UNSC (2006b, para. 11).
- 40 Butler (2006, p. 64).
- 41 HRW (2007b, p. 4); LHRC (2009).
- 42 AI (2006, p. 2).
- 43 UNSC (2006b).
- 44 See UNSC (2004a; 2006a).
- 45 UNSC (2006b, para. 3).
- 46 UNSC (2006b, para. 15).
- 47 Hoge (2006).
- 48 Blanford (2008).
- 49 According to Israeli sources; see Rubin (2007, p. 10).
- 50 Rubin (2007, p. 11).
- 51 Rubin (2007, pp. 4–5).
- 52 Bazzi (2006).
- 53 Bazzi (2006); Prier (2008).
- 54 Rubin (2007, p. 5); AP (2007).
- 55 Fishman (2008).
- 56 See, for example, LOAC (2008). This survey found modest support overall for Hezbollah even among Shi'ites: 50 per cent of Shi'ites said that Hezbollah best represented them; 22 per cent said that Amal best represented them; and 17 per cent stated 'no one'.
- 57 See <<http://www.elections.gov.lb>> (in Arabic); <<http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/lebanon.html>>; and IFES (2009).
- 58 See *Jerusalem Post* (2008).
- 59 Salamey and Tabar (2008).
- 60 The poll, conducted by Charney Research (n.d.), included a nationally representative survey of adult Lebanese citizens. The poll included 1,800 interviews conducted in the period 1–18 July 2008 among all confessional groups in all regions of the country, with an error margin of approximately 2 per cent for national results.



- 61 Increasing peace-building activities by UNIFIL, its growing collaboration with local authorities, and economic gains brought to local communities are among other factors contributing to growing popular approval. Yet this has not assured the locals of the force's ability to defend the south.
- 62 Neither the survey instrument nor a regional breakdown of the results of the survey was ever released by IPI.
- 63 The areas surveyed included administrative districts (*qazas*) under UNIFIL mandate, within 'Southern Lebanon', and should not be confused with the larger administrative district (*muhafazah*) 'South Lebanon'.
- 64 Cluster sampling is typically used to identify clusters of households within towns and villages, but in the LAVA survey it was used to identify the towns and villages themselves. Various techniques, including random sampling, were employed to select households within each town or village. This method helped overcome the lack of accurate demographic and population data for Southern Lebanon.
- 65 The survey instrument was created using the Human Rights History developed by Kolbe and Hutson (2006); the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HPRT, n.d.); and small arms and security queries adapted from the MENAANSA (2006) survey regarding weapons and community security in Gaza, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Sudan.
- 66 For more information on the sampling methods, survey protocols, and data analysis, please see <<http://www.lebanon-violence.org/research-methods.html>>.
- 67 Nerguizian (2009, p. 31).
- 68 Nerguizian (2009, p. 52).
- 69 *Daily Star* (2009).
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## About the Lebanon Armed Violence Assessment

The Lebanon Armed Violence Assessment (LAVA) is an initiative administered by the

Small Arms Survey, an independent research project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Designed with the support and cooperation of the Lebanese American University, Wayne State University, and McMaster University, the project seeks to collect and disseminate quantitative and qualitative research to support efforts to prevent and reduce real and perceived armed violence in Southern Lebanon. Launched in the wake of the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war, the LAVA provides empirical research on:

- the health and security impacts in Southern Lebanon as a result of the 2006 conflict;
- public attitudes towards the provision of security by the state and non-state groups;
- inflows and prevalence of small arms and light weapons among non-state groups and civilians in the region; and
- motivations for the use of small arms and light weapons in political, criminal, and livelihood-related violence.

LAVA *Issue Briefs* are designed to support evidence-based policy options to reduce armed violence for the Lebanese government, civil society, and their partners. The project

draws on a combination of methods—from public health surveillance to focus group- and interview-based research—to identify appropriate priorities and practical strategies. For more information, see <<http://www.lebanon-violence.org>>.

## Credits

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