IMUN 2026 Research Report

Security Council Issue #3: The question of conflict in Lebanon

The border instability in Lebanon has persisted for over 50 years, split across seven distinct periods of warfare involving the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Hezbollah ("Israel has invaded"). However, now there is the 7th conflict that started on the 2nd, March, 2026, from which Lebanon has been faced with occupied territory in the South, frequent airstrikes, and a humanitarian crisis ("Conflict With"). The war has reached combatants and civilians alike, with fear being the order of the day. It is now up to the United Nations (UN) to find peace in this long-lasting conflict.

Upon independence in 1943, Lebanon established a confessional political system distributing power proportionally among Maronite Christians (President), Shiite Muslims (Speaker), and Sunni Muslims (Prime Minister). ("Conflict With"). The conflict sparked in 1970 when the PLO was expelled from Jordan during 'Black September' and relocated to southern Lebanon to launch rocket attacks into Israel. The weak Lebanese government could not police the region, leaving the PLO unchecked when the Lebanese Civil War began in 1975. ("Israel has invaded"). In 1978, 20,000 Israeli troops crossed the Lebanese border, reaching as far as the Litani river in was Israel claimed to be in response to a Palestinian attack that killed 37 Israeli's. With their occupation of the region, Israel expelled the PLO from the region and established a "proxy militia" called the South Lebanese Army which it armed and financed. The UN Security Council (UNSC) would then pass Resolution 425, which "called on" Israel to withdraw from the area, and established the UN interim force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon, which monitors the border to this day. However, Israel did not fully withdraw, it retained some influence in the region through the South Lebanese Army for another 22 years ("Israel-Lebanon Conflict" 9:35-10:35). In June 1982, due to UNIFIL's "failure" to eliminate the PLO,

Israel launched Operation Peace for Galilee, in which the IDF reached Beirut (holding it until 29th, September, 1982), forcing the PLO to relocate to Tunisia. The IDF would go on to occupy most of Southern Lebanon until the 3rd, September, 1983, when it retreated south of the Awali river in south Lebanon because of rising IDF casualties caused by “guerrilla attacks by militants.” Israel would later retreat in stages between February and April in 1985 back to the zone of security. Due to the power vacuum left by the PLO, new organizations including Hezbollah and Amal began competing for Shia support, entering their own war in 1986, ending in 1989. "The Lebanese civil war ended in 1990 with the Taif Accord, but a weakened Lebanese military could not evict Hezbollah from the south. Consequently, Israel maintained its southern security zone and launched two major military campaigns during the 1990s to eliminate the group's rocket infrastructure, though both campaigns ultimately failed to achieve their goals." With growing IDF and South Lebanese Army losses morale and support for the occupation began falling, eventually leading to the IDF’s withdrawal to the UN establish “Blue Line” (a demarcation line dividing Lebanon from Israel and the Golan Heights for the sole purpose of confirming the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanese territory) on the 25, May, 2000. The withdrawal left a vacuum that was eventually filled in by Hezbollah, who claimed that Israel had failed to withdraw from small sections of internationally recognized Lebanese land, making them a legitimate target. In 2006, after a Hezbollah attack that left three Israeli soldiers dead and another two kidnapped, Israel retaliated through “air strikes and artillery fire on Lebanese civilian infrastructure and an air and naval blockade, followed by a ground invasion of south Lebanon”, leaving 1300 Lebanese civilians and 61 Israeli’s dead, infrastructure destroyed, and approximately 1 million Lebanese, and 300,000 to 500,000 Israelis displaced ("Israel has invaded"). Tensions would begin to once again begin to increase, with it finally boiling over on

the 2nd, March, 2026, when Hezbollah launched missiles and drones into northern Israel in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes on Iran and its supreme leader days prior. Israel responded by launching air strikes across Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah, and other Iran-backed groups', headquarters and military sites. According to the British government, "Israel's stated aims were to disarm Hezbollah and create a 'security zone' in southern Lebanon, to protect Israeli communities from Hezbollah attacks" ("Country bulletin"). Since then, Israeli attacks have killed at least 3,711 people in Lebanon 132 health workers and 247 children according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Additionally, on the 27th of May, Israel declared 14 percent of Lebanon's territory, the entire area south of the Zahrani river, as a "combat zone", ordering residents to leave the area. They would later order on the 7th and 9th of July for the Lebanese city of Tyre and its surrounding towns and refugee camps to leave their homes. Currently, it is estimated that because of these actions, over 1 million Lebanese and displaced ("Israeli Displacement"). The most recent UNSC resolution is Resolution 1701 (2006), which called for numerous actions, including: the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the strengthening of UNIFIL to a maximum of 15,000 peacekeepers ("Resolution 1701").

Delegates must look beyond mere casualty statistics to analyze the underlying history: why the Lebanese government cannot project authority over its territory, and why Israel relies on border interventions. Resolutions must balance both sides of the equation, with some examples being: strengthening the Lebanese government through state building, set a stronger UN apparatus to observe the border, or through consensual third-party mediation. Most importantly, delegates must review agreements and treaties such as Resolution 1701 to understand the complex scenario that they are entering.

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