

2.2.2. Impact of political transition in Syria on power dynamics in Lebanon

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The fall of Assad regime in Syria in December 2024 has been widely celebrated in Lebanon, particularly by members of the far-right Lebanese Forces (LF) party who were critical of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon[136] that began in 1976 and ended in 2005 following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, for which Syria was widely accused.[137]

However, the fall of the Assad regime was a significant loss for Hezbollah[138] as it cut off its 'land corridor' with Iran from which it was receiving arms, logistical supplies[139] and military advisors.[140] For decades, Hezbollah has been a major force in Lebanese politics, spearheading the pro-Syria March 8 Coalition against the anti-Syria March 14 Coalition.[141] However, Hezbollah has recently weakened due to the loss of its key leaders,[142] including Hassan Nasrallah, in its war with Israel[143] and the collapse of its ally, Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria.[144] For more information on Hezbollah, see section 5.1 Hezbollah.

Cited by The New Arab news, Ali Rizk, a Beirut-based political and security analyst stated that the fall of Assad 'clearly undermined Hezbollah politically in Lebanon.'[145] The source further noted that the new Syrian government holds an anti-Hezbollah stance, and certain actors within the emerging political landscape of 'New Syria' are deeply hostile toward both the Lebanese Shia group and Tehran.[146] In addition, the collapse of the Syrian regime has created an unstable security environment along the Lebanese-Syrian border, as Israeli airstrikes have weakened Hezbollah, and new militia groups hostile to Hezbollah have taken control of key border crossings, replacing both Syrian forces and Hezbollah militants and further undermining Lebanon's already fragile authority in these areas.[147] On 27 March 2025, Lebanese and Syrian defence ministers signed a Saudi-brokered agreement in Jeddah to enhance border security coordination and address military threats alongside their shared border.[148]

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