5. Non-state armed actors and militias

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According to Daher, who was interviewed by the EUAA for this report, ‘there are both formal and informal armed groups in Lebanon including political, communal, clan-based, or linked to specific communities, which maintain their own armed capacities’.281

Shia armed groups in Lebanon include Hezbollah,282 the Amal movement (which officially announced in early 2024 that it is joining Hezbollah in the fight against Israel), and the Imam Hussein Division.283 In addition, there are Shia clan militias in Lebanon including the Zaiter, Jaafar, Noun, Jamal, and Rachini clans, who are historically rooted in southern Lebanon bordering Syria.284

According to BBC monitoring report of March 2024, ‘in addition to the two largest Iran-backed Palestinian factions, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which have a presence in southern Lebanon, a number of other lesser known groups have also been involved in attacks against targets in northern Israel and in disputed territory along the frontier’.285 By September 2024, other Palestinian factions, including Al-Fajr forces (the military wing of Jamaa al-Islamiya) and Hamas’s Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, were also operating in Lebanon.286

Daher noted that ‘some Sunni Islamist armed groups operate mainly in Tripoli and along the northern coast, and include former fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL).’287 The Lebanese army reportedly arrested a commander of ISIL in the country288 and security forces allegedly arrested a group of individuals suspected of links to the group in the southern suburbs of Beirut.289

Adding to these groups, both ISIL and the al-Nusra Front, which is affiliated with Al-Qaeda, have attempted to infiltrate Lebanon, reflecting the enduring ideological and historical link between Al-Qaeda and ISIL despite their current operational separation.290

Furthermore, the LAF reports that the rise of Salafi-Jihadism in Lebanon, intensified by the Syrian conflict and the influx of refugees, has contributed to growing security threats as extremist groups exploit border regions to conduct attacks.291

Daher described that ‘major armed groups potentially remain active although most were officially disarmed after the civil war’. (1957-1990)292 According to the United Nations Security Council report of November 2024, no progress was made on the disarmament of armed groups in Lebanon, as Hezbollah and other non-state actors continued to display their military capabilities, including strikes into Israel, with their retention of weapons outside state control in

violation of Resolution 1701 (2006) undermining Lebanon’s full sovereignty and authority over its territory.293 On 11 September 2025, in correspondence with the EUAA for this report, Maalouf Moneau stated that ‘several groups remained armed’ in Lebanon.294 For further information on disarmament of the armed groups in Lebanon, see section 6.2 Overview of security dynamics related to recent developments with Israel.

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