

Disarming Hezbollah: Lebanon's Security Dilemma

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Since middle 2025, Lebanon has seen a significant shift in its approach to non-state armed groups, particularly Hezbollah. The government, under Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, has tasked the Lebanese Army with a plan titled “Homeland Shield” to centralize all weapons under state control. This initiative marks one of the most substantial challenges to Hezbollah’s military autonomy in decades (Al Jazeera, 2025).

The Government’s “Homeland Shield” Plan

In August 2025, the Lebanese cabinet empowered the Army to develop a strategy to monopolize all arms under state institutions by the end of the year (Al Jazeera, 2025). This decision responds to domestic and international pressures to disarm militias, chiefly Hezbollah, and restore the Lebanese state’s sovereignty (Ministry of Information, Lebanon, 2025).

The plan, formally presented by Army Commander General Rodolphe Haikal, is structured in five phases, beginning in southern Lebanon, south of the Litani River, and then expanding across the country (AA News / 2025). These phases include securing weapons depots, dismantling illegal military sites, and confiscating arms stored in non-state facilities (This is Lebanon, 2025). The Lebanese government frames this effort as a means to consolidate state authority and ensure that all military power operates under civilian control (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Supporters argue that the initiative is critical for reaffirming state sovereignty and reducing risks associated with parallel armed powers. Minister Kamel Shhada emphasized the national consensus on enforcing the monopoly of arms by the state (AA News / 2025).

Hezbollah’s Response

Hezbollah has responded forcefully to the disarmament roadmap, condemning the cabinet’s decision as a “grave sin” and accusing the government of succumbing to external pressures, particularly from the United States (Reuters, 2025). The party pledged to “deal with it as if it does not exist” and warned its supporters to remain calm while monitoring the government’s actions (Reuters, 2025).

Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem warned that disarming Hezbollah without reciprocal Israeli concessions would weaken Lebanon's capacity to resist Israel and jeopardize national security (Al Jazeera, 2025). Hezbollah and Amal ministers also walked out of a cabinet session in protest, demonstrating the political and sectarian divide within Lebanon (CH23, 2025).

Key Challenges and Risks

Despite its ambitious scope, the *homeland shield* plan faces several operational and political challenges. First, the Lebanese Army, though respected, is constrained in terms of manpower, funding, and institutional reach, raising doubts about its ability to dismantle entrenched non-state military structures (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Second, the disarmament plan risks exacerbating sectarian tensions. Hezbollah argues that its weapons are essential to defending Lebanon and safeguarding Shiite communities, and any attempt to remove them unilaterally could provoke unrest (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Third, the plan is intertwined with international frameworks, such as U.S. backed proposals that link disarmament to economic aid and regional concessions. Hezbollah's refusal to accept disarmament without reciprocal Israeli actions presents a major diplomatic obstacle (Ministry of Information, Lebanon, 2025). Finally, there is the risk of armed conflict. Hezbollah has warned that any forcible disarmament could ignite internal strife, particularly in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa Valley (Al Jazeera, 2025).

Concluding Remarks

Lebanon's disarmament roadmap is historic in ambition and symbolic in meaning. For the first time in years, the government has seriously moved to bring all weapons under state control and strong assertion of state sovereignty. However, Hezbollah's staunch opposition, coupled with operational and political constraints, makes the plan highly precarious. The success or failure of this initiative will determine not only the future of Hezbollah but also the Lebanese state's stability and its role in regional security dynamics.

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