

CEASEFIRE OBSERVATORY

The Israeli - Lebanese Ceasefire

December 2025

Monthly Monitoring Report

Middle East Institute for Research and Strategic Studies (MEIRSS)

MEIRSS

Executive Summary

December 2025 recorded a relative decline in the number of IDF strikes compared to earlier months of the ceasefire period. However, this quantitative decrease did not translate into de-escalation on the ground. On the contrary, operational patterns indicate continued Hezbollah military rehabilitation, persistent presence south of the Litani River, and a gradual shift of activity north of the Litani and into the Beqaa Valley. Parallel to the military track, December also witnessed intensified pressure on Hezbollah's financial infrastructure, highlighting the limits of a ceasefire that addresses violence without dismantling enabling structures.

الملخص التنفيذي

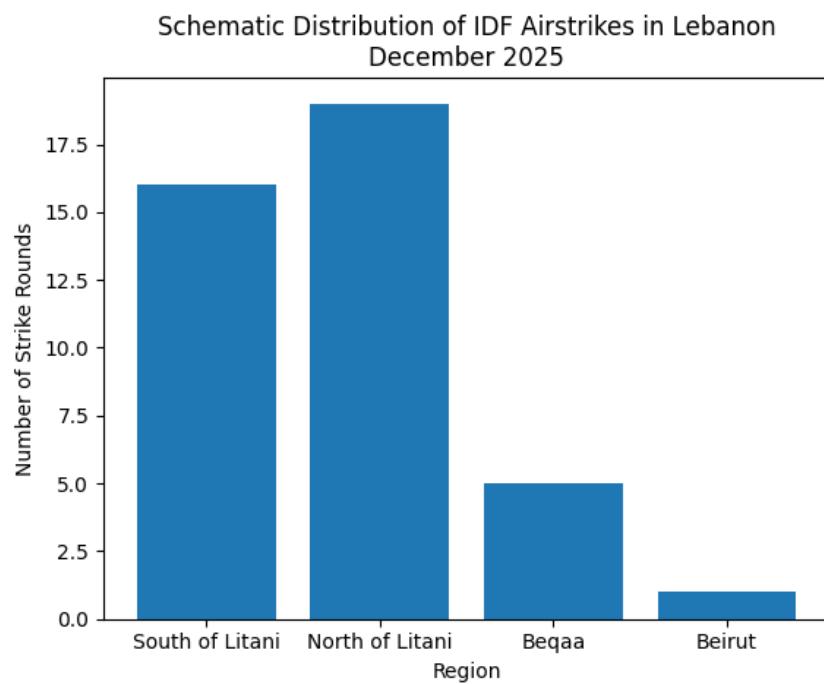
سُجِّل شهر كانون الأول ٢٠٢٥ تراجعاً نسبياً في عدد الضربات التي نفذها الجيش الإسرائيلي مقارنة بالأشهر السابقة من فترة وقف إطلاق النار. غير أنّ هذا التراجع الكمي لم يترجم تهدئة فعلية على الأرض. على العكس، تُظہر الأنماط العملياتية استمرار عملية إعادة التأهيل العسكري لحزب الله، وتواصل حضوره جنوب نهر الليطاني، إلى جانب تحول تدريجي في مركز النشاط نحو شمال اللبناني وسهل البقاع. وبالتزامن مع المسار العسكري، شهد كانون الأول أيضاً تصاعداً في الضغوط المفروضة على البنية المالية لحزب الله، ما يسلط الضوء على محدودية أي وقف لإطلاق النار يكتفي بضبط العنف من دون تفكيك البنية التي تمكّنه من الاستمرار.

1. Military Developments During December 2025

1.1 Scope and Geography of IDF Strikes

During December 2025, the IDF carried out 40 rounds of airstrikes in Lebanon:

- 19 strikes north of the Litani River
- 16 strikes south of the Litani River
- 5 strikes in the Beqaa region



This makes December the lowest month in strike volume in the past six months, continuing a gradual decline observed since mid-2025. From June to December 2025, the monthly average stood at 47 strikes, compared to 62 strikes per month between December 2024 and May 2025.

Despite this reduction, strike concentration remained geographically consistent, particularly in southern Lebanon, reflecting Hezbollah's entrenched deployment patterns rather than successful neutralization.

1.2 Targets and Operational Logic

Strikes throughout December targeted:

- Weapons storage facilities
- Rocket launch sites
- Military camps and structures
- Terrorist infrastructure
- Two Radwan Unit training and preparation compounds

In several cases, evacuation warnings were issued prior to strikes, underscoring IDF efforts to limit civilian casualties while maintaining operational pressure.

The Radwan Unit remained a central focus, reflecting Israeli assessments that Hezbollah continues prioritizing the restoration of its offensive capabilities despite the ceasefire.

1.3 Eliminations and Armed Presence in December 2025:

- 11 Hezbollah operatives were eliminated, eight of them south of the Litani River
- One Amal operative was eliminated
- One senior operative from Quds Force Unit 840 was eliminated, highlighting Iran's direct operational footprint in Lebanon

Among those killed were operatives involved in:

- Infrastructure rehabilitation
- Security and internal control networks
- Liaison roles with local communities
- Air defense operations
- Coordination between Hezbollah and elements inside the Lebanese Armed Forces

The presence of Hezbollah-affiliated operatives within the LAF underscores institutional infiltration challenges that weaken state sovereignty and complicate ceasefire enforcement.

1.4 Ground Operations

Beyond airstrikes, the IDF conducted 11 ground operations in December, primarily in villages adjacent to the line of contact. These operations aimed to:

- Prevent the renewal of Hezbollah infrastructure
- Disrupt weapons collection
- Thwart intelligence-gathering activity near Israeli territory

Weekly summaries from 9-14, 22-28, and 29 December-4 January consistently indicate that ground activity remains an integral component of Israel's ceasefire posture.

2. Trends Since the Ceasefire

2.1 Quantitative Perspective

Since 27 November 2024, the IDF has conducted 722 rounds of strikes in Lebanon. While the overall trend shows a gradual decline, December's lower numbers should be understood as operational modulation, not strategic restraint.

2.2 Geographic Shift

Data from November and December 2025 reveal a notable shift in strike concentration north of the Litani River, suggesting:

- A partial relocation of Hezbollah's operational center of gravity
- Continued presence and rehabilitation efforts south of the Litani, contradicting claims of withdrawal

Hezbollah has not vacated southern Lebanon, and its activities along the contact line remain active.

3. The Economic Front: Al-Qard al-Hasan Under Pressure

December 2025 marked a significant escalation in international focus on Hezbollah's financial backbone, particularly the Al-Qard al-Hasan institution.

3.1 U.S. Pressure and Lebanese Constraints

On 8 December, a U.S. Treasury delegation demanded that Lebanon shut down the institution, which:

- Serves approximately 300,000 clients
- Manages an estimated \$3 billion in activity
- Functions as a cornerstone of Hezbollah's socio-economic control over its Shiite base

While the Governor of the Banque du Liban, Karim Saeed, explored enforcement mechanisms, legal constraints quickly emerged. As a registered association rather than a licensed bank, Al-Qard al-Hasan falls outside traditional banking authority.

3.2 Hezbollah's Response and Adaptation

Hezbollah framed U.S. demands as an attempt to "strangle" its social environment and signaled clear red lines. MP Ali Fayyad warned against actions affecting private property.

Internally, Hezbollah began exploring alternatives, including:

- A new association named "Joud", operating through gold-based transactions
- Increased reliance on regulatory gray zones
- Public reaffirmation on 17 December that Al-Qard al-Hasan continues operating nationwide

These developments demonstrate Hezbollah's adaptive financial resilience, mirroring its military rehabilitation strategies.

4. Mechanism and Oversight

Since November 2024, the ceasefire has been overseen by the International Monitoring and Implementation Mechanism (IMIM), chaired by the United States and comprising representatives from Israel, Lebanon, France, and UNIFIL. Initially military-focused, the mechanism entered a new phase in late 2025 with the inclusion of civilian representatives from both sides, reflecting a deliberate attempt to broaden dialogue beyond immediate security arrangements. This evolution responds to the growing recognition that sustaining the ceasefire requires not only military verification but also political clarity, confidence-building measures, and third-party supervision of Hezbollah's disarmament process. While IMIM succeeded in halting large-scale hostilities and facilitating regular military-to-military engagement, its effectiveness now hinges on robust U.S. and French involvement to bridge deep mistrust between Israel and Lebanon, ensure transparency in Lebanese compliance, and prevent unilateral escalation. Absent sustained external oversight and a clear, enforceable framework for disarmament, the mechanism risks becoming a forum for managing tensions rather than a tool for consolidating the ceasefire and preventing a return to war.

5. Strategic Assessment

4.1 Ceasefire Without Disarmament

December 2025 confirms a core reality: The ceasefire limits escalation but does not dismantle Hezbollah's military or economic capacity.

- Military rehabilitation continues, especially within the Radwan Unit
- Financial infrastructure remains largely intact
- State capacity to enforce meaningful measures is severely constrained

The challenges Lebanon faces in regulating Al-Qard al-Hasan closely resemble its inability to disarm Hezbollah, raising fundamental questions about sovereignty and governance.

4.2 Outlook

While December recorded fewer strikes, the data point to:

- Sustained Hezbollah presence south of the Litani
- Operational migration northward, not demobilization
- Persistent Iranian involvement via the Quds Force
- A ceasefire increasingly characterized by containment rather than resolution

Absent comprehensive political, economic, and security reforms, December 2025 illustrates that the ceasefire remains a mechanism for managing conflict, not ending it.