



# Israel-Hezbollah war: Cataclysm in making?

## Getting ready for showdown?

An Israeli soldier walks at the site of a Hezbollah anti-tank missile direct hit on a building near the Lebanon border in Moshav Shtula, northern Israel, on June 19, 2024.  
● KOBİ WOLF/  
BLOOMBERG

By Ali Zubair Soomro  
Columnist

### OPINION

**Following Israel's attack in Khirah in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa area and Hezbollah's drone attack on Beit Hillel, northern Israel — in response to the attack which resulted in the assassination of the Jamma'a Islamiya group's commander in Lebanon — the tension between Hezbollah and Israel has heated up. The exchange of fire between them has been ongoing since October 8 in order to compel Israel to stop the Gaza massacre. In the conflict, about 350 Hezbollah fighters and more than 90 Lebanese civilians have been killed so far, while in Israel, 15 soldiers and 10 civilians have been killed, but after the assassination, the situation has been exacerbated. Both of them claim readiness for an all-out war, but the diplomatic resolution of the tension is underway. Here questions arise: will Israel afford to open another front to war? Can Hezbollah outsmart Israel? Will the US support Israel? Can the region afford another war? Is another cataclysm in the making?**

The exchange of fire between Israel and Hezbollah has constrained denizens to flee from both sides of Israel and Lebanon. More than 90,000 Israelis have fled their homes in the north of the country since the skirmish triggered with Hezbollah on October 8, and at least 90,000 people have also fled their homes in southern Lebanon after Israeli attacks. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under domestic pressure to drive Hezbollah from the border and

allow displaced residents to return to their homes in Israel's north as the school year approaches, and they are under fear that they won't be able to live in security as long as Hezbollah operates nearby.

The Israeli public wants both things: returning to their homes and military operations against Hezbollah, which seem difficult to achieve within months as Bibi is unable to move some forces to the north because of the ongoing massacre in Gaza. Here, it is noteworthy

that Hezbollah has claimed it will mitigate tensions with Israel if the genocide in Gaza is terminated. Besides, Hezbollah has warned Cyprus, a member of the European Union, that if it opens Cypriot airports and bases for the Israeli forces to target Lebanon, it means that the Cypriot government has become part of the war and will be dealt with accordingly. However, another front for all-out war is a herculean task for Israel for some reasons. Firstly, its forces are engaged in heavy

fighting with Hamas in north and central Gaza. So, its forces cannot be moved to the northern side of Israel to engage in war with Hezbollah for the time being. But some experts opine that Israel can open another front, but the financial and human costs will be immense. Secondly, the Israeli defense system's Iron Dome anti-missile batteries are at risk of being overwhelmed in the opening strikes of any escalated tussle with Hezbollah. Thirdly, the assessment by US officials and recent analysis by experts in Israel and the US are replete with fears that a war with Hezbollah could be far more devastating than the 2006 second Lebanon war. Last but not least is the dearth of military aid from the US that renders Israel incapable of fighting a greater war. Netanyahu declared in a video that in the past few months, the US administration has been withholding weapons and ammunition from Israel. The statement was dubbed perplexing by US officials since they noted that only one weapons shipment had been paused since the inception of the war, while billions of dollars of weapons had flowed unimpeded. The conflict of statements depicts that Israel does not have enough weapons and ammunition to wage a full-scale war with Hezbollah. Apart, Hezbollah is not the same as in the 2006 war. It has



Hezbollah fighters carry out a training exercise in Aaramta village in the Jezzine District, southern Lebanon, on May 21, 2023.  
● HASSAN AMMAR/AP

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Greater war will not be affordable by both sides and the entire region. So, averting a greater war will be in favour of both sides. And it can help a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas because one of the core rationales behind Hezbollah's assaults is to stop Israel from destroying the entire Gaza.