

Israel Bombed Lebanon Today, Killing Hundreds. The U.S. Is Sending More Bombs

Weapons used in earlier Israeli strikes into Lebanon that have killed civilians have been found to be U.S.-made.

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In-depth Report: [THE WAR ON LEBANON](#)

The Israeli military has embarked upon a massive bombing campaign in Lebanon. Last week, it began with the [remote detonation](#) of thousands of personal electronic devices. On Friday, an Israeli strike leveled a building in the Beirut suburbs. On Sunday and into Monday, the bombings expanded into the largest attack on Lebanon since Israel's [2006 invasion](#). All told, the Israeli military bombed 1,300 targets, killing at least 490 people, including more than 90 children and women.

The death toll is already the highest since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, and certainly the worst since October 7, when Israel and Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shia group backed by Iran, began [exchanging strikes](#). The Israeli government continued its attacks over the course of the day Monday, hitting a Beirut suburb with three missiles, injuring at least six others. While Israel said it targeted Hezbollah's weapons supplies, Lebanon's health minister also said the strikes hit hospitals, medical centers, and ambulances.

With this new bombing campaign, Israel has opened a new front in its wars on Gaza and the West Bank — and critics of U.S. policy have renewed calls for the U.S. to halt its weapons transfers to Israel as the conflict continues to grow.

“It’s easier to stop sending the Israel government weapons to conduct its genocidal wars than it is to evacuate every American in Lebanon,” said Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., on X on Monday, [captioning a tweet](#) from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, urging American citizens to leave the country.

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<https://t.co/R3BZ5zMnAP>

— Rashida Tlaib (@RashidaTlaib) [September 23, 2024](#)

Abbas Alawieh, a co-founder of the [“Uncommitted” movement](#), which has been pushing the Democratic Party and Kamala Harris’s campaign to commit to an arms embargo on Israel, reported Monday morning that his family’s village in Lebanon had been hit by Israeli bombs, killing “a mom and her daughters ... in their home,” as well as other civilians in his cousins’

village.

“[President Joe Biden], the more weapons you send, the more civilians killed,” Alawieh [wrote](#).

Overwhelmed this morning by news from family in Lebanon. In our village, reports of a mom and her daughters killed in their home by an Israeli airstrike. In my cousins', their great aunt and 3 daughters, the same. [@POTUS](#) the more weapons you send, the more civilians killed.

— Abbas Alawieh (@AZAlawieh) [September 23, 2024](#)

In May, ahead of Israel's invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah where [thousands of Palestinians were sheltering](#) from fighting, the Biden administration halted the transfer of 2,000-pound and 500-pound bombs to Israel. However, in July, amid [pressure from pro-Israel lobby groups](#), the U.S. resumed shipments of 500-pound bombs.

When Harris was asked during a talk with the National Association of Black Journalists in Philadelphia about a shift in policy around Israel's war in Gaza, a question she has [avoided](#) throughout the [campaign trail](#), Harris said she supports Biden's pause on 2,000-pound bombs.

“So, there is some leverage that we have had and used,” she said.

Although the source of the bombs and missiles used in the recent bombardments in Lebanon have yet to be established, Stephen Semler, co-founder of Security Policy Reform Institute, which tracks U.S. military arms transfers to Israel, believes it likely that American-made munitions were involved in the attacks.

“As more forensic evidence is recovered in Lebanon, we shouldn't be surprised to see U.S. fingerprints all over it,” Semler told The Intercept. “Considering Israel's reliance on U.S. munitions, the burden of proof is effectively flipped, where it'd almost be more shocking to see a non-U.S.-supplied weapon being used in southern Lebanon.”

Semler compiled a list of instances of U.S. munitions being used in possible violations of humanitarian law earlier this year, including a strike in March where Israel bombed the village of Hebbarieh in southern Lebanon, hitting a residential building that housed the Emergency and Relief Corps of the Lebanese Succour Association. The Israeli strike killed emergency and relief volunteers. While the 500-pound bomb used in the attack was made in Israel, its Joint Direct Attack Munition guidance kit — a bolt-on piece of technology that guides bombs toward their targets — was American-made, according to Semler's [work](#) and research conducted by [Human Rights Watch](#).

On October 16 of last year, the Israel Defense Forces fired 155 mm artillery shells filled with white phosphorus into Dhayra, another south Lebanon village. The attack killed nine civilians and damaged civilian property. Production serial numbers on the artillery shells showed they were manufactured in the U.S., according to [Amnesty International](#) and the [Washington Post](#).

The Israeli military has said the recent strikes, which mostly took place in southern Lebanon,

are intended to secure the border area so that tens of thousands of displaced Israelis who fled northern Israel over the past year could safely return to their homes. Israel also accused Hezbollah of using “human shields,” alleging it had stored munitions inside civilian homes, a common pretext for costly strikes of homes and hospitals in Gaza.

As the strikes began, Israel’s Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli released a statement calling for the IDF to invade and permanently take over parts of southern Lebanon from which Hezbollah can fire missiles into Israel.

“Lebanon, even though it has a flag and even though it has political institutions, does not meet the definition of a state,” Chikli wrote in [a series of posts](#) on X, blaming Lebanon for allowing Hezbollah to control its southern region. In addition to its armed wing, Hezbollah also operates as an official political party in Lebanon and has been a part of the national government for over three decades. The tweets included a map of a proposed “buffer zone,” that would move the Israel–Lebanon border up beyond the “[Blue Line](#)” — which was drawn in a deal following the 2006 war — miles into current Lebanese territory.

לבנון, למרות שיש לה דגל ולמרות שיש לה מוסדות פוליטיים לא עונה להגדרה מדינה.

בהיעדר מונופול על הפעלת הכוח הן כלפי פנים והן כלפי חוץ ממשלת לבנון היא לא יישות ריבונית. על מרחב הגבול עם לבנון המאוכלס ברובו באוכלוסייה שיעית עוינת שולט באפקטיביות... pic.twitter.com/pVrszT5tFf

— עמיחי שיקלי - Amichai Chikli (@AmichaiChikli) [September 21, 2024](#)

Chikili’s comments revived worries over the [long-standing possibility](#) of Israel annexing and occupying part of southern Lebanon. In recent months, an Israeli settler organization, Uri Tzafon — the name invokes a biblical verse and translates to “Awaken, O North” — said that settling Lebanon is necessary to “grant true and stable security to northern Israel” and expand Israel closer toward its biblical borders, according to [Jewish Currents](#).

The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Lebanon that has been helping maintain the Blue Line said on Monday amid the renewed Israeli strikes that they have “grave concern for the safety of civilians.”

“It is essential to fully recommit to the implementation of UN [Security Council Resolution 1701](#), which is now more critical than ever to address the underlying causes of the conflict and ensure lasting stability,” the U.N. mission said.

Hezbollah was founded in the 1980s, largely in response to Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982, with the explicit support of the recently established Islamic Republic of Iran. During that conflict, more than 17,000 people were killed, including more than 1,000 civilians – mostly Palestinians and Lebanese — who were massacred by an Israeli-backed Lebanese Christian militia group in Beirut’s Sabra neighborhood and Shatila refugee camp.

Semler said the current crisis stems from [Israel’s ongoing war in Gaza](#), which is nearing its one-year mark and has killed more than 41,000 people, including more than 16,500 children. Hezbollah, along with a set of allied groups, including the [Houthis in Yemen](#), have vowed to attack Israel as long as it continues its war in Gaza.

Ceasefire talks to end the war have dragged on for months, prompting critics, including Semler, to accuse the U.S. and Israel of putting on “[political theater](#),” as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu firms his grip on power in the country. A growing number of Democratic leaders, [and Americans](#), have called on the Biden administration to use its military aid as leverage to force a ceasefire deal.

“In general, nothing Israel is doing now would be possible without the United States,” Semler said. Congress approved \$18 billion in military aid to Israel this year alone.

IDF spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari told reporters on Monday that it is “not looking for wars” but is “looking to take down the threats” and “will do whatever is necessary to do to achieve this mission.”

Hagari also claimed Monday that Hezbollah has launched more than 9,000 rockets and drones into Israel since October 7, including 700 in the last week. Semler said his analysis found that Israel has launched an even greater amount — 11,000 munitions, excluding the bombs dropped in airstrikes — into Lebanon from October 7 to June. This weekend’s strikes have prompted thousands more in south Lebanon to flee north.

Meanwhile, during an Oval Office meeting on Monday between Biden and United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan meant to reinforce the U.S. economic partnership with the oil-rich country, the president said his Cabinet is “working to de-escalate” the conflict in Lebanon.

“The Biden administration is telling us that it’s working for a ceasefire in Gaza, but continues to send arms,” Semler said. “And it’s the same deal for the broader Middle East, they’re telling us, ‘Oh, we don’t want it to extend to a broader conflict,’ but at the same time they keep sending weapons to Israel, which allows them to expand the conflict.”

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Featured image: Smoke billows from a site targeted by Israeli shelling in the southern Lebanese village of Zaita [Mahmoud Zayyat/AFP]

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