



### [U.S. Envoy to Lebanon Tom Barrack's Push to Disarm Hezbollah and the Chances of His Success](#)

As U.S. Envoy to Lebanon Tom Barrack and other American officials push for the implementation of the Hezbollah disarmament plan, there are aspects that present significant challenges to the prospect of success. The plan, which was approved by the Lebanese government last month, aims to bring all weapons under state control by the end of the year in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from occupied areas in southern Lebanon and an end to its hostilities. It also includes the promise of international economic support for Lebanon – a nation in the midst of a deep economic and financial crisis – as an incentive for compliance. Yet one of the main obstacles remains how to proceed with the disarmament of Hezbollah when Israel continues to violate the November 2024 ceasefire agreement with ongoing military operations and attacks – which Hezbollah has insisted must be put to an end first and cited as justification for retaining its weapons. Israel's failure to abide by the ceasefire agreement and its unlawful occupation of territory in southern Lebanon have therefore been deemed harmful to the prospect of successfully carrying out the plan.

Despite being signed by Lebanon and Israel, with several mediating countries such as the United States pledging to oversee its proper enforcement, the November 2024 Israel-Lebanon ceasefire agreement has seen Israel commit at least 8,000 violations – according to United Nations peacekeepers. This has included ground operations, drone surveillance, and airstrikes, all serving as not only violations of the ceasefire agreement but of Lebanese sovereignty as well. UN peacekeepers have also noted that these violations have come from the Israeli side, but not from Lebanon. Understandably, this has led many to argue that U.S. officials should ensure that these impediments to peace be halted first – or at the very least at the same time – with the efforts to push for the disarmament of Hezbollah. U.S. officials like Barrack have seemingly acknowledged the need for Israel to comply with the stipulations laid out in the plan for it to have any chance of success, however it appears as though the onus is being placed on the Lebanese government to try to begin the complex and fragile process of disarming Hezbollah first while bellicose Israeli violations still persist. It is clear to most experts that Hezbollah will likely resist the idea of handing over its arms unless Israel stops launching attacks and withdraws from illegally occupied Lebanese territories.

In addition to the continued Israeli attacks, its ongoing occupation of numerous areas in southern Lebanon is a notable hindrance to the prospect of successful implementation of the Hezbollah disarmament plan. This is in direct defiance to the terms of the ceasefire and has been condemned by Lebanese and UN officials. Israeli forces have refused to withdraw from southern Lebanon, even though doing so would maximize the chances for the disarmament plan to succeed. Furthermore, the continued presence of Israeli forces is a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and serves as a course of action which indefinitely risks sparking renewed conflict. For these reasons, Lebanese government officials have recently implored the U.S. to pressure Israel to end its encroachments. Doing so would help to stabilize domestic conditions and allow the Lebanese government to deal with Hezbollah as should be the case: as a matter of internal affairs and integration into the state apparatus.

Fair-minded analysts view the halting of Israeli attacks and unlawful occupation as conditions that must be put in place either before or in conjunction with efforts to initiate the disarmament of Hezbollah. As such, there is skepticism regarding the chances of successful implementation of the Hezbollah disarmament plan unless this

transpires. It is crucial that the United States apply the same amount of pressure on Israel as it is on the Lebanese government. If Barrack and other U.S. officials want to truly see the plan succeed, they should use the United States' leverage over Israel to compel its adherence to the needed circumstances on the ground in southern Lebanon that would allow this to materialize.