

Lebanese Social Media Reactions to Rocket Strikes on Israel

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Brief Analysis

A sampling of posts suggests fears of another catastrophic war, increased public questioning of Hezbollah as a “resistance” movement, and anger toward its cooperation with Iran in compromising Lebanon’s sovereignty.

On April 6, thirty-four rockets were launched from south Lebanon into Israel, the largest such volley since the 2006 war. The Israeli military [stated \(https://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-warning-sirens-sound-in-israel-towns-on-lebanese-border/\)](https://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-warning-sirens-sound-in-israel-towns-on-lebanese-border/) that the attacks were carried out by the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, whose leader Ismail Haniyeh [met with \(https://twitter.com/haningdr/status/1644025863300587528?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/haningdr/status/1644025863300587528?s=20) Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon the previous day. Haniyeh was also [photographed \(https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1644052631894085645?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/ytirawi/status/1644052631894085645?s=20) meeting with various Palestinian groups in the Hezbollah stronghold of Dahiya, where he declared, “The factions will not stand idly by in the face of this brutal aggression,” referring to the latest Israeli police action at Jerusalem’s al-Aqsa Mosque.

In light of Haniyeh’s meetings and the fact that the rockets were launched from Lebanese soil, Hezbollah almost certainly gave Hamas its consent for the strikes. The two groups also remain in coordination via a “Common Operations Room.” In response to the incident, Israel [launched \(https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1644153084665274370?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1644153084665274370?s=20) airstrikes [in Gaza \(https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1644087964543352833?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1644087964543352833?s=20) and south Lebanon on April 7, [hitting Hamas infrastructure \(https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/1644155480028110849?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/1644155480028110849?s=20) near Rashidiya.

Early Lebanese social media reactions to these events highlight how dramatically opinions of Hezbollah have changed since the 2006 war with Israel. Increasing numbers of citizens see the organization as an Iranian proxy, not a bona fide form of resistance against Israel. In their view, its relationship with Tehran has undermined Lebanese sovereignty and drawn attention away from the country’s [failing economy and endemic corruption](#)

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/it-time-new-hezbollah-policy>). Many have also voiced concern over the [potential for another catastrophic conflict \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollah-infiltrates-israel-part-2-potential-responses\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollah-infiltrates-israel-part-2-potential-responses) on Lebanese soil, which they hope to avoid at all costs.

When the 2006 war broke out, many Lebanese viewed Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance movement and were willing to make significant sacrifices in the name of opposing Israel. Yet events since then have altered local perceptions of the group and colored individual reactions to the latest crisis, strongly suggesting that another war would receive less popular support than in 2006.

For example, one Lebanese Twitter user condemned the rocket strikes given Lebanon's failing economy, [arguing \(https://twitter.com/Salah_Halawi/status/1644017303413989379\)](https://twitter.com/Salah_Halawi/status/1644017303413989379) that those who support the attack are "feeling bored and would like to indulge in war at a time when we do not have the bare minimum to survive." Another user [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644007794926841856\)](https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644007794926841856), "[Hezbollah's] problem is that if an Israeli war is waged against #Lebanon, there will be no popular support for it. We won't take anyone into our homes. 2006 will not be repeated." And another [declared \(https://twitter.com/SaraAssaf/status/1644039483065528320\)](https://twitter.com/SaraAssaf/status/1644039483065528320), "Despite all the tragedy, this is not our war. We have had enough. Period."

Regarding the problem of Hezbollah's regional interventionism distracting from domestic issues, a Lebanese attorney [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/joylahoud/status/1644229841166761984?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/joylahoud/status/1644229841166761984?s=20), "We want Lebanon as an economic and cultural platform, and here it is, as a platform for frenzied missiles." Another user [wryly observed \(https://twitter.com/ESNWt1/status/1644035678403981325\)](https://twitter.com/ESNWt1/status/1644035678403981325), "I wish you were as excited when the port was bombed," implying that [Hezbollah's reaction \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/washington-should-sanction-officials-obstructing-beirut-port-investigation\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/washington-should-sanction-officials-obstructing-beirut-port-investigation) to the 2020 Beirut port explosion and its catastrophic aftermath amounts to a hypocritical double standard. Similar posts highlighted that resistance to Israel does not address the basic kitchen-table issues that the Lebanese people are desperately seeking to resolve.

Other users have cast Hezbollah's activities more explicitly as a national threat. One [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/AmarRashid/status/1644024174149509144\)](https://twitter.com/AmarRashid/status/1644024174149509144), "They went to Aleppo, Yemen, and Iraq, and now they are destroying us...[T]hey have killed more of us than of the enemy. Who among us can live through another war?" Another [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/rimaanabtawi/status/1644045151101390848\)](https://twitter.com/rimaanabtawi/status/1644045151101390848) that the strikes were an "act of aggression by Iranian proxies and Iranian backed Palestinian factions," emphasizing Tehran's influence over Hamas and Hezbollah. And in an [Al-Arabiya video report \(https://twitter.com/AlArabiya/status/1643966957031419905?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/AlArabiya/status/1643966957031419905?s=20), Shia journalist Mustafa Fahs argued that no one can launch a rocket from south Lebanon against Israel without Hezbollah's knowledge; he then asked whether Lebanon was back to the pre-1982 era, when the Palestine Liberation Organization was freely operating in the south.

Some official reactions to the attacks have likewise focused on the issue of sovereignty. Mark Daou, a reformist parliamentarian elected in 2022, [tweeted \(https://twitter.com/DaouMark/status/1643961982498881536?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/DaouMark/status/1643961982498881536?s=20), "Lebanon is not a missile platform serving anyone. National sovereignty is the paramount consideration. Those who fired the missiles and those who helped them committed a crime against Lebanon." And Prime Minister Najib Mikati [released a statement \(https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1644075332087996418?s=20\)](https://twitter.com/BarakRavid/status/1644075332087996418?s=20) condemning the Hamas rocket fire toward Israel, rejecting the use of Lebanese territory as a staging ground for efforts to destabilize the region, and emphasizing that Lebanese army forces and UN peacekeepers were aiming to [arrest the perpetrators \(http://www.pcm.gov.lb/arabic/subpg.aspx?pageid=22800\)](http://www.pcm.gov.lb/arabic/subpg.aspx?pageid=22800).

To be sure, not all commentators have aimed their ire at Hezbollah and Hamas. Many Lebanese Twitter users

rejected (<https://twitter.com/HusseinSerhan14/status/1644073551412994049>) Mikati's statement and argued that he has not been so forceful in condemning (https://twitter.com/adel_halawi/status/1644071466407809024?s=20) Israeli actions at al-Aqsa. Another user tweeted (<https://twitter.com/Hseiinsaleh/status/1644338412806197248?s=20>), "For Lebanon to be free, protect Lebanon's airspace from Zionist aircraft...And liberate the section from the occupied south, otherwise Lebanon will not be free."

Additional Reactions

The above themes have been expressed in numerous other social media posts in the hours since the rocket attack. Below is a small sampling of illustrative quotes, including expanded versions of certain posts referenced previously (some originally in English, others translated from Arabic):

"Here is the crux of the problem: You consider #Hezbollah Lebanese and that it is part of my society and yours. As for me, I consider that the party is a multinational militia organization similar to #ISIS and yes, I hold its constituents directly responsible for all the crimes it commits. The party is not separated from its popular base. This regional axis is governed by a popular incubator, which I will not come to the aid of."

(<https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644035400518758425>
(<https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644035400518758425>))

"Lebanon is not a conduit for anyone, nor for passing messages. Our choice is not war, and we will not fight the battles of others." (<https://twitter.com/yumnafawaz/status/1644005045795422209>
(<https://twitter.com/yumnafawaz/status/1644005045795422209>))

"I am from #Lebanon & I am against firing rockets at #Israel on behalf of anybody—Palestinian, Iranian or otherwise. If you are Lebanese & feel the same, speak up!"
(<https://twitter.com/FirasMaksad/status/1643962724265623554>
(<https://twitter.com/FirasMaksad/status/1643962724265623554>))

"I am both Lebanese and Palestinian with family [in] both places and I condemn this act of aggression by Iranian proxies and Iranian backed Palestinian factions."
(<https://twitter.com/rimaanabtawi/status/1644045151101390848>
(<https://twitter.com/rimaanabtawi/status/1644045151101390848>))

"Why are you praising those who fired the missiles? Do you think no one else lives in this country? Do you think they are really concerned about Jerusalem, Sheikh? *[Editor's note: the poster was referring to Sheikh Hasan Moraib, an assistant general inspector with the government religious institution Dar al-Fatwa who tweeted in support of the attacks.]* For years we have been hearing that we will pray in Jerusalem, and what did they do? They went to Aleppo, Yemen, and Iraq, and now they are destroying us, they blew up our mosques, they have killed more of us than of the enemy. Who among us can live through another war? Aren't you concerned about your family's safety? Our country is standing on shaky ground, we can't take it anymore."
(https://twitter.com/_AmarRashid/status/1644024174149509144
(https://twitter.com/_AmarRashid/status/1644024174149509144))

"The problem of #Hezbollah is not #Israel's expected response to their idiotic move, which falls under the category of 'forcing Christians in Lebanon to elect #SleimanFrangieh' in exchange for de-escalation. The party's problem is that if an Israeli war is waged against #Lebanon, there will be no popular support for it. We won't take anyone into our homes. 2006 will not be repeated." (<https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644007794926841856>
(<https://twitter.com/MajdolineLahham/status/1644007794926841856>))

"Glory to the Katyushas! A 'Twitter' resistance fighter living in Europe or in north Lebanon and has no family in the

south, feeling bored and would like to indulge in war at a time when we do not have the bare minimum to survive.

Note: If Israel initiates an attack, I would support every resistance action against them (and I like to think that all

Lebanese think the same).” (https://twitter.com/Salah_Halawi/status/1644017303413989379

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