

Middle East war

Lebanon demands full Israeli withdrawal from its territory

Tuesday's deadline to pull out passes as Israel says its troops will stay in 5 'strategic' locations



Israeli military tanks on the border with Lebanon on Tuesday © Atef Safadi/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock

Raya Jalabi in Beirut YESTERDAY

Lebanon has called on Israel to withdraw all its forces from Lebanese territory, warning that any remaining troop presence would constitute an “occupation”.

Tuesday marked the deadline for Israel to withdraw under a US-brokered deal that sought to end its devastating offensive in south [Lebanon](#) that began in September following months of cross-border fire between it and Hizbollah.

The deal agreed in November halted the worst round of fighting between Israel and the militant group in almost two decades.

Under the terms of the agreement, Israel was given 60 days to withdraw fully, which was [then extended](#) by a further three weeks last month.


But Israel had accused the Lebanese army, which was supposed to deploy as the Israeli forces withdrew to prevent Hizbollah from returning, of not moving fast enough.

On Monday, Israeli officials said troops would remain in five “strategic” positions inside southern Lebanon, saying that was part of last year’s US-brokered deal that ended months of war between Israel and Hizbollah.

An Israeli military spokesperson described the decision as a “temporary” deployment

An Israeli military spokesperson described the decision as a temporary deployment at five “specific” locations that gave “vantage points” on Israeli communities over the border.

Israel says its forces will remain in five locations within Lebanon

 Approximate locations of positions the Israeli military will retain inside Lebanon



FINANCIAL TIMES

Israeli officials said the move had been “agreed upon” with the US-led ceasefire monitoring mechanism that was established as part of the truce.

But it remained unclear if Israel’s decision was approved solely by Washington, or whether the other members of the monitoring mechanism overseeing the ceasefire’s implementation — including France, the UN and the Lebanese government — had

also agreed.

Top UN officials in Lebanon said in a statement that “another delay” in the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement was “not what we hoped would happen, not least because it continues a violation of UN resolution 1701”, which governs the terms of the agreement.

They added that Israel’s military had withdrawn from population centres in southern Lebanon and that the Lebanese Armed Forces being deployed had done so in challenging conditions.

Lebanon’s president, prime minister and speaker of parliament said on Tuesday that they would take their complaint to the UN Security Council to address the continued “Israeli violations and oblige Israel to withdraw immediately”.

Israel mounted a ferocious air and ground offensive against Hizbollah after the Iran-backed movement began firing towards Israel following Hamas’s October 7 2023 attack from Gaza.

The Israeli assault devastated Hizbollah’s arsenal and killed much of its top leadership, including secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah. Israeli troops also invaded several kilometres into southern Lebanon.

More than 4,000 people were killed in Lebanon, and more than 140 Israeli civilians and soldiers during the 13 months of fighting. The cross-border fighting between Israel and Hizbollah displaced more than 1mn people throughout the country, along with nearly 60,000 Israelis from border communities. The Israeli government is set to call for its civilians to return to their homes by early next month.

Despite the ceasefire, Israel has continued striking Hizbollah and other targets inside Lebanon, as recently as this weekend.

Lebanese soldiers began moving into areas that Israeli troops were pulling out from on Tuesday, and began clearing roadblocks set up by Israeli forces and checking for unexploded ordnance.

Residents of areas deemed safe enough have begun to return home, although many have found only rubble where their houses once stood.

Cartography by Steven Bernard

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2025. All rights reserved.

Follow the topics in this article

Middle East war

Middle Eastern politics & society

Israel-Hamas war

Lebanon

Raya Jalabi