

# EDITORIAL

DATE : 1<sup>st</sup> December

## Israel-Lebanon Conflict and Ceasefire

### Why in News?

The **Israel-Lebanon ceasefire**, modeled on **UNSC Resolution 1701**, marks an end to the **13-month-long conflict** that escalated in September. The ceasefire comes after Israel's security cabinet approved a **US-backed proposal**, signaling an important development in the region's geopolitics. This follows recent hostilities involving **Hezbollah**, and broader discussions on the ethical justifications of war amidst global conflicts like the **Russia-Ukraine war**.

### Understanding the Israel-Hezbollah Conflict

#### 1. Origins of the Conflict:

- **1948 Arab-Israeli War:** Creation of **Israel** displaced over **750,000 Palestinian Arabs**, many of whom took refuge in southern **Lebanon**, escalating tensions.
- **Rise of Hezbollah (1982):** Formed as a **Shia militia** with **Iranian support** to resist Israeli occupation during the **Lebanese Civil War**.
- **Israeli Occupation:** Military interventions in **1978** and **1982** led to a prolonged Israeli presence in southern Lebanon and the emergence of Hezbollah as a resistance force.

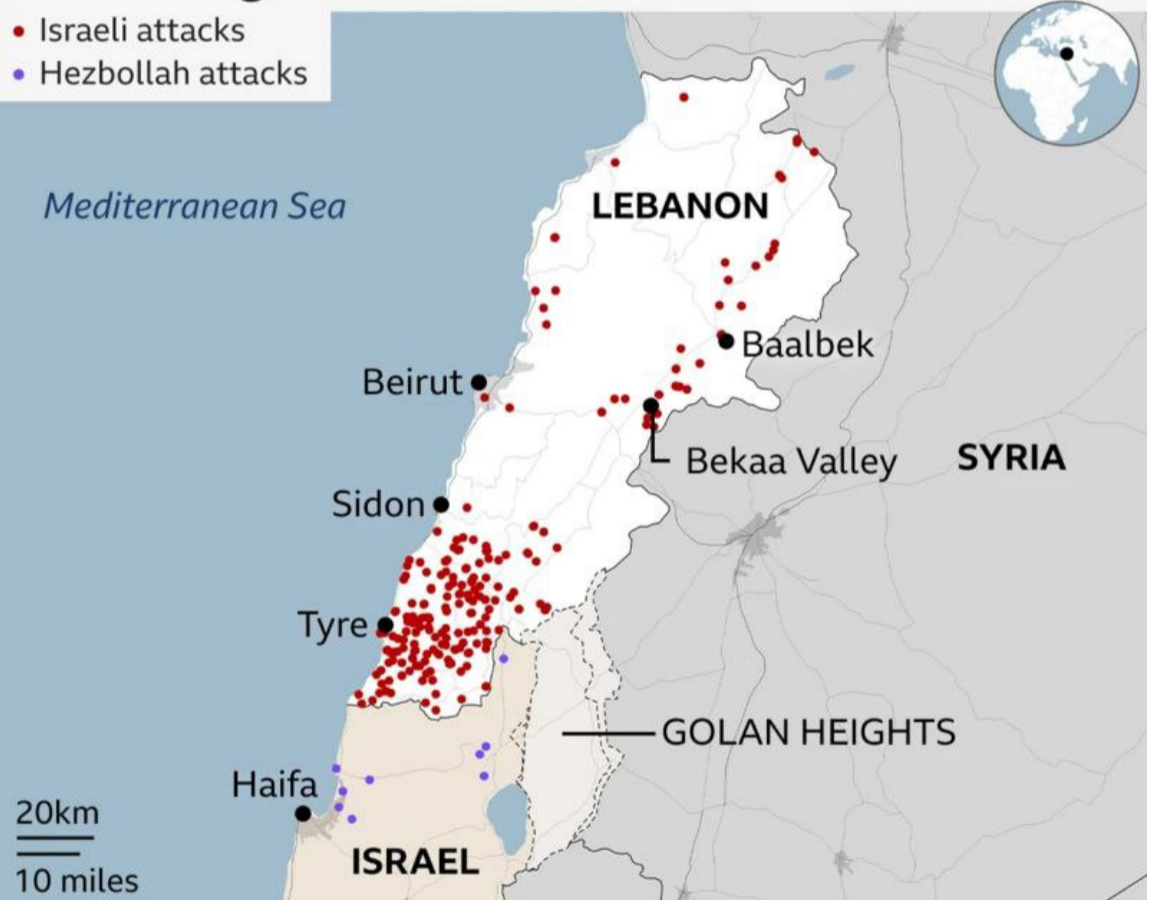
#### 2. Major Escalations (1980s–2006):

- **Guerrilla Warfare (1980s):** Hezbollah engaged in **attacks on Israeli forces**, including the **1983 US and French barracks bombings** in Beirut.
- **July War (2006):** Sparked by Hezbollah's **capture of two Israeli soldiers**, the 34-day conflict caused:
  - **1,200 Lebanese deaths** and **158 Israeli fatalities**.
  - Severe infrastructure damage, solidifying Hezbollah's status as a regional actor.

#### 3. Recent Developments (2010s–Present):

- **Syrian Civil War (2012):** Hezbollah supported the **Assad regime**, gaining **combat experience**.

#### Areas targeted in Israel-Hezbollah conflict



Note: Data includes air strikes, artillery, rocket, and mortar attacks

Source: ISW data between 18:00 GMT 25 Sep and 18:00 GMT 26 Sep 2024 **BBC**

- **Gaza Conflict (2023):** Hezbollah launched **rockets in solidarity** with Gaza amidst escalating Israeli actions.
- **Tensions in 2024:** Assassination of Hezbollah leaders and cross-border hostilities intensified, leading to Israel's **military advances to the Litani River**.

## The Ceasefire Agreement: Modeled on UNSC Resolution 1701

### Overview of UNSC Resolution 1701

Adopted on **August 11, 2006**, it sought to end the **Israel-Hezbollah war**, create a **buffer zone**, and establish a **permanent ceasefire**.

#### Key Provisions:

1. **Disarmament:**
  - Full **disarmament of armed groups** in Lebanon, granting monopoly of force to the **Lebanese State**.
2. **Buffer Zone:**
  - Establishment of a **demilitarized zone** between the Blue Line and the **Litani River**.
  - Only **UNIFIL peacekeepers** and **Lebanese forces** are permitted in this area.
3. **Arms Control:**
  - Prohibition of **arms transfers** to Lebanon without government consent.
4. **Monitoring Role of UNIFIL:**
  - Deployment of up to **15,000 UN peacekeepers** to assist in ceasefire monitoring and buffer zone enforcement.

#### Key Takeaways from the Ceasefire

1. **Cessation of Hostilities:**
  - A **60-day truce** serves as a framework for a **long-term resolution**.
2. **Withdrawal of Forces:**
  - **Hezbollah:** Retreats **40 kilometers** from the Israel-Lebanon border.
  - **Israel:** Agrees to withdraw from **Lebanese territory**.
3. **Enhanced Oversight Mechanisms:**
  - Lebanon to strengthen monitoring of **Hezbollah's activities** south of the Litani River.
  - Oversight involves:
    - **UN peacekeepers.**
    - **Lebanese military.**
    - A **multinational committee** comprising **US, France, Lebanon, Israel, and UNIFIL.**
4. **Israel's Conditional Approach:**
  - Israel reserves the right to **resume operations** if Hezbollah breaches terms.
  - Ceasefire does not demand Hezbollah's **disarmament in northern Lebanon**.

## Broader Ethical Context: The Debate on War and Peace

### 1. Just War Theory (JWT): A Measured Perspective

- **Philosophers:** Developed by **St. Augustine** and **Aquinas**.
- **Core Tenets:**
  - **Jus ad Bellum:** War is justified for **self-defense**, halting atrocities, or preventing future aggression.
  - **Jus in Bello:** Emphasizes **ethical warfare**, minimizing civilian harm.
  - **Jus Post Bellum:** Focuses on **just peace**, addressing root causes of conflict.

### 2. Realism: Power Politics Dominate

- **Thinkers:** Articulated by **Thucydides** and **Machiavelli**.
- **Core Belief:** States prioritize **security and power** over moral considerations, viewing war as a **pragmatic necessity**.

### 3. Pacifism: Rejecting All Violence

- **Advocates:** Leaders like **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Martin Luther King Jr.**
- **Belief:** Nonviolent resistance offers a more sustainable path to peace.

- **Criticism:** Critics argue it is **impractical** in the face of severe aggression.

## Israel's Motivation Behind the Ceasefire

### Strategic and Military Considerations:

1. **Iran as a Priority:** Redirect focus on **Iran** as a regional threat.
2. **Replenishment of Resources:** Ceasefire allows Israeli forces to regroup after prolonged engagement.
3. **Separation of Fronts:** Isolate **Hamas and Hezbollah theaters** to reduce strain on military resources.

### Domestic and Tactical Factors:

1. **Civil-Military Dynamics in Israel:**
  - Former defense officials questioned the government's **military objectives**, urging diplomacy.
2. **Challenges in Lebanon:**
  - Prolonged presence could strengthen **Hezbollah's domestic support**.
3. **Hezbollah's Resilience:**
  - Despite heavy losses, Hezbollah retained operational capacity, launching **250 rockets** just before the ceasefire.

## Contemporary Updates on Israel-Hezbollah Conflict

1. **Multilateral Engagement:**
  - The US and **France** have actively mediated, enhancing the **multinational oversight role** in the ceasefire agreement.
2. **Focus on Reconstruction:**
  - Lebanon seeks international aid to rebuild **infrastructure damaged** during hostilities.
3. **Hezbollah's Position:**
  - While adhering to the ceasefire, Hezbollah has warned of retaliation if **provocations** continue.

## Conclusion

The **Israel-Lebanon ceasefire**, rooted in **UNSC Resolution 1701**, reflects the region's delicate geopolitical balance. While it provides temporary relief, the agreement does not address deeper issues like **Hezbollah's disarmament** or the **root causes of hostilities**, leaving room for future tensions. The ethical frameworks of **Just War Theory, Realism, and Pacifism** offer contrasting lenses to understand the conflict, highlighting the complexity of achieving lasting peace in the **Middle East**.

## MAINS QUESTION

**"The Israel-Hezbollah conflict is a microcosm of larger geopolitical tensions in the Middle East." Analyse this statement with reference to the role of regional and extra-regional powers.**