



Human Rights Now Strongly Condemns Israel's Continuing Attacks and Mass Displacement of Civilians in Lebanon

Human Rights Now strongly condemns the continued attacks by Israeli forces in Lebanon, including the strikes on 8 April 2026 that killed over 250 people, the most in a single day since the conflict began, as well as indications of serious violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and other international crimes in Lebanon by Israeli forces, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possible genocide. We call on Israel to immediately cease its attacks in Lebanon, withdraw its forces, allow the safe return of displaced people, and ensure accountability for serious violations.

1. Israel's Intentional Targeting of Civilian Areas

On 8 April 2026, Israel's military announced that it had carried out more than 150 air strikes within 10 minutes in Beirut, Southern Lebanon, and the eastern Bekaa Valley.¹ The strikes included targets in densely civilian-populated residential areas, including residential apartment buildings and other buildings without any apparent military significance.² Journalists reported seeing numerous charred bodies at one of Beirut's busiest intersections in the central Corniche al Mazraa neighborhood, a commercial and residential area, where an apartment building behind a popular food shop had also been struck.³

Lebanon's civil defense service announced that 254 people had been killed by the strikes and over 1,165 wounded,⁴ while the health ministry reported at least 182 killed across the country and 890 wounded, which they added was not the final figure.⁵ Lebanon's health ministry has also reported that since 2 March 2026, when the conflict escalated following Hezbollah strikes into Israel, Israeli attacks have killed at least 1,739 people in Lebanon, including at least 130 children, and wounded at least 5,673.⁶ These attacks appear to constitute several war crimes and crimes against humanity under IHL including targeting and/or indiscriminately attacking civilians and civilian objects and failing to minimize and take all feasible precautions to prevent harm to civilians.⁷

The fact that most of the areas struck were Shia Muslim communities and most of the civilians killed and forcibly displaced, as described below, were Shia Muslims—in the context of statements by the government of Israel appearing to explicitly target Shia Muslims for attacks and expulsion⁸—appears to indicate that Israeli forces committed serious international violations including racial discrimination and possible genocide if the attacks and expulsions were intended to destroy the group as such through prohibited means including killing, serious harm, and conditions of life calculated to destroy it.⁹ As the activist Nadia Hardman stated, "The Israeli military cannot claim to be safely evacuating the civilian population for imperative military reasons when, in some areas, its expulsions are based on religion and only Shia civilians are forced to leave."¹⁰ Rights groups have also reported the repeated killing of Lebanese journalists and health care workers, which may constitute the war crimes of targeting such groups, which are explicitly protected under IHL.¹¹

While some areas were given advanced warning before the strikes, the most densely populated areas of central Beirut were not, violating the IHL obligation to provide advance warning, a war crime in itself.¹² These were areas where strikes had not occurred yet and where nobody was expecting them. A UN aid official in Lebanon, Imran Riza, stated that "A lot of the strikes that happened today did not have displacement orders,

did not have warning orders.”¹³ One Lebanese official noted that half of the population displaced by conflict was sheltering “at the heart of Beirut” in an area that was struck.¹⁴

2. Condemnation by UN Authorities

Volker Türk, the head of the UN’s human rights office, stated that “Such carnage, within hours of agreeing to a ceasefire with Iran, defies belief.” The UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis, stated that Israel’s attacks “cannot go on”, and that “Neither side can shoot or strike their way to victory. Now is the time for a halt to all hostilities, direct talks and a clear roadmap based on resolution 1701,” which calls for the end of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.¹⁵

3. Widespread Displacement, IDP Vulnerability, and Israeli Occupation

There have been more than 1.2 million people forcibly displaced by the recent conflict, about a fifth of Lebanon’s population, most from Shia Muslim communities in the south.¹⁶ The displacement began by the Israeli military’s call for the evacuation of over 100 villages and towns in southern Lebanon by March 3, resulting in over 1 million displaced people in only two weeks.¹⁷ About half of the displaced are women and girls, with an estimated 13,500 pregnant women among them.¹⁸ The displacement to Beirut and other areas has also raised sectarian tensions and fears that Israeli attacks will follow the displaced population to other areas of Lebanon, already on display in the recent strikes in Beirut.¹⁹

Israel has issued evacuation orders for 15% of Lebanon’s territory in the south, and its ground forces continue to occupy about 10% of the territory, which Israel announced that it intends to continue occupying after the conflict as a “buffer zone.”²⁰ This would clearly violate the IHL obligation that occupation is presumptively temporary and the status quo ante conditions must be preserved, similar to the ICJ’s July 2024 Advisory Opinion that Israel’s continued occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is illegal.²¹ As mentioned above, Israeli strikes have particularly targeted Shia Muslim villages, completely destroying villages near the Israeli border and displacing much of the population in south Lebanon, with Israeli authorities announcing they will never be allowed to return to their homes.²² Israel has also constructed a wall crossing into Lebanese territory making 4,000 square meters inaccessible to the population, affecting people’s right to return to their homes.²³ Forced displacement is a serious war crime, as is preventing the return of displaced persons to their homes, and both are crimes against humanity when systematic or widespread in such numbers.²⁴ Meanwhile, the population that has remained in the south has struggled with shortages of food and medicine, facing a humanitarian disaster which much be addressed under IHL.²⁵

4. Destruction of Civilian Infrastructure

Over the course of the conflict, Israeli forces have bombed infrastructure including bridges, hospitals, and power stations, with the last remaining bridge linking south Lebanon to the rest of the country being struck as part of the April 8 strikes, all of which constitute serious war crimes.²⁶ Israel’s military stated that “most of the infrastructure that was struck was located within the heart of the civilian population.”²⁷ According to the World Health Organization, of 207 primary health-care centers in conflict areas, 100 are now closed due to the escalation of violence.²⁸ Israeli forces have also used white phosphorus artillery munitions airburst over residential areas, which is a war crime when used to harm civilians and their property, and they have set homes, agricultural areas, and other civilian objects on fire, all also war crimes, exposing civilian population to long-term harm and enforced displacement.²⁹

5. The Short History and Future of the Conflict

Israeli forces attacked Lebanon in 1978 and 1982, which exacerbated Lebanon's ongoing civil war effectively caused by Israel's previous and illegal mass forced displacement of Palestinians, and it occupied south Lebanon from 1982 to 2000. The conflict reignited in 2006 and most recently in 2023 when Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel in support of Hamas during the Gaza conflict, quickly intensifying. These hostilities culminated in September and November 2024, which included an attack on September 17 by Israel causing thousands of pagers presumed to be owned by Hezbollah members to simultaneously explode in an illegal indiscriminate attack killing 12, including 2 children, and injuring 3000.³⁰ In January and February 2025, the Israeli military withdrew from southern Lebanese border towns and villages it occupied in late 2024.³¹ Conflict reignited between August to October 2025, when several towns and villages were destroyed by Israeli strikes. Most recently, Hezbollah launched attacks into Israel following the US and Israel's initiation of war in Iran on 28 February 2026, leading to Israel's continual strikes and reoccupation of south Lebanon since March 3.³²

The April 8 strikes occurred only a few hours after the US, Israel, and Iran announced a two week ceasefire. However, both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump, as well as the White House press secretary, announced that Lebanon was not part of the ceasefire agreement, despite the Iranian president stating that a ceasefire with Lebanon was an essential condition of its agreement.³³ This has raised concern that the Lebanon conflict will continue, leading to further civilian deaths, injuries, displacement, suffering, and war crimes, and that Israeli forces may remain in south Lebanon after conflict ends.

6. Israel Must End its Attacks against Lebanon

Human Rights Now strongly condemns Israel's continuing attacks in Lebanon and we call on Israel's government to immediately cease all attacks in Lebanon, withdraw its forces completely, allow the safe return of all displaced people, ensure accountability for serious violations of IHL and other international crimes, and recommit to the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701.

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-beirut-strikes-9402965418687c634d4a157c966ec6ea>, citing <https://x.com/IDF/status/2041844695303696733>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>

³ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-beirut-strikes-9402965418687c634d4a157c966ec6ea>

⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/8/hundreds-of-casualties-across-lebanon-after-israel-says-it-hit-100-sites>

⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>

⁶ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-beirut-strikes-9402965418687c634d4a157c966ec6ea>; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/04/1167268>

⁷ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule1>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule10>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule12>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule14>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule22>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/01/world/middleeast/lebanon-shiite-israel-evacuation.htm>

⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-elimination-all-forms-racial>; <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/definition>

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- ¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/01/world/middleeast/lebanon-shiite-israel-evacuation.html>
- ¹¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/lebanon-israel-attacks-9.7156476>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule28>; <https://www.icrc.org/en/article/international-humanitarian-law-protect-journalists-armed-conflict>
- ¹² <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/8/hundreds-of-casualties-across-lebanon-after-israel-says-it-hit-100-sites>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule20>
- ¹³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/04/1167268>
- ¹⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-beirut-strikes-9402965418687c634d4a157c966ec6ea>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/8/hundreds-of-casualties-across-lebanon-after-israel-says-it-hit-100-sites>; https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s_res_17012006.pdf
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- ¹⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/03/05/israeli-military-calls-for-evacuating-southern-lebanon>; <https://www.rescue.org/uk/press-release/one-million-people-displaced-across-lebanon-just-two-weeks-children-need-urgent>
- ¹⁸ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/04/1167268>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>
- ²⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>
- ²¹ <https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/occupation>; <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/204176>
- ²² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/lebanon-israel-attacks-9.7156476>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>
- ²³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2025/11/increasing-israeli-attacks-killing-civilians-lebanon>
- ²⁴ <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule129>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v1/rule132>
- ²⁵ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>
- ²⁶ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/lebanon-israel-attacks-9.7156476>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>; <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ru/customary-ihl/v2/rule54>
- ²⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/8/hundreds-of-casualties-across-lebanon-after-israel-says-it-hit-100-sites>
- ²⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/unhcr-lebanon-crisis-deepens-israeli-airstrikes-intensify#:~:text=The%20Government%20of%20Lebanon%20estimates,the%20run%20for%20their%20lives.>
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- ³¹ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/lebanon>
- ³² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-03-24/israel-planning-to-occupy-southern-lebanon-to-the-litani-river/106493608>
- ³³ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/lebanon-israel-attacks-9.7156476>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-pauses-attacks-under-us-iran-ceasefire-sources-close-group-say-2026-04-08/>