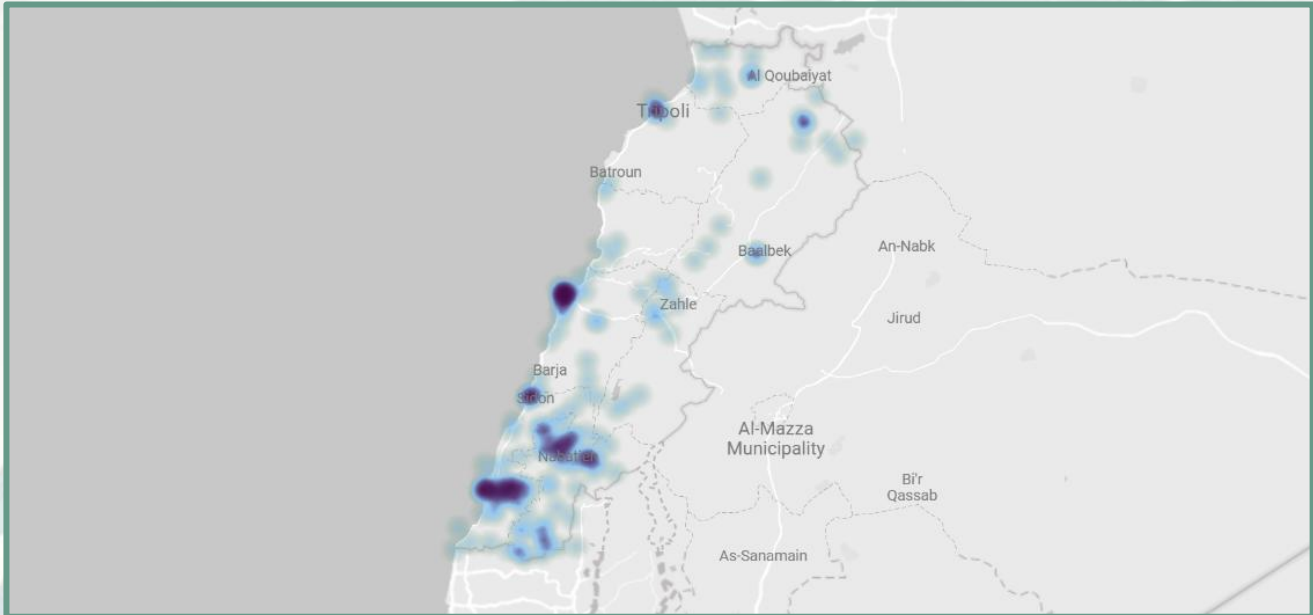




LEBANON WEEKLY UPDATE, JULY 25-31, 2025

August 1, 2025

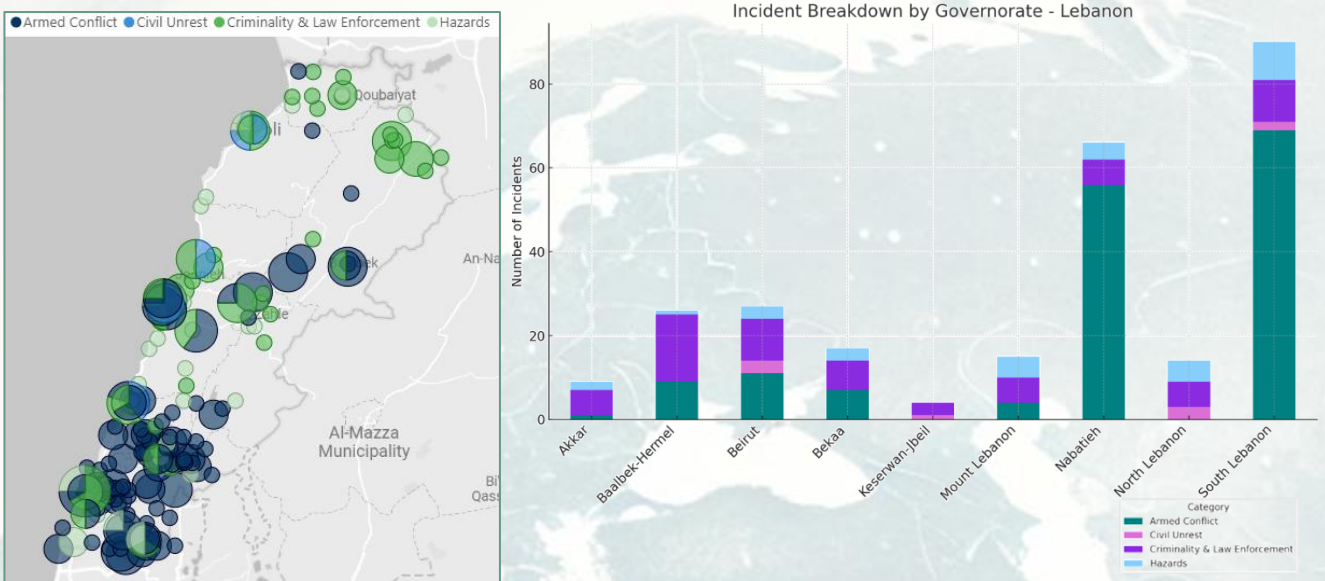


1. Key Weekly Highlights

- **Intensification of Israeli Airstrikes and Ground Operations:** The reporting period witnessed a significant escalation of Israeli military activity, moving beyond routine reconnaissance to direct kinetic strikes on multiple locations in Southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. This included a series of targeted airstrikes on what were described as "strategic military production and storage facilities" in key areas such as Brital, Nabi Sheet, and Al-Mahmoudiya.
- **Widespread Domestic Security Operations:** Lebanese security forces, including the Army, General Security, and Internal Security Forces (ISF), conducted a series of large-scale, multi-governorate security campaigns. These operations focused on a range of illicit activities, including illegal residency for Syrian nationals, arms trafficking, and the apprehension of a suspected ISIS commander, underscoring a proactive, albeit fragmented, state response to internal security threats.
- **Persistent Threat from Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs):** The aerial environment was dominated by pervasive and low-altitude Israeli drone activity, extending far beyond the immediate border region. Drones were observed in southern Beirut's suburbs, the Bekaa Valley, and multiple communities in Tyre and Nabatieh, suggesting a sustained and extensive intelligence-gathering and targeting effort across the country.
- **Civil Unrest and Political Tension:** The week was marked by a mix of protests, including large-scale demonstrations in Sidon and Tripoli in solidarity with Gaza, as well as a volatile domestic incident involving a prominent Syrian Druze community figure in Aley. These events highlight the dual pressures on Lebanon's internal stability: regional conflict and deep-seated sectarian and political divisions.



2. Weekly Overview



The security and conflict environment in Lebanon during the last week of July was defined by a notable escalation of Israeli military operations and a concurrent increase in proactive, but often uncoordinated, domestic security campaigns. The most significant development was the shift from targeted strikes on individuals to a broader campaign of airstrikes against what Israeli armed forces labeled as "strategic military production and storage facilities." These strikes hit multiple sites in both Southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, impacting communities in Brital, Hourtala, Nabi Sheet, Al-Mahmoudiya, and Al-Jarmaq. This represents a qualitative change in the nature of cross-border conflict, indicating a potential shift towards degrading a wider military and logistical infrastructure, rather than simply targeting high-value individuals. This kinetic activity was complemented by a persistent and widespread Israeli drone presence, with UAVs conducting low-altitude reconnaissance across numerous towns and cities, from the southern suburbs of Beirut to the Bekaa Valley.

In the political and civil sphere, the country grappled with a mixture of regional solidarity and domestic friction. Large-scale demonstrations were held in Tripoli and Sidon to protest the situation in Gaza, reflecting public sentiment tied to the broader regional conflict. Domestically, judicial and security developments dominated headlines. A travel ban was issued against two political figures related to an investigation into the National Credit Bank, and a riot erupted in Aley against a visiting Druze community figure from Syria, prompting a Lebanese Army response to protect the individual. These incidents highlight the ongoing fragility of Lebanon's political and civil institutions, which are susceptible to both internal power struggles and external influences.

The humanitarian and operational environment for NGOs was increasingly complex and dangerous. The escalation of Israeli airstrikes, particularly in areas like the Bekaa Valley and Southern Lebanon, poses a significant and unpredictable threat to staff safety and operational continuity. The widespread presence of low-altitude drones and the launch of incendiary flares, such as the one that started a fire in the Al-Labouneh forest, create a high-risk environment for field staff. Moreover, the extensive and multi-governorate security campaigns, while aimed at improving internal security, can disrupt movement and access for humanitarian workers. For instance, the closure of key roads and the establishment of numerous checkpoints as part of a 15-day security campaign across various governorates could impede the delivery of aid and essential services. The discovery of unexploded ordnance in areas like Fron-Bint Jbeil also presents a tangible, life-threatening risk to both civilians and those providing assistance.



3. Geographic Zoom-In

South Lebanon (Tyre, Sidon, Nabatieh): This region remains the primary nexus of direct conflict and surveillance. Airstrikes were frequent, with multiple incidents of vehicles being targeted, such as the strikes on a vehicle on the Tairi-Sriba road and another in Tali' al-'Aref. Drones were omnipresent, flying at low altitudes over dozens of communities including Tayourey, Naqoura, Srafa, Siksaki, and throughout the Tyre and Nabatieh districts. The incident where an Israeli drone dropped what were identified as old money transfer receipts over Mays al-Jabal, and the subsequent denial of rumors by the Shaqra and Doubie municipalities, illustrates the psychological warfare component of these operations. Humanitarian risks were also evident, with a fire in the Al-Labouneh forest ignited by an Israeli flare and unexploded ordnance found in Fron-Bint Jbeil.

Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel: This region experienced a significant escalation of Israeli military activity, moving from passive reconnaissance to direct kinetic strikes. The most notable event was the series of airstrikes on "strategic military production and storage facilities" in the general vicinities of Brital, Hourtala, Massa, Nabi Sheet, and Al-Shara. This is a qualitative shift in the conflict. Concurrently, the Lebanese Army and security forces conducted extensive raids in communities such as Hermel, Jaroud Hermel, and Al-Khodr, targeting arms trafficking and other crimes. This indicates a high level of both external and internal security-related volatility in the Bekaa region.

Beirut and Mount Lebanon: The capital and its surroundings saw a mix of domestic and regional security-related events. Israeli drones were observed conducting low-altitude reconnaissance over the southern suburbs of Beirut and multiple western Beirut neighborhoods, including Zqaq al-Blat and Nweri, demonstrating an expanded and brazen aerial surveillance footprint. Domestically, security forces apprehended a dangerous terrorist cell in Sidon and a suspected ISIS commander in Keserwan, while also addressing civil unrest in Aley. These incidents highlight the persistent threat of terrorism and internal sectarian tensions, even amidst the backdrop of the regional conflict.

North Lebanon: The North Lebanon governorate saw multiple domestic security incidents, including large-scale arrests of 90 Syrian nationals in Tripoli for illegal residency and an exchange of fire at the Al-Arida border crossing, which resulted in one Lebanese soldier being injured. This points to ongoing challenges related to border security and migrant populations. The region also hosted large public marches in Tripoli in solidarity with Gaza, reflecting the strong political engagement of its population.

4. Key Security & Humanitarian Trend Analysis

The Intensification of Israeli Strikes on Strategic Infrastructure

This week, a notable trend emerged in the nature of Israeli military operations, increasing focus from primarily targeted strikes on individuals to a broader campaign against what were described as "strategic military production and storage facilities." This represents an escalation in the conflict's scope, aiming to degrade the military infrastructure of armed actors rather than just their personnel.

Israeli armed forces conducted multiple airstrikes on sites in the Bekaa Valley and Southern Lebanon. Specific locations targeted included the general vicinities of Brital, Hourtala, Massa, Nabi Sheet, and Al-Shara in the Bekaa. In Southern Lebanon, strikes hit areas around Al-Jarmaq, Al-Mahmoudiya, Al-Aishiya, and Kfar Tebnit. This is a significant increase in the scale of attacks, moving beyond isolated incidents to a coordinated campaign. The targeting of infrastructure, as opposed to solely individuals, indicates a strategic reassessment by Israeli forces.



This escalation has critical implications for NGOs. The deliberate targeting of infrastructure in previously less-active conflict zones like the Bekaa Valley dramatically increases the risk of collateral damage and misidentification. NGO facilities, staff residences, and operational routes in these areas are now at a heightened risk. This new pattern of large-scale strikes requires NGOs to urgently re-evaluate their security protocols, particularly regarding staff movement and the designation of "safe areas" in the Bekaa and Southern Lebanon. The operational environment has become more volatile and unpredictable, necessitating a review of contingency plans for rapid evacuation and asset protection.

Pervasive and Expanded Aerial Surveillance

Israeli drone activity continues to be a pervasive, low-altitude, and geographically extensive threat. This trend moves beyond simple border monitoring and indicates a deep and sustained intelligence-gathering and targeting effort across a vast swathe of Lebanese territory, including urban centers far from the conflict's front lines.

The data provides numerous examples of this trend. On July 25, drones were observed over the southern suburbs of Beirut and over the Litani River banks in Al-Qasimiyeh. This aerial presence intensified and expanded on July 28 and 29, with reports of low-altitude reconnaissance flights over at least 15 different communities in the Tyre and Nabatieh districts, including Abassiya, Ma'raka, Tyre, Debaal, and Kfarkela. The surveillance footprint extended into the Bekaa Valley on multiple days and included the southern suburbs of Beirut, even reaching multiple western Beirut neighborhoods like Zqaq al-Blat, Nweri, and Basta on July 30. This constant, low-altitude presence suggests an ongoing effort to gather actionable intelligence and potentially identify targets for future kinetic strikes.

The sheer scale of this drone activity means that NGOs must assume they are under constant surveillance in all areas of operation, not just near the border. This has profound implications for staff safety, privacy, and operational security. Any movement, meeting, or gathering could be observed and potentially misinterpreted. NGOs must enforce strict communication and information security protocols. The risk of being identified as a potential target or being in close proximity to a target is now present in areas previously considered lower risk, forcing a fundamental shift in how NGOs manage visibility and assess risk across the entire country.

Fragmented, High-Intensity Domestic Security Operations

Lebanese security forces are conducting multiple, large-scale, and often uncoordinated raids and campaigns across different governorates. While aimed at improving internal security, these operations are reactive and often lack a unified, national strategy, leading to a fragmented and unpredictable security landscape.

The data shows a series of these campaigns. On July 26, the army detained 90 Syrian individuals in Tripoli. Two days later, a multi-agency security sweep was conducted in numerous communities in Akkar, Hermel, Baalbek, and the Bekaa, targeting a range of crimes from arms trafficking to illegal residency. Concurrently, Internal Security Forces (ISF) established numerous checkpoints in Tyre, Nabatieh, and Beirut as part of a 15-day campaign. The week culminated with the apprehension of a terrorist cell in Sidon on July 28 and the arrest of a dangerous ISIS commander in Keserwan on July 31. These operations, while effective in their specific aims, appear as a series of disparate, high-intensity actions rather than a cohesive national effort.

This fragmented approach to internal security creates a "patchwork" of risks for NGOs. The sudden establishment of checkpoints and large-scale raids can disrupt supply chains, impede staff movement, and make it difficult to predict safe transit routes. The focus on Syrian nationals in these campaigns also



raises humanitarian concerns and potential access issues for NGOs providing services to this vulnerable population. Operational planning becomes difficult as these security incidents can flare up in different locations with little warning. NGOs must maintain high situational awareness and robust communication channels with local authorities to navigate this unpredictable environment and ensure their staff and assets are not caught in the crossfire of these high-intensity security actions.

6. Humanitarian Outlook, Risk Assessment, and Recommendations

Humanitarian Outlook

The humanitarian outlook for Lebanon is rapidly deteriorating due to the convergence of intensified external conflict and persistent internal instability. The escalation of Israeli airstrikes into new geographical areas, particularly the Bekaa, and their focus on infrastructure rather than solely individuals, presents an immediate and severe threat to civilian populations. This new phase of conflict increases the risk of mass displacement and damage to critical civilian infrastructure, disrupting essential services and supply lines. The pervasive and low-altitude drone activity in both urban and rural areas contributes to a climate of fear and psychological distress, further complicating humanitarian efforts. Concurrently, internal security crackdowns, particularly those targeting Syrian nationals, place vulnerable populations at risk and may impede the access of humanitarian organizations seeking to provide aid. The combination of these external and internal pressures creates a perfect storm where the need for humanitarian assistance is rising while the operational environment for delivering that aid is becoming more constrained and perilous.

Risk Assessment

Risk Category	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation / Contingency
Direct Kinetic Impact	Escalated Israeli airstrikes hitting or causing collateral damage to NGO personnel, assets, or facilities in previously lower-risk areas like the Bekaa Valley.	High	Critical	Relocate essential assets and non-essential staff from high-risk zones; develop and communicate clear "shelter-in-place" and evacuation protocols for all personnel; reinforce facilities where possible.
Operational & Access Disruption	Inter-agency security campaigns, checkpoints, and road closures impede the movement of staff and the delivery of humanitarian aid and supplies.	High	High	Establish and maintain robust communication with all relevant security agencies (LAF, ISF, General Security); pre-identify and communicate alternative routes; keep a minimum of 72 hours of essential supplies on hand at all key locations.



Information & Surveillance Risk	Widespread low-altitude Israeli drone surveillance compromises the security and privacy of NGO staff, potentially exposing them to targeting or identification.	High	High	Implement strict communication security protocols (e.g., encrypted messaging, limited use of personal phones in the field); conduct regular security briefings to raise awareness of drone threats; assume constant observation and minimize visible activity.
Civil Unrest & Political Violence	Protests, riots, or sectarian clashes, like the one in Aley, disrupt operations and place staff at risk of direct violence or being caught in the crossfire.	Medium	High	Maintain strong ties with local community leaders and authorities to receive early warnings; pre-position staff and assets in secure, separate locations; develop and practice communication plans for staff during a civil unrest event.

Strategic Recommendations

- 1. Re-evaluate and Redefine Operational "Hot Zones":** NGOs must immediately revise their security maps and risk assessments, extending the designation of "high-risk" areas beyond the immediate southern border to include key parts of the Bekaa Valley, such as the areas around Brital, Nabi Sheet, and Al-Mahmoudiya. This re-evaluation should be based on the new pattern of infrastructure-focused airstrikes, and operational footprints and staff presence should be adjusted accordingly to minimize exposure.
- 2. Enhance Information and Communications Security:** Given the pervasive and brazen low-altitude drone surveillance observed across multiple governorates, NGOs should assume that all movement and communication are being monitored. Implement a mandatory, country-wide policy for all staff to use secure, encrypted communication platforms for all work-related messaging and to minimize the use of personal devices and visible signage on vehicles in the field. Conduct regular training on identifying and responding to surveillance threats.
- 3. Proactively Engage with All Security Stakeholders:** To mitigate the risks posed by fragmented and high-intensity domestic security campaigns, NGOs should proactively engage with all relevant security forces at both the national and local levels. Establish clear communication channels and, where possible, share movement and logistical plans to avoid being caught in raids or at checkpoints. This cooperative approach is essential for ensuring operational continuity and protecting staff safety amidst an increasingly unpredictable internal security environment.



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