

Israel says it won't withdraw from southern Lebanon by Sunday deadline



Israeli military vehicles in Nabatieh, Lebanon, on 21 January, 2025. (Via Getty Image)

Tel Aviv, January 25 (RHC)-- The Israeli regime says its military will not withdraw from Lebanon by Sunday's deadline, in violation of a ceasefire agreement that ended months of aggression against the Arab country.

The decision to delay the withdrawal follows weeks of rhetoric suggesting Israel intended to remain in at least five outposts in South Lebanon. Confirming that Israel would not meet the January 26th deadline, the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office accused Beirut of not fully implementing the deal.

“The military’s withdrawal process is conditional on the Lebanese army deploying in southern Lebanon and fully and effectively enforcing the agreement, while Hezbollah withdraws beyond the Litani [River],” it said in a Friday statement.

It said Israel regarded the ceasefire as “not yet fully enforced” and that “the phased withdrawal process will continue, in full coordination with the United States.”

Under the ceasefire deal signed in November, Israeli forces were to withdraw from Lebanon and the Lebanese army was to deploy soldiers in the south of the Arab country over a 60-day period ending on January 26th.

Hezbollah resistance movement has called on the Lebanese government and other parties to ensure the full implementation of the ceasefire deal with Israel. It has said evading commitments under any pretexts’ would not be tolerated by the group.

Hezbollah says a possible Israeli delay to withdraw the occupation forces from southern Lebanon will constitute an infringement on the Arab country’s sovereignty.

The Lebanese resistance movement issued the warning in a statement on Thursday after Israeli media reported that the regime had lobbied the United States to keep its troops in Lebanon for an additional 30 days, beyond the 60 days stipulated in a ceasefire deal with Hezbollah.

This week a Hezbollah lawmaker said any failure to comply with the deadline would cause the ceasefire to collapse. “We in Hezbollah are waiting for the date of January 26, the day on which the ceasefire requires a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory,” Ali Fayyad said. “If the Israeli enemy does not comply with this, it will mean the collapse of the [ceasefire deal].”

Hezbollah leader Sheikh Naim Qassem said last week that Israel had committed hundreds of ceasefire violations.

“We have been patient with the violations to give a chance to the Lebanese state responsible for this agreement, along with the international sponsors, but I call on you not to test our patience,” he said last weekend.

Israel was forced to accept the truce with Hezbollah on November 27, 2024, after suffering heavy losses on the battleground and failing to achieve its goals despite killing over 4,000 people in Lebanon.

Israel’s Channel 13 news reported that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu had requested that the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump allow Israel to keep occupying five military outposts in Lebanon after the withdrawal deadline.

Israel’s outgoing ambassador to the U.S. Michael Herzog said he believed Tel Aviv and Washington would “reach an understanding” on the matter and that the extension would be granted.

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