



By: TA | AP Brief

A 10-day ceasefire agreed on by Israel and Lebanon goes into effect



A 10-day truce began in Lebanon on Friday that could pause fighting between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group and boost attempts to extend the ceasefire between Iran, the United States and Israel after weeks of devastating war.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the agreement as a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon.

However, Israel has not been fighting with Lebanon itself, but rather with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants inside the country, who were not formally part of the agreement.

Barrages of gunshots rang out across Beirut as residents fired into the air just after midnight to celebrate the beginning of the truce.

Displaced families began moving toward southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs, despite warnings by officials not to attempt to return to their homes until it became clear whether the ceasefire would hold.

Earlier, Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** said he agreed to the ceasefire "to advance" peace efforts with Lebanon, but said Israeli troops would not withdraw.

Israeli forces have engaged in fierce battles with Hezbollah in the border area as they pushed into **southern Lebanon** to create what officials have called a "security zone." Netanyahu, in his video address, said it will extend 10 kilometers (6 miles) into Lebanon.

"That is where we are, and we are not leaving," he said.

Hezbollah said that "Israeli occupation on our land grants Lebanon and its people the right to resist it, and this matter will be determined based on how developments unfold" — a stance that could complicate the ceasefire.

Israel reserves right to defend itself

The U.S. State Department said that according to the agreement, Israel reserves the right to defend itself "at any time, against planned, imminent, or ongoing attacks." But otherwise, Israel "will not carry out any offensive military operations against Lebanese targets, including civilian, military, and other state targets."

The wording suggested Israel would maintain the freedom to strike at will, as it did in the months following the ceasefire that ended the previous war.

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It's unclear when the 1 million people displaced by the war will be able to safely return.

Lebanon's state-run National News agency reported that Israeli shelling continued in the villages of Khiam and Dibbine about a half hour after the truce went into effect. Israel's military said it was looking into reports of shelling and artillery fire in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah kept firing rockets at northern Israeli towns and communities right up to the start of the ceasefire. Air raid sirens went off in some often-targeted border towns less than 10 minutes before midnight.