



By: TA | AP Brief

Lebanon's president will meet with Trump to push for Israeli troop withdrawal



Lebanon's president will meet with U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday to wrap up a four-day visit to Washington, in a bid to bring about long-term calm in the war-torn country after months of war between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

Joseph Aoun's landmark meeting with Trump comes as Lebanon and Israel continue to hold rare direct talks mediated by Washington.

Lebanon hopes they will result in Israeli troops withdrawing from large swaths of southern Lebanon that they currently occupy, and for the Lebanese military to receive support to assert full control in areas where Hezbollah militants had held sway.

Lebanon and Israel announced a “**framework agreement**” on June 26, setting a plan for Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon as well as the disarmament of Hezbollah, which for decades had a strong presence in the area.

It also lays out steps toward an eventual peace agreement between both countries, which have never held formal diplomatic ties and have been nominally in a state of war for nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment.

The U.S. State Department announced Monday that operations in three villages deemed part of a “pilot zone” had begun, without giving details on what that entailed.

Two of the three villages, Froun and Srifa, are not under Israeli military control and the Lebanese army is present there, while Israeli forces are in part of Zawtar al-Gharbieh.

The Lebanese army in a statement said it was preparing for an Israeli withdrawal from Zawtar al-Gharbieh and that it would deploy in the area.

The Israeli military said it “will adjust its force posture in one of the pilot areas in order to enable the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their mission,” without specifying the location.

US will continue to support framework agreement

Aoun met with Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday, who said Washington will continue to endorse the **Lebanese agreement** and support the agreement's full implementation.

Rubio described the meeting as “very positive” and warned that Lebanon will “never be fully at peace” as long as the Hezbollah issue is not resolved.

“How do you replace Hezbollah? You defeat and replace them with a government that is strong enough to be the sole force of arms in the country,” Rubio said after the meeting.

Skeptics in Lebanon fear that a military confrontation with Hezbollah could lead to a civil war, as government officials have also urged for investment into the country's battered infrastructure to empower the weakened state, which Rubio echoed.

This is not just about military stuff. This is about how can we attract more U.S. and international investment into Lebanon – Marco Rubio

“This is not just about military stuff,” he added. “This is about how can we attract more U.S. and international investment into Lebanon.”

The Lebanese military last week increased its presence in some of the areas expected to be included in the pilot zone, including the three villages, with troops patrolling and setting up checkpoints.

Though recent talks in Rome have signaled that the agreement's implementation will begin soon, Israeli troops have not withdrawn from the areas under control.

Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said they plan to keep forces long term in a “security zone” in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah has dismissed the direct talks brokered by the United States and instead backed Washington's talks with their key ally and patron Iran to end their war, which also includes ending the war in Lebanon as a condition to bring back calm.

Lebanon's government came to power on a reformist platform in early 2025, vowing to disarm all non-state groups including Hezbollah.

It blames Hezbollah for dragging the country into another war with Israel in March when the militant group fired several rockets toward northern Israel after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran.

Beirut's leadership, however, has been critical of Israel's subsequent ground invasion and massive aerial campaign in the country, which killed over 4,000 people and displaced 1.2 million others.

While grappling with stark political opposition from Hezbollah and allies within the deeply divided country, Lebanon's leadership insists that Israeli withdrawal and international financial support for Lebanon's cash-strapped army is crucial for a sustainable security solution.