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News of the day with Nasser Kandil

Gallant Prepares Blinken for Ending the Ground Operation... Reiterates Commitment to Return Northern Residents

Resistance Operations: In 3 Weeks, the Occupation Lost 70 Dead, 600 Wounded, and 28 Tanks

Hezbollah Mourns Sayed Safi Al-Din... Hardan: The Martyr Leaders Are the Vanguard of Our Victories

The political editor wrote:

While the Occupation's Air Force targeted residential buildings, media, and health centres with twelve airstrikes by midnight, the core of the Occupation's Defense Minister's statements, made in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, became clear. Gallant spoke of continuing what he described as the pursuit of Hezbollah, meaning an escalation of aggression on Lebanon, aiming to push Hezbollah beyond the Litani River and ensure the safe return of displaced settlers from northern occupied Palestine. The key point, however, was Gallant's new declaration that this pursuit would persist even without the ground operation. He used a striking phrase: "Even after the

ground operation ends, the pursuit of Hezbollah will continue until they are pushed beyond the Litani, and the northern residents return”.

This confirms internal discussions within both the political and military leaderships regarding the disastrous results of the ground operation on the occupation army, with the collapse of the hope that resistance forces would crumble after the strikes they endured. Ending the ground operation without achieving the stated objective - pushing Hezbollah beyond the Litani and returning the northern residents - while reintroducing this goal is attainable through airstrikes alone, despite this strategy having failed previously, raises questions about the continuation of the entire war. The war now seems less about realistic objectives and more about the dilemma of ending it without an image of victory or political gains, as evidenced by U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein’s visit to Lebanon, which highlighted the impossibility of such gains due to firm Lebanese rejection and the steadfast resilience of the resistance.

This impasse and failure coincided with Blinken’s visit and U.S.-Israeli talks about targeting Iran, which the entity’s leaders view as an escape route from their predicament. At the same time, the Islamic Resistance’s operations room issued a statement summarising the results of the ground war across five sectors, corresponding to the deployment of the occupation’s five divisions along the border. According to the statement:

- First sector: Operations of the 146th division from Naqoura in the west to Marwahin in the east.
- Second sector: Operations of the 36th division from Ramiya in the west to Rmeish in the east, including Aita al-Shaab, and from Rmeish to Aitaroun in the east.
- Third sector: Operations of the 91st division from Blida in the south to Houla in the north.
- Fourth sector: Operations of the 98th division from Markaba in the south to the occupied Lebanese village of Ghajar in the east.
- Fifth sector: Operations of the 210th division from Ghajar to the occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms.

The operations room added: “As of this field report, the enemy has not fully secured control or occupied any village along the southern front of Lebanon. According to the Islamic Resistance fighters, the enemy has lost more than 70 soldiers, with over 600 wounded officers and soldiers. They destroyed 28 Merkava tanks, 4 bulldozers, an armoured vehicle, and a troop carrier, and downed 3 Hermes 450 drones and 1 Hermes 900 drone. This tally does not include losses in bases, military sites, and barracks in northern and central occupied Palestine”.

Last night, Hezbollah issued a statement mourning the head of its executive council, Sayyed Hashem Safi Al-Din, who was targeted in the Mrayjat strike two weeks ago. The statement described Safi Al-Din, as per Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan

Nasrallah, as “a loyal brother, much like Al-Abbas was to Imam Hussein (peace be upon them), his brother, support, banner carrier, trusted companion, and protector in times of hardship. He followed the path of the Badr companions, as a defender of God’s religion, pious, righteous, a pioneer, manager, leader, and martyr.” Syrian Social Nationalist Party leader Assad Hardan also issued a statement praising Safi Al-Din’s martyrdom, along with Sayyedn Nasrallah’s previous testament that “the martyr leaders are the vanguard of our victories.”