LEBANON AND THE TRAGEDY OF THE SOUTHERN BORDER DEMARCATION

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**Lebanon and the Tragedy of the Southern Border Demarcation**
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**Introduction**

Since its declaration as a state in 1920, Lebanon has been subject to a series of experiences and tests that have been and still are prevailing. In addition to the concerns of the Lebanese national unity, resulting mainly from the cultural and religious diversity that makes up Lebanon’s social fabric, and the concerns of the authorities and how the power is exercised and its extensive misery, the permanent tragedy of the southern borders stands out strongly.

If the land is one of the elements of the formation of the State[[1]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn1%22%20%5Co%20%22), then borders are what separate States and preserve their entities, independence and wealth, as well as preserve sovereignty as an attribute accompanying the State[[2]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn2%22%20%5Co%20%22). Respect for these borders limits regional conflicts, and contributes to maintaining international peace and security, which are the first goal of the international community today, especially after its long suffering from wars and conflicts among countries, and after the high prices paid because of the lust for domination, competition, colonization of peoples and the exploitation of their national wealth. Hence, the borders have been a constant concern for small and weak States, specifically for those who have neighboring countries founded on expansion, aggression and violation of rights, as is the case of Lebanon with the Zionist entity that was established on Palestinian Arab lands in 1948.

Demarcation of borders between States constitutes the best legal tool in accordance with the principles and standards of international law in resolving regional disputes. As such, and in order to prevent infringements and preserve rights, security and stability, Lebanon has had long and continuous experiences in this regard. As the issue of preserving its land and maritime borders (which are currently being discussed in indirect negotiations with the Israeli enemy), the negotiations have witnessed many ups and downs, and the borders have witnessed continuous attacks, thus depriving the Southern region and its inhabitants of stability, tranquility and development.

From this standpoint, the Southern borders of Lebanon will be the subject of this article, so we will review the various stages that the demarcation of these borders went through.

**1. Demarcation of  boundaries during the mandate period:**

The first time the southern borders of Lebanon were demarcated was at the beginning of the Mandate period. By the end of WWI, and after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, and based on Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916, the Middle East Region was occupied by Britain and France, where Lebanon and Syria became under the French mandate, while Palestine, Jordan and Iraq became under the British Mandate. On December 23, 1920 the two mandatory states agreed to regulate the affairs of borders, water, railways and the related affairs that bind the mandated areas together[[3]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn3%22%20%5Co%20%22). Accordingly, a joint committee was tasked with demarcating the borders between Palestine on one hand and Lebanon and Syria on the other hand. The committee named “Paulet-Newcombe” after their representatives - the two officers: Paulet and Newcombe.

The Paulet-Newcombe Committee began its field work in early June 1921 and ended with the signing of the “Final Report on the Fixation of the Borders between Lebanon and Syria on one hand and Palestine on the other hand” on February 3, 1922. On March 7, 1923, the two mandate states exchanged the Memorandum of the Paulet-Newcombe Agreement and the demarcation became effective as of March 10, 1923. Then the document of agreement was registered in the League of Nations on February 6, 1924 and was internationally recognized[[4]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn4%22%20%5Co%20%22). The international decisions that refer to Lebanon’s international borders in the South, refer to the borders as defined by the Paulet-Newcombe Agreement.

The agreement included the identification and designation of 71 separation points on the border line, 38 of which are on the Lebanese-Palestinian borders, starting at Ras al-Naqoura and ending at a hill located a hundred meters south of the Mutla-Banias road, passing through the old Roman bridge over the Hasbani River. As for the Syrian-Palestinian borders, it begins with point 38, at which the Lebanese-Palestinian border ends, and reaches point 71 in El Hamme, in the lower Yarmouk valley.

Thus, the Paulet-Newcombe Agreement not only did it fix the southern borders of Lebanon and demarcating them on the ground, but also gave these borders an international legitimacy that is extremely important in terms of the implicit recognition of the newly declared State of Lebanon at the time, and the recognition of the sovereignty of this state over its borders. The agreement will also have important effects in the years following its signature and until this day, and this importance will appear especially after the establishment of “Israel” on the land of Palestine, which will be explained in the next paragraph. Despite these advantages, the Paulet-Newcombe agreement also left some negative consequences, the most important of which may be the annexation of some seven Lebanese villages to the Palestinian territories, which are: Tarbikha, Salha, Malikiyah, Qadas, Nabi Yusha’, Hunin, and Ibel al-Qamh. These villages are spread today on the Palestinian side of the borders, and a number of Israeli colonies have been established on them, and occupy important strategic locations, as they overlook the Palestinian lands and the roads that connect them, especially some of them over the Galilee finger. The largest number of their inhabitants were displaced to the neighboring Lebanese villages and other Lebanese regions.

Thus, the Paulet-Newcombe agreement was the first demarcation of the Southern Lebanese borders, and the second demarcation took place in 1949 after the signing of the Lebanese-Israeli armistice agreement.

**2- Demarcation of borders with the armistice agreement in 1949**

After the end of the British Mandate over Palestine on May 14, 1948, the establishment of the Israeli entity was declared on the same date. Then, under the pressure of the Arab people and their demand to defend the rights of the Arab people in Palestine, Arab governments made a military intervention to save Palestine from Zionist control. The first Arab-Israeli war, called the “Palestine War”, took place between May 15 and June 11, 1948, followed by a month-long truce imposed by the UN Security Council. Then the war was resumed, but ended with an Israeli victory, and with the signing of armistice agreements among the Israeli enemy and four Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. On November 16, 1948, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 62, based on Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, in which it required the parties involved in the conflict in Palestine to negotiate directly, or through an international mediator, to reach an armistice that includes permanent armistice lines that cannot be crossed, and to reduce and withdraw the armed forces from both sides of these lines in order to ensure the truce, and to move forward to permanent peace in Palestine. On March 23, 1949, the Lebanese- “Israeli” armistice agreement was signed in Ras-el-Naqoura by the Lebanese delegation and the  “Israeli” delegation under the supervision of the UN mediator Ralph Bunche[[5]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn5%22%20%5Co%20%22).

The agreement stipulated the establishment of a permanent armistice that includes the establishment of an “armistice line” located on “the international borders between Lebanon and Palestine”, the withdrawal of the forces of both sides, and the reduction of forces on both sides of the armistice line. The first paragraph of Article 5 of the agreement stipulated the following: “The armistice line shall follow the international border between Lebanon and Palestine”.

The agreement also established a joint truce monitoring committee called the Joint Israeli-Lebanese Committee for Truce Supervision (ILMAC)[[6]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn6%22%20%5Co%20%22). The first work accomplished by this committee was reviving the separation points on the Lebanese-“Israeli” international borders, which will be the armistice line stipulated in the agreement.

In demarcating the boundaries and reviving the separation points, the committee relied on the Paulet-Newcombe Agreement of 1923. The commission revived the 38 separating points established by the Paulet-Newcombe agreement and added a number of new intermediary points to bring the total of the points on the border line to 141 points[[7]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn7%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Thus, the Armistice Agreement between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy emphasized the international borders between both sides. The “Israeli” recognition of these borders can be concluded as soon as it signed the agreement. This recognition is important because the Israeli enemy did not announce its borders on the day it was declared a state, which indicates its embedded intention to expand in its regional surroundings, especially towards southern Lebanon, coveting its land and water.

The Israeli enemy tried to evade the armistice agreement with Lebanon after the breakdown of the armistice agreements with Egypt, Jordan and Syria as a result of the June 1967 war, but it failed due to Lebanon and the United Nations’ adherence to it.

From this point on, it is possible to recognize the importance of the 1949 Lebanese-“Israeli” Armistice Agreement, which preserves the southern borders of Lebanon and stands in the way of Israeli ambitions with the guarantee of the United Nations and the Security Council, which ordered this agreement, participated in it, and then ratified it by a special resolution. The Security Council met the Israeli violations of the armistice and the Lebanese borders with decisions condemning them and adhering to the armistice agreement, but the support provided by the great powers to the Israeli enemy prevented the Council from taking disciplinary measures against it.

**3- Demarcation of the Blue Line after the Israeli withdrawal in 2000:**

On March 15, 1978, the Israeli enemy launched a massive attack against southern Lebanon in an operation called “Operation Litani”, which occupied a large area of more than 2,000 square kilometers. Following that, the Security Council issued the famous Resolutions 425 and 426, calling for the Israeli enemy to withdraw immediately and respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, as well as establishing the “United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon” (UNIFIL)[[8]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn8%22%20%5Co%20%22), which still exists at present. The Lebanese Resistance faced the occupying Israeli army with courage and determination to expel it from southern Lebanon. They inflicted many losses on the Israelis and made their occupation of that area extremely costly. However, the Israeli enemy continued its occupation for more than twenty years, until it announced, on April 2, 1998, its desire to withdraw in implementation of Resolution 425, calling on the Lebanese government to negotiate the necessary arrangements for the withdrawal. The Lebanese government refused to make any arrangements with the Israeli enemy and demanded a complete and immediate withdrawal from all Lebanese territories. The United Nations intervened and appointed an international mediator to help implement Resolution 425 and finalize the Israeli withdrawal. In order to reconcile the opposing positions of the Israeli enemy and Lebanon, and to secure the Israeli withdrawal, the United Nations drew on maps the “withdrawal line” and called it the “Blue Line”. This line is considered closest to the Lebanese-Palestinian international borders but not the actual border line itself.

After the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon on May 24, 2000, the United Nations sent a topographic team to join the technical team of the UNIFIL to verify the Israeli withdrawal. On the other hand, and after studying and analyzing the Blue Line, the Lebanese government accepted it with reservations on the areas where the Blue Line does not coincide with the international borders. Then a specialized military team was formed by the Lebanese army to work with the United Nations team to ensure the withdrawal and the stabilization of the Blue Line[[9]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn9%22%20%5Co%20%22).

The field verification of the Israeli withdrawal was carried out by the United Nations and the Lebanese army teams during the months of June and July 2000, and showed that the Blue Line and the international borders do not coincide. It was also evident that there were a number of violations regarding the Blue Line, and a continued presence of many Israeli centers inside the Lebanese territories. The field verification process was able to remove many of the Israeli encroachments on the Blue Line which diverged from the international borders in three main areas allowing the Israeli enemy to keep occupying it. The first one is in Ras El Naqura area, where the Blue Line is 18 meters away from the international borders inside the Lebanese territories. In fact, the Israelis have moved the gate, which was originally located on the borders, at a distance of 18 meters inside Lebanese territory, to become on the Blue Line, which extends the same distance away from the international borders in that area. The second point is in the area of the settlement of Maskvaam, as the Blue Line crossed the hill overlooking the towns of Adaisah and Kafr Kila and the neighboring villages, which allowed the Israeli enemy to remain in this occupied hill. As for the third area which is the passage of the Blue Line north of the road that connects Mutla with the Roman Bridge, making this road under Israeli control, in contravention of the internationally recognized borders between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy, which is south of that road[[10]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn10%22%20%5Co%20%22).

In addition to the three mentioned areas still occupied by Israelis, the Lebanese authorities have also registered their reservation on the Blue Line because it passes through the center of the town of Ghajar and does not include the Kfarshouba hills and the Shebaa Farms, as they are occupied Lebanese territories, and from which the Israeli enemy must withdraw.

The Lebanese authorities had reservations about these violations, and considered that the Israeli enemy is still occupying the Lebanese territory, and therefore it has not fully implemented Resolution 425 as it claimed. The Lebanese authorities also objected to the same Blue Line that was announced in a hurry by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to accelerate the implementation of Resolution 425. He confirmed that the Israeli enemy withdrew according to this line before the completion of its installation on the ground and before confirming that the Israeli enemy had actually withdrawn from all Lebanese lands. However, the Lebanese authorities agreed to the line, despite the difficulties that accompanied it, with the aim of getting rid of the Israeli occupation of the South.

After the subsequent verification of the Israeli withdrawal according to the Blue Line, the United Nations Force, UNIFIL, was deployed along this line. This situation continued at this pace until the issuance of Resolution 1701 following the July 2006 war, which we will be tackling later.

**4- Marking the Blue Line after the issuance of Resolution 1701**

On July 12, 2006, the Lebanese Resistance carried out a military operation against the Israeli enemy, in which it captured a number of its soldiers. Then the Israeli enemy launched a massive aggression against Lebanon that included air strikes targeting infrastructure deep in Lebanese territory, mainly bridges and roads. The Israeli forces crossed the Blue Line in several axes, attacking the corresponding Lebanese villages and towns, where they were met with violent resistance that inflicted heavy losses. The aggression also caused the displacement of most of the people of the South to seek refuge in the interior regions. After thirty-three days of fighting and devastating Israeli bombing, the Security Council issued Resolution 1701 on August 11, 2006, which called for a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of the Israeli enemy, and the deployment of UNIFIL and the Lebanese army. The Resolution also called for respecting  the Blue Line, and it emphasized the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized borders, as stipulated in the General Armistice Agreement between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy of March 23, 1949. The resolution also highlighted other practical measures aimed at preserving security and stability and strengthening the sovereignty of the Lebanese State.[[11]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn11%22%20%5Co%20%22)

In accordance with the Resolution 1701, UNIFIL increased its forces to fifteen thousand soldiers, and about fifteen thousand soldiers from the Lebanese army. The forces spread in the area extending from the south of the Litani to the Blue Line.

The International Forces Command realized the need to re-mark the Blue Line and make it clearer and more distinct, in order to prevent any contact with the Israelis. As such, the Blue Line was re-marked by UNIFIL in cooperation with a team from the Lebanese army and another one from Israeli army. This process continued for about ten years, due to Israeli obstacles, during which clear marks (blue barrels) were placed on the Blue Line, where it coincides with the international borders. Once again, there were more reservations about violations of the Blue Line. The number of these violations reached thirteen points (or areas), which are the following: the border point in Ras al-Naqoura, 3 points in Alma al-Shaab, al-Bustan area, Marwahin area, Rmeish district, the area between Yaroun and Maroun al-Ras, the Blida region, a spot between Mays al-Jabal and Hula, the Adaisse area, the road between Adaisse and Kfar Killa, the last border point between Metulla and Wazzani.[[12]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn12%22%20%5Co%20%22)

Despite the enormity of the breaches shown by the marking of the Blue Line, as expressed in the reservations referred to above, this does not negate the achievements attained through the success of the process of marking the border points where the Blue Line coincides with the international borders and making them clearer, which facilitates the mission of the Lebanese Army and that of UNIFIL.

**5- Areas occupied by the Israeli enemy on the Lebanese-Syrian borders**

The Israeli enemy’s violations on Lebanese lands were not only limited to those located on the international borders established by Paulet-Newcombe Agreement and recognized by the Armistice agreement between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy, but also to the Lebanese territories located on the south-eastern borders between Lebanon and Syria and its vicinity. Between the years 1967 and 1973, the Israeli enemy occupied the area extending from the Shebaa Farms to the Kfarshouba hills, to Nakhailah, and to the town of Ghajar. When the Israeli enemy withdrew in the years 2000 and 2006, these withdrawals did not include the occupied area on the Lebanese-Syrian borders mentioned above. Moreover, the Blue Line drawn in the year 2000 as a line for the Israeli withdrawal, made those areas fall south of it, meaning that it did not require an Israeli withdrawal. This behavior is in violation to the various international resolutions that rejected the Israeli occupation and requested its withdrawal.

Below, we will be reviewing the issue of the continued occupation of these areas and the surrounding situations and problems.

**a- Shebaa Farms****[[13]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn13%22%20%5Co%20%22):**

The “Shebaa Farms” is that part of the Lebanese territory located on the south-western slope of Jabal al-Sheikh, which extends from Mughr Shebaa (or from Marjayoun-Quneitra road) in the south up to the Zalqa hill on Mount Hermon in the north, and is bounded by Wadi al-Asal in the east, while it is bordered on the west by the occupied Kfarshouba hills.

The number of these farms is fourteen: Barkhata, Beit al-Buraq, Kafr Dura, Mashad al-Tair, Ramtha, Zebdine, Qafwi, al-Moghar, Khallet Ghazaleh, Fashkool, Boustra, Marah al-Malloul, Karm al-Zaytouni, Jabal al-Rus, and al-Naqqar[[14]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn14%22%20%5Co%20%22). These farms are considered as a shelter for the residents and farmers of Shebaa town and their livestock, where they settle in winter to escape the snow in the town of Shebaa. We note that the Mughr Shebaa farm is the only one that is considered Syrian and belongs to the Syrian Quneitra district, while the rest of the farms are Lebanese, and together with the town of Shebaa constitute a real estate unit belonging to the Hasbaya district in the South of Lebanon.

Following the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights in June 1967, the Shebaa Farms were gradually occupied from 15 to 25 June 1967, while the Boustara farm was occupied in 1973; Israeli forces surrounded the farms with barbed wire and expelled its residents and destroyed more than 1070 homes. It also prevented thousands of families from exploiting their properties. In the mid-eighties, the Israeli enemy established three colonies in the farms: two of them on the farms of Ruwaisat al-Nu’man and Zebdine to settle the Falasha Jews, and the third was for skiing and tourism, which was established on the farm of Marah al-Maloul[[15]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn15%22%20%5Co%20%22) (the Israeli enemy expelled the entire population by force of arms in 1989).

The “Shebaa Farms” is of great importance, both in terms of its geo-strategic location (which overlooks the Hula Plain and the Galilee region in occupied Palestine, a large area of the Syrian Golan, and the Jabal Aamel region in southern Lebanon), and its water wealth contained in the farms which gives it utmost importance due to the large number of waterways and surface waters that feed the Banias, the Dan, and the Wazzani rivers. Shebaa Farms is also considered a major source of groundwater, so it is regarded as the upper basin of the Jordan River. The total quantity of water this river is fed by Shebaa Farms is estimated to be one billion two hundred million cubic meters annually[[16]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn16%22%20%5Co%20%22).

As for the pretext used by the Israeli enemy for not withdrawing from the Shebaa Farms in the year 2000, it was that the farms were Syrian and not Lebanese, and they fell outside the scope of Resolution 425 and thus outside the Blue Line. What applies to the Shebaa Farms, in the eyes of the Israeli enemy, are the provisions of Resolution 242, which was issued by the Security Council in the aftermath of the June 5, 1967 war. The United Nations agreed with the Israeli enemy’s viewpoint, so the farms were placed south of the Blue Line despite the Lebanese authorities’ request that the withdrawal should include the farms as well. In spite of the maps presented by Lebanon, considering that it has more than one Lebanese and non-Lebanese map that  the farms within the Syrian borders, there are many reasons that prove that the Shebaa Farms are Lebanese, not the least of which is the numerous decisions of the French mandate authorities, and the joint Lebanese-Syrian survey work to address the dispute in the Mughr Shebaa area, which was completed and signed by the Lebanese judge Rafik Ghazzawi and the Syrian judge Adnan al-Khatib on March 27,1946, which showed that Shebaa Farms are Lebanese and the Mughr Shebaa Farm is Syrian, in addition to the description of the borders between Lebanon and Syria in that area[[17]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn17%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Faced with the repeated Lebanese demands, the United Nations responded with the necessity to present an official document on the part of the Syrian state proving that the Shebaa Farms are Lebanese, in order to be able to take the necessary measures to ensure the Israeli enemy’s withdrawal from them. However, the Syrian authorities refused to sign a document in this regard, and were satisfied with the public statements of a number of Syrian officials declaring the farms as Lebanese. This issue caused internal Lebanese political and Syrian-Lebanese disputes, where the issue of the Shebaa Farms was exploited in a way that it departs from the true interest of Lebanon and Syria in taking back territories occupied by the Israeli enemy.

**b- Kfarshouba Hills:**

The occupied Kfarshouba hills are located north of the occupied Shebaa Farms, and they extend from Majidiya village in the west to Jabal Al-Rus in the east, the most important of which are the Ruwaysat al-Alam high in Jabal al-Rus and the Ruwaysat al-Sammaaq highland, where the Israeli enemy holds two major military centers.

The Israeli enemy occupied these heights in 1969, (not occupied in 1967, as what happened to the Shebaa farms), and there were no Syrian soldiers there, as the Israeli enemy invoked its occupation of the Shebaa farms.

However, these heights had been stationed by Palestinian resistance units since 1968. After the Israeli invasion in 1978, and the issuance of Resolutions 425 and 426. The area became under the custody of UNIFIL forces, which were stationed near Ruwaysat al-Alam and in Birkat Ba’athail near Ruwaysat al-Summaqah. However, the Israeli forces stationed on Ruwaysat al-Alam hill prevented the international forces from positioning near it and obliged them to move away and station north of Kfarshouba town.

On the other hand, the Israeli forces placed barbed wires around the occupied heights, and placed a gate that prevented people from entering their agricultural lands, thus placing its hand on large agricultural lands for the people of Kfarshouba[[18]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn18%22%20%5Co%20%22).

What is striking is the confusion occurring between the Kfarshouba Heights and the Shebaa Farms and considering them part of it, and it applies the same criteria that the Israeli enemy invokes to maintain the Shebaa Farms. However, not any Syrian soldier had entered the Kfarshouba Heights before it was occupied by the Israeli enemy in 1969, as is the case in the Shebaa Farms. Therefore, the United Nations had to place those heights on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line and obligate the Israeli enemy to withdraw from them in the year 2000, in implementation of Resolution 425, similar to the southern regions from which it withdrew.

**c- Al-Nakhaila Village:**

The village of Nakhaila is located in the far southeast corner of the Hasbaya district, at a distance of 2,500 meters east of the Hasbani River, and at a distance of 1,500 south-west of Mughr Shebaa. According to the Paulet-Newcombe delineation, the village of Nakhaila is located approximately 1,000 meters northwest of the meeting point of the Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian borders[[19]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn19%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Therefore, the village of Nakhaila, located to the south of the Shebaa Farms, which was not mentioned in all the delineations of the Blue Line, should have been included in the Israeli withdrawal.

**d- Ghajar town:**

The town of Ghajar is located east of the Wazzani River on the vertices line extending south down to the Roman bridge. It is bordered on the north by the Surda farm and the outlying town of Al Mary, and on the south by Israeli borders, and on the east by the towns of Al-Abbasiya and Majidiyeh, and to the west by the town of Arab Al-Luizah. As for the townspeople, they are Syrians, and most of them today hold Israeli citizenship.

The town of Ghajar was occupied in the June 1967 war, and it was then a small town, and the Israeli enemy considered it part of the occupied Golan. Because of the population growth of the town, and during the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the town began to expand to the north, and its residents began building their homes outside the Old Town, making more than one third of the town within Lebanese territory. In the year 2000, the Israeli enemy withdrew from the northern part of the town after it became clear that the Blue Line was dividing it in two. The Lebanese army did not enter the northern part at that time. Rather, the movement of the people was left unchanged due to their lack of association with the Lebanese State. However, the Israeli enemy reoccupied the town completely in 2006 during the July war, and refused to withdraw from it after the issuance of Resolution 1701. UNIFIL tried to make the Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese part of the town available, but it was unable to do so due to the Israeli enemy’s intention not to withdraw from the town, especially since its residents have become Israelis. Despite all the proposals made by UNIFIL and the Lebanese side, the Israeli enemy insisted on its adherence to the Ghajar and erected a barbed-wire fence around the town, cutting the Arab al-Luweizeh-Abbasiah road, which is located within the Lebanese territories and outside the occupied zone, and passes along the barbed wire[[20]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn20%22%20%5Co%20%22).

In addition to obstructing the movement of Lebanese citizens on the aforementioned road, the Israeli enemy proceeded to steal large quantities of the Wazzani spring water, under the pretext that it was pumped for the benefit of the residents of Ghajar. In fact, the Israeli enemy installed two 4-inch pumps each, operating day and night, far exceeding the Ghajar need for water. One study showed that the quantity that the Israeli enemy steals from the Wazzani Spring amounts to 1,500 cubic meters per day, and that it goes to Israeli territory under the guise of the Ghajar people[[21]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/lebanon-and-tragedy-southern-border-demarcation%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn21%22%20%5Co%20%22).

**Conclusion and Remarks:**

After this comprehensive view of our southern borders, its historical background, and the stages that it has gone through since its establishment during the days of the French Mandate of Lebanon and the demarcation of its borders with Palestine, which was under the British Mandate, and which back then took the form of “internationally recognized borders”, and that before the establishment of the Israeli enemy in 1948, we saw the danger that Lebanon perceived with the establishment of the Israeli enemy, and the continuous violations of its borders as a result of Israeli ambitions.

After we shed light on all the problems that the Israeli enemy has created with regard to its borders with Lebanon, it seems necessary to include some remarks that are imperative to ensure the safety of the borders in the face of a greedy enemy who covets the goodness of our land, and today the bounties of our sea. It must be noted that we did not address in this research the dispute related to the demarcation of the maritime borders with the Israeli enemy, as it requires a special research that are beyond the boundaries of this discussion. As for the remarks, they are as follows:

**First** – The borders are a very significant issue, as they relate to one of the pillars on which the state is founded, namely the land and the exercise of sovereignty over it, which in turn is not upright without clear, stable, and safeguarded borders. On this basis, the issue of borders should be taken seriously and with diligent institutional work, which calls for a national effort that has priority, and requires dealing with it with honesty and dedication and keeping it away from all political disputes at various levels.

**Second** - The Lebanese army, since the signing of the Lebanese-Israeli armistice agreement in 1949, may be the only national institution that has carried the burden of the southern borders of Lebanon, even if that was among its core tasks, despite the loss of the political decision in many cases. Maintaining a leading role for Lebanon in the international community and in international organizations played by the official authorities, helps Lebanon preserve its borders, its rights and its national interests.

**Third** - The Lebanese authorities must focus on the right direction while handling different situations on the southern borders; and our true direction is the Lebanese-Israeli Armistice Agreement signed in 1949. It should be known that this armistice agreement is the only bilateral agreement signed between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy, sponsored by the UN Security Council. It is responsible for controlling the conditions on the borders, and it obligates the Israeli enemy to respect these borders. The Israeli enemy has tried a lot to evade this agreement, in order to be freed from its obligations, in order to facilitate the fulfillment of its desires. Therefore, the “armistice line”, which corresponds to the international border between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy, which was declared by the Armistice Agreement, must be reconsidered. Therefore, the Armistice Monitoring Committee must be reactivated and its officers are still present with UNIFIL, but their role is almost frozen.

As for the Blue Line, it is only considered a withdrawal line, and it cannot be compared to the “armistice line” that the Security Council ordered to establish according to Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter under Resolution 62 referred to above, and this “armistice line” is identical to the international borders with the Israeli enemy. Hence, the focus must always be on the armistice line, in all issues related to the southern borders. When Israeli violations occur, Lebanon should announce that they are violations of the armistice line before being violations of the Blue Line (especially since the Israeli enemy, in this context, deliberately focuses on the Blue Line, neglecting to mention the armistice line and the armistice agreement itself). In this regard, the Israeli enemy seeks to perpetuate its occupation of the areas where the Blue Line is far from the international borders, on one hand, and with the aim of avoiding condemning it for violating the many international resolutions in this regard on the other hand.

The greed of a brutal enemy is a fact. It needs worthy statesmen, ready to bear the responsibility of managing national issues efficiently and with perseverance. Otherwise, history will witness and will document what they could have done but did not do.

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**مأساة ترسيم الحدود الجنوبية**

لمّا كان ترسيم الحدود بين الدول يشكّل الأداة القانونية الفضلى وفق مبادئ القانون الدولي ومعاييره في حل النزاعات الإقليمية، وذلك منعًا للتعديات وحفظًا للحقوق والأمن والاستقرار، فإن للبنان تجارب طويلة ومستمرة في هذا الشأن. إذ إن مسألة الحفاظ على حدوده البرية الجنوبية، كما على حدوده البحرية، وهي المطروحة اليوم في المفاوضات غير المباشرة مع "إسرائيل"، عرفت الكثير من التقلبات، وشهدت الحدود الاعتداءات المستمرة، فحرمت المنطقة الجنوبية وسكانها من الاستقرار والهدوء والتنمية. من هذا المنطلق، فقد جرى ترسيم حدود لبنان الجنوبية عدة مرات تبعًا لتطور الأوضاع الأمنية وللتوتر شبه الدائم الذي شكّله وجود "إسرائيل" على الجانب الآخر من الحدود.

جرى الترسيم الأول للحدود زمن الانتداب الفرنسي والبريطاني للبنان وفلسطين في العام 1921 من قبل لجنة بوليه-نيوكومب الفرنسية–البريطانية، وأصبحت حدودًا دولية بعد موافقة عصبة الأمم عليها في 6 شباط 1924. أما الترسيم الثاني فكان بعد توقيع اتفاقية الهدنة اللبنانية-الإسرائيلية في العام 1949، حيث جرى إعادة إحياء خط الحدود التي رسمها اتفاق بوليه–نيوكومب. والترسيم الثالث حدث من خلال ما سمي بالخط الأزرق الذي اعتمدته الأمم المتحدة كخطٍ للانسحاب الإسرائيلي من جنوب لبنان في العام 2000 تطبيقًا لقرار مجلس الأمن الرقم 425. وأخيرًا الترسيم الرابع كان في العام 2006 تطبيقًا لقرار مجلس الأمن الرقم 1701 الذي أعقب العدوان الإسرائيلي على لبنان في تموز من العام 2000.

إن هذا الترسيم المتكرر للحدود يختصر واقعًا متفجرًا لأوضاع المنطقة الحدودية الجنوبية بين لبنان و"إسرائيل"، كان له الكثير من التداعيات، لعل أبرزها احتلال "إسرائيل" لأجزاء من الأراض اللبنانية، وانطلاق المقاومة اللبنانية لهذا الاحتلال، كما نتج عنه تدخلًا دوليًا مستمرًا من خلال الأمم المتحدة، والمتمثل عمليًا بوجود قوات الطوارئ الدولية في الجنوب اللبناني منذ العام 1978 ولا تزال هناك حتى يومنا هذا.

هذا هو الإطار العام للبحث، الذي ينتهي ببعض الملاحظات والتوصيات المتعلقة بمسألة الحدود الجنوبية للبنان.