

LEBANON



Flag Description: three horizontal bands consisting of red (top), white (middle, double width), and red (bottom) with a green cedar tree centered in the white band.



Background: Following the capture of Syria from the Ottoman Empire by Anglo-French forces in 1918, France received a mandate over this territory and separated out the region of Lebanon in 1920. France granted this area independence in 1943. A 15-year civil war (1976-1991) devastated the country, but Lebanon has since made progress toward rebuilding its political institutions. Since the end of the war, Lebanon has conducted several successful elections, most militias have been disbanded, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have extended authority over about two-thirds of the country. Hizballah, a radical Shi'a organization retains its weapons. During Lebanon's civil war, the Arab League legitimized Syria's troop deployment, numbering about 16,000 based mainly east of Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley. Damascus justified its continued military presence in Lebanon by citing Beirut's requests and the failure of the Lebanese Government to

implement all constitutional. Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, however, encouraged some Lebanese groups to demand that Syria withdraw its forces as well. The passage of UNSCR 1559 in early October 2004 - a resolution calling for Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and end its interference in Lebanese affairs - further emboldened Lebanese groups opposed to Syria's presence in Lebanon. The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 20 others in February 2005 led to massive demonstrations in Beirut against the Syrian presence. Syria finally withdrew the remainder of its military forces from Lebanon in April 2005. In May-June 2005, Lebanon held its first legislative elections since the end of the civil war free of foreign interference, handing a two-thirds majority to the bloc led by Saad Hariri, the slain prime minister's son.

Geography: Location: Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Israel and Syria. Area: total: 10,400 sq km. Area - comparative: about 0.7 times the size of Connecticut. Land boundaries: total: 454 km. Border countries: Israel 79 km, Syria 375 km. Coastline: 225 km. Climate: Mediterranean; mild to cool, wet winters with hot, dry summers; Lebanon mountains experience heavy winter snows. Terrain: narrow coastal plain; El Beqaa (Bekaa Valley) separates Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains. Natural resources: limestone, iron ore, salt, water-surplus state in a water-deficit region, arable land. Natural hazards: dust storms, sandstorms. Environment - current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; desertification; air pollution in Beirut from vehicular traffic and the burning of industrial wastes; pollution of coastal waters from raw sewage and oil spills. Geography - note: Nahr el Litani is the only major river in Near East not crossing an international boundary; rugged terrain historically helped isolate, protect, and develop numerous factional groups based on religion, clan, and ethnicity. (CIA Factbook 2006)

Military Notes: In 2006 Hizballah attacked Israel from Southern Lebanon and brought about the destruction of much of Lebanon's infrastructure but no political solutions.

1956 Car, Armd, 4x4, Staghound/AEC.



Above: Lebanese Army T17E1 with AEC Mk III turret.
(Photo: Author's collection).

Remarks: The AEC turret and Staghound chassis were developed by Lebanon (see US for vehicle details).

1970 Car, Armd, 4x4. AML-90, Panhard.



Remarks: (see France for vehicle details).

1978 Car, Armd, 4x4, Car, Armd, 4x4, Dodge

1985 Car, Armd, 4x4, Car, Armd, Imp (Druze)

1987 Veh, Utility. M151A2 w/57mm RR.



Above: Lebanese Christian forces with an M151A2 mounted Soviet 57mm Recoilless Rifle.
(Photo: Author's collection)

Remarks: (see US for vehicle details)

1990 Carr, Wpns. M825 w/106mm RR.



Above: Lebanese Army M825 with 106mm RR.
(Photo: Author's collection)

Remarks: (see US for vehicle details)

1990 Veh, Utility. AIL M-325 Commandcar.



Above: Lebanese Army M-325 set up with multiple rocket launcher.

Remarks: Lebanon received an unknown number of M-325s from Israel (see Israel for vehicle details).