



The Sabra Report

Israel Rejects Lebanese Changes to Maritime Border Proposal, Putting Deal in Doubt

Lazar Berman, Times of Israel, October 6th 2022

Recap:

A proposal to split a gas-rich, 330-square-mile disputed area of the Mediterranean Sea between Israel and Lebanon is on life support.

The Context:

- ✧ The area in question borders the coastline of Israel and Lebanon. The US brokered proposal would allow Lebanon to explore and exploit gas reserves in the Gana field while allowing Israel to continue doing so in its Karish field [1].
- ✧ Iran-backed Hezbollah signaled tacit approval of the deal, calling it "a very important step." Hezbollah, a terrorist organization, is the kingmaker in Lebanese politics, making its blessing a necessity [2]. Hezbollah fought a war with Israel in 2006 and remains committed to Israel's destruction.
- ✧ Despite Israel's initial positivity, the deal stalled following Knesset deliberations. Ex-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argues the proposal could benefit Hezbollah and hinted he would overturn it if re-elected in November [3].
- ✧ Lebanon is suffering from one of the world's worst financial crises, with violence and protests occurring throughout the country as basic services collapse. In late September, Lebanese banks closed after customers staged armed robberies to get their cash out [4]. Although a deal would mark a step forward for Lebanon, it remains to be seen whether commercially viable reservoirs will be found and if Lebanon can become a gas or oil producing country.

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Would development of the Gana field reduce Lebanese dependency on Iran and ultimately bring political stability to Lebanon?
- ✧ Should Israel approve a deal if there's anyway Hezbollah would benefit?
- ✧ Would Hezbollah agree to a deal if the Lebanese economy was not in distress?

Notes:

1. [Lebanon-Israel maritime talks still all at sea](#), NEVILLE TELLER, Jerusalem Post, SEPTEMBER 28th, 2022
2. Ibid
3. [Israel upbeat on draft Lebanese demarcation deal, sees gas profit-sharing](#), Dan Williams, Reuters, October 2nd, 2022
4. [Lebanon's banks to close 'indefinitely' after heists by angry depositors](#) Raya Jalabi and Andrew England in London SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

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