Country/entity	Lebanon Syria
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Arsal 24-Hour Ceasefire Agreement
Date	5 Aug 2014
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/local conflict

Syrian Conflicts (1948 -) (1976 - 2005) (2011 -)

The agreements relate to three different conflict contexts. Israel-Syria and Syria-Lebanon. The Syrian-Israeli conflict was a key factor for the Syrian intervention during the Lebanese Civil War, with Syrian-backed Palestinian Liberation Army units intervened in 1976 against the Palestinian/Leftist militias. Following a massacre at Tel al-Zaatar that year, Syria was forced to accept a ceasefire at a meeting of the Arab League. However, the Arab League also mandated an Arab Deterrence Force, consisting of mostly Syrian soldiers with token contributions from other Arab League states, thus further legitimizing the Syrian presence in Lebanon. During a second bout of fighting that began in 1989, caused by the formation of rival Lebanese regimes in East and West Beirut, the Syrian-backed regime won and in 1991 the 'Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination' was signed to legalize the Syrian occupation as a means to ensure the security of Syria. Syrian forces were forced to withdraw in 2005 following possible involvement in the assassination of Lebanon's President Hariri.

Syria-internal. In 2011, domestic upheaval following a wave of protests across the Arab World soon led to violent repression of protestors by Syrian government troops. The violence progressed steadily and by July 2011 the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was formed consisting of defected military units and new recruits. The FSA and rebel umbrella group known as the Syrian National Council represented the first attempt at coordinating rebel factions in late 2011. However, a steady influx of foreign fighters and increased sectarianism radicalised opposition groups, which relied on foreign funding. The nature of the conflict changed drastically in late 2013 as infighting among the opposition groups increased. One of the more significant developments was the split between the al-Qaeda outfits the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, ISIS), and Jabhat al-Nusra in early 2014 in addition to the intensified targeting of other rebel factions by ISIS fighters in particular, including the Kurdish Peshmerga, the FSA and other jihadist outfits. Since the summer of 2014, the conflict was further internationalized when ISIS announced the formation of an Islamic state eroding the state line between Iraq and Syria and also in mid-2015 when Russian forces intervened on behalf of the Bashar al-Assad government in Damascus.
Close
Syrian Conflicts (1948 -) (1976 - 2005) (2011 -)

Stage Ceasefire/related

Conflict nature Government

Peace process Syrian Local Agreements

Parties Syrian rebels (Islamist), Lebanese Armed Forces

Third parties	-
Description	A 24-hour humanitarian ceasefire following fighting between Syrian factions and Lebanese Armed Forces allowing for the evacuation of civilians and wounded. Implementation managed by a joint committee of 'Syrian jurists' and Arsal inhabitants. Ceasefire broken in less than 24 hours.

Agreement document	LB_SY_140805_Arsal Ceasefire_EN.pdf (opens in new tab) | Download PDF
Agreement document (original language)	LB_SY_140805_Arsal Ceasefire_AR.pdf (opens in new tab)

Local agreement properties

Process type	Isolated example
Rationale	-> Link to national level; no external support mechanism; no culture of signing The clashes in Arsal opposed the Lebanese army on the one side to fighters of Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State from neighbouring Syria on the other side. The two Salafi-Jihadist groups have been active in Lebanon in the bordering area (especially Arsal) and in the northern city of Tripoli. Lebanon has dealt with those insurgents via its army and refused to “negotiate” with those “terrorist” groups. Only in December 2015, in a once-off instance, Lebanon agreed to swap prisoners with Jabhat al-Nusra. There is thus no persistent practice of signing agreements in Lebanon at that time. Moreover, the agreement was reached at the level of the city of Arsal on the initiative of an imam. No national established mechanism supported the negotiations.
Is there a documented link to a national peace process?	No
Link to national process: articulated rationale	The agreement does not contain any reference to a wider peace process at the national level, as the Lebanese state representatives refused to negotiate with insurgent groups. We can also debate the existence of a national peace process in Lebanon (unless it is directly linked to the civil war, which is not the case here). Yet, it is noteworthy to note that the agreement was approved by several Lebanese state officials: Prime Minister Tammam Salam, Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi, Interior Minister Nihad al-Mashnouq, and army chief Jean Kahwagi. There was thus official national support for the agreement.
Name of Locale	Arsal
Nature of Locale	City
GPS Lat/Long (DD)	34.179095, 36.420674

Participant type	Central state actor International or transnational actor
Mediator, facilitator or similar	Mediator or similar referred to
Mediator (references)	Sheikh Salem al-Rafii, Sunni imam of the al-Taqwa mosque (Tripoli), reached the agreement with the insurgent fighters after he was wounded by gunfire. The agreement was then submitted to the Lebanese army for approval or rejection. The name of the Sheikh is not mentioned in the agreement.
Type of mediator/ facilitator/similar	Domestic religious organisation/leader or other elder

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Local issues

Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture)	No specific mention.
Grievance List	Although the agreement does not refer to specific causes of the conflict, it lists five provisions to address local grievances. Page 1, 1. Form a Committee consisting of the people of Arsal [ʿArsāl] and some Syrian jurists to manage Arsal, stay updated on the security situation and ensure the implementation of this initiative under the supervision of the Lebanese Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (LIFE) and the Muslim Scholars Association. 2. All warring parties are obliged to withdraw from Arsal and hand over the area to the Committee. 3. As a gesture of goodwill, the fighters will release three Lebanese soldiers in return for the entry of media bodies and humanitarian relief organisations. 4. The wounded will be transported [out] and civilians are permitted to leave, particularly women and children. Under the supervision of the Arsal Committee, doctors will be brought in to treat those who cannot be moved. 5. Permit the delivery of food, medical and humanitarian aid to the town of Arsal.
Cattle rustling/ banditry	No specific mention.
Social cover	No specific mention.
