

Lebanon's army chief elected president, showing weakened Hezbollah

BEIRUT, Jan 9 (Reuters) - Lebanon's parliament elected army chief Joseph Aoun head of state on Thursday, filling the vacant presidency with a general who has U.S. support and showing the weakened sway of the Iran-backed Hezbollah group after its devastating war with Israel.

In a speech to the chamber, Aoun, 60, vowed to work to ensure the state has the exclusive right to carry arms, drawing loud applause as lawmakers from Hezbollah — which runs its own military forces — sat still.

He promised to rebuild south Lebanon and other parts of the country he said had been destroyed by Israel, and also to prevent Israeli attacks on Lebanon, which was mired in deep economic and political

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