

Lebanon, Hezbollah to meet in peace talks

by UPI

DOHA, Qatar -- The Lebanese government and leaders of the Hezbollah opposition movement were preparing Friday to begin negotiations aimed at producing a unity government. In a deal brokered by Qatar, the two sides agreed this week to end fighting that has resulted in 65 deaths and are moving toward talks that could produce the appointment of a new president for the country and reform its parliamentary election laws, al-Jazeera reported. The crisis was precipitated when the Western-backed Lebanese government moved to shut down Hezbollah's private telecommunications network and reassign the Beirut airport's security chief. Now, however, the two sides have already agreed to appoint Lebanese Gen. Michel Suleiman as president, al-Jazeera reported, but still must negotiate several other issues, including how to spread the state's sovereignty throughout the country's entire territory. Hezbollah has agreed to allow the Beirut airport to fully reopen, to end sit-in protests and remove street barricades, while the government has dropped its attempts to destroy its telephone network.

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