

# Hariri calls on international community to reject Israel's 'blatant violation' of Lebanese sovereignty.

Mon, 2019-08-26 13:35

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri said Monday his government wants to avoid an escalation with Israel but the international community must reject Israel's "blatant violation" of Lebanese sovereignty.

Two drones crashed Sunday in Beirut suburbs prompting the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement to warn Israeli soldiers at the border to await a response.

"The Lebanese government sees it best to avoid any sliding of the situation towards a dangerous escalation but this requires the international community affirming its rejection of this blatant violation," Hariri told the ambassadors of the UN Security Council's five permanent members, his office said.

Al-Hariri also met Lebanon's interior and defense ministers and with the army chief on Monday to discuss security issues, his office said.

Meanwhile, President Michel Aoun discussed the "Israeli assault" with the country's United Nations Special Coordinator Jan Kubis, the president's office said on Twitter.

A pro-Syrian Palestinian group on Monday accused Israel of carrying out a drone attack on one of its positions in Lebanon, hours after Hezbollah claimed it was targeted by a similar Israeli strike.

A spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), which has close ties with Hezbollah and Syria's government, said the strike caused only limited material damage.

"It was an Israeli strike with a drone," spokesman Anwar Raja said. There were no casualties, he said, as "the position targeted had been evacuated" before the alleged strike.

Lebanon's state National News Agency (NNA) said "three hostile strikes" after midnight hit near the eastern town of Qusaya "where the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command has military posts."

"They responded with a barrage of anti-aircraft fire," it said.

There was no immediate comment from Israel.

Qusaya is only about five kilometers from the Syrian border.

The PFLP-GC has positions in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley as well as in Al-Naaemeh just south of Beirut.

An NNA correspondent also reported on Monday that warplanes belonging to Israel have violated the Lebanese airspace and are currently flying over Marjeioun district at a medium altitude.

In July 2015, a security official said a blast at a PFLP-GC base in Qusaya wounded seven people, while the Palestinian group blamed it on an Israeli strike.

Raja said the latest attack was Israel "saying that it is able to strike the

axis of the resistance wherever it wants” referring to anti-Israeli forces like Hezbollah and its ally Iran.

He also denounced the strikes as “provocation” after Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah on Sunday threatened Israel over what he described as a targeted “drone attack” on his group’s stronghold in the south of Beirut.

“The time when Israeli aircraft come and bombard parts of Lebanon is over,” Nasrallah said.

“I say to the Israeli army along the border, from tonight be ready and wait for us,” he added. “What happened yesterday will not pass.”

Hezbollah, considered a terrorist organization by Israel and the United States, is a major political actor in Lebanon and also a key backer of the government in war-torn Syria.

The latest incident also came after Israel on Saturday launched strikes in neighboring Syria to prevent what it said was an Iranian attack on the Jewish state.

Nasrallah said the strike in Syria killed two Hezbollah members.

Israel did not confirm the alleged “drone attack” on Hezbollah’s stronghold.

*(With Reuters and AFP)*



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel-Lebanon](#)

[Michel Aoun](#)

[israeli air strikes](#)

Anger in Lebanon over botched Israeli drone strike on BeirutLebanon’s Aoun

vows to tend to economic, financial reforms

---

## Israel reduces Gaza fuel supply after rocket attack

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1566811361363847500

Mon, 2019-08-26 09:18

JERUSALEM: Israel said on Monday it was cutting by half the amount of fuel it supplies to Gaza's only power plant, in response to rocket attacks from the Palestinian territory.

Three rockets were fired from the Hamas Islamist-run enclave at southern Israel on Sunday and two were intercepted by the Iron Dome anti-missile system, the military said. There was no claim of responsibility.

After the attack, Israel launched an air strike against what the military described as a Hamas military compound. No casualties were reported on either side of the volatile border.

In a statement, COGAT, a unit in the Defense Ministry that coordinates civilian issues with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip, said "cutting the amount of diesel in half will significantly reduce" the plant's output.

It said the measure, "following the firing of rockets ... and the continued violation of stability and security" will be in effect until further notice. Gaza has long suffered from a shortage of electricity and chronic blackouts. A new power line from Israel has been proposed to alleviate the situation. Mohammad Thabet, spokesman for the Gaza power company, described the Israeli decision as collective punishment.

"We already are in a crisis and now the Israeli decision will make it worse. It will have a grave impact on the lives of 2 million people and on vital services such as hospitals," Thabet told Reuters.

Currently residents get six hours of electricity followed by 12 hours of blackout. Thabet said the fuel cuts would decrease power time to only four-hour periods.

In a series of border confrontations in recent weeks, Israel said it killed at least eight Palestinian militants who tried to infiltrate its territory. Israeli and Egyptian blockades have brought the Gazan economy to the brink of collapse. Recent foreign aid cuts and sanctions by the Palestinian Authority, Hamas's rival in the West Bank, have worsened the situation.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Gaza](#)

Three rockets fired from Gaza into Israel: armyIsrael shoots grenade-throwing Gazan on border

---

## [Finding homes in ruin, destitute Iraqis return to camps](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-08-25 22:51

AL-KHAZER/IRAQ: Her tent is bare, she is unemployed and her family relies on food donations. But Nihaya Issa was forced to pick an Iraqi camp over the unlivable ruins of her native city Mosul.

The northern city was freed from Daesh's grip more than two years ago, but tens of thousands of Iraqis who fled Mosul into sprawling displacement camps have yet to move back home. Many, like Issa, say they tried returning but were shocked by what they saw.

"When I went back to Mosul I didn't find my house. It was destroyed," said Issa, speaking from her stuffy tent in the Khazer camp about 30 km east of Mosul.

"I also couldn't afford renting a house, so I came back to this camp again," she told AFP, clapping her hands in exasperation.

Dark circles have formed under her eyes, and the widow and mother of eight girls said she and her children "live a tough life" in Khazer. But the 33-year-old feels she has little choice.

"We stay in the camp because of the food rations we get every 30 to 40 days," she admitted.

Across Iraq, more than 1.6 million people remain displaced, among them nearly 300,000 from Mosul alone, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

They are spread out across a handful of displacement camps in the broader Nineveh province that have developed into full-fledged tent cities.

Amenities provided by NGOs include schools and training centers, health clinics and shops, football fields and hair salons – all mostly unavailable in Mosul and other towns ravaged by Daesh and the ensuing fighting.

Ghazwan Hussein, 26, hails from Sinjar, a region west of Mosul that was overrun by Daesh five years ago as it waged a brutal campaign against the district's Yazidi minority.

The father of four fled the region to the Khazer camp, where he eked out a living until his son fell ill a few months ago. He sold his meager belongings in the camp to afford the required surgery and tried to return to Sinjar.

"I found that my house was unlivable. It was demolished and the area didn't have basic services," said Hussein, his toddler perched quietly on his lap outside their tent.

"I couldn't stay and came back to Khazer once again."

Only a sliver of Sinjar's native population of 500,000 Yazidis has returned, with the rest saying persistent destruction, the lack of services and the tense security situation have kept them in camps.

Hussein said the Iraqi government should speed up reconstruction efforts and compensate displaced citizens.

"Does it make sense to keep us in the camp without work for three years, as if in jail?" he asked.

"We just eat, sleep, and live on food baskets without any hope the situation will improve so we can go home." Mosul's migration office said up to 25 families a day are leaving their destroyed homes to return to displacement camps to access better services.

“For the past 18 months, we have also seen ‘reverse migration’ back to the camps or to the Kurdish region,” said office head Khaled Ismail.

“The reasons for reverse displacement are varied according to the regions: It might be tied to the security situation, the family’s financial conditions or the fact that their destroyed homes are unsuitable for living.”

According to the migration office, about 72,000 families have returned to Nineveh since the fighting against Daesh ended two years ago.

Many are returning to the eastern side of Mosul, which was left more intact when fighting ended and where returning residents find restaurants and shops reopening.

But across the Tigris River in the Old City, mountains of rubble still seal off many streets and unexploded ordnance, rocket remnants, and even decomposing bodies lie under ruined homes.

For the most desperate families, those ruins will have to do.

IOM says nearly 30,000 returnees in Mosul are living in vulnerable conditions including destroyed homes, schools and other public buildings – the highest number of any location in Iraq.

Shaking from a medical condition, Sabiha Jassem made her way through her tiny home, the grimy walls dotted with bullet holes and flies.

She and her children could not afford to pay rent in east Mosul and returned to their home in the ravaged Old City.

“This house is a danger to us – its roof and walls could collapse. But we’re poor and have no other solution but to live in it,” said Jassem, 61.

“This is not a life we are living here.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iraq](#)

[Iraqis](#)

[International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#)

[Mosul](#)

Iraq summons US charge d'affaires over military base attacks  
Rocket attack kills six in Iraq's oil-rich Kirkuk

---

## [Iran satirist to serve 11 years in jail for US cooperation](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-08-25 22:22

TEHRAN: An Iranian court has sentenced writer and satirist Keyomars Marzban to 11 years in prison after convicting him of charges including cooperation with the US, state media reported.

The official IRNA news agency said Marzban had “collaborated” with Radio Farda and Manoto television – broadcasters that are based abroad and banned in Iran.

Marzban had been facing charges of “assembly and collusion against national

security, cooperation with a hostile state, spreading propaganda against the system, and insulting sanctities and officials,” IRNA quoted his lawyer as saying.

The court cleared him of the first count of assembly and collusion but found him guilty of the other four charges, said the lawyer Mohammad Hossein Aghasi.

In line with Iranian law, he would have to serve only the longest of the sentences – 11 years behind bars for cooperating with a hostile state – if he loses an appeal.

“We will definitely appeal this verdict as we believe that there has been no connection between the client and American government,” said Aghasi.

“We also don’t accept (the charge of) insulting sanctities.”

IRNA said that according to posts on social media, Marzban had left Iran in 2009 and returned eight years later before being arrested in Aug. 26, 2018.

Iran has meanwhile blacklisted US-based think-tank the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and its chief Mark Dubowitz on accusations of being behind “economic terrorism” against the Islamic republic.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it had “added the so-called Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) and its director to the sanctions list.”

The FDD and Dubowitz were blamed for “seriously and actively trying to harm the Iranian people’s security and vital interests,” according to the English-language statement posted on the ministry’s website.

They were accused of doing so through “fabricating and spreading lies, encouraging, providing consultations, lobbying, and launching a smear campaign” against Iran. As a result, they would be “subject to legal consequences,” it said.

The move would be “without prejudice to any further legal measures that the other administrative, judicial or security institutions and organizations may take” against them and their “collaborators and accomplices.”

The FDD describes itself as a Washington-based “non-partisan research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy.”

The think-tank responded to Tehran’s move with a statement saying: “FDD considers its inclusion on any list put out by the regime as a badge of honor and looks forward to the day when Americans and others can visit a free and democratic Iran.”

It strongly opposed the 2015 deal that saw world powers lift sanctions against Iran in return for limits on its nuclear program.

Tensions between arch-foes Iran and the US have escalated since President

Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the accord last year and began reimposing sanctions against the Islamic republic.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran](#)

[Iran-US](#)

[Keyomars Marzban](#)

[IRNA](#)

Iran, US tension is a 'clash of wills': Guards commander Iranian oil tanker pursued by US says it is going to Turkey

---

## [Three rockets fired from Gaza into Israel: army](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-08-25 22:37

JERUSALEM: Three rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel on Sunday, the Israeli army said.

"Three launches were identified from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory," it said in a statement. "Two of them were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defence system."

One projectile fell in wasteland, starting a fire, according to the Sha'ar

HaNegev Regional Council.

A concert organised as part of a music festival in the town of Sderot was interrupted by a siren, a spokesperson for the municipality said. Since the start of August, an uptick in rocket fire and Palestinian attempts to cross from Gaza into Israel have been met with Israeli strikes, threatening a fragile ceasefire between Israel and the coastal enclave's rulers Hamas.

With less than a month to go before Israeli elections, analysts say Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is keen to avoid a flare-up – despite his rivals calling for tough action against Hamas.

The movement has not claimed the latest rocket fire or infiltration attempts, but speculation has grown that supporters in the blockaded enclave are hoping to pressure him into further concessions under a truce deal.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel-Palestine](#)

[Gaza](#)

Gaza Palestinians fire rocket at Israel  
Impoverished Gazans lament stagnant livestock market