

Israel fires missiles into south Syria

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Wed, 2019-07-24 02:10

BEIRUT: An Israeli missile attack targeted Syrian military positions held by the government and its allies early on Wednesday, Syria's state news agency said.

The missiles were fired into the south of the country close to the Golan Heights, an area occupied and annexed by Israel.

"The Israeli enemy launched an aggression after midnight against the Tall Al-Hara area," the SANA news agency said Wednesday, adding that there were reports of damage to property.

The attacks were earlier described as "probably Israeli" by the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, who said they targeted Tall Al-Hara in Daraa province, south of Damascus, and two areas in the neighboring province of Quneitrathe.

"The regime's anti-aircraft defense has been activated to counter the attack," director of the Observatory Rami Abdel Rahmane said.

"Some missiles have been shot down, others have hit their target."

The Observatory reported "loss of life" without giving further details.

Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes in Syria since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, targeting forces loyal to President Bashar Assad and the regime's allies Iran and Hezbollah.

The Syrian conflict has killed more than 370,000 people and drawn in world powers since it started with the brutal repression of anti-government protests.

Israeli strikes have previously targeted Tall Al-Hara where Hezbollah has installed a radar system and the Syrian regime has erected anti-aircraft batteries, according to the Observatory.

At the end of June, six civilians and nine pro-government fighters were killed in Israeli strikes near Damascus and in the central province of Homs, it added.

Israel says it is determined to prevent its arch-foe Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, where Tehran backs Assad's regime.

The Jewish state insists that it has the right to continue to target positions held by Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah out of self-defense. The strikes came after Hezbollah's leader said earlier this month that the group's rockets could reach key Israeli sites along the Mediterranean coast, including Tel Aviv.

Hassan Nasrallah also said that Iran was "able to bombard Israel with ferocity and force" but "will not start a war."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu countered that his country would deliver a "crushing military blow" on the both Hezbollah and Lebanon if it were to attack.



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Syrian-Canadian composer takes a trip to outer space
Deportation of Syrian refugees from Istanbul creates panic

[No Iranian drone has been downed: Iran defense minister](#)

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Reuters

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Wed, 2019-07-24 09:43

GENEVA: No Iranian drone has been brought down, the ISNA news agency quoted Iran's Defense Minister Amir Hatami on Wednesday as saying, after the US military said it taken action against two Iranian drones in the past week. The United States said last Thursday that a Navy ship had "destroyed" an

Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz after the aircraft threatened the vessel, but Iran said it had no information about losing a drone. On Tuesday the US military said one of its ships had taken defensive action against a second Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz last week, but did not see the drone go into the water. "We showed the body of the (US) drone that we brought down," Hatami said, according to ISNA. "If anyone claims they brought down our drone, show it. No drone from the Islamic Republic of Iran has been brought down."



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[**US may have brought down second**](#)

Iranian drone last week: US general

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Tue, 2019-07-23 21:49

WASHINGTON: A US Navy ship may have brought down a second Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz last week, the head of US Central Command said on Tuesday.

The US said on Thursday that a Navy ship had “destroyed” an Iranian drone in the Strait of Hormuz after the aircraft threatened the vessel, but Iran said it had no information about losing a drone.

“We are confident we brought down one drone, we may have brought down a second,” General Kenneth McKenzie told CBS News in an interview.

A US official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told Reuters that the warship Boxer may have brought down a second drone last week, though they were still working to confirm it.

“We brought down one for sure. ... There might have been a second,” said the official.

Tensions in the Gulf region are high, with fears that the US and Iran could stumble into war.

The United States has blamed Iran for a series of attacks since mid-May on shipping around the Strait of Hormuz, the world’s most important oil artery. Tehran rejects the allegations.

Iran in June shot down a US military surveillance drone in the Gulf with a surface-to-air missile. Iran says the drone was in its airspace, but Washington says it was in international skies.

President Donald Trump said at the time the United States had come close to launching a military strike on Iran in retaliation for the downing of the US drone.

The increased use of drones by Iran and its allies for surveillance and attacks across the Middle East is raising alarms in Washington.



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Suspected 'Iranian' spy drone caught near Pakistan's Reko Diq gold mine
The Coalition forces intercept a Houthi drone targeting civilians and civilian structures in Jizan

[Former Israeli PM apologizes for killing of Arab protesters](#)

Author:

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Tue, 2019-07-23 12:55

JERUSALEM: A former Israeli prime minister is apologizing for the killing of 13 Arab protesters by Israeli police in 2000. Ehud Barak, who has made a political comeback ahead of September's elections, said Tuesday in an Israel Radio interview that "there is no place for

protesters to be killed by their country's security forces."

Barak was responding to an op-ed written by a parliament member from the left-wing Meretz party who called on him to apologize for the October 2000 killings, which came in the opening weeks of the second Palestinian uprising, when he was serving as prime minister.

Barak's campaign hinges on uniting liberal parties in a bid to oust Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister.



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[Iraqi forces clear farmland near Baghdad of Daesh militants](#)

Author:

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Tue, 2019-07-23 12:59

TARAMIYAH: Iraqi security forces are sweeping villages and farmland north of Baghdad as part of an operation aimed at clearing remaining militants belonging to the Daesh group from around the country's capital. A military helicopter flew over army units in the area as troops on the ground searched for weapon caches and bombs in farmland in Taramiyah on Tuesday. The area is about 50 kilometers, or 31 miles, north of Baghdad. The dragnet is part of the operation dubbed "Will to Victory," which started two weeks ago along the border with Syria and was extended last week to areas north of Baghdad and in the Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar provinces. Although Iraq declared victory against IS in July 2017, the extremists continue to carry out attacks around the country.



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