Lebanon to file UN Security Council complaint against Israel

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Lebanon’s Foreign Ministry said Saturday it will file an “urgent complaint” against Israel with the United Nations Security Council, claiming that Israeli air force jets violated its air space when they allegedly carried out an airstrike against a Syrian government installation.

Israeli jets were reported to have struck an installation on Thursday that former Israeli military and intelligence officials said was producing weapons possibly bound for the Lebanese terror group Hezbollah.

Several reports said the missiles were fired from within Lebanese airspace and not from inside Syria where Russian and US-led coalition aircraft are also active.

The Syrian army said at the time that two soldiers were killed.

Hezbollah is part of Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri’s government, though Lebanon officially remains neutral over the neighboring Syrian civil war.

The Syrian army confirmed that a military site near Masyaf was bombed, saying the attack was carried out by Israeli jets and killed two people.

“Israeli warplanes fired several rockets from the Lebanese airspace at 02:42 a.m. on Thursday targeting one of the Syrian military posts near Massyaf, killing two army personnel and causing material damage to the site,” it said in a statement carried by the official Syrian Arab News Agency.

The target in Syria was apparently a Scientific Studies and Research Center (CERS) facility near Masyaf, which is in the northern Hama region. CERS is a Syrian government agency that Western officials have long associated with the production of chemical weapons.

Syrian opposition forces have in recent months claimed the Masyaf site, and other CERS facilities, have been working on a joint projects with Iranian specialists to develop chemical weapons capability for missiles.

Israel had no comment on the incident.

Israel has for years been widely believed to have carried out airstrikes on advanced weapons systems in Syria — including Russian-made anti-aircraft missiles and Iranian-made missiles — as well as Hezbollah positions, but it rarely confirms such operations on an individual basis.

In August a former commander of Israel’s air force said that it had carried out [dozens of airstrikes on weapons convoys](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-have-hit-hezbollah-convoys-dozens-of-times/) destined for the Hezbollah over the past five years. The remarks by Maj. Gen. Amir Eshel revealed for the first time the scale of the strikes, which are usually neither confirmed nor denied by the IAF.

Israel has largely stayed out of the fray during the six-year-long civil war in neighboring Syria, but has repeatedly said it will act to prevent Hezbollah from acquiring advanced weapons.

In May, Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman said the IDF only carries out raids in Syria for three reasons: when Israel comes under fire, to prevent arms transfers, and to avert a “ticking timebomb,” namely to thwart imminent terror attacks on Israel by groups on its borders.

Hezbollah fired more than 4,000 rockets on Israeli communities during the 2006 war with Israel. Since Tuesday, tens of thousands of Israeli soldiers [have been staging a mock 10-day war](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-to-launch-mock-war-with-hezbollah-in-its-largest-drill-in-20-years/) against Hezbollah in northern Israel, marking the IDF’s largest exercise in nearly 20 years, the army announced Monday, amid tensions over growing Iranian influence in Syria and Lebanon.