



Israeli Iron Dome missile fired in August 2022

Will Iranian Proxies Target Israel In September Or October?

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A former counter-terrorism advisor to two Israeli prime ministers triggered an intense debate about whether Iranian proxies will attack Israel in September or October.

There is, however, disagreement within Israel's security and defense establishment over a planned Iran-backed attack against the Jewish state.

Yigal Carmon, the founder of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and one of Israel's leading counter-terrorism experts, wrote an August 31st article titled "[Signs Of Possible War In September-October](#)," in which he argued a "confrontation could result from an uncontrolled deterioration on the ground or from the use of new and unusually deadly weapons by these movements [Hamas and Hezbollah]."

Carmon said, “neither Hamas nor Hezbollah are eager to start a comprehensive confrontation with Israel” but noted that growing acts of jingoism and saber-rattling by both Iranian regime-backed jihadi movements (including Palestinian Islamic Jihad) on Israel’s borders.

Yigal Carmon, the founder of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)

Hezbollah has set up tents in the Har Dov area within Israeli territory and was involved in “dismantling surveillance cameras along the border fence near Fatima Gate, and firing an anti-tank missile into Israel,” wrote Carmon.

Carmon, who is a fluent Arabic speaker, added “Hezbollah, which does not recognize the Blue Line as the international border between Lebanon and Israel, has recently made a new territorial claim, demanding that Israel give Lebanon sovereignty over the northern Rosh Hanikra railway tunnel, likewise in Israeli territory. At the same time, it also demands to curtail UNIFIL’s freedom of action in South Lebanon.”

The US government and many European states have classified Iran’s strategic partner, Hezbollah, a foreign terrorist organization. Both the US and EU have designated Hamas and the PIJ terrorist entities.

Members of Lebanon's Hezbollah hold flags during a rally

Carmon wrote, "There has also been an increase in efforts by Iran and Hezbollah to smuggle weapons into the West Bank, similar to the smuggling of weapons into Gaza. PIJ secretary-general Ziad Al-Nakhleh said that, during his June 2023 meeting with Iranian Leader Ali Khamenei, the latter had 'reiterated [the need to] develop the arming of the West Bank and the resistance there.' Nakhleh added: 'We, as Palestinians and as resistance forces and movements, understand the importance of arming the West Bank, but this requires efforts by the Palestinians themselves, and also the assistance of our brothers in the Islamic Republic of Iran.'"

The spike in recent activity between Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Tehran's PIJ, Hamas and Lebanese allies in Beirut was also a subject of Carmon's analysis.

Secretary-General of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement Ziad al-Nakhleh (2nd from right) meets with Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in Tehran on June 14, 2023.

Abdollahian stressed that in the Beirut meeting the statements of Khamenei about the need "to help the West Bank" and about Iran's "ongoing [commitment to] assisting the resistance with all its might." Amir-Abdollahian added, "the establishment of the joint Hamas-PIJ [war] room reflected a smart move on the part of the resistance."

Carmon noted that Amir-Abdollahian also met with Hezbollah Secretary-General Nasrallah, who then met with Al-'Aroui and Al-Nakhleh to "make a joint assessment of the situation in the West Bank, the escalation of the resistance activity and the latest Israeli threats."

Abdollahian and Iran's allies underscored at the meeting "the steadfastness and steadiness of all the forces of the resistance axis in the struggle against the Zionist enemy," and cooperation between the "resistance movements" in Palestine and Lebanon.

When asked about Carmon's analysis, Brigadier-General (res) Amir Avivi told Iran International, "While the specter of war unfortunately always looms along and beyond our borders, whether fueled by Iranian money and weapons or online incitement, at this time I do not share the assessment of an imminent war in September or October."

The terrorist organization Hezbollah in Lebanon has indeed been conducting provocations along the border, and the other Iranian proxies have made belligerent statements."

Avivi, the founder and CEO of the Israel Defense and Security Forum (IDSF), added, "And yes, religious holidays are historically periods of inter-community tensions, but at this time I believe that neither Hezbollah nor Hamas have an appetite for a full-blown confrontation with Israel, because they understand how devastating it would be for them."

Carmon had also warned in his article that "During the Jewish holidays in September and October, Jews are likely to visit the Al-Aqsa compound, as happens every year. Hamas and Hezbollah spokesmen have stressed that this could lead to a regional war."

Avivi noted that "Both Hamas and Hezbollah are suffering from internal unrest and lack of legitimacy in their respective fiefdoms, and it would be wise of them to refrain from jeopardizing their own future. Contrary to media reports and wishful thinking amongst Iranian proxies, the IDF is fully fit for combat, alert and ready to respond to any aggression."

Israeli air force F-35 pilots

When presented with these arguments, Carmon told Iran International that “I said they [Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad] do not want it[war] but things can get out of control.”

Carmon raised the example of **Nasrallah who said after the 2006 Second War** in Lebanon about the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers that sparked the war: “We did not think, even one percent, that the capture would lead to a war at this time and of this magnitude. You ask me, if I had known on July 11 ... that the operation would lead to such a war, would I do it? I say no, absolutely not.”

A second factor that is part and parcel of Carmon’s “uncontrolled deterioration” framework during the lead up to the full-blown war in 2006 was the entry of an Israeli Merkava 2 tank into Lebanon that passed over a massive explosive device, destroying the tank and killing its four crew members.

Carmon said “People do things without knowing repercussions. This is what happens when people like Avivi listen only to themselves and not to the other side.” Carmon also warned about the shipments of advanced new weapons, including Kornet anti-tank missiles, to Iran-backed terrorist terrorists, that can be used by against Israelis.

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