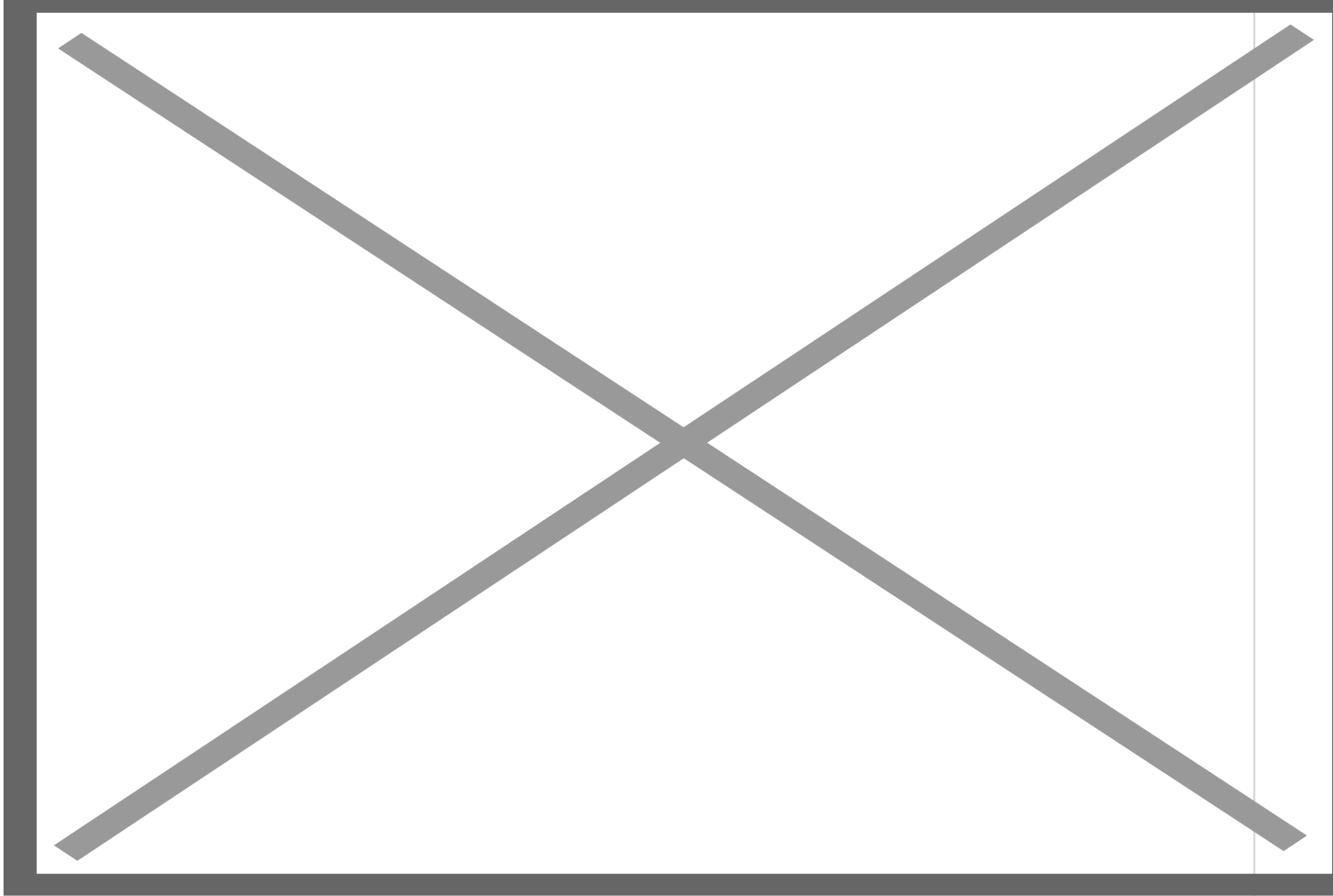


Russia says Israel must immediately halt hostilities and withdraw forces from Lebanon

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Israel's military vehicles deploy at a position along the border with Lebanon on October 1, 2024 -- poised to invade Lebanon. (Photo: AFP)

Moscow, October 2 (RHC)-- Russia says Israel must "immediately" withdraw its forces from southern Lebanon and halt hostilities that continue to further destabilize the region.

Israel said in early hours of Tuesday that it had begun "limited, localized, and targeted ground raids" in southern Lebanon.

The Russian foreign ministry urged Tel Aviv to "immediately cease hostilities, withdraw their troops from Lebanese territory and engage in a real search for peaceful ways to resolve the Middle East conflict."

In a separate statement, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the government is deeply concerned over the regime's airstrikes on Damascus, capital of Syria, on Tuesday. "We are witnessing together that the geography of hostilities is expanding, which is further destabilizing the region and increasing tensions."

"These tensions are destructive to the region and the surrounding areas. We remain deeply concerned," Peskov said.

Liz Throssell, spokesperson for the UN rights office, also warned against what Tel Aviv calls "large-scale ground invasion" of Lebanon. "We fear a large-scale ground invasion by Israel into Lebanon would only result in greater suffering."

Throssell said that "the consequences for civilians have already been terrible" since Israel started its intensifying attacks on Lebanon on September 24. Ever since, the regime's airstrikes have killed more than 1,000 people and displaced as many as 1 million people, according to Lebanon officials.

Lebanon "is facing one of the most dangerous stages in its history," said Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

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