

Iranian army confirms four soldiers have been killed in Israeli air strikes

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The combo shows (from left to right) Major Sajjad Mansouri , Sergeant Mohammad-Mehdi Shahrokhifar, Sergeant Mehdi Naghavi and Major Hamzeh Jahandideh, members of Iran's Army who were martyred in Israeli aggression on the country on October 26, 2024.

Tehran, October 26 (RHC)-- The Iranian army said four soldiers have been killed in Israeli air strikes that targeted military bases, after Israel said it had "completed" its attack and warned against any retaliation.

The Israeli army struck military sites in Iran after 2am on Saturday (22:30 GMT on Friday) in response to what it said were months of attacks by "Iran and its proxies" in the region.

Hours later the Israeli military said it had "completed" the strikes and "achieved its objectives." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Iran was "entitled and obligated to defend itself against external aggressive acts" after the attacks on its soil.

Iran's air defence headquarters, in a statement, confirmed that bases in the provinces of Ilam, Khuzestan and Tehran were hit but the attacks were "successfully countered".

"Though minor damages were caused in some areas, and the extent of the incident is currently under investigation," it said.

Iran also indicated its readiness to respond to any Israeli "aggression", the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported, citing sources who said "there is no doubt that Israel will face a proportional reaction for any action it takes".

Reporting from Tehran, Al Jazeera's Resul Serdar said that while Israel targeted multiple locations across Iran, including the north, east and south, the main focus of the strikes was the Iranian capital.

"The attacks primarily aimed at Iran's air defence systems, missile bases and drone facilities," he added. "Currently, Iranian officials are not reporting any casualties and assert that their integrated, multi-layered air defence system has functioned effectively, portraying the situation as a success."

Meanwhile, Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) said flights had returned to normal across the country.

Neither Imam Khomeini International Airport in Tehran nor other airports were attacked.

Earlier Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said in a prerecorded video statement, "The regime in Iran and its proxies in the region have been relentlessly attacking Israel since October 7 ... including direct attacks from Iranian soil." He said Israel "has the right and the duty to respond."

Israel's response was long expected after Iran launched a missile barrage earlier in October, in which about 200 missiles were fired at Israel and one person was killed in the occupied West Bank.

Iran said that attack was in retaliation for assaults in recent months that killed leaders of Lebanese group Hezbollah, Palestinian group Hamas and the Iranian military.

Following the Israeli attacks, the United States urged Iran to stop attacking Israel to break the cycle of violence.

"We urge Iran to cease its attacks on Israel so that this cycle of fighting can end without further escalation," US National Security Council spokesman Sean Savett told reporters.

"Their response was an exercise in self-defence and specifically avoided populated areas and focused solely on military targets, contrary to Iran's attack against Israel that targeted Israel's most populous city," he added.

Claiming that the U.S. did not participate in the operation, he said "it is our aim to accelerate diplomacy and de-escalate tensions in the Middle East region".

Several countries condemned the strikes and called for restraint.

Analyst Abas Aslani said this was the first time Israel admitted to a direct strike on Iran, with Tehran downplaying the impact and Israel exaggerating its achievements.

“This indicates that ... Israel may be encouraged by the US to avoid a full-scale war in the region,” Aslani, a senior research fellow at the Center for Middle East Strategic Studies, told Al Jazeera from Tehran.

“The initial assessment and the initial reaction here in Tehran indicates that maybe a serious or significant reaction, a direct reaction against Israel, was not as likely.”

However, he added that some sort of response from Iran should be expected.

Tensions between archrivals Israel and Iran have escalated after a Hamas-led led attack on southern Israel on October 7, 2023. Since then, at least 42,847 people have been killed and 100,544 wounded in Israel’s war on Gaza.

Fears that Iran and the U.S. would be drawn into a regional war have risen with Israel’s intensifying assault on Hezbollah since last month, including air strikes on the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and a ground operation.

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