Israel jets bomb Damascus outskirts as tanks advance deeper in Quneitra

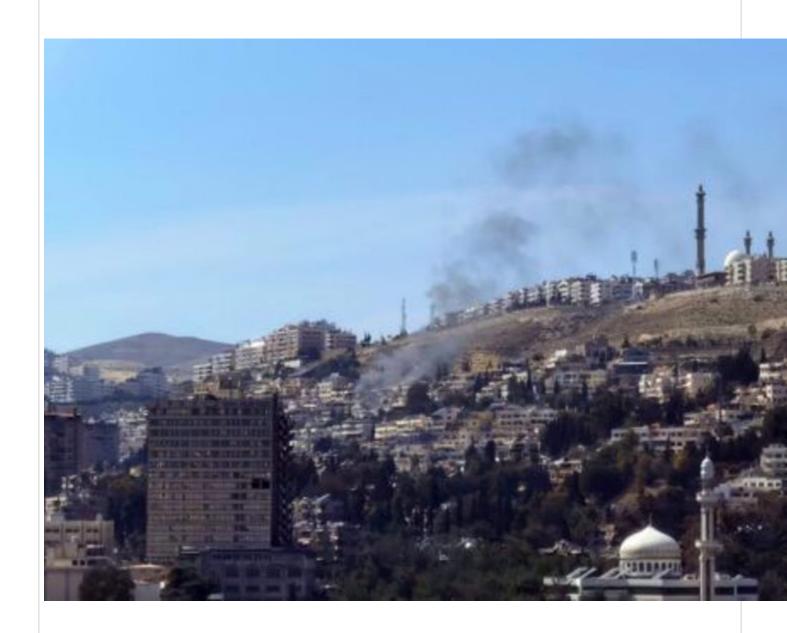


Photo shows smoke billowing from a building in the aftermath of an Israeli airstrike on the

Syrian capital Damascus on March 13, 2025.

Damascus, March 14 (RHC)-- Israel has carried out an airstrike on the outskirts of Damascus and its tanks have advanced into the southwestern Quneitra region in the latest aggression against Syria since the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad.

Media reports, quoting sources, said Israeli aircraft targeted a residential building in northwest of Damascus on Thursday. A short video published by Israel's military showed an explosion at the edge of a building followed by thick plumes of smoke. Local paramedics said at least three people were wounded in the latest attack.

A series of Israeli aerial raids also hit the town of Kiswah, south of Damascus, and several parts of the Dara'a province.

Elsewhere on Thursday, Israeli forces advanced into the countryside in the al-Quneitra region with tanks and military vehicles, detonating former military sites.

In a brazen declaration of expansionist Zionist ambitions, an Israeli Knesset member last week openly called for Syria to be placed under the regime's full control. Boaz Bismuth said Israel "will not allow a military force to emerge in Syria after Assad's fall."

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently said the regime will not tolerate the presence of the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) or any other forces affiliated with the new rulers in southern Syria. He also said Israeli troops will remain stationed at a so-called "buffer zone" inside the occupied Golan Heights, seized following the fall of President Assad.

The buffer zone was created by the United Nations after the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. A UN force of about 1,100 troops had patrolled the area since then.

Netanyahu said the regime's forces will maintain an indefinite military presence at the summit of Mount Hermon, and the adjacent zone.

Following the downfall of Assad, the Israeli military has been launching airstrikes against military installations, facilities, and arsenals belonging to Syria's now-defunct army.

The strikes were accompanied by ground incursions, as tanks and armored bulldozers penetrated Syrian territory, beyond the Golan Heights to Qatana, barely 30 kilometers from Damascus.

Israel has been condemned for the termination of the 1974 ceasefire agreement with Syria, and exploiting the chaos in the country in the wake of Assad's downfall to make a land grab.

Former al-Qaeda affiliate the HTS took control of Damascus in early December in a stunning offensive, prompting Israel to move forces into a UN-monitored demilitarized zone within Syria.

The Israeli regime has occupied some 600 kilometers of Syrian territory since the fall of Assad.

The HTS remained conspicuously silent on the unprecedented Israeli aggression, refusing to condemn the land theft, a move seen by regional experts as a sign of internal instability.

The developments also come as the HTS militants and armed opposition groups recently engaged in deadly confrontations in the country's northwestern coastal region.

More than 1,540 people, the majority of them civilians, have been killed so far in the violence in the provinces of Tartus, Latakia, Hama and Homs, according to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human

Rights (SOHR).

The resistance groups in Syria have accused the new Western-backed HTS rulers of perpetrating massacres of minority communities, warning of an "endless conflict" ahead if the international community did not take immediate measures to halt the violence.

Iran and several regional nations have condemned what Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei called the "unjustifiable" killing of civilians across Syria.

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