

Israeli defense minister warns Israel is ready to strike Iran

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Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz has said the country is ready to attack Iran [File: Sebastian Scheiner/The Associated Press]

Tel Aviv, August 6 (RHC)-- Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz has said the country's military is ready to take action against Iran, calling it "a global and regional problem."

The comments on Thursday came as tensions continue to rise in the region following a deadly drone strike last week on an Israeli-managed tanker off the coast of Oman.

Israel has said it provided to allies "hard evidence" that Iran was behind the attack on the tanker, Mercer Street, without offering details. The United States and the United Kingdom also blamed Iran for the attack that killed two people – British and Romanian crew members – and pledged to respond. Tehran has rejected the accusations, saying it would "respond decisively" if other countries decide to attack its interests.

Asked in an interview broadcast on a local media website on Thursday whether Israel is prepared to strike Iran, Gantz responded: "Yes." Gantz also told Ynet that Israel is ready to engage in a "multi-front" conflict that might include Iran.

"Iran is a global and regional problem and an Israeli challenge," Gantz said. "We need to continue to develop our abilities to cope with multiple fronts, for this is the future," he added.

On Wednesday, the commander-in-chief of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said countries that threaten Iran – especially Israel – must develop a realistic understanding of its defensive and offensive capabilities.

"In our defensive policies and strategies, there is no act, from any enemy at any point and with any scope, that will be tolerable and won't prompt us to show a strict and decisive response," Hossein Salami said during a visit to forces situated along the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

"We are ready for any scenario," he said, adding his message was one of action, not diplomacy.

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