

Hezbollah pounds Israeli aerial surveillance base with 62 missiles

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Beirut, January 7 (RHC)-- Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance group says it has hit an Israeli aerial surveillance base with scores of missiles in its first response to Tel Aviv's assassination of a deputy political leader of Hamas.

“At 08:10 AM on Saturday, January 6, 2024, the fighters of the Islamic Resistance targeted the Meron Aerial Surveillance Base with 62 missiles of various types, inflicting direct and confirmed hits,” Hezbollah said in a statement. The movement described the operation “as a preliminary response” to the Israeli assassination of “great leader Sheikh Saleh al-Arouri and his martyr brothers” in the southern Beirut suburb of Dahiyeh.

According to the statement, the base is the sole center for administration, surveillance, and air control in the northern occupied territories. “It is one of two principal bases in the entire usurping entity, the other being Mitzpe Ramon in the south,” it said.

Earlier, sirens were sounded in northern Israeli cities, warning residents of incoming rockets, media reports said Saturday. The cities of Shtula, Abirim, Netu’a, Karmiel, Safed were among 94 settlements in Galilee and the occupied Golan Heights put on alert Saturday, they said.

The southern Lebanese border has seen regular exchanges of fire, mainly between Israeli forces and Hezbollah since Tel Aviv launched its ferocious invasion of Gaza in early October.

Arouri's assassination on Tuesday in southern Beirut, which a US defense official has told AFP was carried out by Israel, has raised fears of further escalation.

The Israeli military said it had identified around 40 rocket launches from Lebanese territory on Saturday morning. Air raid sirens went off in towns and cities across northern Israel, later also blaring in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

In a speech Friday, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah had warned Israel that the movement would respond swiftly “on the battlefield” to Arouri's assassination.

Nearly three months of cross-border fire have killed 175 people in Lebanon, including three journalists. In northern Israel, at least 13 Israelis including nine soldiers have been killed, according to Israeli authorities.

The secretary general of Lebanon's Hezbollah says Israel is concealing the “heavy losses” it has suffered in the war on the southern Lebanese border as the resistance movement's operations against the occupying regime are “very exhausting.” Nasrallah, however, said Israel is lying about its true number of casualties.

“The enemy does not acknowledge either fatalities or injuries, and this is part of its policy of general secrecy regarding its losses since October 8,” he said, adding at least 2,000 Israeli soldiers had been wounded on the Lebanese border. The Lebanese resistance group has carried out 670 operations against Israel over the past three months, he said Friday. “What is happening on the Lebanese-Israeli border is unprecedented since 1948,” Nasrallah said in a televised speech.

Israelis in the north, Nasrallah said, should ask their leaders for a ceasefire if they wish to be safe. The Lebanese front is there to alleviate pressure on Hamas and Gaza, and to impose a ceasefire in Gaza, he added.

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