

At least three killed as Israel bombards southern and eastern Lebanon

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People search for victims at a destroyed building hit in an Israeli airstrike, in Ghaziyeh town, south Lebanon, on November 3, 2024. [AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatari]

Beirut, November 4 (RHC)-- At least three people have been killed in an Israeli air attack in southern Lebanon, and other strikes were reported in the country's east as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the border region.

"The Israeli enemy's raid on Haret Saida resulted in an initial death toll of three people killed and nine others injured," Lebanon's health ministry said on Sunday, referring to a densely populated area near the city of Sidon in southern Lebanon.

Footage, verified by Al Jazeera, showed the aftermath of the attack on a multi-story building in Haret Saida, showing a fire on the top floor and extensive destruction across all floors.

News agencies also reported an additional Israeli strike on the town of Ghaziyeh, south of Sidon. According to the AFP news agency, the strike hit a residential building, and a child was rescued from the rubble.

"Sidon has been struck multiple times – twice in the last few days, an indication of an escalation further north than the main theatre of operations for the Israelis further south," said Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Beirut.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported other Israeli strikes near a hospital in Tebnin, a town in the Bint Jbeil district of southern Lebanon. The mayor of Tebnin said the hospital sustained significant damage. None of these strikes were preceded by evacuation warnings.

Earlier on Sunday, Israel's military said it would be targeting Hezbollah-linked facilities in Lebanon's Baalbek area, which includes east Lebanon's largest city and UNESCO-designated Roman ruins. At least three strikes have been reported in the area.

According to Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health, at least 2,986 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on Lebanon since October 2023, including 18 dead and 83 injured in the past 24 hours.

During a visit to the border with Lebanon on Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to push the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah back beyond the Litani River, approximately 30 km (18 miles) inside Lebanon from Israel's border.

"With or without an agreement, the key to returning our (evacuated) residents in the north safely to their homes is to keep back Hezbollah beyond the Litani, to strike its every attempt to re-arm, and to respond forcefully against all action against us," Netanyahu said.

In Israel, the military said it intercepted several projectiles fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory, while some fell into unpopulated areas. On Thursday, rocket fire from Lebanon killed seven people in the town of Metula in northern Israel, in the deadliest day on the Israeli side of the border since the war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah escalated on September 23 – when Israel ramped up its attacks after a year of tit-for-tat exchanges of fire. One week later, it sent ground troops into southern Lebanon.

Israel's military says 38 soldiers have been killed in the Lebanon campaign since it began ground operations.

Iran-aligned groups in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria have also joined the fighting, while Iran and Israel have directly attacked each other, escalating fears of an even broader conflict.

Separately on Sunday, the Israeli military reported conducting a ground raid into Syria, capturing a Syrian citizen allegedly involved in Iranian networks. This marks the first time in the current conflict that Israel has announced sending troops into Syria, whose government has not yet commented on the report.

The military did not disclose the specific location or timing of the raid but identified the suspect as Ali Suleiman Al-Eatzi, a Syrian citizen living in the Tsida area in southern Syria.

Israel's assault on northern Gaza continued on Sunday, with at least 35 people killed across the Strip since dawn.

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