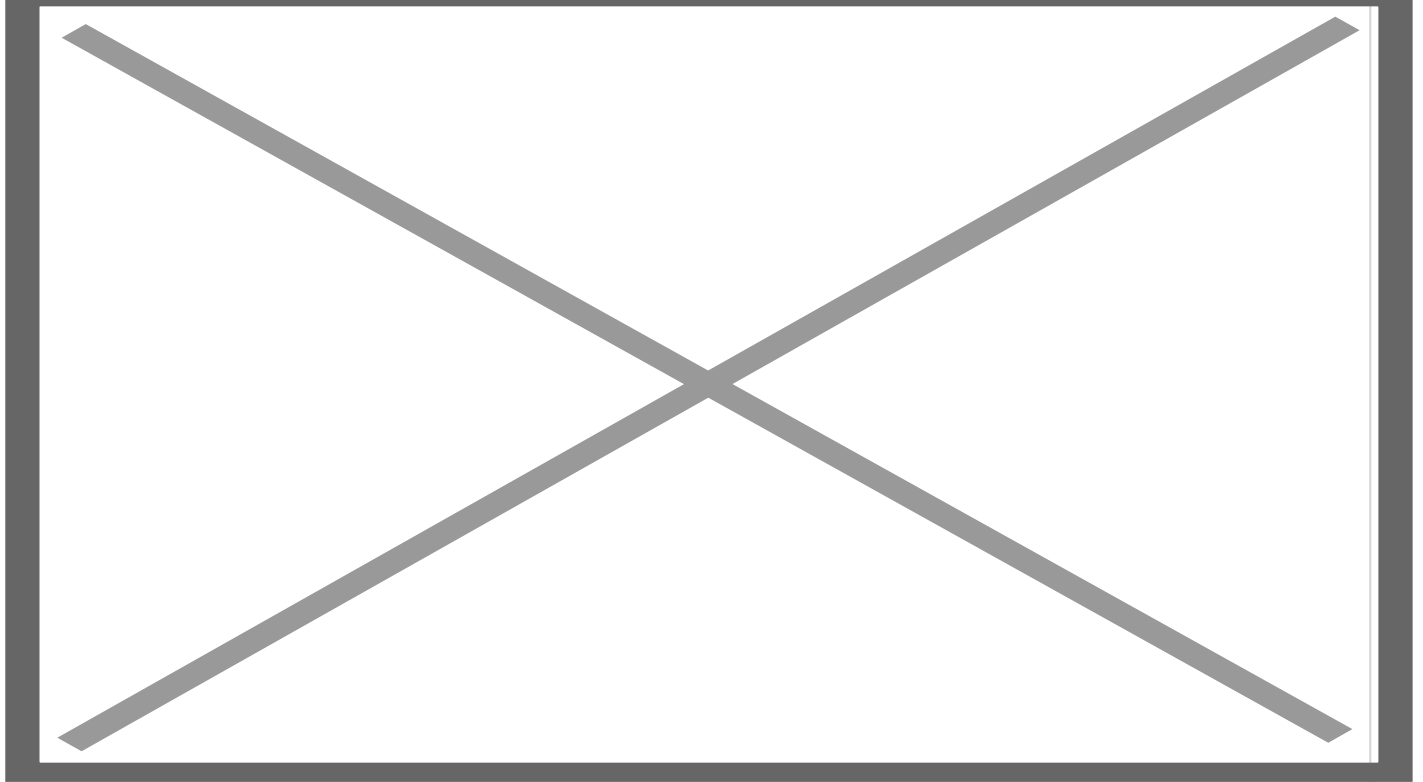


Barrage of more than 250 Israeli attacks destroy important military sites in Syria

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Smoke billows on the outskirts of the Syrian capital Damascus following Israeli airstrikes on December 9, 2024.

Israel conducted more than 100 air strikes on military targets in Syria on December 9 including a research centre Western countries suspected of having links to chemical weapons production in Damascus, a war monitor said. (Photo by Aaref WATAD / AFP)

More than 250 Israeli air strikes have hit Syria in 48 hours, reports the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Damascus, December 10 (RHC)-- Israel has unleashed a barrage of aerial attacks across Syria, battering key military sites amid a security vacuum after opposition forces ousted President Bashar al-Assad.

Near the port city of Latakia, Israel targeted an air defence facility and damaged Syrian naval ships as well as military warehouses. In and around the capital, Damascus, strikes targeted military installations, research centres and the electronic warfare administration.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a war monitor, said Israel had “destroyed the most important military sites in Syria, including Syrian airports and their warehouses, aircraft squadrons, radars, military signal stations, and many weapons and ammunition depots in various locations in most Syrian governorates”.

Israel, which borders Syria, sent troops into a buffer zone on the east of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights after al-Assad’s fall, in what Foreign Minister Gideon Saar described as a “limited and temporary step” for “security reasons”. It has also carried out “about 250 air strikes on Syrian territory” over the last 48 hours with the aim of destroying the former regime’s military capabilities, according to SOHR.

Israel media, quoting a senior security source, described the attacks as the largest air operation carried out by its Air Force in its history.

“Israel’s attacks on Syria are systematic,” said Al Jazeera’s Resul Serdar, reporting from Damascus. “They are aiming to destroy Syria’s defence bases.” Serdar said Israel’s latest raids targeted three major airports – in Homs, Qamishli and Damascus – as well as weapons depots and other strategic military sites.

“Israel claims it is doing this because it is concerned that these strategic facilities and military equipment could fall into the hands of the opposition,” said Serdar.

There was no immediate reaction from Syria’s incoming Salvation Government, which al-Assad’s Prime Minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali agreed on Monday to hand power to.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), a US Muslim group, blasted the US government for its continued support to Israel despite its escalating attacks in the region, saying the “Syrian people deserve to rebuild their country free from foreign occupation and violence”.

The flurry of air strikes came after Israeli troops also seized more territory in a buffer zone near the occupied Syrian Golan heights. The incursion trampled on a 50-year ceasefire agreement with Syria, which established the buffer zone, according to United Nations peacekeepers.

Al Jazeera’s senior political analyst Marwan Bishara said “Israel has taken the opportunity of Damascus being preoccupied with a change of regime to expand their presence in the Golan Heights and perhaps beyond.”

Israel “called it temporary, but we know the implications when Israel says temporary,” Bishara said. “In the occupied West Bank, for example, it’s been almost six decades”.

While Syria had been at war for more than 13 years, the al-Assad government’s collapse came in a matter of days in a lightning offensive led by the opposition group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

Syria’s parliament, formerly pro-al-Assad like the PM, said it supports “the will of the people to build a new Syria towards a better future governed by law and justice.”

The Baath party said it will support “a transitional phase in Syria aimed at defending the unity of the country”.



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