Teen killed by Hezbollah rocket in north; another hits area near Ben Gurion Airport

November 6, 2024

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The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-fires-rockets-at-central-israel-with-one-hitting-ben-gurion-airport-area/>

An Israeli teenager was killed by a Hezbollah rocket in the north on Wednesday, after the terror group also fired rockets twice throughout the day at central Israel, demonstrating it maintains the capability to launch long-range attacks even as the Israeli military pursues its ground operation in southern Lebanon.

A barrage of rockets at northern Israel Wednesday evening killed a teenager, whose body was only discovered hours later in Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk near Acre.

The Magen David Adom ambulance service said that a farmhand who found the body led medics to the site, where they located the victim suffering from severe shrapnel injuries and declared him dead at the scene.

He was later identified as Sivan Sade, an 18-year-old from the kibbutz who was working in the fields.

The IDF said that Hezbollah fired more than 150 rockets at Israel throughout Wednesday, including a barrage of 25 rockets at the Western Galilee and the Haifa Bay area.

Meanwhile, Israeli fighter jets carried out strikes in southern Beirut targeting Hezbollah infrastructure, following a day of long-range rocket fire on Israel, while the IDF chief of staff said the military must prepare to expand the Lebanon ground operation.

In the late morning rocket barrage targeting central Israel, the IDF said 10 projectiles were fired from Lebanon, with most intercepted, but one rocket struck an area near Ben Gurion Airport.

A part of an intercepted rocket also hit an empty parked car in Ra’anana. No injuries were caused in the attack.

Sirens rang out again shortly after 4 p.m. east of Tel Aviv. The IDF said they were caused by a single rocket that was intercepted.

Some flights experienced delays and disruptions as a result of the rocket attacks. The Israel Airports Authority said the airport was “open and working normally for arrivals and departures.”

In a statement, Hezbollah claimed to have targeted the IDF’s Tzrifin base, located south of Ben Gurion Airport, in the morning attack. The bases house a number of IDF units, including several training schools and a logistics center.

Projectiles were also lobbed by the terror group at Israel throughout Tuesday, including a drone launched from Lebanon that set off sirens in Metula and Kfar Giladi and was shot down by the IDF, and two rockets fired from Lebanon that were intercepted after they triggered sirens in Haifa and surrounding communities.

On Wednesday evening, the IDF announced that Israeli fighter jets had struck a series of Hezbollah sites in Beirut’s southern suburbs earlier in the day. According to the IDF, the targets included Hezbollah command rooms, weapon depots and other infrastructure.

All of the Hezbollah sites were located “in the heart of a civilian population,” the military said, accusing the terror group of using human shields. Before the strikes, the IDF issued evacuation warnings to civilians in the area.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi said Wednesday that the military must prepare to expand the ongoing ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

“Alongside the diplomatic attempt to reach agreements in Lebanon, we need to continue formulating the plans for the continuation of the fighting in Lebanon, including expanding and deepening the [ground] maneuver, and we will activate these plans as needed,” Halevi said during an assessment, in remarks provided by the IDF.

He added that the IDF “continues to strike Hezbollah targets according to plan in the entire region, in southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley, Beirut and Syria.”

Meanwhile, Lebanese rescuers pulled 30 bodies out of the rubble after a late-night Israeli strike on an apartment building in the town of Barja, Lebanon’s Civil Defense service said Wednesday.

It remained unclear if there were any survivors or bodies still trapped under the rubble following the Tuesday night airstrike, which came without warning. There was no statement from the military and the strike’s intended target also was unknown.

The military has said that it only targets terror infrastructure in Lebanon and that Hezbollah routinely uses residential buildings to store arms.

Barja, a town just north of the port city of Sidon in central Lebanon, has not been regularly targeted so far in the conflict.

“Something pulled me hard, and then the explosion happened,” said Moussa Zahran, who was at home with his wife and son when the building was hit. He said he couldn’t see but started digging through the rubble until he found his wife and son — alive but injured — and pulled them out. Both are still in the hospital, he said.

Another building resident, Muhyiddin Al- Qalaaji, said he was at work when the strike happened and heard the news from his wife who called him frantically.

“There are many dead and injured,” he said as he carried out what he could salvage of the family’s belongings on Wednesday morning.

Civil defense official Mostafa Danaj said some of the neighbors have reported there are still people missing.

Amid the ongoing operation, the IDF on Wednesday called on civilians near four buildings in southern Lebanon’s Nabatieh to immediately evacuate ahead of airstrikes.

Col. Avichay Adraee, the IDF’s Arabic-language spokesman, published maps alongside the announcement, which call on civilians to distance themselves at least 500 meters from the sites.

“You are located near Hezbollah facilities and assets, against which the IDF will operate in the near future,” Adraee said.

Israel sent troops into southern Lebanon in late September, days after stepping up its attacks on Hezbollah in a bid to make the north safe for some 60,000 displaced residents.

The residents were evacuated soon after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack, out of fear Hezbollah would carry out a similar assault in the north. A day after the massacre, Hezbollah-led forces began attacking the north on a near-daily basis.

Lebanon said Wednesday it had filed a complaint with the United Nations’ labor agency over deadly detonations of communication devices held by Hezbollah operatives across the country in September, widely ascribed to Israel, and which came ahead of the escalation at the end of that month.

Thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah exploded during the attack, killing dozens of people and injuring thousands more across Lebanon, in what has widely been reported as a successful Mossad operation.

Israel has not officially taken responsibility for the attacks.

The attacks on northern Israel since October 2023 have resulted in the deaths of 40 civilians. In addition, 61 IDF soldiers and reservists have died in cross-border skirmishes and in the ground operation launched in southern Lebanon in late September. Two soldiers were killed in a drone attack from Iraq, and there have been several attacks from Syria, as well, without any injuries.

The Lebanese health ministry announced on Monday that the country’s death toll in the Israel-Hezbollah war had crossed 3,000. The figure does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. The IDF estimates that some 3,000 Hezbollah operatives have been killed in the conflict. Around 100 members of other terror groups have also been reported killed in Lebanon.