

# Deadly strike on central Beirut after Israel, Iran trade threats

Beirut (Lebanon) (AFP) – Israel carried out a deadly air raid Thursday in central Beirut after eight ground troops were killed near the Lebanese border, as it traded threats with its arch foe Iran over possible future attacks.

The Israeli military kept up its bombardment of the Lebanese capital after Iran launched its largest missile attack yet on Israel, which prompted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to warn Tehran would pay for its “big mistake”.

As Israel weighs retaliation, President Joe Biden said the US was “fully supportive” of its ally but ruled out supporting a strike on Iran’s nuclear sites.

Iran, which backs Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, said it would step up its response if Israel counterattacked, defying calls for de-escalation in a war that has cost more than 1,000 lives in Lebanon.

In Beirut, AFP journalists heard multiple explosions overnight and reported some buildings shaking.

One of the Israeli strikes hit a Hezbollah rescue facility, a source close to the group told AFP, killing at least six people, according to a Lebanese health ministry toll.

A total of 17 overnight air raids had hit Beirut by dawn on Thursday, Lebanon’s official National News Agency (NNA) reported.

Israel, shifting its focus from the Gaza war sparked by Hamas’s October 7 attack, says it is trying to secure its border with Lebanon so tens of thousands of Israelis displaced

by nearly a year of hostilities with Hezbollah can return home.

Israeli bombing of Lebanon has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

## Israeli soldiers killed



People stand on top of the remains of an Iranian missile in the Negev desert near Arad in southern Israel © Menahem KAHANA / AFP

The military has bombarded Hezbollah's south Beirut stronghold, having dealt a significant blow to the group last week by killing its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in a massive strike.

A day after its military said it was conducting "targeted ground raids" in south Lebanon, Israel reported the first death of a soldier in the Israel-Hezbollah war, a toll that later rose to eight dead.

Hezbollah said it had forced Israeli soldiers to retreat, targeted an Israeli unit with explosives, and destroyed three Merkava tanks with rockets as they advanced on Maroun al-Ras village.

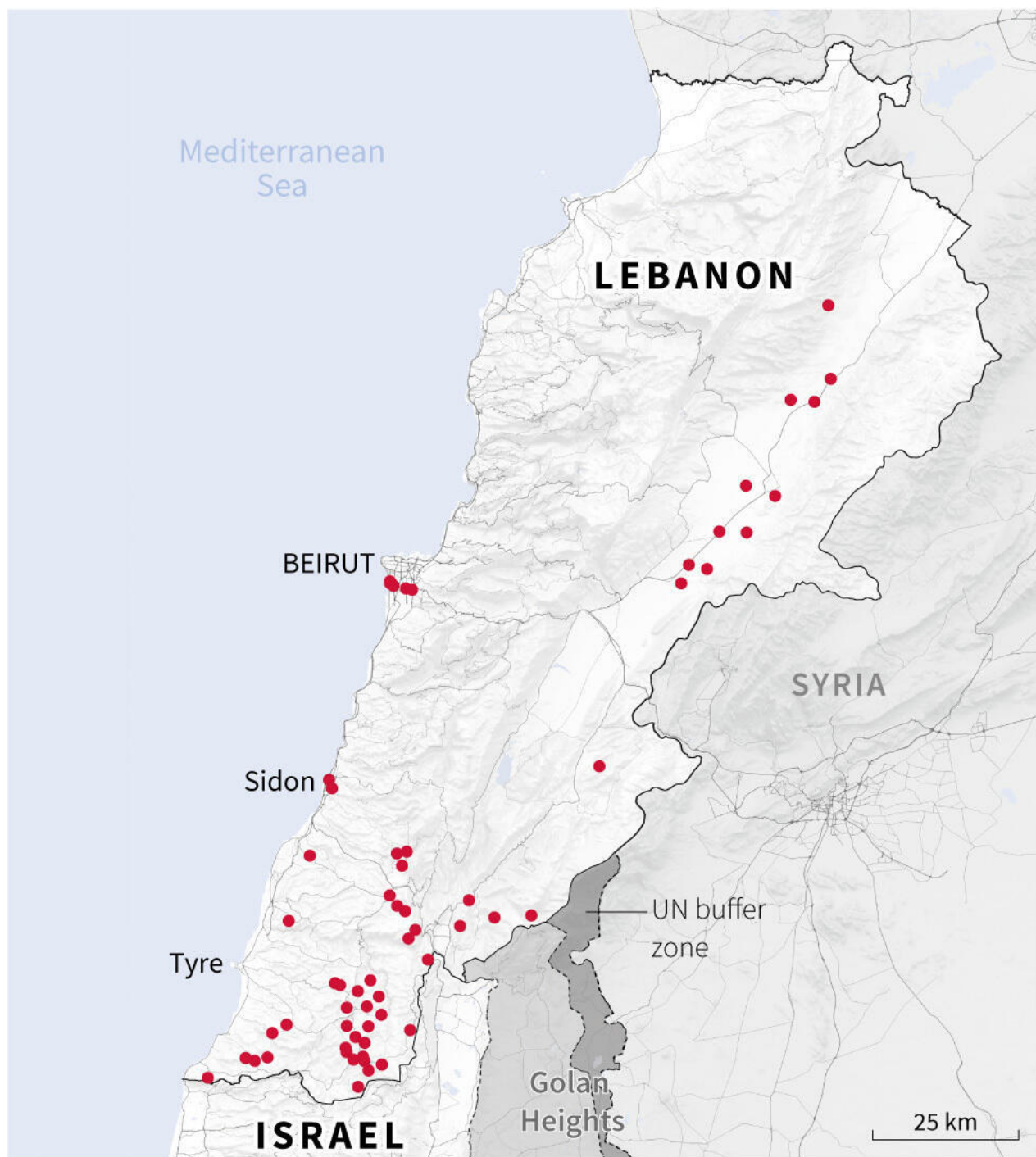
The Israeli military said it staged two brief incursions into Lebanon, ordering residents to flee more than 20 areas.

The military released footage that it said showed soldiers inside Lebanon, moving through villages and mountainous areas on foot, and announced it had deployed a second division to support the fighting.

Explosions in the Lebanese capital were audible kilometres away and came as the Israeli military ordered residents to leave multiple parts of densely populated southern Beirut in the early hours of Thursday.

# Israeli strikes on Lebanon

October 1



Map data: OSM, Nasa

Source: Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project



Israeli strikes on Lebanon © Valentina BRESCHI, Sylvie HUSSON  
/ AFP

Lebanon's health ministry said 46 people were killed and 85 others injured by Israeli strikes over the past 24 hours.

Earlier, Lebanon's disaster management agency said 1,928 people had been killed in Lebanon since Israel and Hezbollah began trading cross-border fire after the Gaza war erupted nearly a year ago.

## **Iran missile attack**

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said an Israeli strike in Damascus killed four people, including Hassan Jaafar al-Qasir, son-in-law of the slain Hezbollah leader.

Hours after Israel announced the start of ground operations in Lebanon, Iran fired some 200 missiles, including hypersonic weapons, sending frightened Israeli civilians hurrying to shelters.

Israel said it intercepted most of the missiles. Two people were wounded by shrapnel and a school building was damaged.



Israel has vowed to make Iran pay for firing 180 missiles at its territory, most of them intercepted © Menahem Kahana / AFP

The Israeli military said several Iranian missiles struck inside air force bases without causing any casualties or damage.

In Jericho in the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian was killed when “pieces of a rocket fell from the sky and hit him”, the city’s governor Hussein Hamayel said.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant warned that “those who attack the state of Israel, pay a heavy price”.

Iran’s armed forces chief of staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, threatened to attack “with bigger intensity” if Israel made good on its pledge to retaliate.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also warned of a “stronger” response, though he stressed Iran was “not looking for war”.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the missiles were fired in retaliation for Nasrallah's killing alongside its Quds Force commander Abbas Nilforoushan, as well as for the death of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in a Tehran bombing in July.

## Global alarm



Gazan rescuers in southern Khan Yunis on October 2 © BASHAR TALEB / AFP

In Israel's commercial hub Tel Aviv, resident Liron Yori said he was worried about the situation.

"I see where the war's going and I don't feel comfortable with it," the 22-year-old told AFP.

In central Beirut, people were weary and afraid, though some Hezbollah supporters were defiant.

Youssef Amir, displaced from southern Lebanon, said: "I have lost my home and relatives in this war, but all of that is a

sacrifice for Lebanon, for Hezbollah”.

Iran’s missile attack, its second on Israel in six months, triggered widespread global alarm, as well as a spike in world oil prices.

UN chief Antonio Guterres condemned the Iranian attack, saying it did “nothing to support the cause of the Palestinian people”.

The G7 group of wealthy nations vowed to work together to reduce tensions in the region and said a diplomatic solution was “still possible”.

Israel’s retaliatory military offensive has killed at least 41,689 people in Gaza, the majority of them civilians, according to figures provided by the Hamas-run territory’s health ministry. The UN has described the figures as reliable.

In Gaza, the health ministry said its toll published Wednesday included 51 deaths over the past 24 hours.

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