

Israel Braces for Hizbullah Retaliation over Slain Militiaman

Uri Cohen 07/23/2020

Group blames Jewish state for airstrike against Iranian target in Syria that killed Ali Kamel Mohsen

Israel placed its northern towns and villages on alert Thursday and abruptly mobilized an army battalion at the border with Lebanon in case of an attack by Hizbullah.

[...]

“Up till now, the rules were simple: If Israel violates Lebanon’s sovereignty, there’s a response,” says **Orna Mizrahi**, a senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv and a former deputy national security adviser for foreign policy.

“But for the past six months, Hizbullah has been trying to implement new rules: If an operative of the organization is killed by attacks attributed to Israel even outside Lebanon, they’ll respond militarily. That’s why the concern,” she said, citing Israeli decision-makers.

Mizrahi says that while Hizbullah did not directly threaten retaliation, its public acknowledgement that the soldier was killed amounts to the same thing.

“They want to keep it vague because in the current circumstance, with inner tensions and protests [over a failed Lebanese economy] and outside financial pressure and sanctions [by the US and Europe], they don’t want to be drawn into a large campaign with Israel,” she said.

Mizrahi acknowledges that some Middle Eastern analysts claim the opposite.

“There’s a theory that a prolonged fight with Israel is exactly what they want in order to redirect the attention and anger and criticism of the Lebanese public away from themselves and onto the Israeli enemy,” she says, adding that she disagrees.

For full article:

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