



## Israel and Lebanon gas field talks on knife-edge

By Yolande Knell / BBC News, Jerusalem / 29.9.22

**As Europe frets over gas prices, Israel and Lebanon have reached a vital stage in indirect talks over natural gas fields in disputed offshore territory.**

The neighbours, which see each other as enemy states, are reportedly closer than ever to reaching a deal.

If they play their cards right, there is the prize of tapping new and potential energy resources.

But a misstep could result in war, with the Lebanese militant group and party Hezbollah making new threats to Israel.

A triangle of turquoise Mediterranean waters is at the heart of the row over competing energy exploration rights. It contains part of the Karish gas field and part of Qana, a prospective gas field.

[...]

"For Israel, a deal on the maritime border is really about solving a security and strategic threat," argues **Orna Mizrahi, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies, based in Tel Aviv.**

She stresses how a deal could defuse a potential source of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, which is heavily armed and backed by Iran, but says there is great caution in the military establishment.

Israel and Lebanon have a history of bloody wars. Israel invaded Lebanon during the latter's civil war in 1982. In 2006, a cross-border raid by Hezbollah triggered a month of fighting.

"The IDF has been on a high alert for months and is ready for every scenario of deterioration," Ms Mizrahi says. "Maybe Nasrallah could do something not against the rig but along the border."

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