

Iran exploiting Jordanian border 'blind spot,' expert says

Tehran is trying to “compensate losing Gaza” by strengthening terrorists in the Palestinian territories, according to an INSS security specialist.

Natan Galula / (September 10, 2024 / JNS)

With an increase in incidents involving the Israeli-Jordanian border, **Prof. Kobi Michael, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) and Misgav Institute**, spoke with JNS about the source of the escalation and challenges that Jerusalem faces in countering it.

“Smuggling on that border always existed,” said Michael, who specializes in civil-military relations, national and internal security and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “And it involved terrorist elements of arms smuggling, including shootings, but the scope was much smaller. The Jordanians are trying to curb the phenomenon, but just as Israel face challenges in doing so, so does the Hashemite Kingdom.”

[...]

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz told *Kan News* in late August: “Iran is working to establish an eastern terrorist front in Judea and Samaria, just like the Gaza and Lebanon model, by financing and arming terrorists and smuggling advanced weapons from Jordan. We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of [Palestinian] residents and whatever would-be necessary steps.”

Michael concurred. “In the wake of Israel’s significant achievements in the Gaza Strip, Tehran realized that it lost Hamas in Israel’s south,” he told JNS. “Since the Islamic Republic has not abandoned its ‘ring of fire’ and attritional war strategy against Israel, it’s seeking to compensate for its asset loss in Gaza [by establishing a new one] in Judea and Samaria.”

He added, “Judea and Samaria are potentially even more of a tinderbox than the Gaza Strip, because half a million Jews live there, and it commands over many metropolitan areas in Israel, such as Netanya and Kfar Saba; whereas most Israeli territory adjacent to the Palestinian enclave in the south is farm lands.”

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