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Israel calls up reservists, telling troops to prepare for Lebanon incursion

The moves set off a diplomatic scramble as Hezbollah fired a ballistic missile at Tel Aviv and Israeli strikes killed more people in Lebanon, officials said.

By Claire Parker, Lior Soroka and Suzan Haidamous / September 25, 2024

CAIRO — Israel said Wednesday it was readying troops for a potential ground incursion into Lebanon, telling soldiers to prepare to “enter enemy territory” as it called up more reservists and sent world leaders scrambling to prevent a full-scale war with Hezbollah militants.

[...]

Israel’s move to call up more reserve brigades was one of the clearest signs the war could expand. The military did not say what type of troops were mobilized, but reserve brigades can be ready for action “in less than 24 hours,” according to **Ariel Heimann, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv and former chief reserve officer for the IDF.

The two brigades mobilized Wednesday, which would include several thousand soldiers, could be deployed “for the operation itself in Lebanon, as a backup and readiness force for such an operation, or as a force to replace other units currently stationed on the border, allowing them to go on the mission,” he said.

The problem, according to Heimann, is that the Israeli government doesn’t appear to have an exit plan, with previous — and deadly — forays into Lebanon hanging over the military. Israel invaded in 1982 and formally occupied southern Lebanon until 2000. Hezbollah, which originated as a force to fight foreign powers in the country, took credit for Israel’s withdrawal.

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