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War within a war: Israel takes aim at Hamas militants in Lebanon

Officials and experts in Lebanon say Israel's assassination campaign against Palestinian militants has brought Hamas and Hezbollah closer together.

By Susannah George and Suzan Haidamous / September 5, 2024

SIDON, Lebanon — Hamas operative Nidal Hleihel was sitting in his car last month outside an apartment block in this Lebanese port city when he heard a loud crack above him. Spooked, he said, he scrambled out of the vehicle. He had just reached a nearby stairwell when the Israeli missile struck.

[...]

“Before, we would have feared such a strike would cause a war, but we are already in a war,” said **Yoram Schweitzer, head of the program on terrorism and low-intensity conflict at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies**. “The location doesn't give them immunity anymore.”

Israel invested heavily in intelligence operations in Lebanon in the aftermath of its 2006 war with Hezbollah, including the development of robust files on Palestinian militants in the country, according to a Lebanese official, who also spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

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