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Israel Strikes On Iran, A Show Of Force In Simmering Conflict

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Israel struck several military facilities in Iran on Saturday, marking the latest exchange in the hostilities between the two longstanding adversaries in a conflict that has simmered for months.

[...]

"From Israel's point of view, it is a huge demonstration of capabilities," said **Sima Shine**, an **Iran specialist at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)** in Tel Aviv.

"I think it is the first time that many, many airplanes were flying to Iran, attacking in Iran, (and) coming back safely."

[...]

Danny Citrinowicz, another Iran expert at the INSS, believes that Israel's ability to conduct largely unimpeded strikes stems from its successful efforts to weaken Hezbollah, Iran's key ally in Lebanon.

"It was really the protecting wall of Iran, and the fact that Hezbollah is quite weak in its war on Israel, I think changes Israel's calculus regarding attacking directly in Iran," he said.

"This is a direct consequence of that."

Though Citrinowicz called the attack "unprecedented" and "historical" by breaking the taboo of a direct attack on Iran's military on its soil, he said escalation into a full-blown regional war was unlikely.

Explosions in April shook Iran's Isfahan province in what US officials, cited by American media, said was Israeli retaliation, though Israel never publicly acknowledged its responsibility.

"Nobody wants to find themselves in a regional war," he told AFP, adding that Iran's minimising of the attack's impact was a way to defuse tensions.

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