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In Lebanon, winning means this is last war

Sophistication of Hezbollah's attack plans
is clear, as is evidence of Iranian guidance

Amos Harel

SOUTH LEBANON —The scale of the destruction in the old casbah of a Lebanese Shi'ite village not far from the Israeli border is enormous. Southern Lebanon isn't yet the Gaza Strip. But given the intensity of the fight the army is conducting there in its raids on villages near the border, not many houses are still standing.

The main difference between Gaza and Lebanon is the complete absence of civilians in the combat zone. In Lebanon, unlike parts of Gaza, residents had enough time to escape and somewhere to go. When the Israel Defense Forces entered the villages, almost no civilians were there.

In this entire village, Golan Brigade soldiers found only one elderly woman hiding in a farm on the outskirts. She was given medical treatment in Israel and then sent on her way.

In nearby Christian villages, there is no fighting at all. Since Hezbollah didn't build outposts or store arms there, the IDF hasn't attacked them. Consequently, some residents have stayed home and observed the intense fighting in neighboring Shi'ite villages from the

sidelines. It seems unlikely that all of them are sorry about what they're seeing.

In the 24 years since the IDF withdrew from southern Lebanon, and even more so since the Second Lebanon War of 2006, Hezbollah has done as it pleases in these areas. Neither UNIFIL, the Lebanese army nor, obviously, the villagers dared to stand up to it.

Three soldiers
killed

News, Page 2

The IDF allows reporters to accompany its forces in Lebanon as long as the fog of war is maintained. We aren't allowed to publish the names of the villages or sectors where the troops are operating, beyond the fact that these areas are within a few kilometers of the border.

During a brief tour of that Shi'ite village Tuesday afternoon, the marks of the past two weeks of fighting were clearly evident. When the battles began, some officers from Hezbollah's elite Radwan force and its ter-

ritorial defense units fled, while others stayed to fight. Most have been killed, but 10 Hezbollah operatives have been captured.

In the most serious incident, five soldiers from Sayeret Golani, the brigade's elite reconnaissance unit, were killed last week. Four Hezbollah fighters were hiding in an enclosed interior space on the second floor of a house that the soldiers had entered after firing tank shells and antitank missiles at it.

The Lebanese opened fire at short range, killing the soldiers who were climbing the stairs to the second floor and wounding the comrades who rushed to their aid from the first floor. Five soldiers were seriously wounded. The dead included a company commander and a platoon commander. The deputy battalion commander, who was summoned to the scene, took control of the fighting and the rescue effort.

Sayeret Golani is "the best unit we have," said a senior officer under whose command the brigade is operating in that area. "Their recovery was impressive, within hours, despite the many casualties. Officers immediately volunteered to replace their comrades who

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Blood on the floor Tuesday of the Kafr Qasem home where Siham Muserati, inset, and her aunt Mai Issa were murdered.



David Bachar

Woman, 29, and her 10-year-old niece killed in alleged revenge attack in Kafr Qasem

Deiaa Haj Yahia
and Josh Breiner

A 10-year-old girl and her 29-year-old aunt were shot and killed overnight into Tuesday in a home in the central Israeli Arab city of Kafr Qasem.

Another casualty, the 17-year-old brother of the young girl, was also shot and is in serious condition. An additional victim was

taken to a hospital in moderate condition.

The double homicide took place at the home of the 29-year-old victim, later identified as Mai Issa who is the aunt of the two kids, 10-year-old Siham Muserati and 17-year-old Udai, who are both from the central Israeli city of Ramle.

Police believe the shooters targeted them as revenge over a quadruple ho-

micide that took place last month in Ramle. Police have not announced any arrests.

Witnesses said the shooters were wearing police uniforms when they knocked on the victims' door at around 1:20 A.M. They then entered the home and began shooting, before fleeing. A burnt vehicle was later found nearby.

A police source said that the siblings had recently

moved in with Issa after facing death threats.

Earlier this month, the police announced it had solved the murder of four people in Ramle in a car bombing in September, which led to an indictment against a 17-year-old. Police believe a rivalry between two criminal groups in Ramle led to the deadly blast.

The victims in the bombing were identified as

Dua Abu Halawa, 50, her daughter Sila, 14, and son Mohammed, 10, as well as 14-year-old Lin Moghrabi, whose father was killed four years ago. A 1-month-old baby was also critically wounded.

Since the beginning of 2024, 27 women have been murdered in Israel. There have been 192 homicides in Israel's Arab community in the same period.



Damage to Netanyahu's Caesarea home from the drone.
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Saturday's Hezbollah drone hit PM's Caesarea home

Jonathan Lis
and Josh Breiner

A drone launched by Hezbollah from Lebanon on Saturday struck Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's private residence in Caesarea. According to the Prime Minister's Office, neither Netanyahu nor his wife, Sara, were at home at the time.

The attack involved three drones. After three fighter jets were deployed to intercept them without success, two drones were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, while one struck the prime minister's home in Caesarea, according to the IDF. Sirens were not activated in the city prior to the attack.

The three drones targeted the prime minister's

residence, with the one that was not intercepted striking the bedroom window. In addition to damaging the window, the drone created a gaping hole in the side of the house and caused further damage from the blast waves.

After the attack on Saturday, Netanyahu accused Iran of carrying out an assassination attempt, and

said its "proxies made a grave mistake" by targeting him and his wife. Netanyahu addressed "the Iranians and their axis of evil partners" and said "anyone who harms Israeli citizens will pay a heavy price for it."

Despite that, Hezbollah media chief Mohammed Afif said Tuesday that the organization takes "full and sole responsibility" for the

attack.

Additionally, on Saturday, a spokesman for Iran's mission at the United Nations denied the country's involvement and told The Wall Street Journal that "we have already responded to the Israeli regime," and that the "action in question has been carried out by Hezbollah in Lebanon."

As of November 2019,

the following work had been performed on the Caesarea home: reinforcement and protection at a cost of 795,000 shekels (about \$210,900) and maintenance costing 190,000 shekels. The PMO paid 165,200 shekels of the latter amount; the balance was privately funded, in accordance with the instructions of the PMO's accountant.

Said to be planning to kill a mayor and a scientist

Seven E. Jerusalem residents arrested for alleged Iran spy plot

Josh Breiner
and Nir Hasson

Seven residents of East Jerusalem have been arrested on suspicion of working for Iran and planning the assassination of a senior Israeli scientist and the mayor of a major Israeli city.

The Shin Bet security service and the Israel Police disclosed the arrests, which were made weeks ago, on Tuesday. The suspects were barred from meeting with a lawyer for three weeks.

In a joint statement, the agencies said the suspects had established contact with Iranian intelligence and were allegedly solicited to blow up a police cruiser and throw a hand grenade

at a home in exchange for a payment of 200,000 shekels (around \$53,000).

Draft indictments were filed Sunday, with formal charges of conspiracy to commit terrorist acts expected to be brought in the

Cracks in social
cohesion

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Jerusalem District Court on Wednesday.

According to the Shin Bet and police, the Iranians first made contact with a 23-year-old resident of Beit Safafa, a Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem, who was then tasked with recruiting

additional collaborators. He brought in six other suspects, who were assigned to carry out a series of missions, including spraying graffiti and torching cars in the area of Jerusalem's Ein Karem neighborhood.

Some of the suspects are also accused of approaching the home of the senior scientist and taking pictures of it in exchange for a payment of 500 shekels.

A total of 50,000 shekels in cash was found in a search of the suspects' homes, along with a police license plate and a large number of credit cards.

A lawyer for one of the suspects stated that his client had not yet taken any action before being arrested.

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Live from the Pentagon: IDF secrets

Ahead of Israeli strike on Iran: What can we learn from documents leaked over the weekend?

Aluf Benn

1. The mother of all leaks

The two American intelligence documents that were made public last weekend, detailing the findings of the monitoring of Israeli preparations for a strike on Iran, provide a unique and unprecedentedly deep glimpse into the IDF's clandestine activity, and the very close surveillance by the Americans of its friend and ally. For the first time, top secret information was leaked in real time: The documents were posted online last Friday and revealed a major aerial drill that was held two or three days earlier in preparation for the anticipated strike. Another drill was conducted two days before that.

We've never seen any-



An Israeli plane departing to target Hezbollah in Lebanon.

IDF Spokesperson

thing like this before. The huge Wikileaks leaks, the leaks by Edward Snowden and the major leak from the Pentagon two years ago revealed archival information

of which only a portion was current and relevant. Now we've seen the thing itself practically broadcast live and read the report that was distributed among the

American intelligence community, and in part also to the countries that, along with the U.S., are part of the "Five Eyes" intelligence-sharing alliance – Britain,

Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It is now known who provided the documents that appeared on the Telegram channel of Middle East Spectator, a site the Israeli media describes as "pro-Iranian." But the American administration hastened to announce that the documents were credible and that an investigation was being launched to discover the source. President Joe Biden said he was "deeply concerned" about the report. In other words, even if the administration itself was not behind the leak, it took ownership and responsibility by the tried and true "shock and investigation" method, also used by the Israeli defense establishment when it wants to lend credibility to "foreign press reports" or

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