

# Israel will not stop fight with Iran, Defense Minister Gantz says

The rivalry between Israel and Iran is at boiling point, with concerns in Tel Aviv that Hezbollah's growing rocket arsenal could soon pose a significant threat.

Israel will not stop its armed confrontation with Iran, Defense Minister Benny Gantz has said, following the bombing of western Syria's Latakia port by suspected Israeli jets on Tuesday.

"I call upon the region's countries to stop Iran from violating their sovereignty and people," Gantz urged while at an Israeli airfield on the same day as the Latakia bombing.

"Israel will not allow Iran to funnel balance-breaching weapons to its proxies and threaten our citizens."

The assault on the port city of Latakia came after military equipment bound for the Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah was allegedly diverted from land to sea after repeated airstrikes on Iranian convoys and bases in eastern Syria by Israel.

Israel has accused Iran of smuggling weapons to its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah and other allied militias in the region via Syria and vowed to prevent Tehran establishing a foothold in the country, where Iranian forces are supporting the Assad regime.

War monitor Airwars said earlier this month that Israel's strikes in Syria have caused up to 40 civilian deaths from 2013 onwards.

Israeli bombing in Syria typically targets locations it believes are linked with Iran, including those belonging to its ally Hezbollah.

The rivalry between Iran and Israel is near boiling point, with concerns in Tel Aviv that Hezbollah's growing rocket arsenal could soon pose a significant threat to the country.

Meanwhile, Israel has suggested it could attack Iranian atomic sites should negotiations aimed at rescuing the Iran nuclear agreement not lead to a pact it

feels places sufficient limits on Tehran.

This is despite Israel being the only Middle Eastern state currently known to have an undeclared nuclear weapons programme.

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