

Lebanon complains to UN after Israel uses country's airspace to strike Syria again



Beirut, August 21 (RHC)-- Lebanon has issued a complaint to the United Nations after Israeli jets "blatantly violated" its airspace to carry out strikes at Syrian territory on Thursday. The incursion reportedly forced two civilian flights to divert from their route.

Late on Thursday, Syrian air defenses "repelled an Israel missile aggression," downing most of the incoming projectiles, Syria's state-run SANA news agency reported, citing military sources. The strikes allegedly came from the southeast side of the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and targeted areas outside the Syrian cities of Damascus and Homs, according to the agency.

Israel, which is concerned about the presence of the Iranian military and Lebanese armed group Hezbollah in Syria, usually remains silent on its strikes against the neighboring country. The reported attack was condemned by the Lebanese authorities, with Defense Minister Zeina Akar claiming that Israeli warplanes have "blatantly violated Lebanon's airspace."

The jets flew at low altitude and caused "a state of panic among citizens," the minister said as cited by Reuters. According to other reports, a least two passenger liners heading to Beirut had been forced to divert from their flight routes due to the appearance of military planes in the area.

Lebanon has complained to the United Nations about the reported Israeli overflights, which violate UN Resolution 1701 that ended the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, Akar said. The United Nations must act to put a stop to such incidents, she insisted.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have carried out numerous attacks on targets inside Syria in recent years, using Lebanese airspace to avoid Syrian air defenses. Damascus has repeatedly denounced those strikes as acts of aggression.

In July, Russia, which is Syria's ally in fighting terrorism, Iran and Turkey issued a joint condemnation of the "continuous" Israeli attacks, describing them as violations of "international law, international humanitarian law, the sovereignty of Syria, and neighboring countries."

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