

Syria blames Israel for missile attacks near Damascus

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Damascus, April 8 (RHC)-- A missile attack near the Syrian capital of Damascus has wounded four soldiers, according to Syria's state media which blamed Israel for the attack. Syria's state news agency SANA, quoting an unidentified military official, said Syrian air defences were able to shoot down most of the missiles before they hit their targets on Thursday.

The missiles were apparently fired from the direction of neighbouring Lebanon and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, state television said. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, reported that military posts near Damascus were targets, but gave no further details.

Al-Manar TV, of Lebanon's Hezbollah group, said one of the Syrian air defence missiles exploded near the Lebanon-Syria border and was heard in parts of southern Lebanon. It later said the missile crashed near the Lebanese border village of Houla.

Israel has launched hundreds of attacks against Iran-linked military targets in Syria over the years but rarely acknowledges or discusses such operations.

In February, Syria's army said the country's air defences intercepted "Israeli aggression" over Damascus. The attacks killed at least nine pro-government fighters, a Britain-based war monitor said at the time.

Israel views Iranian entrenchment on its northern frontier as a red line, and it has repeatedly struck Iran-linked facilities and weapon convoys destined for Hezbollah.

Western intelligence sources say Iran's military influence has expanded in Syria in recent years, prompting Israel to escalate its campaign to prevent Tehran from establishing a significant military foothold along its border.

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