

## Fallout ripples across Mideast, beyond as Iran war escalates



Displaced residents from the southern suburbs of Beirut gather in the Lebanese capital's Martyrs' Square on Thursday after the Israeli army issued a warning to evacuate. The Israel-Hezbollah war that began Monday is the third such conflict in 20 years. KHALIL ASHAWI/REUTERS

## Border agency suspects 28 regime officials are in Canada despite ban

MAURA FORREST MONTREAL

Canadian border authorities have identified nearly 30 suspected senior Iranian officials who they believe should be barred from remaining in the country under a federal ban, amid a widening conflict in the Middle East that could see more regime officials seek refuge.

The Canada Border Services Agency has been investigating 95 cases involving possible high-ranking members of the Iranian regime, up from 66 last June, according to figures provided by the agency.

Of those 95, the CBSA has identified 28 people it believes are inadmissible since senior Iranian officials were banned from the country in November, 2022. That number is up from 20 last year.

But the CBSA has so far removed only one official from Canada – a number that remains unchanged from last year.

While the cases wind their way through Canada's immigration system, there are concerns the war in Iran could drive more officials to try to enter the country, despite Canada's efforts to keep them out.

"The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) closely monitors all international developments which could give bad actors a greater motive to seek safe haven in Canada, so that we may anticipate and thwart unauthorized travel attempts," spokesperson Luke Reimer said in a statement. ■ CBSA, A5

## Anger mounts against Hezbollah after Lebanon pulled into another fight

MARK MACKINNON SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT

There was a time when Fatima Daoud supported Hezbollah and saw the group as defending Lebanon's sovereignty. But her affection for the "Party of God" expired as it dragged her country into war after war, driving her family from one home to another.

The Israel-Hezbollah war that began Monday – just one front in the widening Middle East war – is the third such conflict in 20 years and the second in 15 months. The fighting has forced Ms. Daoud and her family to move seven times, from their destroyed home in southern Lebanon, via a succession of rented apartments and temporary shelters, to the high school where she and her family were camped Thursday.

Hezbollah's decision to launch a volley of rockets at Israel on Monday – an attack it said was retaliation for the U.S.-Israeli strike on Iran, which has supported Hezbollah since its founding in 1982 – has provoked the predictably harsh Israeli military response, but also a firestorm of

criticism within the country.

Opposition to Hezbollah had been hardening for years among Lebanon's Christians, Sunni Muslim and Druze. What's different this time is that many in the group's own Shia Muslim community are expressing bafflement and anger at the decision to pull the country into yet another war. Many feel that Hezbollah, which has always professed to put Lebanon's interests first, had shown that its ultimate loyalty has always been to Tehran.

"This was between Israel and Iran – so why did we launch rockets from south Lebanon?" Ms. Daoud asked. "We got displaced for what reason? Is this life, what we're living now?"

It wasn't clear whether she and her husband and four children would be safe spending the night on the floor of the high school or if they would have to flee to an eighth location. Shortly before dusk, the Israeli military warned all residents of Beirut's southern suburbs, an area collectively known as the Dahiya and home to about 400,000 people, to evacuate ahead of expected heavy attacks.

■ HEZBOLLAH, A6

## Conflict poised to reshape UAE's role in Africa

GEOFFREY YORK AFRICA BUREAU CHIEF JOHANNESBURG

As they voiced their sympathy for the victims of Iranian air strikes this week, two African governments made the curious decision to omit a key country from their commiseration list: the United Arab Emirates.

The reluctance of Sudan and Somalia to condemn the attacks on the UAE, even as it struggled to fight off hundreds of Iranian missiles and drones, was the latest sign of the oil-rich Gulf state's controversial and expanding role in some of Africa's biggest conflicts.

The UAE's financial and military support has fuelled wars in Sudan and Ethiopia and bolstered a secessionist movement in Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland, according to widespread reports from the region. The Gulf state has also invested billions of dollars in commercial projects across Africa in a bid to boost its political and economic influence.

Now, those same African countries are trying to calculate the impact of the UAE's sudden involvement in the Iran conflict.

Some believe the steep cost of the war could force the Emirates to pull back from Africa to conserve its financial and military resources. Others say the Iranian assault on the UAE could generate enough international sympathy to discourage any Western pressure to scale back its role in Sudan and elsewhere.

■ AFRICA, A5

## Court order links police corruption investigation, Wedding case

COLIN FREEZE SARA MOJTEHEZADEH

A central figure in the Project South police corruption probe has been linked in court documents to an alleged accomplice of accused cocaine kingpin Ryan Wedding, connecting for the first time the two sprawling investigations into organized crime in Canada.

Brian Da Costa, an alleged drug trafficker accused of bribing Toronto police officers and leaking computer data later used in organized crime interdiction campaigns, has been ordered not to contact Gurpreet Singh – a Toronto-area man who allegedly conspired to transport hundreds of kilograms of cocaine into Canada for the Wedding network.

Mr. Da Costa was released Wednesday on the condition that he not contact more than 30 individuals, including Mr. Singh, according to the release order, signed by Justice of the Peace Anne Finn.

Mr. Singh, who is fighting extradition to the United States, where he faces drug-trafficking charges, has been jailed at Toronto South Detention Centre since October, 2024. ■ DA COSTA, A19

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