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Soaking in Budapest

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What I discovered about Herzl's room in Basel

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What's the 'Beef'?

Season 2 of Netflix suspense series doesn't disappoint

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A FRENCH UNIFIL contingent patrols as displaced residents wave Hezbollah flags while they return to their homes in Al-Qasmiyeh, southern Lebanon, yesterday. (Mahmoud Zayyat/AFP/Getty Images)

IDF reservist killed in Lebanon

In shaky ceasefire, French UNIFIL soldier also killed by Hezbollah

By TOBIAS HOLCMAN
and Jerusalem Post Staff

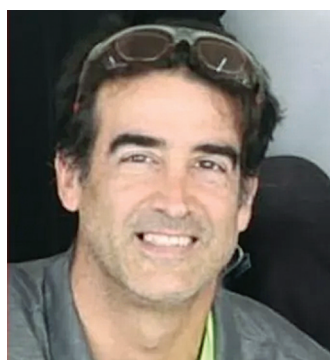
A 48-year-old IDF combat soldier was killed in Lebanon after the ceasefire went into effect on Friday, the IDF announced on Saturday evening.

Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Barak Kalfon in the 226th Brigade from Adi was killed and three other soldiers were wounded by an explosive device.

The soldiers were evacuated to a hospital for medical treatment, and their families have been notified.

The IDF on Saturday targeted several sites in southern Lebanon where Hezbollah terrorists were stationed, saying that their presence was in violation of the truce, while in a separate incident a French UNIFIL soldier was killed and three others were wounded in a Hezbollah attack.

Terrorists who were spotted approaching the buffer zone



SGT.-MAJ. (RES.)
BARAK KALFON
(IDF Spokesperson Unit)

erected by the army in the area were targeted by the IDF, it said. The army conducted air and ground attacks aided by artillery fire to eliminate the threat.

These attacks, per the IDF, were conducted in accordance with the political echelon and the ceasefire agreement with

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IDF: We'll continue to attack Hezbollah

By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Despite the newly mounted Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, the IDF will continue to attack Hezbollah terrorists in the southern part of the country unless they surrender, the military said on Friday.

This statement was illustrated by action on Saturday, when the IDF targeted several sites in southern Lebanon where Hezbollah men were stationed, arguing that their presence violated the ceasefire agreement.

The IDF's Friday statement was the first aggressive interpretation by a senior Israeli

official of the truce's limits.

Additionally, according to IDF sources, the military has been officially and unequivocally committed to remaining in southern Lebanon indefinitely, regarding the Litani River as the new security line with Hezbollah – unless the terror group agrees to disarm.

Although Israeli political officials shouldered this stance in recent weeks, the IDF was slower to adopt it with such a consequential long-term plan, given that it could mean getting stuck in a new Lebanese quagmire for

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Iran tightens control of Strait of Hormuz in challenge to Trump

US president: We won't be blackmailed

By TREVOR HUNNICUTT,
ARIBA SHAHID
and MUHAMMAD AL GEBALY

WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD (Reuters) – Iran said it was tightening control over the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, warning mariners that the vital energy route was again closed, but US President Donald Trump said Tehran could not blackmail the United States by shutting the waterway.

The regime said it was responding to a continued US blockade of Iranian ports, calling it a violation of their ceasefire, while the new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, reportedly said that Iran's navy was ready to inflict "new bitter defeats" on its enemies.

Shipping sources said that at least two vessels had reported coming under fire and being hit while trying to transit the waterway.

India later said the Iranian ambassador in New Delhi had been summoned, and deep concern was expressed to him about two Indian-flagged ships coming under fire in the strait.

State media in Iran quoted the Supreme National Security Council as saying that Iranian control over the Strait included demanding the payment of costs related to security, safety, and environmental protection services.

State television also quoted the Council as saying that the US had put forward new proposals after talks mediated by Pakistan in recent days. Tehran was considering them but had

not yet responded, it said.

There was no immediate sign of direct US-Iran talks taking place at the weekend, despite Trump saying on Friday that negotiations would be happening.

The Islamic Republic's renewed tough messaging caused fresh uncertainty around the Iran conflict, raising the risk that oil and gas shipments through the Strait could remain disrupted, just as Washington weighs whether to extend the fragile ceasefire.

Trump said the US was having "very good conversations" with Iran, though it wanted to close the Strait again. Iran could not blackmail the US, he said.

Maritime security and shipping sources said some merchant vessels had received radio messages from Iran's navy, saying no ships were allowed through the waterway, reversing Friday's signs that traffic might resume.

Maritime trackers had earlier shown a convoy of eight tankers transiting the narrow waterway in the first major movement of ships since operations Roaring Lion and Epic Fury began seven weeks ago.

Hours earlier, Trump had cited "some pretty good news" about Iran, declining to elaborate. But he also said that fighting might resume without a peace deal by Wednesday, when the two-week ceasefire expires.

Iran had announced its temporary reopening of the Strait of Hormuz following a separate US-brokered 10-day cease-

US said planning to seize Iran ships,
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Wartime restrictions lifted across country,
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PM said shocked Trump 'prohibited' strikes on Lebanon,
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fire agreement on Thursday between Israel and Lebanon. Israel invaded parts of southern Lebanon after Hezbollah joined the fighting in early March.

But on Saturday, Iran's armed forces command said transit through the Strait had reverted to a state of strict Iranian military control, citing what it described as repeated US violations and acts of "piracy" under the guise of a blockade.

The spokesperson said the regime had earlier agreed, "in good faith," to the managed passage of a limited number of oil tankers and commercial vessels following negotiations, but said that continued US actions had forced it to restore tighter controls on shipping through the strategic chokepoint.

US Central Command said in a statement that the US was enforcing a maritime blockade of Iran, but it did not comment on the latest Iranian actions.

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Has Hezbollah crossed a redline with France?

ANALYSIS

By SETH J. FRANZMAN

Just days after the ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon began, Hezbollah appears to have carried out an attack, killing a French soldier.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on social media that "Sgt. First Class Florian Montorio of the 17th Parachute Engineer Regiment from Montauban fell this morning in southern Lebanon during an attack against UNIFIL."

In an unusually firm statement, the French leader added, "Everything suggests that responsibility for this attack lies with Hezbollah. France demands that the Lebanese authorities immediately arrest the perpetrators and assume their responsibilities alongside UNIFIL."

In the past, Hezbollah has

been able to get away with these kinds of attacks. Will the group once again get to reassert itself and kill people without any repercussions?

Tensions are high in the region. Israel has accused Hezbollah of ceasefire violations. Many Lebanese are trying to return to southern Lebanon in the wake of the truce.

Israel has said it will keep control of a buffer zone near the border. It is dubbing this the Yellow Line, similar to the line in Gaza.

Meanwhile, France could choose to respond. Two weeks ago, reports by Turkey's Anadolu media noted that "France's nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* has arrived at Souda Bay in Crete for a scheduled refueling stop."

It added that the vessel had docked "near the city of Chania, and is expected to remain

until April 7 before departing for operations in the eastern Mediterranean. Souda Base, located on the northwest coast of Crete near Chania, is a major naval and military facility."

France has faced criticism in the past from Israel regarding Lebanon. In the recent talks between Israel, Lebanon, and the US, France was excluded.

The US has also seemed nonplussed by European countries' stance on the Strait of Hormuz and the war against Iran. Could the attack on the French forces in UNIFIL in Lebanon finally lead to action?

France, historically, has taken attacks on its forces seriously. It is also known for always seeking to bring hostages and detainees home from abroad.

Macron posted on X/Twitter that, in addition to the soldier

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Without Chinese help, it will take years for Iran to restock thousands of missiles

By YONAH JEREMY BOB

If Iran does not receive extensive Chinese help with reconstituting its ballistic missiles program, the Islamic Republic will not be able to obtain thousands of missiles for many years due to the damage the Israeli and American militaries inflicted, the IDF said.

On the other hand, the flip side of this IDF Friday view is that if Beijing does go all in to help Tehran rebuild its ballistic missile program, the recovery will not only be much quicker but it will be conducted in unpredictable ways.

The IDF's positive scenario is based on the US and Israel having struck over 2,600 Iranian military industrial sites, including a vast number of targets connected to Iran's ballistic missile apparatus.

That heavy weakening, with-



THE TAIL section of a ballistic missile launched from Iran earlier this month landed in Shadmot Mehola in the Jordan Valley. (Erik Marmor/Getty Images)

out massive outside help, would mean Iran lost the chance to produce thousands of missiles it could be manufacturing now and would have produced in

the coming year or two, as well as the ability to produce any new missiles at a substantial rate for many years to come.

In turn, the army's negative

scenario is based on the fact that Iran retains between several hundred and 1,000 missiles

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IDF assesses that Hamas will begin 'painful' disarmament process soon

By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Hamas will soon enter the disarmament stage, the IDF said on Friday.

The announcement is aspi-

rational in that Hamas has not yet begun the process, and no one can really know whether the Gaza terrorist group will follow through.

What this statement exhibits, according to military sources, is the IDF's growing confidence that Hamas, overall, is leaning toward taking "painful" steps to avoid Israel reinvading the Gaza Strip.

That said, the IDF was extremely vague about what such disarmament would entail.

Around three months ago, the US said that by late April to early May, Hamas would need to begin handing over its heavy weapons, namely its remaining rockets, drones, and anti-tank missiles, along with maps of its remaining tunnel networks.

Prior to the IDF's statement, there had been significant media speculation that Hamas might take advantage of the fact that Israel and the US would be distracted by the war with Iran and thus attempt to drag out the deadline for entering the first disarmament stage.

In fact, in public, Hamas has demanded that Israel allow more rebuilding processes to

take place in Gaza before it is asked to disarm. So far, Israel has not agreed. Hamas last week rejected US demands to start disarming, saying it had conditions.

The IDF statement appears to reflect deeper confidence that Hamas may negotiate some concessions from the US and Israeli sides, but that it will ultimately begin the disarmament

process, a radical step it has never taken before.

No date has been set for when Hamas needs to proceed to stage two of the disarmament process. Nevertheless, even if that step occurs, there is no deadline for when the terrorist group might have to give up its Kalashnikov rifles (stage two of disarmament), which help it dominate Gaza. It is also

unclear whether Hamas will ever do so, since such a step might truly risk its control of the enclave.

Then there is the matter of no one even discussing with any real seriousness the possibility that Hamas might give up its small weapons, such as handguns (stage three of

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