

# Hezbollah rallies behind Iran ahead of new sanctions, boasts new missiles



Nasrallah is known for his fiery speeches during Ashura that challenge Israel. (Photo: Reuters)

ERBIL (Kurdistan) - The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah on Thursday asked supporters to stand by Iran, while boasting of its new "highly accurate" missiles, which, he claimed, would help the two allies shift the "regional balance of power."

According to AP, Hassan Nasrallah, head of Lebanese Hezbollah, in a televised speech commemorating Ashura, a major Shia religious holy day, told supporters to "be confident in Hezbollah's capabilities," and in what seemed an allusion to Iranian expansionism, affirmed that the "regional balance of power has changed."

"I tell (Israel) no matter what it did to cut the route, the matter is over," he said, adding that Hezbollah "now possesses precision missiles and non-precision and weapons capabilities."

On Sep. 15, alleged Israeli missile strikes targeted a cargo plane from Iran, reportedly delivering weapons in Damascus to pro-regime forces fighting in the country's civil war, including Hezbollah.

The route mentioned by Nasrallah also suggests he was referring to Tehran's push for a corridor straight to the Mediterranean, which the US and Israel have been attempting to block by targeting Iranian militia positions in Syria.

Indeed, the Hezbollah leader reiterated the militant group's strong ties to Iran, calling for supporters to rally behind the Islamic republic as the November sanctions loom.

"It is our duty to stand behind Iran against the US, which is entering the next stage of sanctions," Iran news outlet Tasnim, which has close ties to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), quoted Nasrallah as saying.

The US government has been engaged in “round-the-clock operations” to pressure Iran with sanctions, imposed a blockade on the belligerent country, and has pushed other countries to discontinue the purchase of Iranian oil, he asserted.

“Iran is being punished for fighting America’s domination and refusing to be a slave to the US.”

Despite calls by its own people to desist from costly external operations in regional conflicts, Iran continues to support its proxies in Syria and Iraq, while recent reports claim Tehran has transferred ballistic missiles to allied Shia militias.

Iran’s malign activities in the Middle East are a matter of increasing US concern.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R, Texas), head of the Committee on Homeland Security and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, this week called for designating the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, explaining that the IRGC was expanding into Iraq, as well as Syria, and manufacturing rockets in Lebanon to be used by Hezbollah.

Editing by Laurie Mylroie

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