

# Israeli airstrikes kill 14 Iranian forces in eastern Syria

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the attack hit rural Deir Ezzor this morning



Seven fighters were wounded in the attack, a Syrian military spokesman said. AFP

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At least 14 people from Iranian forces and affiliate militias have been killed in the Syrian province of Deir Ezzor by Israeli bombing, according to a UK-based war monitor.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that the attack targeted Iranian forces early this morning, with all of the dead from Iran and Iraq, in rural areas of the province.

The death toll is expected to rise as some are also wounded and in a critical condition.

It is the latest attack by Israeli forces on Iran-linked targets in Syria in recent days. On Monday, Syrian air defenses foiled an Israeli missile attack on a research center and a military base in the northern province of Aleppo, state media said.

The Syrian army said in a statement that Israel hit military barracks in Al Safirah in the eastern Aleppo countryside. Earlier, state television had said a research center was targeted. The army said it was now assessing the damage caused by the strikes.

A regional intelligence source said Israel was stepping up raids in Syria at a time when world attention and the region, including Syria, were distracted by the coronavirus pandemic.

An Israeli army spokeswoman declined to comment on the report. If confirmed, it is the fifth Israeli airstrike in two weeks on suspected Iranian targets.

There have recently been several reports of suspected Israeli strikes inside Syria, the most recent one last week, when the Syrian military and state media said Israeli warplanes flying over Lebanon fired missiles toward areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, killing three civilians.

Israel rarely comments on such reports, although it has acknowledged carrying out airstrikes inside Syria on numerous occasions in the course of Syria's nine-year conflict, saying it was going after Iranian military targets in the country.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in August that Iran has no immunity anywhere and that the Israeli military forces "will act — and currently are acting — against them."

Western intelligence sources say Iranian-backed militias have long been entrenched in Aleppo province where they have bases and a command center and installed advanced weapons, part of a growing presence across government-controlled Syria.

Israel has launched hundreds of strikes on Syria since the start of the country's civil war in 2011, against government troops, allied Iranian forces and Hezbollah militants.

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Source: *Israeli airstrikes kill 14 Iranian forces in eastern Syria - The National*

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