

Newsletter Monday December 17, 2018

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Russia warns Lebanon against violations of Israeli territory
Moscow demands that the Lebanese army destroy terror tunnels in its territory regardless of Hezbollah's culpability in their construction • U.N. Security Council is set to discuss Hezbollah's terror tunnels during its next session, set for Wednesday.

Israel Hayom Staff

IDF troops near the Israel-Lebanon border during Operation Northern Shield | Photo: IDF Spokesperson's Unit

Russia has demanded that Lebanon take action against the network of Hezbollah terror tunnels revealed by Israel under the two countries' shared border, the London-based Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper reported Monday.

So far, four Hezbollah tunnels snaking under the Israel-Lebanon border have been unearthed by the IDF as part of an extensive operation to neutralize the underground passageways.

According to the report, Moscow has made it clear to Beirut that the tunnels violate U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted to end the 2006 war between Lebanon and Israel, and the Kremlin has further demanded that the Lebanese army deal with the tunnels on its territory.

Israel's counter-tunnel operation, launched on Dec. 4, has so far been very careful not to infringe on Lebanese sovereignty while exposing the tunnels. The reported Russian demand followed a visit to Moscow last week by an Israeli military delegation.

Russian sources told the British publication that the demand was made regardless of Hezbollah's culpability in digging the underground grid, adding that Russia backs the Israeli operation, known as Operation Northern Shield.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Saad Hariri have both downplayed the chances of the Israeli operation leading to any escalation on the border, saying that as long as Israel does not violate Lebanese sovereignty, there would be no reason for fresh hostilities in the sector.

Meanwhile, the U.N. Security Council is poised to discuss Hezbollah's terror tunnels during its next session, set for Wednesday.

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IDF uncovers 4th Hezbollah tunnel under Israel-Lebanon border

IDF says it has lined the tunnel with explosives • Tunnel, in an undisclosed location, exposed as part of Operation Northern Shield, launched Dec. 4 • Israel urges international community to impose sanctions on Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, over the tunnels.

Lilach Shoval, Associated Press and Israel Hayom Staff

An IDF bulldozer digs near the Israel-Lebanon border | Photo: Reuters

A fourth Hezbollah terror tunnel breaching Israeli territory from Lebanon has been exposed, the IDF said Sunday.

The tunnel was discovered as part of Operation Northern Shield, launched by the IDF on Dec. 4 to expose and neutralize Hezbollah tunnels snaking across the border into Israel under the security fence.

"Imagine terrorists digging an attack tunnel like this toward your home, hacking away, inch by inch, underground, in order to kill you and your family. Israelis don't need to imagine. It's our job to protect them," the IDF posted on its English-language Twitter page.

The IDF did not disclose the tunnel's location, saying only that it has lined it with explosives.

The IDF said any Lebanese soldiers or Hezbollah operatives approaching the tunnel on the Lebanese side of the border would do so at their own peril.

Israel has called on the international community to impose new sanctions on Hezbollah, Iran's regional proxy, in the wake of the tunnels' discovery.

The IDF said Operation Northern Shield would continue until all Hezbollah tunnels are exposed and neutralized.

The Shiite terrorist group has yet to issue any comment on the operation, but Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that as long as the Israeli operation does not infringe on his country's sovereignty, it is unlikely to threaten the calm on the border.

"We take this issue – the presence of tunnels at the border – seriously and Israel informed us via the United States that its intentions are not aggressive," said Aoun, a Hezbollah ally. He added that Israel has pledged to "continue to work" on its territory.

6.1-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Eastern Indonesia

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

World | Agence France-Presse | Updated: December 16, 2018 17:57 IST

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COMMENTS

6.1-Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Eastern Indonesia

Officials are still assessing the impact of the quake. (Representational)

JAKARTA: A 6.1-magnitude earthquake hit Papua, in eastern Indonesia Sunday, US seismologists said, but no tsunami warning was issued.

The quake was about 158 kilometres (98 miles) south-southwest of the province's capital Jayapura at 6:42 pm (0942 GMT), at a depth of 61 kilometres, according to the US Geological Survey.

The quake was felt in Jayapura, but residents didn't panic, a military spokesman said.

"I felt it at home," Papua's military spokesman in Jayapura Dax Sianturi said.

Officials are still assessing the impact of the quake, but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

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Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

Last September, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island killed more than 2,200 with a thousand more declared missing.

2 COMMENTS

On boxing day December 26, 2004, a 9.1-magnitude earthquake struck Aceh province, causing a tsunami and killing more than 170,000 in Indonesia.

(Except for the headline, this story has not been edited by NDTV staff and is published from a syndicated feed.)

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