

Analytical Maps

The Israeli strikes in Syria during 2022

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Preamble:

Since 2013, Israel has been launching air strikes on Syria, which fall within the strategy of the "Campaign between Wars (CBW)"; where it considers that to be necessary to weaken the capabilities of the enemy (Iran and its militias or military units) and respond to threats outside the borders¹.

Israeli intelligence played a major role in that strategy in terms of providing information that enables the forces on the ground to work within a framework that creates a harmony between strategic objectives and operations, without being dragged into an open war similar to the one of July 2006, during which the Israeli air forces caused extensive destruction to Lebanon's infrastructure. Although the air strikes carried out in that war aimed at eliminating Hezbollah's weapons, they had not that impact on the group's arsenal quality. Hezbollah; however, is now operating all over Syria.

In 2017, the CBW strategy was adopted as one aspect of the Israeli military doctrine on the northern front. Accordingly, Tel Aviv estimated that Iran is dealing with the conflict in Syria as an opportunity for a long-term positioning².

According to this strategy, the Israeli army set 3 tasks; first to prevent the growth of Iran's capabilities, disrupting its activities in a way that confuses Iranian plans to launch operations against Israel, and more deterrence to enhance the presence of Israeli power and threat in Iran's mind³.

However, there was another trend within the Israeli army that adhered to the strategy of "small wars between big wars"; to weaken Iran's capabilities, and raise the level of deterrence, waiting for an opportunity that allows for a major war in which Israel achieves major strategic goals⁴.

The report discusses the Israeli military strikes in Syria, which were not limited to air ones, but rather included assassinations of collaborators with Hezbollah or Iranian militias. Moreover, the report highlights the kind of goals that Israel has and the factors influencing them. It is also trying to anticipate the future of these strikes in light of regional developments.

¹ A war between wars... Israel expands its campaign against Iran, Noon Post ·12/4/2022 ·[Link](#).

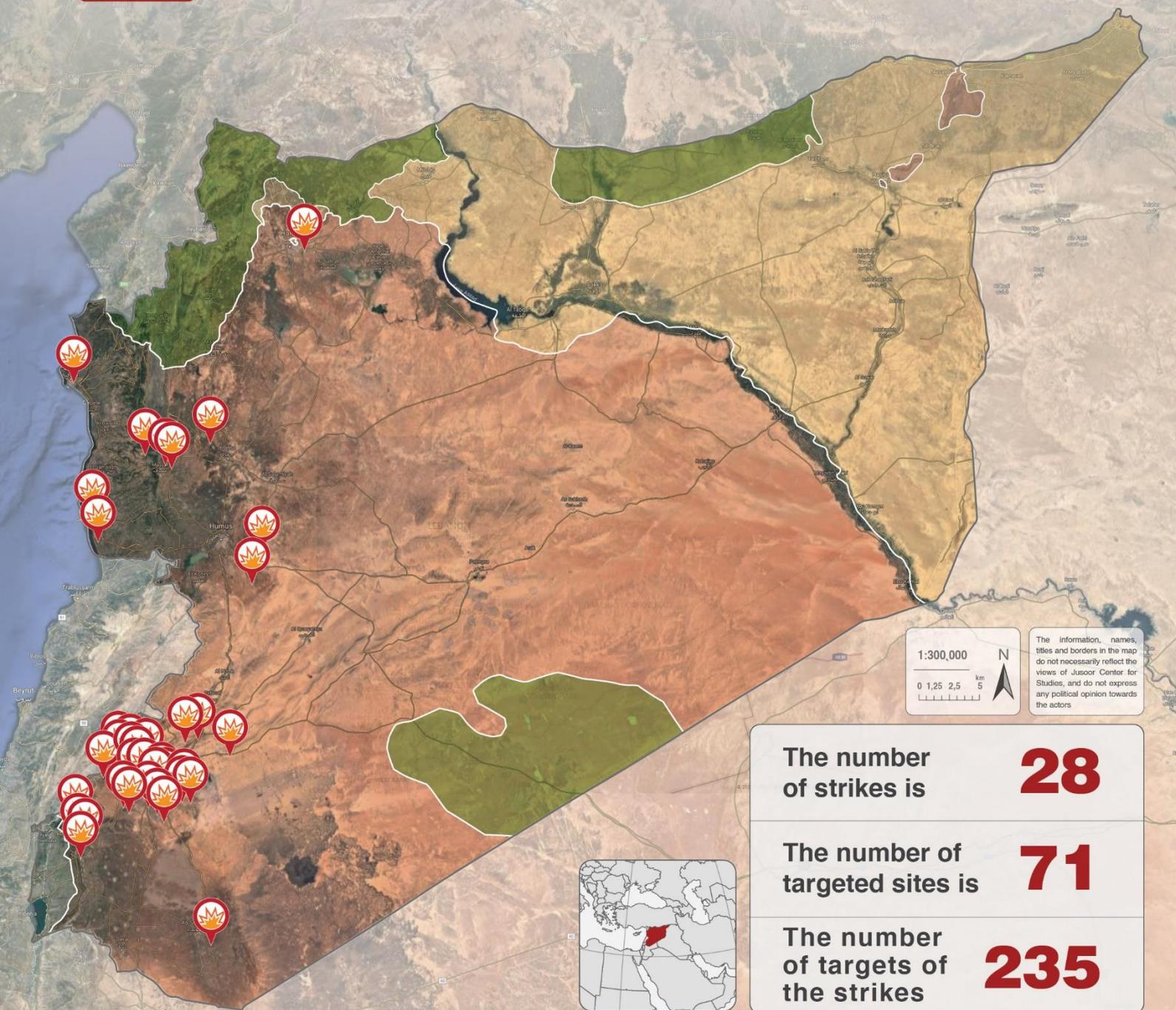
² Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Dodi Siman Tov and Colonel Reserve David Sternberg, the battle between wars and the change in the way of war in the Israeli army, translated by the Hudhud News Network from Maarkhot Magazine, 20/9/2022 ·[Link](#).

³ Ihsan Mortada, The Battle Between Wars: The Tactic of Israeli Impotence, Lebanese Army Magazine website, Issue 405, 3/1/2019, link.1/3/2019 ·[Link](#).

⁴ Riyad Kahwaji, Israel and the problem of voluntary war against Hezbollah in an atmosphere open to all possibilities, Al-Nahar Al-Arabi ·1/9/2022 ·[Link](#).

The Israeli strikes in Syria during 2022

December 2022



1:300,000
0 1,25 2,5 5 km
N
The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors

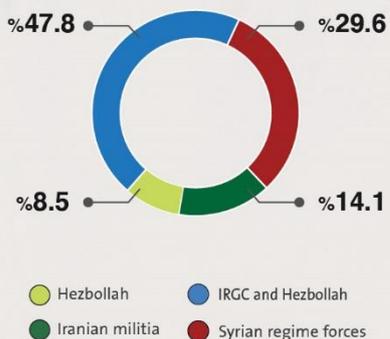
The number of strikes is **28**

The number of targeted sites is **71**

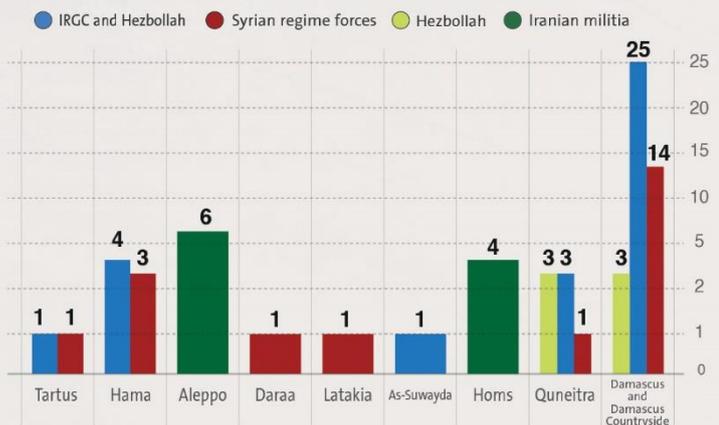
The number of targets of the strikes is **235**



Attacks by the targeted parties



Attacks by governorates



Map keys

- Targeted sites
- Syrian Opposition-Held Areas
- Syrian Regime-Held Areas
- SDF-Held Areas



First: Analyzing the size and frequency of Israeli strikes in 2022

1. Analysis of the scale of Israeli strikes in 2022:

In 2022, and out of 224 targets, Israel carried out 27 military strikes, including ground bombardment and air-strikes in Syria, during which it targeted 68 sites of the Syrian regime forces and Iranian militias.

The strikes were distributed to the places of deployment of these forces and militias in the Syrian governorates. Damascus countryside was targeted 14 times, Quneitra 4 times, Damascus 3 times, Aleppo, Homs and Tartous twice for each, whereas one strike targeted each of Lattakia, Daraa and As-Suwayda.

There were 19 air strikes, 7 surface-to-surface missiles, and 2 shells.

Israel's use of the F35 jets in two operations against targets of Iranian militias and a research center in the countryside of Damascus and Masyaf indicates the military importance of these sites; especially carrying out such operations needs accuracy to avoid risk, given the high combat advantages of the aforementioned warplane ⁵.

The Israeli army used tank shells against Hezbollah targets in two cases in Quneitra, which represents Israel's attempts to test readiness in dealing with unusual activities that require rapid intervention to prevent any security breaches, similar to the one of kidnapping two Israeli soldiers by the party in 2006.

A set of observations can be made in view of the nature of the targeted sites in Syria by the Israeli army during 2022, as shown below:

- Research and development centers for missiles and drones, and units of air defense systems came at the top of the targets list with 60%
This indicates Israel's insistence on preventing Iran from achieving military superiority over Israel in Syria. This affects the imbalance of power and impedes the Iranian ability to deter.
- Targeting the infrastructure of logistical warehouses and manufacturing workshops aims at preventing Iran from establishing such facilities in Syria, so that they would not be Iranian advanced bases used in the future for posing threats against Israel, or a platform that can be used to develop military manufacturing in Syria, and for preventing Iran from supervising and participating in research centers.

⁵ The F35 is difficult for Russian radars to detect, because of its outer coating, and its special shape. It can reach speeds of 1,200 miles per hour. It has a range of 1,350 miles using its internal tanks. It carries a 25 mm machine gun, missiles and laser-guided bombs.



- During 2022, Israel added sites for storing and manufacturing chemical weapons across Syria to the list of targets. Israel targeted two sites in the Damascus countryside. That came in conjunction with what was confirmed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, "Izumi Nakamitsu", about the Syrian regime's lack of cooperation and failure to give answers about the loopholes and sticking points in about 20 issues related to the use of chemical weapons in Syria⁶.
- In the first place, 40.35% of the Israeli military attacks targeted the sites of the Iranian militias. Military sites of the Syrian regime forces come next, with a percentage of 31.58%, before the sites of Hezbollah, with a rate of 28.07%. These results indicate the great military coordination between the Iranian militias and Hezbollah. The presence of the regime within these sites is due to the willingness of Iran and Hezbollah to take advantage of the regime's military units and infrastructure facilities, which, in turn, serves the Iranian project and objectives, not for the efficiency and expertise of the regime forces.
- The Israeli attacks did not affect any position of the regime forces affiliated with Russia, such as the "25th" division; which reflects the extent of coordination between the two parties.

⁶ A UN official accuses the Assad regime of issuing contradict statements about chemical weapons, Orient Net 8/11/2022, [Link](#).

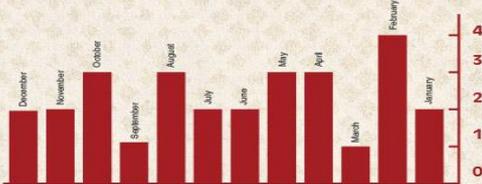
The Israeli strikes in Syria during 2022



28 The number of strikes | **235** The number of targets

<p>05/01/2022</p> <p>📍 Quneitra</p> <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The vicinity of Al-Hurriya village in Quneitra countryside 📍 Movements of militia members opposite to an Israeli site <p>📍 1 Target</p>	<p>31/01/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Brigade 155 in the vicinity of the city of Al-Qatifa 📍 Sites and warehouses <p>📍 5 Targets</p>	<p>09/02/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Brigade 104 Republican Guard 📍 Scientific Research Center in Hama 📍 Paraglider airport - Al-Dimas, Al-Damas Airport 📍 Sites and warehouses <p>📍 18 Targets</p>	<p>16/02/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Al-Abbasa area between Khan Al-Shelb and Zakia 📍 Chemistry Battalion and Air Defense Battalion <p>📍 4 Targets</p>	<p>23/02/2022</p> <p>📍 Quneitra</p> <p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Al-Rawalhana's company 📍 Finance Department building 📍 A monitoring point for the Lebanese Hezbollah 📍 Headquarters room for Iranian militia <p>📍 5 Targets</p>
<p>27/04/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 100th Regiment, west of Damascus 📍 IRGC military headquarters and warehouses in the vicinity of Damascus Airport 📍 Warehouses used by Iranian militia to store weapons <p>📍 11 Targets</p>	<p>14/04/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Rakha town in Balad al-Sheikh and the vicinity of Al-Qatifa 📍 A site for manufacturing and developing drones <p>📍 5 Targets</p>	<p>09/04/2022</p> <p>📍 Hama</p> <p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Scientific Research Center - Mayaf 📍 Defense factories - Mayaf 📍 IRGC military site - Mayaf countryside 📍 Warehouses for storing weapons <p>📍 8 Targets</p>	<p>07/03/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The vicinity of Damascus International Airport 📍 Warehouses for storing weapons <p>📍 3 Targets</p>	<p>24/02/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The surroundings of the Airport 📍 Air defense battalion 📍 Artillery 📍 Air defense battery <p>📍 4 Targets</p>
<p>11/05/2022</p> <p>📍 Quneitra</p> <p>11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Qers Al-Naqi area, west of Al-Hadar 📍 Headquarters for the Second Unit run by the Lebanese Hezbollah <p>📍 4 Target</p>	<p>13/05/2022</p> <p>📍 Hama</p> <p>12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Scientific Research Center - Mayaf 📍 IRGC Rockets Warehouses 📍 Scientific Research Center 📍 Warehouses for soy Rockets <p>📍 32 Targets</p>	<p>20/05/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Research Center - Jananay 📍 Jebel Al-Mansar - Al-Kawah and Damascus Airport 📍 IRGC military sites and warehouses 📍 Military sites and warehouses <p>📍 30 Targets</p>	<p>06/06/2022</p> <p>📍 Daraa, Damascus Countryside</p> <p>14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Near Agaba, Damascus Countryside and a military site in Jebel Al-Mansar 📍 A weapons factory for Iranian militia 📍 Iranian air defense system 📍 A weapons factory air defense system <p>📍 7 Targets</p>	<p>10/06/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Warehouses inside Damascus Airport 📍 Warehouses - The northern runway of the airport <p>📍 11 Targets</p>
<p>31/08/2022</p> <p>📍 Aleppo</p> <p>20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Al Nairab Military Airport in Aleppo 📍 Airport warehouses <p>📍 2 Targets</p>	<p>14/08/2022</p> <p>📍 Tartous and Damascus countryside</p> <p>19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Industrial zone in Tartous 📍 IRGC warehouses - Al-Qatifa 📍 An air defense base (Tartous countryside - Damascus Countryside) 📍 Warehouses of the IRGC 📍 An air defense base <p>📍 3 Targets</p>	<p>12/08/2022</p> <p>📍 Quneitra</p> <p>18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 A group that is engaged in espionage for Lebanese Hezbollah 📍 Lebanese Hezbollah monitoring headquarters 📍 A group that is engaged in espionage 📍 Monitoring headquarters <p>📍 2 Targets</p>	<p>22/07/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus countryside and Damascus</p> <p>17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Sayeda Zeinab Hajira near Mizzab Airport 📍 A factory for processing and manufacturing drones 📍 A factory for drones 📍 Air defense depot 📍 Air defense battalion <p>📍 10 Targets</p>	<p>02/07/2022</p> <p>📍 Tartous</p> <p>16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The vicinity of Al-Hamidiyah, east of Tartous 📍 Factory for manufacturing and assembling Iranian fat military boats <p>📍 5 Targets</p>
<p>06/09/2022</p> <p>📍 Aleppo</p> <p>21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Al Nairab Military Airport in Aleppo 📍 Airport warehouses <p>📍 7 Targets</p>	<p>21/10/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The vicinity of Damascus Airport 📍 Kir Yabous in the western Damascus Countryside 📍 Depots for the IRGC and Hezbollah <p>📍 5 Target</p>	<p>24/10/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 The vicinity of the town of Al-Dimas 📍 Headquarters of the IRGC <p>📍 8 Targets</p>	<p>27/10/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Sayeda Zeinab, IRGC warehouse 📍 Warehouses in the outskirts of Najla, countryside & Sayeda Zeinab 📍 warehouse on the outskirts of the Najla and Sayeda Zeinab <p>📍 6 Targets</p>	<p>13/11/2022</p> <p>📍 Homs</p> <p>25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Concrete hangars of missile drones, smart missile warehouses, stores of engines & drone spare parts 📍 Airport runway and drones warehouses 📍 warehouses of smart missiles <p>📍 14 Targets</p>
<p>20/12/2022</p> <p>📍 Damascus Countryside</p> <p>28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Damascus International Airport 📍 Air defense system temporary warehouses for Iranian weapons <p>📍 8 Targets</p>	<p>12/12/2022</p> <p>📍 As-Suwayda</p> <p>27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Near Al-Kafir Airport southeast of As-Suwayda 📍 Iranian air defense system 📍 A jamming and early warning system and information collection systems <p>📍 4 Targets</p>	<p>19/11/2022</p> <p>📍 Homs, Hama and Latakia</p> <p>26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📍 Al-Shatayh village in Homs countryside 📍 As-Suwayda district in Hama countryside 📍 Jabbeh in Latakia countryside 📍 Missile depots 📍 Air defense battalion 📍 Guided missile warehouses <p>📍 11 Targets</p>		

The number of strikes by months



Map keys

- 📍 Reported by Israel
- 📍 Reported by Syrian
- 📍 Targets location
- 📍 Targets type
- 📍 Targets



2. Analysis of the frequency of Israeli strikes in 2022:

During 2022, major events emerged that coincided with the Israeli strikes in Syria, namely: the Russian military operation against Ukraine, the nuclear negotiations with Iran, the negotiations on the demarcation of the maritime borders between Israel and Lebanon, and the withdrawal of the S300 system from Syria.

- **Nuclear negotiations with Iran:**

In November 2022, Israeli jets targeted twice sites of the Syrian regime and Iranian militias, where there were depots that contain guided missiles. That coincided with the resumption of negotiations between Iran and the (5 + 1) group, within the framework of efforts to return to the nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), that the administration of US President Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018. This came in conjunction with Iran's announcement that it had started enriching uranium to a purity of 60% at the Fordow nuclear plant.

In fact, those strikes sent a message that the nuclear negotiations with Iran will not affect reducing the frequency of Israeli attacks at all, and that the latter has the ability to ensure its own security by itself, which is threatened by Iran's influence, even if the latter becomes a nuclear state with its expansionist policy in the area and the region.

- **Maritime border demarcation agreement between Israel and Lebanon:**

Between February and October 2022, Israel carried out 22 ground and air attacks against military sites, many of which belonged to Iranian militias and Hezbollah, during the period of negotiations to demarcate the maritime borders between Israel and Lebanon.

This meant that the pace of strikes was not affected, but rather Israel maintained its policy of using force against Hezbollah and Iran, as it achieves Israeli security and economic interest, especially when the maritime border demarcation agreement was concluded with the consent and supervision of Hezbollah, which refused to present it to the concerned constitutional institutions so that it would avoid war with Israel at any cost at the current stage for regional and internal considerations, in return for an Israeli guarantee its military and security activities, so that Hezbollah would keep the open struggle with the Zionist enemy endlessly at least in appearance⁷.

⁷ Youssef Matar, The Demarcation... Hezbollah Gives Israel in Peace What It Cannot Provide in War, 18/10/2022! [Link](#).

- **The Russian military operation in Ukraine:**

Launching the Russian military operation against Ukraine in February 2022 did not affect the pace of Israeli strikes in Syria. It is noted that their number did not differ from previous years.

That was the case despite Israel taking a stance against Russia's invasion of Ukraine; which Tel Aviv considered a serious violation of the international order. Russia, in turn, took a similar position on the supply of Israeli weapons to Ukraine, considering it a violation of the red lines Moscow had already set.

Likewise, there was no announcement of the suspension of the hotline between the two parties in Syria, despite Russia hinting at the possibility of using this matter as a pressure tool to have got a modified Israeli position on the war in Ukraine; as Moscow expressed deep concern about the attacks in Syria and considered them illegal⁸.

As for Israel's intensified use of surface-to-surface missiles, it has nothing to do with the existence of any stumbling block in the hotline mechanism between the two parties; because using such weapons indicates Israel's assertion and keenness on destroying the targeted sites, due to the destructive capacity that these missiles possess.

It seems that Russia was not interested in going further in linking the military operation in Ukraine to the coordination mechanisms with Israel in Syria; because the former is keen on maintaining its influence and presence in Syria and the Middle East, in addition to keeping its relationship with all the actors across the region active.

- **Removing the S300 air defense system:**

The number of Israeli air strikes after redeploying the S300 system from Syria in August 2022 until the end of the same year amounted to 10, marking a decline compared to the 17 strikes in the months preceding the announcement of pulling the system.

It is not possible to say with certainty that the Israeli strikes become less or more with the presence of the S300 system in Syria, although Israel welcomed pulling the Russian missiles system as it attacked an Iranian militia position in the city of Masyaf. Moreover, this system did not initially intercept Israeli planes while they were flying within Syrian airspace.

⁸ Russia Restricts Israel's Strikes Against Iran in Syria, Not Preventing Them, Jusoor Center for Studies (30/7/2022) • [Link](#).



Russia's provision of this system to the Syrian regime was often linked to projecting power and obtaining more tools of pressure on the regional powers involved in the Syrian conflict. Via providing the regime with such systems, Moscow also intends to show full control over strategic weapons, in particular in terms of "approving the use, training and development of their personnel." It is also likely that Russia provided the regime with such a system to prevent the old Syrian air defense systems from making mistakes similar to the one that occurred in September 2018, when a Russian plane was shot down.

Second: Russia's ability to stop Israeli strikes in Syria

Despite the intersection of interests between Russia and Iran in Syria, and the dependence of Russian forces on Iranian militias after the start of the Russian intervention in Syria in 2015, they did not prevent the Israeli strikes targeting Iranian sites.

Since the establishment of the "hotline" mechanism with Russia in Syria in 2015 and then activating it fully in 2018, Russia has adopted a bilateral coordination mechanism with Israel that has ensured the continuation of military strikes in Syria in a way that avoid any clashes between forces.

Russia did not object to the bilateral coordination mechanism between Israel and the United States that was established in early 2021, by lesioning Israel with the American military command instead of the European one. This entailed examining and approving attacks against Iranian targets in advance by senior American military officials, especially those which are carried out in the vicinity of the Al-Tanf base, and to ensure that the Israeli bombing does not conflict with the battle led by the United States in Syria⁹.

It is noted that Russia had previously agreed to Israel's role in Syria during the tripartite security meeting held in June 2019, and included Moscow, Tel Aviv and Washington. That meeting discussed removing Iran and its militias from Syria and preventing it from taking Syria as an advanced base threatening Israel.

It seems that Russia resorted to this position to utilize the coordination with Israel in promoting its role as a regional and international power. Moreover, such an approach may indicate Russia's inability to prevent Israeli strikes in light the Israeli military technical superiority over the Russian military equipment and means.

⁹ Wall Street Journal: Israel is coordinating with America in its strikes inside Syria ·17/6/2022 ·[Link](#) .

Russia cannot keep pace with Israel's military superiority; as it tried with China to obtain Israeli military technology, but the American ban prevented this. The Su57, with its stealth and maneuverability, cannot match or counter the F35.

Of course, Russia and Israel vary in achieving the goals of the military strikes in Syria. Whilst Russia relies on the force of the devastating strike on the target (complete destruction), Israel resorts to partially destroying the target, leaving it with the burdens of repair, rebuild, and reuse. As such, the enemy would be burdened and drained financially and morally. Furthermore, the Israeli jets do not transmit electrical pulses that would achieve complete obscurity so that the air defense systems in Syria - which are Russian made- cannot see or target these jets. Instead, the Israeli warplanes transmit electric-attention-diverting pulses. With that it achieves two targets: protecting the jets, transmitting illusive targets that trigger the radar to give orders to hit illusive targets. This would increase the cost on the Syrian regime and its supporters, and results on the rockets falling on the Syrian land. This has been repeated more than once¹⁰.

Third: The goals of the Israeli strikes in 2022

Israel considers that its military operations, including air strikes, resulted in many achievements that ensured security, stability; and raised the level of deterrence in the region. It seems that what meant by that achieving several political and military objectives, as follows:

1. Maintaining the superiority of power over Iran:

Israel's military superiority is a doctrine that Tel Aviv tries to preserve through its own capabilities and international support. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known, drones, by the Iranian militias and Hezbollah was one of the factors threatening this military superiority. It turned into a real concern for Israelis; because of the drones' capabilities to penetrate the borders. Drones are effective in term of the psychological warfare, as this weapon is used to stir fear among the Israeli society.

¹⁰ An interview by the researcher with Colonel Abdul Baset Al-Taweel in 13/11/2022.

Israel also fears that Iran supplies its militias with precision-guided missiles systems that are able to target Israel from the Syrian territories or from Hezbollah's areas in Lebanon. This explains Israel's motive to target research centers, airports and convoys, which are transit and concentration centers for electronic devices, computers, routers, serial servers and control units that are used to develop and use these weapons¹¹. Accordingly, the Israeli goal is to create a state of deterrence against Iran, to reduce its capabilities significantly, weaken it, but not prevent it from being in Syria.

2. Preventing Iran from exploiting the Russian preoccupation in Ukraine:

Israel has worked on increasing the military and security measures that would limit the effects of Russia's preoccupation with its war against Ukraine. Israel also aims at imposing a limit to the process of strengthening the Iranian militias' places of deployment and prevent Iran from turning such places into influential Iranian military bases. However, this is subject to somewhat contradictory factors, the first appears in the lack of will in Russia to let Iran control Syria, so that the Israeli activity would serve this desire¹².

The second is noted in Russia's tendency to restrict Israel's ability to work over Syria after the growing cooperation with Iran in Ukraine in particular, except for Israel's non -pro -Russian position in its war on Ukraine.

3. Targeting Iranian militia leaders:

The huge military presence in Syria pushed Iran to involve officers and military technical figures who were under surveillance and targets. In 2022, Israel was able to kill Iranian officers during its operations in Syria.

The Iranian "Mehr News" agency announced the killing of Abu Al -Fadl Aljani, one of the leaders of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, during a consulting mission in Syria, a week after an Israeli shelling of sites in the Damascus countryside and Tartous, which are run by Iran and Hezbollah militia.

¹¹ The US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security issued a letter filing charges against UAE-based WEBS for exporting communications equipment to Syria and Iran. A local source in the city of Deir ez-Zor also reported that the convoy of trucks that were targeted by the unknown warplanes (probably Israeli, due to the International Coalition's denial of doing so) in early November 2022, in the Al-Bukamal countryside, after entering Syrian territory, was carrying equipment and devices for missiles and drones.

¹² Israel: Our goal is to reduce, not prevent, the Iranian presence in Syria. Syria TV 25/9/2022 [Link](#) .

Two Iranian Revolutionary Guards officers, Colonel Ihsan Karbalai, and Colonel Mortada Saeed Naja, were also killed in an Israeli raid on a site near Damascus. Furthermore, Colonel Dawood Jaafari from the aerospace forces of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard was assassinated in Syria with an improvised explosive device attached to his car, that was exploded on the side of the road near Damascus. He is Colonel Dawood Jaafari, who is charged with installing missile bases and a complex network of suicide and normal drones, to target Israel. The Revolutionary Guards accused Israel to be standing behind this operation.

4. Pressuring the regime to be removed from Iran:

The Iranian military presence in Syria in general, in the south in particular, poses a serious threat to Israel. Tel Aviv seeks to address this threat through political means and regional and international relations. Iran constituted the main motivation for normalizing relations between Turkey and Israel. Israeli officials say that any request for the Syrian regime to stop Israeli strikes on Syrian territory cannot be made before moving away from Iranian hegemony, or cut ties with it.

Fourth: Israeli strikes in 2023

Israel attaches great importance to the issue of national security and carrying out the military strikes in Syria is just a kind of the preventative war. Accordingly, it is expected to take in 2023 one of the following scenarios:

The first scenario: to carry out strikes in coordination with Russia and depending on the Israel military capabilities:

In this scenario, Israel maintains the hotline it established with Russia, despite the turmoil in relations between the two parties as a result of the war in Ukraine. It is possible that the quality of the sites targeted by Israeli strikes on Syria will increase, depending on its war effort. This scenario enhances a number of factors, most notably:

- Israel's seeking to benefit from Russia's desire to reduce Iran's influence in Syria without being a direct confrontation between them.
- Israel to get rid of the burdens of its support for Ukraine at the expense of the relationship with Russia; because of the European countries and the United States of America providing Israel with adequate weapons to achieve superiority in the balance of power on the theater of geographical operations.

- Israel to eliminate concerns about the arriving the advanced arms systems that are supplied to Ukraine to the hands of Russia, and the possibility of moving such weapons to Iran, which may help Iran benefit from them in building similar systems or crystallizing technological solutions to confront Israel¹³.

In fact, carrying out Israeli strikes in coordination with Russia depends on the relationship between the two parties, and it is characterized by feasibility and securing technical and human safety due to the high technology of the Israeli Air Force. It is likely that Israel will continue to adopt this scenario in parallel with working on other ones.

The second scenario: carrying out strikes with the international military build-up against Iran's influence in Syria

In this scenario, Israel is working on taking advantage of the Iranian hardships, represented in its overlapping files on the international and regional levels - from its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and Russia's support in Ukraine to its growing influence in Syria - to call upon the international community to take hard stances against Iran.

This would distribute the tasks aimed at curtailing Iran's influence between Israel and other countries, rationalize the cost of the Israeli strikes against Iran, and direct them against more qualitative targets. What reinforces this scenario is moving Israel from the European Command (EUCOM) to the US Central Command's area of responsibility within the framework of modernizing the limitations of the old roles following strategic or technical developments¹⁴.

The "claw-sword" operation launched by Turkey in late 2022 may be linked to this strategy, not only because this operation targeted the sites of Iranian militia deployment north of Aleppo, but because Iran's influence in Syria was previously present during the meeting of the foreign ministers of Turkey and Israel in May of the same year; where the views of both parties converged on such a move to a large extent¹⁵.

In any case, the scenario of regional and international military mobilization against Iran's influence in Syria also seems likely. It is proved that is true through the Israeli army's announcement of a series of joint air exercises with the US army on November 29, 2022, simulating strikes against Iran and its regional allies.

¹³ Saleh Al-Naami, Prospects for the Iranian-Israeli confrontation in Ukraine, Al-Jazeera Net ◀ 13/11/2022 ◀ [Link](#) .

¹⁴ Assaf Orion and Mark Montgomery, Moving Israel into the US Central Command: Another Step into the Light, The Washington Institute ◀28/1/2021 ◀ [Link](#) .

¹⁵ Convergence of Turkish-Israeli views on the Syrian file, Nedaa Post ◀25/5/2022 ◀ [Link](#) .

**The third scenario: carrying out strikes by increasing coordination with the United States:**

This scenario is based on two factors: one of them is the close political connection between Israel, the United States and the UK; especially that Tel Aviv trusts these countries, who are committed to protect Israel's interests and prevent Russia from using such a card. The other factor is to rely on the military technology that Israel possesses and infiltrate through the gaps left by the Syrian air defense in covering and striking sites from outside the borders, launching from the airspace of Lebanese, the Mediterranean Sea, or the airspace of the Al-Tanf region, which is under the influence of the US-led international coalition to combat terrorism.

It can be said: This scenario is unlikely, given the international embarrassment to the countries involved due to Israel's usage of Lebanese airspace without prior coordination. Carrying out Israeli military missions from the Lebanese airspace could also cause damage to the warplanes and their crews, due to the long distance traveled, the obstacles that could result from it, and the possibility of affecting the execution of such missions with weather factors, and the possibility of it being difficult to fall within the feasible range of the aircraft, or the aircraft falling within the field of action of radars and air defense networks.



Conclusion:

Israel carries out air strikes within the framework of preserving its national security. Through conducting such strikes, Israel aims at weakening Iranian influence in Syria without eliminating it, and creating a defect in the relationship between Tehran and the Syrian regime. Israel also hopes that these strikes will push Iran to restrict its nuclear program.

The strikes are considered a practical test of what the Israeli army began to do since the end of the nineties of the last century, i.e. building a "strategic command" consisting of the intelligence force, the air force and special mission units so that it would be able to carry out missions very far from its borders to defend its security, which is represented, according to the Israeli doctrine at the time, with weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, targeting Iran can be a real test for Israel, whether through striking the Iranian militias in Syria, or through targeting its nuclear program.

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