

Sudan accuses Israel of bombing military factory in Khartoum

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Early Wednesday morning, an explosion hit the Yarmouk Military Industrial Complex in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, killing at least two people and partially destroying the plant. Reports and Israeli statements strongly suggest that the explosion was caused by an Israeli air strike, carried out in violation of international law. Israel and Sudan are not at war.

Sudanese information minister Ahmed Belal Osman told reporters that “four military planes attacked the Yarmouk plant,” and that the Sudanese government believes “that Israel is behind it.” He explained that “the planes had appeared to approach the site from the east,” and that an analysis of rocket debris and other material had shown that Israel was behind the attack. He added that Khartoum was now “certain” of this fact.

Eyewitness accounts reported by news agency AFP confirmed the Sudanese government’s statements that the explosion was caused by an air strike. Residents living close to the Yarmouk factory told reporters that they saw aircraft and missiles flying overhead shortly before the plant exploded in flames.

Abelgadir Mohamed, 31, a resident of the working class area in which the factory is located, described the havoc after a loud roar woke him and his brother around midnight. “At first we thought it was more than one plane. Then we thought it was a plane crashing because of how sharp the sound was,” he explained. “Then we saw a flash of light, and after it came a really loud sound. It was an explosion.”

“It was a double whammy,” he continued, “the explosion at the factory and then the ammunition flying into the neighborhood. The ground shook. Some homes were badly damaged. The walls of our home cracked, so we left our house to sleep elsewhere. When we came back this morning, our beds and furniture were covered in ashes.”

The Israeli government did not officially take responsibility for the air strike. Asked by Israeli television Channel 2 about Sudan’s accusations, Israeli defence minister Ehud Barak said, “There is nothing I can say about this subject.”

Other statements made by high-ranking Israeli officials suggest, however, that the air strike was carried out by the Israeli Air Force.

Amos Gilad—director of policy and political-military affairs at the Israeli Defence Ministry and a former top official of Israel’s military intelligence organisation, Aman—accused Sudan of “assisting terrorism” on Army Radio on Thursday.

“Sudan is a dangerous terrorist state. To know exactly what happened [there], it will take some time to understand,” he said. Asked whether Israel was involved in the attack, Gilad refused to reply directly, but stressed that the Israeli Air Force was “one of the most prestigious in the world, a fact which had been proved many times in the past.”

Such comments strongly suggest that Israel’s main ally, the United States, was involved in the strike. London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Hayat* reported that the US embassy in Khartoum closed its doors on Wednesday morning, before the Sudanese government blamed Israel for the attack. Sources in the Sudanese capital speculated that Washington knew that the strike was carried out by Israel and closed its embassy out of fear that it could be attacked.

Last month, the US embassy in Khartoum was beset by angry protesters amid demonstrations against US imperialism throughout the Middle East and Africa, during which numerous US embassies were attacked.

Over the years, the US and Israel have carried out several strikes against Sudan. In August 1998, US cruise missiles were fired at the Al-Shifa

pharmaceutical factory in northern Khartoum. Washington claimed that the factory was producing chemical weapons, but when reporters arrived on the scene, it turned out that the factory in fact only produced medicine.

In January 2009, a truck convoy was attacked in the Northern Sudanese city of Port Sudan, killing 39 people and destroying 17 trucks. Official sources in Washington confirmed that Israel was behind the attack, claiming that the convoy was carrying weapons for Hamas. At the time of the attack, Israel was conducting a brutal war against the impoverished Gaza Strip, destroying much of its infrastructure and killing more than 1,000 Palestinians.

In April of last year, the Sudanese government accused Israel of carrying out another missile and machine-gun strike with an attack helicopter on a car south of Port Sudan, killing two.

The recent air strike against Khartoum comes amid escalating US and Israeli wars and threats throughout the region. The same night that the air strike was carried out against Khartoum, the Israeli Air Force flew strikes against alleged Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip, killing at least three people.

In Syria, the US and its Western allies are waging a now months-long proxy war to bring down the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

The countries targeted by US imperialism are all considered allies of Iran, against which the Obama administration and the Israeli government are planning their next major war. In recent months both states have repeatedly threatened Iran over its nuclear programme.

Significantly, there are reports that the factory targeted for destruction has ties to Iran and China. The British *Guardian* quoted a UN source explaining that “there are two arms factories in this area of the strike: one is the Yarmouk factory, the other is the Sudan Technical Centre. We don’t know for certain if they are making weapons or manufacturing ammunition. At the very minimum they are repackaging munitions produced elsewhere. Yarmouk is sponsored by Iran. The Sudan Technical Centre is definitely handling Chinese weapons.”

The largest-ever joint US-Israeli military drill began on Sunday. For the three-week-long exercise, 1,000 troops have been brought to Israel from the US, while another 2,500 US military stationed in Europe and the

Mediterranean plus 1,000 members of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) are involved. According to Israeli and American military officials, the manoeuvre is testing Israel’s integrated anti-missile systems.

The current attacks and manoeuvres are a further step towards war with Iran, which would plunge the whole region into a devastating conflict, threatening the lives of millions. Commenting on the strikes against Gaza, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu made clear that the main target of the attack is Iran.

“Today we engaged in exchanges against terrorist aggression that comes from our southern border in Gaza, but it actually comes from Iran and a whole terror network that is supporting these attacks,” he declared.

Sudanese ambassador to the UN Daffa-Alla Elhag Ali Osman called the attack “a blatant violation of the concept of peace and security.” He warned that “it jeopardises peace and security in the entire region, not just in Sudan.”



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