

Israel air strikes on Syrian military raise Mideast tensions

Patrick Martin
20 March 2014

Israeli warplanes struck Syrian military positions on the Golan Heights Wednesday, killing one soldier and wounding seven, in the bloodiest attack by Israel since the civil war in Syria broke out three years ago. The attacks hit an army training facility, an army headquarters and artillery batteries.

Officials in Jerusalem portrayed the action as retaliation for a roadside bombing Tuesday in the Israeli-occupied portion of the plateau, which wounded four soldiers. Israeli artillery opened fire on Syrian targets immediately after that attack.

No group claimed responsibility for planting the roadside bomb, but Israel routinely affixes blame on the Syrian government for anything that takes place on the Golan Heights. In addition to Israeli and Syrian army troops, several groups of Syrian “rebel” guerrillas and fighters from Hezbollah, who are allied with the Syrian regime, reportedly operate there.

A statement from the Syrian military branded the Israeli airstrikes a “desperate attempt to escalate and worsen the situation,” and a response to battlefield advances by forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, which recently captured a key opposition base near the Lebanese border.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, in a statement broadcast on Israeli Army Radio, that “jihadi elements and Hezbollah” were both active along the Israel frontier with Syria, adding “this presents a new challenge to the state of Israel.” Netanyahu’s reference to “jihadi elements” embraces virtually all those groups engaged in fighting against the Assad regime, most of which are armed and financed by the United States, Saudi Arabia and various Gulf sheikdoms.

The twin strikes Tuesday and Wednesday across the Israeli-Syrian border on the Golan Heights bring to nine the number of attacks in the past month along or

across various borders of the state of Israel. These include:

February 24: Israeli warplanes attacked an alleged Hezbollah supply convoy in northeastern Lebanon, killing at least one official of the Shiite Muslim group. It was the first direct Israeli attack on a Hezbollah target in Lebanon since the abortive 2006 Israeli invasion of south Lebanon.

March 4: Israeli troops on the Golan Heights fired at two suspected Hezbollah militants near the border with Lebanon, near the Druse village of Majdal Shams.

March 5: Navy commandos boarded and seized a merchant ship in the southern Red Sea, more than 1,000 miles south of Israel, and Israeli officials claimed they had captured an Iranian shipment of weapons en route to Palestinians in Gaza. The ship was escorted to the Israeli port of Eilat for a media event to display the alleged weapons cache. US officials confirmed both the seizure and alleged Iranian provenance of the weapons.

March 10: An Israeli soldier shot to death a Jordanian judge of Palestinian birth at the Allenby Bridge, at the border between Jordan and the West Bank

March 11: Israeli airstrikes in the southeastern Gaza Strip killed three Palestinians whom IDF officials said had fired a mortar round at Israeli troops.

March 12: After Palestinian militants fired 60 rockets at southern Israel in retaliation for the previous day’s air strikes, Israeli jets carried out widespread airstrikes at 29 separate sites across the Gaza Strip. No one was reported injured by either the rockets or the bombs, but the exchange of ordnance was the most intense since November 2012.

March 15: Israel forces shelled several villages in southern Lebanon, allegedly in response to a roadside bomb placed along the Lebanon-Israel border.

While the United States and the European Union

portray the Russian movement of troops into Crimea—with little or no violence—as an unprecedented breach of international law, they have been generally supportive of the actions of Israel, which effectively disregards all international borders in its war against the Palestinian people and other opponents in the Middle East.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact