

Israeli jets strikes Syria

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Rare daytime raid targets Iranian military sites in Hama

DAMASCUS: Israeli jets flying high over Lebanon struck at targets inside Syria, Syrian state media reported, in a rare daytime raid that killed at least one person.

Syria's Sana state news agency said the country's air defences shot down five missiles on Tuesday, adding that one person was killed and 12 others were wounded.

It reported strikes on the Wadi Ayoun area in the western Hama province and on the town of Baniyas in the coastal Tartous province.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the jets targeted military installations belonging to Iran, a key ally of the Syrian government.

Lebanese residents in areas north of the capital, Beirut, reported hearing jets overhead before sunset.

Israel is believed to be behind a string of strikes targeting government and allied military installations in Syria, in order to disrupt weapons transfers between its arch-enemies Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

The Israeli government rarely acknowledges the attacks, and such strikes usually take place late at night.

The Syrian government accused Israel of striking a weapons research facility in Masyaf, near Wadi Ayoun, in July. The attack killed a top military scientist.

An Israeli military official said Tuesday that Israel has struck over 200 Iranian targets in Syria over the past 18 months.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity under military guidelines, said the targets were connected to Iran's elite Al-Quds force and include air force components, support infrastructure, and weapons storage and manufacturing facilities.

The official said on Tuesday's



Dousing the flames: Syrians using dirt to put out a fire at the scene of a reported air strike in the district of Jisr al-Shughur, in the Idlib province. — AFP

alleged airstrikes were not included in the tally.

He would not confirm Israel was behind those strikes, and did not comment on them.

Elsewhere in Syria, at least eight people were killed in airstrikes in the northern Idlib province, where Syria's rebels are holed up in their last major bastion.

Those strikes were likely carried out by the Syrian government or its allies, which are preparing for a major offensive.

The Syrian Civil Defense, volunteer first responders also known as

the White Helmets, said five children were killed in strikes on the town of Jisr al-Shughur and another three civilians were killed in strikes on the village of Mahambal.

The Observatory said 13 people were killed.

The Observatory blamed the strikes on Russia, which intervened in Syria's civil war in 2015 to support President Bashar Assad.

Government forces are amassing at the border with Idlib province, while Russia revealed last week it had positioned more than a dozen

fears of a wide-scale offensive that could mark the last major battle in the seven-year civil war.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said Tuesday the Security Council will discuss the situation in Idlib on Friday.

The US is currently the president of the council, the UN's top decision-making body.

The UN's special envoy to Syria, Staffan De Mistura, urged Russia and Turkey to reach a "soft solution" to avert an expected government offensive on the province. —