

Drones and Jets: Israel Bombed Syrian and Iranian Targets in Syria

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“Iran brazenly violated Israel’s sovereignty,” [stated Netanyahu](#) on 10 February. “They dispatched an Iranian drone from Syrian territory into Israel.”

In response to this alleged reconnaissance drone, which the Israeli military [characterized](#) as a “serious Iranian attack on Israeli territory,” Israel promptly [bombed](#) twelve Syrian and Iranian targets in Syria.

A vagueness persists about the alleged drone. Iran stated the claim was “[baseless](#)” and “[ridiculous](#).” The US [called](#) the drone “provocative.” Israel [noted](#) that it waited for the drone to enter its territory and “chose where to bring it down,” just [ninety seconds](#) later. Some sources indicate it was over [Beit Shean](#), some say over the [Golan](#). While the drone caused no damage, Israeli airstrikes killed [six](#) people.

At the Munich Security Conference a week later, [Netanyahu underscored](#) his indignation:

“[Iran’s] brazenness reached new heights, literally new heights. It sent a drone into Israeli territory, violating Israel’s sovereignty, threatening our security. We destroyed that drone and the control center that operated it from Syria.” He then portrayed Israel as the innocent victim under threat, characterising the alleged drone as an “act of aggression.”

Talk about brazen.

Let us recall that in August 2014 it was Israel’s drone that was shot down in Iranian territory. While Israeli media [reported](#) that the “device looks like a kind of UAV used by the Israeli military,” all sources agree with Reuters’ [observation](#): “Israel has always declined comment on such accusations.” Did the [Netanyahu-labelled](#) “tyrants of Tehran” respond as Israel has just done? Did Iran retaliate by sending fighter jets into Israel? Absolutely not. Instead, Iran did what it was meant to do as a cooperative member of the international community. It verbally [condemned](#) the affront; it reported it to the IAEA ([INFCIRC/867](#)) and to the UN Security Council ([S/2014/641](#)). The IAEA merely [circulated](#) the complaint to member states, and the world ignored the brazenness of Israel.

Let us recall that in August 2011 it was a US drone that was shot down in Iranian territory. Somehow this was not “provocative,” but was rather, as then-current and former

officials [said](#), “part of an increasingly aggressive intelligence collection program aimed at Iran,” encouraged by “public debate in Israel.” This 2011 drone is even [flaunted](#) in current Israeli media, noting the US “initially denied the incident but eventually acknowledged the loss.” A bit brazen, wouldn’t you say?

Let us recall Israel’s unconscionable use of air power, including drones, over Occupied Palestine. [Seen as](#) “near continual surveillance and intermittent death raining down from the sky,” its decades-long aerial persecution of the Palestinians epitomises brazenness.

Lastly, let us recall Lebanon. Since the 1960s, Israel has routinely occupied Lebanese skies. This flagrant defiance of international law is a matter of record. Lebanon has issued numerous formal complaints with the UN—to no avail. Lebanese skies are violated virtually daily by a combination of helicopters, reconnaissance aircraft, and two, four or eight Israeli warplanes. They fly through all regions of Lebanon, including over UNIFIL territory, over Beirut, and over the Ba’abda Presidential Palace. The Israeli overflights might [just spy](#), or they might create [sonic booms](#), or they might [fire flares](#), or they might fly [round-the-clock shifts](#) so that there are always one or two Israeli aircraft in the skies of Lebanon. Or they might fly through Lebanese airspace to [bomb Syria](#).

A recent UN Security Council Report [states](#):

“Israel continued to violate Lebanese airspace on a daily basis, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty. From 1 July to 30 October [2017], UNIFIL recorded 758 air violations, totalling 3,188 overflight hours, an increase of 80 per cent compared with the same period in 2016.”

This was, of course, despite the Security Council’s previously [reiterated](#) call for “Israel to cease immediately its overflights of Lebanese airspace.” But, then again, that call has been reiterated by the UN for decades. Extraordinary brazenness.

It has been argued that Israel should not be bound by [Resolution 1701](#) because Hezbollah has remained armed. Such an argument is simply making excuses for Israel’s belligerent conduct. It should be noted that:

- UN Resolutions do not subscribe to the all-or-none approach; they specify obligations to each party separately.
- Israeli overflights in Lebanese airspace are in direct violation of the [1949 Armistice](#), which forbids Israel to “enter into or pass through the air space” of Lebanon, clarifying specifically “for any purpose whatsoever.”
- Prior to the formation of the Hezbollah Resistance there were already 28 Security Council Resolutions condemning Israel’s aggressions against Lebanon. Since at least 1972—a decade before Hezbollah—UNSC Resolution 316 [called on](#) Israel specifically “to desist forthwith from any violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.”
- [Resolution 1701](#) states that prohibitions on weaponry “shall not apply to arms, related material, training or assistance authorized by the Government of Lebanon or by UNIFIL.” This authorization is indeed expressed, as is custom, in the [2016 Ministerial Statement of the Government](#), which emphasises the right of Lebanese citizens to resist the Israeli occupation and to respond to its aggression. As President Aoun, a former Army General, [explained](#): “Hizbullah’s arms do not contradict with the State and are an essential component of the

means to defend Lebanon.”

With [552 violations](#) of Lebanese airspace in 2016, Israel has exhibited extreme brazenness. With [805 violations](#) in the ten months of 2017 that have been officially reported, Israel has surely forfeited the right to stand in judgement. Fifty years of consistent air violations in Lebanon and Palestine. And Netanyahu calls Iran “brazen” for ninety seconds?

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Michel Chossudovsky

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