

Uproar in Cyprus After Israel Carries Out Military Exercise Aimed at Lebanon

Israel conducted military drills in Cyprus which plan for a possible confrontation with Lebanon's Hezbollah, prompting an angry response from some in the island nation

By [The New Arab](#)

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Cyprus’ main opposition party has slammed a large [Israeli military exercise](#) which took place on the island recently, warning of the consequences of dragging Cyprus into any regional conflict.

The exercise, which ended last week and is believed to be one of Israel’s biggest, simulates a ground offensive deep inside Lebanon in a potential conflict with arch-rival Hezbollah.

[Iran-backed Hezbollah](#) and Israel have fought several wars before, and Lebanon and Israel are still enemy states.

[#Europe](#) should respond to [#Iran](#) & [#Lebanon](#) for hosting a drill on its territory directed towards war against Lebanon and Iran. Did Europe declare war on these 2 countries? If not, why it is allowing an Israeli drill(s) on its territory ([#Cyprus](#) joined the EU in 2004?)

— Elijah J. Magnier ☐☐ (@ejmalrai) [June 1, 2022](#)

The Progressive Party of Working People, or AKEL, blasted the government for hosting the drills, calling it “a dangerous development for Cyprus.”

According to the *Cyprus Mail*, AKEL compared the Israeli army to the Turkish military that occupies the northern half of divided Cyprus.

“Territories and cities of our country cannot be turned into training grounds for any

foreign armies,” AKEL was quoted as saying.

“On top of that, Cyprus should avoid cooperating with a foreign army with a history of occupation, colonisation, war crimes and violation of international laws, all of which remind us of the Turkish occupation in the island,” the party added.

Cyprus was chosen for the drills due to its terrain’s similarity to slightly bigger Lebanon, reported the *Times of Israel*.

Mediterranean neighbours [Lebanon and Cyprus](#) share close and historic ties, which has raised questions about why the latter gave Israel the green light to carry out the large exercise.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdalla Bou Habib met with Cypriot Ambassador to Beirut Panayiotis Kyriacou earlier this month, who denied that the drills were aimed at Lebanon, in contrast to what was being said in Israeli media.

Hello, [@CyprusinLebanon](#)

Yesterday your ambassador to Lebanon denied that the drills with Israeli occupation forces in Cyprus are aimed at Lebanon

Well, Zionist media & military is claiming otherwise, can you openly deny these statements? Request Zionists to openly deny them?
pic.twitter.com/1HNEmLKkvY

— Astro (@EyesOnSouth) [June 2, 2022](#)

Cyprus did not participate in the exercise.

While Lebanese media spoke of the drills, the issue did not make major headlines.

The development takes place amid rising tensions between Lebanon and Israel over the latter’s plans to begin [drilling for offshore gas](#) in disputed maritime territory. Beirut has warned Tel Aviv of provocations, considering any plans to extract gas in a disputed zone was “an act of aggression.”

Israel said it was taking measures to protect its offshore drilling from potential Hezbollah strikes.

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