



Exclusive: Attack On Iran Has Become A Priority, Israeli Official Says

Description

IRNA/ISRAEL: A top Israeli official has told Iran International that an attack against Iran's nuclear targets has become a priority, as media say that training will begin.

"The Israeli Air Force will begin practicing for a strike on Iran's nuclear program beginning next year, having set aside funding and updated its training schedule for the mission," [the Times of Israel reported](#). The newspaper said that while plans were in draft, some parts could be ready quickly while others would take over a year to be fully actionable.

A senior Israeli military official told Iran International's correspondent in Tel Aviv Monday that attacking Iran was now the Israeli air force's top priority. Last week the Israeli media revealed [the government had a \\$1.5-billion budget](#) for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities that covered fighter jets, bombers, and intelligence gathering drones, as well as specialized munitions that could penetrate Iran's underground sites.

Israel has for decades accused Iran of pursuing a nuclear bomb. Iran has repeatedly declared that it has no intention of attaining atomic weapons and its program has been [closely monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency](#). An Israeli attack would be the first on nuclear sites under IAEA inspection.

Iran has also repeatedly declared that it has no intention of pursuing nuclear weapons and criticized the International Atomic Energy Agency for allegedly having "double standards" when it comes to Israel's nuclear program and possession of nukes which it neither confirms nor denies.

Some in Iran, and elsewhere, have said the latest Israeli threats are meant to sabotage Iran's talks with world powers in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear agreement, the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plant of Action).

"Israel's limited military sabotage in Iran will continue but the regime will not dare to launch a military attack against Iran," foreign relations commentator Hassan Lasjerdi told Iran's Rouydad news website

Monday. Israel's recent threats resulted from Iran's expression of willingness to return to the JCPOA, Lasjerdi said.

Yossi Cohen, former head of the Israel intelligence agency Mossad, [recently said that Iran "was not even close to acquiring a nuclear weapon"](#) and that Israel needed to look to build on the JCPOA rather than continuing its opposition.

But others think Israel is ready for military action as it sees itself in danger. "I think an Israeli attack on Iran is definitely possible," Sohrab Sobhani, US-based chairman of Caspian Group holdings, told Iran International. Sobhani said authorities in Tehran lacked a "proper understanding" of Israel's position: "Preservation of Israel means everything to Israel and Jews around the world, irrespective of who rules in the United States."

Ali Shamkhani, Iran's top security official, Sunday [said Sunday Israel should reconsider its spending plans](#). "Instead of allocating \$1.5 billion budget for atrocities against Iran, the Zionist regime should focus on providing tens of thousands of billion dollars funding to repair the damage that is going to be caused by Iran's shocking response," [he tweeted separately](#) in English, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Iran has ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel as well as allies in Hezbollah and Palestinian groups who have shorter-range missiles. Israel regularly attacks targets in Lebanon and Syria, and Monday Syrian media [reported Israeli attacks on facilities](#) reportedly linked to Hezbollah near the Israel-occupied Golan region of Syria.

But besides its powerful air force, Israel also has long-range missiles that can reach Iran, and ultimately its nuclear weapons, if Iran decides to inflict unbearable damage on its cities.

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