

Israel Remains Calm as It Girds Itself for War

Syria admitted for the first time recently it has **chemical weapons** and may use them against outside forces.

Fears that those weapons could fall into terrorist hands or that **jihadists** could infiltrate Israel's border with Syria has the Jewish state on high alert.

Israeli authorities are quietly stepping up distribution of gas masks at malls and other public places. By the end of the year, the army estimates another half million gas masks will be distributed—an average of more than 80,000 a month.

But Israelis say they're not panicking about chemical weapons. They're just doing what they're told and getting prepared.

"Yes, I'm concerned but I don't think the masks will help us. Just God will help us, I think," one woman at the gas mask distribution center told CBN News.

"Everybody's concerned because nobody knows what happens. I sleep well at night," another man said.

The Israeli-Syrian Border

Meanwhile, chemical weapons falling into the wrong hands is not the only Syrian threat Israel is facing.

The Israeli-Syrian border on the Golan Heights has been Israel's quietest border for the last 40 years. But experts say that could change if and when Syrian President Bashar Assad falls.

"We run into a country that has no rule of law, no law, no authority and then it's used to regularly attack Israel, let's say in the Golan Heights with rockets, with terrorist infiltration, similar to what we see along Israel's border

today with Gaza and with Sinai," *Jerusalem Post* military correspondent Yaakov Katz told CBN News.

Israel captured the strategic Golan plateau during the 1967 Six-Day War. It borders Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Damascus is just 40 miles away.

It also has a commanding view of farms and communities around the Sea of Galilee below and, on a clear day, all the way to Mediterranean port city of Haifa.

Recently the Syrian civil war came very close to the Golan Heights. The **Syrian army** attacked a village less than a mile from the border.

Five hundred soldiers crossed into the de-militarized zone not far from where pro-Palestinian protesters breached the border last year. That means terrorists could also cross the border.

"As Jihadi, Sunni Islamist fighters cross into Syria to take part in fighting against the regime, they are anti-Israel, too, and very keen to hurt Israel," Middle East analyst Jonathan Spyer told CBN News.

Golan residents say they feel the tension, but they go on living.

"We're working in our agriculture, in the vineyard, the orchards," said Golan resident David Morad, noting it's different on the border than even a few months ago.

"We can see there is some pressure in the Israeli army, the Israeli government. We don't know what will be with the chemical weapons. It's become very close to our border. So even one mistake, they can attack us," Morad said.