

Israel Seizes 900-Year-Old, Crusader-Era Fortress from Hezbollah

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz ordered the Israel Defense Forces on Monday to strike Hezbollah terrorist targets in the Dahiyeh district of Beirut, sending thousands of civilians fleeing the Lebanese capital a day after Israeli troops seized a strategic medieval fortress in the country's south.

"In light of the repeated violations of the ceasefire in Lebanon by the terrorist organisation Hezbollah and the attacks on our cities and citizens, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz have instructed the IDF to strike terror targets in the Dahiyeh district of Beirut," the two officials said in a joint statement reported by The Times of Israel.

Dahiyeh is Hezbollah's primary stronghold in Beirut's southern suburbs. Scenes of mass evacuation followed the announcement, with long traffic backups reported on highways out of the capital. Mothers carrying children were seen on foot along roadways as security personnel directed traffic.



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On Sunday, the IDF captured Beaufort Castle, a 900-year-old Crusader-era fortress in southern Lebanon that commands commanding views of the surrounding terrain. The castle, also known as Qalaat al-Chakif, had served as an Israeli military position during Israel's previous occupation of southern Lebanon, which ended in 2000.

"The capture of Beaufort is a dramatic stage and a dramatic

shift in the policy we are leading,” Netanyahu said in a video statement following the operation.

The IDF had also issued evacuation orders Monday for nine towns and villages in Lebanon’s Sidon and Jezzine districts, well north of the Lebanese-Israeli border, before strikes commenced, according to Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency.

Hezbollah claimed responsibility for a missile fired at Tiberias, roughly 19 miles inside Israeli territory, and said it had attacked Israeli forces operating inside Lebanon.

Lebanon and Israel have technically been operating under a truce since April 17, but the agreement has not held. Both sides accuse the other of daily violations. Lebanon was drawn into the broader Middle East conflict on March 2 when Hezbollah launched rockets toward Israel following the killing of Iran’s supreme leader.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun condemned Monday’s Israeli offensive on X, calling it “a vicious and reprehensible Israeli aggression.” He pledged to “work to end the suffering of the Lebanese people, and people in the south in particular.” US-brokered talks between Lebanese and Israeli military delegations are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday in Washington.

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