Threat of War between Syria and Israel is getting More Real

On February 9, Israel launched yet another series of strikes on targets near Damascus, which resulted in one Syrian killed and five injured, which has aggravated the threat of war between Syria and Israel.

According to the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), on February 9, four Israeli F-16s, without crossing the state border of Syria, launched another guided missile attack on facilities near Al-Kiswah, a village south of Damascus. One of the anti-aircraft missiles of the Syrian army exploded over the occupied Golan Heights, after which the IDF fired from the area occupied by Israeli troops in the Syrian Golan Heights ten surface-to-surface missiles at the positions of the Syrian air defense forces. Some missiles were brought down by Syrian air defenses. Nevertheless, the attack still caused significant damage to some buildings in the city of Qudsaya, destroying dozens of houses and cars. To repel the attack, Syrian troops utilized Russian-made air defense systems, which shot down eight missiles.

According to an IDF statement, in response to an intercepted missile fired from Syria into northern Israel, Israel attacked targets in Syria, including the “Syrian radar and anti-aircraft batteries that launched missiles at Israeli Air Force aircraft.” However, it is obvious that the missile chosen by the IDF as the reason for retaliation was the anti-aircraft missile that exploded in the air and was launched by Syrian air defenses as a measure of protection against earlier Israeli missile attacks launched from Lebanon.
In the message the Syrian Foreign Ministry sent to the UN Security Council regarding the aforementioned act of aggression by Tel Aviv, the Syrian government denounces the dangerous consequences the Israeli attacks on the SAR territory may have for stability in the Middle East and the entire world. “Syria reserves the right to use all legal means to respond to the treacherous strikes carried out by Israel on the outskirts of Damascus from Lebanese airspace and from the occupied Golan Heights,” the document says. The Syrian Foreign Ministry drew attention to the fact that “the United States, which patronizes Israel, encourages it to continue attacks and paralyzes possible measures by the UN Security Council to deter the aggressor, which undermines the prestige of the international community.”

Initially, Israel planned to launch two strikes simultaneously on February 9 - one on the outskirts of Damascus, and the other on Latakia. However, after encountering two Su-35s scrambled in response, the IAF fighters flew back without attacking the Syrian port. At the same time, almost all of the missiles allegedly aimed at Iranian facilities in the Rif Dimashq Governorate were shot down by Russian-made Syrian air defense systems. The attack was carried out from Lebanese airspace, which is another gross violation of international law.

Israeli Air Force regularly strikes targets in Syria without entering the airspace of the Arab Republic, and mainly operates from the airspace of Lebanon - in violation of international norms, or from the Mediterranean Sea. Since 2013, the IDF has been carrying out hundreds of airstrikes on the territory of a neighboring country primarily targeting pro-Iranian forces in the SAR. This year, there have already been two such attacks by Israel. The first one was took place on January 31 at targets near Damascus, namely Hezbollah facilities and warehouses in the vicinity of Al-Qutayfah. In 2021, there were 55 attacks:

- 3 missile strikes in December (on December 7, 16 and 28, mainly in the area of the port of Latakia, one Syrian soldier was killed, and significant damage was caused). It is noteworthy that on December 28, not for the first time, two F-16s of the Israeli Air Force launched four guided missiles at facilities on the territory of the port of Latakia without crossing the Syrian border (from the Mediterranean Sea). The Syrian air defense forces did not engage in a battle to repel the IAF raid on the port of Latakia, since a landing Russian Air Force transport plane could be in the affected area;

- 4 missile strikes in November (on November 3, 8, 17 and 28, mainly on targets near the city of Homs, which resulted in four people killed, including two civilians, several people wounded and significant material damage);

- 4 missile strikes in October (on October 8, 13, 25 and 30, strikes were carried out on the outskirts of Damascus, the outskirts of al-Ba‘ath and the village of Al-Krum in the Quneitra Governorate in southern Syria, and the city of Abu Kamal, as a result of which more than ten Hezbollah militants and a Syrian soldier were killed, and significant damage was caused);

- 3 missile strikes in September (on September 3, 14 and 27, South from the village of Mayadin in the Deir ez-Zor Governorate in Eastern Syria, near the Iraqi border, with many people being wounded);

- 2 missile strikes in August (on August 17 and 19); 3 missile attacks from May to July (on May 5, June 8 and July 19); 9 missile strikes from January to April, with dozens of people dead and wounded;

- 39 missile attacks and air raids were carried out in 2020.

Israel explains its attacks with the desire to prevent modern weapons from falling into the hands of its enemies. Enemy No. 1 in this regard is the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, which is fighting on the side of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and is controlled by Tehran. After the first Israeli airstrikes, Moscow invited all interested parties to meet and talk about disentangling their interests in order to avoid armed conflicts and civilian casualties. However, these calls of Russia have not been heeded.

Israel, despite repeated statements by official Syrian authorities to the UN, continues regular airstrikes on Syrian civilian targets, using, among other things, provocative air attacks by its fighters “under the cover” of civilian aircraft. Thus, in addition to the attack of December 28, on the night of October 13, 2021, four IAF F-16s once again entered the Syrian airspace in the area of the US-occupied Al-Tanf zone in the Homs Governorate and, under the cover of civilian aircraft flying at the same time, carried out an airstrike on a phosphate ore processing plant in the Palmyra area. It is noteworthy that this is not the first time such air attacks have been carried out from the area of the US-occupied zone in the Homs Governorate, which clearly indicates the coordinated actions of the IAF with the US military.

Such provocative tactics of the Israeli Air Force can lead to a serious aggravation of the situation, and it will by the
IAF’s fault if the Syrian air defenses in their anti-missile actions shoot down a civilian aircraft of any country, under whose cover Tel Aviv carries out its airstrikes. And such an incident has already occurred in 2018 when Israeli planes bombed Syria from the air zone where the Russian reconnaissance plane was located, and the Syrian air defense shot down this plane by mistake. Russian service members were killed and a big scandal broke out, which was extinguished, and an armed conflict with Israel prevented, only thanks to complex diplomatic efforts.

The Syrian leadership has repeatedly demanded that the UN Security Council put pressure on Israel to stop attacks on the territory of the republic, since such actions violate its sovereignty and lead to increasing tensions in the region. The Syrian Foreign Ministry has previously repeatedly stated that the republic can use “all legal means” to respond to Israeli airstrikes on the Syrian territory. Therefore, by continuing such provocative attacks, Israel is openly tempting its fate, which could turn into a serious armed conflict at any time.

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