

PLEASE NOTE: Very short news today

Iran says no retaliation planned, as both sides seek distance from Isfahan attack

Ben Gvir tweets alleged reprisal was 'lame,' drawing complaints of endangering security by revealing origin of strike, even as Iran indicates it will look the other way

By *Tol Staff* and *Agencies* Today, 12:24 pm



A handout image grab made available by Iranian state TV showing what the TV station said was a live picture of the city of Isfahan early on April 19, 2024, following reports of a drone strike overnight. (Iranian state TV (IRIB) / AFP)

Iran has no plan for immediate retaliation against Israel, a senior Iranian official said Friday, as officials in Jerusalem indicated that an alleged drone attack on a city south of Tehran was meant to send a signal rather than cause damage.

The Iranian official also cast doubt on whether Israel was behind the attack in Isfahan, despite comments from some Israeli politicians practically accepting

responsibility.

Together with a subdued response from official Iranian media organs, the senior official's comments indicated that Tehran may be uninterested in risking war to make good on threats that it would attack Israel should it retaliate for a weekend missile and drone attack, and was seeking a way to avoid being held to the bellicose promises.

"The foreign source of the incident has not been confirmed," the Iranian official said on condition of anonymity.

"We have not received any external attack, and the discussion leans more toward infiltration than attack."

They added that Iran has no plan to strike back immediately over the attack.



Iranian worshippers attend an anti-Israeli gathering after Friday prayers in Tehran, Iran, April 19, 2024. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

In a speech, Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi hailed Tehran's unprecedented retaliatory attack on Israel almost a week ago, but made no mention of the latest blasts.

That operation "showed our authority, our people's will of steel and our unity," Raisi told hundreds of people in

Semnan province, east of Tehran.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi speaks during an Army Day parade at a military base in northern Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Raisi warned that the "tiniest invasion" by Israel would bring a "massive and harsh" response. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

In most official comments and news reports, there was no mention of Israel and state television carried analysts and pundits who appeared dismissive about the scale.

Shortly after midnight, "three drones were observed in the sky over Isfahan. The air defense system became active and destroyed these drones in the sky," Iranian state TV said.



Senior army commander Siavosh Mihandoust was quoted by state TV as saying air defense systems had targeted a “suspicious object.” He said there had been no damage from the attack.

An analyst told state TV that mini drones flown by “infiltrators from inside Iran” had been shot down by air defenses in Isfahan.

In Israel, authorities were officially mum, but a number of politicians and former officials spoke out about the strike.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir, a hardliner who had pushed for a forceful response to Iran’s early Sunday attack, tweeted the single word “lame!”

A Channel 12 report claimed officials in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s inner circle slammed Ben Gvir for damaging Israel’s national security, saying the far-right minister “was and remains childish and irrelevant to any discussion.”

Opposition Leader Yair Lapid also slammed Ben Gvir.

“Never has a cabinet minister so badly hurt the country’s security, image and international standing,” wrote Lapid on X. “In an unforgivable, one-word tweet Ben Gvir managed to make Israel into a laughing stock, disgracing it from Tehran to Washington.”

According to the Washington Post, citing an Israeli official, the strike had been intended to signal to Iran that Israel has the ability to reach Iran with its weapons.

“It’s important Iran understand that when it acts against us, we have the ability to strike any point and we can do enormous damage – we have a capable air force and the US on our side,” former national security adviser Eyal Hulata told Army Radio.

The Israeli response was thought to have been tempered by international pressure to make sure that the reply did not further escalate tensions.

“Nobody wants war with Iran right now,” Netanyahu confidant Natan Eshel was quoted saying by journalist Ben Caspit. “We proved to them that we can infiltrate and strike within their borders and they weren’t able to inside ours. The messages are more important than the grandstanding. We currently have more important tasks both in Gaza and Lebanon.”

Like fellow firebrand Ben Gvir, Likud MK Tally Gotliv also appeared to spill the beans over the attack.

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In a post on X, she said early Friday was “a morning to proudly hold our head up high. Israel is a strong and powerful country.” She added a prayer for the return of Israel’s “power of deterrence.”



Likud MK Tally Gotliv in the Knesset, in Jerusalem, on January 29, 2024. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Some politicians expressed annoyance at the comments, despite several unnamed Israeli and US officials telling foreign press outlets that Israel was behind the attack.

Israel has for years operated under a strategy of plausible deniability regarding its attacks on Iranian interests in Syria, declining to take responsibility or speak publicly about specific sorties and giving Iran and its

proxies an out to avoid retaliation.

The strategy has limits though. Israel has not taken responsibility for a strike on Iran’s embassy in Damascus on April 1 that killed several members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp, including a top officer. Nonetheless, Iran responded Sunday night by lobbing over 300 cruise missiles, ballistic missiles and armed drones at Israel. Nearly the whole barrage was shot down by Israel, with help from the US, UK, France and Jordan. A small Israeli girl who was the only victim in the attack was badly injured by falling shrapnel; the targeted Nevatim air base also suffered light damage, according to Israeli officials. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-says-no-retaliation-planned-as-both-sides-look-for-distance-from-isfahan-attack/>

Iranian air base reportedly attacked in ‘limited’ Israeli reprisal strike

Iran downplays apparent retaliation and Israel keeps mum in sign both sides are looking to climb back from brink of war following international pressure for restraint

By [Tol Staff](#) and [Agencies](#) Today, 8:17 am

Explosions were heard near the Iranian city of Isfahan early Friday as Israel reportedly launched a heavily anticipated reprisal strike for an Iranian attack on Israel days earlier, defying international pressure to stand down. There was no official confirmation of a strike from Israeli authorities; state-run media in Iran reported only that air defenses were activated, downplaying claims of an attack on a military site in the city some 315 kilometers (196 miles) south of Tehran and describing the incident as business-as-usual.



Illustrative: Iranian soldiers take part in a military parade during a ceremony marking the country's annual army day in Tehran on April 17, 2024. (Atta Kenare / AFP)

But unnamed Israeli and American officials told US news outlets that Israel had carried out a strike. And the New York Times said three Iranian sources confirmed that a military air base in Isfahan had been struck. The scope of the damage was not clear.

The apparently limited nature of the strike, reportedly carried out with drones rather than missiles or airstrikes, and the lack of official acknowledgment will likely give the regime in Iran the strategic deniability needed to wriggle

out of its bellicose threats to attack Israel a second time, providing an early indication that both Israel and Iran may be seeking to step back from the brink of war.

The attack had been widely expected, with Israel providing indications throughout the week that it would not let an unprecedented Iranian barrage of over 300 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones early Sunday pass without a response, leading to fears of spiraling tit-for-tat attacks giving way to all-out war.

However, there were also indications that the Israel Defense Forces had moderated its attack plans in response to international pressure for restraint.

ویدیویی که یکی از مخاطبان بی‌بی‌سی در ساعت ۴:۴۷ بامداد در شرق اصفهان ثبت کرده است، فعال شدن پدافند و صدای انفجار را نشان می‌دهد. این مخاطب می‌گوید گلوله‌های پدافند «از سمت اتوبان آقابابایی و پایگاه هشتم شکاری» دیده می‌شدند. pic.twitter.com/d1C6tsl7zp... بزرگراه آقابابایی در شمال شرق حاشیه شهر #اصفهان و از — BBC NEWS فارسی (@bbcpersian) April 19, 2024

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir a hardliner who has pushed for wide military action against Iran, commented on X with a simple “lame.”

Iranian state TV said that shortly after midnight “three drones were observed in the sky over Isfahan. The air defense system became active and destroyed these drones in the sky.”

The broadcaster later said the situation in Isfahan was normal and no ground explosions had occurred. Iranian officials initially grounded flights and cleared its airspace, but lifted restrictions on flights later Friday morning. Gen. Siavosh Miandoost, a local army commander, told state TV the incident caused “no damage” around Isfahan.

An Iranian analyst told state TV that the mini drones shot down by air defenses in Isfahan were flown by “infiltrators from inside Iran.”

One source told Reuters the US was not involved but was notified by Israel before the attack.

According to CNN, quoting a senior US official, Israel told the US the attack was not targeting Iranian nuclear facilities. Both CNN and Fox News quoted officials describing the attack as “limited.”

An Israeli source was quoted telling the Washington Post that the attack was meant to serve as a warning that Israel’s military has the ability to reach Iran.

Israel’s Home Front Command said there were no special instructions for staying near bomb shelters, indicating no Iranian response was expected.

Isfahan is home to sites associated with Iran’s nuclear program, including its underground Natanz enrichment site, which has been repeatedly targeted by suspected Israeli sabotage attacks.

State television described all sites in the area as “fully safe.”

Tasnim later published a video from one of its reporters, who said he was in the southeastern Zerdenjan area of Isfahan, near its “nuclear energy mountain.” The footage showed two different anti-aircraft gun positions, and details of the video corresponded with known features of the site of Iran’s Uranium Conversion Facility at Isfahan.

“At 4:45, we heard gunshots. There was nothing going on,” he said. “It was the air defense, these guys that you’re watching, and over there too.”

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The facility at Isfahan operates three small Chinese-supplied research reactors, as well as handling fuel production and other activities for Iran’s civilian nuclear program.

The air base in Isfahan has been home to Iran’s fleet of American-made F-14 Tomcats — purchased before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi had warned Israel before Friday’s strike that Tehran would deliver a “severe response” to any attack on its territory.

Iran told the United Nations Security Council on Thursday that Israel “must be compelled to stop any further military adventurism against our interests” as the UN secretary-general warned that the Middle East was in a “moment of maximum peril.”

Alongside the strike in Iran, Israel was also accused of carrying out an attack overnight on a Syrian military radar installation in the south of the country. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iranian-air-base-reportedly-attacked-in-limited-israeli-reprisal-strike/>

Islamic Jihad battalion commander killed in West Bank operation, Palestinians report **Four IDF soldiers were injured during the ongoing widescale West Bank operation to suppress terrorism in the al-Shams refugee camp**

[Elisha Ben Kimon](#), [Einav Halabi](#), [Yoav Zitun](#)|10:49

The Palestinians reported Friday that Mohammad Jabar, commander of the Tulkarem Brigade in the Islamic Jihad, was killed in clashes with Israeli security forces in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm.

Four IDF soldiers were injured in a broad West Bank operation to suppress terrorism in the refugee camp, with two in moderate condition and two in light condition. The operation, which is still ongoing, included hundreds of IDF, Shin Bet, and Border Police fighters.



Islamic Jihad battalion commander Mohammad Jabar

In addition, five other terrorists were eliminated, and the forces also apprehended several wanted individuals considered among the top ranks of the refugee camp. Moreover, they uncovered explosives hidden under the roads, gathered various types of combat means, and searched dozens of buildings.

Since the start of the war, security forces have intensified operations in the West Bank, and thus far, approximately 3,850 wanted individuals

have been arrested, with some 1,650 of them affiliated with the Hamas terrorist organization.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sys3eglwr#autoplay>

Iran flareup sealed fate of Israel's credit ranking, but it's not the only problem

Commentary: Iran's attack on Israel and government's firm response prompt S&P to downgrade Israel's credit rating; officials concerned absent economic reform and continued large-scale spending on non-growth sectors, more downgrades may soon follow

[Gad Lior](#)|07:55

Until just a few days ago, Israel's credit rating had not been downgraded twice within a matter of weeks. At Standard & Poor's (S&P), the world's leading credit rating agency, there was concern about Israel's security situation and the significant expenditures it entailed.

However, there was confidence that an imminent end to the conflicts



on the southern and northern borders would allow for renewed and proper control over the national budget, necessitating only a stern warning for Israel.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Photo: GPO)

However, the decision to downgrade Israel occurred in two stages. At first, it followed an unprecedented attack by Iran last Saturday night. Once it became clear that the Israeli government intended to respond militarily to the Iranian attack, the downgrade of Israel's credit rating was inevitable.

The unusual late-night announcement at 2:00 AM Israel time caused consternation among the economic elite. The announcement was made two hours before the attack on Iran's Isfahan and essentially served as a "preview" for Israel's imminent response on Iranian soil.

Now, the economists at the world's leading credit rating agency, which joined Moody's in downgrading Israel's credit rating, are particularly concerned that the Israeli government will not be able to prevent a significant increase in defense spending, especially if the conflict between Israel and Iran intensifies in the coming weeks. Iran has promised a response to the response, and it's unclear whether such a situation could escalate into a new type of regional war in the Middle East—not between a state and a terrorist organization, but between two of the world's largest and strongest armies.

A senior government official told Ynet Friday morning that the test for the Israeli government is clear. "Otherwise, our rating will drop further. The government must demonstrate absolute control over defense spending and prevent budget deficit leaks that would be very difficult to recover from," the official said.

A senior economic official expressed deep concerns over the lack of serious debate about defense expenditures and the fact that a special committee for this matter has not yet been established.

"If these enormous expenses spiral out of control, the Israeli economy could deteriorate to a state never seen even in previous wars, forcing citizens to endure significant cuts to services and painful tax hikes. Every citizen will pay for such a failure," the official said.

What happened Thursday night is a severe blow to the reputation of Israel's economy in the financial world.

Vladimir Beliak, a member of the opposition in the Knesset's Finance Committee, claimed that "Israel's economy is already on the chopping block."

Let us challenge this assertion. Even after the downgrade, Israel's economy is still considered stable, as a country that has never missed any debt repayment. The Israeli market remains at an A-level rating by all three major agencies, with Moody's rating just one notch lower than the other two, but it has not yet fallen to a B-level. However, after years of economic prosperity, Israel remains among the top 25 countries with the highest credit ratings worldwide. Investments in Israel, such as in companies like Intel, Teva and high-tech ventures, remain high and stable.

Recently, foreign companies, particularly in the food sector, have begun operations in Israel, with others still considering such opportunities for the near future. Declaring the demise of Israel's economy following a downgrade would be a grave mistake.

However, the downgrade by two of the world's major rating agencies is not a trivial matter. The increased interest rates on loans for the Israeli government and Israeli companies will cost us billions of dollars. Israeli citizens will end up paying much more for the cost of war and other expenditures. Our standard of living is expected to decline in the coming years, and the quality of education, health and welfare services will decrease instead of improving, as our cost of living rises.

The credit rating is unlikely to improve in the next two years, contrary to the baseless assurances by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the rating will return to its previous level "immediately after the war ends."

In the current Middle Eastern context and the outlook from all rating agencies marked as "negative," it indicates that the rating could deteriorate further soon. A positive outlook seems much further away than the physical distance between Iran and Israel. <https://www.ynetnews.com/business/article/byemiklza>

