



On the ground investigating Iran's strikes on Israel

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Jeremy Loffredo (JF): I'm Jeremy Loffredo for the Grayzone in Israel, where last night Iran fired over 200 ballistic missiles in retaliation for the assassinations of Lebanese and Iranian political and military leadership. Since the missile strikes, Israeli authorities have attempted to downplay the significance of the attacks, censor the locations of missile impacts for media publication and claim that Iran was targeting Israeli civilians. What I saw today here in Israel is clear evidence that Iran was targeting the same Israeli intelligence and military infrastructure that's been used over the past year to carry out brutal assassinations and attacks.

The morning after the missile strikes, news reports indicated that one of the principal targets was Nevatim airbase. Nevatim air base, located deep in the Negev Desert is the largest and most critical Air Force base in Israel. It's home to three squadrons of U.S. supplied Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth fighter jets, which have played a pivotal role in Israel's yearlong air assault on the besieged Gaza Strip. And as of two weeks ago, these F-35s are also spearheading relentless and devastating strikes in southern Lebanon, so far resulting in the deaths of 2000 civilians. The base is also home to Wings of Zion, the Israeli equivalent of Air Force One. Video footage taken around 8 p.m. Israel time by Israelis and Palestinian Bedouins who live around the Negev Desert show Nevatim air base being hit with at least ten ballistic missiles.

I drove 70 miles south to the highly sensitive air force installation, aiming to document the under-reported and potentially embarrassing destruction. As I approach the military base, F-35 fighter jets were vertically landing at the base, in all likelihood on the way back from killing 30 miles away in Gaza or 100 miles away in Lebanon. The road was separated from the base by more than a mile of desert and miles of steel fencing. So seeing any destruction was impossible. In the Negev Desert, there are 46 Palestinian Bedouin villages. 80% of these villages are, quote, "unrecognised by Israel" and face constant demolition orders on any permanent or semi permanent structure, resulting in most of their homes and buildings being built with late material like plywood or sheet metal. I went village to village asking about the missile strikes. Most Bedouins were suspicious of me, but two young men who told me the

explosion scared their wives and children claimed they knew where a missile had fallen. They led me there, but they were unwilling to appear on camera due to concerns for their safety. The military took away most of the missile, but there was still a piece left. The missile fell a quarter mile west of Nevatim air base, about a quarter mile from the Bedouin village, which is unrecognised by Israel. So it isn't supplied with any type of state of the art bomb shelters like Jewish communities..

JF: Where were people in the communities around here hiding yesterday during the [missile] sounds?

Witness: Some of our people ran to the school. Lot's of us went to the bridge underpass. We are not safe because our people are not given any shelters or safe places to hide.

JF: As night fell, I headed to the heart of Israel's military and intelligence operation, tel Aviv. This city is home to the nucleus of the state's defence apparatus, and by Israel's own logic, the civilians here could be considered human shields. At the centre of this high density urban area lies the headquarters of Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, where overt operations, assassinations, espionage and blackmail plots are devised against state enemies. It's not just that schools or hospitals are nearby. Mossad's headquarters is strategically nestled among them, with apartment complexes, tourist hubs and public facilities all around. Rumours had been circulating online with unverified videos suggesting that the Iranian missile barrage targeted this very headquarters. However, finding the exact impact site was difficult. Israel's military censor had barred the media from reporting the locations of the missile strikes.

Using visual clues from footage circulating online, I set out to locate where the missile may have landed. Driving down a street I believed to be in one of the missile videos, I saw a heavily damaged SUV, its windshield shattered, debris and concrete caked into the vehicle. Further down, the scene unfolded, destroyed vehicles, torn up asphalt and a massive crater roughly 30ft wide, recently filled in with dirt.

Cab driver: That's the Mossad headquarters.

JF: The missile had hit less than 1000ft from Mossad headquarters. This information is missing from all Israeli media reports due to the fact it's been officially censored. Right here, are the censored coordinates. Given the proximity to what is considered one of the world's most advanced intelligence agencies, it seemed clear that Israel was taking extra precautions to conceal the exact impact location. As we left the area, an unsettling incident occurred. Our cell phones lost GPS functionality, maps went blank, and then both devices, mine and my taxi drivers suddenly showed we were at Amman's airport in Jordan, over 120 miles west.

For the Grayzone in Israel, Jeremy Loffredo.

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