

Israel drops 'earthquake bomb' on Syria causing huge mushroom cloud as Americans urged to leave

US embassy in Damascus advises Americans to leave Syria as it issues warning about armed conflict and 'terrorism throughout the country'

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[Israel](#) dropped a bomb on [Syria](#) so powerful it reportedly measured on the Richter scale.

Video shared online showed the massive explosion as Israel bombarded northwestern Syria near the city of Tartus, said the [Syrian Observatory for Human Rights](#).

“Israeli warplanes launched strikes’ targeting a series of sites including air defence units and ‘surface-to-surface missile depots’,” the war monitor said. It said Sunday’s bombardment was “the heaviest strikes in Syria’s coastal region since the start of strikes in 2012”.

The size of the blast could indicate the presence of a large amount of stored weapons.

It has been reported that the explosion was so large that it measured 3.0 on earthquake sensors.

The Israeli military declined to comment on the strikes.

The US embassy in Damascus advised Americans to leave Syria, saying the security situation there continues to be volatile and unpredictable with armed conflict and “terrorism throughout the country”.

The embassy, which has been closed since 2012, posted a statement on X, formerly Twitter, warning US citizens who are unable to leave the country to prepare “contingency plans for

emergency situations” and did not give further details.



Social media posts show what is believed to be a huge Israel airstrike near Tartus

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The statement also said that the US government is unable to provide any

routine or emergency consular services to US citizens and those who need “emergency assistance to depart should contact the US Embassy in the country they plan to enter”.

Sleeper cells of the Islamic State group have claimed responsibility for deadly attacks over the past months in different parts of Syria.

Despite their defeat in March 2019, the extremists still pose a threat in the war-torn country.

Israel has been pounding what it says are military sites in Syria after the dramatic collapse of President Bashar Assad's rule, wiping out air defences and most of the arsenal of the former Syrian army.

Israeli troops have also seized a border buffer zone, sparking condemnation, with critics accusing Israel of violating the 1974 ceasefire and possibly exploiting the chaos in Syria for a land grab.

The Assad family's rule, which lasted more than half a century, collapsed just

over a week ago following a rebel advance.

The latest Israeli strikes on Syria came as Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) said in a video statement that “we have no interest in conflict with Syria” and Israel’s policy will follow “the emerging reality on the ground”.

He described Israeli military actions in the past week, including hundreds of airstrikes, as aimed at thwarting potential threats.

Israel has also sent in ground troops, calling the incursion temporary but signalling the presence is open-ended.

For his part, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) leader Ahmad al-Sharaa has said they do not intend to enter any conflict “because there is general exhaustion in Syria”.

HTS swept [Bashar al-Assad](#) from power last Sunday, ending the family’s five-decade iron-fisted rule of Syria.

Israel’s government also approved Mr Netanyahu’s plan to encourage population growth in the Golan Heights, which Qatar quickly called “a new

episode in a series of Israeli aggressions on Syrian territories and a blatant violation of international law”.

Israel captured the Golan Heights in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed it, though the international community except for the US regards it as occupied.

Israeli figures show the remote territory is home to about 50,000 people, about half of them Jewish Israelis and the other half Arab Druze, many of whom still consider themselves Syrians.