# Israeli envoy slams UN chief for turning ‘blind eye to Hezbollah’s war crimes’

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By Jacob Magid

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<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-envoy-slams-un-chief-for-turning-blind-eye-to-hezbollahs-war-crimes/>

Israel’s Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan on Sunday lambasted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres over his response to flaring tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border, accusing him of turning a “blind eye to Hezbollah’s war crimes and acts of terror.”

On Friday, Iran-backed Hezbollah fired 19 missiles toward open areas in the north of Israel, its heaviest barrage since the 2006 Second Lebanon War. Israel responded with several rounds of artillery strikes.

In a statement earlier Sunday, Guterres expressed his “deep concern about the recent escalation between Lebanon and Israel across the Blue Line, including rocket fire into Israel and return airstrikes and artillery fire into Lebanon.”

“The Secretary-General calls on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and to actively engage with UNIFIL’s liaison and coordination mechanisms,” the statement on the secretary-general’s behalf read. “It is paramount that all actors involved avoid actions that can further heighten tensions and lead to miscalculation.”

The response appeared to have infuriated Erdan, who issued his own statement calling it “unfortunate that the UN Secretary-General repeatedly chooses to draw a moral equivalency between attacks perpetuated by designated terrorist organizations and the law-abiding, democratic State of Israel, which is a member of the UN.”

“It is inconceivable that the rocket fire for which Hezbollah itself explicitly took responsibility has not been attributed by the Secretary-General to that terrorist organization,” Erdan added.

“The UN continues to willfully turn a blind eye to Hezbollah’s war crimes and acts of terror and its effective control of Lebanese territory. These actions by Hezbollah will ultimately lead to the destruction of Lebanon,” the envoy continued. “We expect more from the UN, which should serve as a voice of moral clarity before it’s too late for the people of Lebanon and the region as a whole.”

Also on Sunday, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett pointed an accusatory finger at Lebanon’s government after the Hezbollah rocket fire, arguing that Beirut “must take responsibility for what is happening in their backyard.”

“It is less important to us whether it is a Palestinian organization or rogue factions. The State of Israel will not accept firing into its territory,” Bennett said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem.

Hezbollah [fired 19 rockets at Israel](https://www.timesofisrael.com/rocket-alert-sirens-sound-in-golan-heights/) on Friday, its heaviest assault since 2006. The terror group said the rocket fire was in response to recent [Israeli airstrikes](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-renews-counterstrikes-as-fire-from-lebanese-rocket-engulfs-northern-hillside/) in Lebanon.

On Saturday, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah said that his terror group did not seek escalation with Israel, but would respond to any Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli army says that it hopes to contain the situation on the northern border without a major escalation. Military spokesperson Ran Kochav told reporters Friday that Israel has “no intention of going to war, but we do not want to turn the Lebanon border into a line of confrontation.”

The air strikes last week were the first ones openly acknowledged by the military in southern Lebanon since 2014. Previous responses were limited to artillery shelling.

Lebanon has been undergoing a spiraling economic and political crisis in recent months, with some observers warning the ever-fragile country could collapse entirely.