



The Regional Escalations Following Israel's Assassination of Hezbollah Leader Nasrallah

In yet another major unsettling action which risks plunging the Middle East into all-out war, late last week Israel assassinated Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Peace advocates have lamented that rather than seek to quell tensions and put a halt to regional hostilities, Israel has instead sought to elicit further escalations through its decision to carry out the incendiary move. The targeted assassination, in conjunction with Israel's ground invasion into Lebanon, has prompted a retaliation from Iran – which launched nearly 200 ballistic missiles at Israel earlier this week. All of this has drawn continued concern regarding the potential of wider-scale and unrestrained conflict across the region, and it is essential that diplomatic measures be taken in order to avert a broadened war in the Middle East.

For many observers, the killing of Nasrallah was eerily reminiscent of the dual targeted assassinations carried out by Israel against leaders from both Hezbollah and Hamas back in late July – Fuad Shukur of Hezbollah and Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas. After they took place, both of these were criticized as being blatant Israeli attempts to provoke additional regional escalations and even risk dragging the United States into an expanded conflict in the region. Furthermore, the two targeted assassinations – and repeated acts of escalation like them – legitimately called into question Israel's commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East. They provided yet more evidence to support the long-held belief that the current Israeli government has no real intention of putting an end to hostilities and, on the contrary, is hell-bent on continuing to engage in bellicose behavior aimed at perpetuating conflict. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces growing global condemnation of his military actions in Gaza and Lebanon, impending criminal charges domestically and internationally, and significant levels of discontent within Israel and as such, is aware that a cessation of hostilities would spell doom for his political survival. Due to this, analysts have pointed out how his government has seemingly made the determination that purposefully prolonging conflict is in their best interests.

The recent Israeli assassination of Nasrallah only served to further stoke animosities and is harmful to the prospect of peace and stability in the region, particularly at such a volatile time. It deserves criticism and begs the fair question of how it could possibly do anything to quell tensions and halt regional hostilities? It does not, and in fact, merely inflames tensions and increases the chances of wider-scale war in the Middle East. Some experts have argued that one of the reasons why Hezbollah and Iran have been trying to avoid broadened hostilities with Israel is so as not to be blamed for the possibility of even worsening conditions in Lebanon – as the country already faces [economic hardships](#), a lack of access to [basic goods](#), and a failing government. However, in light of the array of Israeli provocations, including the targeted assassinations, the [pager and walkie-talkie device explosions](#), war crimes in Gaza and Lebanon, and others, it was anticipated that some form of retaliation would follow – as was the case.

While an all-out regional war was avoided following the targeted Israeli assassinations in late July, the fear is that the same might not be the case this time around. This will all depend on what transpires in the tit-for-tat between Israel and Iran. One of the main concerns is that further escalations could result in the United States being dragged into the conflict more directly. Analysts have [highlighted](#) that although Iran is busy enough with internal considerations so as to be extremely hesitant to focus on external ones, things may reach a point where it

concludes that it needs to take action to prevent larger damages which may result from sitting back and waiting. Additionally, Israel's ground invasion into southern Lebanon is another recent development which risks deteriorating the overall situation in the region and worsening hostilities. Ultimately, Israel's assassination of Nasrallah was an [inflammatory move](#) which does nothing to quell tensions, and on the contrary, has undoubtedly exacerbated hostilities and increased the likelihood of all-out war. If this was to happen, it would result in the mass displacement and killing of yet more innocent civilians, and therefore, the United States and others have the duty to subdue bellicose behavior.