

Report: Airstrike exposes Iran arms chain

by UPI

PORT SUDAN, Sudan -- An Israeli airstrike on a weapons-laden convoy in Sudan affirms arguments Iran is secretly supplying arms for Hamas fighters in Gaza, analysts said.

The January airstrike in the desert northwest of Port Sudan, which Israel refuses to comment on, reportedly killed 39 people riding in 17 trucks.

The attack, which Paris's Sudan Tribune called an "embarrassment" to Sudan's government, also exposed a network that stretches from Iran through the Persian Gulf and Yemen to Sudan, Egypt and Hamas-ruled Gaza, said analysts, including U.S. terrorism and security expert Reva Bhalla.

Around the time of the attack, Bhalla suggested Lebanon's militant Hezbollah Shiite movement was involved in the Iranian-created arms network, The Jerusalem Post reported Thursday.

"You'll have a bunch of Hezbollah agents who will procure arms through Sudan," said Bhalla, director of geopolitical analysts at Strategic Forecasting Inc., an Austin, Texas, private intelligence agency.

"They'll enter Egypt under forged documents, pay off disgruntled Bedouins in the Sinai with things like light arms, cash, Lebanese hashish -- which they can sell in the black market -- and pay off Egyptian security guards as well so that they can travel covertly into Gaza to pass off the weapons shipments through Hamas' pretty extensive underground tunnel network," Bhalla said at the time.

Before conducting its airstrike, Israel learned of plans to move weapons through Sudan north toward Egypt and then through the Sinai into the Gaza Strip, CBS News reported.

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