

Hezbollah chief Hassan meets Hamas, Islamic Jihad officials

Huddle comes amid people of Israel claims of the increasing attacks by Hezbollah

BEIRUT

SENIOR officials of Palestinian militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad have held talks with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah about achieving "real victory" in their war with Israel, the Lebanese group said on Wednesday.

The Hezbollah statement did not specify when or where Nasrallah met with Hamas number two Saleh al-Aruri and Islamic Jihad leader Ziad Nakhleh beyond saying that it was at an undisclosed location in Lebanon.

News of the meeting comes as Hezbollah and allied Palestinian factions exchange daily fire with the Israeli army across the Lebanon-Israel border, raising fears of a new front in Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza.

The three groups are part of the "axis of resistance" — Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and other Iran-backed armed groups opposed to Israel.

They discussed what "the axis of resistance must do at this critical stage to achieve real victory... in Gaza and Palestine and stop" Israel's "brutal aggression", the statement said.

They also discussed "recent events in the Gaza Strip since the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" — the unprecedented October 7 Hamas attack that killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians, in Israel.

The health ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza says 5,791 people have been killed, again mostly civilians, as Israel has bombed the territory.



A man carries a girl injured when supermarket was hit by an Israeli strike in Gaza Strip | AFP

Nasrallah and the Palestinian militant leaders "agreed to keep coordinating and daily following up on developments," the statement added.

Hezbollah and Hamas have long been part of a "joint operations room" with the Quds Force — the foreign operations arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards — a source close to Hezbollah previously told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The meeting also touched upon the cross-border fire on the Lebanon-Israel border, the statement said.

At least 52 people have been killed in Lebanon according to an AFP tally, mostly Hezbollah combatants but also four civilians, including Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah.

Four people have been killed in Israel, including one civilian. AFP

UN chief says his remark on Hamas misrepresented

UNITED NATIONS

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday rejected the "misrepresentations" of his remarks a day earlier on Palestinian grievances that infuriated Israel.

"I am shocked by misrepresentations by some of my statement yesterday in the Security Council — as if I was justifying acts of terror by Hamas," Guterres told reporters, without directly naming Israel.

Addressing a Security Council session on Tuesday, the UN chief, again without naming Israel, denounced "the clear violations of international humanitarian law that we are witnessing in Gaza."

In remarks that especially outraged Israel, he said it was "important to recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum" as the Palestinians have been "subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation." Guterres said Wednesday it was "necessary to set the record straight, especially out of respect for the victims and their families."

"I spoke of the grievances of the Palestinian people. And in doing so, I also clearly stated." AFP

EXPRESS READ

Sterilisation rule unlawful, says Japan's Supreme Court

TOKYO: The top court in Japan said on Wednesday that the obliging transgender people to be sterilised in order to change their legal gender was unconstitutional. But the claim from a transgender woman at the centre of the case against having to undergo gender affirmation surgery will be sent back to the high court for the further deliberation, the Japan's top court explained. AFP

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C. Sudhakar Gupta, Advocate, Lawyers Colony, Chittoor

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