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## Israel Hold Surprise Drill

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Israel's army yesterday staged a surprise drill on the country's northern border, the military said, amid tensions over Iran's nuclear drive and the fate of Syria's chemical weapons.

The one-day exercise was ordered by army chief Lieutenant General Benny Gantz, a military statement said, "in order to examine the competence and preparedness of several units in the army, led by [the] artillery corps." The drill was not previously announced, but the military said it had been scheduled. Tens of thousands of soldiers were mobilized for the exercise, including artillery and air force personnel, making the drill unique because of the number of soldiers and senior officers involved, several officials said.

"The drill is a part of routine inspection in the army," the statement said. Military sources said the drill began with soldiers being drafted from their homes, after which they were dispatched by air to the Golan Heights, which borders Syria. The drill ended with a live fire exercise in the Golan.

Israel is closely watching its northern border with Syria, where the embattled regime has reportedly considered supplying chemical weapons to the Lebanon-based group Hezbollah.