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AP News

Hezbollah says it has list of targets in Israel

BASSEM MROUE

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A senior official with the militant Hezbollah group said Sunday they have a list of military targets inside Israel to strike in any future war.

Hezbollah commander in south Lebanon, Sheik Nabil Kaouk, made his comments in response to Wednesday's release by Israel's military of maps and aerial photographs of what it described as a network of Hezbollah weapons depots and command centers in south Lebanon.

The Israeli material included detailed maps and 3-D simulations showing individual buildings that the military said were rocket storehouses. Some were said to be located close to schools and hospitals.

The Hezbollah official told the state news agency that the Israeli leaders were trying to restore their confidence by presenting a list of targets in southern Lebanon "after the Israeli public opinion lost faith in the army."

Kaouk noted that Israel's announcement comes on the anniversary of their "defeat" in the 2006 war in which Hezbollah battled Israel to a stalemate and some 1,200 Lebanese and 160 Israelis died.

Though the border has remained quiet for the last four years, Israel and Hezbollah have exchanged threats in recent months.

During the 2006 war, which started after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border attack, Israel launched a massive air, sea and ground campaign, while Hezbollah fired around 4,000 rockets into Israel.

The war ended with a U.N. resolution that imposed a blockade on weapons destined for Hezbollah and banned the group from operating near the Israeli border.

Israel says the resolution and international peacekeeping forces in Lebanon have been largely ineffective. Israel believes Hezbollah has increased its prewar arms stockpile to more than 40,000 rockets.

Israeli defense officials say the range of the group's arsenal now includes Israel's main population center in and around Tel Aviv.

Hezbollah leader sheik Hassan Nasrallah said the group now can hit anywhere in Israel.

"Let the enemy's leaders know that we have a bank of targets that is full and they all know that all their drills and threats will collapse in front of the resistance's surprises in any future war," said Kaouk.