

After Fouad Cheker, head of Hezbollah's armed operations, killed on July 30, 2024, it is now Ismaël Hanyeh, the leader of Hamas abroad, who was eliminated today, July 31, 2024, by Israel. The first was killed in Beirut, in the southern Shiite suburbs. The second was in Tehran to attend the inauguration of the new Iranian president. We are currently at a pivotal moment when everything can change in the Middle East. Because Iran and Hezbollah cannot remain inactive. Hamas has also promised retaliation, but its capacity to cause harm is reduced. On the Western side, it seems that Israel has obtained guarantees from the United States. The bombing by American aircraft of a pro-Iranian militia base south of Baghdad indicates that Washington is in solidarity with Israel in the assassination of Fouad Cheker at least.

Six men to be killed

In October 2023, the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth announced that six Hamas figures were in the crosshairs of the Hebrew state as responsible for the October 7 massacre. Three of them have already been killed: Ismaël Hanyeh, the head of the Political Bureau, based in Doha, Saleh Al-Aroui, Hamas' number 2 and in charge of the activities of its military organization in the West Bank, he was based in Beirut, Marwan Issa, deputy head of the military branch in Gaza. The three other targets are Yahya Al-Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Khaled Mechaal, responsible for activities abroad, he resides in Qatar, and finally Muhammad Al-Deif, the head of the military branch in Gaza. Israel has sentenced these six terrorists to death and they will be eliminated wherever they are and whatever the consequences. This is reminiscent of the hunt for the organizers of the attack at the Munich Olympics in 1972 that cost the lives of 11 Israeli athletes.

Obvious American support

The strike against Hezbollah's number 2, Fouad Cheker, comes in retaliation for the missile on Majdal al-Shams that killed 12 teenagers. Since October 7, 2023, northern Israel has been living in fear of Hezbollah rocket fire and nearly 100,000 civilians have been evacuated from the border with Lebanon. Israel demands the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 in 2006, which calls for Hezbollah to withdraw 20 km north of the Israeli border, but without success. It therefore seems that we are approaching a military solution to restore security to Israeli territory. American diplomacy has failed to obtain this withdrawal and Joe Biden can only support Israeli military action in the hope of avoiding an open war with Iran.

The elimination of Fouad Cheker also comes on the return of Benjamin Netanyahu's trip to the United States. The latter must have discussed with the American president his strategy towards Lebanon and received guarantees from him. It should be noted that a few hours after

the Israeli strike in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Washington bombed a base of pro-Iranian militias south of Baghdad, to signal to Iran their solidarity with the Hebrew state and thus attempt to neutralize its reaction. However, was Joe Biden aware of the operation against Ismaël Hanyeh in Tehran? Because it is a completely different magnitude than the one that targeted Hezbollah's number 2 in Lebanon.

The consequences of the double Israeli strike

First of all, on the Gaza front, it is clear that the negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the last Israeli hostages have been interrupted. Hamas' military capacity is now very reduced and Israel has little to fear from that side, but an escalation on the northern front is to be expected. The credibility of the Islamic Republic has been seriously damaged: a foreign guest killed on its own territory on the occasion of the inauguration of the new Iranian president is much more serious than the strike against the Iranian consulate in Damascus in April 2024. Iran had then sent a salvo of missiles in Israel, but made sure that it did not cause damage to avoid an all-out war. The Iron Dome and Israel's Western allies had played their protective role.

What will happen after the death of Ismail Hanyeh? At the very least, Iran will support Hezbollah's reprisals against Israel, which will logically trigger an IDF offensive in Lebanon and massive bombings on Iranian roads in Syria, through which the Lebanese Shiite militia's weapons come. The Middle East will therefore not have waited for the end of the Olympic truce to flare up again.