



DAMASCUS (AFP) — Israel will regret its latest "aggression against Syria", Iran's security chief Saeed Jalili told reporters during a visit to Damascus on Monday.

"Just like it regretted all its wars... the Zionist entity will regret its aggression against Syria," said Jalili, head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, a day after Israel implicitly confirmed it staged an air strike near Damascus last week.

"The Syrian people and government are serious about this, and the Muslim world supports Syria," Jalili said.

"Syria is at the forefront of the Muslim world's confrontation with the Zionist entity," he added, in reference to Israel.

In Munich on Sunday, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak implicitly confirmed that the Jewish state had staged an air strike on Syria, following reports of an air raid which Damascus said targeted a military complex near the capital.

Barak told the Munich Security Conference that the strike was "another proof that when we say something we mean it."

Meanwhile Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told a Beirut-based pan-Arab that the raid was proof of Israel's "weakness" and that Syria was unable to retaliate due to the ongoing conflict.

"We were hoping for different circumstances in Syria, that way it could have defended itself," Ahmadinejad told Al Mayadeen television.

The Iranian president also said that "war is not a solution" in Syria and called on the government in Damascus and the opposition to engage in talks.

Asked if Syrian President Bashar al-Assad should quit, Ahmadinejad said: "I think it is up to the Syrian people to determine who should stay and who should go."

The January 30 air strike targeted surface-to-air missiles and an adjacent military complex believed to house chemical agents, according to a US official.

Tehran has provided Assad's regime with unequivocal support throughout the country's 22-month conflict, which the UN says has left more than 60,000 people dead.

Syria's Defence Minister Fahd al-Frej said on Monday that Israel's raid was "retaliation" for successful army operations against rebels, who he branded "tools" of the Jewish state.

"Israel retaliated," he told state television. "When the Israeli enemy saw that its tools were being pursued, it responded to our military operations against armed groups."