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JERUSALEM (AP) -- Israel on Tuesday eased a strict news blackout on an airstrike in Syria last month, allowing the first publication of reports it struck an unspecified "military target" deep inside Syrian territory.



Syrian President Bashar Assad, in a file photo, told the BBC an Israeli airstrike hit a building in Syria.

Israel's military censor had imposed a total blackout on coverage of the September 6 airstrike. But Tuesday, the office allowed preliminary details to be published after Syria's president, Bashar Assad, confirmed the airstrike in a televised interview.

"Israeli air force planes attacked a military target deep inside Syria on September 6, the military censor allowed for publication today," Israel's Army Radio reported.

The headline on the Web site of the Maariv newspaper was, "Now it can be revealed: Israel attacked in Syria," while the Haaretz newspaper led with the military's permission to publish "the fact" of Israel's attack.

The censor continued to bar publication of other key details, including the target of the raid, which forces participated in the mission and whether the operation

was successful.

Foreign reports, quoting unidentified U.S. officials, have speculated that [Israel](#) attacked a weapons shipment destined for Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon, or attacked a nuclear facility built with North Korean technology.

North Korea, which provides missile technology to [Syria](#), has denied any nuclear link. Syria also has denied receiving North Korean nuclear help.

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Journalists in Israel are required to submit articles related to security and military issues to the censor, which can make changes to stories or bar publication altogether. In a rare move, the censor's office issued a special directive about the Syrian air raid, specifically prohibiting publication of any details.

Violation of the censorship orders can result in the loss of press credentials or other sanctions.

In an interview with the British Broadcasting Corp. on Monday, Assad said Israeli warplanes attacked an "unused military building," the first time Syria officially acknowledged an air raid had taken place.

Previously, Syrian officials had said only that the Israeli warplanes entered the country's airspace, came under fire from anti-aircraft defenses, and dropped munitions and fuel tanks over northeastern Syria to lighten their loads while they fled.

Assad said the raid last month showed Israel's "visceral antipathy towards peace." [E-mail to a friend](#)

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