

Suspect arrested after threats disrupt FEMA’s work in NC

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UPL.com

A suspect has been arrested and charged with threatening Federal Emergency Management Agency workers over the weekend that forced the federal agency to pause Hurricane Helene assistance operations in some North Carolina counties.

William Jacob Parsons, 44, of Bostic, N.C., was arrested and charged Saturday with Going Armed to the Terror of the Public, a misdemeanor offense, the Rutherford County Sheriff’s Office said in a statement Monday.

Authorities received a report Saturday morning of a white man armed with an assault rifle making comments about “possibly harming FEMA employees” working in Lake Lure and Chimney Rock area following Hurricane Helene.

Parsons was identified as a suspect by deputies who connected him to the vehicle associated with the man who uttered the threats.

Authorities said he was armed with a rifle and a handgun when arrested.

He was transported to the Rutherford County Sheriff’s Detention Center, and was released on \$10,000 bond.

The announcement comes after FEMA announced over the weekend that it had made “operational changes” in the area “based on threat



MADELEINE COOK / FEMA via UPI

Responders from the Eastern Band of Cherokee, FEMA and local personnel conduct a recovery operation in Haywood County, N.C., on Oct. 2. FEMA was forced to pause operations in some North Carolina counties due to threats, before a suspect was arrested over the weekend.

information.”

The Ashe County Sheriff’s Office said that FEMA in “the mountain region” had been targeted with threats and “out of an abundance of caution, they have paused their process.”

FEMA officials had their workers in Rutherford County, N.C., leave that jurisdiction immediately on Saturday after the threat was issued by a militia, according to local National Guards troops, The Washington Post reported. The workers, however, returned to process hurricane survivors on Sunday.

FEMA officials said the pause was temporary until they could properly analyze the threats amid a wave of misinformation and disinformation regarding the agency in the wake of the hurricane.

The Rutherford County Sheriff’s Office on Mon-

day corrected the record that no truck “loaded with militia” was involved in the threat, and that “it was determined Parsons acted alone.”

FEMA has been working to help some of the hardest-hit victims of Hurricane Helene in areas where they are not pausing work.

Jordan Monaghan, deputy communications director for North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, said the governor’s office was “aware of significant misinformation online and reports of threats to workers” in the state.

“The governor has directed the Department of Public Safety to identify with local law enforcement the specific threats and rumors and coordinate with FEMA and other partners to ensure safety and security as this recovery effort continues,” Monaghan said.

Reprisal against Iran will be limited, Israel assures US

BY PATRICK KINGSLEY AND
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NYT News Service/Syndicate
Stories

The Israeli government has told the Biden administration that it will avoid striking Iran’s nuclear enrichment and oil production sites when it responds to Iran’s recent missile attack, two officials said, a move that may reduce the immediate likelihood of an all-out war between the two adversaries.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomacy, said Israel had agreed to focus its next attack on military targets in Iran instead of sites related to Iran’s oil industry or its uranium enrichment efforts. The Biden administration believes that if Israel were to hit such sensitive targets, it could set off a dramatic escalation in the Middle East at a time when Israel is already at war with Iranian proxies in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

While no final decision is believed to have been made, an Israeli retaliation could still be large in scale, possibly prompting Iran to continue the cycle of attacks. And the officials said the Israeli pledge, first reported by The Washington Post, related only to its next attack against Iran – meaning that it could still pursue more ambitious targets in future rounds of fighting.

Even if Israel avoids Iranian nuclear enrichment and oil sites, it could still hit a wide array of military targets including launchers, storage sites and factories for missiles and drones, as well as

military bases and government buildings, according to two Israeli officials briefed on the planning process, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military matters.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with security chiefs at an intelligence base Sunday to discuss the response and his government has yet to agree on a specific approach, the Israeli officials said.

Yet, according to Bloomberg News reports on Tuesday, Netanyahu has also asserted the country is free to act how it chooses after more than a year of battling Iranian proxy groups and fending off two direct long-range attacks from the Islamic Republic, whose regional clout and nuclear aspirations Netanyahu sees as an existential threat.

“We listen to the opinions of the United States, but we will make our final decisions based on our national interests,” Netanyahu’s office said Tuesday.

In other developments: **●THAAD crew arrives:** A team of U.S. military personnel has reached Israel before the arrival of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, which aims to thwart attacks by Iran, the Pentagon said in a statement. It did not say when the missile defense system would be operational. The Pentagon said over the weekend that it was deploying the THAAD battery and about 100 U.S. troops to Israel.

●Northern Lebanon: After an Israeli airstrike on Monday killed at least 21 people in the Lebanese village of Aitou, according to health officials, the

Israeli military said it had “struck a target belonging to the Hezbollah terrorist organization.” The military added that it was reviewing reports that civilians were killed in the strike. Aitou is in a largely Christian region of northern Lebanon that is not known to have been targeted before by Israel as it steps up its assault on Hezbollah.

●Health system attacked: Israeli airstrikes overnight damaged a hospital in Baalbek, in eastern Lebanon, and put it out of service, Bachir Khodr, the regional governor, said Tuesday. Lebanon’s health minister, Firass Abiad, said 13 hospitals in the country had now been completely or partially shut down, and that Israeli attacks had killed more than 150 paramedics and health workers since hostilities with Hezbollah began last year.

●Hezbollah defiant: The acting leader of the Lebanese armed group, Sheikh Naim Qassem, said it would seek to expand its conflict with Israel by launching strikes deeper inside Israeli territory. In a televised address, he signaled that Hezbollah would not agree to a truce with Israel unless a ceasefire was reached between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Israeli attacks over the past several weeks have killed or injured many of Hezbollah’s top leaders and fighters, though the group has continued to fire rockets at Israeli cities.

●Iranian general: Gen. Esmail Ghaani, the commander of Iran’s elite Quds Force, appeared in video footage broadcast by Iranian state news media after days of speculation about his whereabouts. The Quds Force is the branch of the Revolutionary Guard that conducts external operations, including the oversight of the militant groups that Iran supports, including Hezbollah and Hamas.



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