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Israeli jets clash with German ship near Lebanon

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BERLIN (Reuters) - Two Israeli warplanes and a German navy vessel have clashed off the Lebanese coast, the Defense Ministry in Berlin said on Wednesday without giving further details.

Germany daily Der Tagesspiegel earlier on Wednesday quoted a junior German defense minister as telling a parliamentary committee that two Israeli F-16 fighters flew low over the German ship and fired two shots.

The jets also released infra-red countermeasures to ward off any rocket attack, the paper quoted him as saying.

The minister did not say when the incident happened or what had caused it, the paper said.

"I can confirm that there was an incident," a ministry spokesman told Reuters on Wednesday. An investigation was underway and he therefore was unable to provide further information, he added.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said she was checking the report.

Germany assumed command of a United Nations naval force off the coast of Lebanon 10 days ago and has sent a force of eight ships and 1,000 service personnel to join the international peace operation in the region.

The naval force is charged with preventing weapons smuggling and helping maintain a ceasefire between Israel and radical Lebanese-based Islamic group Hezbollah.

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