



### Iran wants 'religious empire' in Middle East: Israel



AFP/File Photo: Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, seen here in July 2006, has urged the international...

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Thu Aug 10, 8:44 AM ET

PARIS (AFP) - Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres has urged the international community to prevent [Iran](#) from imposing a "religious empire" across the Middle East.

"The problem, once again, lies with the religious ambitions of the Persians," Peres told French television France 3 Thursday.

"That is why many people, even among Arabs, are against Hezbollah and the Iranians. They want to maintain the Middle East as an Arab place, not an Iranian religious empire."

"The world, including France, needs to do something to stop this dangerous behaviour," he said.

[Israel](#) accuses [Iran](#) and [Syria](#) of supporting the Shiite Hezbollah militia in Lebanon and supplying it with arms, notably its arsenal of thousands of rockets, which is being used to shower Israel with attacks every day.

The two countries consistently argue that their support for Hezbollah is purely moral.

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