Dramatic testimony suggests UN peacekeepers bribed by Hezbollah

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Hezbollah operatives captured during recent Israel Defense Forces (IDF) ground operations in southern Lebanon have disclosed during interrogations that the organization paid off [UNIFIL personnel to use their positions](https://www.israelhayom.com/2024/10/18/how-unifil-became-hezbollahs-human-shield/) in the region, according to security sources who spoke to *Israel Hayom*.

These sources, privy to the details, revealed that Hezbollah also took control of UNIFIL cameras in compounds near the Israeli border and utilized them for their own purposes. In light of these revelations and UNIFIL's glaring failure to prevent Hezbollah's entrenchment along the border Israel plans to rely primarily on commitments from the Lebanese army in any future arrangement with Lebanon, rather than on UNIFIL, which has proven ineffective over the years and is now accused of frequently collaborating with Hezbollah operatives.

**A force mired in failure**

UNIFIL, a UN peacekeeping force, was deployed in southern Lebanon under a UN Security Council resolution following Operation Litani in 1978 and has since operated under various mandates. Initially lacking enforcement powers until the Second Lebanon War, its mandate was expanded in 2006 from peacekeeping to limited enforcement authority.

UN Resolution 1701, adopted at the war's conclusion, authorized UNIFIL soldiers to stop Hezbollah operatives from engaging in terrorist activities south of the Litani River. However, the UNIFIL force has failed spectacularly in its mission, with Israel claiming in some instances that it even facilitates Hezbollah's plans under its watch.

Even as the IDF recently entered Lebanon for ground operations near the border to dismantle Hezbollah's terror network, UNIFIL adamantly refused Israeli pleas to evacuate their positions and withdraw from the border area.

The organization insists on maintaining its presence in the line of fire, thereby endangering foreign soldiers from various countries serving in the force. UNIFIL's refusal to evacuate its personnel caught Israel off guard, prompting attempts through multiple channels to persuade the organization to retreat from the danger zone.

Israel suspects that UNIFIL's insistence on staying is partly an attempt to obscure its ongoing failure to prevent Hezbollah's arms buildup and blatant violations of Resolution 1701. Compounding the issue, UNIFIL has recently leveled accusations at the IDF, claiming that Merkava tanks forcibly entered one of the organization's village positions, destroying the gate.

The IDF explained that the incident occurred during heavy anti-tank missile fire on its forces, which wounded several soldiers. To evacuate the wounded, tanks had to reverse in an area where they couldn't advance due to the threat of fire.

Furthermore, the IDF reports that in recent months, Hezbollah has been launching missiles and rockets at Israel from sites adjacent to UNIFIL positions, with some projectiles landing close to their outposts.

**Diplomatic fallout**

The friction between the IDF and UNIFIL is drawing international condemnation, undermining the IDF's efforts to build international legitimacy for its operations in southern Lebanon and causing significant diplomatic damage with European countries.

Israel's UN ambassador, Danny Danon, recently stated, "Hezbollah terrorists use UNIFIL outposts as hiding places and set up ambushes nearby. The UN's insistence on keeping UNIFIL soldiers in the line of fire is incomprehensible."

Israeli sources indicate that the UN currently intends to maintain UNIFIL's presence in the sector even after the war ends. However, given the organization's abject failure, Israel plans to rely more heavily on the responsibilities it hopes the Lebanese army will assume, and less on the UN force that failed to enforce its mandate.