



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center**

October 14, 2009

**Explosions at Hezbollah arms caches in villages south of the Litani (Tair Filsay and Khirbet Silim) prove the organization maintains an active military infrastructure in south Lebanon. UNIFIL and the Lebanese army are helpless to prevent Hezbollah's military buildup, which is a gross violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.**

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**Explosions at two Hezbollah arms caches in villages in south Lebanon  
(Photos courtesy of the IDF Spokesman)**



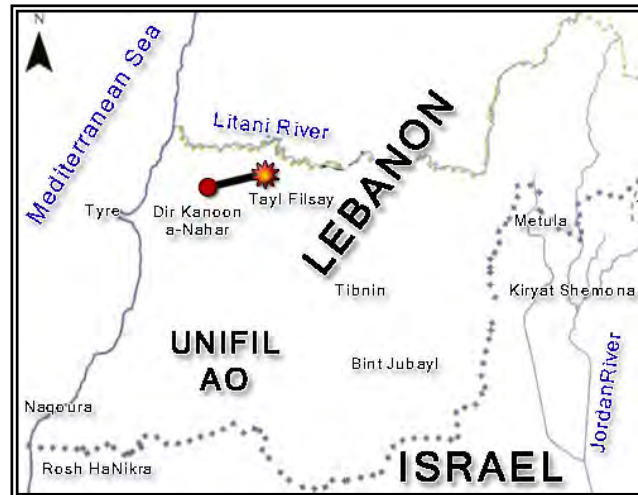
**]The explosion at the arms cache in Tair Filsay  
(October 12, 2009).**



**The explosion at the arms cache in Khirbet Silim  
(July 14, 2009)**

## Overview

1. At 21:15 at night on October 12, 2009, there was a loud explosion at the house of Hezbollah operative Sayid Issa in the village of Tair Filsay, 15 kilometers, or 9.3 miles, northeast of the Lebanese city of Tyre, south of the Litani River. The house served as an arms cache for Hezbollah, and the explosion apparently injured several Lebanese, including the owner of the house.<sup>1</sup>



The site of the explosion and the village to which the remaining ammunition was transferred.



UNIFIL forces examine the exterior and interior of the explosion site (Hezbollah's Al-Intiqad website, October 13, 2009).

2. As in the past, Hezbollah was quick to contain the event and **cover up the evidence** proving it maintained an arms cache in a civilian area and thus violated UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Immediately after the explosion, Hezbollah operatives closed the area to UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces and using large trucks, began transferring the remaining weapons to an arms cache in the center of the village of **Dir Qanoun al-Nahar**, about three

<sup>1</sup> There are conflicting reports about the number of casualties. Hezbollah and the Lebanese army claimed that only one individual was injured. Various media reported five killed (Reuters, October 12, 2009), two killed (Al-Arabia TV, October 12, 2009), or one killed (AP, October 12, 2009).

kilometers, or 1.8 miles, southwest of Tair Filsay. A film shot by the Israeli Air Force shows the weapons being removed from the house, which included **rockets and rocket launchers**. Only two hours and 45 minutes later, when the transfer had been completed, were UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces “allowed” by Hezbollah to enter the area.

3. The IAF film clearly shows Hezbollah’s modus operandi for such cases, similar to that used after an arms cache in the village of Khirbet Silim exploded on July 14, 2009.

[Click for film](#)

### **Stage 1: Containing the incident and preparing to remove the remaining weapons**



Left: Operatives and trucks gather at the building and begin loading the remaining weapons on trucks.  
Right: Loading a rocket, clearly seen on the truck.

**Note:** After the explosion at the arms cache in the village of Khirbet Silim Hezbollah also contained the event, sending dozens of operatives to the site.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For further information see our August 3, 2009 bulletin “Explosion in Hezbollah weapons depot in the village of Khirbet Silim exposes the existence of an active Hezbollah military infrastructure south of the Litani river” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hezbollah\\_e012.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hezbollah_e012.pdf).

**Stage 2: Removing the weapons from the site of the explosion and transferring them to their new location**



Left: Trucks loaded with weapons and camouflaged. Right: The trucks leave Tair Filsay en route to an alternative weapons cache.

**Note:** Two trucks also arrived at the site of the explosion in Khirbet Silim to evacuate the remaining arms, particularly rockets and mortar shells.



Left: The trucks arrive at an alternative weapons cache, this one in Dir Qanoun al-Nahar. Right: Two hours and 45 minutes later, Lebanese army forces are allowed into Tair Filsay.

**Note:** The Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces were only allowed into Khirbet Silim the day after the explosion, where they found the arms cache abandoned but with the remaining weapons the organization had not had the time to move. The weapons were apparently moved to the village of Bir al-Sanasil, about half a kilometer southwest of Khirbet Silim. A clash developed with UNIFIL soldiers who wanted to search the village for the weapons on July 18, 2009.

## Reactions

### Hezbollah

4. Hezbollah's first reaction was stammering, indicating its embarrassment. As usual, the organization tried to minimize the importance of the incident and blamed Israel for the explosion. According to Hezbollah's (false) version, disproved by the videotape issued by the IDF, the explosion was caused by a shell in the garage of one of the village residents and caused only minor damage (Hezbollah's Al-Intiqad website, October 13, 2009). Hezbollah also claimed, in contradiction to media reports, that only one person was injured (Al-Waed, October 13, 2009). Other sources within Hezbollah were quick to claim the explosion had been caused by an Israeli shell left during the second Lebanon war, ignoring the existence of the arms cache.

5. **Note:** Hezbollah reacted in the same fashion after an arms cache exploded in Khirbet Silim. **Sheikh Naim Qassem**, Hezbollah's deputy secretary general, issued the false statement that ammunition left by the IDF during the second Lebanon war had exploded, claiming it had been left there in coordination with the Lebanese army. Thus, he claimed, the incident had been exaggerated by Israel and was not a violation of Security Council Resolution 1701.

### The Lebanese army

6. As of this writing Lebanese parties have not seriously criticized Hezbollah for the explosion.

7. The day after the explosion, **the Lebanese army** said in a laconic statement that a shell had exploded in a house in Tair Filsay. It further stated that the Lebanese army had immediately imposed a security closure on the area and initiated an investigation of the events in cooperation with UNIFIL forces (Lebanese News Agency, October 13, 2009). (Note: The false version is the same as Hezbollah's.) After the clash between Hezbollah and UNIFIL forces at Bir al-Sanasil, the Lebanese army announced it had begun an investigation. The so-called investigation did not find the arms cache belonging to Hezbollah.

### The UN

8. Michael Williams, the UN envoy to the Middle East, said that the event was "seriously troubling" (Naharnet.com October 13, 2009). **Note:** The UNIFIL and UN responses to the explosion at Khirbet Silim were stronger, when UNIFIL spokesmen said that the explosion was a "serious violation" of Resolution 1701.

9. US Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Alejandro Wolff told the UN that the continuing presence of armed groups, including Hezbollah, in Lebanon was "a danger to

international peace and security,” and that “armed elements, their assets and their weapons in south Lebanon pose a similar threat (Naharnet.com, October 15, 2009).

### **Israel’s complaints at the UN**

10. Gavriella Shalev, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, lodged an urgent complaint with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and with the current president of the Security Council regarding the explosion of the arms cache. According to the complaint, it was the second explosion of a Hezbollah arms cache in three months. It was further proof that the organization stored illegal weapons south of the Litani River and was rebuilding its military infrastructure. Furthermore, Hezbollah was using the villagers as human shields and destroying evidence by using trucks to move military equipment from the site of the explosion to a nearby village.

11. According to the complaint, elements within the Lebanese army turn a blind eye to Hezbollah’s activities in south Lebanon. Israel, it said, regarded the Lebanese government as responsible for every incident occurring within its territory, and expected it to take serious measures to prevent Hezbollah from rearming. Ambassador Shalev demanded that **UNIFIL investigate immediately** and turn its findings over to the various parties involved as soon as possible.

### **Summary and conclusions**

12. The explosion of the arms cache in the village of Tair Filsay was the second incident of its kind in the past three months. In both instances Hezbollah destroyed the evidence and transferred the materiel to other sites before it allowed UNIFIL and Lebanese army forces to enter the area. In both instances Hezbollah tried to make Israel seem responsible. In both instances the Lebanese army announced its intention to “investigate,” investigations which in our assessment will not incriminate Hezbollah.



**Aerial photo of the building in Khirbet Silim after the explosion**

13. Both explosions clearly prove that **since the end of the second Lebanon war Hezbollah has been intensively rebuilding its military infrastructure in south Lebanon,**<sup>3</sup> including a large arsenal of rockets which threaten Israeli population centers. It is situated for the most part in areas populated by civilians, whom it uses as human shields. In our assessment there are hundreds of arms caches south of the Litani River like the two which exploded during the past three months. **Syria and Iran have methodically and systematically aided Hezbollah in rebuilding it, in clear violation of Security Council Resolution 1701.**

14. Hezbollah has positioned advance weapons in south Lebanon including, in our assessment, approximately **20,000 rockets with ranges of up to 40 kilometers**, or 24.8 miles, several hundred anti-aircraft missile launchers, rockets with ranges of up to 200 kilometers, or 124.3 miles, unmanned aerial vehicles, thousands of IEDs and thousands of anti-aircraft missiles.

15. In addition to proving the existence of Hezbollah's military infrastructure in south Lebanon, the events at Khirbet Silim and Tair Filsay revealed two additional facts:

- i. **UNIFIL is limited** and makes no effective effort to prevent Hezbollah from rearming. UNIFIL interprets its mandate from Security Council Resolution 1701 in the narrowest possible way. It is careful not to enter into confrontations with Hezbollah and does not operate effectively in the Shi'ite villages where Hezbollah has located its military infrastructure, and where its operatives and supporters are.
- ii. **Practical collaboration exists between Hezbollah and the Lebanese army (and government) even though the government is aware of the serious implications of Hezbollah's military buildup.** For internal Lebanese reasons and for external considerations, the government does not effectively impose its authority in south Lebanon and thus, in effect, accepts the fact that Hezbollah is rebuilding its military infrastructure within the Shi'ite population in the south.

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<sup>3</sup> Hezbollah is rebuilding its military infrastructure with the support of Iran and Syria, and the problems arising from the functioning of the Lebanese government and UNIFIL were made clear during the first year after the second Lebanon war. For further information see our August 13, 2007 bulletin "One year since the acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the second Lebanon war: An interim report" at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/un1701\\_0807.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/un1701_0807.pdf).