



Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center at the Israel
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A chain of explosive charges disguised as rocks laid the area of Avivim on the Israeli-Lebanese border: a Hezbollah test case for Israel, the first time since the second Lebanon war



The IDF detonates one of the charges (Photo courtesy of the IDF spokesperson)

General description

1. On the morning of February 5 IDF soldiers discovered 4-5 explosive charges disguised as rocks on the Israeli-Lebanese border in the area of the settlement of Avivim. They were observed in Lebanese territory close to the blue line, north of the security fence.¹ Apparently Hezbollah put them there.
2. So far, Hezbollah has refrained from responding to charges of responsibility. However, the organization's media claimed that the IDF penetrated about 20 yards into Lebanese territory in the area of Zar'it without

¹ The security fence was constructed through certain locations south of the blue line (the boundary delineated by the UN when the IDF withdrew from the security zone in south Lebanese in May 2000) for topographical reasons. The distance between the fence and the blue line may reach, in certain instances, several dozen yards.

UNIFIL's attempting to halt the action (Al-Manar TV and Radio Nur, February 5). **The claim is false**, since the IDF forces operating in the area did not cross the blue line.

Assessment

3. Hezbollah's laying the charges near the blue line is the first of that type of event to occur since the end of the second Lebanon war. The charges were unprofessionally placed by Hezbollah in a chain, enabling the IDF to discover them. Exploiting the current stormy weather, Hezbollah apparently positioned them during the past few days.

4. Their objective may have been to send a message to the IDF, warning the soldiers not to approach the blue line in locations where it passes north of the security fence. It is also possible that Hezbollah was planning to activate the charges against the IDF. **Politically**, placing the charges might be a test case, the first of its kind since the second Lebanon war, to see how the IDF would react (and how UNIFIL, the Lebanese government and the international community would react as well). Experience has shown that such test cases may presage other provocations, especially as Hezbollah progressively rehabilitates its forces and gains confidence.