



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

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Recently, Hezbollah conducted a military exercise north and south of the Litani River, blatantly violating Resolution 1701. The exercises conducted by Hezbollah since the second Lebanon war are intended to send a message of strength to Israel and to the Lebanese government, emphasizing Hezbollah's role as "the defender of Lebanon".

1. Al-Arabiya TV reported that on November 22, Hezbollah conducted a covert military exercise **north and south of the Litani River**. A reporter for Al-Arabiya said that no live fire was used during the exercise, and that its purpose was to practice deployment in the mountainous terrain of south Lebanon. Hezbollah's information unit did not respond to questions from the media regarding the exercise (Al-Arabiya, November 22).

2. Held on **Lebanon's Independence Day**, the exercise was portrayed by the media (Arabic website Ilaf) as Hezbollah's military parade on the occasion of Independence Day, held at the same time as the Lebanese army's military display and designed chiefly to demonstrate Hezbollah's readiness, seeing as Hezbollah considers itself, rather than the Lebanese army, to be responsible for Lebanon's defense (Ilaf, November 22). According to another interpretation published on the same website, Hezbollah's exercise was a response to an extensive military exercise conducted by the IDF.¹

¹ On November 6, 2008, the IDF completed an extensive military exercise, simulating coordination between the different branches in various combat scenarios on the northern front.

It should be noted that Hezbollah leaders did not attend the official Independence Day ceremonies organized by the Lebanese government, citing “prior commitments”.

3. Since the second Lebanon war, Hezbollah routinely conducts exercises and military training in south Lebanon. It has conducted two large-scale exercises over the past year: an extensive exercise on behalf of the Lebanese Resistance Units was held in November 2007 (also close to the time of an extensive military exercise by the IDF).² **Another exercise** was held by Hezbollah in May 2008, on the anniversary of the IDF’s pullout from Lebanon.³



An exercise conducted by the “Lebanese Resistance Units”. Left: operatives storming a hill which represents an IDF outpost. Right: a group of operatives on a briefing (Al-Manar, May 27)

4. It should be noted that holding military exercises in south Lebanon, particularly south of the Litani River, **is a blatant violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701**, which ended the second Lebanon war, even though Hezbollah operatives taking part in exercises did not bear arms. Resolution 1701 forbids “armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL...” to operate south of the Litani River (Paragraph 8). According to the resolution, **only the Lebanese government, assisted by UNIFIL**, is allowed to operate in the area, keeping it a **demilitarized zone** free of terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah.⁴ According to the resolution, the UN Secretary General was required to develop a proposal which includes disarmament of the militias (i.e., Hezbollah) and to present the proposal to the Security Council within 30 days.

² See our Information Bulletin: [“Hezbollah held a large-scale three-day exercise in south Lebanon. It was held close to the time of broad IDF maneuvers in the Galilee. It meant to send a message of deterrence to Israel that Hezbollah had rehabilitated its operational capabilities damaged by the second Lebanon war, including its rocket capabilities”](#) (November 9, 2007).

³ See our Information Bulletin: [“Hezbollah conducted a military exercise in which its operatives stormed a hill representing an IDF outpost. It is the first military exercise made public since the second Lebanon war, designed to deter Israel and Hezbollah’s opponents in Lebanon and to establish the concept of “resistance” among the Lebanese public”](#) (June 5, 2008).

⁴ For further information, see our Information Bulletin: [“One year since the acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the second Lebanon war: An interim report”](#) (August 12, 2007).

5. The exercises conducted by Hezbollah since the second Lebanon war tested the organization's military readiness, implementing the lessons it learned in the second Lebanon war and keeping a **low media profile**. It is our assessment that the publication of the exercises reflects a sense of security and is designed to send a message of deterrence to Israel and to Hezbollah's opponents on the Lebanese scene, emphasizing Hezbollah's position as the "defender of Lebanon" and defying the IDF by showing that Hezbollah, too, has the capability to conduct military exercises. That message is particularly outstanding when viewed in the context of Lebanon's Independence Day, and should be viewed as an act of defiance to the Lebanese government and army.