

ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.
Issue 1134 • December 7, 2018 • Chanukah 5779

ISRAEL LAUNCHES OPERATION TO DESTROY HEZBOLLAH CROSS-BORDER TUNNELS FROM LEBANON (Ha'aretz 12/5/18)

The Israeli military launched an operation Monday night to destroy cross-border tunnels constructed by Hezbollah, crossing the Lebanon border into Israel. The Israel Defense Force announced the discovery of the tunnels on Tuesday morning, saying it has started destroying them, dubbing the operation Northern Shield.

The military said it has been aware since 2006 that Hezbollah was trying to construct attack tunnels stretching from Lebanon into Israel at several points along the border. Since then, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has spoken of a plan to take over parts of the Galilee in a future conflict.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that there had already been "operational successes" in the operation. "Whoever tries to harm the State of Israel will pay a heavy price," Netanyahu said in a statement, adding that Israel "is operating divisively and responsibly on all fronts simultaneously. We will continue with further actions – public and clandestine – in order to safeguard the security of Israel."

The construction of the tunnels is a violation of UN Security Council resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 Second Lebanon War, IDF Spokesperson Ronen Manelis told Army Radio Tuesday.

"We've been preparing for this morning for a very long time," Manelis said.

"I don't want to talk about the number [of tunnels], those details will stay classified," said Manelis. "It suffices to say that it is a small number. Work has started near Metullah, and in the coming days the operation will expand to other sections of the homefront." Manelis added that the tunnels did not constitute an immediate threat and they were still unfinished.

In 2013, the military discovered that Hezbollah was attempting to begin construction of the tunnels but could not locate any. In 2014, the military formed a special team to locate these tunnels, and in 2015 it began building a barrier along the Lebanese border. During this time, the military developed tunnel-locating technology.

"The fact that Hezbollah has tunnels crossing the border into Israeli territory is proof of a flagrant violation of Israeli sovereignty," Manelis said. "We see this as a very serious situation that hurts Lebanon and the citizens of Lebanon, and we hold the Lebanese government accountable. We have indisputable proof that the Lebanese government is not in control of their border. Iranian money is behind these tunnels."

Since 2013, residents in the north have reported hearing sounds of digging emanating from under the ground. Manelis told army radio that each report had been investigated, yet the army maintained that no tunnels had been found under the northern border.

NETANYAHU: ISRAEL MAY OPERATE IN LEBANON (YNet 12/6/18)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday there is "reasonable possibility we will have to operate in Lebanon" as part of the IDF's Operation Northern Shield to uncover and destroy Hezbollah tunnels that cross the border into Israel.

"We are denying our enemies the tunnels weapon in a systematic, determined manner and we will do whatever it takes," Netanyahu told 25 foreign ambassadors at a briefing in the upper Galilee. "This operation is just beginning, but when it ends, the tunnel weapon Hezbollah invested in will no longer be effective."

"Anyone who attacks us, his blood be on his own head. Hezbollah and Hamas know this," he added.

"I told the ambassadors they must unequivocally condemn the aggression and increase the sanctions against these elements (Hezbollah and Hamas)," he told reporters afterwards.

Netanyahu said Israel plans to demand a response from the international community at a meeting of the UN Security Council called for by Israel.

"We're preparing on all fronts, and I will determine the timing (for fighting) on each front. They can't do anything because we neutralized them. It's one of the reasons we didn't go on an operation in Gaza, but not the only reason," he said.

A senior Israeli intelligence explained Netanyahu decided to tour the operation's area with the ambassadors "to create diplomatic legitimization for further action down the road—if and when we need it."

"We're trying to de-legitimize Hezbollah," he explained. "They infiltrated our territory. We're convening the Security Council at the end of the week or early next week, and we'll start applying the same pressure we put on Hamas—not just against the tunnels, but also to make it clear this is a terror organization that is here to kill civilians."

The official said the IDF chose to launch the operation on the Lebanese border now to stop Hezbollah from learning of it ahead of time. "If Hezbollah found out that we know (about the tunnels), they might have accelerated the efforts to carry out a kidnapping. We didn't want to reach a situation in which they infiltrate and capture a soldier or a civilian," he said.

The official also noted Russian presence on the Syria-Lebanon border is significantly slowing down Hezbollah's efforts to convert its regular missiles into precision-guided ones. "We're using a plan that exposes and deprives them of their conversion sites for such a weapon. They were neutralized and eliminated by mere words," he said. "If Iran tries to transfer such weapons to Lebanon, the state of Lebanon will get into a big mess."

Israel Report is a Student Publication of

Torah Academy of Bergen County

Alex Ostrin, Yoav Zolty, Editors-in-Chief

Akiva Sturm, Eli Jarashov, Ezra Sepowitz and Bentzion Rotblat, Editors

We are proud to be distributed by these institutions, though they do not necessarily support or condone any of the material published:

Anshei Chesed Cong., Boynton Beach, FL	Hillel at Brandeis University
Bergen County High School of Jewish Studies	Hillel at California State University - Long Beach
Boca Raton Synagogue, FL	Hillel at Columbia University
Carmel School, Hong Kong	Hillel at Johns Hopkins University
Cong. Agudath Achim, Bradley Beach, NJ	Hillel at Yale University
Cong. Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, NJ	Hillel High School, Deal NJ
Cong. Ahavath Achim, Fairfield, CT	Jewish Center of Teaneck, NJ
Cong. Anshe Shalom, Jamaica Estates, NY	Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi, Cedarhurst, NY
Cong. Anshe Shalom, New Rochelle, NY	Kemp Mill Synagogue, Silver Spring, MD
Cong. Beth Aaron, Teaneck, NJ	Mizrachi Shul, Johannesburg, SA
Cong. Beth Shalom, Monroe Twp, NJ	North Shore Hebrew Academy HS, NY
Cong. Bnai Yeshurun, Teaneck, NJ	Suburban Torah Center, Livingston, NJ
Cong. Etz Ahaim, Highland Park, NJ	The Learning Shul, Columbia, SC
Cong. Ohr Torah, Edison, NJ	Woodsburgh, NY Minyan
Cong. Rinat Yisrael, Teaneck, NJ	Young Israel Bet Tefilah of Aberdeen, NJ
Cong. Shomrei Torah, Fair Lawn, NJ	Young Israel of Brookline, MA
Cong. Sons of Israel, Allentown, PA	Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ
Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ	Young Israel of Fort Lee, NJ
Cong. Zichron R. M. Feinstein, Brooklyn, NY	Young Israel of Hancock Park, CA
Delray Orthodox Synagogue, Delray Beach, FL	Young Israel of Holliswood, NY
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue, CO	Young Israel of Houston, TX
Flatbush Park Jewish Center, Mill Basin, NY	Young Israel of New Hyde Park, NY
Harvard University Library	Young Israel of North Woodmere, NY
Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, NY	Young Israel of New Rochelle, NY
Hillel at Baruch College	Young Israel of Sharon, MA

YI Shomrai Emunah, Silver Spring, MD

We encourage our readers to subscribe to our sources on the internet. For more information or to subscribe by e-mail, reach us at IsraelReport@tabc.org



Furthermore, "according to Nasrallah's plan to develop accurate weapons, they were supposed to have thousands of accurate missiles by now. In reality they have mere dozens," the senior official explained. "It happened because we disrupted their operations."

ISRAEL HAS A RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF, EU AMBASSADOR SAYS (Israel Hayom 12/6/18)

Israel has the right to defend itself, EU Ambassador to Israel Emanuele Giaufré said Thursday, after Israel launched Operation Northern Shield to destroy Hezbollah attack tunnels on its border with Lebanon.

Giaufré said in a Twitter message that he was "closely following news re: Northern Shield" and was in "close contact" with Israeli authorities.

Giaufré also said that UNIFIL had a "key role" to play and needed full support to fulfill its mandate to "maintain stability and prevent escalation."

GERMANY, BRITAIN BACK ISRAEL AND CONDEMN HEZBOLLAH (Arutz-7 12/6/18)

Germany on Wednesday condemned the Hezbollah terrorist organization for digging tunnels that infiltrated into Israeli territory.

"The German Government strongly condemns the aggressive behavior of Hezbollah, as manifested in the tunnel system built in violation of Israel's territorial integrity," said Germany's Ambassador to Israel, Susanne Wasum-Rainer, in a post on Twitter.

Britain's Minister of State for the Middle East also expressed support for Israel's efforts against Hezbollah.

"UK condemns Hizballah [sic] tunnels into northern Israel. This is a blatant disregard of UN resolutions, threatening Israel and Lebanon's stability. UNSCR 1701 must be implemented. UK supports Israel's right to defend itself," he tweeted.

The Israeli operation has received backing from the US, which condemned Hezbollah's attempts to dig tunnels leading into Israel.

"The US strongly supports Israel's efforts to defend its sovereignty, and we call on Hezbollah to stop its tunneling into Israel and to refrain from escalation and violence," said US National Security Advisor John Bolton on Tuesday.

"More broadly, we call on Iran and all of its agents to stop their regional aggression and provocation, which pose an unacceptable threat to Israeli and regional security."

On Wednesday, the Russian government endorsed Israeli efforts to seek out and destroy tunnels constructed by Hezbollah, but also urged the Jewish state not to take military action inside of Lebanon.

CAN ISRAEL AND U.S. CONVINC INDIA, OTHERS TO CONDEMN HAMAS AT THE U.N.? (JPost 12/5/18)

Jerusalem and Washington are focusing efforts to pass an anti-Hamas resolution in the UN on Thursday on countries that abstained on a similar motion in June, Israel's Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon said.

These include countries with which Israel has very strong ties, such as India, Kenya, Ethiopia, Philippines, Mexico, Panama, Romania, Rwanda and Uganda.

Danon said the working assumption is that those 62 countries that voted for a US-backed amendment condemning Hamas in June will vote for it this time as well, and those 58 that opposed it then will also oppose now. The 42 countries that abstained are being targeted to change their vote.

The amendment in June was to a resolution that condemned Israel for the Gaza violence and called for protection for the Palestinian civilian population. The amendment garnered a majority, but failed to pass because of procedural issues that necessitated a two-thirds majority. The initial resolution, condemning Israel, passed.

Danon said that Hamas has mobilized Iran in the UN, as well as the Palestinian Authority, to press countries to vote against the current measure.

Israel and the US, he said, are pressing equally as hard to get the motion passed.

Danon said that in his conversations with fellow ambassadors at the UN, he is stressing that the resolution was not for Israel or against the Palestinians, but rather a resolution against a terrorist organization. He said his message to those who abstained in the summer was, "You can't sit on the fence. Tomorrow there will be a terrorist attack and you will come to the UN to seek a condemnation. No country is immune."

Danon expressed amazement that Hamas was sending letters to the UN and dispatching representatives to various countries to lobby against the move, as if it was a political entity, not a terrorist group.

US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley is expected to present the resolution on Thursday. She tweeted this week that the "UN will vote on a US resolution supported by the EU that condemns Hamas's destructive actions. Countries must now ask themselves: Are they for or against Hamas' violence? The choice is clear for the US – we hope it will be for the rest of the UN as well."

Jerusalem and Washington's diplomatic efforts on this issue are not only taking place in the halls of the UN, Danon said, but also in capitals around the world where the decisions on how to vote are being made.

Danon said everything in the UN "is a precedent," and that the Palestinians are concerned if the resolution is passed, it will be among the bundle of resolutions on the Mideast that will be brought up and voted on each year.

Danon said the Palestinian Authority and Iran, which are used to being on the offensive in the UN against Israel, have found themselves in recent days on the defensive when it comes to this resolution, "something they are not used to."

JERUSALEM'S NEW MAYOR LION VOWS TO SUCCEED KING DAVID (JPost 12/4/18)

An emotional new Jerusalem mayor Moshe Lion formally received the gavel and the key to the city from outgoing mayor Nir Barkat Tuesday in a ceremony at City Hall in the capital's Safra Square.

Struggling to hold back tears, Lion told the story of his family making aliyah in 1935 from Thessaloniki, Greece and settling in Jerusalem. Although the family later moved to Tel Aviv and Givatayim, Lion said he felt they had come full circle with him becoming mayor.

"Jerusalem unites our people and is the engine that ignites the Jewish spirit," Lion said. "I have the honor of sitting on the chair of King David, but I also must make sure the streets are clean. My mission is to unite all of the people in a positive atmosphere."

Lion said that everything he had done in his career in the public and private sector had prepared him for becoming mayor, which he said was the peak of my aspirations and vowed would be his last role in public life.

Although he was elected by a preponderance of ultra-Orthodox (haredi) voters, Lion promised to help all sectors of the city, including Arabs, and said he was obligated to everyone.

Lion has not succeeded yet in building the coalition he needs to run the city. Barkat asked council members to help Lion start out his term well.

Barkat detailed his accomplishments for the city, including the doubling of tourism, blossoming hi-tech, cultural renaissance, improvements in the education system, and infrastructure upgrades in transportation, and the construction of a news city entrance and central business district.

"Leaving my office for the last time as mayor, I am thankful to God for giving me the great honor to head the most important and most complicated city council in the world over the past decade," Barkat said. "I think residents know something good is happening over here."

Turning to Lion, Barkat vowed to help him succeed and said: "I have no doubt that your devotion, experience and your ability to listen, will enable you to continue advancing the city forward."

Coalition chairman David Amsalem, a former Jerusalem city councilman, was the only MK present. Lion's political patron, MK Avigdor Liberman, was

noticeably absent, and his associates said he purposely did not come because he wanted to let Lion shine outside his shadow.

50 KIDS RESCUED FROM FLOODED KINDERGARTENS IN REHOVOT (YNet 12/6/18)

A winter storm that hit Israel on Thursday caused flooding in different areas of the country. Fifty children and their teachers were safely rescued from three kindergartens in Rehovot.

In Tel Aviv, massive puddles formed on the busy Allenby Street and in nearby streets, while traffic congestion blocked the Azrielly Junction after the stop lights stopped working. Roads were also flooded in Rishon LeZion, where the municipality drained water in the eastern part of the city. Two streets were flooded in the Yavne industrial area.

So far, the Hadera Stream area saw the most rainfall, with 20 mm falling in one hour and a total of 40 by 8am Thursday. Zikhron Ya'akov also registered a lot of rain, with 28 mm, while Bat Yam experienced 23 mm, Acre 18 mm and Netanya and Haifa 17 mm each. Raanana reported 15 mm of rain, while Rishon LeZion saw 14 mm.

Meteo-Tech meteorologist Tzachi Waxman said the worst of the storm is still ahead, with the coastal area and the north expect to get the brunt of the rainfall. "This is the most serious storm since the beginning of the season, which officially marks the beginning of winter," he said. "Snow began falling at the top of Mount Hermon this morning. I estimate that by tomorrow morning, it'll cover the top part of the ski site."

JERUSALEM LEADS WORLD CITIES IN TOURISM GROWTH FOR 2018 (Israel Hayom 12/5/18)

Jerusalem is poised to become the world's leading city in tourism growth, according to a new report by leading market research firm Euromonitor.

According to the report, the number of tourists around the world will hit 1.4 billion in 2018, an increase of 5% over last year. Jerusalem is set to lead in growth, with an expected 37.5% following a "more modest" increase of 32% in 2017. According to the report, Jerusalem owes its increasing popularity to "relative stability and a strong marketing push."

The Indian cities of Chennai and Agra took second and third place on the list, with 30.4% and 24.3% increase in growth, respectively.

According to the report, tourism to other destinations in the Middle East and Africa, in particular the Tunisian cities of Jerba and Sousse and Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt, which dropped out of the top 100 cities for tourism growth, would decline. Euromonitor said this was largely due to the terrorist attacks that have hit those cities. One notable exception to this trend is Cairo, where after a decline, tourism appears to be getting back on track.

The increase in tourism to Jerusalem is due to in part to a global marketing effort by the Tourism Industry. According to the data, the ministry's decision to offer special Black Friday discounts led to a 20% increase in inquiries to travel agents about purchasing plane tickets to Israel. The Black Friday campaign received over 157 million views, over 500,000 clicks and saw some 70,000 inquiries from points of sale about purchasing a ticket to Israel.

According to Tourism Minister Yariv Levin, the ministry made the decision to join the campaign "to continue to break records, increase incoming tourism to Israel and meet the many demands. It was the right decision, and we hope the Black Friday celebrations will become a tradition."

Some of the deals offered on tourism to Israel on Black Friday included flights from Germany to Eilat for 9.90 euros (\$11.20). Discount flights were also on offer from Vienna and London to the southern resort city.

ISRAELI DEFENSE FIRM ELBIT SNAGS \$112 MILLION CONTRACT IN ASIA (Ha'aretz 12/3/18)

Israeli defense electronics firm Elbit Systems (ESLT.TA) said on Monday it won a \$112 million contract from an Asia-Pacific country to supply advanced airborne intelligence systems.

The contract will be performed over six years. Elbit (ESLT.O) did not name the country.

Elbit operates primarily in the homeland security and defense arena, and has been at the forefront of innovative approaches towards dealing with conflicts and ongoing terrorist activities. Its products include thermal imaging systems, guided missiles and unmanned vehicles.

The company has played an active role in supplying the Israeli military with the technology needed for most Israeli aircrafts like the IAI Lavi fighter aircraft and for the Israeli Merkava tank.

Through the years, Elbit has expanded worldwide and has several companies in the United States, Brazil, and the United Kingdom. More recently, Elbit's involvement in providing surveillance components for the West Bank separation fence has sparked divestment by some groups and organizations in Europe.

CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP RELOCATED AFTER SAUDI ARABIA REFUSES ISRAEL PARTICIPATION (Israel Hayom 12/6/18)

For the second consecutive year, Saudi Arabia refused to allow Israeli chess players to participate in an international tournament, but this year the kingdom was penalized and the World Rapid and Blitz Championships have been relocated to St. Petersburg, Russia.

Seven Israelis were barred from participating in the same tournament in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, in 2017.

Israeli chess grandmaster Ilya Smirin and former Israeli Chess Federation spokesman Lior Aizenberg wrote last month to the International Federation of Chess (FIDE), the sport's governing body, seeking assurances that it would not allow host countries to discriminate against Israelis who want to compete.

Their letter was sent with the assistance of the United States-based NGO Lawfare Project, a nonprofit Jewish civil and human rights organization.

It said that the Israeli players' "inability to participate in this tournament was due to FIDE's failure to secure entry visas to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Israeli nationals and, correspondingly, its failure to guarantee their equal treatment and to protect them against discrimination on the basis of their nationality."

On Sunday, FIDE said it would move the tournament, scheduled for Dec. 25-31, "due to the policy adopted by Saudi organizers."

The decision was made "in spite of the generous financial offer made by Saudi Arabia," FIDE said in a statement.

"FIDE will no longer stage its official events in the countries that deny entry visas and fair treatment to all the eligible players," it said, adding that "officials in Riyadh could not guarantee an entry to representatives of all the national federations who had a right to participate in the event."

Brooke Goldstein, the executive director of the Lawfare Project, said, "We couldn't just sit and wait for FIDE to do the right thing. We are proud to have supported this action which ensures that no chess player will be banned from a tournament because of their nationality."

"It is hard to believe that in 2018, a country could be allowed to host an international event while practicing such blatant discrimination," she went on to say. "But I welcome FIDE's decision to make sure that last year's scandal will not be repeated."

Israeli athletes have frequently had trouble getting visas to enter Arab countries hosting tournaments.

In August, the Tunisian Chess Federation agreed to allow a 7-year-old Israeli girl to take part in the World School Individual Chess Championships in Sousse, Tunisia, in 2019.

Haggai Frank, the deputy chairman of the Israel Chess Federation and Israel's representative in FIDE, told Israel Hayom: "We greatly appreciate the step that was taken on our behalf. ... We were also very moved that current World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen announced he would boycott the competition if it bans Israelis."

WHAT ISRAEL NEEDS IS A REAL WEEKEND (Libby Reichman, JPost 12/3/18)

When a vital resource has to be shared by different groups of people who each need to use that resource in profoundly different ways, it's only natural that each group will claim that resource as its own while trying to delegitimize the claims of all others. Great rivalry is sure to ensue as a result of this competition, as each group attempts to prove the validity of its claim by showing how this resource is integrally connected to the group's value system.

In Israel we have a resource which different groups try to claim as their own – Shabbat. Shabbat is viewed in totally different terms by different groups in our society, who each try to prove to all others – unsuccessfully – that their philosophy of Shabbat is the valid one.

For some, Shabbat is expected to supply all the functions of a “weekend” in a Western society – a day for rest and relaxation, for shopping, for pursuing hobbies, for cultural and social activities, for get-togethers on a family, national and even international level. Then there's another group that sees Shabbat as a spiritual, regenerative day, a day of turning inward to self, to family, to community. This group feels that the spiritual nature of Shabbat preserves the uniqueness of the Jewish people and is concerned that allowing the official national dilution of the essence of the day will divest the country of all vestiges of spirituality.

There's clearly little room for compromise or sharing in this situation. But more importantly, it's not healthy that Israelis should have to choose between one type of day or another. Relaxation, recreation, and spirituality fulfill different needs in a person, and Israelis mustn't be forced to choose between them; rather they need to be able, if they wish, to choose all of them.

Shabbat is a wonderful spiritual day, but in the reality of our lives today, a relaxed Sunday following Shabbat is a basic necessity for all of us.

What this country needs therefore, is a real weekend, not the excuse of a weekend we have now, which is euphemistically called “sof shavua” but really means a little of Friday and Shabbat. As every Israeli knows, having Friday or part of Friday off is not a rest – Friday is finishing off the week and getting ready for Shabbat; it is a day of intense activity and often of tension. In addition, six months out of the year, Shabbat starts in the afternoon hours. Any attempt to turn Friday into a day of formal recreational activities will just result in additional arguments around activities that start on Friday and continue into Shabbat.

The combination of Shabbat and Sunday would make an incredible difference in our tense, Israeli lives.

People would have a serious break from work, they would be more relaxed, more energized to go back to work on Monday. There would be a day when religious and secular could relax and enjoy each other in natural leisure activity as opposed to the current effort of artificially bringing different kinds of people together for “events” limited in depth and scope. As things stand today, there is no leisure day of the week to hold various national and international conferences and happenings, and so the religious public misses out on countless important experiences and opportunities, while the society at large misses opportunity after opportunity to bridge the religious and cultural divides.

There would be a convenient day to have weddings and assorted smachot, as well as a real weekend for visits to friends and relatives in other parts of the country. There would be a shopping day when malls and kibbutz stores would have an even broader available clientele that would not conflict with the desire to have a national day of rest on Shabbat. Sports players and spectators, religious and secular alike, would be able to pursue their passions, guilt-free. It is also relevant to note that as Sunday is a day of rest in all the Western world and Friday is a regular day of work, this change would bring us more in sync with international business activity. Of course, there are many reasons why this unoriginal suggestion is not practical. Friday is at best a half day of work and accommodation has to be made for

Moslems for whom Friday is a day of prayer. Yet because of the social benefits resulting from a two-day weekend, every other Western country has figured out a way to overcome obstacles, which certainly existed in different forms in every country that made the switch.

Ultimately, it's critical that we decide on priorities. If we maintain the status quo, we ensure the continued fragmentation of our society, as each side pulls in diametrically opposed directions to have Shabbat be its type of day of rest, causing ever-increasing strife and outrage. On the other hand, if we recognize that we all need both types of days, we will be taking the most significant step possible toward a harmonious and respectful co-existence.

HEZBOLLAH DEALT A PAINFUL BLOW (Lilach Shoval, Israel Hayom 12/5/18)

The disclosure of Hezbollah's attack tunnels is an impressive achievement for the Israel Defense Forces from a technological, operational and intelligence standpoint, in that the military succeeded in discovering the details of Hezbollah's top secret and highly classified project. Although aware of Hezbollah's efforts for a long time, it was the IDF's ability to keep it under a cloak of secrecy for such a long time that allowed the military to take the terrorist organization to our north by surprise on Monday morning.

The cross-border tunnel exposed by the IDF is just the beginning. The operation to clear the tunnels is set to take a few weeks and the most difficult part most likely remains ahead. The assessment in Israel is that as long as IDF activity is constrained to Israeli territory, Hezbollah will be hard-pressed to find international legitimacy for military action against Israel. The IDF has already insinuated that, even if the operation to neutralize the terrorist threat is carried out from Israeli territory, its activities may spill over into Lebanese territory. This is one of the reasons the IDF is on high alert in the north.

Hezbollah was dealt a painful blow to both its operations and morale on Monday. Israel embarrassed the organization when it exposed Hezbollah's blatant violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the Second Lebanon War, before the international community. The publicity also embarrassed the Lebanese government, the supposed sovereign power in the area, and in all likelihood the U.N., whose peacekeeping forces, the Interim Force in Lebanon, have been stationed in southern Lebanon in an effort to enforce the resolution and prevent such a flagrant violation of Israeli sovereignty.

Along with the continuation of the operation and the neutralization of the attack tunnels, the next stage must also see Israel leverage its operational success on the international front. Netanyahu began to do this on Monday, when he asked the United States to impose additional sanctions on Hezbollah and called for an urgent meeting of the U.S. Security Council on the subject.

But Israel must also take advantage of the exposure of Hezbollah's project to contend with another burning issue on an international level, and that is the Iranian-led efforts to improve the precision of Hezbollah's rocket arsenal. It would be fair to assume heavy international pressure on Lebanon would serve to slow down this project and ultimately prevent the need for possible Israeli military action inside Lebanon with the potential to spark an all-out war.

