

Secret clause in Israel-Lebanon deal enshrines IDF freedom of action in buffer zone- report

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Newly inked Israel-Lebanon deal reportedly includes a secret annex that preserves Israel's right to operate militarily in the security zone in southern Lebanon.

By World Israel News Staff

A classified security annex attached to the recently signed Israel-Lebanon framework agreement guarantees that the Israel Defense Forces will retain full freedom to operate against threats inside a designated security zone in southern Lebanon, according to an Israeli official familiar with the document who spoke with *The Times of Israel*.

The annex, which has not been made public, reportedly stipulates that Israeli troop withdrawals will be determined by security conditions on the ground rather than fixed timetables, reinforcing Israeli assurances that the agreement will not restrict military operations against Hezbollah if threats emerge.

According to the official, the document explicitly preserves the IDF's authority to act against both immediate and developing threats within the security zone, addressing one of

Jerusalem's central concerns during negotiations amid parallel US-Iran diplomacy.

The official also said there would be no automatic Israeli pullbacks. Instead, any redeployment of forces would depend on Lebanon's performance in implementing the agreement and the evolving security situation.

The annex reportedly limits the initial implementation to the two pilot withdrawal areas announced over the weekend, with no immediate plans to expand the arrangement. Under the framework, Lebanese army units will gradually assume responsibility for those areas after undergoing training and vetting.

Israeli officials nevertheless remain concerned that Tehran could seek to influence the arrangement through its ongoing contacts with Washington, including by pressing for a complete Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon as part of a broader US-Iran understanding.

The framework, brokered with US involvement, is intended to lay the groundwork for a broader normalization process between Israel and Lebanon while gradually transferring security responsibilities to the Lebanese state and advancing efforts to disarm Hezbollah.

The Iran-backed group has rejected the agreement, calling it unacceptable and warning that it will not recognize its terms.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir praised the agreement during a visit to Northern Command on Sunday, saying the military campaign had created the conditions that made it possible.

"The agreement is historic and significant," Zamir said.

"We will honor the agreement and work to ensure its success. The test now is one of action by both sides, and the coming period will determine the future," he added.

Even as the agreement moves into its implementation phase, Israeli forces continue operations against Hezbollah infrastructure.

On Sunday, the military announced that it had destroyed a tunnel complex more than 200 meters long in the southern Lebanese village of Majdal Zoun. According to the IDF, the underground facility served as a Hezbollah drone base and contained hundreds of weapons and multiple launch shafts.

Israeli officials have repeatedly stressed that the agreement does not require the military to tolerate renewed Hezbollah activity and that the security zone will remain in place until the conditions set out in the framework are met.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has likewise said Iran and Hezbollah will have "no role" in Lebanon under the arrangement and that Israel will preserve its ability to eliminate

security threats while the agreement is implemented.