

DEBKAFfile Exclusive: Spy fever sweeps Hizballah after breaking up two Israeli Mossad rings which included Lebanese Shiite agents

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Hizballah's dreaded Special Security Apparatus is reported by our intelligence sources in Beirut and Israel as having broken up two spy rings of Lebanese agents which the Israeli Mossad planted inside Hizballah before and during the Lebanon war. One worked out of Beirut, the second in South Lebanon. The two networks, according to **DEBKAFfile's** sources, planted bugs and surveillance equipment at Hizballah command posts before and during the war. They also sprinkled special phosphorus powder outside buildings housing Hizballah's war commands and rocket-launchers as markers for air strikes. Israel warplanes and helicopters were able to hit these locations with great accuracy. Well before the war, the Beirut ring had penetrated the inner circles of Hizballah high-ups and was reporting on their activities and movements to Israeli controllers. Its center was located in Beirut's Shiite district of Dahya, the Hizballah stronghold. Short anonymous phone calls would give

agents their rendezvous for picking up orders and spy equipment and dead drops for relaying their information. The second network was composed of two cells operating out of the village of Itrun opposite Kibbutz Yaron and Bint Jubeil further west. Run by veterans of the South Lebanese Army (the force Israel created during its occupation), its job was to "paint" targets for the Israeli Air Force and artillery. Their leader was Mahmoud al-Jemayel. Envelopes with their orders and espionage devices were left at a pre-assigned spot along the security fence on the Lebanese-Israeli border. Halil Mantsur, an Itrin villager, was in charge of communications through the security fence; Muhammed Bassem, a Shiite from Bin Jubeil, ran field operations. The ring had 20 operatives recruited from South Lebanese villages and a number of Palestinians from the camps around Tyre and Sidon. They were paid \$500 per month for spying on Hizballah. A local taxi driver drove the operatives to their assignments and returned them to their homes. The Beirut ring was the more sophisticated. In addition to tactical intelligence-gathering, its wings spread outside Lebanon. Its leader, Faisal Mukleid, 29, a Shiite from Jarjuara village, was captain of small freighters which carried smuggled drugs and stolen goods between Mediterranean ports on the Italian and Egyptian coasts. In 2000, Mukleid was picked up by the Italian navy in a customs raid. In a cell awaiting trial, he was contacted by the Mossad. In no time, he was sprung and flown to Israel where he spent several months learning how to use eavesdropping and surveillance equipment. The Lebanese Shiite sea-captain's first mission in Lebanon was to recruit relatives and fellow Shiites and get them planted inside the Hizballah leadership. Towards the end of the year, he and his wife joined up as members of Hizballah. Their devotion and zeal was such that they were soon promoted to the high ranks of the organization. Together with the agents they recruited, they quickly reached positions on the personal staffs of top political and military leaders, whom they accompanied more than once on trips to Tehran. Exposing the Israeli spy rings in their midst has made Hizballah's top people extremely jumpy and suspicious. One of their discoveries from an inquest of the war they fought with Israel in July and August is that their command structures in South Lebanon were heavily penetrated by agents working for Israel intelligence. Now they are looking over their shoulders for spies they may have missed. Tuesday night, Aug. 29, Hizballah's security officials detained two non-Lebanese Arabs wandering around the ruined Dahya district, taking photos and drawing maps. Several forged passports were found in their possession. The captured Israeli agents are locked up in Hizballah jails awaiting their fate. The Hizballah security service has drawn up dossiers for their indictment, but it is uncertain how to proceed. The Lebanese prosecution authorities, once dominated by Syrian influence, can no longer be counted on for convictions.

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