Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's Refworld website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

LBN105387.E

22 December 2015

Lebanon: Military service obligations in South Lebanon for a young Shiite in 1999 and 2000; whether military service would have been required in the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) or the South Lebanon Army (SLA) during these years

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview


According to a press release by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a "civil rights and human relations agency" that combats anti-Semitism (ADL n.d.b), the occupied zone was approximately 9 miles wide (ibid. n.d.a). The Guardian reports that in the "early 1980s," the "SLA, strongly reinforced by Israeli military 'advisers,' had established control of the land south of the Litani river - roughly 10% of the country" (8 Feb. 2000). According to Human Rights Watch, the areas occupied included "over one hundred villages and towns that are part of Lebanon's provincial administrative districts of Tyre, Bint Jbail, Marjayoun, Hasbaya, the Western Bekaa, and Nabatiyeh" (Human Rights Watch 1999). According to The Los Angeles Times, the Israeli army headquarters was located in Marjayoun (24 May 2000). The New York Times reports that the second largest Israeli base was located in Bint Jbail (23 May 2000).

Sources state that members of Hezbollah began to occupy southern Lebanon after the departure of the SLA and Israeli forces (The LA Times 24 May 2000; The New York Times 23 May 2000; Freedom House 1999).

2. Military Service Obligations

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor of political science at the University of Otago, with a specialization in the Middle East, including Lebanese history, stated that between 1998 and 2000, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) would have had a 12 month conscription for men over 18 years of age and that "service with the LAF was technically required" (1 Dec. 2015). The US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1999 similarly states that "[a]ll males between 18 and 21 years of age in Lebanon are subject to compulsory military service" (US 23 Feb. 2000, Sec. 2d). Sources, including the Professor, indicated the following exceptions: university students, those who resided outside of Lebanon for five or more years (Professor 1 Dec. 2015; Australia 21 Dec. 2006), those who are the only male child in the family, married or had a brother who already completed his compulsory military service (ibid.). For information...
on the end of the practice of mandatory military service in the LAF, see Response to Information Request LBN103352.

To the Professor's knowledge, there was "no LAF presence in the occupied zone" (1 Dec. 2015). According to a September 2000 article in Jane's Intelligence Review, after the withdrawal of the SLA and IDF, the "Lebanese security presence in the south [was] minimal" (26 Sept. 2000). The BBC similarly reported in late May 2000 that "[t]he Lebanese Government is reluctant to deploy the army in the south" (BBC 26 May 2000). According to a 1999 report by Freedom House, "Lebanon had by year's end only apportioned some police and army personnel to towns and villages within the former security zone..." (Freedom House 1999).

According to the Professor, while it would have been possible and "technically required at some point" to serve in the LAF, the individual "would have had to leave the [occupied] zone," and to the Professor's knowledge, the individual would not have been allowed to return (1 Dec. 2015). According to sources, the SLA would pressure young men to join them (UN 14 Oct. 2006; The New York Times 5 June 2000; Professor 1 Dec. 2015), including through the use of "duress and even abduction" (ibid.). Sources indicate that the SLA expelled people from the occupied zone (US 23 Feb. 2000; Human Rights Watch 9 Nov 1999), including for suspected activities of relatives and for refusing to serve in the SLA (ibid.; UN 14 Oct. 2006).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References


Professor of Political Science, University of Otago. 1 December 2015. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.


**Additional Sources Consulted**

**Oral sources:** Associate Professor, International History, London School of Economics and Political Science; Associate Professor, Political Science and International Relations, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Director, Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Tufts University; Foundation for Human & Humanitarian Rights Lebanon; Professor of Political Science, Florida Atlantic University.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International; *The Daily Star Lebanon*; ecoi.net; Factiva; Foundation for Human & Humanitarian Rights Lebanon; *Haaretz*; International Crisis Group; Israel – Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Lebanon Wire; *The Times of Israel*; UN – Refworld; War Resisters' International.

Tips on how to use this search engine.

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