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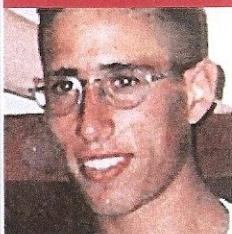
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Guy Hever Photo: Yedioth Ahronoth archive



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Syrian group says holding missing Israeli soldier

Syrian guerilla organization, the Committees for the Liberation of the Golan Heights, says it is holding missing Israeli soldier. Group apparently referring to Guy Hever, missing since August 1997

Ali Waked

Latest Update: 02.13.07, 23:01 / [Israel News](#)

First publication: An Israeli soldier missing since August 1997 was being held by the Resistance Committees for the Liberation of the Golan Heights, the group claimed Tuesday.

The Syrian guerilla organization was apparently referring to Guy Hever, who has been missing since August 17, 1997.

The authenticity of the statement was still unclear.

Guy's mother, Rina, told Ynet: "I haven't received new information from any official source regarding my son. I'm hearing about it for the first time from you. I know he's being held in Syria, I've been certain of this for the last 10 years, and kept saying it. There was no other option. He disappeared near the Syrian border."

Prisoner-swap demanded

In the statement, the Syrian organization addresses "the Zionists," offering a prisoner-swap deal for the soldier they claimed was in their custody.

"Don't think that your millions of dollars will bring back your soldier missing from the Golan. You know very well how you can get him back," the statement said.

The group demanded Israel release nine Syrian prisoners, residents of the Golan Heights, currently held in Israeli prisons. Four of the nine have been jailed for over 22 years, and two of them are being held in solitary confinement. The Syrian group warned Israel against bringing them to any harm.

The Syrian organization was founded on June 26, in a cross-border ceremony in the Golan Heights and Syria. The participants declared the establishment of the 'Resistance Committees for the Liberation of the Golan Heights' and warned that if negotiations between Israel and Syria failed, the group would

turn to terror tactics.

In recent months, Syrian President Bashar Assad has commented at multiple opportunities that if negotiations with Israel were not renewed, "It is Syria's right to repossess the Golan using all means, including war."

Hizbullah's Syrian parallel

A Syrian source told Ynet that the resistance group was founded with the aim of launching "a guerilla war" in the Golan, with Syrian gunmen planning to infiltrate Israel to perpetrate attacks.

Syria drew its conclusions from last summer's war in Lebanon, and it was likely the group would operate parallel to the Hizbullah terror organization.

Guy Hever, a soldier from the IDF's artillery corps, disappeared from the Golan Heights on August 17, 1997. He was last seen at his army base at 9:30 a.m., and since then was never heard from again. He was dressed in his IDF uniform, dog tags, a prisoner document and a key ring, and he was armed with a long-cylindrical gun.

Since Hever's disappearance, efforts were made on many planes to locate him. His family and IDF officials met with defense and diplomatic officials in Israel and abroad, as well as with Red Cross and UN representatives. Israel Police and the IDF held extensive search missions, aided by various technological means, but found no trace of the soldier.

Searches for the missing soldier were renewed three months ago. The investigation team focused their searches on a one-kilometer radius around the army base Hever disappeared from nine-and-a-half years ago.

Special technological equipment was used to survey minefields near the base, and an underwater scanner was used to inspect nearby water reservoirs. The searches, however, were in vain.

Roi Mandel and Ronny Sofer contributed to the report