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Who chose the brigade's name?

Jabal al-Jormoq is the highest peak in Palestine. We chose that name because it symbolises the liberation of all of Palestine.

Tell us about the 1978 invasion.

It became clear that the situation was heading towards a wide Zionist military operation. This was especially the case following the failure of its agents in unifying al-Qleia' and Marjeyoun strip with Ramish and Ain Ebel strip. This failure became clear after the pressure it applied on the border villages within the border strip failed to persuade these villages to join them. This made the enemy occupy Maroun el-Ras, which is located 940 meters above sea level and overlooks Palestine on one side and on the other overlooks Bint Jbeil, Ayatroun and the outskirts of Tebnine. We didn't have any forces in Maroun el-Ras as we had an agreement with the two main families in the town declaring the town, like the rest of the border villages, as a neutral area.

At dawn on 2 March 1978 Sami al-Shediaq's forces supported by tanks occupied Maroun el-Ras. As a result Bint Jbeil was under their direct fire. The families started leaving the area and the situation became difficult. If the border villages kept falling under their control and their two strips were united we would be forced to retreat to the out skirts of Tebnine.

We had discussed this possibility earlier. We reached a decision to retake Maroun el-Ras immediately to prevent the enemy from fortifying its positions and thus making any attempt to retake the town difficult and costly. I left the battalion's command center in Tebnine and went to Bint Jbeil. The roads in Bint Jbeil were severed as a result of enemy fire and shelling. Jihad (Shafiq al-Ghabra) had started preparing for the counteroffensive. We didn't for reinforcements from the forces to avoid wasting time. I rejected a suggestion from the commanders to postpone the attack until preparations were made and we had enough forces for the attack. Bilal, the commander of the middle sector, arrived in Tebnine. Our relationship to Bilal was similar to our relationship to Jawad. I asked him, Khaled, the commander of reinforcement operations, and Wasef Eraitia, commander of the heavy artillery for support.

¹ From an interview conducted by Tony Clifton, Newsweek (New York – International edition), April 3, 1978.

The counteroffensive started at 1pm and was led by Jihad. The offensive was on three axes scaling up the hill on foot. The aim was to control the town's entrance and the area surrounding the town and securing the main road connecting it to Bint Jbeil. As the force that will reach Maroun el-Ras will be exhausted we ordered a mobile force, led by Ammar, to join the attack and maintain the momentum. Raed and the mortar division in the brigade did an excellent job in supporting the attack. Units from the PFLP, the Communist Action Organisation, and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party took part in the attack. We liberated Maroun el-Ras without losing any fighters. The enemy lost 18 dead and a number of armored vehicles which we gave to the Lebanese Arab Army. The bodies of the dead were handed over to the Red Cross. The north of Palestine as far as the eye could see was now only a few meters away. The Zionists shelled Maroun el-Ras for an entire hour then heavy silence fell on the area. This was followed by a storm that was gathering in the horizon.

The battle of Maroun el-Ras ended the military role of Haddad-Shediaq forces and forces the Zionist army to act. We, on the other hand, started preparing for the coming confrontation.

A few days later on 8 March 1978 Dalal al-Mughrabi operation took place. Dalal was a Feda'i who took part in Beirut battles and moved with us from Baissour to Bint Jbeil. In Beirut male and female fighters from university students camped in the positions together. In the south the situation was harder. It was our custom in the brigade to respect the traditions of the masses. We tried to form a women platoon but the number of our sisters wasn't enough. Dalal wasn't satisfied working at the clinic run by Dr Khaled, who came from France, Aqba and sister Bahyia. They were joined from time to time by a number of volunteers from our sisters and our international friends especially Norwegians.

The clinic offered medical services to Bint Jbeil and the border villages including those under the control of Saad Haddad. The clinic served multiple functions including acting as a medical point, a communications point and a security point. Dalal wasn't satisfied with that role and insisted on serving in the forward positions. We allowed her to but she wasn't satisfied with that role either. It seems that she had bigger ambitions. She joined the martyr Kamal Adwan group and took part in the famous operation on the Palestinian coast. In her will she wrote great praise of martyr Saad Jaradat, the brigade and the student organisation.

After liberating Maroun el-Ras an Israeli military intervention became a reality. Dalal al-Mughrabi's operation decided the matter. Total silence fell on the entire frontline and movement in the Zionist settlements ceased after their inhabitants were evacuated. At midnight 14 March the aerial and artillery bombardment for our positions in Maroun el-Ras and Bint Jbeil started. From the early hours of the evening messages from Rebhi in Maroun el-Ras continued to follow informing us that Israeli mechanised divisions started their advance from their rear assembly points along their entire line of deployment. We informed the command that the Israeli attack was taking place that night because the enemy deploys its armored vehicles in front of us when they wanted to advance. I don't want to go into the details of the military action in Bin Jbeil but I want to say that our fighters fought fiercely in Maroun el-Ras and all the positions. The fighters adopted a clever plan to avoid enemy shelling. The enemy expected us to retreat when it shelled our positions. Instead we moved forward. In other words the fighters in Maroun el-Ras advanced towards the Palestinian-Lebanese borders. That's why none of us was injured in the shelling. We even left our fortified positions in Bint Jbeil and moved forward. When the enemy flanked and stormed Maroun el-Ras they discovered that our positions were abandoned. The enemy soldiers were celebrating and dancing when our fighters opened fire. The enemy admitted losing 8 dead in Maroun el-Ras and heavy losses in Bint Jbeil. We had agreed on a regressive fighting plan according to which we would absorb the first shock, steadfast in our positions for as long as possible, retreat to another position and so on. After that we would retreat to a main position where we would confront and surprise the enemy who would have been reassured by overcoming small positions and was advancing rapidly. We planned our retreat from Bint Jbeil to Beit Yahoun, Tebnine, Sultaniyah, Chehabie, Jouaya and Abbasseih. Our losses in Bint Jbeil were heavy because absorbing the first shock cost us the lives of most fighters in our positions in Talet Masoud and Talet Shalaboun. Our dead included Hassan Shararah, Bashar Faour, Zaytoun Bazi, Abu Khaled Shheimi, and Abu Wajih Andari. (The graves of these martyrs were discovered after the liberation of the south in 2000. A monument was erected and a big ceremony was held in Bint Jbeil in honor of their memory, steadfastness and heroism.) The 1978 battle continued until the last two points we fought at in Jouaya and Abbasseih. In Abbasseih the enemy committed a big massacre. Despite the massacre the fighting in Abbasseih and Jouaya convinced the Israelis that if they continue their advance towards Tyre and the camps fierce fighting was waiting for them. The fighting from Bint Jbeil to Jouaya and Abbasseih lasted for 8 days. This is why it was called the 8 days war. We fought in this strip alongside the brothers from the middle sector led by the brave and competent commander martyr Bilal. This plan prevented the Israelis from reaching the Litani River.

The Tyre-Sidon road was kept open and the Palestinian camps outside the control of the occupation. I would like to mention the great role played by martyr Ali Abu Touq who was head of the logistics at the time. He didn't leave any group in need of any supplies or weapons. By the way we didn't lose a single weapons cache. In the groves in Chabriha the Israelis were 50 meters away from the weapons cache and despite that we managed to move the entire cache. We didn't lose a single weapon, communication with the groups or any supplies.

After the battle, the Israeli chief of staff Mordechai Gur held a press conference where he said the units they faced in Bint Jbeil and Maroun el-Ras were different from other units they face before. He spoke about an important discovery they made and that was finding educational leaflets and booklets with learned lessons from other experiences. He concluded that they were facing a different type of fighters.

After the battle of 1978 ended we redeployed along the coastline. When the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) arrived in Lebanon we feared that Saad Haddad forces might take positions in areas under UNIFIL control. We decided to take positions in the south before UNIFIL arrived there. By the time the forces arrived our presence there was a fact on the ground. When UNIFIL entered Deir Qanoun, Chabriha and Qana they found us there. Our presence was a fact on the ground. Therefore it was necessary to form a coordination committee between our forces and UNIFIL. The committee was headed by Mohammad Temraz, a brave officer in the Palestine Liberation Army. During this period there was a confrontation with Saad Haddad forces, with Israeli support, tried to sneak into border areas such as Khirbet Selm and Kabrikha. Taking control of these areas would have allowed them to bring Wadi al-Hajir under their fire. In cooperation with the families there, we sent groups that lived with and were supported by the families. During the night these groups would go to Wadi al-Hajir and the border areas on patrols. The groups continued their activity for 3 or 4 months. The Israelis were afraid to advance towards these areas because they believed we were setting up ambushes to capture soldiers. We moved around in plain clothes without establishing a permanent base. The fighters dressed in plain clothes and we moved them from one house to the next every 3 days or so. This way we didn't need supply trucks or military vehicles which would have made our detection easier. During that period we prevented Saad Haddad forces from deploying inside the area controlled by UNIFIL. We also managed to build good relations of the force officers. They even helped us move weapons and ammunitions into the occupied territories. They carried 10s of transportation missions for us. The Israeli managed to detect only one. Mohammad Temraz

played an important role in coordination these operations along with Abu Hassan and Hamdi.

You went to Bent Jbeil and most of you were educated or university graduates. We also know that you had a moral code in the bases and in your relationship with the people. Can you tell us more about this code?

All of Fateh should behave like this. We focused our attention on good behavior. We considered any aggression against the people to be an aggression against us. We didn't tolerate any aggression even if we had to threaten the use of force to stop such aggression. In our experience in the Lebanese south we clashed with drug dealers and thieves. Such incidents often ended quickly. Transgressions against the people were prohibited regardless of the perpetrator. On some occasions we threatened the use of force against units from Fateh and other factions that assaulted the people or public property. We fought all attempts to bully the people. This created a strong relationship between the people and us. In addition to our revolutionary behavior, our positive position towards the Movement of the Disinherited and our relationship to Sayyed Musa al-Sadr helped strengthen this relationship.

Like all other areas in Lebanon the south had its own characteristics and divisions. There are conflicts and competition between the families. Some families changed their allegiance from one faction or party to the next. We didn't have any predetermined positions. We had allies among the Palestinian factions and the Lebanese National Movement but this didn't mean we needed to be hostile towards the political opponents of those factions. For example, if Iraq was at war with Iran this didn't mean we allow al-Baath or the Arab Liberation Front to clash with Shia Islamists supportive of Iran. We refused to be hostages of such situations. That's why we conducted an experience, that appeared to be strange, in Bint Jbeil initially and in the entire south after that. At the time, Amal Movement was a rising power in the south. The various parties of the National Movement, especially the Communist Party, considered the south their main support base. They considered the support that Amal was gaining was at their expense. This created hostility between the two sides that quickly turned into armed clashes.

In Bint Jbeil we initiated a dialogue with Amal Movement. We had previous relations with the movement through their first training camp. The trainers at the camp were members of our group. Mujahed al-Damen, one of our brothers, was martyred at the camp. This is in addition to the Kfarchouba

experience and our relationship with Sayyed Musa al-Sadr. We started a dialogue and a discussion with Dr Mustafa Chamran, who became the first Minister of Defence in Mehdi Bazargan's government in Iran, when he was head of the Workers Institution in Tyre. Amal and the other factions including Fateh had many fears and suspicions. We convinced Dr Mustafa Chamran that they needed to have presence in positions on the frontline. Amal started stationing groups with us in Bint Jbeil. Eventually they had a group permanently stationed there. Dr Mustafa Chamran sometimes used to come with these groups. This move broke the tension partially. At the same time we built relations with the other forces including Abdel Raouf Fadlallah, Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah's father. We visited him frequently at his house in Ainata. We also built relationships with the head of the municipality, the Mukhtar and the members of parliament from the area. There were no limits or restrictions on building such relationships as long as they served communal and civil stability, stopped any negative friction and helped achieve steadfastness against the enemy. Martyr Hassan Shararah played a great in coordinating these relationships in addition to his distinguished combat and leadership roles.

These efforts succeeded initially but when the tension intensified, Iraq-Iran war broke out and Amal's influence became very powerful the situation escalated into armed clashes in 1980-1982. Palestinian factions became embroiled in the clashes between Amal and the factions of the National Movement. Our position was decisive against those committing transgressions regardless of which side they were on. For example, in Kfartebnit members of Amal killed two members of the Labour Party while on their way to their positions in Arnoun. We declared our position that the area was the front against the Zionist enemy and that such acts are prohibited there. We forced Amal to handover the two people responsible for the killings to imprisoned and tried. In other areas there were attacks and shelling on the villages. For example, if a village were considered to have allegiance to Amal it would be shelled by rockets and mortars. To maintain our decisive position we would dispatch a force to the concerned village even if it were outside the area under our control. We would dispatch a force to stop armed violence. Unfortunately this changed the nature our job. At the time we had positions in Shaqif Castle, Kfartebnit and el-Nabi Taher groves. This meant that our confrontation was mainly against Saad Haddad and the Zionist enemy. Half of the brigade was busy stopping the clashes in Ansar, Zefta, Ansarieh, and Sarafand. If there were any problems in any area we needed to intervene. Muin, Marwan or Abu al-Fateh would go to Sidon or Tyre to solve the problems there. This drained our energy. We had a platoon guarding the Castle's rear and was stationed near al-Qaqaia bridge, Jebchit and Zawtar. We

didn't expect the Israeli attack to come across al-Khardali bridge but would outflank UNIFIL and advance across al-Qaqaia bridge. We had to dispatch this platoon to stop the clashes in Ansar. The enemy crossed al-Qaqaia bridge easily and the platoon was only able to engage the Zionist forces near the entrance to Jebchit.

You spoke about the moral code and leading by example. Can we consider the epic battle at Shaqif Castle to epitomise this type behavior? The fighters decided to stand their ground and fight knowing they will not survive the battle.

Our set of values included leading by example, education, raising awareness, and adherence to the political and intellectual lines. The fighters needed to know what their mission was, why they were there, and the importance of what they were doing. Fighters in the castle, or any other position, knew how to act in every moment and were the highest level of preparedness and awareness.

Was there a decision to resist until the end?

Our decision was to hold on to Shaqif Castle and the other positions in el-Nabi Taher grove, Kfartebnit and Arnoun in order to support the castle during the battle. Our positions in el-Nabi Taher grove was considered, in military terms, the most important position because it protected the castle and overlooked Nabatieh. It was known the fighters stationed in the castle would not withdraw. It was the job of the other positions to help those inside the castle hold on to it until the end.

What do you mean by "until the end"?

I mean that fighters in the castle would fight until their last breath; until martyrdom. The job of the forces in Kfartebnit, el-Nabi Taher grove and Arnoun was to support the castle and engage the Zionist forces that might advance across al-Khardali bridge. This was a secondary axis for the enemy's advance. Another platoon was stationed before the castle and was tasked with engaging the Israeli forces that would advance across al-Qaqaia bridge towards the castle. This platoon was in Ansar to stop the clashes between Amal and the National movement. It engaged the Israelis halfway to the castle on the outskirts of Jebchit. We dispatched another force from Nabatieh to confront the enemy forces that began advancing from Zawtar towards Arnoun. A tanks division from the September Martyrs Brigade, which was attached to our forces, took position in positions that were prepared in

advance in the nearby hills and engaged the enemy forces advancing between Zawtar and Arnoun. Our choice was to fight until martyrdom.

The fortifications in the castle were prepared according to this. The fortifications were improved everyday as a result of the great efforts of the fighters led by Ali Abu Touq and the support from the rear positions in the previous two years. We take great pride in the fact that despite the preparatory aerial, artillery and rocket bombardment followed by direct tank fire we didn't lose a single martyr. All the fighters were killed in direct close trench combat.

In 1980 we received orders to move to Nabatieh and the castle following an Israeli raid on the castle. We arrived in the area at dawn and took positions under enemy aerial and artillery bombardment. Bayt al-Maqdis brigade, which was stationed in the area, withdrew to regroup. From that day on the area became a non-stop workshop. Our sisters in Beirut filled bags with sand from a beach near by and shipped it to the frontline. Our main workshop was building metal hangers for us to bury in the ground creating shelters. University engineering students brought us an old blueprint of the castle. The blueprint enabled us, despite the destruction caused by the Zionists, to learn the castle's secrets and where to dig and in which direction. The students supervised the fortifications work and the non-stop digging carried out by tens of volunteers under continuous bombardment. The result was that during two years of bombardment, from the war of attrition to the invasion, we only lost two martyrs. The fighters wrote at castle's entrance: "Built by Beaufort; Liberated by Saladin; and Modified by Ali Abu Touq."

The castle is an exceptional human experience were the fighters decided to resist to the end. Who was the leader of the group in the castle?

Martyr Yaqoub Sammour (Rasem). He had 34 fighters. All of them were martyred after a devastating Israeli bombardment and heroic fighting inflicting unexpected losses on the Israelis. The leader of the Israeli assault, Giora Harnik, was killed during the assault. When Begin and Sharon visited the castle they were furious because of the Israeli losses. A few minutes after Begin boarded his airplane the Israelis discovered an injured Palestinian fighter still a live. The injured fighter opened fire against the Israelis without injuring anyone according to what the Israelis said. They shot and killed him. Imagine if this happened while Begin was still at the castle.

Between the two invasions the Islamisation movement began and you opened up towards Islam. Shia Islam was on the ascendancy and the Palestinian

presence in the south was receding. Is there a paradox here? How can we analyse this paradox in relation to the security equation in the Lebanese south?

The Islamic Revolution in Iran opened our eyes to something new. The prevailing point of view at the time was that Islamists, or people who believe in political Islam, were reactionaries. The Islamic Revolution demonstrated that Islam had a great potential to be a revolutionary force capable of mobilising energy and efforts and revolutionary action as well as contributing to liberation. I can't say that what we experienced was an ideological religious shift as much as it was political shift. It contributed a great revolutionary energy to the conflict with the Zionist enemy.

Our evaluation was that we were witnessing a great change in the region. The Shah of Iran, an Israeli ally, was removed by the Islamic revolution. The concept of progressive or revolutionary Islam altered the nature of the conflict with the Zionist enemy and the Americans in the region. That's where the interest in Islam and Islamic thought came from. This was especially the case since the people around us in the Lebanese south were Shia Muslims greatly affected by the Iranian experience.

On the practical level I didn't feel there was a fundamental change in the brigade or in the nature of our mission. Our set values remained the same. Perhaps some of the brothers were stronger observers of Islam than others. Within the brigade topics such as Marxism or Maoism were not discussed. The nature of our duty made everything move in a more practical direction. Whenever we had a meeting for the brigade command Ali Abu Touq would fall asleep as a result of exhaustion.

Probably there were deeper discussion in Beirut and the universities. The strugglers around us discussed issues such as Maoism and Islam. In truth, such discussions didn't affect the relationships with the brigade or the nature of our mission. Our thinking was dominated by other issues.

Where were you in the Islamisation project?

I was within the general national project but close to the Islamic issue. I didn't become a preacher or a jurist. I believe that any real revolutionary project in our country that ignores the Islamic popular culture and the great potential that political Islam represents as an essential tool of mobilisation and struggle will not succeed.

The problem with Islam is there are many sects and schools of thought...

A project will not succeed unless this Islamic reserve intersects with the national movements in our country. This includes all of Islam's sects and schools of thought. This is a process of unifying the entire nation against its main adversary. It includes all the Islamic and Christian sects as well as different ethnic groups.

How did this reflect on the brigade?

As a brigade we thought the Islamic Revolution's victory was a new struggle reserves that can extend the life of the Palestinian revolution and struggle and expedite its victory. Our set of values didn't change as they were close to the Arab Islamic culture, which was our culture. Some of our literature addressed such issues before the Islamic tide. This is in addition to our practical position aimed at building the widest front available around the resistance.

What happened after the fall of Shaqif Castle?

The Zionist preparatory bombardment started on 4 June 1982. In the morning of 6 June we shot down a Sky Hawk airplane in Kfartebnit. The pilot, Aharon Ahiaz, was captured and handed over to the leadership in Beirut. The pilot was returned as part of the exit from Beirut agreement. There wasn't a prisoners' exchange and we didn't get anything in return. On 6 June we started receiving reports that the Israeli tanks started advancing. We decided to move the operations room to another location. Vehicles weren't allowed to drive to the new location and you were only allowed to get there on foot to avoid exposing it. So when one of the officials from on the factions drove there we were surprised. He needed batteries for his radio. A few seconds after he stopped his car we were hit by probably a surface-to-surface missile. At that moment the radio operator was climbing a tree to hand the antenna. He fell down and was martyred. I was injured. Another fighter called Deeb, who was injured before, was wounded. My foot was hit and a splinter penetrated my spleen. A Canadian doctor Yano, who was with us in Nabatieh and Tripoli and who stayed with martyr Ali Abu Touq in Shatila, came. He broke the door and used the wood to make a cast for my foot. I was then moved to Sidon. The Israelis had carried out a landing in Sidon and closed all the roads to the city. That day I met the fighters from Mount Lebanon and asked them to scout the back roads between the south and Chouf. We had predicted that the coastal road would fall in the first stages of the invasion even if the Israelis didn't advance. Before I left Nabatieh we engaged the tanks advancing towards the castle near the town's entrance. We attacked the

scout patrol that the Israelis sent towards Nabatieh. The characteristics of the invasion started becoming clearer and the clashes started taking place at short distances. We evacuated a platoon of 23mm machine guns towards Sidon to protect them. When the platoon arrived in Sidon Tallet Sharhabil, which overlooks Sidon, had fallen into enemy hands. A counteroffensive was launched to retake the hill with support from the machine guns platoon. Meanwhile, Hamdi and the other brothers found out I was injured. He took two of brother Abu Jihad's escorts and a fighter from Mount Lebanon and drove a Red Crescent ambulance along the back roads that they scouted earlier. When they arrived to Sidon the road was open.

How long was it open for?

The counteroffensive opened the road for 30 minutes which they used to get into the city and take me to the hospital. I had just left the surgery room in Ghassan Hamoud hospital. They put me in the ambulance and took me to Beirut. The Israelis renewed their attack on Tallet Sharhabil. From the ambulance I could see shells landing around us. Sharif, Abu Jihad's driver, was driving the car fast. I asked him to slow down because every time he sped up it caused me more pain. Hamdi told him to ignore me. Thank god we arrived at the hospital in Beirut. I was put in a room next to my wife who had given birth to our first girl two days earlier. I stayed in that room until we left Beirut after the war. Later on the Zionists arrested Dr Yano in Sidon and subjected him to brutal interrogation about my whereabouts. They didn't believe I had left Sidon in that short window of time.

And the fighters?

At dawn the next day the fighters started a gradual retreat in groups in al-Toufah area. None of them knew where the Israeli advance would have reached. They started evacuating the positions in Nabatieh, el-Nabi Taher and Kfartebnit and started a gradual retreat through al-Toufah area until they reached Beqaa. The retreat was organised and communications to all groups continued as a result of the bravery of one of our sisters. She had allowed us to put a radio transmitter in her house in Zrariah which she kept even after the area was occupied. She continued doing her duty until all groups have reached their destination safely. The retreat continued for 4 or 5 days after that the groups started reinforcing Mount Lebanon. Abu Jihad had agreed to send Hamdi and Mahmoud al-Aloul from Beirut to organise the resistance in Mount Lebanon against the Israeli advance. In Beqaa, the fighters' new mission was to absorb the new volunteers, reinforce Mount Lebanon, resupply Beirut and conduct operations behind enemy lines. The first

operation document by Ali Abu Touq in his diaries was carried out on 23 June.

What were the losses of the brigade after retreating?

We lost 50 martyrs in Shaqif Castle, Arnoun, Nabatieh and Jebchit and a small number of wounded. None of our fighters was captured or surrendered.

Did the fighters in Mount Lebanon conduct attacks operations the Israelis?

These operations were largely ignored and were only mentioned in Mohammad Hamza's book where he documented the letters sent to central command center and the various military units. If we look at the Hebrew sources we will discover that the Israeli losses between June 1982 and the end of 1983 and the Tripoli battles were larger than their losses during the invasion. It is worth noting that their losses in this period equal their losses in all the resistance operations until their withdrawal from Lebanon. The Israelis in that period were deceived by victory and didn't organise themselves properly. They were also stretched across a very large area of Lebanese territory which made easy targets.

Why were these operations ignored?

Firstly, I think the decision was to force the resistance out of Lebanon. Therefore it wasn't in anyone's interest to talk about the resistance operations in Lebanon whether during the Siege of Beirut or the exit from Beirut after that. Secondly, the split took place which made talk about operation inappropriate. However, despite the split we were keen that operations against the Israelis continue. We distinguished between the two issues. Thirdly, the resistance in Lebanon was meant to present a special model of resistance and it wasn't appropriate to discuss any other model. The most discussed operation is al-Wembi operation. No one talks about the Alia's bus operation planned by Ali Abu Touq along with our brothers in Mount Lebanon. This operation resulted in 60 Israeli casualties. No one talks about Armoun bus operation, martyr Kamal al-Nalawi or the tens of other operations. No one talks even about the capture of 8 Zionist soldiers without firing a single shot. This was the largest number of Israeli soldiers captured by the resistance ever. This operation was also ignored.

Who carried out this operation?

A patrol under the command of brother Mahmoud al-Aloul with help from the Mount Lebanon groups such as Hilal Raslan (Abu Mahmoud). At the time we had a series of bases and scouting points in the area.

How was the operation carried out and how were they captured?

The fighters snuck onto an Israeli ambush. The soldiers let their guard down and thought our fighters were Israeli soldiers coming to replace them or reinforce them. Our fighters spoke Hebrew and French. The group's leader had studied in Algeria. Then suddenly they pointed their guns at the soldiers and capture them. Then they went to the other four soldiers still in their dorms and captured them as well. They made the Israeli soldiers walk in front of them handcuffed and carrying their weapons on their backs. The question was how to take these soldiers to Beqaa with all the Syrian checkpoints in the area? They passed through a checkpoint for the PFLP-General Command and used their vehicles to transport the prisoners to Beqaa. The PFLP-GC took two prisoners in return for allowing our fighters to pass through the Syrian checkpoints. The prisoners were returned in a prisoners exchange during the siege of Tripoli. In the prisoner exchange all the prisoners held at Ansar were freed. Ansar practically closed down after the prisoners' exchange. A limited number of prisoners held inside Palestine were also freed. The PFLP-GC prisoner exchange freed almost all the prisoners held in Palestine.

The two prisoners held by the PFLP-GC were taken to Syria. Our issue now was where to keep prisoners? How to keep 6 Israelis soldiers in Beqaa at time when were surrounded in the area located between Chtaura, Saadanyel and Taalbeya? The area was less than 2 kilometers squared. It was very difficult to hide 6 Israeli soldiers especially with the clashes with the defectors taking place. The Syrian and the Israeli armies were now looking for the soldiers. It felt like the entire world revolved around the fate of these 6 soldiers. Gilad Shalit's capture by Hamas caused a lot of confusion in the Israeli security establishment. It was considered a great success that Hamas kept his location a secret. We had 6 soldiers. If we hid them somewhere under guard we would be exposed the next minute. We would have been exposed if we had fighters guarding a place or sent food or a doctor. So we hid them in people's homes. We went back to our masses and our people. We divided the soldiers into various houses. They lived in that house and ate what family in that house ate. No one went to visit them or check on them. If one of the neighbors noticed something unusual we changed their location. We hid them for more than a year. This is not a short period of time. The circle started closing on us and Beqaa was no longer a safe area. We smuggle the 6 soldiers, one at a time,

into Tripoli despite all the checkpoints. They left Tripoli a year later. It is a great achievement to hide 6 soldiers in an area less than 2 kilometers squared. Despite all of this the operations carried out by the Palestinian-Lebanese resistance 1982-1983 are still ignored.

However, the operations behind enemy lines and the operations of the Palestinian –Lebanese resistance during 1982-1983 are still ignored to our day.