Footage appears to show Hezbollah adopting Gaza arson tactics against Israel

August 19, 2019

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/footage-appears-to-show-hezbollah-adopting-gaza-arson-tactics-against-israel/>

A fire that raged along Israel’s border with Lebanon Friday appears to be the work of Hezbollah terrorists who have adopted arson techniques that Palestinians in Gaza have used repeatedly to attack Israel, according to footage aired Sunday by Channel 12.

In the footage, Hezbollah operatives can be seen setting fires near the border. Strong winds quickly fanned the flames and caused the fire to cross the boundary and spread toward an IDF base and the community of  Margaliot.

In the footage, UN peacekeepers can be seen patrolling near the fires, but making no attempt to stop the Hezbollah men from lighting them.

The fires caused several landmines placed along the border to explode. Local firefighters took several hours to put out the fire, in an effort that was hampered by the inability to use firefighting aircraft due to the proximity to the hostile border.

“Everyone knows the Lebanese side is responsible for these provocations,” local official Yoram Mahluf told Channel 12. “They are testing us.”

The news report said officials believe that Hezbollah would continue to set fires along the border in order to try and keep the IDF distracted and also to clear brush that Israeli special forces could use for cover.

The tactic appears to be in imitation of Palestinian terrorists in Gaza who have been sending thousands of arson balloons into Israel with devastating effect.

The tactic of launching balloons carrying explosive and arson devices from Gaza into Israel emerged last year as part of a series of protests and riots along the Strip’s border, known collectively as the March of Return. The simple and cheap method of attack by Palestinians proved effective against the far more powerful Israel Defense Forces.

From April to June 2018, Israeli firefighters extinguished 1,954 fires started by arson attacks in the fields, forests and grasslands around the Gaza Strip. They fought 383 blazes over the same period in 2019.

In addition, throughout 2018, approximately 34,000 dunams — 8,400 acres — of Israeli land were burned in arson attacks, according to statistics from the Fire and Rescue Services, Jewish National Fund and Nature and Parks Authority.

As of June, 1,400 dunams — 345 acres —  of land were damaged by incendiary devices from the Strip in 2019.