

IDF Assists Hospitals During Wartime

During national emergencies, special Hospital Military Units are deployed to assist hospitals in dealing with the reception of casualties and protecting vulnerable areas.

Though designed for assistance during unconventional warfare, these units have now expanded their field of operations to include assistance during conventional warfare such as the rocket attacks faced during Operation Pillar of Defense.

“Every hospital in the state is served by two to four companies of the Hospital Military Unit, based on the size of the hospital,” said Lt. Col. Yehudit Dahan, head of hospital preparations in the Home Front Command. “They are enlisted in war-time, and their task is to assist in cases of unconventional warfare like a chemical attack. Since Cast Lead, we’ve learned lessons and understood that they can also assist during conventional warfare.”

The lessons learned from Cast Lead helped the unit lead the swift preparation of hospitals during Operation Pillar of Defense.

“From the moment we received the announcement about the assassination of (Hamas military chief) Jabari, we prepared for an emergency scenario,” Lt. Col. Dahan said. “The emergency room of Barzilai hospital, for instance, was not protected, but from the moment the hospital began the transition together with the soldiers of the Hospital Military Unit, it was a few short hours until the whole department was protected.”

In addition to reservist soldiers from the Hospital Military Unit, the hospitals were helped in the last operation by soldiers in their regular service from the Home Front Command.

"We understood that if it's possible to enlist soldiers from (the Home front Command's training base) Zikim, then there's no reason to hurry to call up reservists," Lt. Col. Dahan said.

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