

Israeli Hero, Former IDF Chief, Dies at 68

Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, a former Israel Defense Forces chief of staff and government minister, passed away on Wednesday morning at the age of 68 at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Jerusalem.

Lipkin-Shahak had been battling cancer in recent years. Earlier this week, he was hospitalized in serious condition.

Lipkin-Shahak enlisted in the IDF in 1962 and served in the paratroopers. Over the next three decades, he rose through the ranks and was appointed as the IDF's 15th chief of staff on Jan. 1, 1995, replacing Ehud Barak.

Lipkin-Shahak retired from the IDF in 1998. A year later, he was elected to the Knesset as a member of the Center Party, led by Yitzhak Mordechai. Lipkin-Shahak was appointed tourism minister and later served as transport minister.

Lipkin-Shahak resigned from the Knesset in 2001.

He is survived by his wife and five children.

Upon hearing the news of Lipkin-Shahak's death, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "Amnon was an Israeli hero who dedicated his best years to ensuring the security of Israel. His courage was also evident in the brave way that he handled his disease. He never shed an iota of his nobility, not even for a minute. On behalf of the citizens of Israel, I offer my condolences to the grieving widow, Tali, and all his family."

President Shimon Peres also issued a message of condolences.

"Ever since last Sunday, when I went to the hospital to say goodbye to my dear friend Amnon, my soul has been restless. Amnon was a true hero soldier; he carried the torch of peace.

“He was a rare individual and a learned Jew. His many students and soldiers under his command viewed him as an exceptional role model. They believed every word he said, and they flocked to his door seeking wisdom and advice.”