UN rejects Israeli claims of Hezbollah operating under guise of fake NGO

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<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/UN-rejects-Israeli-claims-of-Hezbollah-operating-under-guise-of-fake-NGO-497759>

The United Nations and Israel clashed at the end of last week over [recent IDF allegations](https://www.google.co.il/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwij2_LfsdfUAhVkIMAKHSlsDEAQqOcBCCkwAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jpost.com%2FArab-Israeli-Conflict%2FHezbolla-497650&usg=AFQjCNFL9kr91kuzOzSGmZYeeRSs1pvW0w) that Hezbollah terrorists are operating under the guise of an environmental NGO near Lebanon’s southern border.

In footage released by the IDF on Thursday, Hezbollah operatives can be seen erecting observation posts near the Blue Line border with Israel, presumably in order to gather intelligence. According to the IDF, the group has been carrying out these activities while pretending to operate as an environmentalist NGO group it called “Green Without Borders,” at least since April.

Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon had sent a letter to the president of the Security Council shortly after the footage was published, calling on him to “send a strong message” and “demand that the government of Lebanon dismantle these observation posts immediately.”

According to the letter, which was also sent to Secretary- General Antonio Guterres, the “NGO” had denied members of UNIFIL, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon in charge of peacekeeping along the Blue Line, entry to an observation post in April.

But when asked about it on Friday, a spokeswoman for the secretary-general rejected Israel’s allegations.

“Our UNIFIL colleagues say that this nongovernmental organization has been active in the area for the last two years, and UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, closely monitors all activities close to the Blue Line,” the spokeswoman, Eri Kaneko, said.

Kaneko maintained that the UN agency has not observed any unauthorized armed persons at the location, or found any basis to report a violation of Security Council Resolution 1701, which put an end to the monthlong conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006.

“UNIFIL constantly urges the parties to exercise caution in undertaking any activity in the vicinity, and UNIFIL remains in regular contact with the Lebanese Armed Forces command in relation to this and other activities close to the Blue Line to ensure that there are no violations of Resolution 1701 and to avoid any misunderstandings or tensions that could endanger the cessation of hostilities,” she added.

In response, Danon said it is “regrettable that UNIFIL has chosen again to turn the other way as Hezbollah continues to operate in the region.

“This is not an organization that engages environmental protection, but a group that gathers information to assist in terrorist activities,” he added. “It is time for UNIFIL to fulfill its mandate and ensure that UN Security Council resolutions are implemented.”