

## Ex-IDF chief Ya'alon: Air force failed in Second Lebanon War

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Ya'alon faults IAF for Lebanon War failures

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By Yuval Azoulay, Haaretz

Former Israel Defense Forces chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon on Tuesday issued a harsh criticism of the Israel Air Force's operations during the Second Lebanon War, claiming it failed in its mission.

During statements he made Tuesday at a military and security conference at the Armored Corps Museum in Latrun Ya'alon said "There was an air agenda and a dictatorial way of thinking, and after this way failed, there were those who placed the blame on others," he said.

This is not the first time that Ya'alon has attacked the military leadership during the July 2006 war. "If they had determined the right objectives, the war could have been finished from the air within five days."

"An air agenda was part of the decision-making process," Ya'alon added. "The air force leadership thought that this was their opportunity to put on a show. After the war, they pushed their responsibility onto their inferiors."

The former chief of staff compared the government decision-making process prior to the war with the process that led to operation 'Grapes of Wrath' in 1996 which attempted to end the shelling of northern Israel by Hezbollah, saying "Many discussions were held prior to the Grapes of Wrath operation whereas before the Second Lebanon war, there was a two and a half hour talk which did not define any military goals." "It was decided to carry out a retaliatory mission which wasn't even called a war."

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JPost.com Staff , THE JERUSALEM POST

Former chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. (res.) Moshe Ya'alon launched a scathing attack against the Israel Air Force on Tuesday, citing the actions of senior commanders in the IAF during the Second Lebanon War as one of the reasons for Israel's inability to obtain its objectives in the campaign.

"Those in blue uniforms exhibited tyranny [during the war]," Ya'alon said at a conference in Latrun. "There was an 'airborne agenda' in the offices of decision-makers, and those in blue uniforms felt it was their chance to put on a show. That's why even OC Northern Command [Maj.-Gen. Udi Adam] was not invited to the deliberation."

"Sadly, after the war they placed the responsibility on their underlings or on those who served before them."

Ya'alon also criticized the communications between the military echelon and the government, calling it "a failure."

"Going to war without a diplomatic objective and a clear time frame is the original sin, the results of which were evident later on," he said. "As opposed to the Grapes of Wrath operation in 1996, when the cabinet sat with the top military echelon for dozens of deliberations on the matter, prior to the Lebanon war the security cabinet did not amass insights regarding Hizbullah."

"Despite the fact that such a situation could have been averted, the fear of becoming bogged down in Lebanon was what prevented them from operating the ground-forces maneuver on time, as per the plan. The only option presented to the political echelon by the military echelon was a sterile aerial option, and they imagined that they had the trick that could bring us accomplishments [in the field]."

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