

The Hasmonean Brigade Debate: Partial Success, Real Risks

written by Prof. Kobi Michael | 06.08.2025

Prof. Kobi Michael: It might be considered a success but a very partial one, and certainly not a success without risks for the IDF. We must remember that, while service and equal service is an important value that should be shared by all sectors of Israeli society, including the ultra-Orthodox, we are talking here about a very isolated and unique unit, where there is more than one source of authority.

In every other IDF unit, there is a single, ultimate source of authority: the IDF and its commanding officers. Here, in addition to that, there is also a rabbinical source of authority. I think this creates a potential for future conflict.

Secondly, the unique characteristics of this brigade ultimately excluded women. That exclusion stands in contrast to another core value — the value of gender equality — which is not only central to the IDF, but to Israeli society as a whole.

At the end of the day, I am not sure this brigade will truly create a breakthrough in increasing the number of ultra-Orthodox recruits joining the military.

The full interview took place on Channel I24, on August 6, 2025.

<https://youtu.be/bQ7cdXhUfIE>