

## **Court rules in favor of soldier who developed cancer in the line of duty**

By [Zafir Rinat](#)

In a very rare move, a soldier who contracted cancer following exposure to radiation during military service was recognized as disabled by the Be'er Sheva Magistrate's Court.

The court ruled in favor of the soldier, Rahamim Mehetu Gulo. Gulo was appealing the decision of the Israel Defense Forces, which had decided the radiation did not cause the Hodgkin's Disease he contracted during his service.

Gulo served as an electronics engineering technician in the Israel Air Force electronic warfare system.

For 10 years, he operated a system that emits electromagnetic energy, among other tasks. He was also exposed to radiation from radioactive materials.

Due to an equipment malfunction, at one point Gulo was exposed to higher than usual radiation, which he said caused his illness. After the incident Gulo and another soldier were sent for tests and were told everything was alright, and they returned to work.

In 2001, a lump was discovered in his chest that was diagnosed as Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He was treated with chemotherapy, recovered and continued to serve in the same place but with equipment that did not produce radiation. However, the cancer apparently has returned. Gulo was released from the army about three years ago.

Medical opinions for the army stated that nothing in the scientific literature proves there is a connection between Gulo's illness and exposure to radiation. Another expert for the army stated that the army committee set up to investigate the incident found that radiation had not reached dangerous levels during the malfunction.

However, Gulo's expert, Professor Eli Richter, said there very likely was a cause-and-effect relationship between the radiation exposure and the illness.

"The soldier was exposed to two types of dangerous radiation and was not necessarily protected from the exposure," Richter said. "The malfunction contributed greatly to his illness," Richter added.

Judge Ya'akov Ganan said the burden of proof that the radiation caused the illness should be eased, because this had been shown to be a reasonable possibility and often in such matters, there is "no choice but to invoke gut feelings."