



Veterans' Benefits for Noncitizens

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France

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SUMMARY France’s Parliament froze the pensions of military veterans from France’s former colonies in 1959. French courts in 2001 and 2010 ruled this practice to be contrary to antidiscrimination laws.

In 2011, the Parliament adopted legislation to unfreeze the pensions of colonial military veterans. Noncitizen veterans or their beneficiaries were given the opportunity from December 31, 2010, to December 31, 2014, to submit requests to have their pensions revised. Those who failed to submit requests within this period did not benefit from increases in their pensions.

Further legislation was adopted in 2015 to eliminate any remaining discriminatory legislation and expressly provide for the pensions of a number of groups that had previously been excluded.

I. Introduction

Veterans’ benefits in France are principally governed by the Code of Military Disability and War Victims’ Pensions (Code des pensions militaires d’invalidité et des victimes de la guerre)¹ and the Civil and Military Retirement Pensions Code (Code des pensions civiles et militaires de retraite).² Veterans are able to avail themselves of the Title of the Nation’s Gratitude (Titre de reconnaissance de la Nation), a combatant’s card (*carte du combattant*), a war pensioner’s disability card (*carte d’invalidité des pensionnés de guerre*), and a combatant’s retirement (*retraite du combattant*).³

In 1959, the French Parliament redefined colonial military veterans’ pensions as “retirement allowances” owing to the accession to independence of the veterans’ countries. The veterans’ pension rates were thus frozen, or “crystallized.”⁴

¹ CODE DES PENSIONS MILITAIRES D’INVALIDITÉ ET DES VICTIMES DE LA GUERRE [CODE OF MILITARY DISABILITY AND WAR VICTIMS’ PENSIONS], <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074068>, archived at <https://perma.cc/SJE8-EHX7>.

² CODE DES PENSIONS CIVILES ET MILITAIRES DE RETRAITE [CIVIL AND MILITARY RETIREMENT PENSIONS CODE], <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006070302>, archived at <https://perma.cc/Y679-4VL6>.

³ *Anciens Combattants* [Veterans], SERVICE-PUBLIC.FR (official website of the French administration), <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N30> (last visited Oct. 12, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/8LGK-F6YC>.

⁴ Loi no. 59-1454 du 26 décembre 1959 portant loi de finances pour 1960 [Law No. 59-1454 of the 26th of December 1959 Relating to the Law of Finances for 1960], JOURNAL OFFICIEL DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE [J.O.], Dec. 29, 1959, p. 12372, https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jo_pdf.do?id=JORFTEXT000000874213, archived at <https://perma.cc/4D8F-L66M>.

Rulings by the Conseil d'Etat (France's highest administrative court) in 2001⁵ and by the Conseil Constitutionnel (France's constitutional court) in 2010⁶ established that the law was discriminatory. Reforms were consequently passed, in a process often referred to as the “decrystallization” of pensions.

II. Decrystallization of Veterans' Benefits for Noncitizens

The 2011 Budget Law, which entered into force on January 1, 2011, repealed the crystallizing laws and harmonized the means of calculating the veterans' pensions of French nationals and nonnationals.⁷

Article 211 of the Budget Law harmonizes the value and indexation of military disability pensions, combatant's retirement, and civil and military retirement pensions for both foreign-national and French veterans.⁸ It also provides for the harmonization of the “pension calculation indicators” for military disability pensions, civil and military retirement pensions, and combatant's retirement for foreign-national and French veterans.⁹

The Budget Law specified that the pension would be revised only from the date of the request, meaning the veteran, or his/her beneficiaries, could recover the increased value of the pension only from the date of the request onwards, and not retroactively.¹⁰ Subsequent legislation clarified that the interested parties—meaning the veterans or, in certain cases, their widows and/or children—must have submitted a request to have the pension revised by December 31, 2014.¹¹

⁵ Conseil d'Etat no. 212179, Nov. 30, 2001, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichJuriAdmin.do?idTexte=CETA-TEXT000008029234>, archived at <https://perma.cc/BWD2-YURF>.

⁶ Conseil Constitutionnel [Constitutional Court], Décision no. 2010-1 QPC du 28 mai 2010 [Decision No. 2010-1 Constitutional Priority Question of May 28, 2010], <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank/pdf/conseil-constitutionnel-48290.pdf>, archived at <https://perma.cc/4WZJ-C23B>.

⁷ Loi no. 2010-1657 du 29 décembre 2010 de finances pour 2011 [Law No. 2010-1657 of the 29th December 2010 on Finances for 2011], <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000023314376&categorieLien=id>, archived at <https://perma.cc/M6AK-DEMB>.

⁸ *Id.* art. 211.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*; *Derrière la victoire politique, une nouvelle stratégie de spoliation* [Behind the Political Victory, a New Spoliation], GISTI (Feb. 10, 2011), <http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article2246>, archived at <https://perma.cc/3FJM-AAMM>.

¹¹ Décret no. 2010-1691 du 30 décembre 2010 pris en application de l'article 211 de la loi no. 2010-1657 du 29 décembre 2010 de finances pour 2011 [Decree No. 2010-1691 of the 30th of December 2010 Adopted Pursuant to Article 211 of Law No. 2010-1657 of the 29th of December 2010 on Finances for 2011], art 1, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000023332073&categorieLien=id>, archived at <https://perma.cc/2R5M-F6RL>; Loi no. 2013-1278 du 29 décembre 2013 de finances pour 2014 [Law No. 2013-1278 of the 29th of December 2013 on Finances for 2014], art. 111, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000028399511&categorieLien=id>, archived at <https://perma.cc/WL7P-ZPKF>; L'Association de Labadissi et al., Anciens Combattants – Faites valoir vos droits [Veterans – Claim Your Rights], <http://www.gisti.org/IMG/pdf/faire-valoir-ses-droits-anciens-combattants-fr.pdf> (last visited Oct. 27, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/W6PQ-8S6T>.

III. Elimination of Discrimination Based on Nationality

New legislation was adopted in December 2015 to repeal a number of residual discriminatory provisions and explicitly award benefits to groups that had been previously excluded.¹² This legislation is scheduled to enter into effect no later than January 1, 2017.¹³ Among other measures, it will eliminate rules that suspended a person's rights to a military disability pension and to a combatant's retirement when that person lost or renounced his/her French citizenship.¹⁴ It will also add a provision to the Code of Military Disability and War Victims' Pensions to extend benefits to North African auxiliary troops who participated in World War II and the colonial conflicts in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco between 1952 and 1962.¹⁵

¹² Ordonnance no. 2015-1781 du 28 décembre 2015 relative à la partie législative du code des pensions militaires d'invalidité et des victimes de guerre [Ordonance No. 2015-1781 of the 28th of December 2015 Relating to the Legislative Part of the Military Disability Pensions and War Victims Code], <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000031702175&categorieLien=id>, archived at <https://perma.cc/QFE5-FYM7>.

¹³ Ordonnance no. 2015-1781 du 28 décembre 2015, art. 8.

¹⁴ MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE [MINISTRY OF DEFENCE], RAPPORT À L'ORDONNANCE 2015-1781 DU 28 DÉCEMBRE 2015 RELATIVE À LA PARTIE LÉGISLATIVE DU CODE DES PENSIONS MILITAIRES D'INVALIDITÉ ET DES VICTIMES DE GUERRE [REPORT FOR ORDINANCE NO. 2015-1781 OF THE 28TH OF DECEMBER 2015 RELATING TO THE LEGISLATIVE PART OF THE MILITARY DISABILITY PENSIONS AND WAR VICTIMS' CODE] ¶ 3.4, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jo-pdf.do?id=JORFTEXT000031702142>, archived at <https://perma.cc/576B-96R2>.

¹⁵ Ordonnance no. 2015-1781 du 28 décembre 2015, Annex, art. L111-3.

Israel

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SUMMARY Israeli law on veterans' benefits does not expressly distinguish between Israeli citizens and foreigners who have volunteered to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). The receipt of veterans' benefits, including those paid to families of fallen soldiers and soldiers injured in the line of duty, generally depends on eligibility criteria that do not include place of residence or citizenship.

The IDF currently runs special programs for foreign volunteers. The IDF recognizes both volunteers and immigrants who do not have immediate family in Israel as "lone soldiers." Such soldiers enjoy special benefits during their military service. Lone soldiers who stay in Israel after completing their service are eligible for a number of benefits that are designed to ease their absorption into Israeli society. These benefits include special grants, and subsidies for tuition, housing, and business expenses.

Former members of the South Lebanon Army who fought alongside the IDF and their families are entitled to the same benefits as those accorded to IDF veterans upon death or injury. They are also entitled to special grants and assistance in finding residence and employment.

I. Introduction

About 3,500 foreign volunteers from thirty-seven countries, both Jewish and non-Jewish,¹ served in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during Israel's 1948 War of Independence, and prior to that in assisting more than thirty-one thousand Holocaust survivors enter Palestine in violation of the British blockade against Jewish immigration.² Many of the volunteers in the 1948 Independence War were veterans of World War II, and their military expertise was crucial to strengthening the IDF's newly created sea, land, and air units.³

¹ For information on non-Jewish volunteers during the 1948 War of Independence, see *Non-Jewish Volunteers*, WORLD MACHAL, http://machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=497&Itemid=237&lang=en (last visited Sept. 22, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/54NC-YV62>.

² *Overseas Volunteers in Israel's War of Independence 1947-49: A Brief Summary*, WORLD MACHAL, http://machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=302&Itemid=357&lang=en, archived at <https://perma.cc/YZN6-SQKB> (last visited October 19, 2016); see also YAACOV MARKOVITZKY, MACHAL: OVERSEAS VOLUNTEERS IN ISRAEL'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 7 (Moshe Kohn trans., 2003), 2007 Internet ed. available at <http://www.mahal-idf-volunteers.org/about/Machal.pdf>, archived at <https://perma.cc/K689-DB82>.

³ MARKOVITZKY, *supra* note 2, at 6. For a documentary on World War II pilots who volunteered to fight for Israel in the War of Independence and also laid the groundwork for the Israeli Air Force, see ABOVE AND BEYOND (Playmount Production in association with Katahdin Productions 2016). Information about the movie is available at *About*, ABOVE AND BEYOND: THE UNTOLD TRUE STORY, <http://aboveandbeyondthemovie.com/about> (last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/GKH8-BJB6>. Detailed information on foreign volunteers' contributions to the IDF in different periods, including personal stories, is available at *Summarized History*, WORLD

Overseas volunteers have continued to join the IDF over the years, with 381 volunteers reportedly joining in 2015, 43% from France and 38% from the United States. There has been a sharp increase in the number of volunteers in recent years, which is attributed to “Israel’s increasing isolation and the perceived rise in global anti-Semitism,” as well as to the recent terrorist attacks targeting Jews in France and other countries.⁴ The IDF currently runs what are known as *Machal* programs—special programs for foreign volunteers who are either Jewish or relatives of Jews who could qualify for *aliyah* (immigration into Israel) under the Law of Return.⁵

Foreign volunteers who have been recognized by IDF authorities as “lone soldiers”—servicemen or women without immediate family in Israel—are entitled to special benefits during their service. Such benefits include monthly grants in addition to their regular military pay, gift certificates on main holidays, the funding of flights to visit parents, special vacations to visit parents overseas and to host parents on their visits to Israel, and a monthly allowance for the purchase of groceries. Additional benefits include subsidies for rent and utilities.⁶ Upon completion of their military service, foreign volunteers generally enjoy the same benefits as members of the IDF who were drafted. Those who choose to return to their native countries after the end of their service may not, however, enjoy benefits that are designed to facilitate the absorption of discharged soldiers into civilian life in Israel.⁷

Former members of the South Lebanese Army (SLA) who fought with Israeli forces prior to the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon on May 23, 2000, and their families are eligible for permanent residence and citizenship under conditions prescribed by the South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families Law, 5765-2004.⁸ According to this Law, SLA veterans injured in service are eligible to receive benefits under the Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5719-1959 (Consolidated Version),⁹ and families of fallen soldiers are similarly eligible to benefits under the Fallen Soldiers’ Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950.¹⁰ SLA veterans

MACHAL, http://www.machal.org.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=302&Itemid=357&lang=en (last visited Sept. 27, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/J886-C5QH>.

⁴ ALONA FERBER, *Israeli Army Cites Rise in Number of Overseas Volunteers Joining Its Ranks*, HAARETZ (Apr. 22, 2015), <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.652927>, archived at <https://perma.cc/T8QD-ZUH3>; see also AMIR BUCHBUT, *In the Background of Terror: France Was Transformed into the Number One Exporter of Volunteers to IDF*, WALLA (Jan. 13, 2016), <http://news.walla.co.il/item/2924386>, archived at <https://perma.cc/3UH8-KLDS?type=image>.

⁵ *Aliya* is the immigration into Israel of a Jew or relative of a Jew under the Law of Return, 5710-1950. Law of Return 5710-1950, SEFER HAHUKIM [SH] [BOOK OF LAWS] (official gazette) 5710 No. 51, p. 159, *as amended*.

⁶ Itai Fildman, *Assistance for Lone Soldiers*, in KNESSET INFORMATION AND RESEARCH CENTER, IDF (Nov. 5, 2013), <https://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m03335.pdf>, archived at <https://perma.cc/M47T-3DJB>.

⁷ See discussion under sections III and IV, *infra*.

⁸ South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families Law, 5765-2004, SH 5765 No. 1965, p. 36.

⁹ Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5719-1959 (Consolidated Version) § 1, SH 5719 No. 295, p. 276, *as amended*.

¹⁰ Fallen Soldiers’ Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950, SH No. 52, p. 162, *as amended*.

residing in Israel are entitled to special grants and may enjoy discounts on *arnona* (local property tax) payments.¹¹

The following parts of the report describe the eligibility criteria and the types of veterans' benefits that apply to both foreign volunteers serving in the IDF and former SLA members.

II. Machal Programs

One Machal program run by the IDF is currently available for foreign males aged eighteen to twenty-four and foreign females aged eighteen to twenty-one, who are not Israeli citizens or children of Israeli citizens and wish to volunteer “for combat and significant military service in the Israel Defense Force.”¹² The program is based on the general authorization provided to the Minister of Defense in accordance with the Defense Service (Volunteering for Defense Service) Regulations, 5734-1974.¹³ The period of service generally lasts eighteen months, or twenty-one months for those volunteering for *Machal Hesder*, a program that combines four months of *Shalat* (yeshiva studies—studies at Jewish religious educational institutions of higher learning) and seventeen months of active army service.¹⁴

In order to qualify for a Machal program, the applicant must be Jewish or eligible for aliyah. Alternatively, if the applicant has Israeli citizenship, he or she must have left Israel by age ten and not stayed there more than 120 days per year prior to recruitment. Unlike Machal soldiers who return to their countries “Machal soldiers who decide to make aliyah following the completion of their army service will be required to serve an additional period of service in the IDF. The amount of time is based on the individual’s age and family status.”¹⁵

Non-Jewish persons or those who do not qualify for aliyah are currently not eligible to volunteer for Machal programs. They are encouraged, however, to volunteer for other noncombat programs, such as engaging in public relations on behalf of Israel.¹⁶

¹¹ State Economy Arrangements (Discount on Arnona) Regulations, 5753-1993, KOVETZ HATAKANOT [KT] [COLLECTION OF REGULATIONS] 5753, p. 419.

¹² *Machal (Overseas Volunteers) – Volunteer Request*, IDF, <https://www.aka.idf.il/Main/giyus/general.aspx?catId=59333&docId=77242> (translated by author, R.L.; last visited Sept. 16, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/4T9Q-UY84?type=image>.

¹³ Defense Service (Volunteering for Defense Service) Regulations 5734-1974, KT No. 3168, p. 1156, *as amended*.

¹⁴ See *Machal – Volunteers in the IDF*, NEFESH B’NEFESH, <http://www.nbn.org.il/aliyahpedia/army-national-service/idf-sherut-leumi/machal-volunteers-in-the-idf> (last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/QDE5-RASE>. Other tracks are listed in a Department of Defense form: *Request to Volunteer for Duty in the IDF in the Framework of Machal*, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, https://www.aka.idf.il/Sip_storage/files/6/69386.pdf (last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/S3YK-B3VS>.

¹⁵ NEFESH B’NEFESH, *supra* note 14.

¹⁶ See Letter by Daniel Katz, MACHAL, <http://www.mahal-idf-volunteers.org/about/non-Jewish-volunteer.htm> (last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/YJH6-VDZD>; *Links to Other Volunteer Programs in Israel*, IDF, <http://www.mahal-idf-volunteers.org/links/volunteer.htm> (last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/3RVB-9NVH>.

III. Extension of IDF Veterans Benefits to Foreign Volunteers

The definitions of the terms “soldier” and “discharged soldier” in the laws that provide for benefits to veterans and their families do not make any distinction between Israelis who were subject to the general national draft and foreigners who volunteered. Both the Fallen Soldier’s Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950,¹⁷ and the Discharged Soldiers (Reinstatement in Employment) Law, 5709-1949,¹⁸ generally define a “soldier” as a person who was in military service. The Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5719-1959 (Consolidated Version), defines a “discharged soldier” as “a person who has served in military service and has been discharged from the service.”¹⁹

The Fallen Soldier’s Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950, and the Discharged Soldiers (Reinstatement in Employment) Law, 5709-1949, bestow benefits on soldiers and the families of soldiers who were in military service on November 30, 1947, fighting for the independence of the State of Israel, and on soldiers who were drafted into the IDF after that day.²⁰

Similarly, the Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law, 5754-1994, does not distinguish between veterans on the basis of their place of residence as long as they served for at least twelve months or were released prior to twelve months for reasons of health or disability. For the purpose of calculating the minimum period of service for eligibility for benefits under this Law, however, every month served in civilian service programs, which are designed for yeshiva students,²¹ is counted as half or three-fourths of a month of military service, depending on whether the average weekly hours served was twenty or thirty.²²

Although no express exclusion from eligibility on the basis of foreign residence was located in the relevant laws, certain benefits accorded to veterans seem to apply only domestically. For example, the Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law authorizes the granting of special tuition subsidies for discharged soldiers who wish to complete their pre-university or university studies, or advanced-level yeshiva studies.²³ The Law further authorizes the granting of government

¹⁷ Fallen Soldiers’ Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law § 1.

¹⁸ Discharged Soldiers (Reinstatement in Employment) Law § 2.

¹⁹ Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law § 1 (translated by author, R.L.).

²⁰ Fallen Soldiers’ Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law § 1; Discharged Soldiers (Reinstatement in Employment) Law § 2.

²¹ Service arrangements and deferments are regulated under the Defense Service (Amendment No. 19) Law, 5774-2014, SH 5774 No. 2441, p. 350, and the National-Civilian Service Law, 5774-2014, No. 2442, p. 380. *See also* Ruth Levush, *Israel: Amendment Law Imposes Military Draft and National Service Obligations on Yeshiva Students*, GLOBAL LEGAL MONITOR (Mar. 31, 2014), <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/israel-amendment-law-imposes-military-draft-and-national-service-obligations-on-yeshiva-students>, archived at <https://perma.cc/538F-KFTY>; Ruth Levush, *Israeli Conscription Laws for Ultra-Orthodox Jews*, IN CUSTODIA LEGIS (Apr. 17, 2014), <http://blogs.loc.gov/law/2014/04/israeli-conscription-laws-for-ultra-orthodox-jews>, archived at <https://perma.cc/RK83-7J73>.

²² Absorption of Discharged Soldiers Law, 5754-1994, § 1, SH 5754 No. 1461, p. 132, *as amended*.

²³ *Id.* §§ 12–13.

subsidies for renting or purchasing a residential apartment and establishing a new business.²⁴ The Law also establishes special financial grants for deposit into veterans' personal bank accounts. While the Law does not exclude foreign veterans from cashing these deposits in Israel, it expressly excludes the materialization of these deposits outside of Israel.²⁵

While the Law does not expressly require subsidies for tuition, housing, and business expenses to be used in Israel, it is reasonable to assume that it intended subsidies to be used for the absorption of discharged soldiers into Israeli society.

IV. Additional Benefits for Discharged Lone Soldiers

Information posted on the Ministry of Defense website regarding a benefit package for lone soldiers lists a variety of benefits “for discharged lone soldiers defined as such based on criteria determined by the IDF . . . [and] who hold a ‘lone soldier’ certificate valid until the end of their service.”²⁶ Benefits may be paid to lone soldiers for a period of up to five years from the date of discharge.²⁷ The following benefits are included in the benefit package and are likely applicable only within Israel:

- Discharge grants and personal deposits
- Counseling at professional orientation offices and youth centers
- Full financing for staying at the Soldier’s Home for a period of up to three months from the date of discharge
- Occupational counseling and diagnosis at professional diagnostic institutions
- Full financing of tuition at high school equivalency centers throughout Israel
- Full financing of tuition at a preparatory school to improve performance on or complete matriculation examinations, in addition to a monthly stipend transferred to the bank account of a discharged soldier
- Financing for the cost of taking preparatory school entrance exams or registering for university entry exams
- A tuition discount voucher for a preparatory course for the Entrance Test—a standardized university entrance exam
- Financial assistance for bachelor’s degree studies
- Scholarships for the first year of degree studies or assistance with housing, further education, or other matters

²⁴ *Id.* §§ 16–18.

²⁵ *Id.* § 8(d).

²⁶ ISRAEL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE: FUND AND UNIT FOR DIRECTING DISCHARGED SOLDIERS, BENEFIT PACKAGE, <https://www.hachvana.mod.gov.il/hacvana/odot/Soldiers/Pages/default.aspx> (click on “english” link in the middle of the page; last visited Sept. 29, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/B9S5-969U>.

²⁷ *Id.*

- Financing of 90% of tuition for certified technician and engineering studies
- A one-time loan for housing, studies, marriage, opening a business, medical treatment, and special needs
- Participation in the Friend for the Road program, in which an IDF or Ministry of Defense officer assists discharged lone soldiers in their first steps in civilian life
- Subject to the provisions of law, an exemption from paying the general property tax during service and for four months from the day of discharge, upon proving ownership of an apartment or presentation of a rental contract.²⁸

Additional scholarships are also provided, including the following:

- Scholarships from the Jewish Agency
- Ministry of Education scholarships through the Funds Registrar
- National Project scholarships for Ethiopian immigrants
- Study Assistance from the Students Administration for Immigrants of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption²⁹

V. SLA Veterans' Benefits

Members of the SLA fought with Israel for over twenty-five years. The SLA was disbanded upon the IDF's withdrawal from its self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon on May 23, 2000. More than 8,500 former SLA soldiers arrived in Israel following the withdrawal. By 2004, 3,500 former SLA soldiers remained, according to news reports, and those individuals could not return to Lebanon.³⁰

In recognition of their contribution to Israel's security and their cooperation with the IDF, the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) passed the South Lebanon Army Persons and their Families Law, 5765-2004 (SLA Law).³¹ The SLA Law regulates the status of SLA persons and their families who resided in Israel on December 15, 2004.

According to the SLA Law, former SLA members may be granted a permit for permanent residence, and Israeli citizenship upon their request.³² In addition, for the purpose of grants and benefits under the Fallen Soldier's Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950,³³

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *The Knesset Approved: Citizenship Will Be Granted to SLA People*, YNET ONLINE NEWS, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-3015146,00.html> (in Hebrew; last visited Sept. 22, 2016), archived at <https://perma.cc/YNT3-FJMY>; see also Joshua Ruebner, *The South Lebanon Army (SLA): History, Collapse, Post Withdrawal Status*, in *LEBANON: CURRENT ISSUES AND BACKGROUND* ch. 4 (John C. Rolland ed., 2003).

³¹ South Lebanon Army Persons and their Families Law, 5765-2004, SH 5765 No. 1965, p. 36.

³² *Id.* § 3.

³³ Fallen Soldiers' Families (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5710-1950, SH 5710 No. 52, p. 162, *as amended*.

relatives of SLA members who died in battle are subject to the same rules that apply to the family members of IDF fallen soldiers.³⁴ Similarly, for the purpose of determining the level of disability, compensation, and payments under the Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5719-1959 (Consolidated Version),³⁵ the status of disabled SLA members is the same as that of IDF disabled veterans.³⁶

The SLA Law authorized the granting of special recognition awards to SLA members.³⁷ On the basis of this authority, the Minister of Defense issued the South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families (Extension of Grants) Regulations, 5766-2006, which prescribe that grants be paid to SLA veterans and their families. The payments are to be made on a monthly basis at a rate determined in the regulations.³⁸ Additionally, the SLA Law ordered the government “to act to find solutions to their residential and employment needs.”³⁹

³⁴ South Lebanon Army Persons and their Families Law § 6.

³⁵ Invalids (Pensions and Rehabilitation) Law, 5719-1959 (Consolidated Version), SH 5719 No. 295, p. 276, *as amended*.

³⁶ South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families Law § 7.

³⁷ *Id.* § 8.

³⁸ South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families (Extension of Grants) Regulations 5766-2006, KT 5766 No. 6477, p. 731.

³⁹ South Lebanon Army Persons and Their Families Law § 14 (translated by author, R.L.).