

Protect Them Fund

They Protect the Nation. We Protect Their Future.

MAY 2026

Executive Summary

Before October 7th, reserve duty was disruptive but manageable. Today, combat reservists are expected to serve at least 60 days per year, double the pre-war baseline, with some special units expected to serve even longer stints.

At the University of Haifa, the new reality is already being felt across campus. Over the past three years, more than 1,000 students have been repeatedly mobilized, many serving in combat roles for extended periods and returning to missed coursework, lost income, and mounting expenses.

In response, the University of Haifa is launching the Protect Them Fund, a \$1 million initiative providing direct financial support to students facing extended reserve service. The goal of the Fund is to support students struggling to balance their service with their studies. By alleviating financial pressure, it helps them stay in school, regain lost ground, and continue their studies with stability and dignity.

The “New Normal”

For the student reservist, this “new normal” is relentless. They move between the front lines and the classroom with little financial cushion and even less predictability.

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (September 2025), 34% of reservist families experienced economic hardship during the war, rising to 38% among ground combat soldiers. For university students carrying this load, these numbers tell only part of the story. Behind each statistic is a student who came home from reserve duty, scrolled through weeks of missed coursework, and wondered whether they could realistically keep going.

That moment, repeated across hundreds of students, is exactly what this Fund is designed to address.

Bridging the Gap: Why Traditional Aid is Not Enough

Existing forms of student aid were designed for a more predictable reality. Merit-based scholarships attract top students, while needs-based aid addresses acute financial hardship. Neither was built for the financial disruption caused by extended IDF reserve service. Because so many Israeli students rely on part-time jobs to make ends meet, each IDF call-up brings lost income and unexpected expenses, especially for married students with young children.

The academic toll follows soon thereafter. Missed classes, disrupted schedules, and delayed progress accumulate, increasing the likelihood that dedicated students will be forced to reduce their course load. When the combined burden becomes too heavy, those who serve and sacrifice are forced into an unfair choice between national service and their academic futures.

The Protect Them Fund: Serving Those Who Serve

The Protect Them Fund is designed as a direct response to this new reality.

The Fund allocates grants of between ₪10,000-₪12,000 during an academic year (approximately \$3,500) to offset the day-to-day financial strain that comes with extended reserve duty—rent, childcare, and basic living expenses—so that students can return, make up what they missed, and keep moving toward degree completion.

Priority will be given to combat soldiers, students supporting young families, and those that have fallen into financial dire straits. The Fund will be jointly administered by the Office of the Dean of Students and the Bloom School of Graduate Studies, ensuring that support reflects the extent of each student's service and financial disruption, and is delivered in a timely and responsible way.

Financial support is critical, but what it signals is even more so. For students already enrolled, it helps them stay on track. For those deciding where to enroll, it shows that the University of Haifa understands the sacrifices they are making—and will stand behind them.



Partner With Us

Students called up for reserve duty are doing more than protecting Israel's borders. They are protecting the foundations that allow Israeli society—and Jewish life around the world—to exist and flourish.

They have answered the call. Ensuring that these young men and women stay on track once they return is our responsibility.

We invite you to join us as a founding partner in the Protect Them Fund—ensuring that those who serve can return, complete their degrees, and continue to shape Israel's future.

EXAMPLES

Nearly half of the students called up for reserve duty are women, each balancing academic ambitions with extraordinary national service. The reserve duty days noted below take into account all days of military service since the outbreak of the “Swords of Iron” war. Below are just four examples, from over one thousand real-life stories:

M. | Home Destroyed in Missile Strike

Multidisciplinary Studies

M., an undergraduate student in Haifa, experienced the devastating impact of war firsthand when a missile strike destroyed the apartment he shared with his mother. A recognized disabled IDF veteran, he nonetheless returned to reserve duty, completing over 530 days of service. M. lost his job due to the sheer volume of his reserve duty, placing significant strain on a family already facing financial hardship. Despite these challenges, he has maintained a strong academic record. Financial assistance will enable him to continue his studies and help restore stability for himself and his mother.

L. | Reserve Service (365+ Days)

Philosophy and Middle Eastern Studies

L., an undergraduate student living in Haifa, has faced significant personal and financial challenges. She and her siblings are currently serving in the reserves, placing additional strain on the family, while her mother, now the primary provider, is coping with both emotional and financial hardship. L. remains determined to continue her education, balancing work, her studies, and over 365 days of reserve service since the outbreak of the war. Financial aid will help ease her burden and provide the stability she needs to complete her degree.

D. | Lone Soldier

Physiotherapy

D., an undergraduate student living in the University dormitories, immigrated to Israel from South Africa in 2018. He serves as a lone soldier with limited family support. Since the outbreak of the war, he has completed over 270 days of reserve duty. D. is determined to complete his studies and build his life in Israel. A grant will provide him with the support and encouragement needed to continue his academic journey and transition successfully into a professional career.

H. | 697 Days of Reserve Service

Human Services and Human Development

H. lives in Haifa with her mother following her father's serious illness and recent passing. The family was forced to sell their home to cover mounting medical expenses. The youngest of five children, H. carries significant responsibility while pursuing her studies. Having served 697 days in the reserves, she faces extreme difficulty meeting basic living expenses. Financial aid will provide critical support, enabling her to continue her studies with stability and focus.

