



# SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON HEZBOLLAH

**Why full designation of the terror group  
strengthens Lebanon, protects the West,  
and promotes stability across the Middle East**

A JOINT PROJECT OF

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Hezbollah and Lebanon</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Shutting out Hezbollah in its entirety will destabilize the Lebanese government, in which Hezbollah and its allies gained a vast majority of the popular vote in parliamentary elections, making it one of the most effective fighting forces against the Islamic State group.”	<b>6</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “The complex nature of the Hezbollah organization, including its presence in Lebanese governments and the social welfare it provides, makes full designation impossible.”	<b>9</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Hezbollah has acted as one of the most effective fighting forces against the Islamic State group (ISIS).”	<b>14</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Designating Hezbollah would kill any hope of democracy in Lebanon where the government is so corrupt that restrictions on Hezbollah would do little to nothing.”	<b>16</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Restrictions on Hezbollah would do little to nothing in terms of strengthening democratic forces in Lebanon.”	<b>19</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “EU governments are worried that full proscription of the group will hinder political and diplomatic engagement with Lebanon.”	<b>22</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Hezbollah will weaken of its own accord, even without a ban, because now Iran has less money to pay Hezbollah due to U.S. sanctions.”	<b>25</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Hezbollah is not an extension of the Iranian regime and, if it is, it has tried to distance itself from Iranian patronage in order to increase its domestic legitimacy among parties that have viewed it as Tehran’s lackey.”	<b>29</b>
<b>Hezbollah and Europe</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Groups that pose a terrorist threat in the Middle East don’t necessarily pose a threat to the EU. What happens in the Middle East, stays in the Middle East. The refugee crisis is water from a different stream.”	<b>32</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Banning the military wing took care of Hezbollah’s shady dealings in Europe.”	<b>35</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Germany cannot bring a resolution regarding a Hezbollah ban into the EU because it is not directly affected by Hezbollah.”	<b>37</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “For France, designating Hezbollah would endanger once again the French troops stationed in Lebanon as part of UNIFIL. It will also endanger French civilians living in Lebanon.”	<b>39</b>

<b>CLAIM:</b> “UNIFIL monitors the flow of arms to Hezbollah – Germany has command of the naval component of UNIFIL – so the arsenals cannot be so dangerous.”	<b>41</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “France is invested in Lebanon politically and economically, and understands that Hezbollah has a hold on power in Beirut. The distinction between military and political wings is necessary to conduct business and exert influence on Lebanese policy.”	<b>43</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “The effort to combat antisemitism in Europe and Hezbollah are two different things.”	<b>45</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Hezbollah has evolved from its earlier days of transnational terrorist operations to become a political power.”	<b>48</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terror organization could implicate people who only support its social service endeavors.”	<b>50</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “Hezbollah hasn’t attacked Israel since 2006 and it is too busy to present a clear and present danger to Israel.”	<b>52</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “The EU, with the partial designation, already has all the tools it needs to deal with Hezbollah’s nefarious activities. The problem is that the EU has been unable to carry out the utilization of those tools.”	<b>54</b>
<b>Additional Claims</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701 to resolve the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. So there’s no conflict.”	<b>57</b>
<b>CLAIM:</b> “There aren’t that many Hezbollah operatives in European countries.”	<b>59</b>
<b>CLAIM</b> “The real problem that should be addressed are war crimes in Syria and Yemen, and human rights violations in Lebanon.”	<b>62</b>
An overview of the political situation in Lebanon and an assessment of the relative political and military strength of Hezbollah	<b>65</b>
<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>69</b>



# INTRODUCTION

*Hezbollah has committed hundreds of terrorist attacks around the world, from Europe and the Americas to the Middle East. Its assaults - always in sync with the agenda of its patron Iran - murder, terrorize, inflame, and destroy.*

*Despite these acts, many countries and multi-lateral groups do not consider it a terrorist organization in its entirety. Its status as a political actor in Lebanon, among other factors, has allowed Hezbollah, and most notably, its proponents, to make a series of claims why such a designation is false, uncalled for, and detrimental to the well-being of the very nations it continues to put in danger.*

*This report examines those claims and provides a fact-based analysis that refutes each one. While each of these responses stands alone, together they offer powerful proof that all of Hezbollah should be considered a terrorist organization. This report was produced by AJC and the International Counter-Terrorism Institute.*



# HEZBOLLAH AND LEBANON



***“Shutting out Hezbollah in its entirety will destabilize the Lebanese government, in which Hezbollah and its allies gained a vast majority of the popular vote in parliamentary elections, making it one of the most effective fighting forces against the Islamic State group.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**HEZBOLLAH IS THE DESTABILIZER IN THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND HAS DONE LITTLE TO DEFEAT THE ISLAMIC STATE. INSTEAD, IT ASPIRES TO BECOME SOMETHING SIMILAR.**

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**THE FACTS**

The struggle to reduce the capabilities of a terrorist organization is ongoing, multi-dimensional, and requires a great deal of determination. A terrorist organization such as Hezbollah, which operates simultaneously as a terrorist organization and within the framework of the Lebanese political system as a “legitimate party,” relies on civilian infrastructure, living spaces, and sources of funding. It carries out profit and loss considerations on an ongoing basis. Reducing Hezbollah’s capabilities and influence must be achieved by exerting pressure on the organization – directly and indirectly. The key to this is international cooperation and the mobilization of political elements in the government to reduce Hezbollah’s power.

## KEY DETAILS

- ▶ For years, an alliance between the Christian camp and the Sunnis controlled the centers of power in the Lebanese political system.
- ▶ The assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah's entry into the government, and especially the rivalry in the Christian camp led to the consolidation of new political dynamics, including an alliance between Michel Aoun from the Christian camp and Hezbollah. As a result, the political map changed and the Sunni-Christian alliance that ruled this system for decades found itself in the opposition.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

- ▶ **Hezbollah is part of the “March 8” Alliance**, which includes 72 out of the 128 members of parliament. The “March 8” Alliance holds most of the important portfolios in the government.
- ▶ The Lebanese government in 2019 includes **30 ministers, 18 of which belong to the Hezbollah camp and have been placed in key ministries**, including: defense, law, foreign affairs, economics, agriculture and energy. In addition, out of these, two Hezbollah representatives hold the following positions: Minister of Youth and Sport and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. Someone affiliated with Hezbollah serves as Minister of Public Health.
- ▶ **Hezbollah's main rival is the “March 14” Alliance**, an umbrella organization that encompasses several political parties in Lebanon, including Al-Mustaqbal, or Future movement, Prime Minister Saad Hariri's party, which has lost a third of its power.
- ▶ Considering the points listed above and the fact that serious clashes occurred in May 2008, when the Lebanese government tried to limit Hezbollah's military power, it seems that **the current Lebanese government without external support will find it difficult to isolate or designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.**

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

One way to reduce Hezbollah's power, military capability, and influence is to harness the international system in a joint effort against the organization and its supporters. In this framework, the following is necessary:

- ▶ **Expand the circle of countries that view Hezbollah as a terrorist organization** with an emphasis on European countries. This move will enable legal and security measures to be taken against the organization's operatives and/or institutions operating in the international arena.
- ▶ **Reduce the scope of military and financial assistance that Hezbollah receives** by exerting pressure on Iran and Syria, which support the organization.
- ▶ **Wage an international campaign** to freeze/reduce the organization's sources of income.

*“One way to reduce Hezbollah's power, military capability, and influence is to harness the international system in a joint effort against the organization and its supporters.”*

- ▶ At the local tactical level, the multinational force operating under UN resolutions in southern Lebanon must insist on the **implementation of UN resolutions** regarding Hezbollah's presence in this region.

## WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO DESIGNATE HEZBOLLAH?

The significance of designating Hezbollah a terrorist organization primarily derives from the entities that carry out the designation. The list of countries that have made the designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization include:

Some countries and organizations make a distinction between Hezbollah's alleged political-state wing and its military-terrorist wing. In 2003, Australia only designated the military wing as a terrorist organization<sup>6</sup>. The European Union did the same in 2013 against the backdrop of the attack in Burgas, Bulgaria, in 2012, and in light of the organization's involvement in the Syrian civil war<sup>7</sup>.

	<b>Israel</b> 1982
	<b>The United States</b> 1997 <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Canada</b> 2002 <sup>2</sup>
	<b>The Netherlands</b> 2004 <sup>3</sup>
	<b>Bahrain</b> 2013 <sup>4</sup>
	<b>Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)</b> 2013 <sup>5</sup>
	<b>The Arab League</b> 2013
	<b>The United Kingdom</b> March 2019
	<b>Argentina</b> July 2019

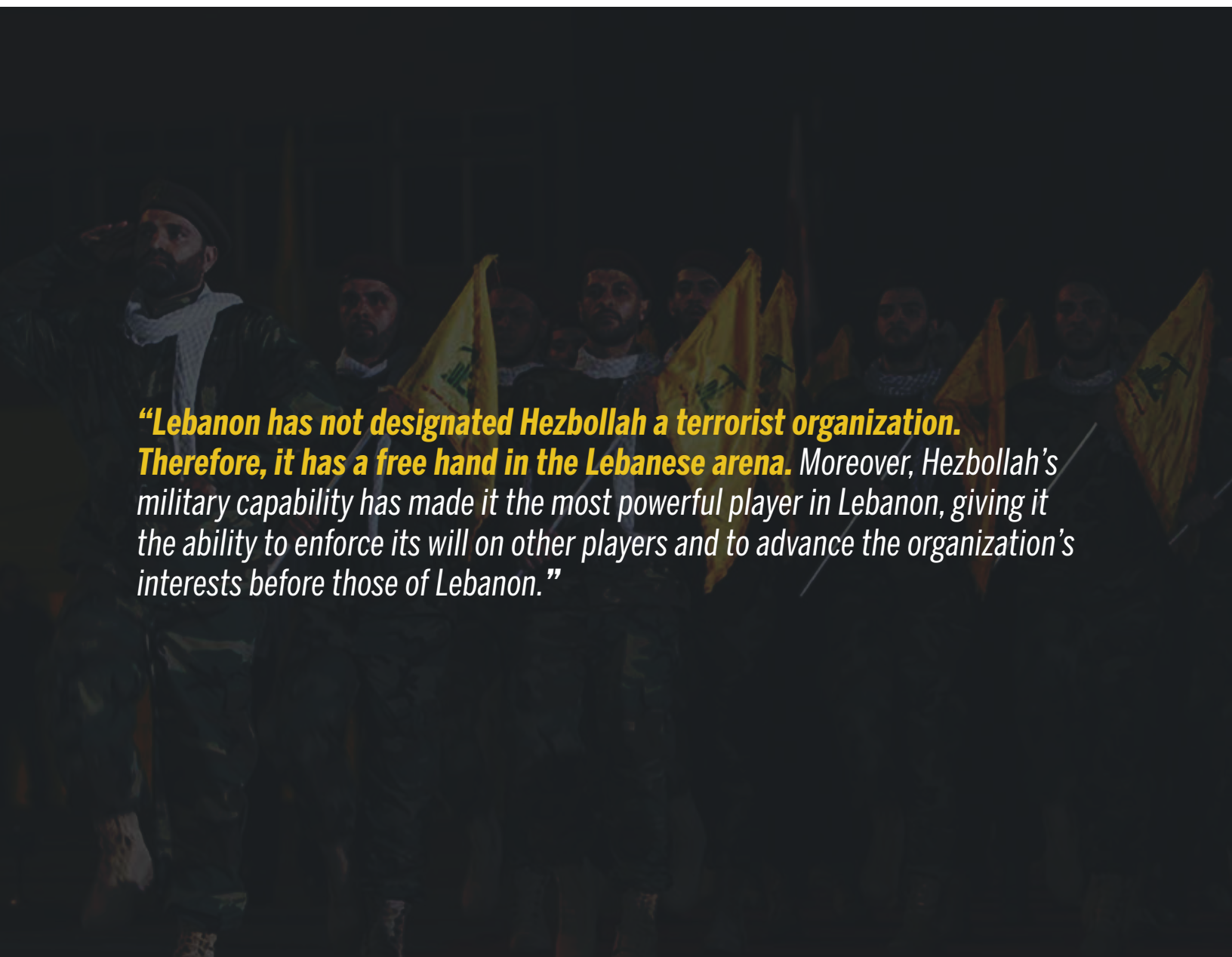
It is important to note that except for the Netherlands and Britain, most European countries have not made individual designations and are relying on the EU restrictions when dealing with the organization (as opposed to the Netherlands, and now Britain). Enforcement of the designation is in accordance with the laws and conduct of the country. For example, the U.S. designated dozens of entities and individuals associated with Hezbollah

as illegal, imposed sanctions on Iran, and designated Iranian terrorist-supporting bodies linked to Hezbollah. The U.S. even prompted Lebanese banks to cease their activity vis-à-vis Hezbollah, designated all the organization's associations and companies as terrorist entities, outlawed them in its territory and imposed sanctions on anyone financing them.

Germany refers to Hezbollah's Martyrs Foundation, which supports the families of Hezbollah's fallen soldiers, as a terrorist entity, and therefore shut down associations that transfer money to it. In a similar vein, the Al-Manar network, Hezbollah's television station, was also designated by the U.S., France, Spain, and Germany, where the network's broadcasts have been blocked. Australia also prevents satellite broadcasts.

Lebanon has not designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Therefore, it has a free hand in the Lebanese arena. Moreover, Hezbollah's military capability has made it the most powerful player in Lebanon, giving it the ability to enforce its will on other players and to advance the organization's interests before those of Lebanon.

Additionally, Hezbollah has not been designated a terrorist organization by the UN Security Council, making it difficult to formulate an international action strategy to decrease the organization's capabilities<sup>8</sup>. For more information, see Annex 1 at the conclusion of the report.

A group of men, some wearing traditional Middle Eastern headwear, are holding up yellow Hezbollah flags at night. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from the flags and possibly some background lights, creating a dramatic and somewhat somber atmosphere. The men are looking in various directions, some towards the camera and others away.

**“Lebanon has not designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Therefore, it has a free hand in the Lebanese arena. Moreover, Hezbollah’s military capability has made it the most powerful player in Lebanon, giving it the ability to enforce its will on other players and to advance the organization’s interests before those of Lebanon.”**



*“The complex nature of the Hezbollah organization, including its presence in Lebanese governments and the social welfare it provides, **makes full designation impossible.**”*

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SHORT RESPONSE

**BECAUSE HEZBOLLAH HAS DIFFERENT WINGS THAT FRONT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS – A HYBRID TERRORIST ORGANIZATION – ONLY HEZBOLLAH WOULD OBJECT TO FULL DESIGNATION.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah is a hybrid terrorist organization that uses violent means and terrorism to advance its objectives and those of its main patron: Iran and, to a lesser extent, Syria. The organization includes three wings: the civilian, armed terrorist, and political. They are indivisible and maintain a synergy that enables Hezbollah to present the outward appearance of a legitimate and pragmatic Lebanese party working to defend Lebanon.

However, in practice, Hezbollah’s military wing, under the guidance of the organization’s leaders, is involved in terrorist activities that result in the killing of civilians in Lebanon, the Middle East and around the world. **The decision to only partially designate Hezbollah underscores the complex nature of the organization, but that complexity does not impede a full designation.**

## KEY DETAILS

To gain support, Hezbollah runs social welfare programs in Lebanon. In most cases, the political appointments requested or received by the organization serve some of its non-profit organizations: The Ministries of Industry and Agriculture overlap with Hezbollah's construction company, Jihad al-Bina. The Ministers of Labor and Industry intersect and work with the organization's syndicate (workers' committees). The Ministries of Education and Sport do the same with Hezbollah's educational institutions, and are responsible for kindergartens, schools and higher education, children and youth activities such as Imam Mahdi Scouts, and youth soccer teams. The activities of the Ministry of Health overlap with the Islamic Health Authority, which operates hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, and the Foundation for the Wounded, which works to assist the organization's injured. In addition, the role of Minister for Parliamentary Affairs affords the organization control over the cooperation between the Cabinet and Parliament.

- ▶ **Hezbollah's representation in the parliament is relatively small but has a huge influence on Lebanese politics due to the existence of the military wing, which poses a threat to those who oppose Hezbollah.** Hezbollah's main rival is the "March 14" Alliance, an umbrella organization that encompasses several political parties in Lebanon, including Al-Mustaqbal, or Future movement, and Prime Minister Saad Hariri's party, which has lost a third of its power.
- ▶ According to the Lebanese constitution, a two-thirds majority of members of the government is required to make decisions. Data on the organization's involvement in the political system indicate that, over the years and in light of its increasing control over politics, Hezbollah has gained the ability to veto and thwart government decisions that are contrary to its interests.

## HEZBOLLAH'S PRESENCE IN GOVERNMENT

ELECTION YEAR	NO. OF HEZBOLLAH SEATS	NO. OF BLOC SEATS	YEAR OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION	PRIME MINISTER	NO. OF MINISTERS	NO. OF HEZBOLLAH MINISTERS	NO. OF BLOC MINISTERS	PORTFOLIOS
1992	8	12						
1996	7	9						
2000	10	12						
2005	14	57	2005	Siniora	24	1+2 (I)	5	Labor, Energy and Water, Foreign
			2008	Siniora	30	1+1 (I)	11	Foreign, Labor
2009	12	57	2009	Hariri	30	2	10	Agriculture, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
			2011	Mikati	30	2	18	Agriculture, without portfolio
			2014	Salam	24	2	8	Industry, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
			2016	Hariri	30	2	18	Industry, Education and Sport, without portfolio
2018	13	79	2019	Hariri	30	1+2 (Jabak - I)	17	Health, Education and Sport, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs



# HEZBOLLAH AS A HYBRID TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

## Hezbollah's three wings (civilian, military and political)

maintain a synergy between one another, which allows the organization to present the outward appearance of a legitimate and pragmatic Lebanese party that works to defend Lebanon. However, in practice, Hezbollah's military wing, under the guidance of the organization's leaders, is involved in terrorist activities that result in the killing of civilians in Lebanon, the Middle East and around the world. Since 2012, this activity has translated into Hezbollah's deep involvement in the Syrian civil war.

The 2012 terrorist attack in Burgas (Bulgaria), attempted strikes, and the establishment of terrorist infrastructure in Cyprus and Nigeria, the arrests of Hezbollah operatives in the U.S., and the involvement of its overseas terrorist unit (External Security Organization, ESO) in organized crime demonstrate that this is the group's fixed organizational policy and strategy, whose purpose is to use violence to achieve its objectives and those of Iran<sup>9</sup>.

Hezbollah does not view itself as a split in separate wings or factions. In fact, the opposite is true. On various occasions its leaders have stated unequivocally that Hezbollah is a hierarchical organization operating as a single entity under the control of the Shura Council (leadership council), led by Hassan Nasrallah – in which every wing of the organization is represented. Its entry into politics did not moderate the organization, as it did not moderate Islamist players like the Iranians after the revolution.

In 1992, Muhammad Fanish, a senior member of the organization and its representative in parliament at the time, stated: *"Our entry into parliament is a form of resistance on the political level. This is because it is natural for members of the resistance to have a political crutch to stand behind them. This is because the armed resistance requires assistance in the political arena.... Our entry into parliament is a factor that helps the armed resistance against the occupation"*<sup>10</sup>. In June 1996, he said, *"Resistance in all its forms is legitimate both in the sphere of military jihad activity, in the sphere of political activity, in the sphere of cultural activity..."*<sup>11</sup>.

In 2002, he claimed that *"one cannot separate between Hezbollah's military wing and political wing"*<sup>12</sup>. It should be noted that Muhammad Fanish was one of Hezbollah's ministers in the Lebanese government.

In 2000, Naim Kassem, Nasrallah's deputy and a member of the Shura Council, summarized the nature and role of this Council. He claimed that *"Hezbollah has a single leadership – the Shura Council that decides and manages all political, jihad, cultural and social activities...the Secretary-General of Hezbollah is the head of the Shura Council as well as the head of the Jihad Council, meaning that we have [one] leadership and one administration"*<sup>13</sup>.

In May 2008, Hezbollah's use of terrorism to achieve political objectives in Lebanon reached new heights. The organization imposed its military capabilities against civilians in response to a

*"Hezbollah today is far more dangerous than the revolutionary Hezbollah of the 1980s. In practice, the organization has not abandoned its goals."*

Lebanese government's decision that it refused to accept. Hezbollah attacked and seized control of the government's centers of power in Beirut (the Sunni neighborhoods). During the battle, which lasted around three weeks, dozens of civilians were killed and injured. The intervention of the Arab states led to the end of the crisis and the formulation of the "Doha Agreement."

Hezbollah today is far more dangerous than the revolutionary Hezbollah of the 1980s. In practice, the organization has not abandoned its goals, but rather changed the pace of their implementation. It operates simultaneously within and outside the Lebanese political system. The organization's pragmatic facade has misled and continues to mislead researchers and players in the international system. Hezbollah's entry into Lebanese politics was perceived by many as a first and important step indicating moderation and a change of its extremist ideological line. Hezbollah also carried out a series of actions to underscore that alleged change. Since the early 1990s, it has invested and continues to invest considerable effort in blurring its terrorist pan-Islamic image, while giving the impression of a legitimate Lebanese movement fighting against an occupying army. In the 1990s, it reduced the scope of its terrorist attacks against Western targets in Lebanon and around the world, started carrying out "quality" terrorist acts, while refraining from taking responsibility for their execution and denying any connection to their operations.

## HEZBOLLAH'S ENTRY INTO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IS IN LINE WITH THE PROFILE OF A HYBRID TERRORIST ORGANIZATION AND IT IS BASED ON THREE PRINCIPLES:

1. **Acting within the boundaries of Lebanese politics and in accordance with its rules** – in parliament, the municipal system, government, and the civilian sector – while simultaneously preserving and developing the capability for independent activity outside the political system.
2. **Advancing in the political system** while creating political crises alongside alliances.
3. **Using political violence** (the assassination of opponents, such as Rafic Hariri) and the organization's independent military force as an impetus for changing political decisions or achieving organizational goals (such as the events of May 2008 or Hezbollah's involvement in the civil war in Lebanon).

## HEZBOLLAH'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

Hezbollah's entry into the Lebanese parliament in 1992 and into the cabinet in 2005 **reinforced its claim that it was a legitimate movement operating within the political framework and in accordance with Lebanese laws**, and that it had moved from its radical revolutionary ways of the 1980s. Its activities were perceived as "legal" in Lebanese and international public opinion, as long as it did not fire at Israeli civilians. The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, and the meeting between UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Nasrallah in June 2000, gave the organization international legitimacy leading to multiple meetings between international players and its leaders. Only in March 2005 did the European Parliament decide to include Hezbollah on the list of terrorist organizations. However, this decision did not translate into practical action on the ground.<sup>14</sup>

In September 2004, Nasrallah declared that his organization was operating in the south of the country alongside the Lebanese army in the framework of a joint strategy for Hezbollah and Lebanon, with the goal of defending the country.<sup>15</sup>

**When we thoroughly examine the organization's activities, institutions, and conduct in the regional and international arena, a different picture emerges from the one that Hezbollah portrays.** The Shura Council, the body that manages the organization, is responsible for its military-terrorist activities on the one hand, and for its socio-political activities on the other. The official responsible for the organization's secret terrorist wing in Lebanon and abroad also serves on the Council. Moreover, the leaders of the organization occasionally slip up and reveal their true positions. In January 2002, Muhammad Fanish, one of Hezbollah's representatives in parliament, stated that "*one cannot separate Hezbollah's military wing and political wing.*"<sup>16</sup> The idea of an Islamic state in Lebanon has not been shelved. It will be raised at the appropriate political opportunity.

**Hezbollah is not keeping quiet. For the past four decades it has established an international terrorist network in dozens of countries, which operates in a centralized manner via the Shura and the Jihad Council.** This international terrorist network has attempted and succeeded in carrying out attacks since the 1990s. It is activated for intelligence-gathering missions, attacks on Western, Jewish, and Israeli targets, the purchase and smuggling of weapons, and the creation of sources of funding for the organization's activities.

## HEZBOLLAH'S STRATEGY OF WALKING ON THE EDGE

Nasrallah, the leader of the organization since 1992, has adopted the policy of walking on the edge in its relations with the Lebanese, regional and international systems, and has made the most of both worlds in which Hezbollah operates. It plays the internal Lebanese political game and works to dispel the Lebanese people's fear of Shari'a being imposed on the country, while

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simultaneously working to establish a terrorist and organizational infrastructure in Lebanon, in the regional arena and in the international arena. Its political activity in the Lebanese arena is part of the action strategy taken by the organization, which distinguishes between Shi'ite-religious thought based on the principle of religious and pan-Islamic rule, and the daily practice of activity within the existing system to achieve the organization's goals. This distinction allows the organization to operate simultaneously within the political system while continuing to develop Shi'ite thought, without one interfering with the other.

The success, survival and expansion of the organization, despite the efforts of its competitors, opponents and rivals, is based on two central components:

1. The regulative element, that is, the ability to build effective operational capabilities, which relies on external and internal sources and is composed of an efficient and hierarchal movement, military capability, financing, and enforcement of organizational authority.
2. The element of legitimacy, based on the organizational discourse that includes religious justification for the organization's strategic changes, the appropriation of Lebanese national responsibility, the partial adaptation (even ostensible) and the willingness to act in the framework of the existing Lebanese political system as a result of situation assessments, sensitivity to changes and the influence of communal public opinion.

The implementation of the "Taif Agreement" led to a strategic change in the Lebanese government's policy and the nature of its activity, which also affected Hezbollah. The latter was forced to adapt itself to the new system, but it did not "straighten out" like other forces. Rather, it continued to develop its military capabilities and wage a war of attrition against Israel. This "independence" should be emphasized as an abundant source of friction and struggles between it and the Lebanese government,



and the waves of escalation and violence that have disrupted routine life in Lebanon, especially the administration's plans to promote its efforts. The organization's policy of "walking on the edge" advanced it in the realm of "the resistance," but created friction between it and the administration on the internal Lebanese level.

The Lebanese government's inability to "domesticate" Hezbollah apparently stems from a combination of an absence of effective governmental leverage against the organization (political, economic, military), the government's unwillingness to confront the organization (due to public opinion and fear of the deterioration of the situation in Lebanon), and Iranian support for Hezbollah.

The fundamental difference in the designations of Hezbollah imposed by the international system undermines any chance of creating effective direct and indirect pressure on the organization. While the U.S. and Israel are working to eliminate Hezbollah as a terrorist entity, European diplomats meet with its leaders and its operatives roam freely on European soil. This international environment allows Lebanon, Syria and Iran to maneuver between European positions and American pressure, and to reject any attempt that is inconsistent with the interests of these three countries.

The absence of an accepted international definition of the term terrorism prevents international cooperation in the fight against terrorist organizations. This fact, coupled with the concern of players in the international system of becoming over-involved in areas saturated with violence and terrorism that might harm their interests, plays into Hezbollah's hands.

**Hezbollah has dragged Lebanon into violent maelstroms that led to the destruction of infrastructure, damage to the Lebanese economy and the loss of human life, in complete contradiction to the interests of the Lebanese government.**

## **EXAMPLES OF HEZBOLLAH'S DAMAGE TO LEBANON**

- ▶ **The Second Lebanon War**, which broke out as a result of the kidnapping of IDF soldiers by Hezbollah in 2006. During the war, heavy damage was inflicted on the Lebanese economy and both sides suffered casualties.
- ▶ **Hezbollah's takeover of western Beirut in 2008**, which took place against the backdrop of the Lebanese government's decisions regarding Hezbollah. Hezbollah's violent military action in Beirut resulted in dozens of Lebanese civilian casualties.
- ▶ **Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian war**, which began in 2012. The organization, in complete contrast to the decisions of the Lebanese government, participated in the civil war in Syria. In the first stage, Hezbollah dispatched dozens of fighters, whose numbers increased as the campaign progressed and peaked at over 5,000 fighters. This involvement caused an escalation in the security situation in Lebanon, as well as an increase in the presence and scope of terrorist attacks by global jihad elements in Lebanon. Hezbollah had difficulty

explaining to the Lebanese people the reasons for its involvement in the civil war and, therefore, it tried to hide this fact for many months. In fact, the organization's many casualties in Syria (approximately 2,000 dead and several thousand wounded) forced its leadership to reveal its involvement in the civil war. The leadership's excuse for Hezbollah's involvement was the need to preserve important interests of the Shi'ite community, including the sites holy to Shi'a (the Zaynab mosque in Damascus), and to protect Lebanon from the infiltration of jihadist organizations, which it referred to as takfiri organizations.

**It should be emphasized that the organization worked first and foremost to preserve its vital interests**, which were mainly military, such as preserving its trafficking and smuggling routes – the Damascus-Beirut route and the Damascus-Homs route, while exploiting the situation to establish a storage and supply system for advanced weapons in Syria.

**The network of Hezbollah tunnels penetrating Israel that was exposed in 2018 is another illustration of the primary interests of the organization**, which is not afraid to drag Lebanon into another round of violence against the State of Israel.

**The organization's military wing, which carries out the organization's policies, is not compatible with Lebanon's policy and sometimes even undermines it.** The inability of Lebanon, as a country that hosts Hezbollah, to maintain the monopoly over the use of force or even delineate its operational policy harms the interests of the state. For instance, over the years, even at the end of the last century, Lebanon promoted a policy of non-interference in local conflicts in the Middle East, in order to maintain neutrality and avoid harming the fragile fabric of relations between the various ethnic groups and camps in the country. This was true during the first Gulf War when Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait as well as during current conflicts, such as the civil war in Syria and the fighting in Yemen. However, despite Lebanon's declarations of non-interference and not taking sides in the confrontations, Hezbollah is actually acting of its own accord and intervened militarily in the last two conflicts – in Syria and Yemen – in order to preserve and promote the interests that are important to it.

**IN SUMMARY**, the failure to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, or the partial designation made by several countries, plays into Hezbollah's hands. In recent years, Hezbollah has carried out organizational activities in Europe and elsewhere, for the purposes of recruitment, crime, financing, logistics and intelligence, and in some cases even for terrorist attacks/attempted attacks (to be detailed in the following responses).<sup>17</sup> With regard to Lebanon's stability, Hezbollah is actually contributing to the weakening of the Lebanese system. The organization acts as an armed militia that is represented in parliament and uses force to strengthen its political standing. Activation of the organization's military force is solely in the hands of Hezbollah and its masters in Tehran while the Lebanese government has no influence on the decisions made in this regard.

**“Hezbollah has acted as one of the most effective fighting forces against the Islamic State group (ISIS).”**

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**SHORT RESPONSE**

**HEZBOLLAH DIDN'T LEAD THE BATTLE AGAINST GLOBAL JIHADIST ORGANIZATIONS, NOR WAS IT THE MOST EFFECTIVE. IT WAS THE RUSSIANS, WHO JOINED THE CAMPAIGN IN 2015, THAT TIPPED THE BALANCE IN FAVOR OF ASSAD'S REGIME IN SYRIA. MOREOVER, HEZBOLLAH'S INVOLVEMENT IN SYRIA LED TO A FLOW OF JIHADIST ORGANIZATIONS INTO LEBANON. THE LEBANESE ARMY'S ACQUISITION OF ADVANCED WEAPONS IMPROVES ITS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH GLOBAL JIHAD ORGANIZATIONS AND, IF APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS ARE CREATED, THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH HEZBOLLAH AS WELL.**

**THE FACTS**

Preservation of the Assad regime is a strategic interest for Hezbollah and its patron, Iran. Syria is the land and air bridge to the Persian nation, through which advanced weapons are transferred to the organization. Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has increased to the level of approximately 5,000 or more fighters.



**Nevertheless, despite the extent of Hezbollah’s involvement, the terrorist organization was not the leader in the fight against global jihad nor was it an effective force operating in the region.** Hezbollah fought most of the battle along the Syrian-Lebanese border and suffered heavy losses, without significant achievements. Moreover, in several areas, including Al-Qusayr, Zabadani, and Qalamoun, the organization was forced to carry out two rounds of fighting before it was able to attain victory, suffering heavy losses.

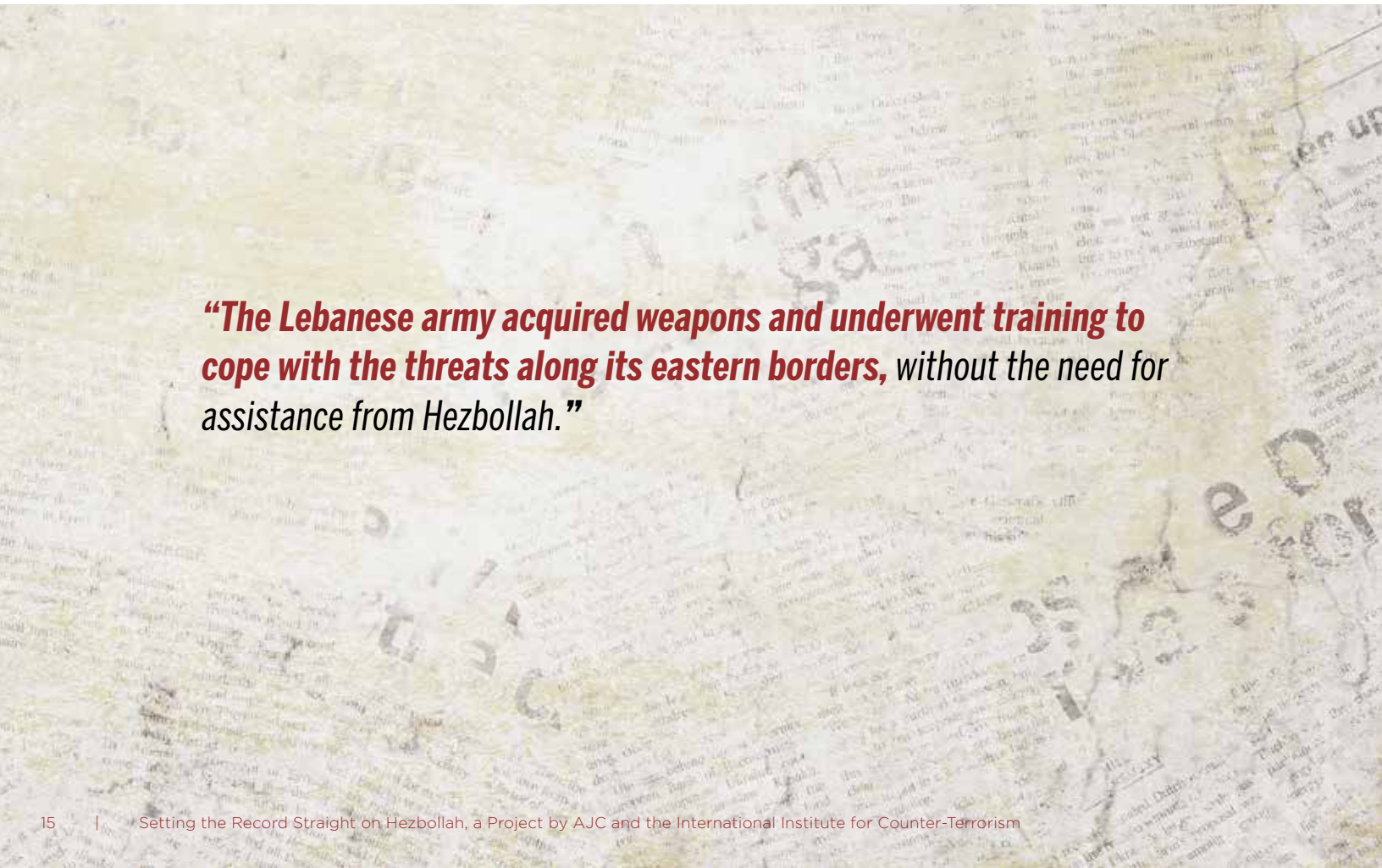
**The two most effective forces operating against the IS and other jihadist elements are the U.S. and Russia.** The U.S.-led air coalition began operating in Syria in September 2014 in the north and east of the country. Russia joined the campaign a year later, in 2015, and operated in the air and on land in western Syria, Damascus, and the center of the country. The entry of the Russians into the war and the extent of their involvement tipped the scales in favor of Assad’s regime.

In recent years, the Lebanese security establishment in general – the Lebanese army in particular – have received considerable economic and military assistance from some Arab and Western countries, especially the United States, France, Britain, and Saudi Arabia. The assistance in weapons includes cannons, armored vehicles, helicopters, reconnaissance planes, light bombers, and advanced anti-tank missiles. These countries have invested approximately \$10 billion since 2005. The aid is intended to address two main issues:

1. To build and strengthen the Lebanese army against threats from within and balance its power vis-à-vis Hezbollah.
2. To strengthen and train the Lebanese army to cope with the threat of global jihad.

**In addition, the U.S. and Britain provided close assistance and advice to the Lebanese Armed Forces in their fight against jihad elements,** with an emphasis on the operation of an array of remote manned aircraft, and the establishment of defense and observation systems along the border in the towns of Aarsal and Al-Qaa. In fact, the Lebanese army acquired weapons and underwent training to cope with the threats along its eastern borders, without the need for assistance from Hezbollah.

**IN CONCLUSION,** Hezbollah was not the leader in the battle against global jihad, nor was it the most effective. It was the Russians, who joined the campaign in 2015, changing the balance in favor of Assad’s regime. Moreover, Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria led to a flow of jihadist organizations into Lebanon. The Lebanese army’s acquisition of advanced weapons improved its ability to deal with global jihad organizations and, if appropriate conditions are created, the Lebanese army will be able to deal with Hezbollah as well.



***“The Lebanese army acquired weapons and underwent training to cope with the threats along its eastern borders, without the need for assistance from Hezbollah.”***

***“Designating Hezbollah would kill any hope of democracy in Lebanon where the government is so corrupt that restrictions on Hezbollah would not be effective.”***

#### SHORT RESPONSE

**DESIGNATING AND OUTLAWING HEZBOLLAH IN LEBANON COULD ENABLE THE RISE OF PRAGMATIC AND MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE SHI'ITE COMMUNITY AND THEIR INTEGRATION INTO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, AS WELL AS AID IN THE LONG-TERM PROCESS OF WEAKENING THE ORGANIZATION IN LEBANON.**

#### KEY DETAILS:

- ▶ A prerequisite for weakening Hezbollah's power is to strengthen the power of the Lebanese government and the branches subordinate to its authority – the army, internal security and more.

#### HEZBOLLAH – POLITICAL CULTURE

Hezbollah's political culture has never been democratic. It is based on the “Principle of the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist” (Walayat Faqih), and is a central component of the political doctrine developed by Ayatollah Khomeini on the eve of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and implemented through the authority of Iran's Supreme Leader. In general, it can be said that since its establishment Hezbollah has aspired to establish an Islamic republic in Lebanon based on the Iranian model, which is very far from being a model of liberal democracy.

The second component of Hezbollah's Shi'ite political culture is the “taqiyya” approach – the ability to lie, pretend or deceive the enemy in order to gain achievements and survive in a hostile environment. This approach has been the basis of Hezbollah's policy in the Lebanese political system for years – the “double game” policy. In this context, Hezbollah acts as a player in the Lebanese political system and plays by its rules, while at the same time the organization's military and social systems are external to the political system and are under the control of the Secretary-General of Hezbollah and Iran.

The organization's leadership, headed by Hassan Nasrallah, made sure to clarify in the early 1990s with the rehabilitation of the Lebanese political system that there had been no change in the organization's attitude toward the Lebanese system. Its entry into the parliament was intended to promote the interests of the organization. Naim Qassem, the movement's Deputy Secretary-General, expressed this approach in an interview published in the movement's newspaper, Al-Ahad, on August 21, 1992: *"Hezbollah decided that it must act to provide representation to the movement fighting against the Israeli enemy, which will serve as the spearhead of the resistance movement against the Israeli occupation and will unite around it all of the parties fighting against the Zionist enemy...Our participation in the parliament will not change the principles that we espouse and we will continue to fight....Our struggle inside parliament will be conducted simultaneously with the struggle outside it. I would like to emphasize that our participation in the elections will not cause us to give up our principles and there is no reason to fear in this regard."* According to this statement (and others), the movement did not abandon its strategy and long-term goals. Its entry into parliament was, as stated, a means to achieve these goals and was deemed necessary in light of the change in Lebanon's political reality.

The Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, also made a similar statement. In an interview with Al-Sapir newspaper in May 1993, he said: "Our participation in parliament does not necessarily indicate our recognition of the regime. We are exploiting our parliamentary activity in order to act for regime change...our parliamentary activity serves our purposes and does not contradict them." In fact, Hezbollah's integration into the Lebanese political system did not indicate an abandonment of the movement's goals – the overthrow of the existing regime and the establishment of an Islamic republic. Rather, it viewed the move as a step toward realizing its long-term goal to achieve power in Lebanon, but gradually this time and in an integrated manner, through its institutions from the top and its broad activity in the civilian sector from the bottom. This is achieved by relying on the "military branch – the resistance" either as a recruiting brand, a threatening deterrent, an intervening party to achieve/defend the interests of the movement through the use of violence, or a combination of all three options. As for the military aspect, Hezbollah systematically violates Security Council Resolution 1701, which was adopted in 2006 after the Second Lebanon War, according to which the Lebanese government is the sole authority in Lebanon and all organizations will disarm. The resolution also states that special security arrangements will be carried out south of the Litani River to prevent Hezbollah's armed presence in the area. In fact, Hezbollah has been working over the years to rebuild its military infrastructure by, among other things, smuggling weapons from Iran through Syria to Lebanon. Thus, the organization (and Iran) is imposing its will on the Lebanese state.

The use of violence as a tool to achieve political goals is characteristic of Hezbollah, as political murders were part of its strategic plan to take control of the political system. In 2005, Hezbollah, in cooperation with and at the direction of Syria, assassinated Rafic Hariri, the main opponent to Syrian involvement in Lebanon and Hezbollah. In 2005, Gebran Tueni, a Lebanese-Christian member of parliament and the editor-in-chief of the Lebanese newspaper, Annahar, called on the government to take responsibility, exercise its sovereignty, disarm Hezbollah, and manage the country in its entirety. Tueni claimed that Hezbollah was implementing an independent policy in Lebanon that served the interests of Syria and Iran.

***"Hezbollah acts as a player in the Lebanese political system and plays by its rules, while at the same time the organization's military and social systems are external to the political system."***

Hezbollah even created crisis situations in the governments in which it served since 2005 whenever its decisions or policies were inconsistent with the interests of the organization and its allies. Hezbollah has led a political campaign to topple the government through the resignation of opposition ministers, the presentation of the government as illegitimate, and political murders (most of which were unsolved) of individuals from the anti-Syrian camp, including Wissam Eid, a senior police investigator who was responsible for investigating Hezbollah's involvement in Hariri's assassination. The height of the campaign was Hezbollah's takeover of neighborhoods in western Beirut in May 2008, during which dozens of people were killed and wounded. In practice, Hezbollah does not fully recognize and respect state institutions, and it established independent alternative institutions and infrastructures. In practice, the organization maintains a state within a state, with an economy that's independent of the Lebanese banking system, an independent army that acts on its own initiative while safeguarding the interests of the organization alone, and a communications system of fiber optic cables spread throughout the country with the goal of preventing the Lebanese government's access.



The organization's involvement in the Syrian civil war and its conduct during the war is further proof of the organization's pattern of action, which is incompatible with the principles of Lebanese democracy. Hezbollah, on Iran's orders and contrary to Lebanon's interests, sent 5,000 of its fighters to participate in the Syrian civil war. In this context, Hezbollah is demonstrating growing loyalty and commitment to Iran and its leader over Lebanon and its constitution. Iran, as its patron, threatens Lebanon's stability and the Lebanese government's ability to impose its sovereignty over the entire country.

Hezbollah also restricts freedom of movement in parts of the country. For example, it prevents the movement and entry of foreigners into Shi'ite areas under the organization's control, such as the Dahieh neighborhood, restricts the movement of

UNIFIL forces in parts of southern Lebanon, limits flights, and prevents the entry of Lebanese army forces into the organization's military compounds throughout the country. In addition, Hezbollah is making demographic changes to the country in order to influence its representation in parliament, thereby increasing its power. By favoring a Shi'ite population in social, agricultural, and economic projects, while creating projects that favor Shi'ite communities in Sunni areas, the organization is moving populations and strengthening them in areas where they have electoral inferiority.

Recently the United States defined Hezbollah not only as a terror organization, but as one of the five leading international criminal organizations, a designation designed to weaken the organization and intensify sanctions against it.

***“Hezbollah, on Iran’s orders and contrary to Lebanon’s interests, sent 5,000 of its fighters to participate in the Syrian civil war. In this context, Hezbollah is demonstrating growing loyalty and commitment to Iran and its leader over Lebanon and its constitution.”***

***“Restrictions on Hezbollah would do little to nothing to strengthen pro-democracy forces in Lebanon.”***

#### SHORT RESPONSE

**WEAKENING HEZBOLLAH WOULD STRENGTHEN LIBERAL POLITICAL FORCES IN LEBANON AND ENABLE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO CONTAIN THE TERROR GROUP’S CORRUPTION, RECLAIM CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY, AND ENFORCE LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY.**

#### THE FACTS

Corruption abounds in all of Lebanon’s sectors, from the government level to the private economic system. Some argue that corruption is, among other things, a product of and integral to the local political culture. Lebanon ranks very high in the international corruption index and is on the watchlist of Transparency International. But there are different levels of corruption among the various political factions.

Hezbollah, which is part of the Lebanese government but operates primarily above the law, is involved in corruption on a particularly large scale compared to other elements in the Lebanese system. The combination of the organization’s representatives in government ministries and in the municipal system, its military power, its leadership in international crime and its status as a main employer in the Shi’ite community only intensify its involvement in fraudulent dealings.

Nevertheless, any move to reduce Hezbollah’s delinquency by designating it a terrorist organization or by hampering its sources of financial income, would weaken Hezbollah. Imposing sanctions on Iran and closing sources of funding from the Shi’ite diaspora in Europe, would decrease the level of corruption in Lebanon and strengthen the Lebanese government’s ability to tackle corruption. Dealing with corruption in Lebanon will open the country up to external investments and strengthen the democratic component.



# CORRUPTION IN THE LEBANESE SYSTEM, AND HEZBOLLAH'S INVOLVEMENT IN FRAUD AND CRIME

Transparency International defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption can be classified as grand, petty, and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs.” Lebanon ranks 138 out of 175 countries in the Transparency International 2018 corruption index. (A high number reflects greater corruption.) In Lebanon, the last elections raised concerns over the financing of political parties and improper management of electoral procedures.

## THE CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN LEBANON

Years of irregularities and revolutions have contributed to Lebanon's weak government. A growing risk of corrupt behavior by various players threatens the system's overall integrity. The considerable amount of money transferred and its effect on the Lebanese economy, the historical trauma of various crises, occupation and invasions, the fragmentation of Lebanese society, the significant presence of armed militias, the silence of European countries on the issue of accepting refugees, and the long duration of the war in Syria have all contributed to the phenomenon of corruption:

- ▶ **Transparency and the risk of corruption** – Corruption exists at all levels of society, in the public and private sector, as bribery, embezzlement, and patronage. The political system in Lebanon is complex and is based on the demographics of the state at the time of the signing of the Taif Agreement. The government system is divided into 18 groups, leading to a lack of accountability on the part of government officials. The public sector is also characterized by a lack of transparency. A national budget has not been published since 2004. In September 2015, Lebanon was ranked last among 102 countries in the International Open Budget Index. Locals treat fraud as granting favors and using networks of influence, instead of bribes. Moreover, bribery is common in public administration and considered an acceptable norm of local political life. To be sure, there is a general suspicion of corruption. But since Lebanon seems to lack a basic understanding of what qualifies as corruption, it usually does not lead to criticism and investigations, nor to assessments that could identify political and technical solutions.
- ▶ **Lebanon and the refugee crisis** – Lebanon has the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. In addition to half a million Palestinian refugees from 1948 and their descendants, the ongoing armed conflict in Syria has added approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees. This sudden and tremendous influx not only has changed the demographic, economic, and social composition of Lebanon, it has also put pressure on the resources and infrastructure of Lebanon's urban and rural areas. In addition, it has changed the delicate demographic balance that formed the basis of the Taif Agreement (signed

in 1989). On top of this, the economic crisis, which raised unemployment and reduced public services, exacerbated the inequality within Lebanese society. Due to the Lebanese government's failure to ratify the Convention on the Status of Refugees (1951), refugees are neither regulated nor anchored in Lebanese law. Although the principle of non-refoulement is respected, the Lebanese population seems to perceive Syrians as migrants seeking economic opportunities rather than refugees seeking protection.

*“Hezbollah, which is part of the Lebanese government but operates primarily outside the framework of the law, is involved in corruption on a particularly large scale compared to other elements in the Lebanese system.”*

## HEZBOLLAH'S INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

In April 2018, Forbes Magazine published a list of the ten richest terrorist organizations in the world, ranking Hezbollah in first place with an estimated annual income of \$1.1 billion, of which approximately \$700 million a year is transferred from the Iranian authorities, **and the rest is raised through an international network of drugs and crime.**

Lebanon produces and trades in illicit drugs, including plantations of opium and hashish in the Bekaa Valley. Already in the 1990s, Lebanon was the center of a multi-billion-dollar drug economy that was anchored in local politics and power centers, namely the manufacturing and selling of the synthetic drug Captagon. In 2016, the Captagon business in Lebanon was valued at over \$1 billion.





## HEZBOLLAH'S INVOLVEMENT IN CORRUPTION

In April 2018, a former Hezbollah fighter reportedly accused Nasrallah of failing to eradicate corruption within the organization. The open letter received support on social media and prompted Nasrallah to launch an anti-corruption campaign that emphasized economic development as the core platform of the group. Nasrallah announced that the party leadership was appointing Hassan Fadlallah, a Hezbollah member of parliament, to head a committee against corruption under his direct supervision.

However, even though Hezbollah may be able to eradicate political corruption, it will have a hard time dealing with the corruption carried out by influential individuals in the organization. Powerful and corrupt entities are involved in criminal networks that provide financial resources to Hezbollah's terrorist and military activities. Operations Cassandra and Cedar, led by the U.S., exposed the criminal-business wing of Hezbollah, Hezbollah External Security Organization Business Affairs Component ("BAC"). Hezbollah elements involved in drug trafficking have been arrested in the U.S, South America and several European countries such as France, Belgium, Germany and Italy.<sup>18</sup>

Along with these activities, several dominant figures in Hezbollah are involved in criminal activities, including the sex industry and human trafficking. One example is Ali Hussein Zeaier, a Hezbollah operative responsible for criminal procurement and financing. In 2014, the U.S. Treasury declared him a terrorist operative because of his handling of companies to acquire drones used by Hezbollah in Syrian territory. In 2015, the U.S. Treasury announced sanctions on additional companies managed by Zeaier in China and Lebanon for similar violations. Several months later, in 2016, the Lebanese authorities uncovered a large prostitution network of mostly Syrian women. Hezbollah claimed to have played a role in exposing the sex trafficking network, but authorities reportedly linked the network to Zeaier.

Similarly, in May 2018, the U.S. Treasury declared Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi a terrorist. A Hezbollah financier with close ties to the former president and dictator of Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, Bazzi was also connected to a Hezbollah-affiliated drug dealer,

Ayman Joumma. The Treasury revealed that Bazzi provided Hezbollah with significant economic assistance for many years from his commercial profits. Bazzi's terrorism financing was achieved mainly through close ties with two operatives in Hezbollah's commercial wing, Adham Tabaja and Ali Yousef Sharara. Bazzi also supported Hezbollah through a drug trafficking network. About one month after declaring Bazzi a terrorist operative, the U.S. administration published a report on human rights violations made possible by corrupt senior political figures and their financiers (published June 12, 2018). The report discussed Bazzi's case at length, his connections with Jammeh and the human rights violations attributed to them, including the holding of prisoners in unsuitable detention conditions, arbitrary arrests, lack of accountability in cases involving violence against women, rape, and female genital mutilation, trafficking in children and child slavery.

**IN SUMMARY,** high-level political corruption undermines democratic institutions and public trust, hampers economic growth, and creates an environment in which economic crime and other forms of lawlessness can flourish. There is no doubt that Hezbollah is up to its neck in criminal activity. The organization's involvement in international crime contributes to corruption, and there is no room for organized crime in Lebanese politics.

Reducing Hezbollah's power and weakening it to a level where the Lebanese government can contain it, reclaim control of Lebanon, and implement Lebanese sovereignty is an attainable goal. Decreasing Hezbollah's capabilities will strengthen the liberal political forces in Lebanon, with an emphasis on the Sunni-Christian alliance that was weakened in the last elections in Lebanon.

The current situation, in which few countries have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, allows it to operate undisturbed in most countries and to establish its power in the Lebanese and regional political arena. Any country that designates Hezbollah a terrorist organization decreases the organization's ability to establish itself in the international system and in Lebanon, and impacts its sources of funding.

***"Hezbollah elements involved in drug trafficking have been arrested in the U.S, South America and several European countries such as France, Belgium, Germany and Italy."***

***“EU governments are worried that full proscription of the group will hinder political and diplomatic engagement with Lebanon.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**COUNTRIES THAT HAVE DESIGNATED HEZBOLLAH IN ITS ENTIRETY AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION HAVE RELATIONS WITH LEBANON TO DIFFERENT DEGREES.**

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**THE FACTS**

Countries that have designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization continue to maintain diplomatic relations with Lebanon. There are various levels of cooperation between these countries, international entities, and Lebanon. The United States, the Netherlands, and Canada all designated Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organization while simultaneously supporting the strengthening of government institutions, maintaining trade relations, and providing humanitarian aid to help the refugees in Lebanon.

## FACTS CONCERNING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH LEBANON

- ▶ **The United States** designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization in 1997. The official policy of the U.S. State Department, as published in July 2018, is to maintain the close ties with Lebanon in order to help preserve the country's independence, national unity, and territorial integrity.
- ▶ Since 2006, the U.S. has provided over \$2 billion in aid to Lebanon. This aid supports **the strengthening of Lebanon's state institutions**, the building of vital public services, the preservation of Lebanon's multicultural character, as well as the battle against Hezbollah's narrative and its influence. U.S. aid to the Lebanese armed forces and internal security forces promotes an agenda of partnership and a sense of commitment in a problematic region, helps Lebanon to defend its borders, and strengthens the protection of Lebanese sovereignty.
- ▶ **The U.S.** has provided Lebanon with \$1.8 billion in humanitarian aid since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. Furthermore, U.S. and Lebanese leadership have been maintaining an ongoing active relationship, which includes a recent visit of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Beirut in March 2019,<sup>19</sup> and a meeting between PM Hariri and President Trump at the White House in July 2017.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that although the U.S. maintains extensive relations with the Lebanese government, the Trump administration has increased its sanctions on Hezbollah. **Among other things, the U.S. prohibits contact with politicians who support the organization**, which could lead them to be designated as supporters of terrorism, thereby preventing their entry into the U.S. and confiscating their assets. Since 2015, Lebanese banks, by instruction of the Lebanese Central Bank, have blocked the accounts of Hezbollah supporters and activists, following U.S. sanctions against institutions that hold such accounts.
- ▶ **The Netherlands** designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization in 2004. In April 2018, the Dutch government indicated it would provide future support for Lebanon to increase its stability. In a speech at a Paris conference on Lebanon's commercial economic developments, the Prime Minister said that she would closely monitor the Lebanese government's moves to implement reforms, eradicate corruption and balance the budget. The Netherlands transfers indirect financial aid to Lebanon by supporting projects of international organizations. Moreover, Lebanon was defined as a new focus for Dutch foreign policy, and as a result, support for Lebanon could grow significantly over the next four years, during which the Netherlands is expected to allocate €200 million in aid. That contribution could increase if Lebanon implements economic reforms, which the Netherlands has encouraged and continues to monitor.
- ▶ **Britain**, which only recently designated Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organization, has not held official ties with the organization's representatives in parliament and government for several years. Official British representatives were prohibited from meeting with Hezbollah representatives in the parliament. Those who tried were reprimanded and even removed from their posts. Still, the British government announced that its cooperation with and support for the Lebanese government would not be harmed by the recent designation.
- ▶ **Canada** has provided extensive aid to Lebanon, which serves as a strategic focal point in light of the Syrian influx of refugees. **Since 2016, Canada has contributed nearly \$250 million to support projects to reduce tensions between refugees** and strengthen the ability of local police to prevent conflict. In 2018, trade between Canada and Lebanon was estimated at \$150 million, a 58% increase since 2013. Canadian exports to Lebanon are estimated at \$117 million and imports from Lebanon are estimated at \$33 million.

Diplomats and politicians draw parallels to ETA and the IRA, arguing that it was important in both of those cases to keep political channels open.

The differences between Hezbollah on the one hand, and the ETA and the IRA on the other are fundamental: The latter two sought separation. Hezbollah seeks domination or, at the very least, the elimination of Israel. Although dialogue has always been part of conflict resolution, the fundamental differences make the strategy of maintaining an open political channel irrelevant in Hezbollah's case.

*“Among other things, the U.S. prohibits contact with politicians who support the organization, **which could lead them to be designated as supporters of terrorism, thereby preventing their entry into the U.S. and confiscating their assets.**”*



*“The differences between Hezbollah, and the ETA and IRA on the other are fundamental: The latter two sought separation; **Hezbollah seeks domination, or at the very least the elimination of Israel.**”*

For starters, the IRA in Ireland and Northern Ireland and ETA in Spain operated outside of the political systems and against the countries where they existed, in order to achieve independence. To be sure, both organizations established a political wing alongside a military wing making them hybrid terrorist organizations. However, unlike Hezbollah, their political wings did not operate within the British/Irish or Spanish political systems. Hezbollah operates within the Lebanese political system with the ultimate aim of taking over the government. It is an organization that exploits the democratic process for its own benefit, while the military wing exerts the most influence on the rest of the political players.

**IN SUMMARY:** Western countries have a common interest in strengthening Lebanon as a strategic player to maintain regional stability, both those that designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in its entirety and those that designated only its military wing. These countries work with Lebanon to strengthen its government institutions while avoiding contact with Hezbollah representatives or their supporters. They maintain trade relations and provide humanitarian assistance to refugees, directly and through international bodies. Even the Netherlands, which is considered strict in its relations with Lebanon because of Hezbollah, could increase the scope of its support if reforms are implemented in Lebanon.

ETA	IRA	HEZBOLLAH	
Independence for Basque Country	Ireland's separation from Britain	Control of the Lebanese political system	<b>Goal</b>
Hybrid	Hybrid	Hybrid	<b>Structure</b>
Outside the political system	Outside the political system	<b>Within</b> the political system	<b>Arena of Activity</b>

***“Hezbollah will be weakened, even without a ban, because now Iran has less money to pay Hezbollah due to U.S. sanctions.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**THE CLAIM THAT HEZBOLLAH WILL WEAKEN DUE TO THE SANCTIONS ON IRAN IS CORRECT, BUT NOT ENOUGH, AS IT WILL FIND OTHER CHANNELS OF FUNDING, INCLUDING THROUGH CRIMINAL DEALINGS.**

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**THE FACTS**

As time goes on, indications of the deep impact of the sanctions on Hezbollah are becoming clearer. However, only integrated activity in the international arena over time will have the desired impact. The full designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and its isolation from sources of funding and spheres of influence is the most effective move.

Hezbollah’s sources of funding are numerous and diverse, and any pressure on all of them will further weaken the organization. A weak Hezbollah increases the chances that the Lebanese government will succeed in applying its sovereignty over all the country. The current situation has a strong Hezbollah operating its units independently and imposing its will on the government by controlling the political system in the parliament and the administration.

The claim that Iranian support has been reduced to the point that it is adversely affecting Hezbollah is not in line with reality, at least not in the short or medium term. Hezbollah has several sources of funding that will sustain its efforts until the situation improves. It was recently reported that the organization itself is financially prepared to operate for up to five years under the current sanctions imposed on Iran.

# FACTS ABOUT HEZBOLLAH'S FINANCING SYSTEM

Hezbollah's budget is estimated at over one billion dollars per year, of which approximately 700 million dollars were transferred to the organization from Iran (as of 2017). This amount is used to finance the organization's military-terrorist activities (purchasing weapons, salaries, training fighters, etc.); its social activities (operating schools, hospitals, welfare institutions, etc.); and other organizational expenses (rents for offices, purchase of office equipment, etc.).

- ▶ **1990-2000 60-100 million dollars**
- ▶ **2000-2006: 100-200 million dollars**
- ▶ **2006-2009 200-300 million dollars**
- ▶ **2010 100-150 million dollars**
- ▶ **2012-2016 Increase in the Iranian budget transferred to Hezbollah**
- ▶ **2016-2017 700-800 million dollars**
- ▶ **May 2018 The United States imposes sanctions on Iran**
- ▶ **2018-2019 Decrease in the Iranian budget transferred to Hezbollah**

The above data indicates that the Iranian budget for Hezbollah has not been consistent over the years, yet the organization has continued to function and has even expanded its activity at the local, regional and international level.

## IRAN FINANCES HEZBOLLAH'S OPERATION THROUGH TWO MAIN CHANNELS:

1. **Government bodies** – A budget transferred to the organization by the Revolutionary Guards (through the Quds Force) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Iranian embassies in Damascus and Syria).
2. **Semi-governmental bodies** – 2. After the 1979 revolution in Iran, charitable foundations were established in Iran operating under the authority of the Supreme Leader. These funds have branches in Lebanon that, as part of the “export of revolution” policy, provide extensive financial and social assistance to Hezbollah and to the Shi'ite population that supports it.

## ALONG WITH IRANIAN ASSISTANCE, HEZBOLLAH HAS WORKED OVER THE YEARS TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INCOME IN A GLOBAL DEPLOYMENT, SUCH AS:

- ▶ **Fundraising in Lebanon and throughout the world:** Hezbollah raises money in Lebanon and around the world (mainly among Shi'ite Muslim communities), estimated at several million dollars a year. In Lebanon, funds are raised through Hezbollah's Islamic Resistance Support Association. The association works to collect significant amounts of money from private individuals and in public spaces, such as businesses, mosques, the education system, gas stations, and others. During his March 2019 speech, Nasrallah called on his supporters to donate to the organization. About two weeks later, he released a video clip in which he claimed that the organization had managed to raise approximately two million dollars. In addition to fundraising in Lebanon, charitable foundations and centers of local Shi'ite communities raise funds around the world.

- ▶ **Legitimate business activity:** In addition to commercial companies belonging to Hezbollah or to its subordinate charities, the organization's operatives are also involved in a range of legitimate business activities, such as oil trade, real estate, and small business ownership. The Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFTC) recently announced new sanctions on Hezbollah and on several of its senior members, including several key figures in the organization's financing system:
  1. **Ali Youssef Charara**, 1. Chairman of the Lebanese media company “Spectrum,” which provides communications services in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. According to assessments, Charara is laundering money for the organization and helping finance it.<sup>21</sup>
  2. **Adham Tabaja**, o2. owner of one of the largest real estate companies in Lebanon, “Al-Inmaa,” and its subsidiary, “Al-Inma Engineering,” served as an investment mechanism for Hezbollah. The company has a branch in Iraq that has promoted projects in real estate and oil, whose profits have been transferred to Hezbollah. According to American estimates, Tabaja is one of Hezbollah's five main sponsors.<sup>22</sup>
  3. **Hasan Ebrahimi**, owner of the “Maher” trading company, which launders funds and is involved in smuggling goods for Hezbollah. Ebrahimi belongs to the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guards and is stationed in Beirut.<sup>23</sup>

**Criminal activity in Lebanon and around the world:** Hezbollah operatives carry out criminal activities in two main areas – drug trafficking and counterfeiting. In addition, the organization's operatives are also involved in trading conflict diamonds, counterfeit medication, gold and cigarettes, as well as car theft, the counterfeiting of credit cards, and more. According to previously published estimates, revenues from this activity vary, but they range from tens to hundreds of millions of dollars a year. **Hezbollah's criminal activity in the international arena serves as a platform for operational activity and as a means of financing the organization's activities.**



## THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXAMPLES:

- ▶ In the past decade, Hezbollah has manufactured counterfeit drugs, including Captagon pills, which were previously used to treat concentration problems. Hezbollah's global drug network operates widely, from South America, Africa, Europe, the Far East, Asia and the Middle East. In 2016, the Captagon business in Lebanon was valued at over one billion dollars, of which Hezbollah earned tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars a year.
- ▶ In the framework of the "Charlotte" affair that was exposed in the U.S. in 2002, a Lebanese network was discovered smuggling cigarettes from various states in the U.S. and transferred millions of dollars in profits to Hezbollah.

## A SHARE OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT BUDGET:

Hezbollah established three separate channels through which it receives state allocations for the Shi'ite community: **The first one** are the organization's representatives in the municipal system; **the second one** are through the members of parliament who belong to the organization; and **the third** channel is the Hezbollah cabinet ministers who manage substantial budgets in the Lebanese economy. Presumably, for example, Hezbollah's insistence on overseeing the Ministry of Health stems from its desire to use its budget, which is the third largest in the Lebanese government. It thus consolidates its status and maintains a hold on the Lebanese economy..

## HEZBOLLAH'S ADVANTAGES IN THE DRUG AND COUNTERFEITING SYSTEM:

- ▶ The organization constitutes a power center among the Shi'ite population in the Beqaa Valley, where these "industrial" centers are located.
- ▶ Hezbollah controls the drugs and counterfeit money pipelines, including smuggling routes to Israel via southern Lebanon.
- ▶ The organization has close ties with Lebanese communities abroad and operational infrastructures worldwide, including international crime and smuggling centers in Latin America, Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union.
- ▶ Hezbollah exploits its relations with Iran to obtain technological assistance and training (of a quality that terrorist organizations typically don't have access to) that enable the organization to maintain an infrastructure that produces sophisticated counterfeit money and medications.

## HEZBOLLAH'S CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO PROMOTE SEVERAL IMPORTANT GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION:

- ▶ The creation of a significant independent fundraising channel, in addition to the financing from Iran.

- ▶ The use of professional criminal elements to improve the organization's operational capabilities in Israel, the Arab countries, and the international arena.
- ▶ Damage the social and economic fabric of Israel and Western countries, to weaken their struggle against Iran and Hezbollah.

*"In the past decade, Hezbollah has manufactured counterfeit drugs, including Captagon pills, which were previously used to treat concentration problems. Hezbollah's global drug network operates widely, from South America, Africa, Europe, the Far East, Asia and the Middle East."*

## IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT HEZBOLLAH WOULD SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDING CHANNELS, BOTH FROM THE LEBANESE DIASPORA, IN EUROPE, AND FROM THE DRUG TRADE INDUSTRY, ON EUROPEAN SOIL.

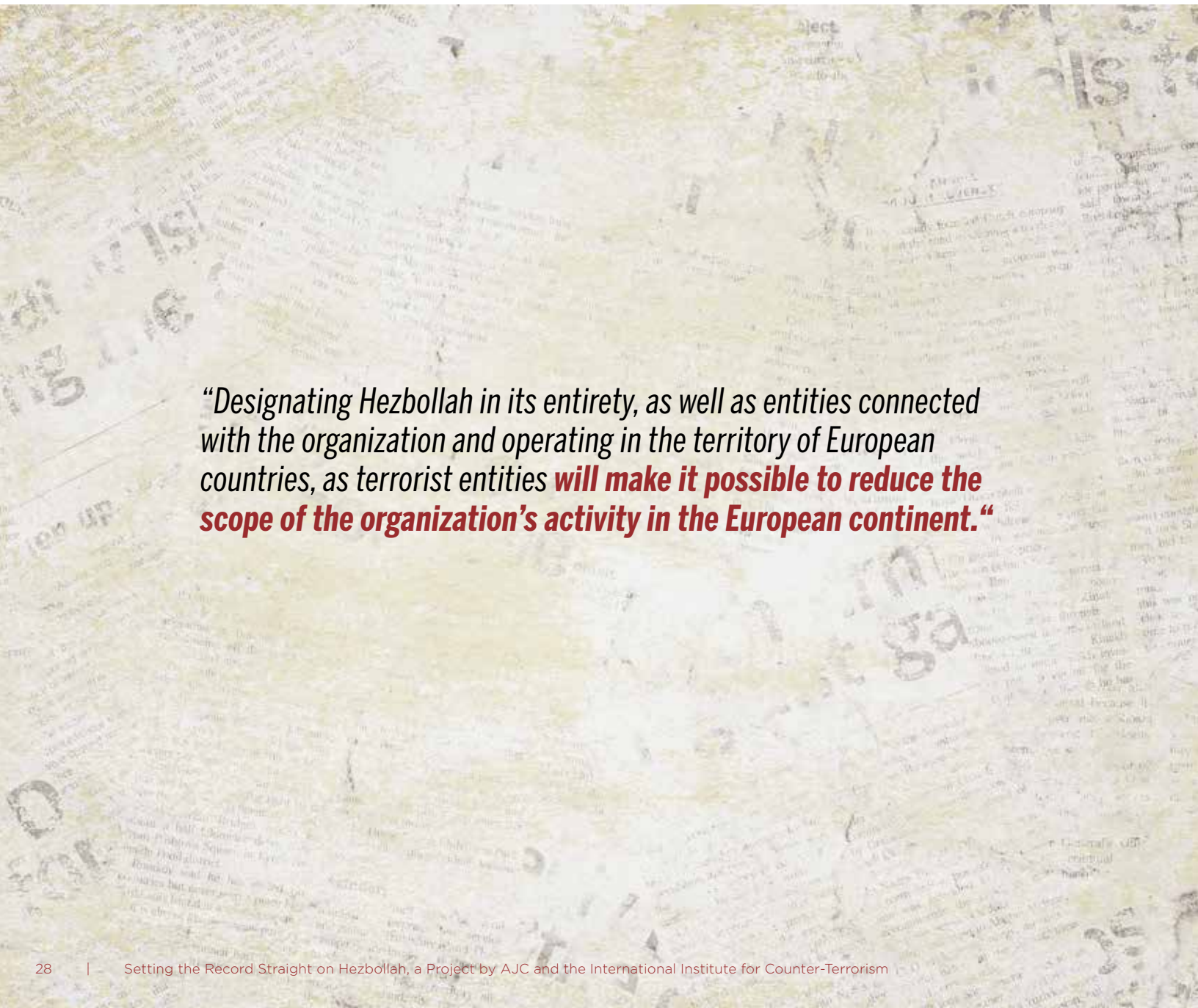
Hezbollah has many sources of income in Europe. Fundraising activity takes place in Germany, Britain, Belgium (diamond trade), and other countries. In addition, the organization works to raise funds through criminal activity in Europe, including drug trafficking and counterfeit European currency. For example, between 2008 and 2018, an international task force was involved in the Cassandra project aimed at exposing and arresting Hezbollah members involved in drug trafficking. Among the countries that operated on the team and even carried out arrests of Hezbollah operatives were the U.S., France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and South American countries, such as Colombia. In this framework, in 2008, the German authorities in Frankfurt arrested two Lebanese men with over €8 million who were recruited through the Hezbollah network to smuggle cocaine. A year later, two more members of the same network were arrested, this time in a raid of their home in Speyer, Germany, for involvement in transporting drugs from Beirut to Europe.

Hezbollah takes advantage of the fact that not all European countries have designated the organization in its entirety a terrorist organization. Most European countries must defer to European Union legal restrictions, unlike Britain and the Netherlands, which can enforce the designation in accordance with the laws of their respective countries. Designating Hezbollah in its entirety, as well as entities connected with the organization (who operate in European territory), as terrorist entities will make it possible to reduce the scope of the organization's activity on the European continent.

Germany is one of Hezbollah's main arenas of operation in Europe. According to German Interior Ministry reports that the organization raised over four million dollars between 2007 and 2013, which was transferred to the "Al-Shaheed Charitable Foundation" in Lebanon, one can estimate that the organization continues to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. The funds are reportedly intended to finance Hezbollah's social activities, but it can be inferred that the donations are also being diverted for other purposes. According to German intelligence sources, the Al-Mustafa Community Center raised funds for, among other things, the Lebanon Orphan Children Project, which was outlawed in Germany in 2014. The German Interior Ministry reports that the organization raised over four million dollars between 2007 and 2013, which was transferred to the "Al-Shaheed Charitable Foundation" in Lebanon. **The German branch of the Lebanese "Al-Shaheed Charitable Foundation,"** which supports the families of Hezbollah's

martyrs, was closed by the German police in July 2002 and apparently has not resumed operations since then. The "Al-Aqsa Foundation," which belongs to Hamas, has also raised funds for Hezbollah in the past. The director of its branch in the Netherlands (which defines Hezbollah as a terrorist organization), previously said that the branch, in coordination with the center in Germany, was raising funds for Hezbollah. It should be noted that the fund in Germany was outlawed in 2002 because of its ties to Hamas.

Additional reports from the past year point to fundraising at the Al-Mustafa Community Center in Bremen, Germany. Sixty Hezbollah supporters work at the center at various fundraising events there, hosting up to 800 people.<sup>24</sup> As of 2018, there are about 1,050 Hezbollah-affiliated entities operating in Germany to raise funds and recruit operatives for the organization.



*“Designating Hezbollah in its entirety, as well as entities connected with the organization and operating in the territory of European countries, as terrorist entities **will make it possible to reduce the scope of the organization’s activity in the European continent.**”*



***“Hezbollah is not an extension of the Iranian regime. In fact, it has tried to distance itself from Iranian patronage to increase its domestic legitimacy among parties that view it as Tehran’s lackey.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**HEZBOLLAH IS THE LONG ARM OF IRAN.**

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**THE FACTS**

There is a reciprocal relationship between Iran and Hezbollah. While Iranians support Hezbollah’s activities in the regional and international arenas, Hezbollah promotes Iranian interests. Iranian investment in the organization has increased over the years with Hezbollah’s transformation into a hybrid terrorist organization that operates a welfare system and a political party alongside its military-terrorist wing.

Although Hezbollah has tried to mask its real relationship with Iran over the years, many statements by its leaders alongside other publications have attested to the depth of these ties.



## KEY DETAILS:

The relationship between Iran and Hezbollah can be described as a reciprocal system. Though Hezbollah was at first under Iranian control and mentoring in the 1980s, it began to operate more independently in the 1990s to position itself as a legitimate player in Lebanon's restored political system.

The patron-client relationship that shares an Islamic-Shi'ite common denominator rests on the existence of a supreme religious authority in Iran. The Persian nation has been funding Hezbollah since its establishment and invests huge sums to develop and strengthen the organization's capabilities, from an estimated \$70-\$100 million per year in the 1990s to approximately \$700 million a year in 2017. In addition, Iran supplies Hezbollah with various weapons, mostly through the Damascus airport. Since 1982, Hezbollah's operational infrastructure has been built almost entirely with Iranian support, with some Syrian political and military assistance. From Iran's point of view, Hezbollah serves as an arm to carry out terrorist activities and achieve Iranian interests and fight against Israel. It should be emphasized that Iran helped and continues to help build Hezbollah's global terrorist infrastructure through operatives of the Iranian security services and the Revolutionary Guards from inside its embassies around the world. Hezbollah is a strategic asset for Iran.

Hezbollah operatives, under Iranian guidance, are active in every place where Iran has interests, such as Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and the Palestinian territory. In order to expand its hold on the ground, the Revolutionary Guards are aided by Hezbollah's Unit 3800, which is entrusted with advising and training organizations outside Lebanon.

In August 2018, Saudi officials posted videos of the Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah training Houthis. Similarly, the Kata'ib militia, which originally operated in Iraq, was sent to Syria by Qassem Suleimani, commander of the Quds Force, which is responsible for the activities of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards outside Iran's borders. The leader of the militia, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, even thanked Iran in 2018 for its support them with weapons and money and Hezbollah for training its fighters.

The changes that have taken place in Lebanon and the Middle East since 2005, such as the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, the Second Lebanon War, the nuclear agreement, and the "Arab Spring" revolutions, deepened Iran's control over Hezbollah and reduced the group's independence. Hezbollah went from being a Lebanese player to a regional and international actor that operates on behalf of Iran. On the outside, Hezbollah continues to attach itself to the Lebanese system while concealing its real relationship with Iran. However, there have been many statements made by senior Hezbollah figures and other publications attesting to the depth of the organization's ties with Iran.

***"From Iran's point of view, Hezbollah serves as an arm to carry out terrorist activities and achieve Iranian interests and fight against Israel. "***

- ▶ In 2016, Hezbollah's Secretary-General admitted for the first time that the organization's budget, revenues, expenses, food, and weapons, all are connected to Iran. In a speech to a small audience that was recorded and leaked to the Iranian media, Nasrallah admitted that the organization regarded itself as a soldier in the service of Iran's Supreme Leader. Hezbollah claimed the recording was forged.
- ▶ Similarly, Sheikh Naim Qassem, Nasrallah's deputy, claimed in 2009 that Khamenei "sets the general guidelines for us that release us from guilt and grant us legitimacy." Qassem emphasized that Hezbollah cannot launch an operation against Israel without religious justification from Iran's ruling cleric.
- ▶ In the "Hizbollah Program," which was published in 1985 and has never been changed, the organization described its identity: "We are the sons of the umma (Muslim community) – the party of God (Hizb Allah) the vanguard of which was made victorious by God in Iran. There the vanguard succeeded in laying down the basis of a Muslim state which plays a central role in the world. We obey the orders of one leader, wise and just, that of our tutor and faqih (jurist) who fulfills all the necessary conditions: Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini. God save him!" Since the death of Khomeini, the faqih is Ayatollah Khamanei.

In addition, Iran or subsidiaries of Iranian organizations own Hezbollah institutions. For example, the Martyrs Foundation is an Iranian institution established by Imam Khomeini that supports the families of martyrs. Its Lebanese branch helps the families of Hezbollah martyrs. They are all identified by the U.S. Treasury as terrorism supporters.

**Recently, several Iranian and Hezbollah operatives were arrested on European soil, attesting to the close ties between the two.** Among other things, French police conducted searches in the city of Grande-Synthe, in northern France, at the headquarters and home of the leaders of the Shi'ite organization "Zahra Center", which have ties to Hezbollah.. The center apparently served as logistical support for Iranian operations in France and was closed by authorities.

# HEZBOLLAH AND EUROPE



**“Groups that pose a terrorist threat in the Middle East don’t necessarily pose a threat to the EU. What happens in the Middle East stays in the Middle East. *The refugee crisis is water from a different stream.*”**

SHORT RESPONSE

**HEZBOLLAH HAS ESTABLISHED A TERRORIST INFRASTRUCTURE IN EUROPE AND EXECUTES TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST NON-EUROPEAN TARGETS ON EUROPEAN SOIL.**

THE FACTS

Events that take place in the Middle East have a global impact. Even in cases where terrorist organizations do not attack “host” countries directly, any action on European soil or aid for such action threatens the continent at large. In addition to a potential terrorist attack, extremists also put the cultural cohesion of European society at risk.

**Hezbollah Members Rise to 1,050 in Germany Amid Growing Jew-Hatred-Intel**

June 4, 2019 — Jerusalem Post

**Hezbollah-linked Extremists Stockpiled Explosives in London**

June 10, 2019 — Al Arabiya



## TERRORIST THREATS TO EUROPE POSED BY HEZBOLLAH:

- ▶ **Physical threat:** Globalization and easy passage between countries has allowed terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, to expand their scope of activity. Hezbollah carried out a terrorist attack on a tourist bus in Burgas, Bulgaria, and attempted attacks in Cyprus in 2012. In recent years, several apartments and hideouts have been discovered throughout Europe, storing huge quantities of explosives and chemical materials for the manufacture of powerful explosive devices. In 2015, a warehouse containing 8.3 tons of ammonium nitrate was found in Cyprus. Six months later, four hiding places were found in London containing three tons of the same material.
- ▶ **Involvement in the arms trade:** Hezbollah is involved in weapon trading operations on European soil. For example, in 2014, a Hezbollah arms dealer named Ali Fayad was arrested in the Czech Republic. Following the arrest, Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon kidnapped several Czech citizens who were freed in exchange for Fayad's release.
- ▶ **Hezbollah's crime and financing network:** Most of the organization's illicit financing activity comes from drug trade, trafficking illegal substances, theft, and money laundering. A drug network run by Ayman Juma smuggled cocaine from South America to West Africa, and from there to Europe and the Middle East. The value of the capital laundered through the Lebanese Canadian Bank was estimated at \$200 million per month. As part of "Operation Cedar," authorities discovered a second network in 2016 in which 16 members of the organization's criminal network in Europe – France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy – were arrested after laundering up to 1 million euros from international drug deals by buying and selling luxury goods worldwide. Hezbollah's criminal activity also extends to cyberspace. In October 2018, several servers in the Czech Republic were seized and shut down after Hezbollah used them to break into networks and computers around the world for the purposes of extortion and information theft.
- ▶ **Hezbollah exploits the freedom of movement of its operatives in Europe to commit crimes, raise funds, incite, and recruit new members.** According to a German intelligence report from May 2019 on Hezbollah's threat to Germany, the number of Hezbollah operatives in the country rose from about 950 to about 1,050. Over the past 20 years, the organization has used its presence in Germany to recruit Caucasian terrorist operatives. For example, in 1997, a German Hezbollah operative named Steven Smirk was arrested in Israel. He was trained in Lebanon before being sent on a suicide bombing mission. Smirk converted to Islam in Germany and underwent religious radicalization by Hezbollah representatives in the country.

*“The community of Lebanese exiles around the world is a regular source of income for the organization. Donations are recorded as assistance to the needy and to the organization’s social activities in Lebanon, but in practice Hezbollah’s social institutions in Lebanon support its military activities.”*

- ▶ **The community of Lebanese exiles around the world is a regular source of income for the organization.** With the help of mosques, Shi'ite cultural centers, and charities, Hezbollah turns to exiles for donations to the organization. Donations are recorded as assistance to the needy and to the organization's social activities in Lebanon. In practice Hezbollah's social institutions in Lebanon support its military activities. For instance, the Jihād al-Binā' Foundation initiates social projects while serving as the engineering wing of the organization. In 2013, Germany outlawed two charities for orphans because they transferred donations to the Martyrs Foundation in Lebanon, which directly assists Hezbollah's military-terrorist activities.
- ▶ Incitement against its opponents, namely the United States and Israel is another aspect of the organization's activities in Europe. Every year, the organization's Secretary-General himself calls on the organization's operatives and supporters to participate in marches, such as the "Al Quds Day march," around the world. This activity, along with incitement in mosques and in Shi'ite cultural centers throughout Europe, contributes to an increase in antisemitism throughout the continent. Josef Schuster, head of the German Central Council of Jews, said that 'Al Quds' demonstrations "transport nothing but antisemitism and hatred of Israel." In the past two months alone, four Shi'ite cultural institutions were shut down in France for incitement.
- ▶ **The *dawah* threat** – By providing support to the community in which they operate, Islamic terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah, use the organization's social network to strengthen their ideological and economic support. By recruiting clerics within immigrant communities and the Shi'ite population in various European cities, Hezbollah strengthens its ideological narrative and mobilizes supporters.

## THE REFUGEE CRISIS AND THE THREAT TO EUROPE:

In the age of globalization, events do not occur in a vacuum. Instability in several Middle Eastern countries has led to civil war, and to an unprecedented stream of refugees from failed states to European countries. In an age of open borders and freedom of movement, Europeans must cope with a range of threats, including foreign fighters returning to their countries of origin in Europe. In recent years, and especially since the rise of the Islamic State, the Middle East has served as a recruitment and radicalization center for European Muslims. Those who survived the fall of the so-called Caliphate are making their way back to Europe and have become a security threat to the continent.

Political crises and a weak central government, coupled with civil wars, are causing populations to flee Middle Eastern countries, longing for a better life in the West. Moreover, when an ethnic and sectarian crisis occurs, there is a clear interest in diluting the enemy population in order to create demographic changes in the country. For Hezbollah operatives in Europe, these refugees constitute a target for recruitment.

**Over the years, several terrorist attacks and attempted attacks were carried out against non-European targets on European soil.** When wars take place in the Middle East, efforts are made to attack the regime opponents in Europe. In 2018, twice Iranian intelligence tried and failed to carry out mass attacks against regime opponents- a plot to detonate an explosive device at a conference in France and an attempted assassination in Denmark. In addition, in 2015 and 2017, two opponents of the Iranian regime were assassinated in Holland. Hezbollah also imports terrorism from the Middle East, as demonstrated in the 1980s when it hijacked three planes and carried out several deadly attacks against shops and hotels in Paris. In the 1990s, the organization was accused of detonating two car bombs at the Israeli Embassy and a Jewish charity in London, and in 2012, the organization carried out an attack on a bus of Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria.

*“In the age of globalization, events do not occur in a vacuum and are not disconnected from other parts of the world. **Instability in several Middle Eastern countries has led to civil wars, and to an unprecedented stream of refugees from failed states to European countries.**”*



**“Banning the military wing took care of Hezbollah’s shady dealings in Europe.”**

SHORT RESPONSE

**THROUGH THE EXTERNAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION (ESO), WHICH OPERATES A UNIT CALLED BUSINESS AFFAIRS COMPONENT, HEZBOLLAH IS INVOLVED IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES, GATHERING INTELLIGENCE AND BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO CARRY OUT TERROR ATTACKS IN EUROPE.**

**THE FACTS**

Since the designation of its military wing as a terrorist organization by the EU in 2013, Hezbollah has carried out illicit activities. In 2016, for example, a joint investigation by the DEA, Europol, and some European countries project uncovered extensive Hezbollah activity related to drug trafficking, money laundering, and arms dealings. This activity was led by the ESO.

**KEY DETAILS:**

- ▶ **Operations Cassandra and Cedar**, led by the U.S., exposed the criminal-business wing of Hezbollah via the External Security Organization Business Affairs Component (“BAC”). During Operation Cassandra, Hezbollah elements involved in drug trafficking were arrested in the U.S, South America and several European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Hezbollah’s criminal activity in Europe is run by BAC, which reports to ESO, AKA Unit 910 or Islamic Jihad Organization (“IJO”). Abdallah Safieddine, Hezbollah’s representative in Iran, is also involved in this activity.



- ▶ **Hezbollah's threat to Europe is also manifested in the build-up of infrastructure.** In recent years, authorities have uncovered safe houses and warehouses containing tremendous quantities of explosive materials. In 2015 a warehouse storing 8.3 tons of ammonium nitrate was discovered in Cyprus and six months later 3 tons of ammonium nitrate were discovered in four London hideouts. On top of the risk for accidental detonations that threaten residential neighborhoods, it was revealed that the charge used in the Burgas bombing in 2012 contained ammonium nitrate.

## HEZBOLLAH'S CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

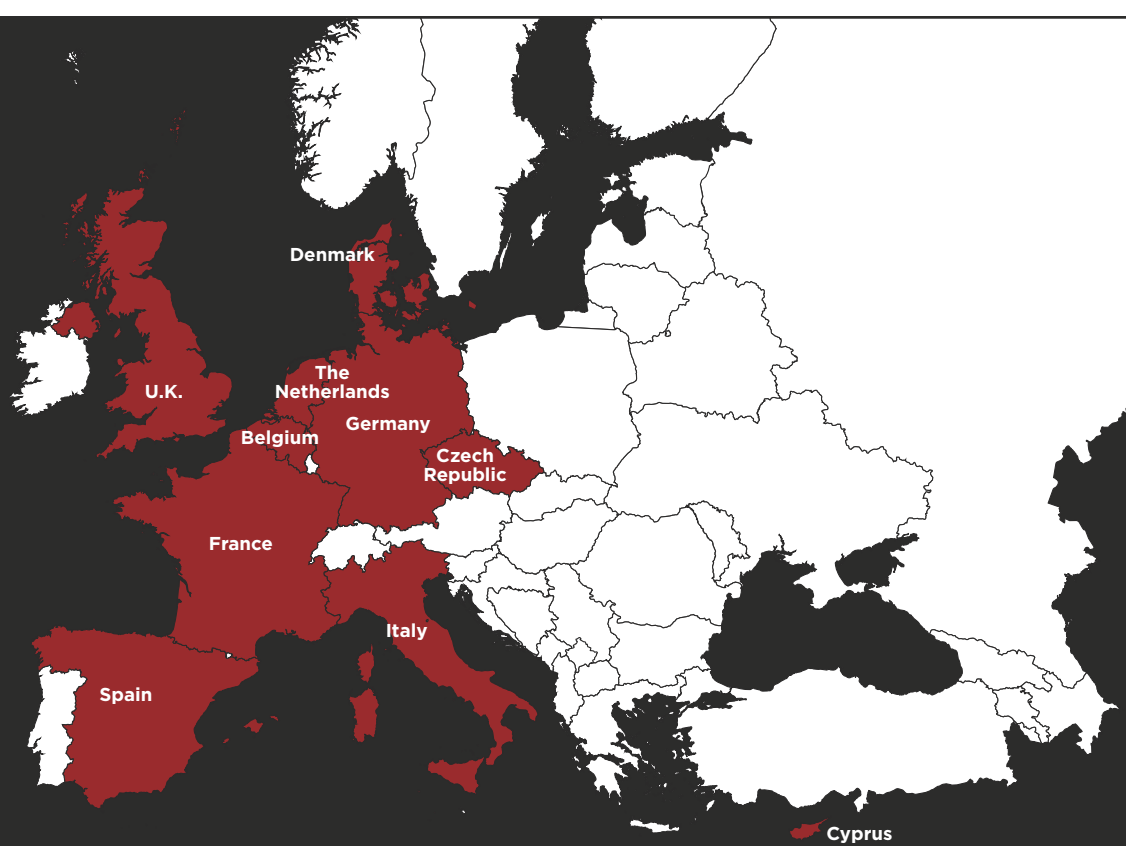
- ▶ Ali Fayed, a gun smuggler for Hezbollah was arrested in 2014 in the Czech Republic. In response, Hezbollah kidnapped a few Czech citizens in Lebanon to get him released.

- ▶ **In the past decade, authorities have exposed two major Hezbollah crime rings with a significant European presence:**

In the Canadian-Lebanese scandal exposed in 2011, a drug trafficking network led by Ayman Jumma smuggled cocaine from South America through Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The volume of illegal funds laundered through that bank was estimated at \$USD 200 million per month. In 2016, Operation Cedar saw the capture of 16 Hezbollah operatives who acted as members of that crime ring in France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy, laundering money through the international purchase and sale of luxury goods. At the height of their activity, the crime ring laundered about one million euros per week, mostly through Germany.

- ▶ Hezbollah raises money from donations from various charities, Islamic institutions, private individuals and Shi'ite donors. Fundraising activities are being carrying out in Germany, U.K., Belgium (diamond dealing) and other countries.
- ▶ Additionally, Hezbollah raises funds through criminal activity in Europe, specifically counterfeiting Euros. For instance, during Operation Cassandra in 2008, German authorities arrested two Lebanese nationals holding over 8 million euros, which have been raised by Hezbollah's cocaine smuggling network. A year later, two other ring members were arrested for their involvement in drug trafficking from Beirut to Europe, in a raid on their home in the German city of Speyer.
- ▶ Hezbollah uses its operatives' freedom of movement in Europe for crime, fundraising, and incitement, but also for personnel recruitment. A German intelligence report about Hezbollah's threat on Germany (May 2019) established that the number of Hezbollah operatives in Germany has increased from 950 to approximately 1,050<sup>26</sup>.
- ▶ Hezbollah's criminal activity is also active in cyberspace. During October 2018, several servers in the Czech Republic were shut down because Hezbollah used them to hack computers and computer networks around the globe. Additionally, Hezbollah is active online and attempts to influence elections and spread disinformation. Arrests of Hezbollah operatives in Europe are a testament to its activity on European soil. French police conducted searches in the city of Grande-Synthe, in northern France, at the headquarters and home of the leaders of the Shi'ite organization "Zahra Center," which have ties to Hezbollah. The center apparently served as logistical support for Iranian operations in France and was closed by authorities.

**EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WHERE HEZBOLLAH'S TERRORIST AND DRUG-SMUGGLING RELATED ACTIVITIES CONTINUED AFTER THE EU'S DESIGNATION OF ITS MILITARY WING AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION IN 2013.**



***“Germany cannot bring a resolution regarding a Hezbollah ban into the EU because it is not directly affected by Hezbollah.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**CONSIDERING HEZBOLLAH’S IDEOLOGY, ITS MERE EXISTENCE IN GERMANY DEFIES CONSTITUTIONAL FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES: HEZBOLLAH USES GERMAN TERRITORY TO FUND ITS OPERATIONS, EITHER LEGALLY, VIA ITS POLITICAL WING, OR ILLEGALLY, VIA DRUG TRAFFICKING AND MONEY LAUNDERING, MAKING ANY ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HEZBOLLAH’S VARIOUS ACTIVITIES ARTIFICIAL.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah’s political wing is actively fundraising in Germany under a legitimate cover. However, the organization carries out extensive criminal dealings (drug trafficking and money laundering) in Germany and other European countries to finance its terror activities. Therefore, it is extremely important to disrupt these financing methods, which sustain the entire organization, by designating all of Hezbollah a terror organization. The attempt to distinguish among the various wings of a hybrid terror organization simply misses the mark, because all its so-called legitimate activities are intended to do is support the organization’s proclaimed goals (i.e. nullifying Israel’s right to exist and undermining Western democratic institutions), which themselves violate basic tenets of the German democracy.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The U.S Department of State published in September 2018 country reports reviewing how various countries met the terror challenge in 2017. The report mentions that in 2017 Germany increased the scope of interrogations, arrests, and criminal charges filed against terror operatives. However, the increase of resources to law enforcement and prosecution authorities did not rise to the same level. Further, Germany also increased Gefährder (Persons of Interest) monitoring, terror suspects deportations, and foreign fighters' interrogations. Additionally, the toolbox for handling hate crimes and terror propaganda was expanded.

### THE RATIONALE TO AVOID DECLARING HEZBOLLAH A TERROR ORGANIZATION

The German government employs the requirement for an EU consensus as a rationale to delay the designation of Hezbollah's political wing as a terror organization. Yet, as the main economic engine in Europe, it is within Germany's power to influence the EU policy regarding Hezbollah. Moreover, Holland's designation of Hezbollah as a terror organization is an example that a member of the EU is indeed able to act without such consensus.

European states, especially France and Germany, are interested in maintaining a "critical dialogue" with Hezbollah. In that sense, banning Hezbollah will not prevent any dialogue with Lebanon because designating Hezbollah as a terror organization imposes economic sanctions but is silent regarding political sanctions. For expansion of the ramification of such designation kindly refer to claims 4 and 6. In June 2019 the Bundestag rejected a bill to designate Hezbollah as a terror organization despite American pressure to do so. Bundestag member Niels Annen explained in a *Der Spiegel* interview that the Shi'ite movement is an important factor in the Lebanese society and that the EU has already designated the military wing of Hezbollah. Annen added that Germany is interested in stability in Lebanon.

## TERROR FINANCE

At the center of the debate whether to designate Hezbollah a terror organization was the Annual Report for The Defense of The Constitution published by the German federal intelligence agency on May 22, 2019. Per the report, the number of Hezbollah supporters in Germany grew from 950 in 2017 to 1,050 in 2018<sup>27</sup>. They operate, organizationally and ideologically, under local mosques which are funded mainly through membership fees and donations. The report further asserted that the political wing of Hezbollah operates in Germany mainly to raise money, recruit operatives and disseminate antisemitic ideology.

Today, almost 20 years after the war on terror was declared, it is a well-known fact that money is terror's lifeline. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to disrupt all financing channels to a terror organization. It should also be noted that Germany is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), whose goal

***"Today, almost 20 years after the war on terror was declared, it is a well-known fact that money is terror's bloodline. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to disrupt all financing channels to a terror organization."***

is to set the standards and promote regulatory and operational steps to disrupt and stop money laundering, terror finance, and other threats to the international financial ecosystem.

## ORGANIZED CRIME

After the Burgas terror attack in 2012 which led to the EU's designation of Hezbollah's military wing as a terror organization, then-German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said that one who attacks a European country should expect retaliation from all of them. Since terror is a form of criminal activity, the same rationale ought to be applied to Hezbollah. Several countries across Europe identified Hezbollah operatives' involvement in a variety of criminal activities including money laundering and drug trafficking.

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- ▶ In a joint U.S.-French operation, Iman Kobeissi and Joseph Asmar were arrested on charges of conspiracy to launder money from drug trafficking and gun smuggling for Hezbollah (2015).
- ▶ A Hezbollah operative by the name of Mohammad Amar was arrested in the U.S. for laundering drug money through Miami banks. Amar was known to facilitate money laundering through Holland, Spain, UK, Australia and Africa (2016).
- ▶ In Operation Cassandra, the DEA cooperated with law enforcement agencies from France, Germany, Italy and Belgium, as well as Europol and Eurojust. Operation Cassandra uncovered Hezbollah's scheme to traffic drugs and launder money under the auspices of Hezbollah's Business Unit (EBO) which is part of the organization's terror apparatus (2016).



***“For France, designating Hezbollah would endanger once again the French troops stationed in Lebanon as part of UNIFIL. It will also endanger French civilians living in Lebanon.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DESIGNATING HEZBOLLAH AS A TERROR ORGANIZATION MAY ENDANGER THE FRENCH TROOPS SERVING AS PART OF UNIFIL OR FRENCH CITIZENS STAYING IN LEBANON, BUT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS CHECKS AND BALANCES.**

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**THE FACTS**

The struggle to curb Hezbollah’s capabilities and sphere of influence is long, ongoing, multi-dimensional and requires a great deal of determination and resolve. The key to success is harnessing the international community to jointly counter Hezbollah and its accomplices and applying on them various levers, either directly or indirectly. Designating Hezbollah a terror organization will enable taking legal and operational steps against Hezbollah as a whole as well as against any of its various components (political, civil, military).

A terror organization such as Hezbollah constantly conducts cost-benefit calculations and adapts, but it has vulnerabilities as well. Hezbollah is aware of its limits and it carefully navigates the playing field. The organization wishes to be a major political player in Lebanon, while protecting Iran’s interests in Europe, making a retaliation against French UNIFIL troops or French nationals in Lebanon unlikely.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

**In the past, terror attacks against UNIFIL have been perpetrated by various entities.** For example, in June 2007 an IED detonated close to the Lebanon-Israel border killing six and injuring others. In 2011, several attacks were carried out against UNIFIL, among them the detonation of a large charge in a hotel that housed UNIFIL troops and the detonation of another charge next to a UNIFIL convoy in southern Lebanon that injured five French troops. 2018 saw another attack against UNIFIL troops in southern Lebanon when UNIFIL troops had to disembark, at gun point, from their vehicles that were then torched, and their weapons confiscated by the attackers.

**Since the 1990s (except for a few isolated cases) there were no foreign nationals kidnapped nor were any injured in terror attacks in Lebanon.** Even today Hezbollah threatens Europe, France included. Hezbollah's criminal activity has been uncovered in multiple European countries. This criminal activity is directly linked to its terrorist wing (External Security Organization, or ESO). Therefore, the international community must use all the tools at its disposal to disrupt frustrate Hezbollah's operations, including by designating the entire organization a terror organization.

In a joint U.S. - French operation, Iman Kobeissi and Joseph Asmar were arrested on charges of conspiracy to launder money from drug trafficking and gun smuggling for Hezbollah (2015). In

operation Cassandra, the DEA alongside French, German, Italian, Belgian law enforcement, as well as pan-European agencies Europol and Eurojust, joined forces and uncovered Hezbollah's scheme to launder drug trafficking and gun running proceeds as an integral part of Hezbollah's business unit activities (2016). It should be noted that the business unit is a part of ESO.

In July 2018, the Belgian law enforcement agencies arrested two Belgian citizens of Iranian descent who were planning to execute a terror attack during a political rally in France organized by an Iranian anti-regime group. A search in their apartment uncovered an explosive device containing TATP. Simultaneously, the French police arrested a French citizen on charges that he acted as the Belgians' accomplice, as well as an Iranian diplomat serving in Austria as their intermediary.

In October 2018, the French police raided the headquarters of the Shi'ite organization "A Zahra Center" in Grande-Synthe (northern France). The center and its leader were a focal point for the police due to their connections to "terror organizations." The headquarters allegedly served as a logistics support center for terror activists and was shut down by the authorities.

**Designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terror organization does not preclude the continuation of any political dialogue with Lebanon.** Various states that made such designation continue to maintain collaboration at various levels. Please refer to claims one and six for more information.

***“Hezbollah’s criminal activity has been uncovered in multiple European countries. This criminal activity is directly linked to its terrorist wing.”***



***“Since UNIFIL monitors the flow of arms to Hezbollah and Germany commands its naval component, the arsenals cannot be so dangerous.”***

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**SHORT RESPONSE**

**UNIFIL DOES NOT MONITOR THE LEBANESE BORDERS AND THEREFORE IT NEITHER CONTROLS NOR IS IT AWARE OF ARMS SHIPMENTS TO HEZBOLLAH.**

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**THE FACTS**

Per UN Security Council resolutions 425 and 426, UNIFIL’s mandate is to verify the withdrawal of IDF forces from Southern Lebanon, restoring peace in the region and providing assistance to the Lebanese government in consolidation of its sovereignty in southern Lebanon. The above resolutions were adopted in 1978, long before Hezbollah was formed.

Similarly, resolution 1701 (2006) stipulates that UNIFIL should restore peace and quiet in southern Lebanon, assist with setting (and enforcing) the international Israel-Lebanon border as per the UN’s resolutions, and help the Lebanese army eliminate the presence of other armed forces as well as armament south of the Litani River. In other words, UNIFIL is entrusted with monitoring and preventing armed forces’ activity solely in southern Lebanon, along the Israeli border. Its mandate does not include Lebanon’s coastline, or its eastern or northern borders. Since the end of the Second Lebanon War in 2006, UNIFIL has not prevented any arms transfers to Hezbollah. Moreover, during the past 13 years, Hezbollah has become the world’s strongest non-state military force. To date, its arsenal is estimated at a minimum of 130,000 rockets and missiles, including an estimated 40,000 guided missiles, whereas in 2006 this number stood at 15,000. This arsenal was supplied by external sources, mainly Iran.



## UNIFIL AND PREVENTION OF ARMS TRANSPORTS TO HEZBOLLAH

- ▶ Germany has not commanded UNIFIL naval force since 2008 but maintains one ship presence in that force. The Commander of UNIFIL's naval forces (15 ships in total) is a Brazilian admiral. Since 2006, UNIFIL's naval forces have contacted over 90,000 vessels, but only 12,263 of them have been referred for inspection by the Lebanese authorities. Apart from one incident in 2012, when a vessel carrying arms for the Syrian rebels was detained and turned over to the Lebanese authorities, there is no record of either UNIFIL or the Lebanese authorities capturing any other arms shipment.
- ▶ In 2009, the Israeli Navy detained MV Francop, which carried 500 tons of armaments for Hezbollah from Iran, including long-range rockets and anti-tank missiles. Additionally, over the years, NATO forces, Israel, and other Mediterranean countries have detained vessels that carried concealed armament shipments from Iran for Syria and Hezbollah. UNIFIL's naval force did not participate in any of these activities.
- ▶ Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011, Hezbollah has made significant efforts to smuggle arms into Lebanon. As of 2013, the Israeli Air Force has attacked hundreds of times in Syrian territory in an attempt to thwart arms shipments before they cross the border into Lebanon
- ▶ from the east where there is no UNIFIL presence. Even so, Hezbollah has succeeded in smuggling tens of thousands of armament items into Lebanon.
- ▶ As of 2012, Hezbollah combatants took part in the Syrian civil war alongside the Assad regime. Since then, armed Hezbollah combatants cross from Lebanon to Syria as a matter of course and carry with them their personal weapons as well as heavy armament. These combatants arrive from all parts of Lebanon, including the south, which is supposedly monitored by UNIFIL.
- ▶ Except for a few armament seizures in November 2006, UNIFIL admits that, despite actionable intelligence from several countries, it was not able to confirm or disprove the presence of banned weaponry south of the Litani.
- ▶ UNIFIL claims that statements from Hezbollah's Secretary General Nasrallah that the organization is in possession of a large quantity of armaments constitute a violation of resolution 1701.
- ▶ UNIFIL's latest report to the UN Security Council admits that Hezbollah excavated offensive tunnels from Lebanon into Israel across the "Blue Line."

*"Apart from one incident in 2012, when a vessel carrying arms for the Syrian rebels was detained and turned over to the Lebanese authorities, **there is no record of either UNIFIL or the Lebanese authorities capturing any other arms shipment.***

***“France is politically and economically invested in Lebanon, and understands that Hezbollah has a hold on power in Beirut. The distinction between military and political wings is necessary to conduct business and exert influence on Lebanese policy.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**THE ARGUMENT THAT A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL WINGS OF HEZBOLLAH IS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE JOINT VENTURES AND POLITICAL IMPACT FRANCE HAS IN LEBANON IS INACCURATE: IN ORDER TO WEAKEN HEZBOLLAH, IT HAS TO BE ISOLATED AS A WHOLE WHILE TIES BETWEEN FRANCE AND OTHER POWER BASES IN LEBANON NEED TO BECOME STRONGER.**

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**THE FACTS**

Designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terror organization does not require a shift in French investment in Lebanon, either politically or economically. On the contrary, to curb Hezbollah’s capabilities, built over years within the political and business arenas, there is a need to continue the dialogue with the Lebanese government and business world, particularly the opposition to Hezbollah. To achieve that, there’s a need for international alignment, bringing in as many sovereign states and international organizations as possible, especially the UN and the EU.



## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

▶ **States that designated Hezbollah a terror organization maintain diplomatic relations with Lebanon with a variety of joint ventures and cooperation between multiple states, international organizations, and Lebanon that are independent of such designation.** For example, the **U.S.**, which has designated Hezbollah as a terror organization, and even hardened its position since President Trump took office, is cooperating with the Lebanese government and strengthening its military by supplying weapons. Western countries have a common interest in keeping Lebanon as a strategic player in the effort to maintain regional stability. The ones that designated Hezbollah as a terror organization work with Lebanon to strengthen the government while avoiding contact with Hezbollah or its supporters. They maintain trade relations and provide humanitarian aid to refugees, directly and indirectly through international organizations. Even the Netherlands may increase its aid if Lebanon implements certain reforms.

- ▶ Designating Hezbollah enables countries to disrupt the terror financing and fundraising by freezing the terror organization's assets, on the one hand, and prevent European citizens and entities to provide financial services to the terror organization, on the other. **If the EU designation were to be expanded to include Hezbollah as a whole, then the above sanctions will apply to the entire organization but will not prevent EU members from maintaining political dialogue with Lebanon.**
- ▶ **Designating Hezbollah in its entirety does not mean severing ties with the Lebanese government.** A precondition to weakening Hezbollah is strengthening the Lebanese government and its organs. Taking Hezbollah out of the political arena where it serves the Shi'ite community as part of its efforts to gain more control and spread its ideology and theology (*dawah*) will enable other Shi'ite forces to take their place and may force the Lebanese government to enforce its sovereignty without any sectorial discrimination on all of its citizens.

*“Designating Hezbollah enables countries to disrupt the terror financing and fundraising by freezing the terror organization’s assets on the one hand **and prevent European citizens and entities to provide financial services to the terror organization, on the other.**”*



***“The effort to combat antisemitism in Europe and Hezbollah are two different things.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**HEZBOLLAH HAS ADOPTED THE ANTI-ZIONIST RHETORIC OF MODERN-DAY ANTISEMITISM.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah was established on the ideology of antisemitism. Its founding principles are rooted in the hatred of Jews, the elimination of the Jewish state, and the determination to deny Jews their right of self-determination or nationhood. Hezbollah knows that more Jewish blood has been spilled in Europe than anywhere else, which makes the continent a fertile breeding ground to fulfill its mission.

However, Hezbollah has learned to manipulate the guilt complex that permeates the certain European countries whose Jewish communities were decimated during the Holocaust. Thus, its rhetoric is framed as anti-Zionist rather than antisemitic. They overstate the oppression of the Palestinians that they say is perpetuated by Israeli politics, then use that friction to justify delegitimizing a Jewish state.

As long as Europe allows any manifestation of antisemitism, regardless of the rhetoric (i.e. “old school” or under the anti-Zionist cover), Europe is complicit in the violation of human rights within its borders. To stop this rising antisemitic tide, Europe has the moral and legal obligation to halt all of Hezbollah’s activities within its jurisdiction.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

**Antisemitism** – In November 2018 the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published a report on antisemitism. The report said that antisemitism may be manifested in various forms, including verbal and physical abuse, threats, harassment, discrimination and unfair treatment, property damage and bodily injury, graffiti, other forms of expression as well as on the web. Antisemitic incidents, which are in fact hate crimes, violate basic human rights, including liberty, human dignity, and the right for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion provided to all people in Europe under ECHR. Wherever Hezbollah sets up shop, its goal is to carry out hate crimes against Jewish and Israeli targets around the world in the form of terrorist attacks.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance defines antisemitism as “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities. Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel conceived as a Jewish collectivity.

Any European nation that has agreed to uphold the European Convention on Human Rights (“ECHR”) and/or has adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism cannot intellectually defend the political or social welfare wing of Hezbollah as legitimate. Doing so allows Hezbollah to become respectable contributors to the mainstream discourse rather than anti-Semites, but simultaneously informs a rising tide of anti-Jewish hatred.

## ANTISEMITIC TRENDS IN EUROPE

In recent years, antisemitism has been on a steep rise in Europe. For example:

- ▶ **The Guardian (British newspaper)** reported in February 2019 that France has seen an increase of 74% in attacks against Jews in the previous year, and Germany has seen a 60% increase in violent antisemitic attacks.
- ▶ **Haaretz (Israeli newspaper)** reported at the end of May 2019 that Chancellor Angela Merkel called for police protection at all Jewish institutions in the face of rising antisemitism in Germany.
- ▶ **According to a December 2018 survey of Jews across Europe** conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 89% of European Jews say antisemitism has increased in their country over past five years.
- ▶ **CNN (American news TV network)** survey of antisemitism in Europe from September 2018 found that 28% of the participants believed Jews had too much influence within the business and financial sectors globally. The survey included over 7,000 people and one out of five of them responded that antisemitism is a reaction to the everyday behavior of the Jewish people.
- ▶ **Politico (American newspaper)** reported in April 2019 that antisemitism in Europe is at a five-year high.

*“Antisemitic incidents, which are in fact hate crimes, violate basic human rights, including liberty, human dignity, and the right for freedom of thought, conscience, and religion provided to all people in Europe under ECHR.”*

## HEZBOLLAH’S ANTISEMITIC RHETORIC

- ▶ In a 2002 speech, Hezbollah’s leader Hassan Nasrallah said that all the Jews are banded together in Israel, making it possible to fight them when they are grouped together and saving the trouble of chasing them around the world.
- ▶ In another speech, aired on Al-Manar TV in 2010, Nasrallah openly and publicly denied the Holocaust. The IHRA working definition lists Holocaust denial as an example of antisemitism.
- ▶ Naim Qassem, Hezbollah’s second in command, once said that history proved that, regardless of the Zionist question, Jews are people with evil ideas.
- ▶ Nabih Berri, the Lebanese parliament speaker and the leader of the pro-Hezbollah movement Amal, made an anti-Jewish racist remark in an interview he gave in June 2019 to Al-Joumhouria. Berri said that, in order to identify a Jew, one has to throw a piece of gold at the feet of a pregnant woman. If the fetus jumps out of her womb to pick it up, he said, then it is a Jew.
- ▶ Celebrating Al Quds Day around the world and particularly in Europe constitutes another antisemitic manifestation. A recent march in Germany, where antisemitism is on the rise, saw some 1,000 attendees, including Hezbollah operatives calling for Israel’s destruction. One need only see the Stars of David engulfed in flames and hear the death chants to understand this has less to do with Israel and more to do with a deep-seated demonization of the Jewish people.

Anti-Zionist Rhetoric (Antisemitism 2.0) – Demonization of Jews and Israel has undeniably reached new heights. This phenomenon is partly due to the rise of fanatical fundamentalist Islam and its blatant refusal to accept the Jewish right to self-determination, coupled with the exercise of Jewish sovereignty in an area it perceived as purely Muslim. In the Arab world the term Jew (Yahud) is interchangeable with Zionist (Sahyuniyyun) or Israeli. In his research, the late Holocaust scholar Robert S. Wistrich demonstrated that the radical antisemitic narrative has camouflaged itself as anti-Zionism much more since the turn of the 21st century. Nasrallah allegedly made a distinction between Jews and Zionists and said he opposed only Zionism. But even if Hezbollah has tried to rebrand its antisemitic rhetoric as anti-Zionist, its substance has stayed the same.





Moreover, Hezbollah notoriously feeds two streams of discourse – one in Arabic, the other in the vernacular of the country where its operatives live. In Arabic, they speak of killing Jews and destroying Israel. In the vernacular, they call themselves simply anti-Zionists.

## IMPACT OF RHETORIC

Though Jewish life has witnessed a resurgence in Europe in recent years, Jews living in Europe are still sensitive to the historic and present-day threats endangering their families. Just last year, German authorities broke up a Hezbollah terrorist cell that had been surveilling targets including a Jewish kindergarten in Berlin. The head of the German Council of Jews has pleaded with that country's government to outlaw Al Quds Day parades because they traffic nothing but hatred on the streets of Germany. Distinguishing between the military and political wings of Hezbollah is much like distinguishing between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. It also achieves the same effect. It tells members of a community what should and should not make them feel uncomfortable, unwanted, and unsafe when they walk down the streets or drop their children off at school. European decisions must listen to people who live in fear of those who hate them.

**The free speech concerns that came up when people try to quell anti-Zionist rhetoric also disrupts the ability of security operatives to conduct adequate surveillance of suspects.**

But those free speech limitations evaporate when countries acknowledge that anti-Zionist rhetoric is not legally protected when it incites anti-Semitic violence. And that is what Hezbollah strives to do. It strives to take advantage of Europe's democratic values in order to undermine them.

Designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organization would reassure European Jewish communities that the countries they once again can call home are serious about history not repeating itself.



***“Hezbollah has evolved from its earlier days of transnational terrorist operations to become a political power.”***

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**SHORT RESPONSE**

**IN 2019, HEZBOLLAH IS A HYBRID TERROR ORGANIZATION, MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE TERRORIST REVOLUTIONARY ENTITY OF THE 1980S.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah never abandoned its goals, but altered its timing to accomplish them. The organization acts simultaneously inside and outside the scope of the Lebanese political system and enjoys wide breadth in both. The pragmatic façade of the organization misleads many researchers and international political actors.

Hezbollah’s introduction to Lebanese politics was perceived by many as a first (and important) step away from its extreme ideological path. To promote this alleged shift, Hezbollah has worked hard to obscure its pan-Islamic terrorist image and create a façade of a legitimate Lebanese political movement fighting against an occupying army. In the 1990s, Hezbollah reduced the scope of its terror attacks against Western targets in Lebanon and elsewhere, opting instead to perform “higher quality” terror attacks and then denying any involvement in them.

## HYBRID TERROR ORGANIZATION:

▶ **Hezbollah doesn't see itself as an organization that has one or more independent wings.** Its leaders have made it perfectly clear that it is a hierarchical organization working as one unified organization, under the same leadership, headed by Hassan Nasrallah and the Shura Council (Majlis Al-Shura), whose members come from all the wings of the organization. **Hezbollah's entry into the political arena didn't tame it, just as it hasn't tamed any other Islamist organization that has stepped into politics, including the post revolution Iranians.**

### HEZBOLLAH INTRODUCTION TO THE POLITICAL ARENA RESTS ON THREE PRINCIPLES:

1. It enables Hezbollah to play by the Lebanese political system rules within the parliament, municipal systems, administration, and public sector, while continuing to "play outside the lines."
  2. Hezbollah can advance within the Lebanese political system by creating crises and forming alliances.
  3. Hezbollah can continue to use violence to advance its agenda, assassinating political opponents such as Rafic Hariri, leveraging its own military force to affect policy changes, and escalating its involvement in the Lebanese civil war and political upheaval of May 2008, during which time the organization used its military capabilities against civilians in response to a Lebanese government decision that it refused to accept. (Hezbollah attacked and seized control of the government's centers of power in Beirut - the Sunni neighborhoods. During the battle, which lasted about three weeks, dozens of civilians were killed and injured. The intervention of the Arab states led to the end of the crisis and the formulation of the "Doha Agreement.")
- ▶ **An in-depth look into Hezbollah's organizational structure and how it presents itself in the local and international arena paint a much different picture from what it tries to portray. The Shura Council oversees Hezbollah's military, social, and political operations.** Occasionally its own leadership exposes the organization's true colors. In January 2002, Mouhamad Panish, one of Hezbollah's representatives in the Lebanese parliament, said that "the military wing of Hezbollah is inseparable from its political wing."
- ▶ **Since 2005, Hezbollah caused crises whenever the government decisions or policies were not aligned with its interests.** In 2006 Hezbollah ministers resigned and decried the government as illegitimate as part of a political campaign to topple the government. Hezbollah also carried out political assassinations of leaders from the anti-Syrian camp (most of them have never been solved) and, in May 2008, took over western Beirut neighborhoods that resulted in dozens of casualties and many wounded.
- ▶ **Over the past four decades Hezbollah has built the infrastructure for an international terror network in more than a dozen countries.** This infrastructure is closely controlled by the Shura and the Jihad Councils and has carried out terror attacks since the 1990s. It is well-organized to gather intelligence and attack Israeli, Jewish and Western targets around the world. The network also purchases weapons, smuggles guns, and raises money.
- ▶ **Hezbollah operatives are heavily involved in criminal activity, especially drug trafficking and currency forgery.** They also deal in blood diamonds, gold and cigarette trade, car theft, credit card fraud, and more. The annual revenue generated from these criminal enterprises is estimated at up to hundreds of millions of dollars. Hezbollah's uses of the revenues of its international criminal activity for terrorism.
- ▶ **The threat Hezbollah poses for Europe is also about providing infrastructure for terror attacks.** In the past years, safe houses and warehouses were located around Europe where huge quantities of explosives and explosive raw materials were kept. For example, in 2015 a warehouse storing 8.3 tons of ammonium nitrate, the explosive material used in the 2012 Burgas attack, was located in Cyprus. Six months later, four safe houses storing three tons of ammonium nitrate were discovered in residential neighborhoods of London. Important to consider is the additional threat of accidental explosions to neighboring residents.

***"Hezbollah is a hierarchical organization working as one unified organization, under one leadership, headed by Hassan Nasrallah and alongside him, the Shura Council."***



***“Designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terror organization could implicate people who only support its social service endeavors.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**DESIGNATING ALL OF HEZBOLLAH A TERROR ORGANIZATION DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN THAT ITS CIRCLES OF SUPPORTERS NEED TO BE DESIGNATED AS TERRORISTS TOO.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah's supporters' circles, including families of Hezbollah's operatives, voters, donors, and political allies are not necessarily terrorists. Yet, some may fall under the scope of terror-supporting entities, especially when they contribute or donate, whether directly or indirectly, to Hezbollah's terror activities. Every case must be examined individually based on its merits and according to local and international laws.



## DESIGNATION – COMPARATIVE LAW

**United States** – The U.S. has two main designation routes:

1. **Foreign Terror Organization (“FTO”)** – To qualify as an FTO, the subject organization must partake in terror or terror activities or possess the capability and intention to partake in terror or terror activities. Furthermore, it is a requirement that the terror or terror activities threaten the security of the U.S., its citizens, foreign relations, or economic interests.
2. **Organizations and Individuals connected to terror (asset freeze)** – Inclusions in this list are being made pursuant to Executive Order 13224, the criteria for which have not been made public. The Order specifies that a designation will be made where there is an immediate or constant threat to U.S. national security, foreign relations, or economy. Whereas the former route deals mainly with organizations, the latter deals with a wider spectrum, including organizations, groups, individuals, individuals within organizations, and other entities such as terror financiers and shell corporate entities.

**UK** – the UK has a unified designation list compiled from three sources: (I) English Law (FATA 2010); (II) English Law and EU resolutions; (III) EU Solely – Council Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001 which is based on UN Security Council 1373 (2001).

In the UK, a terror organization is defined as “any association or combination of persons” which “commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism or encourages terrorism, or is otherwise concerned in terrorism.” The sanctions imposed by the law are double: assets of people and entities included in the list will be frozen AND there is a prohibition on providing them with financial services. Prior to making such a designation the Home Secretary has to take into account multiple factors, including the nature and intensity of the designee’s actions, the specific threat it poses to the UK, the threat to UK citizens around the world, the scope of the designee’s presence in the UK, and the need to support other members of the international community in the global fight against terrorism.

**UN** – The UN doesn’t have one unified list of designees but rather several targeted lists, such as against the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other individuals or groups.

**EU** – The EU has two designation routes: **(I) Individuals and entities associated with Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban.** The inclusion criterion is based on the UN lists; however, the commission is authorized to add or amend the list based on relevant alerts or intelligence provided by the UN’s Security Council, the Taliban Sanctions Committee, and its member states. **(II) Individuals and entities involved in terror activities.** This list includes individuals and entities that have been implicated based on credible information received from competent authorities, regardless of whether said authorities launched an investigation. Also included are individuals and entities identified by the UN’s Security Council as connected to terror and are subject to sanctions.

## DESIGNATING HEZBOLLAH – THE GAP BETWEEN LAW AND PRACTICE

In recent years we have observed a metamorphosis of terror organizations from their classic format into a hybrid form. A hybrid terror organization is typified by its duplicitous activities. On the one hand it performs military terror attacks, while on the other it engages in social and humanitarian efforts and political action.

To date, there is no consensus on the distinction between a terror organization that has an operational wing that carries out attacks and an organization that supports the former but does not have the operational wing. This support can be manifested in multiple practical ways, such as logistical, financial or legal support and marketing campaigns. While some contend that a wider and more inclusive approach that sees both parts of the organization as equally culpable is required, others claim that distinguishing between these organizations is necessary because there are different levels of culpability associated with the terror organization’s actions versus those in the periphery organizations associated with the terror group.

*“To date, there is no consensus on the distinction **between a terror organization that has an operational wing that carries out attacks and an organization that supports the former but does not have the operational wing.**”*

***“Hezbollah hasn’t attacked Israel since 2006 and it is too busy to present a clear and present danger to Israel.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**HEZBOLLAH HASN’T INITIATED A DIRECT ATTACK ON ISRAEL FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY SINCE 2006 BUT IT HAS HIT ISRAELI TARGETS OVERSEAS AND ATTEMPTED ATTACKS BY BUILDING UNDERGROUND TUNNELS.**

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**THE FACTS**

Much like Iran, Hezbollah’s risk/reward calculation has, with few exceptions, led it to avoid direct attacks against Israel since 2006. However, it has consistently been professing its intent to annihilate the Jewish state. Additionally, Hezbollah executed several attacks (as well as some failed attempts) against Israeli targets overseas, alongside its massive weapons and armament accumulation and the development of its attack tunnels system from Lebanon into Israel.



## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

### Statements on Hezbollah's Intent to Annihilate Israel:

- ▶ On the 13th Anniversary of the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah granted an interview to Al-Manar television where he showed on a map how his organization could hit the entire State of Israel.
- ▶ In a March 2009 speech, Nasrallah said Hezbollah would never recognize Israel's right to exist.
- ▶ In a 2002 speech, Nasrallah said that all Jews are banded together in Israel in order to save the world the trouble of hunting them down.
- ▶ In an open letter published by Hezbollah there is a chapter titled "The Need to Destroy the State of Israel," which says the fight will end only once the Zionist entity is destroyed.

**International Terror Infrastructure** – In the past four decades Hezbollah formed – with Iranian assistance – an international terror network encompassing dozens of countries. This network is controlled and directed by the Shura Council and Jihad Council. The network gathers intelligence, attacks Jewish, Israeli, and Western targets, acquires weapons, smuggles guns, and creates income streams to fund Hezbollah's activities. Hezbollah used this network to perpetrate a terror attack on a tour bus carrying Israelis in Burgas, Bulgaria, in 2012.

## ONGOING EFFORTS

- ▶ **Hezbollah's attack tunnels** penetrating Israeli territory were exposed in 2018. They further prove that Hezbollah has no qualms dragging Lebanon into another war with Israel. So far six tunnels have been uncovered -- enough to deploy 5,000 armed combatants to infiltrate Israel. It should be noted that UNIFIL admitted in its report to the UN Security Council that the Hezbollah tunnels violate the "Blue Line." For more information see claim 13<sup>28</sup>.
- ▶ Hezbollah's arsenal includes over 130,000 missiles and rockets, threatening the entire Israeli territory. Additionally, Hezbollah possesses shore-to-ship missiles that could attack shipping routes to Israel<sup>29</sup>. Owning such an extensive arsenal allows Hezbollah to threaten and terrorize Israel's civilian population and critical infrastructure.

*"In the past four decades Hezbollah formed – with Iranian assistance – an international terror network encompassing dozens of countries. **The network gathers intelligence, attacks Jewish, Israeli, and Western targets, acquires weapons, smuggles guns, and creates income streams to fund Hezbollah's activities.**"*

***“The EU, with the partial designation, already has all the tools it needs to deal with Hezbollah’s nefarious activities. The problem is that the EU has been unable to carry out the utilization of those tools.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**THE EU DOESN'T HAVE ALL THE REQUIRED TOOLS TO CONTEND WITH HEZBOLLAH. THAT SAID, THE EU HAS NOT USED ALL THE TOOLS AT ITS DISPOSAL TO STOP HEZBOLLAH.**

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**THE FACTS**

Hezbollah is a hybrid terror organization that is comprised of three wings – (i) civil; (ii) political; and (iii) terrorist-military – all of which work in tandem and synergy allow the organization to put on a façade of a legitimate and pragmatic Lebanese political party. In order to fight Hezbollah, all its wings must be targeted, not just its terrorist-military one.

The EU has tools to arrest Hezbollah elements connected to its military wing but has not used all of them. That decision comes from EU priorities in a wider (than Hezbollah) political context and lack of will to confront Hezbollah on European soil.



## KEY DETAILS

1. The working hypothesis should be that Hezbollah is a hybrid terror organization using violence and terror to promote its goals and the interests of its patron, Iran. Hezbollah is composed of three wings: civil, military-terrorist, and political. These wings work in tandem, maintain synergy, and enable Hezbollah to put up a façade of a legitimate Lebanese political party acting to protect Lebanon. De facto, the terrorist wing is actively involved, following guidance from Hezbollah's leadership, in terror activity that has caused multiple civilian casualties in several theaters – local Lebanese, regional, and international. This activity culminated in 2012 when Hezbollah, as an Iranian proxy, sent thousands of troops to fight alongside the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war. When one conducts an in-depth analysis of Hezbollah activity, a totally different picture of Hezbollah emerges. The Shura Council, Hezbollah's "board of directors," oversees its terrorist-military activity as well as its civil and political ones. Hezbollah never saw itself as a split organization whose wings are totally independent from one another. On the contrary, Hezbollah's leaders clearly stated on many occasions that Hezbollah is a single unified organization, acting as one entity and led by the same leadership, headed by Hassan Nasrallah and the Shura Council (where there is representation to ALL of Hezbollah's wings) at his side.
2. The 2013 EU decision to partially ban the group came on the heels of the Burgas attack (2012) and Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war, distinguishing between the organization's military wing and its social and political wings, when Hezbollah itself doesn't make that distinction. It should be noted that most EU members didn't designate any wing of Hezbollah and they rely on the EU legislation in that regard (save for the Netherlands and UK). In these cases, the enforcement of the resolution is per the local law of the relevant EU member. Designating Hezbollah would enable the EU to disrupt its terror funding apparatus, by freezing assets, on the one hand, and prohibiting EU residents from providing financial services to a designated entity, on the other. For expansion see response to claim 1. The above EU designation does not pertain to Hezbollah's non-military activities. EU designation of Hezbollah in its entirety, as well as any affiliated entity, the EU could have significantly curbed Hezbollah activity in Europe. For example, Al-Manar, Hezbollah's TV network, has been designated as a terrorist entity by the U.S., France, Spain, and Germany. Following that designation its broadcast was blocked from most of Europe and all North America. For expansion, see response to claim 8.
3. The current EU designation does not delegitimize the organization; thus it is not sufficiently effective. The separation between Hezbollah's terrorist-military wing and its political wing allows EU members to maintain contact with Hezbollah's representatives in parliament, including ones with terrorist past and blood on their hands, who are directly connected to Hezbollah's terrorist activity.

For example, only recently formal representatives of Hezbollah reportedly stated that its members regularly meet with European ambassadors, especially the French, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, and Swiss<sup>1</sup>. Similar gatherings are taking place among Hezbollah representatives with European ministers and parliament members.

4. The way things are now, where only a handful of states have designated Hezbollah in its entirety, provides Hezbollah breathing room to act freely in most countries and solidify its power in the Lebanese and regional theaters. Every country that designates Hezbollah in its entirety limits its financial resources and curbs its ability to promote the above.
5. Designating Hezbollah's military wing hasn't hampered its activity on European soil. This activity carried on even after

***“The current EU designation does not delegitimize the organization; thus it is not sufficiently effective.”***

the 2013 decision. In 2016, the DEA, Europol, and European countries, uncovered extensive Hezbollah activity: The task force uncovered drug trafficking and gun running, as well as terror infrastructure build-up. This activity was run by Hezbollah's External Security Organization<sup>2</sup> (i.e. its foreign terror attacks apparatus). Therefore, it is clear that designating alone, although helpful, is not enough, and an extensive thwarting action against all of Hezbollah's wings is required to be carried out on European soil.

6. Some EU members have concerns that designating Hezbollah in its entirety would put UNIFIL forces at risk as well as European citizens in Lebanon. Yet, the international community has a variety of ways to influence Hezbollah. Refraining from a designation benefits Hezbollah. A terror organization such as Hezbollah conducts cost/benefit analyses on an ongoing basis. It is aware of the limit of its power and thus it navigates carefully among the various actors in the various theaters in which it is active.

**IN SUMMATION**, even though the EU has tools to deal with Hezbollah's military wing, which is active on European soil, it consciously refrains from using all of them. Elements affiliated with Hezbollah's military wing are active in Europe<sup>1</sup> in the fields of weaponry acquisition, electronics acquisition, and fundraising, and some are involved in extensive drug trafficking, gun running and money laundering activity. Unit 910/ESO, Hezbollah's external terror activities unit, is running the entire operation on European soil and it is crystal clear that designating Hezbollah and using the above tools will isolate Hezbollah and weaken it.

# ADDITIONAL CLAIMS



***“The United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701 to resolve the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. So, there’s no conflict.”***

### SHORT RESPONSE

## THE UN’S ABILITY TO ENFORCE RESOLUTION 1701 IS NON-EXISTENT.

### THE FACTS

Hezbollah will not obey any UN resolution that limits its power. The party that needs to enforce resolution 1701 is the Lebanese government. But Nasrallah’s fierce resistance prevents it from doing so. Therefore, Hezbollah remains the strongest player within the Lebanese political system. An international effort is required to weaken the terror organization with sanctions and to create the conditions for the Lebanese government to become stronger.

### THE TAIF AGREEMENT

In the late 1980s the Lebanese government didn’t control its territory. Burdened by civil war and the struggles among the different ethnic groups, two governments served simultaneously. The Christian leadership was headed by Michel Aoun, while the Muslim leadership was headed by Salim Al Hus. The anarchy in Lebanon helped Hezbollah expand its infrastructure. The Taif Agreement signed on October 1989 marked the end of the 15-year war. Elias Hrawi was elected president in November 1989 to enforce (de jure at least) the Lebanese government’s sovereignty in the entire territory. The agreement also called for the disarming of all militias. Backed by Iran and Syria, Hezbollah refused to disarm, claiming it was a “resistance movement and not an armed militia.”

In July 1993 Hezbollah launched dozens of missiles into the civilian population of northern Israel and installed IEDs along the patrol route of the IDF in southern Lebanon. Due to this escalation, the IDF launched Operation Accountability to restore peace and quiet on its northern border. After seven days of fighting, Hezbollah and Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under which both parties agreed to avoid shooting at civilian targets. In April 1996 Hezbollah violated the MoU and attacked Israel’s northern civilian areas with missiles. In response, Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath, which ended after 16 days with another MoU.

## ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND RESOLUTION 1559

During the first half of the 1990s, the political system in Lebanon was somewhat stable, excluding the tensions with Israel. This stability ended on May 4, 2000, when Israel withdrew from Lebanon without any agreement with Syria or Lebanon<sup>30</sup>, creating a vacuum in the territory held by the IDF up to that point. The Southern Lebanon Army collapsed, and the Lebanese government did not restore its sovereignty over this area. Hezbollah filled the void and easily took control. Most of the population in that area were Shi'ite. The rest simply joined Hezbollah's supporters out of fear. Hezbollah's military now controls the area coupled with activity by its civilian wing. Both support Hezbollah in elections.

In June 2000, a month after the Israeli withdrawal, Nasrallah addressed the Lebanese people and clarified that he wouldn't use "weapons of opposition" within the Lebanese arena unless it was required to "protect state security." He added that Hezbollah would discuss disarmament only when it became clear that the state doesn't need weapons of opposition anymore. His argument against disarming Hezbollah focused on three main issues:

- a. Blaming Israel for invading the Lebanese airspace.
- b. Blaming Israel for stealing Lebanese water, because streams in Lebanon end up feeding the Dan and Hasbani rivers in Israel.
- c. The territorial issue of Israel and the right of return for some 300,000 Palestinians living in Lebanon; the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty over seven villages located inside Israel; and the territorial resolution of Shebaa Farm and other areas he considered Lebanese territory.

The Lebanese government convinced the UN to negotiate with Israel, but the latter refused to do so without Syria being a party to a comprehensive regional solution. Following that response, Nasrallah's claims gained traction and he continued to refuse to disarm Hezbollah.

On September 2, 2004, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1559, calling for the acknowledgement of Lebanese sovereignty over the entire country, the end of the Syrian presence in Lebanon, and disarmament of all militias. Still, Hezbollah did not disarm.

## THE ASSASSINATION OF RAFIC HARIRI AND RESOLUTION 1680

The situation in Lebanon changed dramatically in 2005. On February 14, Rafic Hariri, the immediate past prime minister, was assassinated along with eight of his bodyguards when a car bomb detonated next to his motorcade. The murder ignited a wave of protests across Beirut. Residents and media alike pointed at Syria as the culprit. In the face of international pressure to implement resolution 1559, Syrian president Bashar Al Assad announced in a televised speech on March 5 that Syria would withdraw its forces to Bekaa in eastern Lebanon and thereafter to the Lebanese-Syrian border.

The protests continued to bear fruit and an international tribunal was formed to investigate the assassination. This move increased the tension between the two main political factions in Lebanon: the Iran and Syria backed "March 8 Coalition" led by Hezbollah, and the "March 14 Coalition" led by Saad Al Hariri and backed by the Saudis and the West. The investigation uncovered that senior members of Hezbollah were involved in the assassination. Hezbollah proceeded to launch a campaign to delegitimize the tribunal and the Lebanese government that was in office at the time of the assassination<sup>31</sup>. This started a period of government instability in Lebanon. When the Security Council called for the implementation of resolution 1559 a year later, there weren't any meaningful government elements to enforce it.

## THE SECOND LEBANON WAR AND RESOLUTION 1701

Lebanon's situation continued to deteriorate, leading to an unexpected war with Israel on July 12, 2006. Hezbollah combatants had killed three Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon and two others had been kidnapped and killed. A ceasefire agreement was reached on August 14 after 34 days of struggle, about two days after the adoption of resolution 1701.

Like previous efforts, resolution 1701 also sought full implementation of the Taif Agreement and the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon. It also urged Lebanese government sovereignty over its entire territory and greater security measures in the space between the Litani River and the Israel-Lebanon border as drawn by the UN following Israel's withdrawal in 2000. It proposed using UNIFIL to keep the peace in the region.

In practice, however, UNIFIL lacks any real enforcement power because of the reluctance of its member states to confront Hezbollah. In the years since the end of the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah's military infrastructure has evolved with the help of Iran. To date, its missiles arsenal alone is estimated to have over 130,000 missiles and rockets, compared to 20,000 rockets in 2006<sup>32</sup>.



***“There aren’t that many Hezbollah operatives in European countries.”***

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SHORT RESPONSE

**THERE IS NO ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF THE NUMBER OF HEZBOLLAH OPERATIVES AND/OR SUPPORTERS ON EUROPEAN SOIL. HOWEVER, THE U.S. LED OPERATION CASSANDRA REVEALED A WELL-ESTABLISHED INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT EUROPE.**

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**THE FACTS**

To date, the German security services are the only ones to publish a count of Hezbollah operatives in their territory. Their latest report speaks of approximately 1,500 operatives vs. 950 operatives in years past<sup>33</sup>. Other European countries refrain from publishing any data. Still, the findings from Operation Cassandra, an effort led by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to undercut Hezbollah funding from illicit drug sources, revealed a well-established infrastructure in several European countries that could include hundreds or thousands of operatives.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

In Europe, Hezbollah operatives live among the Shi'ite diaspora. They engage in international criminal activity, drug trafficking, and money laundering. Under the command and guidance of Hezbollah's terrorist wing, some gather intelligence and provide the logistical support and infrastructure required to carry out terror attacks. The most glaring example of this phenomenon is in Germany, where Hezbollah's infrastructure includes operatives, crime families, and Shi'ite Islamic centers.

Most of Hezbollah's illegal revenue comes from drug trafficking (mostly cocaine), contraband trade, and money laundering. Just in the past ten years, two major crime rings have been directly linked to Hezbollah's European enterprise. The first was involved in the Lebanese-Canadian Bank affair uncovered in 2011. A drug trafficking network led by Ayman Jumma smuggled cocaine from South America through Western Africa and Europe to the Middle East. The value of the money laundered was estimated at \$200 million/month.

***“Most of Hezbollah’s illegal revenue comes from drug trafficking (mostly cocaine), contraband trade, and money laundering. Just in the past ten years, two major crime rings have been directly linked to Hezbollah’s European enterprise.”***

The second crime ring was uncovered in 2016 during Operation Cedars. Sixteen Hezbollah members were arrested in France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy for laundering money through the international acquisition and sales of luxury goods. At the height of the crime ring's activity it laundered 1 million Euros per week, primarily through Germany.

Hezbollah also conducts legitimate business activity. On behalf of for-profit corporate entities owned by Hezbollah or the charities under its control, Hezbollah operatives engage in the oil trade, real estate, and small commerce. Only during May 2018 did the Terrorism Financing Targeting Center (TFTC) announce new sanctions on Hezbollah and some of its senior members. Ali Youssef Charara, chairman of the Lebanese telecom company Spectrum, which provides telecom services in EMEA and Africa, was included on that list based on his activity raising and laundering money for Hezbollah<sup>34</sup>.

## THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF HEZBOLLAH OPERATIVES IN GERMANY.

In the past 20 years Hezbollah leveraged its presence in Europe to recruit terror activists with Caucasian features. For example, in 1997 Israel arrested a Hezbollah operative by the name of Steven Smirk who underwent training in Lebanon before he was sent on a suicide mission. Smirk converted to Islam and was radicalized by Hezbollah operatives in Germany.

Hezbollah takes advantage of the fact that not all European countries have made a full designation. Most (except the Netherlands in 2004 and the UK in 2019) have not designated Hezbollah in its entirety and are relying on the EU law in that regard.

## HEZBOLLAH TERROR INFRASTRUCTURE UNCOVERED:

### GERMANY

In January 2018 the German police raided the homes of 10 individuals suspected of being members of Al Quds force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards who had been gathering intelligence on Jewish and Israeli targets such as the Israeli Embassy, senior dignitaries, and kindergartens<sup>35</sup>. Al Quds Force is an Iranian special force tasked with international operations, such as training and supervising Iranian proxies, Hezbollah included.

In 2002, Germany shut down the German extension of two entities that raised money for Hezbollah: “Al Shahid Charity” that supported the families of fallen Hezbollah fighters and the “Al Aqsa Foundation,” a Hamas entity. Al Shahid Charity apparently didn't resume its operations. Germany outlawed the Al-Aqsa Foundation in 2002 due to its ties with Hamas.

Additional reports from the last year suggest fundraising at the Al Mustafa Center in Bremen<sup>36</sup>, where about 800 people raised funds for the Lebanon Orphan Children Project that was outlawed in Germany in 2014. The German Interior Ministry reports that the organization raised over \$4 million between 2007 and 2013 and the money was transferred to the Al Shahid Charity in Lebanon<sup>37</sup>.

### BELGIUM

In 2003, Belgian police raided the offices of Soafrimex, a food exporter to Africa headed by Kassim Tajideen, one of Hezbollah's major donors. Tajideen was arrested for tax fraud, money laundering, and diamond smuggling valued at tens of millions of Euros<sup>38</sup>.



## FRANCE

French police searched the headquarters and home of the leaders of the Shi'ite organization "Zahra Center," which has ties to Hezbollah. Authorities closed the center, in the city of Grande-Synthe, in northern France, as it served as logistical support for Iranian operations in France<sup>39</sup>. In 2015, a joint U.S.-French operation arrested Iman Kobeissi and Joseph Asmar on charges of conspiracy to launder money from drug trafficking and gun smuggling for Hezbollah.<sup>40</sup>

## CYPRUS

In 2012 Hezbollah was involved in several failed attempts to carry out terror attacks. Additionally, in recent years several safe houses and warehouses were located around Europe that housed tremendous amounts of explosives and explosive raw materials. The one in Cyprus held 8.3 tons of ammonium nitrate.

## UK

Four safe houses were discovered in London that held three tons of ammonium nitrate.

Hezbollah also engages in money laundering from seemingly legitimate activity in the UK. Three charities that have laundered money for Hezbollah – Lebanese Welfare Committee, HELP Charity Association for Relief, and Arbar Islamic Foundation – recently urged people to partake in the Al Quds Day march in London<sup>41</sup>.

## BULGARIA

On 18 July, six people were killed, and 32 others injured when a suicide bomber detonated a bomb inside a bus full of Israeli tourists at Burgas airport. The bombing coincided with the 18th anniversary of the attack on the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in which 85 people were killed. It should be noted that the explosive charge used in this attack contained ammonium nitrate.

## ITALY

Between 2008 and 2018, Italian law enforcement alongside authorities from the U.S., South America, France, Belgium, and Germany arrested several Hezbollah operatives as part of Operation Cassandra, an international task force to uncover Hezbollah's drug trafficking. German authorities in Frankfurt arrested two Lebanese citizens with over eight million Euros collected as profit from drug trafficking and en route to Hezbollah. A year later, in the German city of Speyer, two other members of the same network were arrested in a raid of their homes.

## THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Hezbollah conducts arms trafficking in the Czech Republic and endangers European citizens. In 2014, a gun runner for Hezbollah named Ali Fayed was arrested. In response, Hezbollah kidnapped a few Czech citizens who were released in return for Fayed.

Hezbollah is also criminally active in cyberspace. In October 2018, Czech servers were shut down when Hezbollah used them to hack into computers and networks around the world for information theft and extortion purposes.

***"In 2012 Hezbollah was involved in several failed attempts to carry out terror attacks. Additionally, in recent years several safe houses and warehouses were located around Europe that housed tremendous amounts of explosives and explosive raw materials."***

**“The real problems that should be addressed are war crimes in Syria and Yemen, and human rights violations in Lebanon.”**

## SHORT RESPONSE

# HEZBOLLAH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WAR CRIMES IN SYRIA AND YEMEN AS WELL AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN LEBANON.

## THE FACTS

Hezbollah committed war crimes in Syria in places such as Al Kutzeir, Qalamoun, and the Damascus region. In Yemen, Hezbollah trained the Houthi and aided in the violation of human rights. In Lebanon, Hezbollah carried out political assassinations (e.g. Rafic Hariri) and violated human rights (e.g. taking control of western Beirut neighborhoods in 2008).

## GENERAL OVERVIEW:

### WAR CRIMES: DEFINITION

A war crime is a crime committed during fighting by combatant forces and in violation of the Laws of War (International Humanitarian Law). The Laws of War are meant to limit combatant parties' actions in order to minimize the suffering and limit the effect of war's aftermath on the civilian population<sup>42</sup>. The Laws of War comprise internationally acceptable customs and practices as well as norms set in various international treaties such as the Geneva Convention<sup>43</sup>. The four major principles of the Laws of War are:

- ▶ **Military Necessity** – provides that force must be applied subject to the relevant mission's requirements and only at the level required to accomplish it;
- ▶ **Distinction** – one may deliberately hurt only enemy combatants. Deliberate injury/targeting of civilians is a crime and considered as a massacre and is strictly forbidden even if it assists in accomplishing the mission;
- ▶ **Responsibility** – when civilian collateral damage is expected, one must mitigate the expected harm as much as possible;
- ▶ **Proportionality** – the expected collateral damage must be proportional to the military achievement<sup>44</sup>



War crimes may include crimes against civilian populations such as murder, rape, torture, and malicious attacks on civilian targets; crimes against combatants such as torture and the use of forbidden weaponry and crimes against property, such as looting and the destruction of religious buildings without any military necessity<sup>45</sup>. The Laws of War apply in any armed conflict and they are independent of the way the war erupted, the legitimacy of the conflict, or a declaration of war. The Laws of War bind all combatant parties -- states, non-state actors and individuals partaking in the hostilities<sup>46</sup>.

## HEZBOLLAH'S WAR CRIMES INVOLVEMENT

### SYRIA

Hezbollah has a strategic interest in maintaining the Assad regime remaining in power in Syria because of its role in Hezbollah's military build-up and its hostility toward Israel. The fall of the Assad regime could hurt Hezbollah's military capabilities and its political influence in Lebanon<sup>47</sup>. Even though the war in Syria drew significant media attention and scrutiny by international organizations, one of the least covered aspects was the Iranian and Hezbollah involvement in war crimes committed with the support of the Assad regime<sup>48</sup>. The dearth of coverage might stem from the victims' inability to identify the perpetrators, given the large amount of groups involved in this conflict. In a nutshell, the following are some incidents where Hezbollah committed human rights violations in Syria:

- ▶ On March 13, 2019, the U.S Department of State released its annual comprehensive human rights status report. The chapter on Syria said that regime and supporting forces, including Russians, Hezbollah, and IRGC, heavily attacked the eastern Ghouta area on the outskirts of Damascus in 2013. Those attacks made use of heavy weaponry and apparently also chemical weapons forbidden by international law. Humanitarian aid was knowingly denied as well. The report also includes human rights violations, illegal and indiscriminate killings and specific mention of Hezbollah's involvement in attacks on civilian populations<sup>49</sup>.
- ▶ On June 29, 2019, Human Rights Watch released a report on the human rights situation in Syria. Human Rights Watch is an independent international body. The report said that Syrian forces backed by Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah carried out hundreds of indiscriminate attacks against civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, while ignoring any proportionality as far as civilian casualties were concerned<sup>50</sup>.
- ▶ The Amnesty International report for 2017-2018 said that Syrian forces, backed by Iranian and Hezbollah ground forces and Russian air support took control of areas formerly ruled by ISIS and other militias, while indiscriminately killing and injuring civilian populations and attacking civilian targets such as homes, hospitals, and medical installations<sup>51</sup>.

***“Hezbollah has a strategic interest in maintaining the Assad regime remaining in power in Syria because of its role in Hezbollah’s military build-up and its hostility toward Israel. The fall of the Assad regime could hurt Hezbollah’s military capabilities and its political influence.”***

### YEMEN

Hezbollah has been providing logistical assistance to the Houthi since the revolution in 2014. Hezbollah trains Houthi fighters in demolition and guerilla warfare against the government<sup>52</sup>. In Yemen all involved parties commit war crimes. However, a war is governed by the Laws of War and all parties to the conflict must abide by them<sup>53</sup>. For more information, see claims 3 and 9. Hezbollah, by virtue of its training of Houthi forces, should be implicated in these examples as well:

- ▶ On March 13, 2019, the U.S Department of State released its annual comprehensive human rights status report. The part relating to Yemen said that human rights violations in Yemen included illegal and indiscriminate killings, including political assassinations, forced disappearances, torture and recruitment of child soldiers<sup>54</sup>.
- ▶ The Human Rights Watch report for 2018 said that the Houthi made use of anti-personnel mines, which are forbidden and have caused civilian casualties, carried out indiscriminate heavy artillery shelling toward cities like Aden and Taiz, and similar missile launches toward Saudi Arabia<sup>55</sup>. In an earlier report (published September 25, 2018), the organization said that the Houthi had taken 16 hostages, which is a war crime. The Houthi took these hostages in order to extort money from the families or to exchange the hostages for their own people held captive by their opponents<sup>56</sup>.
- ▶ On March 14, 2019, the Yemenite Coalition for Human Rights (RASD Coalition) reported a human rights violation perpetrated by the Houthi against civilian population in Hajour in the Khaja province. Per RASD Coalition, the Houthi vandalized the area while causing harm to civilian populations, including elderly, women and children<sup>57</sup>.

# HEZBOLLAH HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN LEBANON

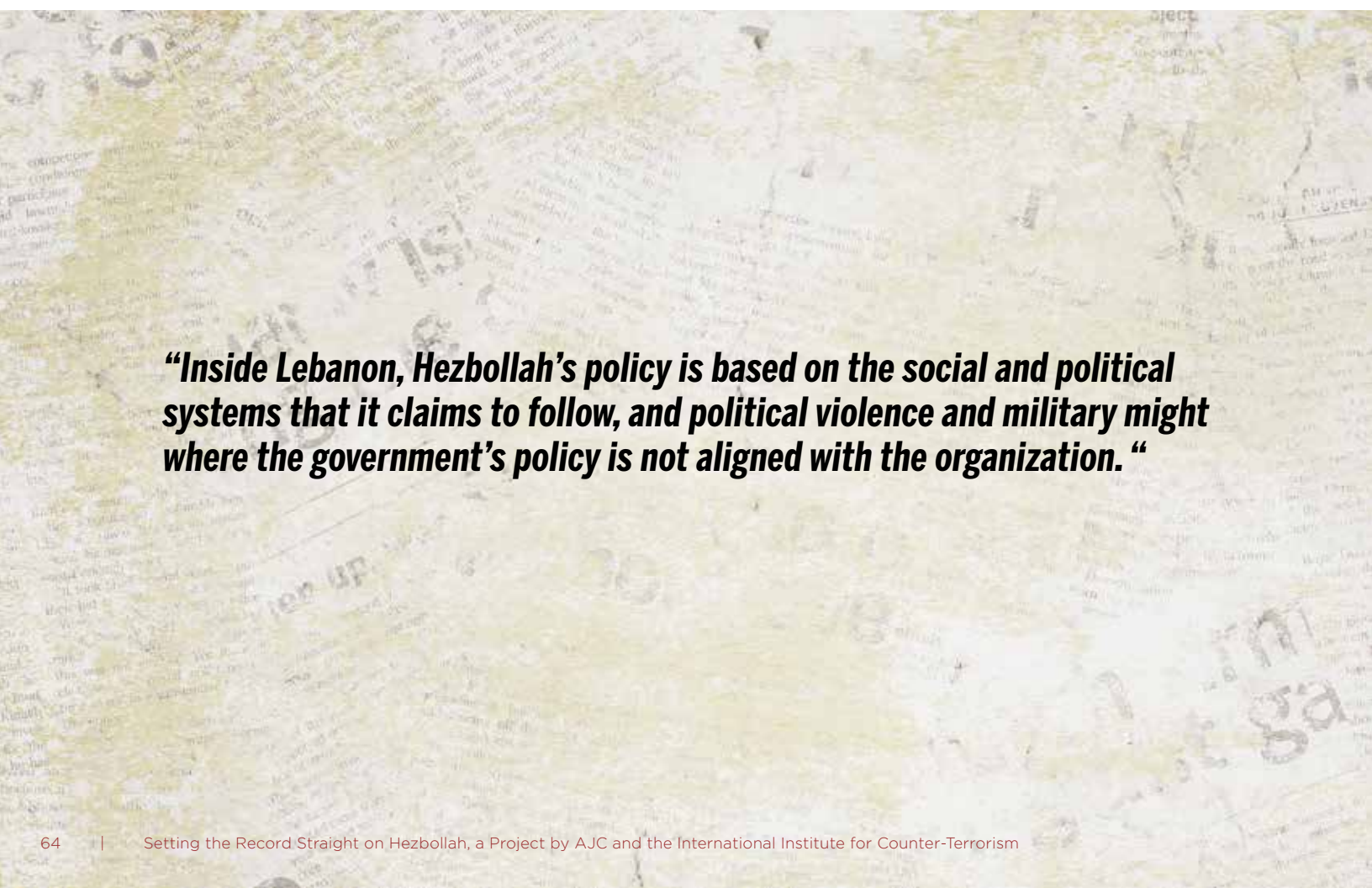
## POLITICAL VIOLENCE

- ▶ Inside Lebanon, Hezbollah's policy is based on the social and political systems that it claims to follow, and political violence and military might where the government's policy is not aligned with the organization. One glaring example was the assassination of Rafic Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister<sup>58</sup>.
- ▶ At the request of the Lebanese government the UN formed a special tribunal to investigate and prosecute the offenders (Special Tribunal for Lebanon)<sup>59</sup>. The investigation uncovered that Syrian and senior Hezbollah members were directly involved in the assassination<sup>60</sup>, and in January 2014, in the International Criminal Court in The Hague, four senior Hezbollah members were put on trial for the murder of Hariri and for committing acts of terrorism (Ayyash et al. case (STL 11-01))<sup>61</sup>. The trial's sessions were completed on September 21, 2018, and to date the judges are debating their verdict<sup>62</sup>.
- ▶ Per the annual report on global human rights produced by the U.S. Department of State, Hezbollah has been operating secret detention centers and jails in Lebanon.

On August 19, 2018, local Lebanese media published photographs of the entrances of several such jails in southern Beirut where Hezbollah apparently detained, questioned, and tortured individuals<sup>63</sup>.

## TAKING OVER BEIRUT WHILE KILLING LEBANESE CITIZENS

Experience made it clear that when the Lebanese government tried to curb Hezbollah, the latter responded by using military force. One of the most glaring examples of that was the bloody riot that took place on May 7, 2008, when at least 81 people were killed and 250 injured. This came as a result of the Lebanese government's efforts to prevent Hezbollah from deploying a private communications network around the country with Iranian support. Also, a high-ranking Lebanese Army officer and Hezbollah supporter had been dismissed for allowing Hezbollah to smuggle weapons through the Beirut airport, which was under his supervision. During the riots, Hezbollah operatives took over entire neighborhoods in western Beirut and forced the Lebanese government to yield<sup>64</sup>.



***“Inside Lebanon, Hezbollah’s policy is based on the social and political systems that it claims to follow, and political violence and military might where the government’s policy is not aligned with the organization. “***



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# An overview of the political situation in Lebanon and an assessment of the relative political and military strength of Hezbollah.

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## IN BRIEF

**THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON IS A DERIVATIVE OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND THE INTERNAL DIVISION WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN CAMP. THE MILITARY SITUATION IS CLEAR: HEZBOLLAH IS THE STRONGEST MILITARY FORCE, EQUIPPED WITH ADVANCED WEAPONRY, TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE, WHICH IT GAINED DURING THE YEARS IT FOUGHT ISRAEL AND THE CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA.**

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## THE FACTS

Since Michel Aoun's election, Hezbollah has restored much of its former political capital. The close relationship between the prime minister and the organization plays into Hezbollah's hands, and helps it maintain a political advantage over its rivals.

For years Hezbollah claimed that it was legitimate to bear arms in its role as the protector of Lebanon from Israel. Since 2011, despite criticism regarding its involvement in Syria, Hezbollah has expanded this argument to portray the organization as a protector against terror spilling over from Syria.

## KEY DETAILS

▶ In recent years, Lebanon has experienced multiple political crises stemming from domestic power struggles. Most of Lebanon's problems come from its weak economic situation. Despite getting financial assistance from Europe and the Gulf states, Lebanon failed to devise a serious reorganization plan, while the approved state budget cut down on soldiers' pensions and hurt the banks. Another factor is the rampant corruption in the country, in which Hezbollah plays a big part. The combination of Hezbollah's involvement in government and the municipal systems coupled with its military strength and being the largest employer in the Shi'ite sector, as well as a major international criminal organization, amplifies its stranglehold on the country.

- ▶ Additional political crises in recent years stem from the energy shortage in Lebanon. Lebanon doesn't have enough power plants to service its entire population and large parts of the country rely on generators and power producing ships on loan from Turkey. On that note, Hezbollah has its claws into the generator owners committee and therefore it is directly involved in any government decision in the energy field.
- ▶ The political situation in Lebanon is a derivative of the various political alliances and the internal division within the Christian camp. The strongest political alliance in Lebanon is the "March 8th Coalition," currently 72 parliament members strong, of which Hezbollah and Amal are members, along with Michel Aoun's party. Its largest opposition is the "March 14th Coalition," currently at 47 parliament members, which includes the Sunni, part of the Christian camp and the Druze.

## HEZBOLLAH'S POLITICAL POWER

### HEZBOLLAH'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

ELECTION YEAR	NO. OF HEZBOLLAH SEATS	NO. OF BLOC SEATS	YEAR OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION	PRIME MINISTER	NO. OF MINISTERS	NO. OF HEZBOLLAH MINISTERS	NO. OF BLOC MINISTERS	PORTFOLIOS
1992	8	12						
1996	7	9						
2000	10	12						
2005	14	57	2005	Siniora	24	1+2 (I)	5	Labor, Energy and Water, Foreign
			2008	Siniora	30	1+1 (I)	11	Foreign, Labor
2009	12	57	2009	Hariri	30	2	10	Agriculture, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
			2011	Mikati	30	2	18	Agriculture, without portfolio
			2014	Salam	24	2	8	Industry, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
			2016	Hariri	30	2	18	Industry, Education and Sport, without portfolio
2018	13	79	2019	Hariri	30	1+2 (Jabak - I)	17	Health, Education and Sport, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs



- ▶ Hezbollah has strengthened its hold on the Lebanese political systems over the years. Its political involvement is part of Hezbollah's duplicitous strategy: on the one hand it presents a pragmatic façade but in reality it partakes in military-terrorist activities.
- ▶ More often than not, the ministries Hezbollah requests (and receives) serve its not-for-profit organizations: The Industry and Agriculture ministries touch on Jihad Al Bina's, Hezbollah's development enterprise areas of business, as they deal with agricultural projects, small business assistance and local industry assistance. Additionally, the Labor and Industry ministries cooperate with the labor unions; the Education and Sports ministry overlaps with the Hezbollah educational system as it is in charge of kindergartens, schools and higher education, and youth movements such as Imam Mahdi Scouts and youth sports teams; the Healthcare ministry overlaps with Hezbollah's Muslim Health Authority and deals with hospital management, clinics, pharmacies and the Wounded Institute that assists Hezbollah's wounded combatants; the Parliamentary Affairs ministry, by virtue of its coordination and cooperation with the parliament functions, enables Hezbollah greater control in the government-parliament work process.
- ▶ In 2011-2013, during the Mikati government, Hezbollah had significant impact on decisions regarding ministers and effectively paved the governments' path. The disagreement it had with prime minister Mikati over the involvement in the Syrian civil war led to the resignation of the former and the weakening of Hezbollah's stature in the Salam government.
- ▶ Hezbollah's representation in parliament may be numerically small, but its true influence on Lebanese politics relies on the organization's military wing, which poses a threat to Hezbollah's opposition.
- ▶ Per the Lebanese constitution, a two-thirds majority is required to pass government resolutions. Based on Hezbollah's government participation numbers, it can veto whatever it chooses. This fact enabled Hezbollah to vote down government resolutions that were not aligned with its interests.

## HEZBOLLAH'S 'WALKING THE LINE' POLICY

Hezbollah is aware of the limits of its power and therefore it carefully navigates among the various players. The organization managed to withstand all crises and even rehabilitated its relationship with its Syrian and Iranian patrons, Lebanese public opinion, and particularly the Shi'ite population. Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader since 1992, has adopted a policy of "walking the line" when it comes to Lebanon, and regional and international organizations, and has made the most out of every field Hezbollah operates in. He plays the internal Lebanese game and works to defuse Lebanese concerns regarding the imposition of Sharia law, while at the same time he builds

up logistic and terror infrastructure in Lebanon and globally. Lebanese politics is part of Hezbollah's modus operandi, separating theology (based on the rule of cleric and pan-Islamism) from practical day to day activities to achieve Hezbollah's goals. This separation enables the organization to develop its theology and be active in the political system without sacrificing one at the expense of the other. Hezbollah's survival, success and expansion relies on two fundamentals:

1. **Regulatory element** - the ability to build effective core competencies that draw from internal and external sources, including an efficient hierarchy, military capabilities, funding, and enforcement.
2. **Legitimacy** - Hezbollah's internal dialogue: the religious justification to the strategic changes it underwent, claiming and adopting the role of the protectors of Lebanon, seemingly adapting to the Lebanese political system, and sensitivity to Shi'ite public opinion.

The implementation of the Taif Agreement forced Hezbollah to adapt itself to a new format, but it didn't make it fall in line like the rest of the Lebanese powers, allowing the organization to develop and build up its military capabilities and conduct a war of attrition against Israel. This "independence" has been a source of friction between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government and caused multiple waves of violence that disrupted Lebanese life and the government plans to promote its agenda.

Moreover, Hezbollah's use of violence as a tool to achieve political goals is part of its strategic plan to take control of the political system. For example, in 2005 Hezbollah assassinated Rafic Hariri, the main opposition to the Syrian involvement in Lebanon. That same year, Gebran Tueni, a Christian member of parliament and publisher of Al-Nahar newspaper, who called on the Lebanese government to take control over the country, disarm Hezbollah and enforce its sovereignty all over the Lebanese territory, was also assassinated. Tueni argued that Hezbollah implemented in Lebanon an independent policy to serve Syrian and Iranian interests<sup>68</sup>.

Hezbollah has been notorious for creating crises in governments whenever the government policies or resolutions were not aligned with its interests. In 2006, Hezbollah led a political campaign to topple the government through resignation of opposition ministers, presenting the government as illegitimate and conducting political assassinations (most of which have not been solved) of prominent figures in the anti-Syrian camp, including the assassination of Wissam Said, a senior police investigator who broke the Hariri assassination case. The campaign peaked in May 2008 when Hezbollah took over the neighborhoods in western Beirut and caused the death and injury of dozens of people.

The Lebanese government's inability to "tame" Hezbollah apparently comes from the combination of lack of levers (be it political, economic or military), a lack of desire to confront it (either because of public opinion or concerns about worsening the situation in Lebanon) and the support Iran provides Hezbollah.

## HEZBOLLAH'S MILITARY STATUS

- ▶ During the Second Lebanon War Hezbollah's operational concept in southern Lebanon was typified by defensive activity on the ground coupled with the launching of missiles and rockets on civilian targets to deter Israelis. The main contributors to this concept had intimate familiarity with the southern Lebanese terrain, the existence of operational and logistical infrastructure, a camouflaged network of tunnels and the ability to blend into the local population. The fighting in Syria posed a different challenge to Hezbollah, as it was forced to adopt an offensive strategy in unfamiliar terrain (e.g. urban warfare), against a local enemy with intimate familiarity of the terrain and close ties to the potentially hostile local population. Additionally, Hezbollah had to work with Russian, Iranian and Syrian forces as well as various Shi'ite militias (Afghani, Pakistani and Iraqi). Such an operational challenge enhances Hezbollah's capabilities and is applicable to future hostilities with Israel. Nasrallah in various speeches and videos expressed Hezbollah's plans to conquer the Galilee.
- ▶ The operational cooperation among Hezbollah, Russia, Iran, and Syria exposed Hezbollah to advanced weaponry, wide-scale operations, operational planning, intertwined battle, and advanced command and control systems. The operational experience gained during the years of fighting in Syria enhances its organizational, professional and command capabilities to include, among others, management of long-term fighting, upgrading low- and high-intensity fighting, and operation of advanced systems.
- ▶ Hezbollah lost many combatants in Syria. It also had to cut down salaries and reduce payments to the families of fallen combatants. That said, it keeps attracting new recruits while lowering its standards. Additionally, Hezbollah increased the scope of its target audience and formed a Christian battalion and attempted to recruit Palestinians and foreign fighters from Kuwait, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

*“The operational cooperation among Hezbollah, Russia, Iran, and Syria exposed Hezbollah to advanced weaponry, wide-scale operations, operational planning, intertwined battle, and advanced command and control systems.”*

- ▶ With Russian and Iranian support Hezbollah managed to increase its arsenal to include ground to air missiles, ground missiles, anti-aircraft guns, and anti-tank weapons. It also acquired various armored vehicles, including U.S.-made tanks and APCs. It should be noted that it also gained experience in deploying UAVs as well, with direct exposure to advanced weapons systems, some at the level of those owned by Western countries, Israel included.

## WEAPONS BY NUMBERS<sup>69</sup>

- ▶ **Personnel** – approx. 45,000 combatants, fewer than 50% of whom are regularly serving. Its elite unit, the Radwan Force, is approximately 2,500 strong<sup>70</sup>.
- ▶ **Missiles, rockets and mortars** – estimated to range between 100,000 and 150,000<sup>71</sup>, including tens of thousands are short-range (up to 40 kilometers), thousands are mid-range (up to 75 kilometers), and hundreds that are long-range (200-700 kilometers). Recently Hezbollah launched a project to upgrade its arsenal in terms of accuracy and according to the latest estimates about 20-200 missiles with a 50-meters range accuracy<sup>72</sup>.
- ▶ **Remotely controlled aircraft** – in recent years Hezbollah expanded its use of remotely controlled aircraft alongside an upgrade of their capabilities. To date, Hezbollah owns hundreds of such aircraft from drones through intelligence gathering photography through attack aircraft (either “suicide” aircraft or grenade launchers).
- ▶ **Shore to ship missiles** – Hezbollah owns various kinds of such missiles, among them C-802 and a handful of Yakhont systems.
- ▶ **Anti-tank missiles** – Hezbollah owns thousands of anti-tank missiles including a third-generation systems that can penetrate most of the IDF and Western armies' armory.
- ▶ **Anti-aircraft missiles** – the estimate is that in addition to portable missile systems such as SA-7 and SA-14, Hezbollah owns advanced systems such as SA-8, SA-17 and SA-22.
- ▶ **Vehicles** – during the civil war in Syria it has been revealed that Hezbollah combatants have been trained on and operated various Russian-made tanks, such as T-55, T-62 and T-72. Additionally, they have been trained in various APCs, including types owned by the Lebanese army. Furthermore, Hezbollah owns mounted mobile units that use Jeeps, ATVs and motorbikes.



# ANNEX

## What are the legal restrictions in the EU if it is implemented? UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) on the Prevention and Suppression of the Financing of Terrorist Acts

In Resolution 1373 (2001), the UN Security Council (hereinafter: UNSC), on September 28, 2001, defined action strategies aimed at combating terrorism in general and terrorism financing in particular. Thus, all countries must implement mechanisms to freeze the funds, financial assets or other economic resources of persons who commit or attempt to commit terrorist acts, or those who participate in or facilitate the commission of such acts. In addition, the UNSC determined that measures should be taken to prohibit funds and other financial assets or economic resources from being made available for the benefit of such persons, and to prohibit financial or other related services from being rendered for the benefit of such persons.

**Regulation of the Council of the European Union on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism** On December 28, 2001, the Council of the European Union released Council Regulation (EC) No 2580/2001 on restrictive measures targeting individuals and entities to combat terrorism (hereinafter: “Council Regulation”). It should be clarified that by virtue of its definition as a “regulation,” the Council Regulation applies in its entirety and directly to all EU member states.

The regulation deals with the freezing of assets and determines that **all funds, financial assets and economic resources** belonging to, or owned or held by, a natural (person) or legal entity, a group or entity (other than a legal entity), that are included on the designation list **will be frozen**. Funds, financial assets and economic resources shall not be available, directly or indirectly, to any designated person, group or entity. The article also states that **it is prohibited to provide financial services** to, or for the benefit of, a natural or legal person, groups or entity that has been designated (Article 2).

While the freezing of assets **applies to specific entities listed on the designation list, the prohibition on providing financial services to designated entities applies to any person who is a subject/citizen of a European Union member state**, to any legal person, and any group or entity (other than a legal entity) to which the law of an EU member state applies, and on any legal entity, and any group or entity (other than a legal entity) that conducts business within the EU (Article 10).

It is the **responsibility of each individual member state to determine the sanctions to be imposed where the provisions of this Regulation are infringed**; such sanctions shall be effective, proportionate and dissuasive (Article 9). It should **be noted that the definitions of the terms discussed in the context of freezing assets are broad**:

1. ‘Funds, other financial assets and economic resources’ means assets of every kind, whether tangible or intangible, movable or immovable, however acquired, and legal documents or instruments in any form, including electronic

or digital, evidencing title to, or interest in, such assets, including, but not limited to, bank credits, travelers’ checks, bank checks, money orders, shares, securities, bonds, drafts and letters of credit.

2. ‘Freezing of funds, other financial assets and economic resources’ means the prevention of any move, transfer, alteration, use of or dealing with funds in any way that would result in any change in their volume, amount, location, ownership, possession, character, destination or other change that would enable the funds to be used, including portfolio management.
3. ‘Financial services’ means any service of a financial nature, including all insurance and insurance-related services, and all banking and other financial services (Article 1).

**The Council Common Position on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism** On December 28, 2001, the Council of the European Union released Council Common Position (2001/931/CFSP) on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism (hereinafter: “Council Position”). The Council Position stated that the EU should take further steps beyond those set out in UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001). The Council Position sets forth criteria for the designation of persons, groups and entities in order to freeze their assets (Article 2); all are **not** EU citizens. The Council Position defines what acts are considered terrorist acts and determines which restrictions apply to them. Thus, the EU has devised a list of **persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts that are subject to restrictions**.

The list includes persons and groups operating both within and outside the EU. The list is examined regularly, as determined by the Council Position, at least once every six months. The use of designation makes it possible to disrupt the terrorist financing chain by imposing sanctions in the form of freezing assets belonging to designated entities on the one hand, and by prohibiting EU citizens from providing financial services to designated entities on the other hand.

To date, since 2013, only Hezbollah’s military wing has been designated a terrorist organization by the EU. If the EU expands the designation to Hezbollah in its entirety, the above-mentioned restrictions will apply, respectively, to the organization as a whole.

It should be remembered that designation is an official procedure meant to determine whether a person is a terrorist operative or whether a group/entity is a terrorist organization. Each country determines by law its desired mechanism of designation, including the criteria and which bodies are entrusted with examining the details of each case and deciding whether to accept or reject the designation. Publication of the designation is intended, among other things, to maintain due process and allow persons, groups or entities to appeal the decision to designate them as terrorists. Designation is a

**legal tool subject to the economic sanctions that** are imposed against those designated persons, groups and entities. Designating Hezbollah in its entirety will not prevent EU member states from engaging in political relations with Lebanon, since designation imposes economic sanctions but does not address political sanctions. However, it is quite possible that there are other laws that prohibit such relations, which do not directly result from designation, such as the prohibition against contact with a foreign agent.

With regard to the question of transferring funds to Lebanon, it is not possible to answer this unequivocally based on the information presented in the question. However, it should be noted that the Council's regulation has an **exception to the freezing of assets**, which states that frozen funds can be used for the purpose of fulfilling the **essential needs** of a person who was designated as a terrorist or his family, including payments for food, medications, rent or a mortgage for his family, and the costs involved in the medical expenses of his family members (Article 5). Funds used for these purposes may be transferred to Lebanon subject to special approval from the official bodies.

**Does it really mean that countries cannot deal with Lebanon politically or send funds? While the EU's reticence might be more about appearance, this is a valid argument that must be explored.** The fact that Hezbollah is in the government creates challenges for the countries that designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

The **first** challenge is the need to manage diplomatic relations with the Lebanese government, which includes Hezbollah ministers, while the **second** one is the concern that advanced weapons being supplied to the Lebanese army will trickle down to Hezbollah.

The countries of the world conduct themselves differently vis-à-vis the Lebanese government and Hezbollah representatives in the administration. There are countries that maintain a rigid policy in this regard, while others have an extensive network of relations with the Lebanese political system, including Hezbollah representatives. Among the stricter countries is the State of Israel, which has no official ties with the Lebanese government, which is considered an enemy state. However, the IDF holds frequent meetings with the Lebanese Armed Forces, mediated by UNIFIL, around the shared border.

Although the U.S. maintains extensive relations with the Lebanese government, which includes a recent visit of U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Beirut on March 22-23, 2019, and a meeting between PM Hariri and President Trump at the White House on July 25th, 2017, as well as an emphasis on security cooperation, which receives financial and material assistance from the U.S., it is clear that since the election of President Trump, the U.S. administration has toughened its stance with Hezbollah and has increased sanctions against it. Among other things, the U.S. prohibits relations with politicians who support the organization, relations that could lead to the designation of that entity as a supporter of terrorism, thereby preventing its entry to the U.S. and resulting in the

confiscation of its assets. In addition, since 2015, following the American announcement of sanctions against Lebanese banks that maintain accounts for Hezbollah supporters and activists, the Lebanese Central Bank instructed these entities to close accounts of bodies affiliated with Hezbollah.

Britain, which only recently designated Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organization, has not maintained official ties with the organization's representatives in parliament and in the government for several years. Even though Hezbollah's political wing was only recently designated a terrorist entity, official British representatives had been prevented from meeting with the organization's members of parliament, and those who did try were reprimanded and even removed from their posts. However, the British government announced that its cooperation with and support for the Lebanese government would not affect the recent designation. It should be noted that, in response to the British designation, the French president responded that his country would not include a Lebanese party that operates in the government on the list of terrorist organizations and, therefore, would continue to maintain ties with Hezbollah's political wing.

"Canada has announced that, like Britain, it is committed to maintaining its ties and cooperation with Lebanon but will have no relationship with the organization or its representatives. The EU, on the other hand, adheres to a separation between the organization's political and military wings, and maintains relations with the organization's representatives in parliament. Recently, official Hezbollah representatives even noted that its members frequently meet with European ambassadors, especially the ambassadors of France, Italy, Spain, Norway and Switzerland.

Similar meetings also take place between Hezbollah representatives, and European members of parliament and ministers. For example, last March, a delegation from the Alliance for Freedom and Peace (APF), a far-right European party, visited Beirut and met with Hezbollah's foreign affairs chief, Ammar al-Moussawi.

The European delegation included members of parliament, activists and politicians from a wide range of countries, including Britain, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Croatia. During the visit, the European delegates expressed support for Hezbollah and its activities. In this context, it is important to note that the EU did impose sanctions on Hezbollah's military wing after the terrorist attack in Burgas, Bulgaria, in July 2012, and froze its assets in the 28 EU countries, but the sanctions did not prevent the EU and other international bodies from cooperating with the network surrounding Hezbollah's military infrastructure.

For example, the "Charitable Association for Treating War Casualties and War Disabled in Lebanon," which is intended to treat Hezbollah casualties, cooperates in all matters related to increasing awareness of the dangers of landmines with the Lebanese government and, in the process, the Lebanese army alongside the EU and UN representatives (such as UNICEF).



As previously mentioned, the number of countries that have designated Hezbollah, partially or in its entirety, as a terrorist organization is not large. Then there are countries that make no designation at all and maintain relations at various levels with Hezbollah and its people. For example, official Russian representatives, including the foreign minister, have met with Hezbollah representatives, including Secretary-General Nasrallah. Furthermore, Russia recently hosted a security conference in which a Hezbollah representative participated.

**IN SUMMARY**, designating Hezbollah in its entirety a terrorist organization does not require severing ties with the Lebanese government. Relations with the Lebanese government should continue, with an emphasis on the political elements opposed to Hezbollah in parliament and in the public sphere, in order to achieve the goal of reducing the organization's capabilities and encouraging those political forces in Lebanon working to marginalize Hezbollah. The weakening of the Lebanese government and its detachment from the international system will actually play into Hezbollah's hands.

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