

Hezbollah

Name: Hezbollah

Type of Organization:

- Militia
- political party
- social-service provider
- terrorist
- transnational
- violent

Ideologies and Affiliations:

- Iranian-sponsored
- Islamist
- jihadist
- Khomeinist
- Shiite

Place of Origin:

Lebanon

Year of Origin:

1982

Founder(s):

Ali Akbar Mohtashemi—Iran’s then-ambassador to Syria; Imad Fayeز Mughniyeh; Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah; Abbas al-Musawi

Places of Operation:

Lebanon, Syria, Germany, Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Iran, United Arab Emirates

Overview

Executive Summary:

Iran helped create the terrorist group Hezbollah in Lebanon in the early 1980s in order to expand its influence in the region. Under the pretense of fighting foreign occupiers in Lebanon, Hezbollah has been responsible for murderous terror attacks against Israeli, American, and Jewish targets around the globe. Despite its rhetoric of freeing Lebanon from foreign occupation, Hezbollah has made no secret that it is heavily supported by foreign powers, namely the Islamist Iranian regime.

Iran has transferred mass quantities of weapons, fighters, and other supplies to Hezbollah through its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, using Syria as a transfer point. It has been responsible for transferring thousands of rockets, which Hezbollah has used against Israeli civilians, notably in the 2006 Second Lebanon War which was sparked by a Hezbollah cross-border raid that resulted in the deaths of eight soldiers and capture of two others. In addition to its violently anti-Israel position, Hezbollah’s loyalty to Iran and Syria has translated into Hezbollah involvement on behalf of the embattled Syrian regime in that country’s civil war.

Like Iran, Hezbollah considers the United States and Israel to be its chief enemies, which has led to a global terrorist campaign against the two nations. Until September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible for killing more Americans than any other terrorist organization. Among other deadly attacks, Hezbollah has been linked to the 1983 attack on U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon; the 1992 suicide bombing at the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina; the 1994 suicide bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association in Buenos Aires; and the 2012 bombing of an

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Israeli tourist bus in Bulgaria. Hezbollah is also suspected of involvement in the February 2005 Beirut suicide bombing that killed 22 people, including former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. In August 2020, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon found Hezbollah member Salim Ayyash guilty of participation in the attack.

Further complicating Hezbollah's status, the terror group has woven itself into Lebanon's social fabric, setting up charities and providing services in the southern part of the country where government authority is weaker. These social services have boosted Hezbollah's popularity enough to allow it to become part of the Lebanese political structure. Since 1992, Hezbollah has had a presence and outsized influence in the elected government.

Hezbollah is a key political actor within Lebanon. Hariri's 2005 death sparked an internal revolution—dubbed the Cedar Revolution—in Lebanon that led to the withdrawal of occupying Syrian forces and the creation of pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian political factions in Lebanon's parliament. Hezbollah's political party leads the pro-Syrian March 8 faction, which also include the Shiite Amal party and the Christian-aligned Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). Though it is itself a smaller party in the parliament, Hezbollah's political party has stalled the creation of governing coalitions and caused their downfall through the withdrawal of Hezbollah support. In October 2016, the Lebanese government elected Hezbollah political ally Michel Aoun as president. In May 2018, Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 of Lebanon's 128 parliamentary seats in the country's first parliamentary elections since 2009. Hezbollah ministers held only two cabinet positions in Lebanon's government announced in January 2020, but the new government was widely viewed as allied with the terror group due to its inclusion of Hezbollah-allied parties. After a year-long political stalemate, Hezbollah-supported Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati announced a new Lebanese government on September 10, 2021, which included two ministers nominated by Hezbollah and a third Hezbollah minister nominated by the Amal party. However, while Hezbollah kept its 13 seats in Lebanon's parliament during the country's May 15, 2022, elections, its allied political bloc lost its majority in the parliament.

In 2013, the European Union branded Hezbollah's armed wing a terrorist organization but distinguished it from Hezbollah's political wing. Ahead of the designation, Europe's leaders were divided over the label out of fear of complicating their relationships with Lebanon. Though the EU distinguished between Hezbollah's political and armed wings, the terror group considers itself a singular organization, and its leadership has continued to pursue a terrorist agenda with Iranian aid. In early 2020, Germany joined the United Kingdom and the Netherlands in designating Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist group. Argentina, Paraguay, Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia also designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2019 and 2020. Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Austria designated Hezbollah as a whole in 2020 and early 2021. In July 2021, members of the U.S. House of Representatives called on the European Union to also designate Hezbollah in its entirety.¹

Doctrine:

The Shiite terrorist group Hezbollah ("the Party of God") emerged in Lebanon in 1982 following Israel's invasion to halt cross-border guerilla attacks by the Palestine Liberation Organization. Hezbollah's stated goal was to fight "for the liberation of the occupied territories and the ejection of the aggressive Israeli forces."² Its ideology was modeled on Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 Iranian revolution. As counterterrorism expert Matt Levitt notes, within the setting of the Lebanese civil war, "the 1982 Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation of southern Lebanon created the space in which Iranian diplomats and agents could help fashion the unified entity Hezbollah from a motley crew of Shi'a militias and groups."³ Iran thus viewed the rise of Hezbollah as an opportunity to extend its influence, cultivating Hezbollah as a proxy force, providing funding, training, and weaponry through Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Hezbollah pledged its loyalty to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and modeled its ideology on Khomeini's 1979 Iranian revolution.⁴ According to counterterrorism expert Matthew Levitt, within the setting of the Lebanese civil war, "the 1982 Israeli invasion and subsequent occupation of southern Lebanon created the space in which Iranian diplomats and agents could help fashion the unified entity Hezbollah from a motley crew of Shi'a militias and groups."⁵

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Allegiance to Iran

Hezbollah is first and foremost an instrument of the Iranian regime. The group's 1985 manifesto explicitly states, "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." Furthermore, the group is explicit in its submission to the Iranian supreme leader's decrees, avowing its compliance to the dictates of "one leader, wise and just, that of our

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tutor and faqih (jurist) who fulfills all the necessary conditions: [Ayatollah] Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini.”⁷

Hezbollah is devout in its adherence to Khomeini’s philosophy of *vilayat-e faqih* (rule of the Islamic jurist), which calls for the absolute rule of a single jurist over religious and state affairs. Khomeini used the concept to seize absolute power as Iran’s supreme leader, and Hezbollah pledged its allegiance to Khomeini and his successor, [Ali Khamenei](#). In a 2012 interview, Hezbollah’s Deputy Secretary-General [Naim Qassem](#) called *vilayat-e faqih* “the reason for Hezbollah’s establishment.” According to Qassem, in 1982, the so-called Committee of Nine—the predecessor to Hezbollah’s Shura Council—sent a delegation to receive Khomeini’s blessing in Tehran. According to the account of Hezbollah Secretary-General [Hassan Nasrallah](#), Khomeini told them to “rely on God” and “spoke of victories that we now see.”⁸

After that 1982 meeting, Iran reportedly sent 1,000 IRGC soldiers to provide military training,⁹ and in February 1985, Hezbollah formally emerged and issued its manifesto. Hezbollah pledged loyalty to Khomeini, demanded the expulsion of foreign forces (i.e., Israel, France, and the U.S.) from Lebanon, called for Israel’s destruction, and called for the creation of an Islamic state in Lebanon.¹⁰

As an Iranian proxy, Hezbollah’s perceived threat environment is almost identical to Iran’s—Tehran’s enemies are Hezbollah’s enemies. Like Iran, Hezbollah considers the U.S. and Israel to be its chief foes. The group’s manifesto describes the U.S. as the root of abomination and declares that its “determination to fight the U.S. is solid.”¹¹ Among Hezbollah’s earliest major attacks on U.S. and Western interests was the 1983 truck bombing at a U.S. Marine compound in Beirut, which killed 241 U.S. service members.¹² The group also carried out a simultaneous truck bombing on French forces in Beirut, killing 58 soldiers.¹³

Since Khomeini’s 1989 death, Hezbollah has maintained its allegiance to the Iranian supreme leader’s successor, Khamenei.¹⁴ For example, Hezbollah and the IRGC’s external wing, the Quds Force, reportedly agreed in January 2010 to cooperate in attacking Israeli, U.S., and Western targets.¹⁵ In 2012, Hezbollah pledged to defend Iran against any attack by the United States or Israel.¹⁶ The group has also joined the IRGC in its ongoing fight to support the Assad regime in Syria.¹⁷ During an October 2016 Hezbollah rally in Beirut, many of the thousands of Hezbollah supporters in attendance reportedly wore pictures of Khamenei in their headbands.¹⁸ In turn, Khamenei has pledged Iran’s continued support for Hezbollah, which he had called a “source of honor for the Muslim world” earlier in the year.¹⁹

According to Subhi al-Tufayli, Hezbollah’s first secretary-general from 1989 to 1991, Iran has supported Hezbollah in order to expand its own influence in the region. “There is no voice within Lebanon’s Shia community that is not tied to Iran,” he told the London-based *Arab Weekly* in May 2016.²⁰

Anti-Israel Stance

Hezbollah claims that it is in confrontation with Israel, “the Zionist entity,” which it maintains is built on land aggressively “wrested from” its rightful owners while Israel trampled “the rights of the Muslim people.”²¹ Hezbollah refuses to accept any ceasefires, treaties, or peace agreements, and sees only one end to its “struggle” against Israel, namely “when this entity is obliterated.”²² In a May 2020 interview with Iranian media, Hashem Safieddine, head of Hezbollah’s executive assembly, declared the primary goal of Iran’s so-called resistance groups is to liberate Jerusalem and all Muslims have a “duty” to prepare for that confrontation.²³

Hezbollah has been linked to numerous terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets since its inception, including: the 1992 suicide bombing at the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which killed 29 and injured 240;²⁴ the 1994 suicide bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, killing over 80;²⁵ and the 2006 cross-border attack in which Hezbollah operatives killed eight Israeli soldiers and abducted two more, launching a summer war with Israel.²⁶

In May 2000, Israel withdrew its forces from its security zone in southern Lebanon to internationally recognized borders, the so-called Blue Line.²⁷ Following Israel’s withdrawal, Hezbollah justified its continued reliance on terrorism by arguing that Israel still occupied seven villages in the Golan Heights along the border known as the Shebaa Farms. This area was part of Syria when Israel took the territory during the 1967 war, and the U.N. recognized Shebaa Farms in 1974 as occupied Syrian territory. Syria and Hezbollah contend that while the Shebaa Farms is located in the Golan Heights, it actually sits on land considered to be Lebanese territory. This depiction has provided Hezbollah with a justification to thus “liberate” the territories from Israel.²⁸

In November 2009, Hezbollah created a new political manifesto that identified the United States as “the centre of polarization and hegemony in the world” and reaffirmed its opposition to Israel, which it identified as “a constant threat and an impending danger to Lebanon.”²⁹ According to the manifesto, the United States is committed to “dominating the nations politically, economically, culturally and through all aspects,” which leaves

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only “the choice of resistance.”³⁰ The manifesto further asserts that Israel “embodies an eternal threat to Lebanon - the State and the entity - and a real hazard to the country in terms of its historical cravings in land and water....”³¹ Moreover, “The ‘Israeli’ threat to this country started since the establishment of the Zionist entity in the land of Palestine, an entity that did not falter to divulge its aspirations to occupy some parts of Lebanon and to grasp its wealth, mainly its water... This entity began its aggression on Lebanon since 1948 from the border to the depth of the country....”³²

Hezbollah’s updated manifesto renewed its commitment to terrorism, couched in the language of “resistance” to Israel. “Resistance” was elevated to the status of a national responsibility, extended to all Lebanese citizens. According to the manifesto, “The Resistance role is a national necessity as long as the ‘Israeli’ threats and aspirations persist.”³³ Hezbollah called for Lebanon to “approve a defensive strategy that depends on a popular resistance” to defend the country against “the ‘Israeli’ threat.”³⁴

Citing Hezbollah’s victory in the Syrian civil war, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah announced in December 2017 that his group would refocus its energies against Israel. Nasrallah called on Hezbollah’s allies to create a united strategy “in the field” with which to confront Israel.³⁵

Syria, ISIS, and the Broader Middle East

As an Iranian proxy, Hezbollah has taken up arms alongside Syrian and Iranian forces in defense of the Syrian regime in that country’s civil war. In 2012, the U.S. Treasury levied additional sanctions on Hezbollah for its support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s regime. According to Treasury, since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in early 2011, Hezbollah provided “training, advice and extensive logistical support to the Government of Syria’s increasingly ruthless efforts to fight against the opposition.”³⁶

Subhi al-Tufayli, Hezbollah’s first secretary-general from 1989 to 1991, has accused Hezbollah of being a “partner in the killing of the Syrian people.” He denounced Hezbollah members who fight alongside Russians, and called on the Hezbollah leadership to heed Lebanese opposition to the group’s involvement in Syria.³⁷

Hezbollah’s role in Syria is not limited to fighting anti-government rebels. Under Iranian direction, Hezbollah has also fought against **ISIS**, which Nasrallah described as a growing threat to the region and an existential threat to Lebanon in an August 2014 interview with the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Akhbar*.³⁸ Hezbollah has also fought against the **Nusra Front** (Jabhat Fateh al-Sham).³⁹ On October 19, 2016, Qassem told Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV that Hezbollah “will not leave Syria as long as there is a need to confront takfiri groups.”⁴⁰ In September 2017, Nasrallah declared victory in Syria. “We have won in the war,” he said, according to *Al-Akhbar*.⁴¹ Nonetheless, in June 2018, Lebanese parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri, of the Hezbollah-allied Amal movement, told Russian media that Hezbollah and Iran would remain in Syria until it is “fully liberated from terrorists.”⁴² In September 2018, Nasrallah declared that Hezbollah would remain in Syria indefinitely with the Syrian government’s permission.⁴³

Israel has launched several airstrikes against the group’s suspected supply chain in Syria. In January 2015, Nasrallah called Israeli airstrikes on alleged weapons shipments to Hezbollah in Syria an aggression against Syria’s regional allies. As such, Syria’s allies have the right to retaliate, according to Nasrallah.⁴⁴ Israel has since continued to strike against Syrian and Iranian targets suspected of arming Hezbollah in the country.⁴⁵

Hezbollah’s participation in Syria has also resulted in an increasingly antagonistic role vis-à-vis the Middle East’s Sunni Arab nations, which oppose Iran’s regional ambitions. The Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) labeled Hezbollah a terrorist group in March 2016 because of its “hostile acts” against GCC member states, recruitment for “terrorist attacks, smuggling weapons and explosives, stirring up sedition and incitement to chaos and violence,” and participation in the Syrian civil war.⁴⁶ The Arab League also labeled Hezbollah a terrorist group that month, accusing Hezbollah and the IRGC of financing and training terrorist groups and interfering in regional affairs. The GCC had previously sanctioned Hezbollah in 2013 for its role in Syria.⁴⁷ On November 19, 2017, the Arab League again condemned Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, citing its regional disruption efforts on behalf of Iran. Bahraini Foreign Minister Khalid bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa accused Hezbollah of “full control” over Lebanon and called for accountability of “countries where Hezbollah is a partner in government responsible, specifically Lebanon.”⁴⁸

Iran’s support for Hezbollah and Hezbollah’s influence in the Lebanese government has strained Lebanon’s relations with Gulf states opposed to Iran. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain expelled Lebanon’s ambassadors and banned Lebanese imports in October 2021 after Hezbollah-allied Lebanese Information Minister George Kordahi criticized Saudi Arabia’s conflict with Iran-backed **Houthi** rebels in Yemen.⁴⁹ Hezbollah has also stepped up its rhetoric against the Saudi monarchy. In September 2016, Nasrallah declared Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabi ideology to be “more evil

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than Israel.”⁵⁰ Thousands of Hezbollah supporters at an October 2016 rally reportedly chanted “Death to the Al Saud,” referring to Saudi Arabia’s ruling family.⁵¹ During a January 3, 2022, televised address, Nasrallah accused Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdul Aziz of exporting ISIS’s ideology and providing cars for suicide attacks in Iraq. Nasrallah further accused Saudi Arabia of participating in a wider conspiracy to destroy the Middle East. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati’s office soon after issued a statement distancing the Lebanese government from Nasrallah’s address.⁵²

After the January 2020 death of Quds Force commander [Qasem Soleimani](#) in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq, Iran reportedly tasked Hezbollah with uniting the Iran-backed Shiite Iraqi militias that had previously answered to the Quds Force. The U.S.-designated Hezbollah agent [Mohammed al-Kawtharani](#) began overseeing the militias operating in Iraq.⁵³ Kawtharani has acted as a conduit for training, funding, and other forms of Hezbollah support to Iraqi Shiite militias. According to the U.S. government, Kawtharani assisted in the transport of fighters from Iraq to Syria to support the Assad regime. Kawtharani also helped secure the release of senior Hezbollah commander Ali Mussa Daqduq from Iraqi custody in 2012.⁵⁴ According to the U.S. government, Kawtharani has “taken over some of the political coordination of Iran-allied paramilitary groups” in Iraq and “facilitates the actions of groups outside the control of the Government of Iraq that have violently suppressed protests, attacked foreign diplomatic missions, and engaged in wide-spread organized criminal activity.”⁵⁵ The Associated Press reported in July 2021 that Iraqi militant commanders also meet regularly in Lebanon with Nasrallah.⁵⁶

Social Role

While Hezbollah promotes itself as a guardian of Lebanon against foreign invaders, it also provides social services to the Lebanese people in areas where the government lacks a strong presence, such as in the south. To maintain popular support, Hezbollah aims to demonstrate it can provide for the Lebanese people in areas where the Lebanese state has failed. For example, in 2004, Hezbollah provided \$100,000 a month to the al-Janoub Hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyah. After the 2006 Hezbollah-Israel war, Lebanese citizens quickly forgot that Hezbollah instigated the conflict as the organization provided money for housing and welfare. “We have ideology and support. Our success can be seen in the peaceful existence between the Lebanese army and the military wing of Hezbollah,” said Hezbollah member Mohammed Ghosen.⁵⁷ In April 2021, Hezbollah opened a chain of discount supermarkets in Lebanon called “Al-Sajjad,” after the Shiite cleric Imam Ali Al-Sajjad. Shopping in the stores requires a Hezbollah-issued store card, which is only available to patrons who earn less than 1,500,000 Lebanese pounds (approximately \$125) per month.⁵⁸ Former Lebanese justice minister Ashraf Rifi has called Hezbollah an enemy of the Lebanese state, while comparing Iran to Nazi Germany. According to Rifi, Hezbollah is determined to tear down the Lebanese state system.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, despite international sanctions on Lebanon’s banking system due to Hezbollah links, the group continues to promote itself to the Iranian people as a functioning alternative to state-run systems.

Political Role

Hezbollah has played a major role in Lebanese politics since 1992. Subhi al-Tufayli, Hezbollah’s first secretary-general from 1989 to 1991, said in May 2016 that Hezbollah has complete control over Lebanon’s army, which “must follow wherever Hezbollah leads.”⁶⁰ Though Hezbollah had only two cabinet ministers in Lebanon’s new government announced in January 2020, the government primarily comprised Hezbollah allies. Western-backed political parties that had previously dominated Lebanon’s government were left out of the cabinet composition.⁶¹

Hezbollah entered Lebanon’s political arena in 1992, when it won eight of the country’s 128 parliamentary seats in elections.⁶² In 2005, Hezbollah won 23 seats, claiming a massive victory in southern Lebanon.⁶³ In 2008, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora banned Hezbollah’s private telecommunications network, sparking clashes between Hezbollah fighters and Lebanese soldiers. After two weeks of fighting, Qatar negotiated the Doha Agreement, which called for a national-unity government and granted the Hezbollah-led opposition veto power in the Lebanese government.⁶⁴ This essentially gave Hezbollah the ability to bring the government to a complete halt should it veer from Hezbollah’s agenda. In the 2009 election, Hezbollah and its allies were defeated by the U.S.-supported “March 14” alliance. Many were surprised by this result.⁶⁵

In January 2011, Hezbollah ministers resigned from the government shortly before the U.N.-backed Hariri tribunal was expected to issue indictments of four Hezbollah members over the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri in 2005. The resignations led to the collapse of the government led by Hariri’s son, Saad Hariri.⁶⁶ In late January 2011, the Hezbollah-backed businessman Najib Mikati was appointed as the new prime minister.⁶⁷ In the new (what some commentators referred to as) “Hezbollah government,” Hezbollah received two portfolios as part of the 30-member strong government. The majority of the remaining ministers were from Hezbollah-allied factions.⁶⁸

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Lebanese Prime Minister Tammam Salam formed a new unity government in February 2014, awarding Hezbollah and the Sunni-led bloc of former prime minister Saad Hariri eight portfolios each. Among other ministries, Hezbollah controlled the foreign ministry and ministry of industry.⁶⁹ On October 31, 2016, Lebanon's parliament elected MP Michel Aoun as president.⁷⁰ Aoun is a former general and Maronite Christian who heads the Free Patriotic Movement, which allied with Hezbollah in 2006.⁷¹ Lebanon had been without a president since May 2014, and some Lebanese MPs blamed Hezbollah for preventing the government's approval of a new president.⁷²

In May 2018, Lebanon held parliamentary elections for the first time since 2009. Hezbollah's parliamentary representation remained steady at 13 seats, but Hezbollah and its allies altogether won a total of 70 of the parliament's 128 seats. The anti-Hezbollah ruling Future movement saw a decrease from 33 to 21 seats, though its leader, Hariri, maintained his role as prime minister. Hezbollah leaders spoke of a larger influence in an as-yet-to-be-formed government coalition.⁷³ Nasrallah called the results "a political and moral victory" for Hezbollah that would guarantee the protection of "the resistance."⁷⁴

Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned in October 2019 after two weeks of nationwide protests against government corruption.⁷⁵ Aoun appointed academic and former education minister Hassan Diab as the new prime minister in December 2019. In January 2020, Diab announced the formation of a government that included two Hezbollah ministers and members of Hezbollah-allied parties. Hezbollah received the portfolios for the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Industry. Hariri's Future Movement and other pro-Western parties remained outside of the cabinet, drawing international concern that Hezbollah's agenda would dominate Lebanon's new cabinet.⁷⁶ Diab dissolved the government on August 10, 2020, after two days of anti-government protests following an August 4 explosion at Beirut's port that killed at least 200 and wounded more than 6,000.⁷⁷ Aoun designated Lebanon's ambassador to Germany, Mustapha Adib, as the country's new prime minister on August 31. Adib's attempts to quickly form a government were delayed by Hezbollah's demands for several ministries, leading Adib to resign on September 26. Lebanon's political parties appointed Hariri as prime minister-designate on October 22, though he was not supported by Hezbollah.⁷⁸

Lebanon had still yet to form a government by the end of July 2021. Hezbollah denied it was intentionally delaying the process and claimed it would cooperate with any proposed government.⁷⁹ In February 2021, FPM head Gebran Bassil called for a review of his party's 2006 agreement with Hezbollah. According to FPM's political council, while the agreement had protected Lebanon from outside attacks and deterred Israel, it had not succeeded in reinforcing rule of law or building Lebanon.⁸⁰ After almost nine months of failing to form a government, Hariri resigned as prime minister on July 15, 2021.⁸¹ Later that month, Hezbollah supported the parliamentary nomination of former prime minister Najib Mikati to be the new prime minister. Mikati pledged to form a government of technocrats, while Hezbollah claimed it would not stand in his way.⁸² Lebanese leaders agreed on a new Mikati-led government on September 10, 2021.⁸³ Hezbollah nominated two ministers in the new 24-member government—Agriculture Minister Abbas Al Hajj Hassan and Public Works and Transport Minister Ali Hamieh. The Hezbollah-aligned Amal movement nominated Hezbollah member Moustafa Bayram as labor minister.⁸⁴

Despite the new government, Lebanon's economic and social crises worsened by the end of 2021. In September 2021, Hezbollah called for the removal of Judge Tarek Bitar, who is heading a government investigation into the August 4, 2020, Beirut port explosion.⁸⁵ After Lebanese authorities issued an arrest warrant for U.S.-designated Hezbollah member and former finance minister Ali Hassan Khalil that October, Hezbollah again called for Bitar's replacement. The issue sparked violent protests in Beirut on October 14, which led to the deaths of seven people and accusations between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Forces party over responsibility.⁸⁶ Ministers from Hezbollah and its allied parties continued to boycott government meetings through 2021.⁸⁷

In December 2021, Qassem blamed failures in Lebanon's judiciary and parliament for the country's ongoing political, economic, and social crises. With parliamentary elections scheduled for 2022, Qassem accused the United States and Persian Gulf countries of seeking to seize power in Lebanon and its parliament. He also accused Lebanese political parties seeking to weaken Hezbollah of working against "the liberation of Lebanon" in alliance with Israel and the United States.⁸⁸

As the Lebanese government remained frozen at the beginning of January 2022, some Hezbollah allies began to question their alliances with the Iran-backed Shiite group. In a December 27, 2021, speech, Lebanese President Michel Aoun seemingly blamed Hezbollah for preventing the cabinet from convening. He did not specifically name Hezbollah, but called for an end to the "unjustified, deliberate and systematic blockage which dismantles the State and drives it to its demise."⁸⁹ Also that week, FPM leader Gebran Bassil warned of "political consequences" against Hezbollah and Amal, sparking international speculation the FPM could end its alliance with Hezbollah.⁹⁰ On January 2, 2022, Bassil condemned "the militia warlords and the leaders of corruption."⁹¹ He further criticized his movement's 2006 alliance with Hezbollah for giving too much voice to parties with which FPM is not aligned—namely, the Hezbollah-allied Amal Party.⁹² On January 15, 2022, Hezbollah and Amal ended their three-month boycott of Lebanese cabinet meetings, allowing for the Lebanese government to meet.⁹³

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The prominence of Iran-backed Hezbollah in the Lebanese government has caused rifts between Lebanon and other Arab nations such as Saudi Arabia. Speaking with Saudi media on October 31, 2021, Saudi Prince Faisal bin Farha blamed the crisis in Lebanon on “the dominance of Iranian proxies over the scene.”⁹⁴ The following day, Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib rejected Saudi demands to reduce Hezbollah’s role in Lebanon. He told Reuters, “Hezbollah is a component of politics in Lebanon. It has a regional armed dimension, yes, but this is beyond what we can resolve.”⁹⁵ On November 3, the political bureau of Lebanon’s Kataeb party issued a statement blaming Lebanon’s rift with Saudi Arabia on the government’s “total surrender to the will of Hezbollah.”⁹⁶

Hezbollah’s influence over the Lebanese government has negatively impacted Lebanon’s relations with Europe as well. In June 2021, the European Union voted in favor of travel bans and asset freezes for Lebanese politicians accused of corruption and obstructing efforts to form a government, financial mismanagement, and human rights abuses. Some voices in the European Parliament viewed the formation of a government in September 2021 as an opportunity to loosen sanctions on Lebanon. However, the majority of the parliament voted on September 16, 2021, to maintain the pressure of sanctions against Lebanon until the new government proves itself to be functional. A majority of the parliament voted for the non-binding resolution recognizing Lebanon’s financial crisis is man-made and warning “the introduction of targeted sanctions for obstructing or undermining the democratic political process remains an option.”⁹⁷ The resolution also recognized Hezbollah’s role in destabilizing Lebanon through the control of key ministries in the government, its terrorist designation by several EU member states, and Hezbollah’s ideological allegiance to Iran.⁹⁸

In January 2022, Saad Hariri announced he would not run in the country’s upcoming May 15, 2022, parliamentary elections. Further, he called on his Future Movement not to run either.⁹⁹ The decision raised fears in Lebanon of a “political void” for Sunni representation. Lebanese voters and international observers also expressed fears of Hezbollah—and Iran—gaining greater influence in the Lebanese government.¹⁰⁰ Following Lebanon’s May 15, 2022, parliamentary elections, Hezbollah maintained its 13 seats in the legislative body, but its allied political bloc lost its 65-seat majority as approximately one dozen independents won seats.¹⁰¹ Hezbollah ally Nabih Berri, head of the Amal party, won reelection as parliamentary speaker on May 31, but by only a 65-vote majority. In 2018, he received 98 votes.¹⁰² The Christian Forces Party won 19 seats, including one by an affiliated independent. Following the parliamentary elections, Christian Forces Party head Samir Geagea told Agence France-Presse, “All strategic decision-making should return to the Lebanese state... and security and military matters should be handled exclusively by the Lebanese army.”¹⁰³ While the Christian Forces Party’s alliance did not win an outright majority, Hezbollah opponents reportedly viewed the reduced showing of Hezbollah and its allies as a possible opportunity to extricate the Iran-backed terror group from control over Lebanese politics.¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, Lebanon’s government remained in a political stalemate by the beginning of December 2022.¹⁰⁵ Further complicating Lebanon’s political crisis, President Michel Aoun’s term concluded in October 2022. Lebanon’s parliament is responsible for electing a new president, but the division between Hezbollah’s allies and opponents left the role unfilled. In November 2022, Nasrallah called for the next president to be a politician who would “reassure” Hezbollah.¹⁰⁶ After the parliament failed in its eighth attempt to elect a president on December 1, Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem declared his group would not support a president who would be subservient to the United States or Israel.¹⁰⁷

Organizational Structure:

The Shura Council is Hezbollah’s central leadership body. Initially, the Shura Council appointed a secretary-general to lead the group for a three-year term. However, after the Council elected Hassan Nasrallah in 1993, it allowed him and future secretaries-general to exceed two consecutive terms.¹⁰⁸ The Shura Council also oversees Hezbollah’s five separate assemblies: the political assembly, jihad assembly, parliamentary assembly, executive assembly, and judicial assembly.¹⁰⁹

The External Security Organization, a.k.a. the Islamic Jihad Organization, is Hezbollah’s foreign operations organ. This is the Hezbollah unit responsible for Hezbollah’s international acts of terrorism.¹¹⁰

The Foreign Relations Department (FRD) is responsible for Hezbollah’s global outreach efforts. The State Department designated the FRD as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in January 2017. According to the State Department, the FRD “is involved in covert operations around the globe, which include recruiting, fundraising and gathering intelligence on behalf of” Hezbollah.¹¹¹

Hezbollah is represented in the Lebanese government by the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc. Hezbollah first entered Lebanon’s parliament in 1992, winning eight of 128 seats in the country’s first elections since 1972.¹¹² Hezbollah’s political party has since played a major role in Lebanon’s governing coalitions since 2008. Following the election of Hezbollah ally Michel Aoun as president in October 2016, two Hezbollah

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parliamentarians and 15 Hezbollah political allies were appointed to Lebanon's 30-minister government.¹¹³

While the United States has designated Hezbollah as a whole as a terrorist entity, the European Union has separated Hezbollah's political party and designated only Hezbollah's military wing.¹¹⁴ In response to the EU's 2013 designation of Hezbollah's so-called military wing, Hezbollah spokesman said, "Hezbollah is a single, large organization. We have no wings that are separate from one another."¹¹⁵ The Dutch government has designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and has urged the EU to do the same. In early 2018, a group of 60 European parliamentarians, led by MPs from Denmark, Sweden, and Hungary, wrote to EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini that Hezbollah should be designated in its entirety.¹¹⁶ The United Kingdom designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization in 2019 and added Hezbollah as a whole to its Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets in January 2020.¹¹⁷ A December 2019 resolution in the German parliament recognized Hezbollah's global criminal activities and called for both Germany and Europe to freeze all of Hezbollah's finances by banning the group in its entirety.¹¹⁸ Germany designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization on April 30, 2020.¹¹⁹

In March 2020, Austria began a trial of a Hezbollah commander who had lived in the country for 13 years while conducting financing operations for the terror group. The trial led all of Austria's political parties to pass a joint resolution in the federal parliament that month entitled "Effective action against Hezbollah," calling for "decisive action" against Hezbollah's "terrorist and criminal activities."¹²⁰ Nonetheless, the resolution stopped short of calling for a complete ban of the group, despite calls from some within parliament. Austria banned Hezbollah in its entirety in May 2021.¹²¹

The EU, however, has thus far refused to ban Hezbollah as a singular organization. In July 2021, a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives introduced legislation calling on the European Union to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization.¹²² On November 1, 2021, EU Spokesperson for Foreign Policy Peter Stano told the *Jerusalem Post* that the EU had already designated Hezbollah's military wing and "[a]ny changes in the nature and scope of the existing listing are for EU Member States to discuss and decide by unanimity."¹²³

There is no distinction between Hezbollah's political and military wings. Both are subservient to the Shura Council, led by Nasrallah. A 2011 Congressional Research Service report identified Hezbollah's "unified leadership structure that oversees the organization's complementary, partially compartmentalized elements."¹²⁴ Hezbollah's leadership has confirmed Hezbollah's unitary leadership that informs both its militants and its politicians. In a 2000 interview with a Lebanese newspaper, Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem said that "Hezbollah's secretary-general is the head of the Shura Council and also the head of the Jihad Council, and this means that we have one leadership, with one administration."¹²⁵

Financing:

Iran helped establish Hezbollah in the 1980s and remains the Lebanese terror group's primary financial backer. Nonetheless, Hezbollah has developed multiple and varied sources of financial support. The U.S. government's Rewards for Justice program offers a standing reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the disruption of Hezbollah's financial mechanisms.¹²⁶

Iranian Support

The Iranian government supplies the vast majority of Hezbollah's income. According to the U.S. Treasury's Under-Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Sigal Mandelker in June 2018, Iran provides Hezbollah with up to \$700 million annually, more than three times previous estimates.¹²⁷ Iran helped develop the organization to boost its own "ability to deploy armed revolutionaries among the [Shiite] strongholds" in Lebanon, according to analyst Anoushiravan Ehteshami. During the Iran-Iraq War, Iran viewed Hezbollah as its opportunity to gain access to the wider Arab world.¹²⁸ The IRGC provided Hezbollah with its initial financial support and training.¹²⁹

Iranian financial and military support is largely passed to Hezbollah through the Quds Force, the elite branch of the IRGC.¹³⁰ The U.S. Department of Defense estimated in 2010 that Iran provides Hezbollah with \$100 million to \$200 million annually.¹³¹ Iran allegedly provided up to \$600 million to Hezbollah for its political campaigns, and Israeli intelligence estimated that Iran had directly provided Hezbollah with more than \$1 billion from the end of the 2006 war to 2009.¹³² In 2004, Mohammed Raad, then-leader of Hezbollah's "Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc" in the Lebanese parliament, acknowledged that Hezbollah had received funding from Iran for "health care, education and support of war widows."¹³³

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To help facilitate the transfer of funds to Hezbollah and its other proxies, Iran set up the Martyrs Foundation charitable network. According to the United States, senior members of the Martyrs Foundation in Lebanon were directly involved in Hezbollah operations during the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. The U.S. government accuses the Martyrs Foundation funneling money to Hezbollah, Hamas, and other terror groups in the Levant. The Martyrs Foundation also created the Goodwill Charitable Organization (GCO), a fundraising office in Dearborn, Michigan, that acted as a Hezbollah front organization and reported to the Martyrs Foundation in Lebanon. The U.S. government designated both the Martyrs Foundation and GCO in July 2007.¹³⁴ In February 2020, the U.S. government imposed financial sanctions on three Lebanese individuals and 12 entities affiliated with or controlled by the Martyrs Foundation.¹³⁵

In 2009—due to the devastating effects on the Iranian economy resulting from international sanctions because of its nuclear program—Iran reportedly cut Hezbollah’s budget by as much as 40 percent.¹³⁶ Hezbollah turned to its already thriving criminal enterprises to make up the shortfall.

In June 2016, Nasrallah denied that Hezbollah has any outside business ventures or sources of income other than Iran. “We are open about the fact that Hezbollah’s budget, its income, its expenses, everything it eats and drinks, its weapons and rockets, come from the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he said in a publicly broadcasted speech.¹³⁷ In response to U.S. financial sanctions, Nasrallah warned that “[as long] as Iran has money, we have money... Just as we receive the rockets that we use to threaten Israel, we are receiving our money. No law will prevent us from receiving it.”¹³⁸

Hezbollah was reportedly forced to cut its budget in 2019 in response to decreased funding from Iran as a result of renewed U.S. sanctions on that country in 2018. According to reports from Hezbollah members, fighters are being reassigned or furloughed at reduced or no salaries. Hezbollah’s al-Manar media group in Lebanon also reportedly laid off staff and canceled programming.¹³⁹

Transnational Criminal Activities

In October 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions designated Hezbollah as a top transnational criminal threat.¹⁴⁰ Contrary to Nasrallah’s declarations that Hezbollah has no sources of income other than Iran,¹⁴¹ the group is active in illicit transnational criminal activities, primarily in South America’s Tri-Border Area (TBA). These activities include drug trafficking, intellectual property theft, and money laundering. Additionally, many Muslims and Lebanese ex-patriates in the region send money to Hezbollah. According to a mosque leader in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, Shiite mosques had “an obligation to finance” Hezbollah. Counterterrorism expert Edward Luttwak of the Pentagon’s National Security Study Group called the TBA Hezbollah’s most important base outside of Lebanon.¹⁴² Hezbollah receives approximately \$20 million a year from its activities in Latin America, according to a 2009 Rand Corporation report.¹⁴³ “The money is used to maintain a military structure and finance social activities ... in Lebanon and the diaspora,” according to analyst Paulo Botta of the Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies in Córdoba, Argentina.¹⁴⁴

Hezbollah has denied any involvement in the drug trade, and Nasrallah has publicly stated it is “religiously banned to manufacture, sell, buy, smuggle and consume” drugs.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, regional analysts and legal authorities accuse Hezbollah of profiting from international drug smuggling. According to a 1994 FBI report, Hezbollah’s religious authorities ruled drug trafficking was “morally acceptable if the drugs are sold to Western infidels as part of a war against the enemies of Islam.”¹⁴⁶ A June 2020 Europol report accused Hezbollah of “trafficking diamonds and drugs” and laundering the proceeds while using Europe as a base.¹⁴⁷ Hezbollah is accused of manufacturing and exporting the amphetamine Captagon in particular.¹⁴⁸

Hezbollah is also suspected of coopting the Lebanese export industry to serve its smuggling activities. According to Saudi security expert Muhammad al-Qubban, 75 percent of the shipments that Lebanon sends to the Gulf contain drugs or weapons and other prohibited items.¹⁴⁹ In July 2020, Italian authorities seized \$1.1 billion worth of Captagon pills arriving at an Italian port from Syria. Though Italian authorities initially suspected ISIS of responsibility for the drugs, the quantity raised suspicions of other groups with larger production capabilities.¹⁵⁰ In April 2021, Saudi authorities seized more than 5 million Captagon pills hidden in a pomegranate shipment from Lebanon. In response, Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Lebanese produce.¹⁵¹ Sources told regional media there was no doubt Hezbollah was responsible.¹⁵²

Hezbollah has established a global network for moving cocaine in the United States and Europe, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Law enforcement refers to this network as “the Lebanese Hizballah External Security Organization Business Affairs Component (BAC).” It was founded by deceased Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyah. The network maintains business relationships with South American drug cartels and launders proceeds in what is known as the Black Market Peso Exchange. La Oficina de Envigado is one of the South American cartels involved with the BAC. It is responsible for the movement of large amounts of cocaine in the United States and Europe. The DEA

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has targeted the BAC network since early 2015 in an ongoing operation called Project Cassandra. In February 2016, the DEA revealed it had made several arrests in Hezbollah's drug-trafficking operation.¹⁵³ In October 2016, the DEA charged three suspected Hezbollah members with using Miami banks to launder \$500,000 in cocaine money for a Colombian drug cartel.¹⁵⁴

Hezbollah utilizes multiple front companies in and around the Middle East to facilitate the flow of money to the terror group from various sources, including the IRGC. In 2018, for example, the U.S. government imposed sanctions on two individuals—Muhammad Qasim al-Bazzal and Ali Qasir—accused of heading international front companies that finance transactions between Hezbollah and the IRGC.¹⁵⁵ Bazzal is co-founder of the Syria-based Talaqi Group and a key financier for Hezbollah and the IRGC-Quds Force, Iran's primary link to Hezbollah and its other terrorist proxies. Qasir is the managing director of the Talaqi Group. Since 2018, Bazzal has used the Talaqi Group and his other companies to facilitate illicit oil shipments for the Quds Force.¹⁵⁶

According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), Iran has created an international network working with Russian companies to provide millions of barrels of oil to the Syrian government. Syria then facilitates the movement of hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars to the IRGC, which distributes the money to Hezbollah and Hamas. OFAC accuses the IRGC of using the Central Bank of Syria to coordinate financial transfers with Hezbollah. U.S.-designated Hezbollah official Muhammad Qasir heads the Hezbollah unit responsible for facilitating the transfer of weapons, technology, and other support from Syria to Lebanon. According to the U.S. State Department, Qasir is a "critical link" between Iran and Hezbollah.¹⁵⁷

South American authorities have also targeted Hezbollah for various illicit activities on the continent. In May 2013, Brazilian police arrested Hezbollah member Hamzi Ahmad Barakat on suspicion of defrauding newly arrived Lebanese immigrants through a network of front companies. In 2002, police arrested Barakat's brother, Assad Barakat, for using his electronics store to raise funds for Hezbollah.¹⁵⁸ In 2008, Colombian authorities arrested members of a drug cartel that allegedly smuggled cocaine to the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East, while laundering hundreds of millions of dollars and sending a percentage to Hezbollah.¹⁵⁹

Hezbollah's criminal activities have also penetrated North America. In 2000, U.S. federal authorities charged 18 people with smuggling cigarettes from North Carolina into Michigan, where cigarettes command higher prices because of higher taxes. According to authorities, the smugglers had been sending their profits to Hezbollah since 1996.¹⁶⁰ In 2002, authorities convicted the smuggling ring's leaders, brothers Muhammad and Chawki Hammoud, of cigarette smuggling, credit card fraud, money laundering, and racketeering.¹⁶¹

In August 2012, U.S. authorities seized \$150 million from the Lebanese Canadian Bank, which they accused of laundering money from an international car smuggling ring that raised money for Hezbollah.¹⁶² In July 2014, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned a network of companies in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, and China for allegedly procuring engines, communications equipment, and navigation equipment for Hezbollah from U.S., European, Canadian, and Asian companies.¹⁶³

In western Africa, Hezbollah has reportedly involved itself in the illegal conflict diamond trade while using the region as a transit hub to move drugs from the Middle East to South America.¹⁶⁴ In 2004, U.S. diplomats in Sierra Leone accused Hezbollah of threatening Lebanese diamond merchants in order to siphon off profits from the diamond trade.¹⁶⁵ A Hezbollah courier on board an airliner that crashed near Benin in December 2003 was reportedly carrying \$2 million in profits from the illegal trade.¹⁶⁶

Hezbollah is also active in Europe. In March 2020, Austria began a trial of a Hezbollah commander who had lived in the country for 13 years while conducting financing operations for the terror group.¹⁶⁷ The trial led all of Austria's political parties to pass a joint resolution in the federal parliament that month entitled "Effective action against Hezbollah," calling for "decisive action" against Hezbollah's "terrorist and criminal activities."¹⁶⁸ A December 2019 resolution in the German parliament also recognized Hezbollah's global criminal activities and called for both Germany and Europe to freeze all of Hezbollah's finances by banning the group in its entirety.¹⁶⁹ In June 2020, police in Italy seized 14 tonnes of Captagon amphetamine pills being shipped into the country from Syria. Captagon production initially centered around Lebanon. The drug is popular among Middle Eastern terror groups such as Hezbollah and ISIS, which sell it to finance their terror activities. The drugs seized in Italy were reportedly worth around 1 billion euros.¹⁷⁰ Police traced the drugs back to Syria to Latakia, an area under the control of the Assad government and known as a hub for Hezbollah smuggling. Investigators did not conclusively prove Hezbollah's involvement in the Italian shipment but reportedly considered it to be likely.¹⁷¹ Hezbollah continues to deny any involvement in the illegal drug trade.

On June 29-30, 2022, the U.S. Department of State organized the annual meeting of the Law Enforcement Coordination Group, a U.S. initiative to mobilize countries to counter Hezbollah's activities outside of Lebanon in order to block its terror, finance, and procurement networks. The meeting

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in Europe drew diplomats, law enforcement officers, and intelligence experts from 30 countries, including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates. A State Department official said the United States wants to impress on other nations how Hezbollah continues to expand its illicit activities despite economic slowdowns in Lebanon and Iran. The 2022 conference largely focused on Hezbollah's operations in Africa and Latin America, where Hezbollah is seeking alternate finances and resources.¹⁷²

Lebanese Ex-Patriates

The Lebanese ex-patriate community reportedly sends \$2.5 billion back to Lebanon annually. Shiite Lebanese ex-patriates have found themselves subjects of suspicion because of Hezbollah's use of their community. Some 400,000 Lebanese ex-patriates live in the Arab Gulf countries. In February 2016, Saudi Arabia expelled more than 90 Lebanese Shiites accused of ties to Hezbollah.¹⁷³ The following month, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates expelled some 100 Lebanese Shiite ex-patriates.¹⁷⁴ In July 2019, the intelligence agency of the German city of Hamburg revealed that 30 mosques and cultural centers in Germany have ties to Hezbollah, and these associations largely focus on raising money from Lebanese ex-patriates. German intelligence cited 1,050 Hezbollah supporters across the country.¹⁷⁵ On July 13, 2019, U.S. Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell accused Hezbollah of "hunting for money in Europe."¹⁷⁶

In 2012, the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security reported that the majority of Hezbollah-linked federal defendants "have been Lebanese nationals or naturalized U.S. citizens from Lebanon."¹⁷⁷ U.S. officials have accused Hezbollah of using Lebanese Shiite expatriates to negotiate contracts with Mexican crime bosses in order to use Mexican drug routes to smuggle people and contraband into the United States.¹⁷⁸ In 2008, Mexican authorities sentenced Lebanese-Mexican Salim Boughader Mucharrافية to 60 years in prison for smuggling some 200 Lebanese immigrants—including Hezbollah supporters—into the United States.¹⁷⁹ Among those Boughader smuggled into the country was Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, a Lebanese carpenter who admitted to raising \$40,000 for Hezbollah inside the United States. In 2005, Kourani received a four-and-a-half-year sentence for conspiring to provide material support to a terrorist organization.¹⁸⁰

According to the U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council, members of Côte d'Ivoire's large Lebanese community are also "known to provide financial support to Hezbollah."¹⁸¹ A 2014 study by the Institute for Security Studies in Africa found that Lebanese communities in Côte d'Ivoire are a "prime target in Hezbollah's efforts to collect additional financial resources."¹⁸² In the United States, authorities arrested naturalized U.S. citizen Ali Kourani in June 2017 for providing material support to Hezbollah.¹⁸³ Kourani believes that Hezbollah recruited him in 2008 because he had U.S. residency, and Hezbollah then encouraged him to attain citizenship.¹⁸⁴

German intelligence has identified 1,050 Hezbollah supporters in the country. In July 2020, German authorities alleged 50 members of the Al-Mustafa Community Center in Bremen were "involved in the financial support" of Hezbollah by sending funds to Lebanese families of deceased Hezbollah fighters. Al-Mustafa was one of the centers German authorities raided in April 2020 in conjunction with Germany's full ban of Hezbollah.¹⁸⁵ Bremen's intelligence service initially accused members of the center in 2018 of fundraising on behalf of Hezbollah. Germany had previously shut down the Lebanon Orphan Children Project in 2014 for sending money to the families of deceased Hezbollah fighters.¹⁸⁶ Bremen shut down the Mustafa center on March 17, 2022.¹⁸⁷

Lebanese ex-patriates also aid in Hezbollah's prolific criminal activities in South America. In Venezuela, for example, the Lebanese-Venezuelan Akil Rada clan runs a diverse array of businesses across the continent and transfers large sums of money from its profits to Hezbollah. The family's head, Hezbollah operative Amer Mohamed Akil Rada, is suspected in Hezbollah's 1992 attack on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Hezbollah's 1994 attack on the AMIA in Buenos Aires.¹⁸⁸ Akil Rada reportedly remains in contact with Salman Raouf Salman, the U.S.-designated Hezbollah operative who coordinated the 1992 and 1994 attacks. According to Argentine and Colombian authorities, in addition to transferring portions of their business profits to Hezbollah, the Akil Rada clan has also aided Hezbollah in smuggling cocaine into Lebanon.¹⁸⁹

Another Lebanese family in Venezuela aiding Hezbollah is the Nassereddine clan, led by brothers Ghazi and Abdallah Nassereddine. Abdallah Nassereddine owns multiple commercial and residential properties on Venezuela's Margarita Island. Ghazi Nassereddine joined Venezuela's diplomatic corps and worked in the country's embassy in Syria, where he allegedly helped arrange meetings between Hezbollah agents and senior Venezuelan officials.¹⁹⁰ The United States sanctioned Ghazi Nassereddine in 2008 for using his diplomatic position to provide support for Hezbollah.¹⁹¹

Financial Sanctions

Hezbollah

In December 2015, the U.S. government passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act (HIFPA) of 2015. The legislation makes disrupting Hezbollah's financial and logistics networks a U.S. policy goal by utilizing "diplomatic, legislative, and executive avenues to combat Hezbollah's criminal activities in order to block that organization's ability to fund its global terrorist activities."¹⁹² The legislation threatens sanctions on any financial institution that deals with Hezbollah or its Al-Manar media arm.¹⁹³ In the aftermath of the bill's passage, Lebanese banks reportedly refused to open new accounts for Hezbollah members. However, Al-Monitor cited an anonymous banking expert who said that Hezbollah maintains its own banking system, which would be unaffected by the U.S. legislation.¹⁹⁴ Lebanese lawmakers have sought to lobby Congress to loosen sanctions against Hezbollah because of the threat to Lebanon's economy. Then Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri argued that sanctions on financial institutions linked to Hezbollah would increase economic hardships for Lebanese citizens.¹⁹⁵

The U.S. government passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act in October 2018. The amendment sanctions law targets government agencies and foreign persons that knowingly support the terror group. It also targets Hezbollah's affiliated transnational criminal networks.¹⁹⁶

In August 2018, the U.S. government renewed financial sanctions on Iran that had previously been lifted under the 2015 international nuclear pact. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah rejected the new sanctions against Hezbollah's primary backer and promised that Iranian support for the terror group would continue.¹⁹⁷ In July 2019, the U.S. government for the first time imposed financial sanctions on two Hezbollah members of Lebanon's parliament, Amin Sherri and Muhammad Raad. Hezbollah Lebanese officials called the designations an assault on Lebanon's government but pledged that they would not affect the government's work.¹⁹⁸ In November 2020, the U.S. government sanction-designated Gibran Bassil, president of Lebanon's Free Patriotic Movement. The government accused Bassil of corruption and helping "to erode the foundation of an effective government that serves the Lebanese people."¹⁹⁹ Bassil is not a member of Hezbollah, nor does the designation mention the terror group. Nonetheless, Bassil and the Free Patriotic Movement are Hezbollah political allies. Bassil had previously told media that working with Hezbollah was an unavoidable political reality in Lebanon.²⁰⁰

In August 2019, the Treasury Department designated Lebanon-based Jammal Trust Bank and three of its subsidiaries as Specially Designated Global Terrorists for the bank's "deep coordination" with Hezbollah, which the Treasury Department said put Lebanon's entire banking sector at risk.²⁰¹ The United States continued to sanction Lebanese institutions in February 2020 when the Treasury Department imposed financial sanctions on three Lebanese individuals and 12 entities affiliated with or controlled by the Iran-based Martyrs Foundation. The designated companies included Atlas Holding for being owned or controlled by the Martyrs Foundation. Atlas and its subsidiaries had conducted financial transactions for Hezbollah through the previously designated Jammal Trust Bank, which the United States accused of facilitating hundreds of millions of dollars in transactions through the Lebanese financial system and aiding Hezbollah officials in evading scrutiny from Lebanese financial authorities.²⁰²

The U.S. government alone has designated more than 100 Lebanese financial institutions, commercial entities, and individuals linked to Hezbollah since 2001.²⁰³ Other nations have also imposed financial sanctions on Lebanese businesses and individuals accused of providing financial and material support to Hezbollah. On October 27, 2021, Kosovo sanctioned seven local businessmen and a company for links to Hezbollah.²⁰⁴ Also that month, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz signed a seizure order against Lebanon-based Shreif Sanitary Co. and its owner, Haytham Ahmad Muhammad Shrief, after the company allegedly provided Hezbollah with equipment for the group's precision-guided missile project. Gantz ordered the seizure of \$17,000 Hezbollah had allegedly transferred to the company. According to the defense ministry, Shreif Sanitary Co. is a "preferred supplier of Hezbollah" that is providing equipment at reduced prices to the terror group.²⁰⁵ In December 2020, the United Kingdom enacted the Lebanon (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, which prohibits the sale or supply of arms and related material, and the provision of related services in Lebanon without the authorization of the Government of Lebanon or the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).²⁰⁶

The U.S. government has also increased financial pressure on Hezbollah networks in South America with sanctions against Hezbollah fundraisers and networkers in the Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. In July 2018, Argentina levied financial sanctions on members of the Barakat Group, a criminal Hezbollah financial support network in South America's Tri-Border Area led by U.S.-designated Lebanese citizen Assad Ahmad Barakat. The move was the first time Argentina had levied sanctions against Hezbollah.²⁰⁷ Brazilian police arrested Barakat that September.²⁰⁸ Argentina designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and froze the group's assets on July 18, 2019.²⁰⁹ Paraguay designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization the following month.²¹⁰

In response to increased financial sanctions against Hezbollah and Iran, Hezbollah has deployed donation boxes across Lebanon and called on supporters to offset the sanctions. In March 2019, Nasrallah called financial sanctions against Hezbollah a "form of war" and implored supporters to increase their financial contributions through a "jihad of money."²¹¹ In July 2020, U.S. Department of State spokesperson Morgan Ortagus declared the United States would continue to apply "severe economic pressure" on Hezbollah.²¹²

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Hezbollah has also used its financial arm, Al-Qard al-Hassan Association (“The Good Loan”), to help Lebanese citizens access U.S. dollars while avoiding sanctions. Al-Qard al-Hassan (AQAH) is a registered Lebanese non-profit that provides interest-free loans and operates savings accounts. Lebanese fearful of the impact of U.S. sanctions on Lebanese banks have sought out AQAH as an alternative. AQAH officials noted a significant increase in depositions through 2020.²¹³ Created in 1982, the association reportedly has approximately 300,000 accounts, all held by Hezbollah members or supporters. In November 2018, an account reportedly opened at the bank to transfer payments to the Houthi rebels in Yemen.²¹⁴ The United States sanctioned AQAH in 2007 for being part of Hezbollah’s support network.²¹⁵ In April 2021, Lebanese judge Ghada Aoun announced an investigation into AQAH based on complaints AQAH had violated Lebanon’s Monetary and Credit Law.²¹⁶ In May 2021, the United States sanctioned seven Lebanese individuals linked to AQAH.²¹⁷ On October 27, 2021, Saudi Arabia designated AQAH as a terrorist entity for its activities supporting Hezbollah.²¹⁸

In August 2021, Hezbollah began importing Iranian fuel for distribution in Lebanon. U.S. officials and Lebanese former Prime Minister Saad Hariri both warned the Iranian fuel risked triggering further sanctions on Lebanon and deepening the country’s economic crisis.²¹⁹ As of September 1, the caretaker Lebanese government claimed it had received no requests from the Iranian government to export fuel to Lebanon.²²⁰ Despite the Iranian shipments, Lebanon continued to suffer the effects of an energy crisis that October as the country’s two main power plants were forced to shut down due to lack of fuel.²²¹

Recruitment and Training:

Recruitment

Hezbollah primarily relies on religious devotion, opposition to Israel, and devotion to Shiite values as recruitment tools, according to various government and journalistic assessments.²²² In Syria, Hezbollah has capitalized on anti-U.S. sentiment and fear of Syrian government reprisals to recruit. In Lebanon, Hezbollah has invested in programs targeting every stage of Lebanese youths’ education, from primary school to university. Hezbollah runs networks of schools, camps, and religious programming throughout Lebanon. By targeting youth, Hezbollah gains new recruits and builds the domestic support responsible for its electoral successes.

Hezbollah’s youth wing, the “Mahdi Scouts,” offers programs similar to those of the American Boy Scouts, except that it indoctrinates support for Shiite and Hezbollah ideology. Scouts display pictures of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution, and pledge their allegiance to Hezbollah. Graduates go on to become Hezbollah recruits or contribute to local support. Hezbollah also runs summer camps, field trips, and religious holiday programming. It maintains student outreach groups in unaffiliated schools. A network of religious teachers across the country is charged with promoting Shiite values and Hezbollah’s mission.²²³

Hezbollah reportedly employs recruiters to vet candidates for proper values, such as piety and modesty.²²⁴ According to journalist Nicholas Blanford, “those that drink, smoke, chase girls and drive fast cars stand little chance.”²²⁵ This process can sometimes take several years. “Only if they are good men do we let them join our ranks,” said an unidentified Hezbollah member.²²⁶ Recruits who pass this stage are then vetted for security before starting a regiment of religious education and basic military training. Recruits are free to leave if they decide during the training process Hezbollah is not right for them.²²⁷

Shiite Hezbollah has expanded its recruitment to include Sunnis and non-Muslims. In 2009, it formed the Resistance Brigades in order to recruit Sunni allies. By 2013, its ranks had swelled to approximately 500. In response to clashes between the Brigades and locals in Lebanon, Hezbollah cut the number of fighters to between 200 and 250.²²⁸

Since 2012, Hezbollah has been fighting on behalf of Syria’s President Bashar Assad in his country’s civil war, requiring it to increase membership of its ranks.²²⁹ Hezbollah has expanded its recruitment to young Christian, Druze, and Sunni Muslim men in east Lebanon. According to local media reports, Hezbollah is providing the recruits with weapons and training “to counter the threat of ISIS and its affiliates.”²³⁰ Sectarian violence in Syria’s civil war, which has spilled over into Lebanon, is attracting new volunteers to Hezbollah’s cause. This is a major shift from when Hezbollah first involved itself in Syria in 2012. Many Lebanese felt then that Syria was not their fight and Hezbollah should keep its focus on Israel. As suicide bombings and other violence gripped Lebanon, attitudes changed. “The war is here now. It is across the borders and in our areas. We have to protect ourselves,” said an unidentified Lebanese teacher.²³¹

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As of November 2018, Hezbollah had reportedly recruited up to 2,000 formerly U.S.-backed rebel fighters in Syria for a new pro-regime force in the country's south along the Israeli and Jordanian borders. A rebel commander told the *Wall Street Journal* that fighters felt betrayed and abandoned by the U.S. and Arab forces. As an incentive to former rebels, Hezbollah allegedly pays a monthly salary of \$250 and guarantees protection against arrest by the Syrian army. U.S. Syria envoy Joel Rayburn called Hezbollah's recruitment of former rebels "a highly destabilizing prospect" that could increase the possibility of a new regional conflict.²³²

Training

In its early years, Hezbollah obtained critical training from Iran's IRGC.²³³ Hezbollah has since developed a network of training camps in Lebanon. It has also built a cultural machine that produces materials that foster an appreciation for Hezbollah's patronage, its ability to empower Lebanese youth and support the society, and cultivate a deep distrust of Israel. The process of becoming a soldier continues at Mustafa schools, where students undergo religious studies, pray for Islamic Resistance fighters, and are inculcated with a sense of military brotherhood and discipline. As of 2011, Hezbollah did not allow fighters under the age of 18, but youth have a basic understanding of military training and weapons.²³⁴ Hezbollah reportedly lowered its fighting age to 16 in August 2014.²³⁵

Hezbollah sends recruiters to villages where the group has influence. Potential recruits are pious, well-behaved, and intelligent. Recruiters develop a relationship with a potential recruit for months and sometimes years, eventually asking them to join. These activated recruits join out of a sense of religious obligation, desire to resist occupation, and even peer pressure.²³⁶

Fighters have to pass through a phase of *tahdirat*, or preparation, where they are taught about Iran's Islamic revolution, scholarly Islamic texts, and a motif of martyrdom. During the second stage, *intizam*, or commitment, members undergo basic military training. Both of these phases last approximately a year.²³⁷

The initial military training program lasts for 33 days, during which recruits learn basic guerrilla warfare and physical fitness. The training takes place in the heavily wooded Bekaa Valley.²³⁸ Recruits are dropped off with bare essentials and required to find their way back to their bases. They are forced to march across unsteady limestone with rock-filled backpacks. The trainees are given only one canteen of water per day, and are pressured to perform uphill sprints and pushups. During the night, each recruit performs at least one hour of guard duty.²³⁹

In addition to these tests meant to build fitness and endurance, recruits are trained in the use of standard Hezbollah weaponry—AK-47 and M-16 assault rifles, the PKC 7.62 light machine gun, the .50 caliber heavy machine gun, and the RPG-7—until they can strip, reassemble, and load each weapon blindfolded. Trainees are taught to shoot both day and night and learn the importance of conserving ammunition. Each fighter is taught how to install roadside bombs and landmines. They study the Israeli army's armored vehicles and are instructed to fire RPGs at vulnerable spots. Recruits become adept at camouflage and stealth—learning various crawls and how to lie in observation for hours—and become expert navigators, using maps, compasses, and GPS instruments. Hezbollah also provides training to protect fighters against nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare.²⁴⁰

This level of training is required for all recruits, even those who may eventually play ancillary roles for Hezbollah. Each fighter is trained in first aid and basic medical support. They are also required to take written and practical exams in the field.²⁴¹ After fighters have attained a certain level of religious scholarship and military training, some travel to Iran and sometimes Syria for specialized training. Hezbollah has been accused of working with the Quds Force of Iran's IRGC, as well as training and advising Syrian government forces.²⁴² Top combat training is reserved for Hezbollah's Special Forces unit, where recruits are subject to two 45-day programs with a five-day break in between.²⁴³

Hezbollah leaders insist that the group's resistance is of a higher quality than other jihadist groups due to its ingrained faith in Islam, readiness for martyrdom, and integrity of leadership.²⁴⁴

Also Known As:

- Ansar Allah²⁴⁵
- Followers of the Prophet Muhammed²⁴⁶
- Hizballah²⁴⁷
- Hizbollah²⁴⁸
- Hizbu'llah²⁴⁹
- Islamic Jihad²⁵⁰

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- Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine²⁵¹
- Islamic Jihad Organization²⁵²
- Organization of the Oppressed on Earth²⁵³
- Organization of Right Against Wrong²⁵⁴
- Party of God²⁵⁵
- Revolutionary Justice Organization²⁵⁶

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Key Leaders



Hassan Nasrallah
Secretary-General



Naim Qassem
Deputy Secretary-General



Hussein al-Khalil
Top Political Adviser to Nasrallah



Mustafa Badreddine
Military Commander (deceased)



Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid
Head of Political Assembly



Hashem Safieddine
Head of Executive Assembly



Mohamed Yazbik
Member of Shura Council and
Logistics Coordinator



Hassan Al Laqis
Former Senior Leader - Deceased

Hezbollah

History:

- **December 1, 2022:** Lebanese lawmakers fail in their eighth attempt to elect a president after the end of Michel Aoun's term that October. Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem declares his group will not support a president who will be subservient to the United States or Israel. Qassem's declaration followed a November call from Nasrallah for a president to stand up to the United States. Sources: Agence France-Presse, "Lebanon MPs again fail to fill vacant presidency," Al Arabiya, December 1, 2022, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/12/01/-Lebanon-MPs-again-fail-to-fill-vacant-presidency->; "Hezbollah won't accept new Lebanese president subservient to US, Israeli regime," Press TV, December 2, 2022, <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/12/02/693771/Hezbollah-won%E2%80%99t-accept-new-president-who-would-give-into-US-Israeli-projects--Top-official>.
- **December 1, 2022:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates two individuals and two companies based in Lebanon for providing financial services to Hezbollah. The individuals designated are Adel Mohamad Mansour, executive director of the Hezbollah-run financial firm Al-Qard Al-Hassan, and Naser Hasan Naser, a managing partner and minority owner of Auditors for Accounting Auditors. Treasury sanctions Auditors for Accounting Auditors for being owned or directed by Ibrahim Daher, the previously designated head of Hezbollah's Central Finance Unit. Treasury also sanctions Al-Khobara for Accounting, Auditing, and Studies, for being owned or directed by Mansour. Al-Khobara operates out of a Beirut building operated by the Hezbollah financial firm Al-Qard Al-Hassan (AQAH) and provides financial services to AQAH. Treasury also sanctions Hassan Khalil for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Hezbollah. Treasury accuses Khalil of providing actively working to procure weapons on behalf of Hezbollah. Source: "Treasury Sanctions Hizballah Accountants and Weapons Facilitator," U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 1, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1135>.
- **November 3, 2022:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions members of an international oil smuggling network of facilitators, front companies, and vessels aiding the Quds Force and Hezbollah in evading sanctions. According to OFAC, the smuggling network "facilitated oil trades and generated revenue for" Hezbollah and the Quds Force. OFAC accuses Gulf nationals Viktor Artemov, Edman Nafrieh, Rouzbeh Zahedi, and Mohamed El Zein of leveraging dozens of companies under their control for the network's illicit activities. According to OFAC, the network uses storage units in the Port of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, and blends products of Indian origin with Iranian oil to obfuscate the Iranian origin. The companies then modify or create counterfeit certificates of origin and quality for the blended oil, which are then transferred for sale abroad. Iranian national Nafrieh oversees the network, while Iranian national Zahedi works with the network to help transport the Iranian oil abroad and uses his companies to transfer funds to Quds Force and Hezbollah members while coordinating with Hezbollah member El Zein. Artemov oversees much of this vast network of cover companies and shipping services to receive, conceal, and sell oil. OFAC also levies sanctions on Gilda Tar Karvan International Company for being owned or controlled by Nafrieh, as well as multiple companies owned, directed, or controlled by Artemov. OFAC designates Tatiana Ryabikova for coordinating financial activities for Artemov and his companies while in his employ. OFAC also sanctions Gregorio Fazzone, CEO of Ava Petroleum, one of the companies affiliated with Artemov. Source: "Treasury Sanctions Oil Shipping Network Supporting IRGC-QF and Hizballah," U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 3, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1076>.
- **October 27, 2022:** After Lebanon and Israel sign an agreement demarcating a maritime border following 11 years of negotiation, Hezbollah rejects any normalization with Israel and asserts there has been no change in its position regarding Israel. Nasrallah calls the agreement a great victory for Lebanon and Hezbollah, while emphasizing Hezbollah's objection to any normalization with Israel. According to a Hezbollah spokesman, Hezbollah and Israel remain enemies and Hezbollah will retaliate if Israel strikes the militia. The agreement, signed in different locations by Lebanon and Israel, settles a dispute around the Karish gas field, which Hezbollah previously targeted that July with drones. The Hezbollah spokesman claims the drones hastened Israel's willingness to sign an agreement. Under the agreement, Israel receives oil and gas rights in the Karish field in the Mediterranean Sea, while Lebanon gets access to the Qanaa prospect area of the Mediterranean. Lebanon also agrees to pay—through an intermediary—17 percent of the profits from Qanaa to Israel. Regional observers speculate whether Hezbollah will use its position in the government to spoil the agreement. Sources: Sarah Dadouch, "As Israel, Lebanon seal maritime deal, Hezbollah does awkward balancing act," *Washington Post*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/27/lebanon-israel-hezbollah-maritime-deal/>; Hadas Gold, Mostafa Salem, Mia Albert, Celine Alkhalidi, and Nadeen Ebrahim, "Israel and Lebanon finalize Mediterranean border agreement, opening up potentially rich oil and gas fields," CNN, October 27, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/27/middleeast/israel-lebanon-sign-gas-deal-intl/index.html>; Tzvi Joffre, "Hezbollah ends state of alert over maritime border – Nasrallah," *Jerusalem Post*, October 27, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-720784>.
- Nasrallah meets with leaders from Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas in Beirut to discuss regional developments and enhanced cooperation. On August 24, Nasrallah meets with PIJ leader Ziad Nakhlah. On August 28, Nasrallah meets with Hamas officials in Beirut, including deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri and senior officials Khalil al-Hayya and Osama Hamdan. Sources: Tobias Siegel, "In Beirut, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad heads discuss 'next stage' of anti-Israel action," *Times of Israel*, August 24, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-islamic-jihad-heads-meet-in-lebanon-for-talks-on-gaza-future-cooperation/>; Tobias Siegel, "Hezbollah chief meets Hamas officials days after sit-down with Islamic Jihad leader," *Times of Israel*, August 28, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-chief-meets-hamas-officials-days-after-sit-down-with-islamic-jihad-leader/>.
- **July 18, 2022:** As Israel and Lebanon continue U.S.-led mediation over their maritime border, Lebanon's Hezbollah-allied Public Works Minister Ali Hamieh demands Israel turn over a shuttered rail tunnel in the northern Israeli town of Rosh Hanikra. The tunnel had originally been part of a railway connecting Egypt to Turkey, crossing through British-mandate Palestine and Lebanon. It had not functioned since Israel's 1948 War of Independence. Sources: "Hezbollah demands return of Rosh Hanikra rail tunnel in bid to torpedo border talks," *Times of Israel*, July 18, 2022, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hezbollah-demands-return-of-rosh-hanikra-rail-tunnel-in-bid-to-torpedo-border-talks/; "Status of Israel-Lebanon Maritime Negotiations," U.S. Department of State, July 15, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/status-of-israel-lebanon-maritime-negotiations/>.
- During a July 13 televised address, Nasrallah warns Hezbollah will continue to target Israeli oil and gas infrastructure in disputed parts of the Mediterranean Sea. The warning followed a July 2 incident when Israeli forces shot down three unmanned Hezbollah drones several kilometers away from Israel's Karish gas rig in the Mediterranean, which Lebanon contends is in Lebanese territorial waters and Israel says is in its territorial waters. Lebanon and Israel are engaged in U.S.-led mediation over their disputed maritime border. Nasrallah warns the July 2 incident was meant to prove to workers on the rig it is not in a safe area and Hezbollah could deploy a "large number" of weaponized drones at any time. Nasrallah threatens Hezbollah "will reach Karish and everything beyond Karish and everything beyond that." Sources: Anna Ahronheim, "Israel downs three Hezbollah drones flying toward Karish gas rig," *Jerusalem Post*, July 2, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-711021>; Laila Bassam and Maya Gebeily, "Hezbollah chief vows 'no one' will extract gas, oil from maritime zones if Lebanon unable to do so," *Reuters*, July 13, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-chief-vows-no-one-will-extract-gas-oil-maritime-zones-if-lebanon-2022-07-13/>; Dalia al-Aqidi, "Lebanon needs a hero to save it from Hezbollah," *Arab News*, July 17, 2022, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2123971>.
- **June 23, 2022:** On June 23, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and a Hamas delegation arrive in Beirut for a multi-day trip to meet with Lebanese government officials, including President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Najib Mikati, and Palestinian faction leaders. Haniyeh is also scheduled to give a speech to the Islamic National Conference in Beirut. On June 22, Haniyeh meets with Nasrallah in Beirut to discuss the "axis of resistance" to Israel and boosting their groups' ties. Sources: Jack Khoury, "Hezbollah's Nasrallah Meets Hamas Chief Haniyeh in Beirut to Discuss anti-Israel Alliance,"

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Haaretz (Tel Aviv), June 23, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/2022-06-23/ty-article/-premium/hezbollahs-nasrallah-meets-hamas-chief-haniyeh-in-beirut-to-discuss-anti-israel-alliance/00000181-8faf-dca5-a5c1-9faf517d0000>; “Hamas chief arrives in Beirut,” Hamas, June 21, 2022, <https://hamas.ps/en/post/4105/Hamas-chief-arrives-in-Beirut>; “Hamas Delegation Arrives in Beirut,” Al Manar TV, June 21, 2022, <https://english.almanar.com.lb/1627595>; “Hamas head Ismail Haniyeh arrives with delegation in Beirut,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-709986>.

- **June 16, 2022:** The STL sentences Hassan Habib Merhi and Hussein Hassan Oneissi to life in prison for their roles in the February 2005 Hariri assassination. Both men remain at large.
Source: “Hezbollah members get life terms for Lebanese leader’s death,” Associated Press, June 16, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/politics-netherlands-beirut-lebanon-555537b497ae78bcfec9d5388dea71>.
- **June 5, 2022 - June 9, 2022:** In response to the June 5 arrival of a tanker ship to produce natural gas from the Karish gas field in the Mediterranean Sea, Nasrallah declares in a June 9 televised speech Hezbollah is “not afraid of war” and can stop Israel from extracting gas from the maritime field.
Nasrallah accuses the ship’s parent company, London-based hydrocarbon exploration company Energean PLC, of being “a partner in this attack on Lebanon” and threatens “consequences” for Energean. Lebanon claims the Karish gas field is in its territorial waters and has warned Israel against developing it. Nasrallah’s warning followed a June 6 declaration from Naim Qassem Hezbollah is ready to use force if Israel drills in the disputed area and is only waiting for Lebanon to clarify its position. Israel claims the field is in its sovereign waters. The United States began mediation between Israel and Lebanon over the field in 2000. Following the ship’s arrival, Lebanese authorities call on U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein to return to Beirut to relaunch maritime border negotiations. Israel has promised to defend its energy infrastructure and rights in the area. Source: “Lebanon’s Hezbollah can stop Israeli gas extraction from disputed field, chief says,” Reuters, June 8, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/head-lebanons-hezbollah-says-his-group-has-capacity-prevent-israel-extracting-2022-06-09/>; Agence France-Presse, “Lebanon should block Israel gas extraction move: Hezbollah chief,” Al-Monitor, June 9, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/06/lebanon-should-block-israel-gas-extraction-move-hezbollah-chief/>; “Lebanon Disputes Israel’s Right to Develop Karish Offshore Gas Field,” Maritime Executive, June 8, 2022, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/lebanon-disputes-israel-s-right-to-develop-karish-offshore-gas-field/>; Laila Bassam and Maya Gebeily, “Hezbollah says ‘ready’ to act if Lebanon says Israel violating water rights,” Reuters, June 6, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-says-ready-act-if-lebanon-says-israel-violating-water-rights-2022-06-06/>.
- **May 31, 2022:** Nabih Berri, head of the Hezbollah-allied Amal party, wins reelection as Lebanon’s parliamentary speaker, but with only a 65-vote majority.
In 2018, he received 98 votes. Source: Stephanie Rady, “Nabih Berri re-elected as Lebanon’s Parliament Speaker,” Anadolu Agency, May 31, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/nabih-berri-re-elected-as-lebanons-parliament-speaker/2602054>.
- **May 25, 2022:** The United States imposes economic sanctions on an international oil smuggling and money laundering network, led by Quds Force official Behnam Shahriyari and former Quds Force official Rostam Ghasemi, for smuggling millions of dollars for Hezbollah, the Quds Force, and other Iranian proxies.
According to the Department of the Treasury, senior levels of the Russian Federation government and state-run economic enterprises support the network, which has facilitated the sale of hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of oil for Hezbollah and the Quds Force. Treasury also sanctions Lebanon-based Hezbollah front company Concepto Screen SAL Off-Shore for facilitating oil deals likely benefiting the Quds Force and Hezbollah. Within the smuggling network, the Treasury Department sanctions multiple Quds Force members and associates in Iran and Turkey for aiding in the sale of illicit Iranian oil and providing support to the smuggling and money laundering network. Source: “Treasury Targets Oil Smuggling Network Generating Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for Qods Force and Hizballah,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, May 25, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0799>.
- **May 15, 2022:** Hezbollah maintains its 13 seats in Lebanon’s parliament as the country holds parliamentary elections, but its allied political bloc wins only 61 seats and loses its majority in the 128-member parliament.
Official results are released on May 17. The Hezbollah-allied Amal Party maintains its 14 seats. The Hezbollah-allied Free Patriotic Movement of President Michel Aoun lost three seats, dropping to 18. FPM party leader Gebran Bassil blames the losses on outside forces, writing to Twitter the FPM is not at war with other parties but “with America, Israel and its allies.” The Christian Lebanese Forces party—which Hezbollah accused of seeking to stoke a new Lebanese civil war in October 2021—wins 21 seats to become the largest bloc in the parliament. Lebanese analysts expect the country’s political paralysis to continue as tensions remain high between the Lebanese Forces and Hezbollah. Sources: Ben Hubbard, “Hezbollah Loses Majority Bloc in Lebanon Election, Results Show,” *New York Times*, May 17, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/world/middleeast/lebanon-election-hezbollah.html>; Bassem Mroue, “Hezbollah, allies lose majority in Lebanon’s parliament,” Associated Press, May 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/government-and-politics-elections-lebanon-legislature-6e305bf22d6525f144ab0f2b0c076712>.
- **May 4, 2022:** Ahead of Lebanon’s May 15 parliamentary elections, a report from U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the Security Council warns Hezbollah’s control “of sizeable and sophisticated military capabilities outside the control of the government of Lebanon remains a matter of grave concern.”
He calls on the Lebanese state to “increase its efforts to achieve a monopoly over the possession of weapons and the use of force throughout its territory.” Guterres further calls on countries in the region with close ties to Hezbollah—primarily Syria and Iran—to encourage the group to disarm and become “a solely civilian political party.” Guterres warns Lebanon’s worsening political polarization has resulted in the Lebanese people “struggling daily to meet basic essential needs.” Sources: Edith M. Lederer, “UN chief urges free, transparent elections in Lebanon May 15,” Associated Press, May 4, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/business-elections-lebanon-united-nations-antonio-guterres-1720267ae91b949cda060ed25a36d589>; “Implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) Thirty-fifth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General,” U.N. Security Council, April 22, 2022, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/327/82/PDF/N2232782.pdf?OpenElement>.
- **March 18, 2022:** A week after Russian President Vladimir Putin says Russia called for 16,000 Middle Eastern volunteers to deploy on behalf of Russia in its war with Ukraine, Ukrainian media reports that Russia had recruited Hezbollah fighters.
Nasrallah states Hezbollah is not sending fighters to Ukraine. Nasrallah calls for Lebanon’s government to form a body to address the Russia-Ukraine war. Sources: Guy Faulconbridge, “Putin says Russia to use Middle East volunteer fighters,” Reuters, March 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-says-volunteers-welcome-help-fight-against-ukrainian-forces-2022-03-11/>; “Hezbollah chief denies reports saying terror group’s fighters going to Ukraine,” Times of Israel, March 18, 2022, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/hezbollah-chief-denies-reports-saying-terror-groups-fighters-going-to-ukraine/; “Lebanon’s Hezbollah chief denies sending fighters to support Russia in Ukraine,” Reuters, March 18, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-hezbollah-chief-denies-sending-fighters-support-russia-ukraine-al-2022-03-18/>.
- **March 10, 2022:** Following a prosecutor’s appeal of its August 2020 decision, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon convicts Hassan Habib Merhi and Hussein Hassan Anaissy for their roles in the February 14, 2005, terrorist attack in Beirut that killed former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The Appeals Chamber rules Anaissy and Merhi were members of the conspiracy aimed at committing the terrorist act in downtown Beirut. Anaissy and Merhi remain at large. Source: “OTP Press release - STL Appeals Chamber Convicts Hassan Habib Merhi & Hussein Hassan Oneissi for Terrorist Attack that killed former Lebanese Prime

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Minister Rafik Hariri,” Special Tribunal for Lebanon, March 10, 2022, <https://www.stl-tsl.org/en/media/press-releases/otp-press-release-stl-appeals-chamber-convicts-hassan-habib-merhi-hussein-hassan-oneissi-for-terrorist-attack-that-killed-former-lebanese-prime-minister-rafik-hariri>.

- **January 18, 2022:** The United States imposes financial sanctions on three Lebanese businessmen—Adel Diab, Ali Mohamad Daoun, and Jihad Salem Alame—and their Lebanon-based travel company, Dar Al Salam for Travel & Tourism. According to the Treasury Department, Diab used his business to raise funds for Hezbollah and facilitate Hezbollah’s activities. Treasury accused Daoun of being a Hezbollah official in charge of the second district for Hezbollah. Treasury also accused Alame of materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Hezbollah. Source: “Treasury Sanctions Hizballah Financiers in Lebanon,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 18, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0558>.
- **January 15, 2022:** Hezbollah and Amal end their boycott of Lebanese cabinet sessions, allowing for the Lebanese government to meet for the first time in three months. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati says he will call for a cabinet meeting as soon as he receives a draft 2022 budget from the Finance Ministry. Source: “Hezbollah, Amal end boycott of Lebanon’s cabinet amid economic crisis,” Reuters, January 15, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-amal-end-boycott-lebanons-cabinet-amid-economic-crisis-2022-01-15/>.
- **January 4, 2022:** The Israeli military shoots down a Hezbollah drone that entered Israeli airspace from Lebanon. Source: “IDF: Hezbollah drone downed after flying over border from Lebanon,” Times of Israel, January 4, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-hezbollah-drone-downed-after-flying-over-border-from-lebanon/>.
- **January 3, 2022:** During a televised address, Nasrallah accuses Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdul Aziz of exporting ISIS’s ideology and providing cars for suicide attacks in Iraq. Nasrallah further accuses Saudi Arabia of participating in a wider conspiracy to destroy the Middle East. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati’s office issues a statement distancing the Lebanese government from Nasrallah’s comments. Sources: Kareem Chehayeb, “Hezbollah’s Hassan Nasrallah accuses Saudi Arabia of ‘terrorism,’” Al Jazeera, last updated January 4, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/3/hezbollahs-nasrallah-accuses-saudi-arabia-of-terrorism>; Timour Azhari, “Hezbollah’s criticism of Saudi not in Lebanon’s interest - PM,” Reuters, January 3, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollahs-criticism-saudi-not-lebanons-interest-pm-2022-01-03/>.
- **October 30, 2021:** Israel allegedly launches a daytime airstrike against a Hezbollah weapons depot in Syria, killing at least one Syrian Armed Forces soldier and wounded three others. According to Syrian media reports, the targeted sites near Damascus contained several ammunition depots belonging to Hezbollah and other Iran-affiliated militias. On November 1, Israel begins a month-long series of military drills simulating a war with Lebanon to prepare for a future confrontation with Hezbollah. Sources: Natan Khodorovsky, “Israeli airstrikes near Damascus target Hezbollah sites - Syrian reports,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 30, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/damascus-rocked-by-explosions-report-683548>; Anna Ahronheim, “IDF drills for war with Hezbollah as tensions with Iran rise,” *Jerusalem Post*, November 1, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/idf-drills-for-war-against-hezbollah-as-tensions-with-iran-rise-683707>.
- **October 18, 2021 - October 26, 2021:** On October 18, Nasrallah accuses the Lebanese Forces party and its leader, Samir Geagea, of seeking to ignite a civil war. Nasrallah claims Hezbollah has 100,000 forces in Lebanon to defend the country from external attack, not fight in a civil war. Geagea denies responsibility and says his party has no armed fighters. Nasrallah calls the Lebanese Forces party the biggest threat to Christians in Lebanon. Hezbollah supporters in the Beirut suburb of Dahiya, a Hezbollah stronghold, fire guns in the air to celebrate the start of Nasrallah’s speech. Geagea says his party’s confrontation with Hezbollah is purely political and must remain so. On October 26, after the conclusion of an investigation by the Lebanese military, a Lebanese military court charges 68 people with murder, attempted murder, inciting sectarian divisions, and possessing unlicensed weapons of war. The charges are all in relation to the October 14 violence. Sources: Maha El Dahan and Laila Bassam, “Hezbollah’s Nasrallah says Beirut violence was a dangerous development,” Reuters, October 18, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-amal-movement-says-violence-aimed-reignite-internal-strife-2021-10-18/>; Maha El Dahan and Laila Bassam, “Lebanon’s Geagea dismisses Hezbollah accusations, says his group has no fighters,” Reuters, October 21, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-military-court-ask-lebanese-forces-party-leader-give-statement-street-2021-10-21/>; “Lebanon charges 68 in relation to shooting at Hezbollah protest,” Al-Monitor, October 26, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/10/lebanon-charges-68-relation-shooting-hezbollah-protest>.
- **October 12, 2021 - October 14, 2021:** On October 12, Lebanese authorities issue an arrest warrant for former Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil, a U.S.-designated Hezbollah member who failed to appear for questioning in the investigation into the August 4, 2020, Beirut port explosion. Hezbollah criticizes the investigation and call for the replacement of lead investigator Judge Tarek Bitar. On October 14, seven Shiite Muslims are shot dead during hours-long gun battles in the streets of Beirut as protesters gather at the behest of Hezbollah and Amal against the continuing investigation. Among the dead from the clashes are two Hezbollah fighters and three from Amal. The Lebanese army deploys around Beirut to end the violence. Hezbollah blames the violence on the Lebanese Forces party, which Hezbollah senior official Hashem Safieddine accuses of seeking to incite a civil war. The Lebanese Forces blame the violence on Hezbollah “incitement” against Bitar. On December 23, a group of residents from Beirut’s Ain El Remmaneh neighborhood file criminal charges against Nasrallah over the violence. Sources: “Beirut port probe suspended again as judge issues warrant for ex-minister,” Al-Monitor, October 12, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/10/beirut-port-probe-suspended-again-judge-issues-warrant-ex-minister>; Kareem Chehayeb, “At least 6 killed, dozens wounded in gunfire near Beirut protest,” Al Jazeera, October 14, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/14/one-killed-beirut-hezbollah-protest>; Sarah El Deeb and Bassem Mroue, “Lebanon buries 7 killed amid street battles over port probe,” Associated Press, October 15, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/business-middle-east-lebanon-beirut-civil-wars-f8f97ef21af6ecf2d7a272e5eec1c6dd>; Maha El Dahan and Laila Bassam, “Hezbollah’s Nasrallah says Beirut violence was a dangerous development,” Reuters, October 18, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-amal-movement-says-violence-aimed-reignite-internal-strife-2021-10-18/>; Aya Iskandarani, “Beirut residents sue Hezbollah leaders over deadly clashes,” *National* (Abu Dhabi), December 23, 2021, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2021/12/23/beirut-residents-sue-hezbollah-leaders-over-deadly-clashes/>.
- **September 29, 2021:** The United States and Qatar sanction a Gulf-based Hezbollah financial network. The U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) levied sanctions on Ali Reda Hassan al-Banai, Ali Reda al-Qassabi Lari, and Abd al-Muayyid al-Banai for providing material assistance, sponsoring, or otherwise providing support to Hezbollah. Abd Al Rahman Abd Al Nabi Shams, Yahya Mohammad Al Abd Al Mohsin, Majdi Fa’iz Al Ustadz, and Sulaiman Al Banai are sanctioned for providing support to Ali al-Banai. Qatar-based Al Dar Properties is also sanctioned for being directly or indirectly controlled by Sulaiman al-Banai. U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken calls the actions “one of the most significant joint actions we have taken with a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partner to date.” Citing “significant steps” by 14 countries in Europe, South America, and Central America to ban, designate, or restrict Hezbollah, Blinken recognizes a “growing international recognition of” Hezbollah’s “true nature.” Sources: “The United States and Qatar Take Coordinated Action Against Hizballah Financiers,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 29, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0381>; Antony J. Blinken, “The United States and Qatar

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Take Actions Against Hizballah Financial Network," U.S. Department of State, September 29, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-qatar-take-actions-against-hizballah-financial-network/>.

- **September 23, 2021:** Wafiq Safa, the head of Hezbollah's Liaison and Coordination Unit, reportedly sends a threatening message to Judge Tarek Bitar, who is heading a government investigation into the August 4, 2020, Beirut port explosion. According to the message, which Safa sends through an anonymous journalist, Hezbollah has "had enough of you; we will go to the end of the legal path, and if that does not work, we will remove you by force." Sources: Marc Daou, "Who is out to get the judge in charge of Lebanon port explosion probe?," France 24, September 25, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20210925-who-is-out-to-get-judge-in-charge-of-lebanon-port-explosion-probe>; Tamara Qiblawi, "Hezbollah threatened top judge probing Beirut port blast, source says," CNN, September 23, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/23/middleeast/hezbollah-beirut-blast-probe-threat-intl/index.html>.
- On August 19, Hezbollah announces it will begin importing fuel from Iran to distribute in Lebanon to alleviate the country's fuel crisis. Nasrallah warns the United States and Israel against interfering with the shipments. The first of three Iranian ships carrying fuel departs Iran on August 19. After Hezbollah's announcement, the United States announces it is in talks with Egypt and Jordan to provide alternative sources of fuel to Lebanon. U.S. officials and Hariri both warn the Iranian fuel risks triggering further sanctions on Lebanon and deepening the country's economic crisis. On August 27, Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati states he is against anything that would harm Lebanon's interests and requests critics of the Hezbollah-Iran fuel deal provide alternatives. Media reports accuse Iran of further attempting to enshrine Nasrallah as Lebanon's savior while also seeking to bypass U.S. sanctions. On September 1, Lebanon's caretaker energy minister, Raymond Ghajar, says the government has received no requests for import permits from Iran. Sources: Laila Bassam and Nafisa Eltahir, "Hezbollah arranges Iranian fuel for Lebanon," Reuters, August 19, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hezbollah-organised-fuel-lebanon-set-sail-group-says-2021-08-19/>; Dana Khraiche, "Hezbollah Tightens Its Grip on Sinking Lebanon," Bloomberg News, September 10, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-10/hezbollah-tightens-its-grip-on-sinking-lebanon>; Seth J. Frantzman, "Iranian fuel, Hezbollah 'savior' of Lebanon and Iran's goal for Chinese investment," *Jerusalem Post*, September 7, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iranian-fuel-hezbollah-savior-of-lebanon-and-irans-goal-for-chinese-investment-678899>; Bassem Mroue, "US senators warn against Iranian fuel shipments to Lebanon," Associated Press, September 1, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-business-iran-lebanon-beirut-e4357394ae1f2605d410cf80234f9341>; "Lebanese state's permission not sought for Iranian fuel, minister says," Reuters, September 1, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-energy-minister-says-he-hasnt-had-request-import-iranian-fuel-2021-09-01/>.
- **July 31, 2021 - August 1, 2021:** On July 31, a man from a Sunni tribe in the town of Khaldeh opens fire at a wedding party in a club in the town, killing Hezbollah fighter Ali Chebli. Chebli had allegedly killed a 15-year-old relative of the attacker a year earlier, and the attack on the wedding party was reportedly revenge. Police apprehend the attacker, whose family says Lebanese police never arrested Chebli for the death of their relative because he was under Hezbollah's protection. During Chebli's funeral on August 1, gunmen kill at least five and wound at least four others. At least three of the fatalities are Hezbollah members. The Lebanese army arrests two suspects in relation to the funeral attack after Hezbollah calls on the army to arrest those responsible. Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati calls for calm and warns against sectarian "discord." Sources: Sarah El Deeb, "Gunmen kill 2 at funeral for Hezbollah commander in Lebanon," Associated Press, August 1, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-lebanon-shootings-beirut-hezbollah-4d48daf9e7b03d6b9a4662277fb4cb95>; "Three Hezbollah men among five killed in Lebanon funeral shooting," Times of Israel, August 1, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/two-shot-dead-at-funeral-for-hezbollah-commander-south-of-beirut/>; Laila Bassam, "Attack on Lebanese funeral prompts warnings of strife," Reuters, August 2, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanese-army-detains-man-after-deadly-funeral-attack-2021-08-02/>.
- **July 26, 2021:** Speaking at a ceremony in Iran's Kermanshah province, IRGC commander Hossein Salami says Hezbollah is ready to confront Israel at any moment. He says, "Lebanon and Hezbollah are standing strong against the Zionists, and whenever the enemy wants to move, Hezbollah suffocates them from the very beginning." In the United States, a bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives introduce legislation calling on the European Union to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization. Sources: "Hezbollah will nip any Zionist move in the bud: IRGC chief," *Tehran Times*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463436/Hezbollah-will-nip-any-Zionist-move-in-the-bud-IRGC-chief/>; Omri Nahmias, "Bipartisan US lawmakers urge EU to fully label Hezbollah a terror group," *Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/international/bipartisan-us-lawmakers-urge-eu-to-fully-label-hezbollah-a-terror-group-675063>; "Bipartisan Resolution Urging EU to Designate Hezbollah a Terrorist Organization Introduced," Website of Congressman Ted Deutsch, July 26, 2021, <https://teddeutsch.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=403016>.
- **July 26, 2021:** With the support of Hezbollah, Lebanon's parliament selects former prime minister Najib Mikati to be the new prime minister. Mikati previously served twice as prime minister, resigning in March 2013 under pressure from Hezbollah. Mikati promises to form a government of technocrats based on a French plan in 2020 that would unlock financial aid through the International Monetary Fund. Sources: Ben Hubbard, "Lebanon Turns to Billionaire Tycoon to Form Next Government," *New York Times*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/26/world/middleeast/lebanon-prime-minister-Najib-Mikati.html>; "Former PM Najib Mikati named Lebanon's prime minister-designate," Al-Monitor, July 26, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/former-pm-najib-mikati-named-lebanons-prime-minister-designate>; "Lebanon's PM-designate says he can form government to implement French plan," Reuters, July 26, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-pm-designate-says-he-can-form-government-implement-french-plan-2021-07-26/>.
- **July 22, 2021:** Israeli Ambassador to the U.N. Gilad Erdan sends a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and to all members of the Security Council calling on them to condemn Hezbollah for continued violations of international resolutions restricting Hezbollah's activities in southern Lebanon. Israel calls on UNIFIL to launch a full investigation. Source: "Erdan calls on UN Security Council to condemn Hezbollah," Times of Israel, July 22, 2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/erdan-calls-on-un-security-council-to-condemn-hezbollah/.
- Lebanon continues to suffer food, fuel, and medical shortages. In early July, the World Bank blames Lebanon's economic collapse on the political stalemate. On July 15, Hezbollah-allied Aoun rejects a coalition proposal from Hariri, who subsequently resigns as prime minister-designate after almost nine months of failing to form a government. Aoun's office accuses Hariri of refusing to consider Aoun's amendments to the proposal. The president's office further accuses Hariri of already deciding to resign ahead of the meeting with Aoun. Protests break out in predominately Sunni areas of Lebanon, leading the Lebanese army to violently engage against protesters. Despite Lebanon's economic and political crises, a video emerges of former Hezbollah parliamentarian Nawar Sahili throwing a lavish wedding party for his daughter on July 24. Sahili later apologizes and suspends future celebrations. Sources: Tamara Qiblawi, Ghazi Balkiz, and Ben Wedeman, "Lebanon's Hariri steps down as prime minister-designate pushing crisis-ridden country further into uncertainty," CNN, July 15, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/15/middleeast/hariri-resigns-lebanon-intl/index.html>; Ben Hubbard, "As Lebanon's Crisis Deepens, Lines for Fuel Grow, and Food and Medicine Are Scarce," *New York Times*, July 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/world/middleeast/lebanon-economic-crisis.html>; Sunniva Rose, "Lebanon: Hezbollah politician suspends party activities over daughter's lavish wedding," *National* (Abu Dhabi), July 26, 2021, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/2021/07/26/lebanon-hezbollah-politician-suspends-party-activities-over-daughters-lavish-wedding/>.

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- May 25, 2021:** In a televised speech marking the anniversary of Israel’s 2000 withdrawal from Lebanon, Nasrallah warns any aggression against Jerusalem or its holy sites would result in regional war. Nasrallah praises Hamas’s increased rocket capabilities, including its ability to fire on Israel for 11 days. The speech is Nasrallah’s first public address since the May 21 ceasefire that ended 11 days of fighting between Israel and Hamas. Israeli military officials note he looks pale, coughs frequently, and appears weakened during the speech. Some Israeli military sources raise the possibility Nasrallah may have Covid-19. On May 27, Qassem tells Lebanese media Nasrallah’s weakened state was due to a recent illness, but he has since fully recovered. Sources: “Lebanon Hezbollah chief says attacks on Jerusalem mean regional war,” Reuters, May 25, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-hezbollah-chief-says-attacks-jerusalem-mean-regional-war-2021-05-25/>; Judah Ari Gross, “Military officials mock Nasrallah, say he appeared sick and weak in speech,” Times of Israel, May 26, 2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/military-officials-mock-nasrallah-say-he-appeared-sick-and-weak-in-speech/; Staff and Aaron Boxerman, “Hezbollah deputy says Nasrallah ‘is fine’ after IDF claimed he contracted COVID,” Times of Israel, May 28, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-deputy-says-nasrallah-is-fine-after-idf-claimed-he-contracted-covid/>.
- May 18, 2021:** Israeli television station Kan reports Hezbollah has dug a series of tunnels hundreds of kilometers long from Beirut to southern Lebanon. According to the report, Hezbollah dug the tunnels to quickly move its forces to southern Lebanon for a confrontation with Israel. Hezbollah reportedly built the tunnels at the same time it built six tunnels into Israel, which Israel destroyed in 2018. Source: “Hezbollah has dug tunnel network from Beirut to 3km. from Israel border – report,” Times of Israel, May 18, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-has-dug-tunnel-network-of-tunnels-from-beirut-to-southern-lebanon-report/>.
- May 14, 2021:** Israeli forces open fire on a group of people attempting to cut into the Israeli border fence in Lebanon. Most of the individuals flee back to Lebanon, leaving behind explosives. Hezbollah issues a statement naming reserve fighter Mohammad Tahhan as a fatality from the incident. Source: “IDF thwarts infiltration from Lebanon; Hezbollah claims member ‘martyred’ in clash,” Jewish News Syndicate, May 16, 2021, <https://www.jns.org/idf-thwarts-infiltration-from-lebanon-hezbollah-claims-member-martyred/>.
- May 13, 2021:** Three rockets are fired toward Israel from near the Rashidiyeh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. The rockets fall into the sea. Hezbollah denies responsibility. A senior Lebanese political official later tells Britain’s Asharq al-Awsat newspaper that Hezbollah has no interest in getting involved in the current confrontation between Israel and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip. The official confirms ongoing coordination between UNIFIL, the Lebanese army, and Hezbollah and the Amal movement, which largely control southern Lebanon. Sources: Agence France-Presse, “All eyes on Hezbollah as tensions rise on Israel border,” France 24, May 19, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210519-all-eyes-on-hezbollah-as-tensions-rise-on-israel-border/>; “Three rockets launched toward Israel from Lebanon, no damage -Israeli military,” Reuters, May 13, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/three-rockets-launched-toward-israel-lebanon-no-damage-israeli-military-2021-05-13/>; “Lebanon ‘Will Not Allow’ Flare-up Along Southern Front with Israel,” *Asharq al-Awsat* (London), May 16, 2021, <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2975736/lebanon-%E2%80%98will-not-allow%E2%80%99-flare-along-southern-front-israel>.
- May 10, 2021:** Hezbollah raises its military readiness levels as Israel announces military drills in its northern parts. Hezbollah summons its forces to southern Lebanon for the first time since the 2006 conflict. Source: “Lebanon’s Hezbollah on alert as Israel begins military exercise,” Middle East Monitor, May 10, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210510-lebanons-hezbollah-on-alert-as-israel-begins-military-exercise/>.
- May 7, 2021 - May 8, 2021:** On May 7, Nasrallah signals his support for renewed talks between Iran and the United States and Saudi Arabia. Nasrallah calls such dialogue “helpful to calming tension in the region.” Nasrallah also calls on Gaza’s militant factions to support a growing conflict in Jerusalem over the fate of the Arab neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, whose residents face eviction. On May 8, Quds Day, Nasrallah praises Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad for launching rockets at Israel in support of al-Quds, Jerusalem. Sources: “Hezbollah leader backs Iran talks with US, Saudi Arabia,” Associated Press, May 7, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/hezbollah-donald-trump-lebanon-iran-middle-east-36928a4b3f0a66d58df49918fddfd58e>; Liad Osmo, “Hezbollah leaders calls on Gaza factions to join J’lem conflict,” Ynet, May 7, 2021, <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/Hyo1kgXdd>; “Hezbollah Chief Lauds Palestinians’ Resistance, Rejection of Israeli Occupation,” Tasnim News Agency, May 8, 2021, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2021/05/08/2498748/hezbollah-chief-lauds-palestinians-resistance-rejection-of-israeli-occupation>.
- April 27, 2021:** The Israeli military shoots down a Hezbollah unmanned drone in Israeli airspace, the second Hezbollah drone the IDF brought down in the span of a few weeks. The IDF suspects the drones were gathering intelligence. Source: “IDF downs Hezbollah drone flown from Lebanon,” Jewish News Syndicate, April 27, 2021, <https://www.jns.org/idf-downs-hezbollah-drone-flown-from-lebanon/>.
- Hezbollah opens a chain of discount supermarkets in Lebanon called “Al-Sajjad,” after the Shiite cleric Imam Ali Al-Sajjad. Shopping in the stores requires a Hezbollah-issued store card, which is only available to patrons who earn less than 1,500,000 Lebanese pounds (approximately \$125) per month. Source: Zeina Antonios, “In crisis-hit Lebanon, Hezbollah opens supermarkets for eligible shoppers,” France 24, April 16, 2021, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20210416-in-crisis-hit-lebanon-hezbollah-opens-supermarkets-for-eligible-shoppers>.
- On April 23, Saudi Arabian authorities seize more than 5 million Captagon pills hidden in a pomegranate shipment from Lebanon. In response Saudi Arabia imposes a ban on Lebanese produce, which goes into effect on April 25. Lebanese officials protest the ban and pledge to investigate and institute measures to prevent future smuggling. On April 27, Lebanese forces arrest three suspects in the smuggling case. Lebanese farmers claim Lebanon does not have pomegranates to export and the shipment likely came from Syria. A former Hezbollah member tells regional media the terror group regularly exports weapons hidden in produce containers. Another unidentified source claims there is no doubt Hezbollah is responsible. Hezbollah spokesman Ibrahim Al Moussawi denies the group is responsible for the Captagon shipment. Sources: “Lebanon urges Saudi Arabia to reconsider ban on produce,” Associated Press, April 26, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/lebanon-saudi-arabia-financial-markets-business-middle-east-5b08626e5a7419d9e0175be14da8ca72>; “Lebanon asks Saudi Arabia to reconsider ban on its produce,” Reuters, April 26, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanese-president-calls-effort-against-drug-smuggling-after-saudi-ban-2021-04-26/>; “ISF arrests three men linked to drug shipment to Saudi,” *Daily Star* (Beirut), April 27, 2021, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2021/Apr-27/519671-isf-arrests-three-men-linked-to-drug-shipment-to-saudi.ashx>; Media Line, “Hezbollah exported drugs, weapons, with Lebanon government knowledge,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 29, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/experts-hezbollah-exports-drugs-weapons-lebanon-government-knowledge-666654>; Rawad Taha, “Hezbollah behind shipment of seized Captagon in Saudi Arabia: Independent Persian,” *Al-Arabiya*, April 25, 2021, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/04/25/Hezbollah-behind-shipment-of-seized-Captagon-in-Saudi-Arabia-Independent-Persian>.
- February 25, 2021:** The STL schedules a new trial for Ayyash in relation to the attacks on Lebanese politicians Marwan Hamadeh, Georges Hawi, and Elias El-Murr between October 2004 and July 2005. The trial is scheduled to begin June 16, 2021. On March 2, Lebanese forces attempting to arrest Ayyash in Beirut are reportedly met with gunfire from Hezbollah fighters. Hezbollah denies its fighters fired on Lebanese forces. Sources: “Pre-Trial Judge sets tentative date for start of trial in the Ayyash case,” Special Tribunal for Lebanon, February 26, 2021, <https://www.stl-tsl.org/en/media/press-releases/pre-trial-judge-sets-tentative-date-for-start-of-trial-in-the-ayyash-case>; [1] Najia Houssari, “Hezbollah gunmen fight off bid to arrest Rafik Hariiri’s killer,” Arab News, March 3, 2021, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1818776/middle-east>.

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- February 1, 2021:** On February 1, al-Manar publishes video of what it claims to be a downed Israeli drone. On February 3, Hezbollah fires anti-aircraft missiles at an Israeli unmanned aerial drone in Lebanese airspace but misses the target. Sources: Joe Truzman, Twitter post, February 1, 2021, 10:47 a.m., <https://twitter.com/Jtruzmah/status/1356268044390166530>; Israel Defense Forces, Twitter post, February 3, 2021, 8:40 a.m., <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1356960795779883008>.
- January 22, 2021:** Israeli forces shoot down a Hezbollah drone in Israeli airspace. Source: Israel Defense Forces, Twitter post, January 22, 2021, 8:25 a.m., <https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1352608318209089537>.
- : Following the November 27 assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrazadeh in Iran, Nasrallah reportedly cancels all travel plans and intends to remain in one undisclosed location out of concern Israel might target him. Kuwaiti media reports in early December that Nasrallah plans to indefinitely relocate—or has already relocated—to Iran. According to the reports, Lebanese and regional intelligence have recorded increased communications between the IRGC and Hezbollah to plan the move. Sources: Tzvi Joffe, “Hezbollah’s Nasrallah to move to Iran amid regional tensions – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 3, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/hezbollahs-nasrallah-to-move-to-iran-amid-regional-tensions-report-650992>; “Hezbollah chief said to hunker down amid fears he could be targeted by Israel,” *Times of Israel*, November 29, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-chief-said-to-hunker-down-amid-fears-he-could-be-targeted-by-israel/>.
- November 11, 2020:** Nasrallah praises “the humiliating downfall” of U.S. President Donald Trump in the U.S. presidential election and warns “the axis of resistance should be in a state of high readiness to respond twice as hard in case of any American or Israeli folly.” Source: “Lebanon’s Hezbollah chief gloats over Trump’s ‘humiliating downfall’ in U.S. election,” *Reuters*, November 11, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-election-lebanon-hezbollah-int-idUSKBN27R2UT>.
- Hezbollah and Amal stall the formation of a new Lebanese government by demanding several top ministries. On September 22, a Hezbollah arms depot explodes in the village of Ain Qana in south Lebanon, reportedly wounding multiple people. Hezbollah blames the explosion on a “technical error” at the depot and denies any casualties. Sources: “Arms depot of Iran-backed Hezbollah explodes in Lebanon, source says,” *Reuters*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-crisis-south-fire/arms-depot-of-iran-backed-hezbollah-explodes-in-lebanon-source-says-idUSKCN26D1P1>; “Lebanon: Hezbollah arms depot blast caused by ‘technical error,’” *Al Jazeera*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/22/blast-reported-in-hezbollah-stronghold-in-south-lebanon>; “France backs Saad Hariri’s proposal to end political deadlock,” *Al Jazeera*, September 23, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/23/france-supports-idea-by-lebanese-politician-to-end-cabinet-logjam>.
- August 31, 2020:** Aoun designates Lebanon’s ambassador to Germany, Mustapha Adib, as the country’s new prime minister. Adib’s attempts to quickly form a government are delayed by Hezbollah’s demands for several ministries, leading Adib to resign on September 26. Protests spread throughout Lebanon as the government remains paralyzed. Lebanon’s political parties appoint Hariri as prime minister-designate on October 22. Hariri is backed by his own Future Movement, Amal, and the Progressive Socialist Party. Sources: Nazih Osseiran and Raja Abdulrahim, “Lebanon Names New Prime Minister After Weeks of Political Uncertainty,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 31, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/lebanon-names-new-prime-minister-after-weeks-of-political-uncertainty-11598874624>; “Lebanon: Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib resigns,” *Deutsche Welle*, September 26, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/lebanon-prime-minister-designate-mustapha-adib-resigns/a-55062582>; “Lebanon crisis: Saad Hariri returns as PM a year after protests,” *BBC News*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-54630150>.
- August 18, 2020:** The STL finds Ayyash guilty of all charges against him. The STL acquits three other suspected Hezbollah members. Ayyash remains at large at the time of the verdict. The court does not find direct evidence that Hezbollah’s leadership played a role in the bombing. On December 11, the STL sentences Ayyash in absentia to five consecutive life sentences. Sources: “The Prosecutor v. Salim Jamil Ayyash, Hassan Habib Merhi, Hussein Hassan Oneissi, Assad Hassan Sabra – Summary of Judgement,” Special Tribunal for Lebanon, August 18, 2020, 5, <https://www.stl-tsl.org/crs/assets/Uploads/20200818-F3840-PUBLIC-Summary-of-Judgment-FILED-EN-FINAL.pdf>; “Rafik Hariri tribunal: Who were the four accused over 2005 assassination?,” *BBC News*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25757367>; “Hezbollah militant Salim Ayyash given life sentences for Hariri killing,” *BBC News*, December 11, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55271428>.
- On August 4, 2020, an explosion in Beirut’s port kills at least 200 people, wounds more than 6,000 others, and destroys much of the port. In response, the STL delays handing down its verdict, which had originally been scheduled for August 7. Lebanese officials suspect the explosion was caused by negligence in the storage of the explosive fertilizer chemical ammonium nitrate but do not immediately rule out the possibility of terrorism. Suspicion also falls upon Hezbollah, which allegedly used multiple buildings in the port for illegal drug smuggling and other criminal activities. Hezbollah reportedly controls buildings in the port housing weapons and fireworks and some regional intelligence officials suspected a fire at one of the Hezbollah warehouses sparked the explosions. Anti-government protests spread across Beirut the weekend after the blast, leading two government ministers and seven members of parliament to resign. On August 10, Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab dissolves the government after attributing the explosion to widespread corruption. Sources: “Anger Rises After Beirut Blast and Evidence Officials Knew of Risks,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/world/middleeast/beirut-lebanon-explosion.html>; “Pronouncement of Judgment in the Ayyash et al. case postponed to 18 August 2020,” Special Tribunal for Lebanon, August 5, 2020, <https://www.stl-tsl.org/en/media/press-releases/pronouncement-of-judgment-in-the-ayyash-et-al-case-postponed-to-18-august-2020>; Bassem Mroue and Zeina Karam, “Negligence suspected in Beirut blast involving chemicals,” *Associated Press*, August 6, 2020, <https://apnews.com/4475998de078a93bbe91b7ac9d43ada2>; Hollie McKay, “Beirut blasts likely accidental – but Hezbollah activities at the port under scrutiny,” *Fox News*, August 5, 2020, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/beirut-blast-hezbollah-port-under-scrutiny>; Michael Georgy and Ellen Francis, “Lebanese government quits amid fury over Beirut blast,” *Reuters*, August 10, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast/lebanon-government-set-to-resign-amid-outrage-over-beirut-blast-minister-idUSKCN2560XY>; Ted Regencia, Arwa Ibrahim, and Farah Najjar, “Second day of protests as anger over Beirut explosion grows: Live,” *Al Jazeera*, August 9, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/hundreds-protesters-injured-anger-simmers-beirut-live-200808234355971.html>.
- July 20, 2020:** Hezbollah operative Ali Kamel Mohsin is killed after a series of airstrikes south of Damascus against weapons depots and military positions belonging to Syrian regime forces and Iran-backed militia fighters. The SANA news agency claims the strikes were launched from the Golan Heights, implicating Israeli responsibility. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the strikes killed five non-Syrian paramilitary fighters and wounded seven Syrian soldiers and four non-Syrian combatants. Hezbollah accuses Israel of killing Mohsin and promises revenge. Sources: Seth J. Frantzman, “Hezbollah threatens Israel after member of terror group killed in Syria,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 22, 2020, https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/hezbollah-threatens-israel-after-member-of-terror-group-killed-in-syria-635865?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1378653; Judah Ari Gross and Agence France-Presse, “Hezbollah says one of its fighters killed in Israeli strike in Syria,” *Times of Israel*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-says-one-of-its-fighters-killed-in-israeli-strike-in-syria/>.
- In mid-July, 235 legislators from the European Union, United Kingdom, Switzerland, United States, Canada, and Israel sign a declaration calling on the European Union to ban Hezbollah in its entirety. On July 22, U.S. Department of State spokesperson Morgan Ortugas tells *Al Arabiya* TV the United States will continue to apply “severe economic pressure” on Hezbollah. Sources: “Transatlantic Declaration,” *AJC Transatlantic Institute*, accessed July 22, 2020, <https://transatlanticinstitute.org/transatlantic-declaration-eu-must-ban-hezbollah/>;

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Lukas Mandl and Daniel Schwammenthal, "It's Time for the E.U. to List Hezbollah as a Terror Organization | Opinion," *Newsweek*, July 17, 2020, <https://www.newsweek.com/its-time-eu-list-hezbollah-terror-organization-opinion-1518373>; "US to put 'severe economic pressure' on Hezbollah," Arab News, July 22, 2020, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1708361/middle-east>.

- In early April**, the Israeli military accuses Syria of helping Hezbollah build a permanent military presence in the Syrian Golan Heights. On April 4, Hezbollah commander Ali Mohammed Younis is found stabbed to death in his car south of Nabatiya in southern Lebanon. Younis was "responsible for pursuing spies and collaborators" within Hezbollah's ranks, according to Iranian media. Hezbollah begins an investigation of the murder, which occurred two weeks after the murder of a former member of the pro-Israel South Lebanon Army by unknown assailants. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for Younis's death, but some Lebanese and Iranian media outlets suspect Israel's Mossad. On April 15, an airstrike in Syria targets a car carrying Hezbollah members near the Israeli border. The car is driven by Mustafa Mughniyeh, son of slain Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh. Mughniyeh and the others in the car survive the attack. Israel is suspected of carrying out the strike. On April 17, Hezbollah members attempt to cut through the border fence separating Israel from Lebanon before they are repelled by Israeli forces. Israel reports the incident to the United Nations as a violation of Resolution 1701. Sources: Tzvi Joffe, "Mossad blamed for assassination of Hezbollah commander – report," *Jerusalem Post*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/hezbollah-commander-assassinated-in-southern-lebanon-623621>; "Hezbollah anti-spy commander killed in south Lebanon," Times of Israel, April 5, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-anti-spy-commander-killed-in-south-lebanon/>; Judah Ari Gross, "Man who escaped strike on car in Syria named as slain Hezbollah leader's son," Times of Israel, April 16, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/man-who-escaped-strike-on-car-in-syria-named-as-slain-hezbollah-leaders-son/>; "Israel accuses Hezbollah of trying to breach northern border," Times of Israel, April 19, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-accuses-hezbollah-of-trying-to-breach-northern-border/>; Judah Ari Gross, "20 years after Lebanon pullout, IDF faces a stronger Hezbollah – in Syria too," Times of Israel, May 21, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/20-years-after-withdrawing-from-lebanon-idf-faces-a-bigger-stronger-hezbollah/>.
- January 22, 2020:** Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab convenes his new government, which includes two Hezbollah ministers and members of Hezbollah-allied parties. Hariri's Future Movement and other pro-Western parties remain outside of the cabinet, drawing international concern that Hezbollah's agenda would dominate Lebanon's new cabinet. Sources: Ben Hubbard and Hwaida Saad, "Lebanon, Mired in Crises, Turns to a Professor as Prime Minister," *New York Times*, December 19, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/19/world/middleeast/lebanon-prime-minister-hassan-diab.html>; Associated Press, "Riots in Lebanon's capital leave more than 150 injured," NBC News, January 18, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/riots-lebanon-s-capital-leave-more-150-injured-n1118461>; Tom Perry and Ellen Francis, "Facing economic crisis, Lebanon's government weighs options," Reuters, January 22, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-crisis/facing-economic-crisis-lebanons-government-meets-for-first-time-idUSKBN1ZL0JW>.
- January 5, 2020:** Hezbollah threatens revenge against the United States after a U.S. airstrike killed IRGC-Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani in Iraq on January 3. Nasrallah calls for Hezbollah to target the U.S. military presence in the Middle East but avoid U.S. civilians. Later in the month, Hezbollah sends Mohammed al-Kawtharani to Iraq to coordinate Iranian-backed militias. During meetings with Iraqi militia commanders, Kawtharani reportedly berates the commanders for failing to develop a strategy to contain protests against the Iraqi government and the militias represented in the Iraqi parliament. Sources: Liz Sly and Sarah Dadouch, "Hezbollah says retribution for Soleimani's death must target U.S. military, not civilians," *Washington Post*, January 5, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/hezbollah-says-retribution-for-soleimanis-death-must-target-us-military-not-civilians/2020/01/05/50869828-2e62-11ea-bffe-020c88b3f120_story.html; "Tehran-backed Hezbollah steps in to guide Iraqi militias in Soleimani's wake," Reuters, February 11, 2020, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-iran-iraq-hezbollah-insight-idUKKBN205204>.
- November 2, 2019 - November 3, 2019:** Twitter suspends accounts belonging to Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV network, including accounts in English, French, and Spanish. Al-Manar calls the suspensions a result of "political pressures." Twitter also suspends several Hamas-affiliated accounts. The suspensions come a week after a group of U.S. congressmen wrote to Twitter to complain about the presence of Hamas and Hezbollah accounts, to which a Twitter spokesman responded that the company differentiates between the political and military wings of said groups because they have members who have been elected to political offices. Sources: Adam Rasgon, "Twitter suspends Hamas- and Hezbollah-affiliated handles," Times of Israel, November 3, 2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/twitter-suspends-hamas-and-hezbollah-affiliated-handles/>; Tzvi Joffe, "Twitter Suspends Hamas, Hezbollah-Affiliated Accounts," *Jerusalem Post*, November 3, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hezbollah-affiliated-TV-stations-Twitter-suspended-606663>; Jackson Richman, Lawmakers accuse Twitter of allowing content from Hamas and Hezbollah, violating law," Jewish News Syndicate, October 23, 2019, <https://www.jns.org/legislators-accuse-twitter-of-allowing-content-from-hamas-and-hezbollah-violating-law/>.
- September 19, 2019:** Federal prosecutors indict Alexei Saab on terrorism charges. Saab is accused of scouting out attack targets for Hezbollah in the New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. areas. Saab is alleged to have been sending photos of proposed monumental targets to the Islamic Jihad Organizations—a faction of Hezbollah—in Lebanon. Source: Jeffery Martin, "New Jersey 'Hezbollah Scout' Assessed Targets In Nyc, Boston And Washington, Feds Claim," *Newsweek*, September 19, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/new-jersey-hezbollah-scout-assessed-targets-nyc-boston-washington-feds-claim-1460308>.
- September 12, 2019:** The U.S. considers intensifying sanctions against Hezbollah by placing sanctions on both direct affiliates and allies of Hezbollah in Lebanon. It is implied that the legislation could target the Shiite Amal movement as well as Lebanon's Maronite Christian President Michael Aoun for investigation. Source: "New sanctions could extend to allies of Hezbollah in Lebanon: U.S. envoy," Reuters, September 12, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-economy-sanctions/new-sanctions-could-extend-to-allies-of-hezbollah-in-lebanon-u-s-envoy-idUSKCN1VX2E1>.
- August 25, 2019:** Two drones crash into the southern suburbs of Beirut, an area that is home to many supporters of Hezbollah. The aircraft is suspected to have been launched from Israel. Lebanon's president has said that the drone attack was "a declaration of war" that justifies a military response. Hassan Nasrallah states that no one was seriously injured. Source: "Lebanon president: Israel drone attack a declaration of war," Al Jazeera, August 26, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/israel-strikes-palestinian-base-lebanon-reports-190826071121071.html>; Ben Hubbard, "Hezbollah Says Drones That Crashed in Beirut Suburbs Came From Israel," *New York Times*, August 25, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/25/world/middleeast/israel-drones-beirut-hezbollah.html?module=inline>.
- August 24, 2019:** Israeli warplanes strike targets in Aqraba, where Iran was preparing to attack Israel using explosive-laden "killer drones." Although Israeli forces only sought to destroy offensive infrastructure, two Lebanese operatives are killed. Israeli forces claim Iran has also developed a new defense tactic—kamikaze-style unmanned vehicles designed to hit a target and blow up on impact. Source: David M. Halbfinger, "Israel Says It Struck Iranian 'Killer Drones' in Syria," *New York Times*, August 24, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/24/world/middleeast/israel-says-it-struck-iranian-killer-drones-in-syria.html?module=inline>.
- August 24, 2019:** The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights claims that two members of Hezbollah and one Iranian are killed in Israeli strikes near Damascus. An Israeli military spokesman said Israeli aircraft struck Iranian forces near Damascus that had been planning to launch "killer drones" at targets in Israel. Source: "War monitor says two Hezbollah members, one Iranian killed in Damascus strikes overnight," Reuters, August 24, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-strikes->

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casualties/war-monitor-says-two-hezbollah-members-one-iranian-killed-in-damascus-strikes-overnight-idUSKCN1VF0AE?il=0.

- **August 8, 2019:** The District Court of the District of Columbia sentences Kassim Tajideen to five years in prison and orders him to forfeit \$50 million. Tajideen is the operator of a network of businesses in Lebanon and Africa and is also designated as a financier of Hezbollah, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The designation prohibited Tajideen from being involved in, or benefiting from, transactions involving U.S. persons or companies without a license from the Treasury Department. Source: "Lebanese Businessman Tied by Treasury Department to Hezbollah is Sentenced to Prison for Money Laundering Scheme Involving the Evasion of U.S. Sanctions," The United States Department of Justice, August 8, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/lebanese-businessman-tied-treasury-department-hezbollah-sentenced-prison-money-laundering>.
- **July 23, 2019:** Israel's U.N. ambassador Danny Danon claims that in 2018 and 2019, "Israel found that Iran and the Quds Force have begun to advance the exploitation of civilian maritime channels" and that Beirut port "is now the Port of Hezbollah." Hezbollah leader Syied Hassan Nasrallah denies the claim. Source: "Hezbollah denies using Lebanon's port for arms smuggling," Reuters, July 26, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-israel-hezbollah/hezbollah-denies-using-lebanons-port-for-arms-smuggling-idUSKCN1UL2C6>.
- **July 12, 2019:** Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah claims that the group has reduced its forces in Syria although it still has fighters all over the country. The heavily armed Lebanese Shi'ite movement has played a vital role in helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad reclaim much of the country. Source: "Hezbollah cut down its forces in Syria: Nasrallah," Reuters, July 12, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-hezbollah/hezbollah-cut-down-its-forces-in-syria-nasrallah-idUSKCN1U7211>.
- **July 2, 2019:** Israel launches airstrikes near Homs, targeting a research center and a military airport. Many Hezbollah members and Iranians are deployed in Homs. Although the number is yet to be confirmed, Hezbollah personnel are reported to have been injured. Source: "Syria calls Israeli strikes 'state terrorism'," Al Jazeera, July 2, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/syria-calls-israeli-strikes-state-terrorism-190702143127588.html>.
- **May 15, 2019:** A court in the United Arab Emirates sentences six Lebanese men, four of them for life and the two others for 10 years each, for setting up a terrorist cell with links to Lebanon's Hezbollah. Five others were acquitted. The 11 defendants, all of them Shi'ite Muslims who have lived and worked in the UAE for more than 15 years, were arrested in late 2017 and early 2018. They were charged in February with establishing a cell linked to Hezbollah and were previously accused of plotting to bomb a "vital facility" in the UAE. Source: "UAE court sentences six Lebanese to jail in Hezbollah trial: state media," Reuters, May 15, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uae-security-lebanon-hezbollah/uae-court-sentences-six-lebanese-to-jail-in-hezbollah-trial-state-media-idUSKCN1SL1WB>.
- **April 16, 2019:** A court in Bahrain sentences 139 people for terrorism offenses. Over 69 defendants are given life sentences and all but one of the 139 has their citizenship revoked. The defendants were accused of building a cell called "Bahraini Hezbollah," in order to sow discord in the Gulf kingdom. Some had trained in Iran, Lebanon, and Iraq under the guidance of members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Source: Bethan McKernan, "Bahrain court sentences 139 to jail in mass terror trial," *Guardian*, April 16, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/16/bahrain-court-jails-139-after-terrorism-trial>.
- **March 13, 2019:** Israeli officials claim Ali Mussa Daqduq, a Hezbollah operative accused of killing five U.S. troops in 2007, is establishing a terror network in the disputed Golan Heights, spotlighting threats the militant group poses to its security as the Netanyahu government pushes for sovereignty over the strategic area. Israeli intelligence officials claim Daqduq resurfaced on the Syrian-controlled side of the Golan Heights about six months ago and began efforts to set up a network to eventually launch attacks into Israel. The U.S. charged Daqduq in 2007, but Iraq released him from custody in 2012 because of what officials said was lack of convincing evidence against him. Source: Felicia Schwartz, "Israel Says Hezbollah Operative Is Setting Up a Terror Network in Golan Heights," *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/israel-says-hezbollah-operative-is-setting-up-a-terror-network-in-golan-heights-11552449610>.
- **February 25, 2019:** Britain says it plans to ban all wings of Hezbollah due to its destabilizing influence in the Middle East, classifying the group as a terrorist organization. The U.K. government previously proscribed Hezbollah's external security unit and its military wing in 2001 and 2008 respectively. Source: Michael Holden, "Britain to expand ban on Lebanon's Hezbollah, calling it terrorist group," Reuters, February 25, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-lebanon-hezbollah/britain-to-expand-ban-on-lebanons-hezbollah-calling-it-terrorist-group-idUSKCN1QE1D2>.
- **January 31, 2019:** After an eight-month delay, Lebanese leaders announce the formation of a new governing coalition led by Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri. Hezbollah is awarded the health ministry, which has the fourth-largest budget of Lebanon's ministerial portfolios. Hezbollah names Jamil Jabak as health minister, though he is not a Hezbollah member. Jabak reportedly once served as Nasrallah's personal physician. The U.S. Department of State warns against allowing Hezbollah to usurp government resources. On February 12, Hariri releases a statement reaffirming the right of Lebanese citizens to "resist Israeli occupation and repel its aggression," seemingly affirming Hezbollah's right to maintain its arms. Sources: "Formation of a New Government in Lebanon," U.S. Department of State, February 1, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2019/02/288713.htm>; "Lebanese leaders agree new government: political sources," Reuters, January 31, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-government/lebanese-leaders-agree-new-government-political-sources-idUSKCN1PP261?il=0>; Vivian Yee and Hwaida Saad, "As Hezbollah Rises in Lebanon's Government, Fears About U.S. Response Follow," *New York Times*, February 1, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/world/middleeast/hezbollah-lebanon.html>; Joseph Haboush, "New Cabinet to Face Parliament Vote," *Daily Star* (Beirut), February 12, 2019, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2019/Feb-12/476424-new-cabinet-to-face-parliament-vote.ashx>.
- **December 4, 2018:** Israel launches Operation Northern Shield, an operation intended to "expose and destroy" a series of tunnels it says Hezbollah dug into Israel from Lebanon. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon states, "the activity of Hezbollah, building those attack tunnels from Lebanon to Israel, is a blatant violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701," referring to the United Nations resolution that brought an end to Israel's month-long conflict with Hezbollah in 2006. In response to the operation, Hezbollah states it will not change its behavior in southern Lebanon. Source: Colin Dwyer and Bill Chappell, "In response to the operation, Hezbollah said it would not change its behavior in southern Lebanon," NPR, December 4, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/12/04/673181288/israels-army-says-it-found-tunnels-dug-by-hezbollah-beneath-border-with-lebanon>.

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- **September 20, 2018:** Hassan Nasrallah says it has attained precision-guided missiles in spite of Israeli attempts to keep hi-tech weapons out of its hands.
Nasrallah's comments were broadcast on a large screen to supporters in Beirut's majority Shia suburb of Dahiya. The Israeli military has said Hezbollah has between 100,000 and 120,000 short-range missiles and rockets, as well as several hundred longer-range missiles. Source: "Hezbollah to Israel: 'Precision' missiles now obtained," Al Jazeera, September 20, 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/hezbollah-highly-accurate-missiles-stay-syria-180920141216036.html>.
- On September 19, Nasrallah declares that Hezbollah will remain in Syria indefinitely with the consent of the Syrian leadership.
On September 20, Nasrallah publicly claims that Israeli strikes in Syria have failed to prevent Hezbollah from obtaining "highly accurate" missiles. During his September 27 address to the U.N. General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed Israeli intelligence showing Hezbollah precision missile facilities in and around civilian areas of Lebanon, including Lebanon's international airport in Beirut. The Lebanese government rejects Netanyahu's accusations that Hezbollah has missile facilities near Beirut's airport. Sources: Dahlia Nehme and Laila Bassam, "Hezbollah leader says group will stay in Syria until further notice," Reuters, September 19, 2018, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-nasrallah-hezbollah-leader-says-group-will-stay-in-syria-until-further-notice-idUKKCN1LZ2KX>; "Hezbollah leader boasts group has 'highly accurate' missiles," Associated Press, September 20, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/1e3d808059da4107b1ca81c2244b4077>; "What Iran hides, Israel will find": full text of Netanyahu's UN speech," Times of Israel, September 27, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/what-iran-hides-israel-will-find-full-text-of-netanyahus-un-speech/>; Dana Khraiche, "Lebanon Summons Envoys to Refute Netanyahu's Missile Claims," Bloomberg, October 1, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-01/lebanon-summons-envoys-to-refute-netanyahu-s-missile-claims>.
- In Lebanon's first parliamentary elections since 2009, Hezbollah and its allies win 70 seats in Lebanon's 128-seat parliament.
Nasrallah calls the results a "political and moral victory" for Hezbollah that would guarantee the protection of "the resistance." Sources: Ben Hubbard and Hwaida Saad, "Lebanon Elections Boost Hezbollah's Clout," *New York Times*, May 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/07/world/middleeast/lebanon-election-hezbollah.html>; Laila Bassam and Tom Perry, "Hezbollah eyes bigger role in next Lebanon government," Reuters, May 23, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-election-hezbollah/hezbollah-eyes-bigger-role-in-next-lebanon-government-idUSKCN110300>; "Hezbollah's Nasrallah says Lebanon results are 'victory' for the resistance," Reuters, May 7, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-election-hezbollah/hezbollahs-nasrallah-says-lebanon-results-are-victory-for-the-resistance-idUSKBN1181PU>.
- **May 1, 2018:** Morocco severs diplomatic and economic ties with Iran after accusing the regime of providing funding, weapons, and training to Polisario Front independence fighters in the Western Sahara.
The Moroccan government says it has proof that Iran-backed Hezbollah has provided resources to the rebels. Iran denies the charges. Hezbollah accuses Morocco of succumbing to American, Israeli, and Saudi pressure. Sources: "Iran denies supporting Polisario after Morocco severs ties," Associated Press, May 2, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/8ac8b53a0c474e01b6edf8a745a3823d/Iran-denies-supporting-Polisario-after-Morocco-severs-ties>; Amira El Masati, "Morocco cuts ties with Iran over Sahara weapons dispute," Associated Press, May 1, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/3aebb7da756940c99434b420a45aa84b/Morocco-cuts-ties-with-Iran-over-Sahara-weapons-dispute>.
- On November 3, Prime Minister Saad Hariri flees to Saudi Arabia.
The following day, he announces his resignation, alleging that Hezbollah had attempted to assassinate him a few days earlier. Hezbollah rejects the claim and accuses Saudi Arabia of directing Hariri to resign in order to weaken Hezbollah. Hariri returns on November 21 and rescinds his resignation. He states that he will not accept Hezbollah to "affect our Arab brothers or target the security and stability of their countries." Sources: Zeina Karam, "Lebanese premier resigns, plunging nation into uncertainty," Associated Press, November 4, 2017, <https://apnews.com/019113ca565d4170ac7c23b687947d74/Lebanese-premier-resigns-plunging-nation-into-uncertainty>; Agence France-Presse, "Hezbollah says Saudi Arabia 'imposed' Lebanon PM's resignation," Yahoo News, November 5, 2017, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/hezbollah-says-saudi-imposed-lebanon-pms-resignation-172701903.html>; Ellen Francis and Laila Bassam, "Lebanon's PM Hariri shelves resignation, easing crisis," Reuters, November 22, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-politics/lebanons-pm-hariri-shelves-resignation-easing-crisis-idUSKBN1DM0IP>; "Lebanon's Hariri takes critical line on Hezbollah," Reuters, November 25, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-politics/lebanons-hariri-takes-critical-line-on-hezbollah-idUSKBN1DP0HC>.
- **October 31, 2016:** Lebanon's parliament elects as president MP Michel Aoun—whose Free Patriotic Movement allied with Hezbollah in 2006.
Sources: "Michel Aoun elected president of Lebanon," Al Jazeera, October 31, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/michel-aoun-elected-president-lebanon-161031105331767.html>; Ben Lynfield, "Political victory for Hezbollah expected in Lebanon election," *Jerusalem Post*, October 31, 2016, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Political-victory-for-Hezbollah-expected-in-Lebanon-election-471274>.
- Senior Hezbollah military commander Mustafa Badreddine is killed in artillery shelling in Damascus, Syria.
He is the most senior Hezbollah leader to be killed fighting in Syria to date. Badreddine was reportedly in charge of Hezbollah's operations in Syria. He had also been accused of masterminding the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Sources: "Hezbollah: Mustafa Badreddine killed in rebel shelling," Al Jazeera, May 14, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/hezbollah-mustafa-badreddine-killed-shelling-160514070756124.html>; Agence France-Presse, "Hariri tribunal axes trial of slain Hezbollah commander," Al-Monitor, July 11, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/afp/2016/07/lebanon-hezbollah-trial-hariri.html>.
- **January 28, 2015:** Hezbollah launches an anti-tank missile at an Israeli military vehicle near the border with Lebanon, killing two Israeli soldiers.
Mortar bombs hit an Israeli military position in the Golan Heights. Sources: "Israel tells U.N. will defend itself against Hezbollah," Reuters, January 28, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/28/us-mideast-israel-lebanon-troops-idUSKBN0L11QQ20150128>; "Mortar bombs hit Israeli military position in Golan Heights: army," Reuters, January 28, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/28/us-mideast-israel-lebanon-golan-idUSKBN0L115A20150128>.
- **January 18, 2015:** An Israeli helicopter conducts a missile strike in Syria, killing five Hezbollah operatives.
Among the dead are Mohamad Issa, an Iranian Hezbollah general and former commander in the IRGC, as well as Jihad Mughniyeh, son of Hezbollah's late military commander Imad Mughniyeh. Sources: "Israeli source confirms attack in Syria: Israeli TV," Reuters, January 18, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/18/us-israel-syria-hezbollah-idUSKBN0KR0SG20150118>; "Late Hezbollah military leader's son killed in Israeli strike in Syria - sources close to Hezbollah," Reuters, January 18, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/18/mideast-crisis-syria-israel-idUSL6N0UX0PD20150118>.
- **September 20, 2014:** Hezbollah reportedly uses armed drones for the first time, attacking a Nusra Front target near the Lebanese-Syrian border.
Source: Peter Bergen and Emily Schneider, "Hezbollah armed drones? Militants' new weapon," CNN, September 22, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/22/opinion/bergen-schneider-armed-drone-hezbollah/>.
- The European Union labels Hezbollah's armed wing a terrorist organization.
Source: Justyna Pawlak and Adrian Croft, "EU Adds Hezbollah's Military Wing to Terrorism List," Reuters, July 22, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/22/us-eu-hezbollah-idUSBRE96K0DA20130722>.

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- Hezbollah chief Nasrallah admits to Hezbollah's role in the Syrian civil war and pledges to defend the Syrian regime. Also that month, Nigerian authorities uncover a Hezbollah weapons cache, including rifles, anti-tank weaponry, and an RPG, in Kano city, Nigeria. Nigeria's security agencies allege the weapons were to be used against Israeli and Western interests. Nigerian authorities also arrest three dual Lebanese-Nigerian citizens, who later admit to being trained by Hezbollah and stockpiling the weapons. Sources: "Hezbollah Promises Syria 'Victory,'" BBC News, May 25, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-22669230>; "Nigeria: Hezbollah armoury discovered in Kano city," BBC News, May 30, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22722948>; Benjamin Weinthal, "Analysis: The Rise of Hezbollah in Africa," *Jerusalem Post*, July 11, 2013, <https://www.jpost.com/International/The-rise-of-Hezbollah-in-Africa-319512>.
- **March 22, 2013:** Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati resigns after a dispute with Hezbollah over delayed parliamentary elections and Hezbollah's refusal to extend the tenure of Lebanon's Sunni national police chief. Hezbollah alleges that external pressures caused Mikati's resignation. Sources: Laila Bassam, "Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati resigns," Reuters, March 22, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-mikati-idUSBRE92L0TG20130322>; Nasser Chararah, "Hezbollah Says External Pressures Forced the Mikati Resignation," *Al-Monitor*, April 2, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/hezbollah-mikati-resignation.html>.
- **September 13, 2012:** The U.S. Treasury sanctions Hassan Nasrallah, Talal Hamiyeh, and Mustafa Badreddine for supporting the Assad regime. Later that month, U.S. and Lebanese officials claim Hezbollah has ramped up its support for Assad's regime, sending him military advisers to assist with the battle against opposition forces. Lebanese officials also claim that Hezbollah's fighters are fighting and dying in the conflict to save Assad. Sources: "Treasury Designates Hizballah Leadership," U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 13, 2012, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1709.aspx>; Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Hezbollah increases support for Syrian regime, U.S. and Lebanese officials say," *Washington Post*, September 26, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/hezbollah-increases-support-for-syrian-regime-us-and-lebanese-officials-say/2012/09/26/d1970396-0591-11e2-aff-d6c7f20a83bf_story.html?utm_term=.bd9f79b207b4.
- **August 10, 2012:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctions Hezbollah for its support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime. According to Treasury, since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in early 2011, Hezbollah has provided "training, advice and extensive logistical support to the Government of Syria's increasingly ruthless efforts to fight against the opposition." Source: "Treasury Targets Hizballah for Supporting the Assad Regime," U.S. Department of the Treasury, August 10, 2012, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1676.aspx>.
- **July 18, 2012:** A suicide bomber attacks a tour bus in Burgas, Bulgaria, killing five Israeli tourists and the Bulgarian driver, and wounding 35 other Israeli tourists. U.S. intelligence accuses Hezbollah of carrying out the attack under Iranian guidance. In September 2020, a Bulgarian court sentenced Meliad Farah and Hassan El Hajj Hassan in absentia to life in prison for the attack. According to Bulgarian prosecutors, the two men are linked to Hezbollah. Sources: Nicholas Kulis and Eric Schmitt, "Hezbollah Is Blamed in Attack on Israeli Tourist Bus in Bulgaria," *New York Times*, July 19, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/world/europe/explosion-on-bulgaria-tour-bus-kills-at-least-five-israelis.html>; Agence France-Presse, "Bulgaria court delays trial of Burgas bus bomber accomplices," *Times of Israel*, September 26, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/bulgaria-court-delays-trial-of-burgas-bus-bomber-accomplices/>; Tsvetelia Tsoolova, "Bulgarian court sentences two men to life in prison for 2012 bus bombing," Reuters, September 21, 2020, https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-bulgaria-israel-trial-blast/bulgarian-court-jails-two-men-for-life-for-2012-bus-bombing-idUKKCN26C0VG?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1545415.
- **June 30, 2011:** The Special Tribunal for Lebanon issues arrest warrants for four men, including two Hezbollah members, suspected in the 2005 bombing that killed former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others. Source: Nada Bakri, "4 Indicted in Killing of Rafik Hariri, Ex-Leader of Lebanon," *New York Times*, June 30, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/01/world/middleeast/01lebanon.html>.
- **June 13, 2011:** Hezbollah receives two portfolios in the new 30-member government, while its political allies receive 14 portfolios. Hariri labels the new cabinet a "Hezbollah government." Source: "Lebanon: Hezbollah dominates new cabinet of PM Mikati," BBC News, June 13, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13750628>.
- After a dispute with Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri about indictments in the assassination of his father, Hezbollah quits Lebanon's unity government, causing it to collapse on January 11. Hezbollah nominates businessman and former prime minister Najib Mikati as the new prime minister. On January 24, President Michel Suleiman appoints Mikati to the position. Source: Martin Chulov, "Lebanon's Unity Government Collapses," *Guardian* (London), January 12, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/12/hezbollah-quits-lebanon-unity-government>; "Profile: Najib Mikati," BBC News, January 25, 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12277773>; "Lebanon: Hezbollah dominates new cabinet of PM Mikati," BBC News, June 13, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13750628>.
- U.S. and Colombian authorities break up an international cocaine smuggling and money-laundering ring that allegedly used some of its profits to finance Hezbollah. Source: Chris Kraul and Sebastian Rotella, "Drug Probe Finds Hezbollah Link," *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/oct/22/world/fg-cocainering22>.
- Hezbollah launches bloody street battles against Lebanese forces after a government decision to dismantle the group's private telephone network, which Hezbollah calls a declaration of war. Hezbollah fighters capture sections of western Beirut and attack media offices affiliated with the governing Future movement in clashes that leave 62 people dead across the country. The Lebanese government calls Hezbollah's actions "an armed and bloody coup," while international media report the conflict as the worst sectarian fighting in Lebanon since the end of Lebanon's civil war. The fighting ends with a Qatari-negotiated agreement that brings Hezbollah into a national-unity government and gives Hezbollah's political minority veto power in a new cabinet. Sources: Nadim Ladki, "Hezbollah says Beirut government declares war," Reuters, May 8, 2008, http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSL08466882._CH_.2400; Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri, "Hezbollah Seizes Swath of Beirut From U.S.-Backed Lebanese Government," *New York Times*, May 10, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/10/world/middleeast/10lebanon.html>; "Hezbollah rocks eastern villages," BBC News, May 11, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7394853.stm; Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri, "Deal for Lebanese Factions Leaves Hezbollah Stronger," *New York Times*, May 22, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/22/world/middleeast/22lebanon.html>; Tom Perry, "Lebanon government denounces Hezbollah 'coup' in Beirut," Reuters, May 9, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-conflict-idUSL0742599820080509>; "Lebanon rivals agree crisis deal," BBC News, May 21, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7411835.stm>.
- **February 12, 2008:** A car bomb in Damascus kills Imad Fayez Mugniyah, considered Hezbollah's top planner of worldwide terrorist operations. Hezbollah accuses Israel, which denies involvement. In January 2015, a former U.S. intelligence official reveals that the CIA and Mossad are responsible. Sources: James Risen, "Before bin Laden, One of World's Most Feared Men," *New York Times*, February 14, 2008,

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/14/world/middleeast/14mugniyah.html>; Adam Goldman and Ellen Nakashima, "CIA and Mossad killed senior Hezbollah figure in car bombing," *Washington Post*, January 30, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-and-mossad-killed-senior-hezbollah-figure-in-car-bombing/2015/01/30/ebb88682-968a-11e4-8005-1924ede3e54a_story.html.

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- **March 17, 1992:** A suicide bomber detonates a pickup truck at the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 29 and wounding 242. Hezbollah admits to orchestrating the attack. Source: Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah's 1992 Attack in Argentina Is a Warning for Modern-Day Europe," *Atlantic*, March 19, 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/03/hezbollahs-1992-attack-in-argentina-is-a-warning-for-modern-day-europe/274160/>.
- **February 16, 1992:** An Israeli helicopter guns down Hezbollah leader Sayyad Abbas Musawi. Current leader Hassan Nasrallah assumes the leadership of the organization. Sources: Clyde Haberman, "Israelis Kill Chief of Pro-Iran Shiites in South Lebanon," *New York Times*, February 17, 1992, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/17/world/israelis-kill-chief-of-pro-iran-shiites-in-south-lebanon.html>; Eben Kaplan, "Profile: Hassan Nasrallah," Council on Foreign Relations, August 11, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/lebanon/profile-hassan-nasrallah/p11132>.
- **June 4, 1991:** Hezbollah launches its satellite news television station Al-Manar. Source: Middle East Quarterly, "Al-Manar: Hezbollah TV, 24/7," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Winter 2004, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/al-manar-hizbullah-tv-24-7>.
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- **September 20, 1984:** A suicide car bomber blows up in the annex of the U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 24 and wounding dozens more. The Islamic Jihad Organization, a.k.a. Hezbollah, claims responsibility in a phone call hours after the attack. Sources: John Kifner, "23 Die, Including 2 Americans, in Terrorist Car Bomb Attack on the U.S. Embassy at Beirut; Blast Kills Driver," *New York Times*; September 21, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/21/world/23-die-including-2-americans-terrorist-car-bomb-attack-us-embassy-beirut-blast.html>; Country Reports on Terrorism 2014, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239413.htm>.
- **October 23, 1983:** Suicide truck bombing of U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut kills 241 U.S. service personnel. Hezbollah is suspected of carrying out the attack. The U.S. government blames Hezbollah. Simultaneously, a suicide bomber drives an explosives-filled pickup truck into a building housing French paratroopers, killing 58 French soldiers. Source: "Beirut Marine Barracks Bombing Fast Facts," CNN, June 13, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/13/world/meast/beirut-marine-barracks-bombing-fast-facts/index.html>.
- **April 18, 1983:** An explosives-filled pickup truck drives into the U.S. embassy in Beirut and explodes, killing Beirut kills 63 and wounding 120. It is the first Hezbollah attack to target American citizens.

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Sources: "Global Terrorism Database," START: A Center of Excellence of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, accessed June 12, 2014, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/IncidentSummary.aspx?gtid=198304180001>; Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. Beirut Embassy Bombed; 33 Reported Killed, 80 Hurt; Pro-Iran Sect Admits Action," *New York Times*, April 19, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/19/world/us-beirut-embassy-bombed-33-reported-killed-80-hurt-pro-iran-sect-admits-action.html>; Associated Press, "Iran Denies Any Involvement in Bombing of U.S. Embassy," *New York Times*, April 20, 1983, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/04/20/world/iran-denies-any-involvement-in-bombing-of-us-embassy.html>.

- Hezbollah emerges in Lebanon with Iranian support.

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Violent history:

According to former CIA director George Tenet, “Hezbollah, as an organization with capability and worldwide presence, is [al-Qaeda’s] equal, if not a far more capable organization.”²⁵⁷ Hezbollah is credited with attacks against Israeli soldiers during Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon; the 1983 attack on U.S. military barracks in Lebanon; and the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, as well as other attacks.²⁵⁸ In 2012, U.S. State Department Counterterrorism Coordinator Daniel Benjamin said, “Hezbollah and Iran will both continue to maintain a heightened level of terrorist activity and operations in the near future,” and could launch attacks “with little or no warning.”²⁵⁹

In its more-than-three-decade history, Hezbollah has transformed—thanks largely to Iranian patronage—from a singularly focused terrorist group fighting Israel into a developed army participating in regional conflicts. Hezbollah’s use of drone technology illustrates its advancement in weaponry. Hezbollah began using Iranian-supplied drones in 2002, primarily for reconnaissance missions. In September 2014, Iranian media reported that Hezbollah had used an armed unmanned aerial vehicle to kill 23 members of the Nusra Front in Lebanon—a significant leap forward in weapons technology for the terrorist group.²⁶⁰ In August 2016, Hezbollah released video footage of its use of armed drones to drop cluster bombs on Syrian rebel forces near Aleppo, Syria.²⁶¹ In December 2021, Israel’s ALMA Research Center warned Hezbollah had an arsenal of approximately 2,000 unmanned aerial vehicles, up from 200 Iran-made UAVs in its possession in 2013. According to the research center, Hezbollah’s drone arsenal included Iranian drones as well as smaller civilian drones made by China that are capable of taking photographs or dropping incendiary devices.²⁶²

The following is a list of areas where Hezbollah has staged violent activities:

Violence against Israel

Since Israel’s May 2000 evacuation from southern Lebanon, Hezbollah has been responsible for cross-border raids, most notably the July 12, 2006, attack that killed eight Israeli soldiers and resulted in the captivity and deaths of two other soldiers. In the ensuing 34-day war, Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets, supplied by Iran, into Israeli territory. During the course of the war, Hezbollah killed 39 Israeli civilians and 120 soldiers, while Israel killed more than 850 Lebanese—most of whom were reportedly civilians. According to a report by the American Jewish Congress, the disproportionately high civilian casualty count on the Lebanese side was due to Hezbollah’s use of civilians as human shields.²⁶³ The report claims that Hezbollah “operated from civilian areas to deter the Israeli military,” and further states that Hezbollah’s operatives “stashed weapons in hundreds of private homes and mosques, had fighters transporting missiles closely follow ambulances,” and fired rockets near areas where U.N. monitors were working.²⁶⁴

The Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated in a 2006 report that Iran had transferred 10,000 short-range Katyusha-type rockets, with launchers, capable of reaching 7 to 12 miles inside Israel, as well as an unknown number of longer-range rockets capable of hitting targets almost 50 miles inside Israel, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles.²⁶⁵ U.N. Resolution 1701, which ended the 2006 conflict, demanded that Hezbollah disarm.²⁶⁶ U.N. Resolution 1559 in 2004 also called for “the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.”²⁶⁷ According to a 2014 State Department report, Hezbollah has stockpiled 60,000 to 70,000 missiles in Lebanon since the end of its 2006 war with Israel.²⁶⁸

Though Hezbollah has focused its military capacity in Syria since 2012, it has continued to target Israel. On January 28, 2015, for example, a Hezbollah missile hit an Israeli army position inside Israel, killing two Israeli soldiers.²⁶⁹ In January 2016, Hezbollah targeted an Israeli patrol on the Israeli side of the border with an improvised explosive device.²⁷⁰ In October 2016, Israeli authorities charged six Lebanese members of a Hezbollah cell who had been arrested in recent months for allegedly attempting to plant bombs near the Israeli city of Haifa.²⁷¹

Following U.S. President Donald Trump’s December 6, 2017, announcement recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, Hezbollah joined other regional terror groups in calling for a violent reprisal against Israel. In a speech the following day, Nasrallah warned of a “blatant aggression against [Jerusalem] its people, its holy sites and identity.”²⁷² He declared that the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is “in real danger, and it may be demolished at any time.”²⁷³ He called for a massive protest in Beirut and supported calls for a new *intifada* (uprising) against Israel and increased violence.²⁷⁴

As of August 2019, there has been a significant increase in hostilities between Israeli forces and Hezbollah. Israel launched an airstrike on August 24, 2019 that killed two Hezbollah members in Syria. The Israeli military justified the preemptive operation as a way to target Iranian and Hezbollah personnel being trained to operate attack drones.²⁷⁵ A day later, two drones crashed into the southern suburbs of Beirut, an area that is home to

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many supporters of Hezbollah. Israel claimed responsibility for the strikes to which Lebanon's president and Hezbollah leader, Hassan Nasrallah, responded that the attacks were "a declaration of war" justifying a military response.²⁷⁶ On September 1, 2019, Hezbollah fired antitank missiles into Avivim, Israel, prompting Israel to return fire with attack helicopters and about 100 artillery shells in southern Lebanon. Despite no reports of casualties or injuries on either side, this altercation represented the first significant exchange between Israel and Hezbollah since the 2006 Lebanon War.²⁷⁷

On January 31, 2021, Hezbollah claimed to shoot down an Israeli drone that had crossed into Lebanese airspace. The Israeli army confirmed a drone had crashed in Lebanese territory but claimed there was no risk of an information breach from the drone.²⁷⁸

On January 31, 2021, Hezbollah claimed to shoot down an Israeli drone that had crossed into Lebanese airspace. The Israeli army confirmed a drone had crashed in Lebanese territory but claimed there was no risk of an information breach from the drone.²⁷⁹ On February 3, 2021, Hezbollah fired a surface-to-air missile at an Israeli drone in Lebanese airspace but caused no damage. Lebanese journalist Ali Choeib wrote on Twitter that Hezbollah's "decision to try to prevent the enemy from continuing to violate its airspace has been made permanent."²⁸⁰

On August 5, 2021, Israel launched airstrikes in southern Lebanon after unknown militants fired rockets across the border the previous day.²⁸¹ On August 6, Hezbollah launched at least 19 rockets into Israel. Hezbollah claimed the rockets struck open areas of the disputed Shebaa Farms area. No casualties were reported. Hezbollah called the rockets retaliation for the August 5 Israeli airstrikes, but did not take responsibility for the previous day's rocket attack. Videos appeared on social media of Druze residents in the Shwaya village in Lebanon's Hasbaya region claiming, "Hezbollah is firing rockets from between homes so that Israel hits us back."²⁸² In response, Hezbollah claimed it had fired the rockets from remote areas and sought to avoid harming Lebanese civilians.²⁸³ The U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the international peacekeeping force in the country, reported witnessing the rocket attacks into Israel and Israeli retaliatory airstrikes, but claimed the rockets were fired from outside its operating area in southern Lebanon.²⁸⁴

Hezbollah has also sought to smuggle weapons into Israel and directly spark violence there. In July 2021, Israeli authorities interrupted a smuggling attempt from Lebanon into northern Israel and seized 43 weapons and ammunition worth approximately \$820,000.²⁸⁵ In October 2021, Israeli police officials accused Hezbollah of smuggling weapons to Israeli Arabs inside Israel to spark a civil war. Most of the smuggling is allegedly directed toward Israeli Arab criminal gangs. According to Israeli police intelligence, Hezbollah supports 95 percent of the smuggling between Lebanon and northern Israel.²⁸⁶ In February 2022, Israeli security forces arrested two Israeli Arabs in the northern Galilee region accused of attempting to smuggle weapons into Israel and hide them for other Hezbollah agents to find. According to Israeli security, the pair met with a Lebanese drug smuggler in Turkey who is connected to Hezbollah and has previously been jailed in Israel. The two were part of an alleged Hezbollah cell of Israeli Arabs tasked with establishing a cell to kidnap Israelis, smuggling weapons into Israel, providing information on targets for missile attacks, and identifying possible locations for crossing the border from Lebanon into Israeli territory. Two other Israeli-Arab cell members were arrested that February. The four were indicted the following month. Israeli officials accuse a senior Hezbollah official named Hajj Khalil Harb of coordinating Hezbollah's smuggling attempts into northern Israel.²⁸⁷

On July 2, 2022, Israeli forces shot down three unmanned Hezbollah drones that crossed into Israel from Lebanon. Initial reports by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) did not believe the drones were armed. The drones were launched toward Israeli territorial waters as Lebanon and Israel continued an international disagreement over their maritime border and Lebanese assertions Israel's Karish gas rig is in Lebanese waters. The drones were shot down several kilometers away from the Karish gas rig. The IDF suspected they were deployed for Hezbollah's propaganda purposes.²⁸⁸ Nasrallah subsequently warned Hezbollah would continue to target the Karish field.²⁸⁹ Lebanese Foreign Minister Bou Habib condemned as "unacceptable" any interference in the negotiations with Israel over the maritime border.²⁹⁰ On July 18, Israeli forces shot down another Hezbollah drone that crossed the Lebanese border into Israel.²⁹¹ During a July 19 visit to the Israel-Lebanon border, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid called Hezbollah's aggression "unacceptable" and warned his country would act against any threat.²⁹² On October 27, 2022, Lebanon and Israel signed an agreement giving Israel oil and gas rights in the Karish field, while Lebanon gets access to the Qanaa prospect area of the Mediterranean. Lebanon also agreed to pay—through an intermediary—17 percent of the profits from Qanaa to Israel. Both Lebanon and Hezbollah denied the agreement signaled recognition of Israel. A Hezbollah spokesman declared his group and Israel remain enemies and Hezbollah would not hesitate to retaliate against any Israeli aggression.²⁹³ Nasrallah declared the maritime matter closed and said Hezbollah would end its "exceptional measures and mobilizations" during negotiations between Israel and Lebanon.²⁹⁴

Violence in Lebanon

Hezbollah

Hezbollah undertook a campaign of violence against U.S., Israeli, and other international targets in Lebanon throughout the 1980s. These attacks include the 1983 attack on the U.S. embassy in Beirut, which left 63 people dead,²⁹⁵ and the suicide truck bombing of U.S. Marine barracks later that year, which left 242 U.S. service personnel dead. Simultaneously with the Marine barrack bombing, Hezbollah targeted French military barracks, killing 58 French service members.²⁹⁶

Hezbollah has been responsible for violent clashes with Lebanese security forces, such as in May 2008 when Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah openly threatened war with the Lebanese army.²⁹⁷ Hezbollah launched bloody street battles against Lebanese forces after a government decision to dismantle the group's private telephone network, which Hezbollah called a declaration of war. Hezbollah fighters captured sections of western Beirut and attacked media offices affiliated with the governing Future movement in clashes that killed 62 people dead across the country. The Lebanese government called Hezbollah's actions "an armed and bloody coup," while international media reported the conflict as the worst sectarian fighting in Lebanon since the end of Lebanon's civil war. The fighting ended with a Qatari-negotiated agreement that brought Hezbollah into a national-unity government.²⁹⁸

Further, Hezbollah's actions in the Syrian civil war have spilled into Lebanon, resulting in confrontations with the Nusrah Front and other rebel groups inside Lebanese territory.²⁹⁹ ISIS has also targeted Hezbollah strongholds inside Lebanon, including a November 2015 twin suicide bombing in Beirut, which left 43 dead.³⁰⁰

On June 30, 2011, the U.N.-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) indicted four men—Hussein Hassan Anaissy, Assad Sabra, and suspected Hezbollah members Mustafa Badreddine and Salim Ayyash—for the February 14, 2005, Beirut bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others.³⁰¹ Hezbollah denies participation in the attack. In February 2012, the STL agreed to try the four in absentia.³⁰² Suspected mastermind Badreddine died in 2016 while fighting in Syria.³⁰³ The STL chose not to pursue the criminal case against Badreddine after his death.³⁰⁴ Municipal officials in Beirut created a domestic controversy in 2018 when they named a street after Badreddine. The street itself led to Rafik Hariri Hospital.³⁰⁵ In October 2013, the STL filed charges against suspected Hezbollah member Hassan Habib Merhi and subsequently added him in absentia to the trial of Anaissy, Sabra, and Ayyash.³⁰⁶ On August 18, 2020, the STL found Ayyash guilty of all charges against him. The court also found Anaissy, Sabra, and Merhi not guilty. Ayyash remained at large at the time of the verdict.³⁰⁷ The court did not find direct evidence that Hezbollah's leadership played a role in the bombing.³⁰⁸ The STL sentenced Ayyash in absentia to five consecutive life sentences on December 11, 2020.³⁰⁹ Following a prosecutor's appeal of its August 2020 decision, the STL Appeals Chamber convicted Anaissy and Merhi on March 10, 2022. The court ruled both were members of the conspiracy aimed at committing the terrorist act in downtown Beirut. Anaissy and Merhi remain at large.³¹⁰

On August 4, 2020, an explosion in Beirut's port killed at least 200 people, wounded more than 6,000 others, and destroyed much of the port.³¹¹ In response, the STL delayed handing down its verdict, which had originally been scheduled for August 7.³¹² Lebanese officials suspect the explosion was caused by negligence in the storage of the explosive fertilizer chemical ammonium nitrate but did not immediately rule out the possibility of terrorism.³¹³ Suspicion also fell upon Hezbollah, which allegedly used multiple buildings in the port for illegal drug smuggling and other criminal activities. According to Lebanese intelligence sources, Hezbollah-controlled buildings in the port housed weapons and fireworks. The explosions were reportedly sparked by a fire at one of the Hezbollah warehouses.³¹⁴ Hezbollah had previously threatened to target ammonium nitrate storage facilities at Israel's ports. Hezbollah had also reportedly sought to use Lebanon's agricultural ministry to import ammonium nitrate into Lebanon from Syria.³¹⁵ Anti-government protests reignited in Beirut after the explosion. On August 10, Lebanese Prime Minister Hassan Diab dissolved the government after attributing the explosion to widespread corruption.³¹⁶

Hezbollah's campaign in Syria has spilled over into Lebanon, with clashes against the al-Nusra Front, ISIS, and other rebel forces within Lebanon's borders. For example, in May 2015, Hezbollah and Nusra fighters fought in eastern Lebanon, about 30 miles from the Syrian border, according to Lebanese security.³¹⁷ In June 2013, Syrian rebels fired 18 rockets and mortars into eastern Lebanon. A Hezbollah member and 17 Nusra Front fighters were reportedly killed in ensuing battles inside Lebanon.³¹⁸

On November 3, 2017, Prime Minister Saad Hariri fled Beirut to Saudi Arabia. The following day, he announced his resignation, alleging that Hezbollah had attempted to assassinate him a few days earlier. Hezbollah rejected the claim and accused Saudi Arabia of directing Hariri to resign in order to weaken Hezbollah.³¹⁹

On February 3, 2021, prominent Lebanese Hezbollah critic Lokman Slim was shot to death in his car in southern Lebanon. It was not immediately clear who had killed Slim, but he had written critically of Hezbollah's intimidation tactics and attempts to monopolize Lebanese politics. He had also accused Hezbollah and its patron Syria of complicity in the August 2020 port explosion in Beirut that killed 200.³²⁰ Hezbollah officially condemned the murder.³²¹ Two days after Slim's death, approximately 100 protesters in Beirut blamed Hezbollah for his murder.³²²

Hezbollah

On February 25, 2021, the STL scheduled a new trial for Ayyash in relation to attacks on Lebanese politicians Marwan Hamadeh, Georges Hawi, and Elias El-Murr between October 2004 and July 2005. The trial was scheduled to begin June 16, 2021.³²³ On March 2, Hezbollah fighters reportedly opened fire on Lebanese forces in Beirut attempting to arrest Ayyash. Hezbollah acknowledged Lebanese forces had attempted to arrest a suspect but denied its fighters had fired on them.³²⁴ In early June 2021, the STL cancelled the start of its upcoming trial of Ayyash because of a lack of funds. The STL also suspended all decisions on filings presently before it, and on any future filings, until further notice.³²⁵

Transnational Violence

Hezbollah is suspected of carrying out a number of transnational attacks. According to the U.S. Department of State, Hezbollah “increased the pace of its terrorist plotting” in 2012.³²⁶

TWA Flight 847

On June 14, 1985, Hezbollah terrorists, armed with grenades and a 9-mm. pistol, hijacked TWA Flight 847 on its way from Athens to Rome. The hijackers demanded passengers with “Jewish-sounding names” identify themselves. The terrorists forced the plane to land in Beirut, where they shot passenger Robert Stethem, a U.S. Navy diver, and threw his body out of the plane, reportedly in retaliation for a failed negotiation. Hezbollah demanded the release of more than 700 prisoners held in Israel, Cyprus, and Kuwait in exchange for the remaining 39 hostages. The terrorists released most of the hostages but kept five on board until their negotiated release on June 30.³²⁷ On October 9, 2021, Hezbollah announced Atwa’s death from cancer and held a funeral in Beirut.³²⁸ Hammadi and Izz-Al-Din remain at large.³²⁹

The hijackers were identified as Mohammed Ali Hammadi and Hasan Izz-Al-Din. A third hijacker, Ali Atwa, missed the flight but was arrested at Athens airport. Greek authorities released him when Hammadi and Izz-Al-Din threatened to kill passengers. All three were placed on the FBI’s Most Wanted list.³³⁰ On January 13, 1987, German authorities arrested Hammadi as he brought explosives into the Frankfurt airport. Soon after his arrest, two German citizens in Lebanon were kidnapped in an attempt to dissuade Germany from extraditing Hammadi to the U.S.³³¹ A German court tried Hammadi and handed him a life sentence in 1989,³³² but he was released on parole in 2005 after serving only 19 years.³³³ Hammadi remains on the FBI’s Most Wanted list.³³⁴

Argentina:

On March 17, 1992, a van carrying 220 pounds of explosives drove onto the sidewalk outside the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires and blew up, killing 23 people and wounding 242.³³⁵ Hezbollah claimed responsibility in a statement to a Beirut-based Western news agency, declaring, “with all pride that the operation of the martyr infant Hussein is one of our continuing strikes against the criminal Israeli enemy in an open-ended war, which will not cease until Israel is wiped out of existence.”³³⁶ The “martyr infant Hussein” refers to the 5-year-old son of Hezbollah leader Abbas Moussawi. Both were killed in an Israeli airstrike on February 16, 1992.

On July 18, 1994, a suicide bomber exploded at the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) community center in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and wounding 300.³³⁷ In 2006, Argentinian prosecutors called for the arrest of a handful of Iranian officials, including former President Hashemi Rafsanjani, in connection to the attack.³³⁸ The following year, prosecutors named several suspects, including Iran’s then defense minister, Gen. Ahmed Vahidi, who was commander of a special unit of the IRGC in 1994.³³⁹ According to Argentinian prosecutors, Iran planned and financed the AMIA attack, which Hezbollah then carried out.³⁴⁰

In 2013, Argentina and Iran agreed to a joint investigation into the 1994 attack. Detractors, including Argentinian Jewish groups and a number of opposition legislators, condemned the deal, arguing it would hinder the investigation and that Iran could not be trusted. “The bombing is being debated with the Iranian government, which ordered it,” said Ricardo Gil Lavedra of the Argentinian legislature.³⁴¹ Guillermo Carmona, president of the Argentine Foreign Relations Committee, called the agreement the only possibility for Argentinian legal officials to question Iranian suspects in Tehran. Despite Iran’s cooperation agreement, Interpol refused to rescind the six arrest warrants for Iranian suspects, including Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi, in the bombing.³⁴² As of October 2016, Argentina continues to issue international extradition requests for Iranian suspects.³⁴³

On January 27, 2013, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner signed a memorandum of understanding with the Iranian government to set up a joint commission to investigate the AMIA bombing.³⁴⁴ In January 2015, Argentine prosecutor Alberto Nisman accused Kirchner and

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other Argentine officials of covering up Iran's role in the bombing.³⁴⁵ Nisman was found shot to death in mysterious circumstances in his Buenos Aires apartment three days later.³⁴⁶ On December 7, 2017, Argentine Judge Claudio Bonadio indicted former president Kirchner on treason charges for covering up Iran's role in the AMIA bombing in exchange for trade concessions. Kirchner denied the charge, which Bonadio based on Nisman's work.³⁴⁷

Argentina designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on July 18, 2019, the 25th anniversary of the AMIA bombing.³⁴⁸

Bahrain:

Bahrain has a Shiite majority but is ruled by a Sunni monarchy. Bahraini intelligence from defected Syrian soldiers revealed that Hezbollah had trained Bahraini cells to carry out terrorist attacks within the country.³⁴⁹ Bahrain's 2013 decision to become the first Arab nation to label Hezbollah a terrorist organization was to "protect Bahrain's security and stability from Hezbollah's threats," according to Bahraini MP Adil al-Asoumi.³⁵⁰

Bulgaria:

On July 18, 2012, a suicide bomber exploded aboard a tourist bus in Burgas, Bulgaria, killing five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian bus driver, and wounding 35 Israeli tourists.³⁵¹ "There are clear signs that say Hezbollah is behind the Burgas bombing," according to Bulgarian Interior Minister Tsvetlin Yovchev.³⁵² Bulgarian authorities accused two suspected Hezbollah members, Australian citizen Meliad Farah, 32, a.k.a. Hussein Hussein, and 25-year-old Canadian citizen Hassan El Hajj Hassan, of providing logistical support for the bombing.³⁵³ Bulgaria turned the information over to EU police but planned to try them in absentia beginning in late 2016.³⁵⁴ Farah and Hassan were found guilty of being accomplices to the accused suicide bomber. Farah and Hassan were sentenced to life in prison on September 21, 2020. They were also ordered to pay reparations to the families of the victims and those injured in the attack. Farah and Hassan remain at large. According to Bulgarian prosecutors, the two men are linked to Hezbollah.³⁵⁵

Cyprus:

A Cypriot court sentenced Lebanese-Swedish national Hossam Taleb Yaccoub to three years in prison in 2013 for planning attacks on Israeli targets. Hezbollah had paid Yaccoub since 2011 to collect information on Israeli tourists, including Israeli flights arriving in Cyprus and registration plates of buses carrying Israeli tourists.³⁵⁶ Yaccoub admitted to collecting the information but denied any plans for an attack.³⁵⁷

Syria:

Syria is Iran's main supply route to Hezbollah in Lebanon.³⁵⁸ Extending Iran's influence, Hezbollah has been actively fighting on behalf of the besieged Syrian government in that country's civil war. Hezbollah actively joined the fighting on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in 2013. In August 2012, the U.S. government sanctioned Hezbollah for its support of the Assad regime in Syria, and said Hezbollah has "directly trained Syrian Government personnel inside Syria and has facilitated the training of Syrian forces by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Qods Force."³⁵⁹ The United States also accused Hezbollah of playing "a substantial role in efforts to expel Syrian opposition forces from areas within Syria."³⁶⁰

Hezbollah has promised to remain in Syria. In April 2014, Nasrallah said, "The problem in Lebanon is not that Hezbollah went to Syria, but that we were late in doing so. This resistance will remain solid, with its head hung high, protecting its people and its nation."³⁶¹ In October 2016, Nasrallah reiterated Hezbollah's determination to remain engaged in Syria.³⁶² In August 2018, the Assad regime formally requested that Hezbollah remain in Syria after the end of the war.³⁶³

In June 2017, Hezbollah openly threatened to attack U.S. forces in Syria if the United States "crosses any red lines."³⁶⁴

Hezbollah has been involved in multiple violent activities in Syria:

Hezbollah

- **February-April 2018:** Hezbollah and Syrian forces launch an assault on Ghouta, Syria. Hezbollah reportedly sends at least 3,000 troops to fight. As of March 2018, 1,100 civilians have been killed in the fighting, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The dead include at least 227 children and 154 women. Syrian forces take control of the suburb that April. The United Nations accuses both sides of crimes against humanity. The United Nations specifically accuses forces loyal to the Syrian government of “deliberately starving” 265,000 people and using tactics “largely unlawful in nature, aimed at punishing the inhabitants of eastern Ghouta and forcing the population, collectively, to surrender or starve.”³⁶⁵
- **November 2017:** Hezbollah leads an offensive against ISIS in Albu Kamal in Syria’s Deir Ezzor province. Hezbollah fights alongside Iran-sponsored Iraqi Shiite militias supported by Russian air strikes. According to media reports, at least 50 civilians are killed in the battle.³⁶⁶
- **December 22, 2016:** The Battle of Aleppo, which began on July 19, 2012, ends in a decisive victory for Assad, Hezbollah, and other forces allied with the Syrian regime. The United Nations accuses Hezbollah and other pro-regime forces of killing civilians in their homes and on the streets. As the battle ends, Hezbollah fighters reportedly attack convoys evacuating civilians and aid workers under a multilateral ceasefire agreement. According to eyewitness and media reports, Hezbollah fighters surround a convoy of 20 buses carrying 800 people. Hezbollah then expels monitors from the International Red Cross and Syrian Red Crescent and then proceeds to separate out males and seize their weapons and phones. Hezbollah then kills five people who resist. Hezbollah then seizes accompanying ambulances and civil defense vehicles from the convoy and forces the rest of the convoy to return to Aleppo.³⁶⁷
- **December 2016:** Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah reportedly instructs his fighters to seize Aleppo at any cost, “even if that meant the loss of 10,000 men,” a Hezbollah commander tells the Middle East Eye. According to this commander, Hezbollah makes no distinction between any anti-regime forces, classifying together U.S.-supported rebels with Nusra Front fighters.³⁶⁸
- **July 3, 2015 – September 24, 2015:** Hezbollah and the Syrian Army launched an operation to take the town of Zabadani, ending in a ceasefire with significant gains for the pro-regime forces. Hezbollah and the Syrian Army claim to capture 85 percent of the city.³⁶⁹
- **May 4, 2015 – June 21, 2015:** Hezbollah leads an offensive in the Qalamoun Mountains alongside the Syrian army, recapturing most of the mountainous Lebanese-Syrian border region and pushing rebel forces to the outskirts of Aarsal.³⁷⁰
- **February 2015:** Hezbollah leads an operation with the Syrian army south of Damascus, taking Deir al-Adas, Deir Maker, Tal al-Arous, and Tal al-Sarjeh from the Nusra Front.³⁷¹
- **May-June 2013:** Hezbollah sends 1,700 fighters to Qusayr, Syria, to support Assad’s forces in retaking the strategic town. Approximately 500 rebel fighters are killed during the battle. Hezbollah fighters tell Lebanese media that the group led the fight against the rebels in Qusayr. According to refugees from Qusayr, Hezbollah slaughtered civilian families who refused to leave the city during the fighting. Approximately 15,000 of the city’s 30,000 residents remained in their homes by the time Hezbollah takes control of Qusayr in June 2013. Qusayr residents accuse Hezbollah of invading their homes and executing those who do not shelter them. Other residents accuse Hezbollah of exaggerating the rebel threat in order to justify an assault on the town on behalf of the Syrian regime. One resident describes to the *Wall Street Journal* seeing “body parts splattered on the walls.”³⁷²
- **February 2013:** The Syrian Revolution Government Commission and Syrian National Council accused Hezbollah of attacking three villages near the Lebanese border.³⁷³
- **October 2012:** Near-daily clashes occur between Hezbollah fighters and the Free Syrian Army on the Lebanese-Syrian border. Syrian activists accuse Hezbollah’s forces of being directly involved in Assad’s 19-month effort to crush the rebel uprising, and say the group was transporting weapons and ammunition across the border “day and night” in ambulances and other civilian vehicles.³⁷⁴
- **May 22, 2011:** Hezbollah fighter Mohammad Ali Ahmad Dilani dies while fighting in Syria, indicating the group’s involvement in the Syrian Civil War two years prior to Hezbollah’s official admission of fighting alongside the Assad regime.³⁷⁵

Venezuela:

In October 2007, authorities found homemade bombs outside of the U.S. embassy in Caracas, Venezuela. According to Caracas Police Commissioner Wilfredo Borrass, the bombs were “made to make noise and publicity.”³⁷⁶

Other International Terrorist Activity:

Hezbollah plots have also been uncovered in Azerbaijan, Egypt, Thailand, as well as throughout South America, Southeast Asia, Europe, and various countries in the Middle East.³⁷⁷

Hezbollah

Other Criminal Activities:

Colombia:

U.S. and Colombian investigators in 2008 broke up an international cocaine smuggling and money-laundering ring that allegedly used some of its profits to finance Hezbollah. Colombian investigators accused kingpin Chekry “Taliban” Harb of acting as a link between South American cocaine traffickers and Hezbollah. Harb’s ring gave Hezbollah 12 percent of its profits, according to investigators.³⁷⁸

Mexico:

U.S. officials have accused Hezbollah of using Lebanese Shiite expatriates to negotiate contracts with Mexican crime bosses, using Mexican drug routes to smuggle people and contraband into the U.S. Admiral James G. Stavridis, then commander of the U.S. Southern Command, testified in 2009 that the link between illicit drug trafficking “including routes, profits, and corruptive influence” and “Islamic radical terrorism” is a growing threat to the United States.³⁷⁹

- In 2008, Mexican authorities sentenced Salim Boughader Mucharraffille, a Mexican of Lebanese descent, to 60 years in prison on charges of organized crime and immigrant smuggling. Mucharraffille, who owned a cafe in Tijuana, was arrested in 2002 for smuggling 200 people, reportedly including Hezbollah supporters, into the U.S.³⁸⁰
- In 2001, Mahmoud Youssef Kourani crossed the border from Mexico in a car and traveled to Dearborn, Michigan. He was later convicted on a 2003 indictment that charged him with providing “material support and resources... to Hezbollah.”³⁸¹

United States:

- In 2002, North Carolina convicted Hezbollah operatives of smuggling cigarettes across state lines and sending more than \$1.5 million of their profits to Hezbollah in Lebanon.
- During the late 2000s, the FBI broke up a Hezbollah counterfeiting ring, led by Hezbollah member Hassan Karaki, which attempted to sell stolen and counterfeit currency to an undercover FBI informant. The group bought what they thought to be stolen property from the undercover officer and shipped to Michigan, California, Paraguay, Brazil, Belgium, Bahrain, Slovakia, Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. The counterfeiting ring’s purchase money came from Hezbollah agent Danni Tarraf, who asked the undercover agent if he could provide guided missiles and 10,000 “commando” machine guns.³⁸²
- Hezbollah agent Dib Harb, looking for a buyer for counterfeit currency, told the FBI that Iran produces high-quality counterfeit currency in Lebanon for Hezbollah. The FBI went to Beirut in February 2009 to meet with Karaki, Harb’s boss, who revealed that Hezbollah had smuggled just under \$10,000 into Lebanon from Iran through Turkey and Syria.³⁸³ Harb told the FBI that Hezbollah also produces counterfeit money from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the EU.³⁸⁴
- On October 9, 2015, U.S. authorities arrested two “Hezbollah associates” on charges of conspiring to launder narcotics proceeds and international arms trafficking. Iman Kobeissi allegedly arranged to obtain firearms and heavy weapons for Hezbollah and other independent criminal groups in Iran, according to the DEA. Kobeissi’s accused co-conspirator, Joseph Asmar, was charged with money laundering conspiracy.³⁸⁵

Other Transnational Criminal Activity:

According to Hezbollah agent Dib Harb, Hezbollah cells commit robberies across the world and send the money to Iran, where it is held before being distributed to Hezbollah in Lebanon. He also revealed that Hezbollah produces fake European documents, including passports and visa stamps.³⁸⁶

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Designations:

Designations by the U.S. Government:

- ○ **January 25, 1995:** The Department of the Treasury designates Hezbollah as a Terrorist Organization that threatens to disrupt the Middle East Peace Process (under Executive Order 12947).³⁸⁷
- **October 8, 1997:** The Department of State designates Hezbollah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act).³⁸⁸
- **October 31, 2001:** The Department of State designates Hezbollah as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).³⁸⁹
- **June 10, 2004:** The Department of the Treasury designates Assad Ahmad Barakat for his close ties to Hezbollah leadership and for working closely with numerous Islamic extremists and suspected Hezbollah associates in South America’s tri-border area.³⁹⁰
- **March 23, 2006:** The Department of the Treasury designates Al-Manar Television, Al-Nour Radio, and their parent company, Lebanese Media Group, as arms of Hezbollah.³⁹¹
- **July 24, 2007:** The Department of the Treasury designates the finance firm Al-Qard al-Hassan (AQAH) under Executive Order 13224 for being part of Hezbollah’s support network.³⁹²
- **August 10, 2012:** The Department of the Treasury designates Hezbollah as providing support to Syrian government (under Executive Order 13582).³⁹³
- **September 13, 2012:** The Department of the Treasury designates Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah; senior leader Mustafa Badr al-Din; senior leader Talal Hamiyah; and senior commander Ali Mussa Daqduq al-Musawi for providing support to the Syrian government (under Executive Order 13582).³⁹⁴
- **June 11, 2013:** The Department of the Treasury designates Ali Ibrahim al-Watfa, Hezbollah supporter; Abbas Loutfe Fawaz, Hezbollah supporter; Ali Ahmad Chehade, Hezbollah supporter; and Hicham Nmer Khanafer, Hezbollah supporter as expanding Hezbollah influence in West Africa (under Executive Order 13224).³⁹⁵
- **January 9, 2017:** The Department of State designates Ali Damush, aide to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and leader of Hezbollah’s Foreign Relations Department, and military commander Mustafa Mughniyeh as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.³⁹⁶
- **May 17, 2018:** The Department of Treasury’s Office of Assets Control designates Hezbollah representative to Iran Abdallah Safi-Al-Din as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.³⁹⁷
- **October 15, 2018:** U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions designates Hezbollah as a top transnational criminal threat.³⁹⁸
- **October 25, 2018:** U.S. President Trump signs into law the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act (HIFPAA) of 2018, which imposes additional hard-hitting sanctions on Hezbollah. The legislation will further isolate Hezbollah from the international financial system and reduce its funding.³⁹⁹
- **April 24, 2019:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Belgium-based Wael Bazzi for acting for or on behalf of his father and Hezbollah financier, Mohammad Bazzi. OFAC also designates Belgium-based Voltra Transcor Energy BVBA, Belgium-based OFFISCOOP NV, and United Kingdom-based BSQRD Limited for being owned or controlled by Wael Bazzi. Additionally, OFAC designates Lebanon-based Hassan Tabaja for acting for or on behalf of his brother and Hezbollah member and financier, Adham Tabaja. The companies and individuals acted as conduits for sanctions evasion schemes.⁴⁰⁰
- **July 9, 2019:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposes financial sanctions on Hezbollah members of Lebanon’s parliament Amin Sherri and Muhammad Ra’d, who is also a member of Hezbollah’s shura council. It is the first time that U.S. sanctions target members of Lebanon’s government. OFAC also sanctions Hezbollah security official Wafiq Safa.⁴⁰¹
- **July 19, 2019:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Salman Raouf Salman, a senior member of Hezbollah’s External Security Organization and the suspected coordinator of the 1994 AMIA bombing.⁴⁰²
- **August 29, 2019:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions Jammal Trust Bank SAL (Jammal Trust), a Lebanon-based financial institution that knowingly facilitates banking activities for Hezbollah.⁴⁰³
- **October 22, 2020:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Hezbollah Executive Council member Nabil Qaouk as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.⁴⁰⁴
- **October 22, 2020:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Hezbollah Executive Council member Hassan al-Baghdadi as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.⁴⁰⁵
- **May 11, 2021:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Ibrahim Ali Daher, chief of Hizballah’s Central Finance Unit, as a Specially Designated National. OFAC also designates six other individuals— Ahmad Mohamad Yazbeck, Abbas Hassan Gharib, Wahid Mahmud Subayti, Mostafa Habib Harb, Ezzat Youssef Akar, and Hasan Chehadeh Othman—linked to Hezbollah and its financial firm, Al-Qard al-Hassan (AQAH).⁴⁰⁶
- **December 1, 2022:** The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designates Adel Mohamad Mansour, executive director of the Hezbollah-run financial firm Al-Qard Al-Hassan, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.⁴⁰⁷

Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:

Hezbollah

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- Israel—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on April 11, 1996.⁴⁰⁸
 - European Union—listed the Hezbollah Military Wing as a terrorist organization on July 22, 2013.⁴⁰⁹
 - United Kingdom—banned Hezbollah’s External Security Organization on February 11, 2001, and designated its military wing as a terrorist organization in 2008. The United Kingdom designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization in March 2019. On January 16, 2020, the United Kingdom added Hezbollah in its entirety to its Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets. Hezbollah’s military wing remains separately sanctioned per the European Union’s separate listing.⁴¹⁰
 - Canada—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on December 10, 2002.⁴¹¹
 - The Netherlands—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in 2004.⁴¹²
 - Australia—listed Hezbollah’s External Security Organization as a terrorist organization on June 5, 2003.⁴¹³ Australia designated all of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on December 10, 2021.⁴¹⁴
 - Bahrain—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on April 9, 2013.⁴¹⁵
 - Gulf Cooperation Council—designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization on March 2, 2016. The GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.⁴¹⁶
 - New Zealand—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on February 10, 2010.⁴¹⁷
 - France—listed Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on May 22, 2013.⁴¹⁸
 - Germany—banned al-Manar on October 29, 2008.⁴¹⁹ Germany banned Hezbollah’s military wing in 2013.⁴²⁰ Germany designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization on April 30, 2020.⁴²¹ On May 19, 2021, Germany banned three organizations—Deutsche Libanesische Familie, Menschen für Menschen, and Gib Frieden—for fundraising on behalf of Hezbollah.⁴²²
 - The Arab League—designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization on March 11, 2016.⁴²³ The following Arab countries have protested or rejected the Arab League designation: Egypt,⁴²⁴ Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, and Tunisia.⁴²⁵

 - Terrorist Financing Targeting Center—designated multiple Hezbollah leaders and financiers on May 16, 2018, in partnership with the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control. Those designated include: Hassan Nasrallah, Naim Qasim, Muhammad Yazbak, Husayn Al-Khalil, Ibrahim al-Amin al-Sayyid, Talal Hamiyah, Ali Youssef Charara, Spectrum Group, Hasan Ebrahimi, Maher Trading, Hashem Safieddine, Adham Tabaja, Al-Inmaa Group, and Al-Inmaa Engineering and Contracting. The Terrorist Financing Targeting Center includes the United States, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.⁴²⁶
 - Argentina—designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on July 18, 2019.⁴²⁷
 - Paraguay—designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on August 19, 2019.⁴²⁸
 - Honduras—designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on January 7, 2020.⁴²⁹
 - Colombia—designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in January 2020.⁴³⁰
 - Lithuania—banned all affiliates of Hezbollah from entering the country on August 13, 2020.⁴³¹
 - Republic of Kosovo—designated Hezbollah’s military wing as a terrorist group in 2019. Kosovo designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization on June 23, 2020.⁴³² On October 27, 2021, Kosovo sanctioned seven local businessmen and the AID Properties company for links to Hezbollah.⁴³³
 - Serbia—agreed to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization on September 13, 2020.⁴³⁴
 - Latvia—the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in September 2020 that it recognizes Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization.⁴³⁵
 - Estonia—designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and barred “any member or affiliate of the group whose activity supports terrorism” from entering the country on October 22, 2020.⁴³⁶
 - Guatemala—designated Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization in 2020.⁴³⁷
 - Czech Republic—the Czech parliament labeled Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organization on October 28, 2020. The parliament also called for the creation of a Czech national list of terrorist groups and to include Hezbollah on it.⁴³⁸
 - Slovenia—declared Hezbollah in its entirety a “criminal and terrorist organization that represents a threat to peace and security” on November 30, 2020.⁴³⁹
 - Austria—banned Hezbollah in its entirety in May 2021.⁴⁴⁰
 - Saudi Arabia—designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization on March 2, 2016, as part of a Gulf Cooperation Council joint designation.⁴⁴¹ Saudi Arabia designated Hezbollah’s financial arm, Al-Qard Al-Hassan, as a terrorist entity on October 27, 2021.⁴⁴²

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Hezbollah

Associations:

Ties to Extremist Entities designated by the U.S. or foreign governments:

- **Kata'ib Hizballah (Iraq)**

The U.S. designated Kata'ib Hizballah a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 2009. According to the U.S. Treasury, Kata'ib Hizballah is responsible for numerous terror attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq and is ideologically linked to Lebanese Hezbollah.⁴⁴³

- **Hamas**

Hezbollah and Hamas both had strong ties to Syria prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 2011. Hamas's political leadership, long based in Syria, left the country in 2012, driving a wedge between Hamas and Iran. In spite of their respective Sunni-Shiite divisions, Hamas and Hezbollah began to repair ties during 2014.⁴⁴⁴ In January 2015, Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif reportedly called for Hezbollah and Hamas to unite in battling Israel.⁴⁴⁵ After the Gulf Cooperation Council designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization in March 2016, Hamas signed an Iranian statement of support for Hezbollah.⁴⁴⁶ On June 22, 2022, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh met with Nasrallah in Beirut to discuss the "axis of resistance" to Israel and boosting their groups' ties.⁴⁴⁷ In July 2022, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned Hezbollah and Hamas were strengthening their military ties to boost Hamas's control of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.⁴⁴⁸

- **Iranian government and the IRGC**

Iran has supported Hezbollah since its establishment in the 1980s. Hezbollah modeled its ideology after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1979 Iranian revolution, while Iran saw Hezbollah as an opportunity to extend its influence and cultivated Hezbollah as a proxy force. Iran has thus provided extensive funding, training, and weaponry to Hezbollah through its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In the early 1980s, Iran reportedly sent 1,000 IRGC soldiers to provide military training and transform local Shiite militants into Hezbollah.⁴⁴⁹ In its 1985 manifesto, Hezbollah pledged loyalty to Khomeini.⁴⁵⁰

Iran has provided millions of dollars worth of funding and weaponry to Hezbollah over the years. For example, during Hezbollah's 2006 war with Israel, the IRGC transferred sufficient cash and rockets to Hezbollah to make the terror group a threat to millions of Israeli civilians.⁴⁵¹ The Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated in a 2006 report that Iran had transferred 10,000 short-range Katyusha-type rockets, with launchers, capable of reaching 7 to 12 miles inside Israel. In addition, Iran provided an unknown number of longer-range rockets capable of hitting targets almost 50 miles inside Israel, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles.⁴⁵² Iran continues to be a primary sponsor of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah and the IRGC's Quds Force reportedly agreed in January 2010 to cooperate in attacking Israeli, U.S., and Western targets.⁴⁵³ In 2012, Hezbollah pledged to defend Iran against any attack by the United States or Israel.⁴⁵⁴ In April 2016, Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei pledged Iran's continued support for Hezbollah, a "source of honor for the Muslim world."⁴⁵⁵ In July 2021, IRGC commander Hossein Salami praised Hezbollah's readiness to confront Israel: "Lebanon and Hezbollah are standing strong against the Zionists, and whenever the enemy wants to move, Hezbollah suffocates them from the very beginning."⁴⁵⁶

As anti-government protests broke out in Iran in September 2022 and continued into autumn, Hezbollah reinforced its public support for the Iranian regime. Protests erupted after the September 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who died in custody after being detained by Tehran's morality police, which claimed she was not wearing a hijab properly. At least 185 protesters were killed since the protests began. Hezbollah has held rallies in support of the Iranian regime with students from its private educational system, the Mahdi schools. Video emerged of children from the Mahdi schools carrying photos of Khamenei and deceased IRGC-Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani.⁴⁵⁷ Nasrallah labeled Amini's death a "vague incident" being "exploited" to "incite against the state."⁴⁵⁸ According to other reports, Hezbollah members joined members of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces in aiding Iranian forces crack down on protesters.⁴⁵⁹

- **Al-Qaeda**

The relationship between Hezbollah and al-Qaeda dates back to the 1990s, when a small group of al-Qaeda members visited Hezbollah training camps in Lebanon.⁴⁶⁰ Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Hezbollah leader Imad Mugniyeh later agreed during a meeting in Sudan that Hezbollah would provide the fledgling al-Qaida with explosives and training, in exchange for money and manpower.⁴⁶¹ Hezbollah reportedly helped al-Qaeda traffic diamonds and gold through Africa following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.⁴⁶²

- **Lebanese Media Group: Al-Nour Radio and Al-Manar Television**

Hezbollah

Hezbollah has set up its own media empire in Lebanon through the Lebanese Media Group, which acts as a propaganda tool for the Shiite group.⁴⁶³ The U.S. designated the Lebanese Media Group as a global terrorist entity and an arm of Hezbollah in 2006.

- **Polisario Front**

In May 2018, the Moroccan government accused Hezbollah of providing resources to the West Africa-based Polisario Front. According to the government, Hezbollah has provided training and financial support to the rebels, through Iran, since 2016. Hezbollah allegedly began sending weapons to the rebels in April 2018. Hezbollah and Iran have denied the accusations.⁴⁶⁴ A September 2018 bipartisan draft bill in the U.S. House of Representatives noted ties between Hezbollah and the Polisario rebels.⁴⁶⁵ The Polisario Front seeks to end Morocco's presence in the Western Sahara. Morocco has banned the group, though the United Nations has recognized the Polisario Front as the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people.⁴⁶⁶

- **Asaib Ahl al-Haq**

In 2005, Iran ordered Hezbollah to train Iraqis to fight U.S.-led Coalition Forces in Iraq. Hassan Nasrallah ordered a covert Hezbollah unit to train members of Jaysh al-Mahdi ("the Mahdi Army," a.k.a. JAM Special Groups) who then formed Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH).⁴⁶⁷ AAH models its military tactics and training, political strategy, and social-service programs on Hezbollah.⁴⁶⁸ AAH's propaganda emphasizes the group's ties to both Hezbollah and Iran.⁴⁶⁹ In December 2017, AAH leader [Qais al-Khazali](#) visited Lebanon's border with Israel on a trip organized by Hezbollah. He released a video clip in which he vowed that AAH would stand with Hezbollah and support the Palestinian cause.⁴⁷⁰

- **New IRA**

The New IRA is a Northern Ireland-based paramilitary group formed in 2012 from the merger of the Real IRA and other smaller militant groups.⁴⁷¹ In September 2020, British intelligence revealed the New IRA began communicating with Hezbollah and Palestinian militant groups in 2017. New IRA leaders traveled to Lebanon in 2018 and reportedly received financial assistance and weaponry, though British security services did not indicate which group provided the weapons.⁴⁷²

Ties to other entities:

- **Syrian Government**

Syria has long been a conduit between Iran and Hezbollah. In 2011, as the Syrian civil war was beginning, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah praised Syrian President Bashar Assad and pledged support for the regime.⁴⁷³ The terror group took the connection to unprecedented levels of cooperation in 2013 when it entered the Syrian civil war on behalf of Assad.⁴⁷⁴

According to news reports, Hezbollah fighters were heavily involved in a battle in the Syrian town of Qusair in May 2013, after the Syrian government launched an offensive to retake the town from rebel forces. The *BBC* reported the deaths of several Hezbollah fighters, and Hezbollah chief Nasrallah pledged to defend the Syrian regime: "This battle is ours... and I promise you victory."⁴⁷⁵

Hezbollah has promised to remain in Syria. In April 2014, Hassan Nasrallah said, "The problem in Lebanon is not that Hezbollah went to Syria, but that we were late in doing so. This resistance will remain solid, with its head hung high, protecting its people and its nation."⁴⁷⁶ In November 2016, Hezbollah held a public parade in the Syrian city of Qusair, during which the terror group showcased U.S. and Russian armored personnel carriers and tanks. The U.S. State Department issued a statement that it was "gravely concerned" and investigating how Hezbollah acquired U.S. equipment.⁴⁷⁷

- **Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba**

Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba ("Movement of the Party of God's Virtuous") is an offshoot of Iran-backed Iraqi militia Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH).⁴⁷⁸ Hezbollah aided the IRGC's Quds Force in creating the so-called Special Groups—Iran-backed militias in Iraq—including AAH.⁴⁷⁹ AAH co-founder Akram al-Kaabi founded Nujaba in 2013.⁴⁸⁰

Nujaba has featured images on its website of Kaabi holding hands with Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah.⁴⁸¹ In August 2017, Kaabi sent a letter to Nasrallah declaring Nujaba's "complete solidarity and support with your loud cry against the oppressive Zionist regime."⁴⁸² In March 2017, Nujaba formed the Golan Brigade to capture the Golan Heights from Israel, which took control of the territory in the 1967 Six Day War.⁴⁸³

- **Los Zetas**

Hezbollah

In a 2011 indictment of Lebanese druglord Ayman Joumaa, U.S. authorities revealed close ties between Hezbollah and Mexican drug cartels, including Los Zetas.⁴⁸⁴ Authorities accused Joumaa of conspiring to smuggle over 90,000 tons of cocaine into America, laundering over \$250 million for the cartels, and helping to smuggle Colombian drugs through Mexico between 2005 and 2007.⁴⁸⁵

Also in 2011, U.S. prosecutors indicted a Lebanese man on charges of trafficking drugs and laundering money for Colombian drug cartels as well as Los Zetas.⁴⁸⁶

- **Houthis**

After the Shiite rebel Houthi group stormed Yemeni government buildings in September 2014, Yemeni intelligence sources claimed that Hezbollah was aiding the Houthis to “[b]oost their control of Yemen’s capital, Sana’a...”⁴⁸⁷ According to Yemeni officials, Houthi rebels began training in Lebanon in as early as 2010. Yemeni authorities arrested two Hezbollah fighters in Yemen in 2012.⁴⁸⁸ Hezbollah has allegedly continued to provide the Houthis with logistical and military support. In June 2018, Saudi forces claimed to have killed eight Hezbollah fighters in Yemen.⁴⁸⁹ In August 2018, Hezbollah distributed a photo of Nasrallah meeting with Houthi leaders in Lebanon.⁴⁹⁰

Regional authorities accuse Iran of attempting to use Hezbollah and the Houthis to expand its influence in Yemen as it did in Lebanon. In July 2018, the internationally recognized government in Yemen filed a complaint with the United Nations over Hezbollah’s support of the Houthis.⁴⁹¹ That September, the Yemeni government called on Lebanon to force Hezbollah to end its interference in the civil war, accusing Hezbollah of prolonging the conflict.⁴⁹²

- **Palestinian Authority**

After the Gulf Cooperation Council designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization in March 2016, Palestinian Charge d’affaires in Iran, Mohammad Jawhar, signed an Iranian statement of support for Hezbollah.⁴⁹³

- **Russia**

Russia maintains “contacts and relations” with Hezbollah, according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov. Russia does not view Hezbollah as a terrorist group because it has never committed a terrorist act on Russian territory, Bogdanov told a press conference in November 2015. He further called Hezbollah and Hamas “legitimate societal-political forces.”⁴⁹⁴

In Syria, Russian forces have cooperated with Hezbollah fighters. Israeli analysts accuse Hezbollah of learning from Russian forces.⁴⁹⁵ In January 2016, the Daily Beast reported that two Hezbollah commanders had confirmed that Russia is actively aiding the group. According to one of the commanders, Hezbollah and Russia are “strategic allies in the Middle East right now—the Russians are our allies and give us weapons.”⁴⁹⁶ While accepting of Hezbollah’s aid to the Syrian government, Russia has also sought to restrict Hezbollah from the Syrian-Israeli border to relieve regional tensions. In June 2018, Hezbollah and Iranian forces reportedly withdrew from the Syrian side of the Golan Heights at Russia’s request.⁴⁹⁷

- **La Oficina de Envigado**

La Oficina de Envigado is a South American drug cartel that works with Hezbollah’s External Security Organization Business Affairs Component to facilitate Hezbollah’s drug and money laundering activities. La Oficina de Envigado is responsible for the movement of large amounts of cocaine in the United States and Europe.⁴⁹⁸

Associations or networks between group and terrorist actions/organizations:

As shown above, Hezbollah is tied to a number of terrorist attacks, terrorist organizations, criminal activities, and insurgencies.

Political connections to U.S. or global leaders:

In its capacity as part of the Lebanese government, Hezbollah maintains ties with international leaders. As such, countries that have diplomatic relations with Lebanon have a relationship with Hezbollah by extension. This has caused problems for countries that have sought to sanction Hezbollah without jeopardizing Lebanese relations. For example, in considering whether to label Hezbollah a terrorist organization in 2013, European leaders were wary of how the designation would affect European relations with Lebanon. As a result, the European Union labeled only Hezbollah’s armed wing as a terrorist organization.⁴⁹⁹

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In October 2016, Lebanon elected MP Michel Aoun—leader of the Hezbollah-allied Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)—as its new president.⁵⁰⁰ Aoun signed a memorandum of understanding with Hezbollah in 2006 that formed a political alliance between the FPM and Hezbollah.⁵⁰¹ On February 12, 2017, Aoun told Egypt’s CBC television station that Hezbollah has a “complementary role to the Lebanese army” and Lebanon needs the terror group for “as long as the Lebanese army is not strong enough to battle Israel.”⁵⁰²

British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has reportedly referred to both Hezbollah and Hamas as “friends,” though he later stated that he regretted the comment.⁵⁰³ Former British Member of Parliament George Galloway has also been an outspoken supporter of Hezbollah, accusing Israel of war crimes against the Palestinians while defending Hezbollah and the Syrian regime against accusations of terrorism. In 2010, for example, Galloway defended Hezbollah from accusations that it was involved in the 2007 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, saying, “I believe, and I don’t know anybody who is objective in this matter who does not believe, that Hezbollah are absolutely innocent of this crime, and it is time that the tribunal looked to the people who benefited from this crime... in Israel.”⁵⁰⁴ In 2011, while appearing on Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV, Galloway again defended Hezbollah and accused Israel of involvement in Hariri’s murder.⁵⁰⁵

Former U.S. Senator James Abourezk of South Dakota appeared on Hezbollah’s Al-Manar TV in 2007 and praised the station. He also called Hezbollah and Hamas resistance fighters. The U.S. designation of the groups as terrorist groups was at the behest of Israel, he said. He went on to accuse “the Arabs involved in 9/11” of working with “the Zionists.”⁵⁰⁶ Abourezk served in the House of Representatives from 1971 to 1973, when he was elected to the Senate, where he served until 1979.⁵⁰⁷

Ties to Lebanese leaders:

As part of the Lebanese government, Hezbollah maintains political ties with multiple Lebanese politicians, including Lebanese President Michel Aoun, the first Lebanese president to openly align himself with Hezbollah.⁵⁰⁸ In February 2006, Hezbollah and Aoun’s Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) signed a memorandum of understanding, forming a political alliance.⁵⁰⁹ After Lebanese President Michel Suleiman’s term ended in May 2014, Hezbollah admittedly blocked the appointment of a new president for more than two years because it wanted Aoun to fill the role.⁵¹⁰ In October 2016, Lebanon’s political parties acceded to Hezbollah’s demands in a power-sharing agreement that led to Aoun’s election and the appointment of Saad Hariri as prime minister.⁵¹¹ Aoun publicly thanked Nasrallah and Hezbollah for aiding his election.⁵¹² Hezbollah deputy leader Naim Qassem declared that Aoun’s ascendancy signaled that the Lebanese government was “working toward achievements for the benefit of the country ... including us.”⁵¹³

In September 2020, the U.S. government sanction-designated two former members of the Lebanese government for aiding Hezbollah. Yusuf Finyanus served as Lebanon’s Minister of Transportation and Public Works from 2016 to 2020. According to the U.S. government, Finyanus used his position to siphon funds from government budgets to ensure that Hezbollah-owned companies won bids for Lebanese government contracts worth millions of dollars. The government also alleged Hezbollah gave Finyanus hundreds of thousands of dollars in exchange for political favors in 2015. Ali Hassan Khalil served as the Minister of Public Health from 2011 to 2014 and as Minister of Finance from 2014 to 2020. The U.S. government alleged that as Lebanon’s finance minister in 2017, Khalil helped Hezbollah avoid U.S. sanctions by moving money from government ministries to Hezbollah-affiliated industries. Both men were designated as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224.⁵¹⁴

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Hezbollah

Media Coverage:

Arab Media

While Western media will mostly acknowledge Hezbollah's terrorist activities, Arab media tends to tell a different story, particularly in Lebanon.

The Daily Star, a Lebanese newspaper, is a prime example. A 2002 article in the *Daily Star* essentially reprinted a speech by Nasrallah verbatim without any analysis. Nasrallah stated, "Christian Zionists[want to]... redraw the world's political map."⁵¹⁵ He added the "U.S. empire" was "slithering" over the Middle East, but that the U.S. and Israel would lose their war against the Muslim world.⁵¹⁶

The *Daily Star's* coverage of Hezbollah could be colored by solidarity with Hezbollah's goals and a general Lebanese aversion to Israel, or by Hezbollah's proximity and fear of retribution. Evidence appears to support the former supposition. The paper picked up an Agence France-Presse report on July 29, 2014, that referred to Hezbollah as "a militant" group.⁵¹⁷ The paper's bias, however, is clear, as a report the day before, written by the *Star* and not a foreign press service, referred to Hezbollah as a "resistance group."⁵¹⁸ The *Star* ran a 2013 report, also by Agence France-Presse, on al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahri, saying Hezbollah's participation in Syria "exposed the ugly face of Hasan Nasrallah" and Hezbollah is just an "instrument" of Iran.⁵¹⁹ Printing these reports without alteration suggests the newspaper does not fear retribution and, despite its own biases, does respect international news organizations. The 2013 piece offered no response from Hezbollah, demonstrating that the terror group does not censor the newspaper, proving the *Daily Star's* ideological bent in its more positive coverage of Hezbollah.

When referencing Hezbollah, Al Jazeera uses terms such as "resistance" and occupation." For example, after the EU's 2013 decision to designate Hezbollah's armed wing a terrorist group, Al Jazeera put quotation marks around the word "terrorists" in the headline. The article sought to explain the impact of the label and whether Hezbollah should be described as a terrorist or resistance group.⁵²⁰ The author explained that "the movement was created as a resistance to the Israeli occupation in Lebanon..."⁵²¹

Israeli Media

Israeli media regularly refers to Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and generally takes a more hardline approach to the organization. Given that Hezbollah has launched numerous rockets and other attacks on Israeli civilian centers, this is not surprising. Israeli news outlets such as *The Times of Israel* and *The Jerusalem Post* will regularly pick up news from outlets outside of Israel on new speeches by Hezbollah leaders and the organization's actions, particularly when leaders, such as Nasrallah, make speeches calling for "resistance" against Israel.

Western Media

Despite its established record as a terrorist organization, Western governments and Western media present conflicting assessments of Hezbollah. While governments in both the U.S. and EU have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, Western media outlets have been more hesitant about describing Hezbollah as such in view of its political role in Lebanon. Nonetheless, Western media will typically reference Hezbollah's terrorist activities.

Following the 1983 attacks against U.S. targets in Lebanon, Western media did not provide extensive coverage of Hezbollah until the 1990s, when the group was linked to a growing number of international attacks.

While the U.S. labels Hezbollah a terrorist organization, media coverage of the group largely replaces "terrorist" with "militant." For example, *Reuters* uses the "terrorist" and "terrorism" labels only for quoted material. According to the *Reuters* handbook, "Terrorism and terrorist should not be used as single words in inverted commas (e.g. terrorist) or preceded by so-called (e.g. a so-called terrorist attack) since that can be taken to imply that *Reuters* is making a value judgment... Terror as in terror attack or terror cell should be avoided on stylistic grounds."⁵²² Other Western news organizations appear to follow this example. A 2004 *Washington Post* article on the U.S. designation of Hezbollah's *Al-Manar* television station as a supporter of terrorism described Hezbollah as a "Lebanese militant group."⁵²³ In 2006, a *New York Times* report on Hezbollah's incursion into Israel, which left eight Israeli soldiers dead and two captured, described Hezbollah as a "guerilla group."⁵²⁴

While European nations debated whether to label Hezbollah a terrorist organization during 2013, U.S., European, and Israeli media ran a number of op-eds from international leaders, such as Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and former Canadian justice minister Irwin Cotler, decrying

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Hezbollah's terrorist activities. Some sections of the media opposed the prospective "terrorist" label. For example, *The Guardian* hosted a forum for both Livni and Sami Ramadani, a university lecturer, to provide opposing arguments. Ramadani argued that labeling Hezbollah a terrorist organization was "futile" and flew "in the face of the facts."⁵²⁵ Ramadani further stated, "Like all genuine resistance movements, the Lebanese resistance, led by Hezbollah, was born as a reaction to occupation."⁵²⁶ The European press thus attempted to cover all angles regarding the suitability of the label, while European leaders were at variance as they sought to balance the issue of Hezbollah's designation with the potential damage to Lebanese relations.

Though the EU did not take up the debate until 2013, there were calls for it to do so for many years previously. For instance, in 2006 the *Baltimore Sun* questioned why the EU would not designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization in spite of Hezbollah's attacks on Israel earlier that summer.⁵²⁷

The debate over what to label Hezbollah, both within the media and by governments, finds its origin in a 1998 piece by academic Augustus Richard Norton. Norton proposed that, despite Hezbollah's violent activities, its provision of social services in Lebanon creates two distinct parts of the organization: one dedicated to terrorism against Israel and the other to being a social-services organization.⁵²⁸

While Western media typically does not use the word "terrorist" to describe Hezbollah, media reports reference some of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by the group and the influence of Iran on its activities. Thus, Reuters recently described it as "an Iranian-backed Shi'ite Islamist group."⁵²⁹ The EU's debate over the designation of Hezbollah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization was sparked by the 2012 Bulgaria bombing, attributed to the Shiite terror group. The BBC reported in early 2013 that Bulgarian officials had linked the bombing to Hezbollah and the news agency included U.S. calls for Europe to label Hezbollah a terror group.⁵³⁰ Following the end of the 2006 conflict, a *New York Times* article reported on the Lebanese people returning to their homes, shocked by the damage. The article explored Hezbollah's position in Lebanese society, or, as one Lebanese professor called it, "a state within a non-state," referring to the failure of Lebanon's government to provide adequate services and security.⁵³¹

Further, media reports frequently note Hezbollah's ties to Iran and Syria. For example, when reporting on the U.S. ban of Hezbollah's television station *Al-Manar* in 2004, the *Washington Post* referred to Hezbollah as a "radical Lebanese political party" whose military wing is "funded by Iran and dedicated to the destruction of Israel."⁵³²

Although Western media may avoid specifically labeling Hezbollah a terrorist organization, it largely – but not always – recognizes Hezbollah's violent nature and terrorist history. A 2013 *New York Times* article on Hezbollah's vow to increase its presence in the Syrian civil war, for example, neglects to mention Hezbollah's connections to the murder of civilians. The article describes Hezbollah "as a popular movement to fight Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon... while firmly based in Lebanon's Shiite community, [it] has long tried to portray itself as a national resistance movement that exists to protect all Lebanese. The strength of its fighters, who constitute Lebanon's strongest military force, once made them — and Mr. Nasrallah — heroes throughout the Arab world."⁵³³ The article notes Hezbollah's annual commemoration of its 2006 war with Israel, crediting Hezbollah for rebuilding a nearby village destroyed in the war. However, the article omits the fact that Hezbollah initiated the conflict by crossing the border and attacking Israeli soldiers.⁵³⁴

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⁵¹⁶ Badih Chayban, "Nasrallah Alleges 'Christian Zionist' Plot," *Daily Star*, October 23, 2002, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2002/Oct-23/21779-nasrallah-alleges-christian-zionist-plot.ashx#axzz33cF0Jcty>.

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⁵²¹ Nour Samaha, "Hezbollah: The EU's New 'Terrorists,'" *Al Jazeera*, July 23, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/07/2013722184615907173.html>.

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⁵²³ Mintz, "U.S. Bans Al-Manar, Says TV Network Backs Terror."

⁵²⁴ Greg Myre and Steven Erlanger, "Israelis Enter Lebanon After Attacks" *New York Times*, July 13, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/13/world/middleeast/13mideast.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

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Rhetoric:

Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary-General, January 3, 2022

Televised speech addressing Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz:

“Your Majesty, the terrorist is who exported the Daesh ideology to the world. The terrorist is the one who sent thousands of Saudis to conduct suicide operations in Iraq and Syria, and it’s you.”⁵³⁵

Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary-General, January 3, 2022

Televised speech addressing Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz:

“We didn’t attack Saudi Arabia. They were involved in the greater conspiracy that was destroying the region.”⁵³⁶

Hashem Safieddine, Head of Executive Assembly, July 16, 2021

“Today, the one who has destroyed Lebanon is the United States, which continues to interfere in all of the affairs of this country.”⁵³⁷

Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary-General, May 25, 2021

“When holy sites face serious threats there are no red lines. All the resistance movements can’t sit back and watch if holy sites are in danger.”⁵³⁸

Hashem Safieddine, Head of Executive Assembly, May 17, 2021

Addressing Palestinians and referring to Israel’s presence in the Middle East:

“We in Hezbollah look to the day where we will fight together, with you, side by side and shoulder to shoulder, on all fronts to extract this cancerous cell. This day is coming, it’s inevitable.”⁵³⁹

⁵³⁵ Kareem Chehayeb, “Hezbollah’s Hassan Nasrallah accuses Saudi Arabia of ‘terrorism,’” Al Jazeera, last updated January 4, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/3/hezbollahs-nasrallah-accuses-saudi-arabia-of-terrorism>.

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