

# Hezbollah

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Hezbollah logo

## Introduction

Since its emergence in 1982, Hezbollah has waged an anti-Israel campaign and guerilla war against Israeli forces. The Lebanese-based U.S.-designated terrorist organization, which seeks to establish a Shiite Islamic state that encompasses both Lebanon and Israel, has been implicated in numerous terrorist attacks against Israeli and Western targets.

Most recently, members of Hezbollah were implicated by Bulgaria in the July 2012 bombing of a bus of Israeli tourists in the resort city of Burgas. Hezbollah and its main international sponsor, Iran, have also been linked to a spate of [attacks and attempted attacks on Israeli diplomats and other targets abroad](#) in 2012.

Hezbollah's ongoing campaign against Israel erupted in July 2006 when Hezbollah operatives killed eight Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two others stationed in Israeli sovereign territory. In response to the attack, Israeli forces launched a series of strikes intended to remove the Hezbollah threat from its border and cripple the military capabilities of the terrorist organization.

Prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Hezbollah, backed by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, was responsible for the deaths of more Americans around the world than any other terrorist organization. An April 1983 suicide bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut killed more than 60 people, including 17 Americans. The following October, a Hezbollah truck bombing killed 241 American marines at the multinational force barracks in Beirut. Hezbollah is also responsible for the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, during which a U.S. Navy diver was killed, and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 American servicemen.

In addition to its activity against American interests abroad, Hezbollah maintains a network of cells in the U.S. and Europe. The American-based cells use funds raised in the U.S. through criminal activities to help finance the organization's terrorist activities abroad. Hezbollah uses Europe as an operational launching pad for its members to enter Israel in order to assist other operatives, conduct surveillance on Israeli targets and carry out attacks, such as the 2012 bombing in Bulgaria.

Hezbollah has also been tied to various Muslim extremist groups in Latin America that have proven threatening to both American and Israeli institutions and civilians throughout the region. A March 1992 Hezbollah suicide bombing at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires killed 29 people and injured more than 240 others. In July two years later, a suicide bomber reportedly linked to Hezbollah detonated a bomb on a commuter plane in Colón, Panama, killing all 21 people aboard, including 12 Jewish businessmen, at least four of whom were Israeli, and three U.S. citizens. A day before the Panama attack, Hezbollah affiliates bombed the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA) building in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and injuring approximately 300 others. Hezbollah also maintains an extensive support operation in Latin America that helps fund its terrorist activities both in Lebanon and abroad through the drug trade and other criminal activity.

### Hezbollah and Israel

Hezbollah has waged a guerrilla war against Israeli military forces in southern Lebanon and carried out terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians for nearly three decades.

Hezbollah emerged during Israel's first war against Lebanon in 1982 with the help of the [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps](#) (IRGC), Iran's elite military unit. The IRGC deployed members of its special operations branch to Lebanon's Bekka Valley to fight against Israel's incursion into the region, which followed a series of cross-border attacks mounted against northern Israel by Palestine Liberation Organization forces based in Lebanon.

In addition to driving the Israeli military out of southern Lebanon, Hezbollah was originally formed to establish an "Islamic Republic" encompassing Lebanon and Israel. According to its 1985 platform, the conflict with Israel "is not only limited to the IDF presence in Lebanon" but to "the complete destruction of the State of Israel and the establishment of Islamic rule over Jerusalem."

Following the Israeli army's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah acquired missiles and armaments, entrenched itself on Israel's northern border and increased its presence in the West Bank and Gaza, providing weapons, training and funds to  [Hamas](#) and other Palestinian terrorist groups.

Despite Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, Hezbollah has continued to launch attacks against the Jewish state. The following October, for example, Hezbollah operatives abducted three Israeli soldiers, who were patrolling Israel's border with Lebanon, and an Israeli businessman. The soldiers' remains and the businessman were returned to Israel in 2004 in exchange for more than 400 prisoners and 59 bodies of Lebanese fighters.

Hezbollah's ongoing campaign against Israel erupted in July 2006 when Hezbollah operatives killed eight Israeli soldiers and kidnapped two others stationed in Israeli sovereign territory. In response to the attack, Israeli forces launched a series of strikes intended to remove the Hezbollah threat from its border and cripple the terrorist organization's military capabilities.

Hezbollah fired approximately 4,000 rockets into Israel during the 34-day conflict, which ended with a United Nations-brokered cessation of hostilities in the form of U.N. Resolution 1701. The U.N. resolution called on the Lebanese government to secure its borders, prevent the import of any weapons not authorized by the government and dismantle any non-state militias operating in its territory.

During a rally in southern Beirut a month after the cessation of hostilities, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah suggested that Hezbollah would defy the U.N. resolution, proclaiming that his organization still maintained an arsenal of more than 20,000 rockets with no plans to disarm. Nasrallah has also threatened that Hezbollah has rebuilt and improved its rocket and missiles arsenal and now has the capabilities to strike deep into Israel, including Tel Aviv.



Source: Hezbollah Web site  
August 2009 Rally in Lebanon Celebrating Anniversary of 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah Conflict

Although there have been no large-scale violations of the U.N. resolution, several small clashes between Hezbollah fighters and Israeli soldiers have taken place since the cessation of hostilities. Hezbollah has also attempted to avenge the death of Operations Chief Imad Mughniyah, who was killed in a February 2008 car bombing in Syria, by carrying out attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets outside of Israel. Authorities have thwarted Hezbollah plots against Israeli and Jewish interests in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Turkey, and Israeli police and Shin Bet foiled another Hezbollah plot in August 2009 to assassinate Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi.

While Hezbollah's recent plots against Israeli and Jewish interests have been foiled, the terrorist organization has succeeded in carrying out attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets outside of Lebanon and Israel, including the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed 29 people, and the [bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association \(AMIA\) building in Buenos Aires](#) two years later, which killed 85 people. The group has also been connected to other attacks against Jewish targets in Africa, Sweden, Denmark, Thailand and the U.K.

### Hezbollah and Hamas

In recent years, leaders from Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organization [Hamas](#) have entered into numerous agreements with each other in support of violent activity against Israel. At a "[resistance conference held in Beirut](#)" in January 2010, Hezbollah and Hamas leaders repeatedly praised each other and called to unify their resistance against Israel and the U.S. On the second day of the conference, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas political chief Khaled Meshaal reportedly held a meeting in southern Beirut in which they agreed to establish a joint military command in Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories and throughout the Arab world. The leaders also reportedly pledged to strengthen ties between their security and intelligence agencies and to establish joint offices in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Nasrallah and Meshaal had previously signed a joint statement rejecting a peaceful solution with Israel in April 2005. The statement, which was signed in Lebanon, warned that Hamas would resume terrorist attacks against Israel if Israel violated the cease-fire declared two months earlier.

Following the April 2005 meeting, the two leaders attended a Hamas rally in Beirut commemorating the first anniversary of the death of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Hamas' spiritual leader. Speaking at the rally, Nasrallah dared the United States to forcibly disarm either group, saying, "We tell America and all those who want to disarm the resistance in Lebanon [Hezbollah] and the resistance in Palestine [Hamas], to safeguard Israel: This is forbidden. It is not possible."

In the following months, Hezbollah engaged in scores of attacks against northern Israel, including firing Katyusha rockets into Israel and shelling Israel army positions. Hezbollah's campaign against Israel in July 2006 erupted shortly after Hamas' cross-border attack into southern Israel, during which one Israeli soldier was kidnapped, two soldiers were killed and three others were wounded.



January 2010 Resistance Conference

In addition to cross-border raids, Hezbollah has also sent weapons, technological equipment and expertise to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups "to augment their capacity to conduct attacks against Israel," according to the U.S. State Department. In May 2009, Hezbollah deputy leader Sheikh Naim Qassem confirmed that Hezbollah provides the Palestinians with "every type of support that could help the Palestinian resistance."

Nasrallah has also publicly endorsed the Palestinian resistance against Israel. Shortly after Israeli authorities intercepted the Karine-A weapons ship, which was carrying 50 tons of Hezbollah weapons to Palestinian terrorists, in January 2002, Nasrallah stated that "transferring weapons to the Palestinians is one of [Hezbollah's] greatest and most important obligations." The operation was reportedly overseen by senior Hezbollah operative Hajj Bassem.

Hezbollah reportedly funnels money to Hamas through moneychangers, bank transfers and couriers traveling into the Palestinian Territories, and has also provided Hamas and other Palestinian terrorists with access to Hezbollah training camps in Iran and southern Lebanon.

#### **Hezbollah and the U.S.**

Prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Hezbollah was responsible for the deaths of more Americans around the world than any other terrorist organization. An April 1983 suicide bombing at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut killed more than 60 people, including 17 Americans. Following the attack, Hezbollah promised "not to allow a single American to remain on Lebanese soil...we mean every inch of Lebanese territory."

The following October, a Hezbollah truck bombing killed 241 American marines at the multinational force barracks in Beirut. Hezbollah is also responsible for the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, during which a U.S. Navy diver was killed, and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 American servicemen. [The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps](#) (IRGC), Iran's elite military unit whose Quds Force serves as Iran's primary mechanism for supporting terrorist activity outside of Iran, provided Hezbollah with the intelligence, training, weapons and funds necessary to carry out the aforementioned terror attacks.

The U.S. designated Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 following the series of Hezbollah attacks against Americans overseas. Hezbollah was listed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2001.

In addition to its activity against American interests abroad, Hezbollah maintains a network of cells in the U.S., according to the FBI. These American-based cells use funds raised in the U.S. through criminal activities, including credit card fraud, illegal drug trade, cigarette smuggling and theft, to help finance the organization's terrorist activities abroad.

While the Hezbollah cells in the U.S. have been mostly limited to fundraising, "they have the capacity to inflict terrible damage on the United States," according to Richard Falkenrath, the Deputy Commissioner for Counterterrorism of the New York Police Department. American counterterrorism officials have stated that Hezbollah may be motivated to launch an attack in the continental U.S. if the American military carries out operations against Hezbollah leaders or Iran or Syria, Hezbollah's state sponsors.

In July 2006, Hezbollah's spokesman in Iran, Mojtaba Bigdeli, stated that Hezbollah is prepared to dispatch its operatives to "every corner of the world to jeopardize Israel and America's interests." He continued, "if America wants to ignite World War Three ... we welcome it."

The following is a sampling of Hezbollah-related activity in the U.S., including Americans who have been indicted or convicted in the U.S. on terrorism charges relating to Hezbollah:

- [Hor and Amera Akl](#), an Ohio couple who both hold dual American and Lebanese citizenship, were arrested in June 2010 for attempting to provide funds and vehicles for Hezbollah to use against Israel.
- In February 2010, three Miami-based businessmen were arrested in Florida for smuggling electronics to a Hezbollah-operated shopping center in Paraguay that serves as Hezbollah's central headquarters in the tri-border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. The men – [Khaled T. Safadi, Ulises Talavera and Emilio Gonzalez-Neira](#) – allegedly attempted to conceal the destination of their prohibited shipments by creating fake invoices containing false addresses and fictitious consignees on required export paperwork.
- Four men were indicted in Philadelphia in November 2009 for attempting to provide Hezbollah with a cache of weapons and funds. The indictment filed against [Moussa Ali Hamdan, Hassan Hodroj, Dib Hani Harb and Hasan Antar Karaki](#) followed a separate investigation in which at least 12 men attempted to transfer stolen goods and send anti-aircraft missiles to Lebanon. Dani Nemr Tarraf, the apparent ringleader of the group, allegedly told federal authorities that he was conspiring to acquire a large quantity of weapons for Hezbollah.
- [Patrick Nayyar](#) of Queens, New York, was indicted in October 2009 for attempting to provide weapons, ammunition and vehicles to Hezbollah. Nayyar, an Indian national residing in the U.S. illegally, has pleaded not guilty to all counts.
- In August 2009, three Yemeni men from Rochester, New York – [Yehia Ali Ahmed Alomari, Mohamed Al Huraibi and Saleh Mohamed Taher Saeed](#) – pleaded guilty to illegally transferring more than \$100,000 to overseas accounts they thought were controlled by Hezbollah.
- In June 2009, [Javed Iqbal and Saleh Elahwal](#) were sentenced in a Manhattan federal court to nearly six years in prison and 17 months in prison, respectively, for distributing broadcasts of Al Manar, Hezbollah's TV station, and providing material support to Hezbollah.
- [Fawzi Mustapha Assi](#), an automobile engineer from Dearborn, was sentenced to 10 years in prison in December 2008 for providing night vision equipment and GPS technology to Hezbollah.
- A Michigan-based charity described by the Treasury Department as a "Hezbollah front" was raided and closed in July 2007. The [Goodwill Charitable Organization](#) was also added to the Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list. Federal authorities also raided the Michigan offices of Al-Mabarrat Charitable Organization as part of the investigation of Hezbollah's financial supporters.
- A group of approximately 20 men ran a criminal enterprise in Dearborn, Michigan, trafficking in contraband cigarettes, cigarette papers and Viagra, as well as stolen infant formula and toilet paper. Prosecutors contend that the ring diverted some of the funds to Hezbollah. Naturalized U.S. citizen Karim Hassan Nasser pleaded guilty to racketeering charges in September 2006, as did Theodore Schenk of Miami Beach, Florida and Imad Hamadeh of Dearborn Heights.
- [Yousef Kourani](#), a Lebanese citizen living in Dearborn, Michigan, was sentenced in June 2005 to four-and-a-half years in prison for raising money for Hezbollah to purchase technology equipment. The indictment described Kourani as a "member, fighter, recruiter and fund-raiser for Hezbollah."
- In 2005, at least 125 people were arrested in Los Angeles for selling counterfeit goods, including designer handbags, DVDs and tobacco, in order to raise money for Hezbollah, according to Los Angeles

County Sheriff's Department. A total of \$16 million in knock-off items was seized, as well as \$3.5 million in cash.

- Dearborn resident Elias Mohamad Akhdar was sentenced in January 2004 to nearly six years in prison for his role in a cigarette-smuggling ring designed to finance Hezbollah. Another Dearborn resident, Hassan M. Makki, received a sentence of nearly five years in prison in connection with the scheme.
- In 2002, Dearborn resident Ali Boumelhem was sentenced to 44 months in prison for trying to send weapons and ammunition to Hezbollah.
- Salim Boughader Mucharraffille, the owner of a Lebanese café in Tijuana, was arrested in 2002 for smuggling 200 people, including Hezbollah supporters, from Mexico into the U.S. Boughader reportedly admitted that one of the individuals he smuggled into the U.S. worked for Al Manar, Hezbollah's television network.
- Mohamad Hammoud was charged in March 2001 for raising funds and conspiring to provide "a variety of items that Hizballah would use to engage in violent attacks and to film such attacks for use in Hizballah [sic] propaganda efforts," according to court documents. Hammoud allegedly procured dual-use technologies for Hezbollah, including goggles, global positioning systems, stun guns, naval equipment, nitrogen cutters and laser range finders. Hammoud and his brother, Chawki, were convicted the following year of providing material support to Hezbollah through their cigarette-smuggling ring that knowingly directed money to the terrorist organization.
- At least three naturalized U.S. citizens – Said Mohamad Harb, Bassam Youssef Hamood and Hussein Chahrour – and U.S. citizen Angela Georgia Tsioumas are among a group of nine individuals who bought cigarettes in North Carolina, shipped them to Michigan and sold them at a price lower than the tax-inflated Michigan price. From 1995 to 2000, the scheme generated more than \$7 million used to procure dual-use technologies for Hezbollah. Items were reportedly purchased for Hezbollah in both the U.S. and Canada, including goggles, global positioning systems, stun guns, naval equipment, nitrogen cutters and laser range finders.

## Hezbollah Around the World

### Hezbollah in Europe

Hezbollah maintains terror cells and an extensive infrastructure throughout Europe, which it uses as an operational launching pad for its members to enter Israel in order to assist other operatives, conduct surveillance on Israeli targets and carry out attacks. Most recently, Bulgaria implicated members of Hezbollah in a the July 2012 bombing of a busload of Israeli tourists in Burgas. Hezbollah, with its sponsor, Iran, has also been tied to a [number of attacks and attempted attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets in 2012 throughout Europe and Asia](#).

In July 2008, for example, Khaled Kashkoush, an Israeli of Palestinian descent who studied medicine in Germany, was arrested in Israel for spying against the Jewish state on behalf of a Germany-based Hezbollah cell. After completing his studies in Germany, Kashkoush allegedly planned to work at a Haifa-based hospital in order to obtain information useful to Hezbollah from Israeli soldiers treated there. Kashkoush also allegedly provided Hezbollah operatives with names of Israeli citizens studying abroad who could potentially be recruited to join the terrorist organization.

While in Germany, Kashkoush reportedly met on a biweekly basis with the head of the Orphans Project Lebanon, a German charity described by Israeli officials as a front organization for Hezbollah. In March 2010, a spokesman for Germany's Interior Minister confirmed that "the association Orphans Project

Lebanon is linked with Hezbollah in many ways organizationally and through its staff. Its danger thus essentially corresponds to that of Hezbollah."

Hezbollah garners most of its funds in Germany from charitable organizations whose donations are officially earmarked for Hezbollah. In 2002, for example, Germany closed down two charitable organizations for raising money for Hezbollah: Al-Shahid Social Relief Institution, the German branch of a Lebanese charitable organization, and the al-Aqsa Fund, a Hamas front organization that also raised funds for Hezbollah.

Germany has become a hotbed for Hezbollah activity and a key fundraising center for the terrorist organization. German authorities have alleged that a handful of Hezbollah's approximately 900 members in Germany use proceeds from selling drugs to help finance the terrorist organization. In May 2008, German police recovered more than \$13 million raised for Hezbollah, reportedly by selling cocaine throughout Europe.

Hezbollah also maintains cells in other locations in Europe that provide logistical and financial support to the terrorist organization and serve as launching pads for terrorist activities against Israel. In 2007, for example, the Swedish government shut down its branch of the al-Aqsa Foundation for facilitating terrorist activity for Hezbollah. That same year, the foundation's deputy chairman, Khaled al-Yousef, was charged with financing terrorism in Israel.

In 2003, Israeli police arrested Ghulam Mahmud Qawqa for his role in several bombings in Jerusalem. Qawqa, a member of Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, admitted that he had been working with numerous Hezbollah cells in Europe to initiate a continent-wide campaign against Israeli and Jewish targets for Hezbollah leadership. Qawqa also allegedly planned Hezbollah attacks on Israeli interests in Asia and plotted to assassinate Israel's ambassador to China.

The previous year, Israeli forces in Hebron apprehended Fawzi Ayoub, a Lebanese citizen who traveled from Lebanon to Europe on his Canadian passport. In Europe Ayoub reportedly met with a Hezbollah operative who supplied him with a fake American passport for his entry into Israel. He stayed in Jerusalem and reportedly attempted to approach arms brokers.

In 2001, Israeli authorities arrested Jihad Shuman, a Lebanese citizen with British nationality who flew from Lebanon to Britain to meet with a Hezbollah operative. Shuman subsequently flew from Britain to Israel on his British passport under the name Gerard Shuman and stayed in Jerusalem, where he was later arrested for planning terrorist attacks inside Israel. A search of Shuman's possessions revealed a yarmulka, a timer, tourist maps of the Jerusalem area, a large sum of money, a video camera, disposable cameras and several cellular phones, according to Israeli authorities.

### **Hezbollah in Africa**

Hezbollah has maintained an operational presence in Africa, which has a large Lebanese expatriate community, since the birth of the Lebanese-based terrorist organization in the 1980s. Hezbollah operatives in Africa raise and launder funds to support the organization's terrorist activities against Israeli and American interests, recruit local operatives and collect intelligence.

Hezbollah has garnered funds through front companies in Africa and the regional diamond trade. Two African-based diamond smugglers and supporters of Hezbollah, Kassim Tajideen and Abd Al Menhem

Qubaysi, were designated by the U.S. Treasury Department in May 2009 for providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism. Tajideen, who was previously arrested in Belgium for diamond smuggling and money laundering, allegedly operated cover companies for Hezbollah in Africa and contributed tens of millions of dollars to the Lebanese terrorist organization. According to the Treasury Department, Qubaysi serves as Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's "personal representative," has hosted senior Hezbollah officials in the Ivory Coast and other parts of Africa and has sponsored meetings and Hezbollah fundraising events in the region.

The December 2003 plane crash of a flight from Benin to Beirut also illustrates Hezbollah's use of Africa as a fundraising locale. A senior member of Hezbollah's African branch and two of his aides who were killed during the crash were reportedly carrying \$2 million in contributions to Hezbollah's Beirut headquarters.

For nearly three decades, Hezbollah has utilized the drug routes across the porous borders in West Africa as a door to Europe and the Middle East. In April 2009, Interpol's secretary general confirmed that "authorities have dismantled cocaine-trafficking rings that used their proceeds to finance the activities of the FARC and Hezbollah, while drugs destined for European markets are increasingly being channeled through West African countries."

Hezbollah has also planned terrorist attacks against Israeli interests in Africa and has conducted training in various countries throughout the region. In April 2009, for example, Egypt announced that it had discovered a Hezbollah cell of approximately 50 people – at least one of whom is a Sudanese national and approximately 20 others are Egyptian – who were reportedly planning to attack tourist villages in the Sinai Peninsula frequented by Israeli and Western tourists. The Hezbollah operatives reportedly planned to send recruits to already-prepared areas in Libya, the Sudan and multiples countries in the Middle East to train in suicide bombing tactics and intelligence gathering. Egyptian authorities have also accused members of the Hezbollah cell of planning to smuggle arms and ammunition into Sinai from Somalia and the Sudan.

The Hezbollah plot in Egypt was seemingly designed to avenge the February 2008 death of Hezbollah Operations Chief Imad Mughniyah, whose assassination Hezbollah has repeatedly blamed on Israel. In the aftermath of Mughniyah's death, the Israeli government issued a warning to Israeli citizens that Hezbollah was plotting to attack Israeli and Jewish interests in Africa and that the terrorist organization was planning to kidnap Israelis in the region. A similar warning was issued in August 2009.

### **Hezbollah in Latin America**

Hezbollah maintains an extensive operational presence in Latin America that helps fund its terrorist activities both in Lebanon and abroad. The group raises revenues throughout Central and South America through drug trafficking, money laundering and forging travel documents.

Hezbollah has also been tied to various Muslim extremist groups in Latin America that have proven threatening to both American and Israeli institutions and civilians throughout the region. A March 1992 Hezbollah suicide bombing at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires killed 29 people and injured more than 240 others. In July two years later, a suicide bomber reportedly linked to Hezbollah detonated a bomb on a commuter plane in Colón, Panama, killing all 21 people aboard, including 12 Jewish businessmen, at least four of whom were Israeli, and three U.S. citizens.

A day before the Panama attack, [Hezbollah affiliates bombed the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association \(AMIA\) building in Buenos Aires](#), killing 85 people and injuring approximately 300 others. Imad Mughniyah, a senior Hezbollah official allegedly involved in numerous Hezbollah attacks against American and Israeli interests in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, allegedly orchestrated the Hezbollah bombings against the Jewish sites in Buenos Aires. Mughniyah was killed in a car bombing in Damascus in February 2008, five years after Argentina issued a warrant for his arrest related to the Buenos Aires attacks.

The investigations in Argentina for the 1992 and 1994 bombings not only detailed Hezbollah's involvement in the attacks, but also revealed the group's extensive history and activities in Latin America. Hezbollah has established a presence in the lawless and drug-ridden tri-border region of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, which it uses as a key locale for raising and laundering money, drug trafficking, weapons and people smuggling and document and currency fraud.

Assad Ahmad Barakat, identified by U.S. authorities as "a key terrorist financier in South America who has used every financial crime in the book, including his business, to generate funding for Hezbollah," allegedly ran an extensive counterfeiting and money laundering operation in the tri-border region and sent millions to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran. Barakat, who according to the U.S. Treasury Department attended a Hezbollah meeting in Brazil to discuss intentions to identify, locate and assassinate Israelis, was arrested by Brazilian authorities in June 2002 at the request of Paraguay, where he was released from prison in 2009 after serving a six-year prison sentence for tax evasion. The U.S. Treasury blocked Barakat's assets in 2004 and, two years later, designated nine others in the tri-border region for providing financial support to Barakat and Hezbollah.

In November 2001, Sobhi Mahmoud Fayad, Barakat's personal secretary who operated as Hezbollah's military leader in the tri-border region, was arrested for allegedly coordinating Hezbollah's fundraising operations in the area and for funneling more than \$50 million to the terrorist group. Fayad, who later went to prison for tax evasion, had previously been arrested for surveillance of the U.S. Embassy in Asunción, Paraguay. Another Lebanese businessman, Ali Khalil Mehri, was arrested in Paraguay in 2000 for allegedly funneling millions of dollars to Hezbollah raised from selling pirated software. Four months later, Mehri bribed his way out of prison and fled to Syria.

In addition to the group's activities in the tri-border region, Hezbollah has used other countries in Latin America as a base for its fundraising activities. Venezuela in particular has become a money-raising hub for Hezbollah due to the country's anti-American foreign policy and close relationship with Iran, which finances and arms the terrorist organization. In June 2008, the U.S. Treasury listed two Venezuelan citizens – [Ghazi Nasr al Din and Fawzi Kanan](#) – as Specially Designated Global Terrorists for allegedly raising funds for Hezbollah and for discussing possible kidnappings and terrorist attacks with senior Hezbollah officials.

Hezbollah and Iran's [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#), which allegedly provided extensive training and financial and logistical support to Hezbollah for the 1992 and 1994 attacks in Argentina, have also reportedly joined forces to kidnap Jewish businessmen in Latin America. According to media reports, Hezbollah operatives in Venezuela have recruited informants at the Caracas airport to gather intelligence on Jewish travelers for potential kidnappings. In August 2008 and 2009, the Israeli government issued a warning to Israeli citizens that Hezbollah may be planning to kidnap Israelis around the world, in particular in Latin America and West Africa.

Hezbollah has also formed alliances with the region's narco-terrorists and drug-trafficking rings, which use their proceeds to help finance the terrorist organization. According to a report prepared by the Professional Research Division of the Library of Congress at the behest of the Defense Department, Hezbollah bases its fundraising activities with Latin American drug rings on an Iranian fatwa issued in the 1980s, which reportedly states, "We are making these drugs for Satan – America and the Jews. If we cannot kill them with guns, so we will kill them with drugs."

Since the mid-1990s, a number of drug traffickers have been arrested throughout Latin America for their purported links to Hezbollah. In June 2005, for example, Ecuadorian police broke up an international cocaine ring whose members were suspected of raising money for Hezbollah, arresting 19 people in both Brazil and the U.S. More recently, 17 people were arrested in Curaçao in April 2009 for their suspected involvement in an international drug ring linked to Hezbollah.

Since the fall of 2008, at least 111 suspects of a Hezbollah-linked international network of drug traffickers and money launderers have been arrested as part of an international operation coordinated by the DEA. At least three of those arrested purportedly distributed money to sponsor Hezbollah, including Chekri Mahmoud Harb, who allegedly coordinated shipments of drugs to Lebanon and distributed the proceeds to the terrorist organization. Jose Alberto Henao Jaramillo, a Colombian drug trafficker who was detained in Bogota, Colombia in March 2009, is suspected of being one of the leaders of the Hezbollah-linked network. He was initially solicited by a U.S. court in south Florida for money laundering and drug activities before his detention in Colombia.

Jaramillo's arrest comes amid growing concerns that Hezbollah is utilizing Latin American drug routes to get closer to the American border. Former assistant administrator and chief of operations for the DEA, Michael Braun, stated that Hezbollah relies on "the same criminal weapons smugglers, document traffickers and transportation experts as the drug cartels...they'll leverage those relationships to their benefit, to smuggle contraband and humans into the U.S.; in fact, they already are."

Several [Hezbollah supporters that have been arrested in the U.S.](#) crossed the border from Mexico, including [Mahmoud Youssef Kourani](#), who crossed the Mexican border into California and traveled to Dearborn, Michigan, where he was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison in June 2005 for conspiring to raise money for the terrorist group. Two years later, Texas's Homeland Security Director claimed that additional terrorists affiliated with Hezbollah had been captured trying to cross into the U.S. from Mexico.

Salim Boughader Mucharrafille, the owner of a Lebanese café in Tijuana, was arrested in 2002 for smuggling 200 people, including Hezbollah supporters, from Mexico into the U.S. Boughader reportedly admitted that one of the individuals he smuggled into the U.S. worked for Al-Manar, Hezbollah's television network.

#### **State Sponsors of Terrorism: Iran and Syria**

Hezbollah emerged during Israel's first war against Lebanon in 1982 with the help of the [Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps](#) (IRGC), Iran's elite military unit that deployed members of the Quds Force, its special operations branch, to Lebanon's Bekka Valley to fight against Israel's incursion into the region, which followed a series of cross-border attacks mounted against northern Israel by Palestine Liberation Organization forces based in Lebanon.

Since its inception, the IRGC has supported Hezbollah's military, paramilitary and terrorist activities by providing the Lebanese terrorist organization with weapons, intelligence and logistical support to "advance its anti-Israel campaign," according to the U.S. State Department. The growth of Hezbollah is directly linked to the guidance, training and material support it receives from the IRGC.

The Quds Force provides Hezbollah with \$100-\$200 million in funding every year and has allegedly trained Hezbollah fighters in both Lebanon and in Iran in various military tactics, including firing missiles, using artillery and operating unmanned aerial drones, as well as conventional and marine warfare.

Iran has been implicated in various Hezbollah terrorist plots and attacks against American, Israeli and Jewish interests overseas.

The U.S. government has indicted members of Hezbollah for the 1983 attack on the U.S. Marine Barracks in Beirut that killed 241 Marines. In 2007, a U.S. federal judge ruled that Iran, which provided Hezbollah with financial and logistical support to carry out the attack, was legally responsible for the bombing.

Similarly, the U.S. government has alleged that elements of the Iranian government inspired, supported and directed Hezbollah to carry out a 1996 truck bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 American servicemen. In December 2006, a U.S. federal judge ruled that the truck bomb had been assembled at a base operated by the IRGC and ordered the government of Iran to pay more than \$253 million to the families of those killed.

Senior IRGC and Quds Force officials have also been indicted by the Argentine government for their alleged roles in the [1994 bombing of an Argentina Jewish Center](#), which killed 85 people and injured approximately 300 others. Hezbollah and the IRGC, which allegedly provided extensive training and financial and logistical support to Hezbollah for the Argentina attack, have also reportedly joined forces to kidnap Jewish businessmen in Latin America.

The IRGC has continued to train, fund and send weapons to Hezbollah to aid the group in its fight against Israel. "Hezbollah is part of us," an Iranian official stated in July 2006, "We are standing with the Party, in spirit and physically, militarily and financially." In 2008 alone, Iran provided more than \$200 million in funding to Lebanon and trained more than 3,000 Hezbollah fighters, according to the State Department. Iran has also aided Hezbollah in its attempt to avenge the 2008 death of its Operations Chief, Imad Mughniyah, and has reportedly provided Hezbollah with intelligence for plots against Israeli and Jewish interests in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Turkey.

In recent years, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah has repeatedly threatened that Hezbollah has rebuilt and improved its rocket and missiles arsenal and now has the capabilities to strike deep into Israel, including Tel Aviv. "Not only have the Iranian arms transfers to Hezbollah increased," Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak stated in January 2010, "but there has also been significant upgrades in the quality of the weapons."

In June 2009, for example, an airplane reportedly carrying explosives and electrical instruments from Iran to be delivered to Hezbollah crashed north of Tehran. This transfer of arms was purportedly a special operation of the IRGC, and some of its members were among the 168 people killed in the crash.



Hezbollah and IRGC Logos

Five months later, Israeli authorities announced that its naval unit had intercepted a Hezbollah-bound arms shipment from Iran. Concealed in the ship's cargo were hundreds of tons of weapons, including rockets, grenades, missiles and anti-tank weapons, according to the Israeli military.

In addition to the training, weapons and financial support from Iran, Hezbollah also receives diplomatic, political and logistical support from Syria, according to the U.S. State Department. Syria was first designated by the U.S. as a state sponsor of terrorism in 1979 and has since continued to provide political and material support to Hezbollah.

Syria reportedly supplies Hezbollah with a quarter of the terrorist organization's arsenal of mid-and long-range missiles, including those used to destroy Israeli tanks in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict. Additionally, Syria has allowed Iran to use Syrian territory as a "transit point" to impart its assistance to Hezbollah, and, in January 2010, allowed Hezbollah to train in the use of anti-aircraft missiles on Syrian territory, according to American officials.

While hosting Nasrallah and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Damascus in February 2010, Syrian president Bashar al-Asad reaffirmed his administration's support for Hezbollah. "To support the resistance," al-Asad said, "is a moral, patriotic and legal duty."

### Hassan Nasrallah

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has served as Hezbollah's leader since 1992. Under Nasrallah's leadership of the Majlis al-Shura, the group's Consultative Council and highest governing body, Hezbollah has waged a guerrilla war against Israeli military forces in southern Lebanon and has carried out terrorist attacks against Americans and Israelis throughout the world.

Nasrallah was born in Beirut in 1960. When he was 15, he moved to Najaf, an Iraqi city sacred to Shi'i Muslims, to study Islam under the supervision of Abbas Musawi. In 1978, Nasrallah was expelled from Saddam Hussein's regime and returned to Lebanon and joined the Amal movement, a militia led by Musawi that was established to promote the Shi'i cause in Lebanon. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Nasrallah followed Musawi into Hezbollah as a guerrilla commander.

Nasrallah took over leadership of Hezbollah after Musawi was assassinated in 1992. Within weeks under Nasrallah's command, Hezbollah bombed the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed 29 people and injured more than 240 others. Nasrallah has also orchestrated Hezbollah attacks against other Jewish and Israeli targets in Argentina, Africa, Sweden, Denmark, Thailand and the U.K.

Nasrallah was the driving force behind Hezbollah's attacks against Israel in the summer of 2006. Following the 34-day conflict, during which Hezbollah fired approximately 4,000 rockets into Israel, Nasrallah declared that Hezbollah had achieved "a strategic, historic victory."



Hassan Nasrallah

Since the end of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict, Nasrallah has increased his anti-Israel rhetoric and issued numerous statements threatening the Jewish state. In the aftermath of the February 2008 car bombing in Syria that killed Hezbollah Operations Chief Imad Mughniyah, Nasrallah stated that the assassination will result in the "disappearance of the Jewish state" and declared "open war" on Israel. The following month, Nasrallah told thousands of supporters that the "Zionist entity can be wiped out of existence." Nasrallah has also threatened that Hezbollah has rebuilt and improved its rocket and missile arsenal and now has the capabilities to strike deep into Israel.

Hezbollah officials announced in November 2009 that they had reelected Nasrallah for a sixth term as the group's leader. Nasrallah and members of Hezbollah have increasingly become politically active and are represented by elected deputies in Lebanon's cabinet and parliament.

Despite Hezbollah's emergence as a political entity in Lebanon, the group has maintained its ideological war against Israel and the U.S. While outlining the group's new platform in November 2009, Nasrallah stated that the best way to defeat Israel, the "cancerous entity," is through "armed struggle and military resistance." Nasrallah, who also labeled the U.S. as the "root of all terror in the world," declared that he and his organization "categorically reject any compromise with Israel or recognizing its legitimacy."

### **Nasrallah: In His Own Words**

Hassan Nasrallah has been the public face and voice of Hezbollah since Abbas Musawi was assassinated in 1992. Since Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, Nasrallah has issued dozens of statements depicting Israel as a cancer and an enemy of Islam that needs to be "wiped out of existence." Nasrallah has also declared the U.S. an enemy of Hezbollah because of American support for Israel.

The following is a sampling of the statements and recordings issued by Nasrallah on behalf of Hezbollah:

#### **January 15, 2010:**

- "Resistance forces will ultimately triumph. We will come out victorious and change the face of the region. The Israeli entity will disappear and American sovereignty over the world will vanish, and we will triumph. I appeal to all the international organizations to support us in order to achieve this victory."

#### **May 18, 2009:**

- "The Zionist entity is not legitimate, and will not be legitimate in any situation."

#### **January 7, 2009:**

- "The Gaza war proved that Israel is the enemy of the world of Islam."
- "Your 2006 war will be but a walk in the park compared to what we have prepared for you in the event of a new offensive. We are ready to sacrifice our souls, our brothers and sisters, our children, our loved ones for what we believe in."
- "In front of the Zionist entity that is based on spilling the blood of the innocent and committing massacres, the least thing to do is not to give legitimacy to this entity regardless of the sacrifices... Not acknowledging Israel, rejecting normalization with it is the least that can be done."
- "Israel is our enemy and the enemy of our nation. It will remain as such even if some make peace with it. The U.S. administration fosters Israel and protects it, so this administration will remain our enemy and the enemy of our nation..."

**December 28, 2008:**

- "What is happening in Gaza will have repercussions not only for Gaza alone or Palestine, but for the entire ummah [Muslim community]. We must continue our work and not be satisfied with an activity here, a demonstration there ... We must exert every effort to defend our people."
- "... northern Israel will burn as Gaza is burning."
- "What is happening today in Gaza is not similar but identical to what happened in July of 2006... It is the same choices, the same battle, the same conspiracies and, God willing, there will be the same outcome."

**September 26, 2008:**

- "Palestine, from the sea to the river, is the property of Arabs and Palestinians and no one has the right to give up even a single grain of earth or one stone, because every grain of the land is holy. The entire land must be returned to its rightful owners."

**March 24, 2008:**

- "Could Israel be wiped out of existence? Yes, and a thousand times yes."

**February 14, 2008:**

- "Zionists, if you want this kind of open war, then let the entire world listen: let it be an open war. We have a sacred right to self-defense and we will do everything this right entitles us to do to defend our country..."
- "The July war is not over. It is ongoing and no ceasefire was ever declared."
- "After they killed Hajj Imad, let them hear me well: in any coming war, not just one Imad Mughniyah will be waiting for you, and not just a few thousands fighters. Imad Mughniyah has left behind him tens of thousands of trained, equipped and ready-for-martyrdom fighters"
- "Mughniyah's blood will lead to the elimination of Israel. These words are not an emotional reaction."
- "First, they, that is, the Zionists, consider the martyrdom of Al-Hajj Imad a great achievement while we consider it great news, signaling the upcoming decisive and final victory, God willing."
- "...let the whole world note - and I take responsibility for this - that we should start writing the history of the phase which signals the beginning of the collapse of the State of Israel."
- "The consequences of shedding the blessed, pure blood of Hajj Imad Mughniyah, Shaykh Raghieb, Al-Sayyid Abbas, Fathi al-Shaqaqi, Ahmad Yasin, and the other martyrs, leaders, and mujahadeen [Muslim warriors] will destroy this cancerous, usurper entity which has been planted in the heart of our Arab and Islamic nation."

**July 14, 2006:**

- "We are going to an open war, to Haifa and beyond Haifa. We will not be the only ones who will lose their children and houses."
- "To the Zionists, to the people of the Zionist entity at this hour I say to them: you will soon discover how foolish and stupid are your new rulers, your new leaders...Not only our houses will be destroyed. Not only our children will be killed. Not only our people will be displaced. Those days are past. That was how it was before 1982, and before the year 2000."

**July 12, 2006:**

- "Our operation succeeded, we have results and honor. We kept our promise to kidnap soldiers [to secure] the release of prisoners, and therefore are calling the attack 'Operation Promise Fulfilled'"

**October 28, 2005:**

- "The international community is not concerned with protecting the interests of the Palestinians, Lebanese or Arabs in general. They only serve Israeli and American schemes currently targeting Syria, Lebanon and Palestine."

#### May 25, 2005

- "We are among the biggest proponents of peace, stability and national unity. We don't seek to attack anyone and we will not allow anyone to attack Lebanon...But, if anyone thinks of disarming the resistance, we would cut off any hand that reaches out to our weapons as an Israeli hand."

#### October 22, 2002:

- "If they [the Jews] all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide."

#### December 22, 2000:

- "[Israel is] a cancer that needs to be removed at its roots."
- "Our weapons, our blood and our rockets are all yours [the Palestinians], too, and we will we stay with you until we can pray with you at the Al-Aqsa mosque in united Jerusalem, capital of all of Palestine!"

#### October 28, 2000:

- "The road to victory is the road of martyrdom....The most important operations in the confrontation are suicide missions, because of their negative material, psychological and moral effect on the enemy and their positive effect on the mujahideen [Muslim warriors]."

#### Al-Manar: Hezbollah Television

Hezbollah's television station, Al-Manar, broadcasts the terrorist group's messages of hate and violence, disseminates anti-Semitic and anti-American propaganda and glorifies suicide bombings to millions of viewers in the Arab world, Europe and South East Asia for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The station, which operates out of Beirut, Lebanon, was founded in 1991 and started broadcasting via satellite in May 2000. Al-Manar, Arabic for "the Beacon," received seed money from Iran and is mostly funded by Hezbollah, which itself is dependent on Iranian financial backing. Al-Manar is also reportedly funded through donations collected from Muslim communities outside Lebanon. In 2004, it was estimated to have an annual budget of approximately \$15 million and 300 employees.

Currently, the Al-Manar signal can be picked up in Europe and in the Arab world, including North Africa, by way of two Arab satellite companies: Arabsat, a Saudi-based company founded and run by the Arab League, and Nilesat, which is controlled by the Egyptian government. Indosat, an Indonesian telecommunications company, has also carried Al-Manar since April 2008.

Al-Manar's former programming director, Sheikh Nasir al-Akhdar, has said that the station's goals are to "wage psychological warfare" and "promote the Islamic resistance." He has further



Al Manar Logo

explained that "the 'war' with the Zionist enemy continues. This war will persist as long as the Hebrew state exists in occupied Palestine."

Al-Manar broadcasts Hezbollah's messages to an estimated daily audience of 10-15 million viewers. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2003, Al-Manar aired [Ash-Shatat](#) ("the Diaspora"), a 30-part series produced in Syria and based on the anti-Semitic literature the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Al-Manar also appears to be the source of the conspiracy theory that claimed that 4,000 Israelis were absent from their jobs at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, implying that Israel was responsible for the terrorist attacks of that day. In addition to broadcasting the conspiracy, Al-Manar also posted the story on its Web site, which enables viewers to watch live streaming video of the network. The September 11 conspiracy story was later picked up by extremists around the world.

Al-Manar often airs interviews and speeches, given by Hezbollah leaders, that incite violence. In several addresses aired during a Shi'i festival in February 2006, for example, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah condemned a Danish newspaper that published cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. Nasrallah urged European parliaments to "draft laws that ban newspapers from insulting the Prophet" and warned, "Today we are protesting...but we are ready to shed our blood."

On March 24, 2008, Al-Manar broadcasted a speech by Nasrallah to mark the end of the 40-day mourning period for Imad Mughniyah, a Hezbollah military commander killed the previous month. In his speech, Nasrallah stated that "The Zionist entity can be wiped out of existence," warned of "Zionist-American propaganda" and spoke about the "bloody war of consciousness" in which Israel, helped by some Arabs and Europeans, has "infiltrated" the media. Nasrallah also stated that "Mughniyah will remain the pillar for the resistance in his martyrdom as he was the pillar of the resistance during his life, his jihad and his work. We...will continue to follow his path."

The U.S. State Department designated Al-Manar as a terrorist entity and added the satellite station to the Terrorism Exclusion List in December 2004. Two years later, the U.S. Treasury Department added Al-Manar, along with its parent company, the Lebanese Media Group, to its Specially Designated Global Terrorist List, which resulted in economic sanctions against the station and made it illegal for any U.S. persons to engage in financial transactions with it. In June 2009, [Javed Iqbal and Saleh Elahwal](#) were sentenced in a Manhattan federal court to nearly six years in prison and 17 months in prison, respectively, for distributing broadcasts of Al-Manar in New York and providing material support to Hezbollah.

Several European countries, including France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as Australia, have also taken measures to block Al-Manar. In March 2005, the broadcasting regulators in the European Union agreed to ban satellite broadcasting of Al-Manar on the basis that the channel carried racist material and incitement. As a result, several satellite service providers, most of them European, dropped Al-Manar, making it unavailable in North and South America, Asia and Australia. Al-Manar, is, however, still available in Europe through Arab satellite companies and its Web site offers English, French and Spanish translations of its material.

### **A Political and Social Force in Lebanon**

Although Hezbollah has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States, the Lebanese government recognizes Hezbollah as a legitimate resistance group and a political party that is represented by elected deputies in Lebanon's cabinet and parliament.

In recent years, Hezbollah has bolstered its political standing by serving as a proponent of Shi'i interests in the electoral process, where it enjoys support from Lebanon's Shi'i community (which comprises approximately 40 percent of Lebanon's population).

In May 2008, the Arab League brokered a deal between Hezbollah and Lebanon's Western-backed government to end an 18-month political crisis that pushed Lebanon on the verge of a civil war. As part of the deal, Lebanon's prime minister agreed to establish a national unity government in which Hezbollah and its allies were given 11 of the 30 seats in the cabinet. Hezbollah was also granted veto power over government decisions, including any attempt to disarm the group.

Although 14 Hezbollah members sat in the Lebanese parliament following the deal brokered by the Arab League, Hezbollah and its allies were defeated in parliamentary elections in June 2009 and, since then, have held 11 of its 128 seats. Five months later, Lebanon's prime minister formed a new unity government, in which Hezbollah holds two seats in the cabinet.

In December 2009, the Lebanese government endorsed Hezbollah's demand to keep its weapons arsenal, a violation of the U.N. resolution that ended the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict. Two months earlier, the United Nations General Assembly voted Lebanon as the Asian bloc's new non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council for a two-year term. Lebanon's seat on the council allows Hezbollah access to confidential information maintained by the Security Council – an ironic development given the fact that Hezbollah has defied Security Council resolutions regarding the disarming of militias.

In addition to its emergence as a political entity in Lebanon, Hezbollah also serves as a significant social force that operates a domestic network of schools, hospitals, charities, clinics and other social services. Hezbollah also owns Al-Manar, its own satellite television channel and broadcast station.