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## **Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)**

**United States Department of State** 

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aka AAA; Band of Helpers; Band of Partisans; League of Partisans; League of the Followers; God's Partisans; Gathering of Supporters; Partisan's League; Esbat al-Ansar; Isbat al-Ansar; Osbat al-Ansar; Usbat al-Ansar; Usbat ul-Ansar

**Description:** Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 27, 2002, Asbat al-Ansar (AAA) is a Lebanon-based violent Sunni terrorist group composed primarily of Palestinians. Linked to al-Qa'ida and other Sunni violent extremist groups, AAA aims to thwart perceived anti-Islamic and pro-Western influences in the country. AAA's base is largely confined to Lebanon's refugee camps.

**Activities:** AAA first emerged in the early 1990s. In the mid-1990s, the group assassinated Lebanese religious leaders and bombed nightclubs, theaters, and liquor stores. The group

has also plotted against foreign diplomatic targets. In October 2004, AAA member Mahir al-Sa'di was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for his 2000 plot to assassinate then-U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon David Satterfield. Between 2005 and 2011, AAA members traveled to Iraq to fight Coalition Forces. AAA has been reluctant to involve itself in operations in Lebanon due in part to concerns of losing its safe haven in the Ain al-Hilwah refugee camp. AAA did not publicly claim any attacks in 2016.

**Strength:** The group has at least 650 members.

**Location/Area of Operation:** The group's primary base of operations is the Ain al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon in southern Lebanon.

Funding and External Aid: It is likely the group receives money through international Sunni extremist networks.

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