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aka the Party of God; Islamic Jihad; Islamic Jihad Organization; Revolutionary Justice Organization; Organization of the Oppressed on Earth; Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine; Organization of Right Against Wrong; Ansar Allah; Followers of the Prophet Muhammed

Description: Hizballah was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on October 8, 1997. Formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Lebanon-based radical Shia group takes its ideological inspiration from the Iranian revolution and the teachings of the late Ayatollah Khomeini. The group generally follows the religious guidance of the Iranian Supreme Leader, which in 2016 was Ali Khamenei. Hizballah is closely allied with Iran and the two often work together on shared initiatives, although Hizballah also acts independently. Hizballah shares a close relationship with Syria, and like Iran, provides assistance – including fighters – to Syrian regime forces in the Syrian conflict.

Activities: Hizballah is responsible for multiple large scale terrorist attacks, including the 1983 suicide truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut; the 1984 attack on the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut; and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, during which U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem was murdered.

Elements of the group were responsible for the kidnapping, detention, and murder of U.S. citizens and other Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s. Hizballah was implicated, along with Iran, in the 1992 attacks on the Israeli Embassy in Argentina and in the 1994 bombing of the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association in Buenos Aires. In 2000, Hizballah operatives captured three Israeli soldiers in the Shebaa Farms area and, separately, kidnapped an Israeli non-combatant in Dubai. The non-combatant survived, but on November 1, 2001, Israeli Army Rabbi Israel Weiss pronounced the soldiers dead. The surviving non-combatant and the bodies of the Israeli soldiers were returned to Israel in a prisoner exchange with Hizballah in 2004.

Hizballah is believed to have carried out two attacks against UN Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeepers, an attack in late July 2011 that wounded six French citizens and a second attack, days later, which injured three French soldiers. Also in 2011, four Hizballah members were indicted by the UN-based Special Tribunal for Lebanon, an international tribunal investigating the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. A fifth Hizballah member, Hassan Habib Merhi, was indicted in October 2013.

In January 2012, Thai police detained Hizballah operative Hussein Atris on immigration charges as he was attempting to depart Thailand. Atris was convicted of possessing bomb-making materials by a Thai court in September 2013 and sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. He was released in September 2014 and is believed to reside in Lebanon. In July 2012, a suspected Hizballah operative was detained by Cypriot authorities for allegedly helping plan an attack against Israeli tourists on the island. On March 21, 2013, a Cyprus court found the operative guilty of charges based on his surveillance activities of Israeli tourists

Hizballah was also responsible for the July 2012 attack on a passenger bus carrying 42 Israeli tourists at the Sarafovo Airport in Bulgaria, near the city of Burgas. The explosion killed five Israelis and one Bulgarian, and injured 32 others.

In May 2013, Hizballah publicly admitted to playing a significant role in the ongoing conflict in Syria, rallying support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

In May 2015, Cypriot authorities arrested Hizballah member and Lebanese-Canadian national Hussein Bassam Abdallah after finding 8.2 tons of liquid ammonium nitrate in the basement of a residence in Larnaca. Abdallah was charged by the Republic of Cyprus on five offenses, including participation in a terrorist organization and providing support to a terrorist organization. On June 29, 2015, Abdallah was sentenced to six years in prison; he is currently serving his sentence in Larnaca, Cyprus.

Hizballah's support for Syria's al-Assad regime continued into 2016, when Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah said he planned to send extra Hizballah militants to fight alongside Syrian government forces in the besieged city of Aleppo. There are reportedly about 7,000 Hizballah fighters in Syria; several senior Hizballah military commanders and hundreds of fighters have died in the Syrian conflict.

Strength: Tens of thousands of supporters and members worldwide.

Location/Area of Operation: Hizballah is based in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Bekaa Valley, and southern Lebanon. As evidenced by Hizballah's activities during the course of 2012 and 2013, the group is capable of operating around the world. Since 2013, Hizballah fighters have assisted Assad regime forces in many areas across Syria.

Funding and External Aid: Iran continues to provide Hizballah with training, weapons, and explosives, as well as political, diplomatic, monetary, and organizational aid; Syria has furnished training, weapons, and diplomatic and political support. Hizballah also receives funding from private donations and profits from legal and illegal businesses. Hizballah receives financial support from Lebanese Shia communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Hizballah supporters are often engaged in a range of licit and illicit activities that benefit the group financially. These activities include smuggling contraband goods, passport falsification, trafficking in narcotics, money laundering, and credit card, immigration, and bank fraud.

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