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Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 5 - Abdallah Azzam Brigades

Also known as (aka) Abdullah Azzam Brigades; Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades; Yusuf al-‘Uyayri Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades; Marwan Hadid Brigades; Marwan Hadid Brigade.

Description: Designated as a FTO on May 30, 2012, the Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB) formally announced its establishment in a July 2009 video statement claiming responsibility for a February 2009 rocket attack against Israel. The Lebanon-based group’s full name is Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdallah Azzam Brigades, named after Lebanese citizen Ziad al Jarrah, one of the planners of and participants in the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

Activities: After its initial formation, AAB relied primarily on rocket attacks against Israeli civilians. It is responsible for numerous rocket attacks fired into Israeli territory from Lebanon targeting – among other things – population centers.

In November 2013, AAB began targeting Hizballah. AAB claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing outside the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, which killed 23 people and wounded more than 140. The group warned it would carry out more attacks if Hizballah did not stop sending fighters to Syria in support of Syrian government forces.

In February 2014, AAB again attacked Hizballah for its involvement in the Syrian conflict, claiming a twin suicide bomb attack against the Iranian cultural center in Beirut, which killed four people. AAB was also believed to be responsible for a series of bombings in Hizballah- controlled areas around Beirut. AAB was also blamed for a suicide bombing in June 2014 in the Beirut neighborhood of Tayyouneh, which killed a security officer and wounded 25 people.

In June 2015, the group released photos of a training camp for its “Marwan Hadid Brigade” camp in Syria, likely located in Homs province. In 2016, 2017, and 2018, AAB continued its involvement in the Syrian conflict and was active in Lebanon’s Ain al-Hilwah refugee camp. In December 2017, AAB called for violent jihad by Muslims against the United States and Israel after the U.S. announcement recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. There were no attacks claimed by AAB in 2018.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown.

Location/Area of Operation: AAB is based in Lebanon but operates in both Lebanon and Syria.

Funding and External Aid: Unknown.