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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 was Ali Khamenei in 2014. 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, the group is providing assistance – including fighters – to Syrian regime forces in the Syrian conflict.

Hizballah has strong influence in Lebanon, especially with the Shia community. Hizballah plays an active role in Lebanese politics, and the group holds 12 seats in the 128-member Lebanese Parliament and two seats in the 24-member Council of Ministers. Hizballah's political strength grew in the wake of the 2006 war with Israel and the group's 2008 takeover of West Beirut, although its reputation and popularity have been significantly undermined by the group's active support for the Asad regime.

Hizballah provides support to several Palestinian terrorist organizations, as well as a number of local Christian and Muslim militias in Lebanon. Besides overt political support, support includes the covert provision of weapons, explosives, training, funding, and guidance.

Activities: Hizballah's terrorist attacks have included the suicide truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983; the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984; and the 1985 hijacking of TWA flight 847, during which a U.S. Navy diver was murdered. Elements of the group were responsible for the kidnapping, detention, and murder of Americans 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 on 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.

Although the non-combatant survived, 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.

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 that injured three other French soldiers – were believed to have been carried out by Hizballah. Also in 2011, four Hizballah members were indicted by the U.N.-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 2012, Hizballah increased the pace of its terrorist plotting, and was implicated in several terrorist plots around the world. In January 2012, Thai police detained a Hizballah operative on immigration charges as he was attempting to depart Thailand from Suvarnabhumi International Airport. He led police to nearly 10,000 pounds of urea-based fertilizer and 10 gallons of liquid ammonium nitrate in a commercial building about 20 miles south of Bangkok. The Hizballah operative was convicted of possessing bomb-making materials by a Thai court in September 2013. He was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison.

In Cyprus, a suspected Hizballah operative was detained by the Cypriot authorities on July 7, 2012 for allegedly helping plan an attack against Israeli tourists in Cyprus. The trial began in September 2012, and on March 21, 2013, a Cyprus court found a Hizballah operative guilty of charges stemming from his surveillance activities of Israeli tourist targets.

In July 2012, a terrorist attack was carried out on a passenger bus carrying 42 Israeli tourists at the Sarafovo Airport near the Bulgarian city of Burgas. The explosion killed five Israelis and one Bulgarian, and injured 32. On February 5, 2013, Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Tsvetan Tsevtanov publicly linked two operatives in the Burgas bombing to Hizballah, and in July 2013, the Bulgarian government identified the operatives as Hassan al-Hajj Hassan, a dual Canadian-Lebanese citizen; and Meliad Farah, a dual Australian-Lebanese citizen. In August 2013, Hizballah claimed responsibility for an attack on the Lebanese-Israeli border that wounded four members of an Israeli military convoy.

In May 2013, Hizballah publicly admitted to playing a significant role in the ongoing conflict in Syria, rallying to support Syrian President Bashar al-Asad. Hizballah's support for the Asad regime carried into 2014, and the group remained active in Syria. Separately, in October 2014, Hizballah set off an explosive device on the border between Lebanon and Israel. The attack wounded two Israeli soldiers.

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 globe. As of December 2014, Hizballah fighters were assisting Asad regime forces in many areas across Syria.

Funding and External Aid: Iran continued 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 Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and Asia. As illustrated by the Lebanese-Canadian bank case, Hizballah supporters are often engaged in a range of criminal activities that benefit the group financially. These have included smuggling

contraband goods, passport falsification, trafficking in narcotics, money laundering, and credit card, immigration, and bank fraud.

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