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COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM 2018 -

CHAPTER 5 - ASBAT ALANSAR

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 FTO on March 27, 2002, Asbat alAnsar (AAA) is a Lebanon-based Sunni terrorist group composed primarily of Palestinians. Linked to al-Qa'ida and other Sunni terrorist 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. Between 2005 and 2011, AAA members traveled to Iraq to fight Coalition Forces. AAA has been reluctant to involve itself in operations in Lebanon, in part because of concerns of losing its safe haven in the Ain al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp. AAA remained active in Lebanon but claimed no attacks in 2018.

Strength: The group has at least 650 members.

Location/Area of Operation: AAA'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.