

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	319
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada - Lebanon
Titel:	"The Influence of Hezbollah"
Udgivet:	31. oktober 2007
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	28. januar 2008



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Canada

Français
Home

Contact Us
What's New

Help
Site Map

Search
Forms

Canada Site
Decisions

- About the IRB
- Legal and Policy References
- Media Centre
- ▼ Research
- Country of Origin Research
- National Documentation Packages
- Recent Research



Country of Origin Research

RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

LBN102615.E

31 October 2007

Lebanon: The influence of Hezbollah; the extent to which the government is able to control Hezbollah activities; whether Hezbollah is forcibly recruiting members

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

General

Hezbollah [also spelled Hezballah (CSIS 14 July 2006, 19), Hizballah (US 6 Mar. 2007) and Hizbullah (AI 2007)], which means Party of God in Arabic (MIPT 10 Sept. 2007; CNN 13 July 2006), is a Shia [also spelled Shiite (CFR May 2007)] Muslim organization in Lebanon which operates both in the political and military spheres (BBC 13 July 2006; see also CFR May 2007; CSIS 14 July 2006, 20). The military wing of Hezbollah is called the Islamic Resistance (BBC 13 July 2006; CNN 13 July 2006). Other names for Hezbollah include Islamic Jihad, Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine (CSIS 14 July 2006, 19), Organization of the Oppressed on Earth and the Revolutionary Justice Organization (MIPT 10 Sept. 2007; Canada 9 Nov. 2006). Hezbollah is listed as a "terrorist" organization by Canada (Canada 9 Nov. 2006) and the United States (US) (US 11 Oct. 2005). Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) classify its security wing, the Hezbollah External Security Organization (ESO), as a "terrorist" entity, but not its political wing (Australia 25 May 2007; UK n.d.; MIPT 10 Sept. 2007). Hassan Nasrallah is the leader of Hezbollah (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3; AFP 11 Nov. 2006).

Hezbollah was established by Iran-educated Shia clerics (MIPT 10 Sept. 2007; see also BBC 13 July 2006) following the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982 (BBC 13 July 2006; CFR 17 July 2006). A number of Lebanese Islamic groups also joined Hezbollah at that time (MIPT 10 Sept. 2007; CFR 17 July 2006). Hezbollah has ties to Iran and Syria (CFR 17 July 2006; BBC 13 July 2006) and has operatives in Europe, North and South America, East Asia and other Middle Eastern countries (MIPT 10 Sept. 2007; Australia 25 May 2007). The Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) states that Hezbollah's self-identified goals are "the establishment of a Shiite theocracy in Lebanon, the destruction of Israel, and the elimination of Western influences from the Middle East" (10 Sept. 2007; see also BBC 13 July 2006). In contrast, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news article reports that Hezbollah underscores that "its Islamic vision should not be interpreted as an intention to impose an Islamic society on the Lebanese" (13 July 2006).

According to the MIPT, there are roughly 1,000 primary Hezbollah operatives and a reserve force of 3,000 to 10,000 personnel (10 Sept. 2007). In slight contrast, Seymour M. Hersh states in *The New Yorker* that Hezbollah has roughly two to three thousand active operatives and thousands of other members (5 Mar. 2007). The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a non-partisan information resource concerned with foreign policy issues (n.d.),

reports that Hezbollah operates mainly in the Shia regions of southern Lebanon, the Bekaa Valley and areas of Beirut (17 July 2006). For more detailed information on Hezbollah's areas of operation, please consult the section below on security issues.

Security

In February 2005, former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated in Beirut (BBC 9 Oct. 2007; Freedom House 2007). Following Hariri's assassination, which was largely attributed to Syria (BBC 13 July 2006; Freedom House 2007), the international community and Beirut protesters put pressure on Syrian forces to withdraw from Lebanon (BBC 9 Oct. 2007; *ibid.* 18 Sept. 2007; Freedom House 2007). After 29 years in Lebanon, Syrian forces left in 2005 (BBC 18 Sept. 2007; Freedom House 2007; see also CFR May 2007). The BBC states that, following the departure of Syrian troops, "Hezbollah became the most powerful military force in Lebanon in its own right and increased its political clout ..." (13 July 2006).

In July 2006, Hezbollah forces captured two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border incident, starting a war between Israel and Hezbollah (BBC 18 Sept. 2007; Freedom House 2007; US 6 Mar. 2007, Introduction). The war ended on 14 August 2006 with a United Nations (UN) sponsored ceasefire (US 6 Mar. 2007, Introduction; UN 11 Aug. 2006). The United States (US) Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006* states the following:

Despite the cessation in hostilities and the deployment of the Lebanon Armed Forces (LAF) and United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the south, Hizballah retained significant influence over parts of the country ... beyond the reach of state authorities. UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions 1559, 1614, and 1701 call upon the government to take effective control of all Lebanese territory and disarm militia groups operating in the Lebanese territory. Due to several factors, including internal political differences and lack of capacity on the part of its security forces, the government has not taken the necessary steps to disarm extralegal armed groups, including Hizballah. (6 Mar. 2007, Introduction)

Country Reports 2006 also states that the Lebanese government has not followed through on statements that it would bring to trial Hezbollah members who hindered, and in some cases injured, UNIFIL officials from moving freely in Lebanon (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2d).

An Associated Press (AP) media article reports that although Hezbollah's influence diminished as a result of the 2006 war with Israel (4 Oct. 2007; see also *Washington Post* 1 Sept. 2006), the group is "again solidly entrenched across the country's south" (AP 4 Oct. 2007; see also Freedom House 2007). According to the AP article, Hezbollah "appears to be in a strong position north and south of the Litani, both in its political wing and as a militia" (4 Oct. 2007).

The New Opinion Workshop (NOW) Lebanon, an independent and non-sectarian organization established to promote Lebanese political participation (NOW Lebanon n.d.), has on its website detailed information on Hezbollah's post-war activities in southern Lebanon:

Hezbollah's preparations have been focused primarily on the creation of a new line of defense north of the Litani River, resupplying its war-depleted arsenal, acquiring new weapons

systems - with an emphasis on air defense, and a systematic campaign of recruitment and training in the Bekaa valley and Iran.

...

The area in question is bordered by Jezzine in the north, the Shia villages of the western Bekaa to the east, the Iqlim al-Touffah heights to the west and the Litani to the south. ... [T]he area is sparsely populated - a mix of Christian, Shia and Druze farms and hamlets... .

...

Hezbollah has been based in these hills and valleys since 2000, when Israel withdrew from South Lebanon, but its presence has increased significantly following last year's war. Hezbollah's new "security pockets" are guarded by armed and uniformed fighters, who prevent local residents and ... journalists from entering. (30 Aug. 2007)

A 22 June 2007 commentary for the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) describes Hezbollah in the following manner:

... Hezbollah has enough strength and freedom of action in the south to launch provocative small raids for its own purposes or in support of Hamas or Syria. There is little evidence it faces any challenge from the Lebanese Army, and it does seem to have a substantial presence and cadre structure outside the area occupied by UNIFIL. (22 June 2007)

The CFR explains that the Lebanese government "has only limited influence over Hezbollah ... militants. Moreover, it lacks control of some of Beirut and of the lawless, drug-ridden Bekaa Valley, as well as ... the southern border region" (May 2007).

Political context

According to *Country Reports 2006*, Hezbollah is the largest Shia political party in Lebanon (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3). Freedom House describes Hezbollah as "a powerful political player on the national level" (Freedom House 2007; see also CFR 17 July 2006). In the 2005 election, Hezbollah garnered 14 out of 128 parliamentary seats (CFR 17 July 2006; *Europa* 2007) as part of the Resistance and Development Bloc which won 35 seats in total (ibid. 2007; *PHW* 2007 Oct. 2006).

In November 2006, Shia opposition ministers left the Lebanese cabinet (AI 2007; Freedom House 2007) demanding a greater role in government (Freedom House 2007; see also ICG 10 Oct. 2007, 2). According to Freedom House, Hezbollah claimed that the Lebanese government was not following through with power-sharing arrangements made in the 1990s (2007). In December 2006, mass pro-Hezbollah protests occurred in Beirut (Freedom House 2007; AI 2007; ICG 10 Oct. 2007, 2). In an 11 October 2006 interview with the International Crisis Group (ICG), the Vice-President of Hezbollah's political council, Mahmoud Qumati, stated that Hezbollah "wants to 'be able if need be to secure the decision-making process'" (ICG 10 Oct. 2007, 2).

Social context

With respect to Hezbollah's social influence, the CFR states that Hezbollah provides extensive social services to thousands of Shia Muslims in

Lebanon, including schools, medical facilities and farming assistance (17 July 2006; BBC 13 July 2006). According to the BBC and the Cable News Network (CNN), Hezbollah's provision of social services boosts its popularity (BBC 13 July 2006; CNN 13 July 2006). The MIPT explains that Hezbollah has "enmeshed itself into the social fabric of Lebanese society" (10 Sept. 2007). A 4 October 2007 AP article indicates that Hezbollah is "the only force trusted by most of the majority Shiite population of the South, and respected - or feared - by most of the minority Christians and Sunni Muslims."

With respect to the media, Hezbollah controls a television station called Al-Manar TV (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2c; BBC 18 Sept. 2007). Al-Manar TV has generated controversy due to allegations of anti-Semitism (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2c; BBC 18 Sept. 2007). *Country Reports 2006* states that Hezbollah has curbed and controlled access to the Internet in southern Lebanon (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec 2c). No further information on Hezbollah's control of the Internet in southern Lebanon could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Both the AP and NOW Lebanon report that a number of wealthy pro-Hezbollah Shias have purchased land from Christians and Sunnis in southern Lebanon near the Israeli border (AP 4 Oct. 2007; NOW 30 Aug. 2007). The AP reports that Lebanese citizens from the area have remarked that such land purchases have increased as of late (4 Oct. 2007). According to NOW Lebanon, there is concern among local Christian and Druze officials who fear that the land purchases are part of an effort to construct a "Shia belt" which would link Shias in Nabatieh and Iqlim al-Touffah to Shias in the western Bekaa, effectively separating Christian and Druze communities from one another (30 Aug. 2007). No further information on similar land purchases in southern Lebanon could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Forced recruitment

Specific information on whether Hezbollah is forcibly recruiting members could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, a 4 October 2007 Associated Press (AP) news article featured in the *Jerusalem Post* reports that Lebanese citizens living in the south maintain that Hezbollah is actively recruiting men who are 16 to 19 years of age and offering them unspecified "attractive" salaries.

A professor specializing in the Middle East at the Toledo International Centre for Peace in Madrid stated the following in correspondence with the Research Directorate:

Hezbollah is always recruiting members in Lebanon especially in the Shia community. Moreover, Hezbollah is training in its camps members of other Lebanese allied faction such as the followers of General Michel Aoun, and other Islamic groups... (10 Oct. 2007)

With respect to Hezbollah and child recruitment, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) featured a translated article from the Egyptian weekly *Roz Al-Yusuf* which states that more than 2,000 children between the ages of 10 and 15 years have been recruited by Hezbollah (MEMRI 1 Sept. 2006). According to the MEMRI, the Egyptian article states that child recruits "must be willing to become martyrs" (1 Sept. 2006). In an October 2007 report on children and armed conflict in Lebanon, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers states that, in southern regions dominated by Hezbollah, it is difficult for the Lebanese government and security forces to ensure that children are not recruited into armed groups.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 11 November 2006. "Hezbollah and Allies Resign from Lebanon Cabinet." (Factiva)

Amnesty International (AI). 2007. "Lebanon." *Amnesty International Report 2007*. <<http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Middle-East-and-North-Africa/Lebanon>> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2007]

Associated Press (AP). 4 October 2007. "Hizbullah Getting Stronger in Lebanon." (*The Jerusalem Post*). <<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?c=JPArticle&cid=1191257222241&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>> [Accessed 4 Oct. 2007]

Australia. 25 May 2007. Australian National Security. "Hizballah External Security Organisation." <<http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/RWP7986D1536C0FFD5FCA256FCD001BE859>> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2007]

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 9 October 2007. "Timeline: Lebanon." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/819200.stm> [Accessed 16 Oct. 2007]

_____. 18 September 2007. "Country Profile: Lebanon." <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/791071.stm> [Accessed 4 Oct. 2007]

_____. 13 July 2006. "Who Are Hezbollah?" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4314423.stm> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Cable News Network (CNN). 13 July 2006. "Hezbollah: Violence Mixed with Social Mission." <<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/07/13/hezbollah/index.html>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Canada. 6 November 2006. Public Safety Canada. "Currently Listed Entities." <<http://www.ps-sp.gc.ca/prg/ns/le/cle-en.asp>> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2007]

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). 22 June 2007. Anthony H. Cordesman. "Summer Wars in Lebanon?" <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/070622_cordesman_commentary.pdf> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

_____. 14 July 2006. Anthony H. Cordesman. "Lebanese Security and the Hezbollah." <http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,3359/> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. October 2007. "Lebanon." *The Vulnerability of Children to Involvement in Armed Conflict*. <http://www.child-soldiers.org/October_2007_advocacy_brief_LEBANON-final.pdf> [Accessed 4 Oct. 2007]

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). May 2007. "Terrorism Havens: Lebanon." <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9516/>> [Accessed 28 Sept. 2007]

_____. 17 July 2006. "Hezbollah: Background." <<http://www.cfr.org/publication/9155/>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

_____. N.d. "Mission Statement." <<http://www.cfr.org/about/mission.html>> [Accessed 22 Oct. 2007]

The Europa World Year Book 2007. 2007. Vol. 2. "Lebanon." London: Routledge.

Freedom House. 2007. "Lebanon." *Freedom in the World 2007*. <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2007&country=7213>> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2007]

Hersh, Seymour M. 5 March 2007. "The Redirection." *The New Yorker*. <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/03/05/070305fa_fact_hersh> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2007]

International Crisis Group (ICG). 10 October 2007. "Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis." (Middle East Report No. 69). <http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/69_hizbollah_and_the_lebanese_crisis.pdf> [Accessed 11 Oct. 2007]

Islamic Resistance. N.d. "Islamic Resistance - Lebanon." <<http://www.moqawama.org/english/index.php>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT). 10 September 2007. Terrorism Knowledge Base. "Hezbollah: Group Profile." <<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3101>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). 1 September 2006. "Egyptian Weekly on Hizbullah's Armed Children's Militias." <<http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sd&ID=SP127606>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

New Opinion Workshop (NOW) Lebanon. 30 August 2007. Nicholas Blanford. "Danger. Do Not Cross." <<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=11526#>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

_____. N.d. "Mission." <<http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=159&MID=16&PID=1>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Political Handbook of the World 2007 (PHW 2007). 2007. "Lebanon." Edited by Arthur Banks, Thomas Muller and William Overstreet. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Professor, Toledo International Centre for Peace, Madrid. 10 October 2007. Correspondence.

United Kingdom (UK). N.d. Home Office. "List of Proscribed Terrorist Groups." <<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act/proscribed-groups>> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2007]

United Nations (UN). 11 August 2006. UN Security Council (UNSC). "Resolution 1701 (2006)." (S/RES/1701). <<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/465/03/PDF/N0646503.pdf?>

OpenElement> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2007]

United States (US). 6 March 2007. Department of State. "Lebanon." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*.

<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78857.htm>> [Accessed 25 Sept. 2007]

_____. 11 October 2005. Department of State. "Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)." <<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/37191.htm>> [Accessed 17 Oct. 2007]

The Washington Post. 1 September 2006. Charles Krauthammer. "Hezbollah's 'Victory'." <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/31/AR2006083101444.html>> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2007]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: A professor of political science at the Lebanese American University in Beirut and a professor of international relations and anthropology specializing in the Middle East at Boston University were unable to provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Assemblée nationale libanaise, *Haaretz* [Tel Aviv], European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Human Rights Watch (HRW), Israeli Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (IICC), La Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Middle East Intelligence Bulletin (MEIB), U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

[Home](#) | [What's New](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Forms](#) | [Decisions](#)

[Français](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Search](#) | [Canada Site](#)

Last updated: 2007 06 08

[Important Notices](#)