



# HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah (the Party of Allah) is a Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim terror organization that exerts significant influence in Lebanon through its extensive military force, political arm, and social services. Hezbollah operates effectively as "a state within a state" in Lebanon. The organization is completely banned in the United States, Canada, Israel, and the Gulf Cooperation Council States, while in much of the EU, the military wing is banned while the "political wing" is not; this distinction completely ignores that all branches of Hezbollah are intertwined.

## LEBANON'S CIVIL WAR

➤ In 1975, a brutal civil war broke out in Lebanon, fueled by a multitude of internal issues that included the presence of armed Palestinian militias coupled with discontent and mistrust among the various sectarian groups within Lebanon. In addition to the internal turmoil, Israel launched an operation to expel Palestinian guerrilla fighters who used the region as their base to attack Israeli civilians.

Amid this backdrop, a group of Shia clerics who drew inspiration from Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in Iran and the installation of a Shia theocracy took up arms to fight Israel. It reached out to the fledgling Islamic Republic of Iran for support.

Seeing an opportunity to export its revolution and influence in the Arab world, Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) provided funds and training to the budding militia. Iran would send over 1,500 Revolutionary guards to Lebanon who would set up base in the Bekaa Valley to train, organize, and finance the group that took on the moniker Hezbollah.

Hezbollah's identity as a Shia resistance movement is enshrined in a 1985 manifesto that also vowed to expel Western powers from Lebanon, called for the destruction of the Jewish state, and pledged allegiance to Iran's supreme leader. It had also proclaimed its intent to transform Lebanon's multi-confessional state into an Iranian-style Islamic state. However, it moved away from this rhetoric to gain mainstream political acceptance in Lebanon.

To this day, the group receives heavy support from Iran, which provides Hezbollah with often sophisticated arms and significant sums of money. Hezbollah is Iran's primary and preeminent proxy terrorist organization in the world.

## PARTY OF TERROR

➤ Hezbollah, from its very inception, earned a reputation for being extremely violent due to its frequent clashes with rival Shiite militias, such as the Amal Movement, engaging in taking Western hostages during Lebanon's civil war, and attacks on foreign targets, including the 1983 bombing of a barracks housing U.S. and French troops in Beirut, in which more than three hundred people died including 241 US marines. This attack remains the single most significant number of Marines killed since the Second World War.



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## HEZBOLLAH AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

- In 1989, Lebanon's parliamentarians met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and signed an agreement that is now known as the Taif Accords to end the civil war; the agreement also ordered all Lebanese militias to disarm except for Hezbollah, which was allowed to stay armed in its capacity as a "resistance force" rather than a militia, fighting Israel.

When the Lebanese civil war ended in the early 1990s, Hezbollah rapidly pivoted its focus. In 1992 Hassan Nasrallah became Secretary General and the terror group became active in the Lebanese political system, beginning to entrench itself into the circles of power in the country and taking its war of terror against Israel and the Jewish people global. Nasrallah would be eliminated by an Israeli airstrike on a Hezbollah bunker in September 2024.

## GLOBAL TERROR

- Throughout the 1990s, Hezbollah's fingerprints were on terror attacks in London, Panama, and Saudi Arabia, and the bombing of the Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that killed 85 people. Additionally, Hezbollah was engaging in attacks on Israeli soldiers and launching rocket attacks on Israeli civilians.

In 2006, Hezbollah launched a cross-border raid during which they kidnapped and killed Israeli soldiers. This led to a 34-day conflict as Hezbollah launched rockets at northern Israel, and the IDF sought to neutralize the threat from Hezbollah. After 34 days of fighting, the conflict ended with Hezbollah propaganda claiming a victory over Israel despite the terror group failing to achieve any militarily strategic gains.

In December 2018, the IDF announced it had discovered terror tunnels under the Lebanese-Israeli border dug by Hezbollah into northern Israel as part of a plot by the terror group to send Hezbollah commandos to storm Israel and occupy parts of the Galilee.

After Hamas launched its brutal assault on Israel from Gaza on October 7th, 2023, Hezbollah began launching anti-tank missiles and various other missiles at Israeli targets over the border. The threat from Hezbollah in the north has led to the displacement of thousands of Israeli civilians who have been evacuated from the border region due to the danger posed by the terror group.



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## TODAY



The last decade has been one of immense growth for Hezbollah, as Iran continues its support for the terror group and Hezbollah has expanded its operations with involvement in the illicit drug trade in Latin America. Today, Hezbollah has also consolidated gains inside Lebanon and is effectively the kingmaker in Lebanese politics. Moreover, its active participation in the Syrian Civil War fighting for Bashar Assad and its involvement in a terror attack on Israeli tourists in Bulgaria have cemented its state-like power, influence, and reach.

With direct supply routes established due to Iranian entrenchment in Syria, Hezbollah now possesses a sophisticated and large missile arsenal, with one commentator noting: "Hezbollah is the world's most heavily armed non-state actor." Though Israel's efforts during Operation Northern Arrows have largely decapitated the organization, globally, the terrorist army remains Iran's most potent proxy, able to launch sophisticated terror attacks far from its base in Lebanon. Domestically, Hezbollah is holding the Lebanese state hostage, turning it into a vassal of Iran to the extreme detriment of the Lebanese people.