



Hezbollah in Germany and Europe

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Executive Summary

In July 2013, the European Union placed Hezbollah on its list of terrorist organizations. However, the EU had made a theoretical division within the organization, placing only Hezbollah's "military wing" on the list of terrorist organizations, not the "political wing." Even though Hezbollah has been active in the EU and Germany for decades, Brussels has not yet placed the entire organization on the terror list, and Berlin has been reluctant to ban the organization. In Germany and the rest of the EU, little is known about Hezbollah's activities despite the fact that Hezbollah would undoubtedly attack Israeli and Jewish institutions in Europe were there to be renewed confrontations with Israel or a conflict between the Jewish state and Iran. In this briefing, we would like to provide information about Hezbollah's beginnings, its ideology, and its activities in Germany and Europe. Only with sufficient background knowledge is it possible to carry out an informed political debate about Hezbollah, which still poses a threat to European domestic security.

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Analysis

Foreword

In July 2013, the European Union placed Hezbollah (Arabic for “Party of God”) on its list of terrorist organizations. The good news was that this meant the 28 member states had finally done something — led by a decisive Bulgarian government that had experienced a deadly Hezbollah attack in the previous year and a Cypriot government that had arrested a Hezbollah member who had been scouting out locations for an attack. The bad news was that the EU had made a theoretical separation within the organization and only placed Hezbollah’s “military wing” on the list of terrorist organizations, not the “political wing.” The EU made this differentiation because Hezbollah is part of the government in Lebanon, and those responsible in Brussels were worried that a general ban would endanger diplomatic contacts. A closer look, however, provides no support for this argument as Hezbollah is banned in many countries that continue to have good relations with the Lebanese government. Hezbollah as a whole is banned in the USA (1997),¹ Canada (2002),² the Netherlands (2004),³ the Gulf Cooperation Council (2016),⁴ the Arab League (2016),⁵ Japan,⁶ Israel,⁷ and Great Britain (2019).⁸

Even though Hezbollah has been active in the EU and Germany for decades, with far-reaching, established structures, Brussels has not yet placed the entire organization on the terror list, nor has Berlin placed any sort of prohibition on the organization. The terrorist organization uses its networks within the EU primarily to generate funding. However, in Germany and the rest of the EU, little is known about the activities of the “Party of God” despite the fact that Hezbollah would undoubtedly attack Israeli and Jewish institutions in Europe were there to be renewed confrontations with Israel or a conflict between the Jewish state and Iran.

In this briefing, we would like to provide information about Hezbollah’s beginnings, its ideology, and its activities in Germany and Europe. Only with sufficient background knowledge is it possible to carry out an informed political debate about Hezbollah. We also aim to show why a separation of Hezbollah into political and military wings does not reflect reality and why it is necessary to classify all of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

¹ US Department of State: “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” at: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

² Department of Public Safety Canada: “Currently listed (terrorist) entities” (last updated: June 21, 2019), at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cntr-trrrsm/lstd-ntts/crrnt-lstd-ntts-eng.aspx> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

³ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD): “Annual Report 2004,” at: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/netherlands/aivd2004-eng.pdf> (PDF, accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴ *Israelnetz*: “Golfstaaten: Hisbollah ist Terror-Organisation” [Gulf states: Hezbollah is a terrorist organization] (March 3, 2016), at: <https://www.israelnetz.com/politik-wirtschaft/politik/2016/03/03/golfstaaten-hisbollah-ist-terror-organisation/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵ *Tagesspiegel*: “Arabische Liga erklärt Hisbollah zur Terrororganisation” [Arab League declares Hezbollah is a terrorist organization] (March 11, 2016), at: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/libanesische-miliz-und-partei-arabische-liga-erklaert-hisbollah-zur-terrororganisation/13310810.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶ *The Telegraph*: “Hezbollah is clearly a terror organisation. Parliament should treat it as one” (January 25, 2018), at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/01/25/hezbollah-clearly-terror-organisation-parliament-should-treat/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “Hezbollah – International terrorist organization” (July 22, 2013), at: <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Hizballah/Pages/Hezbollah-International-terrorist-organization.aspx> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸ UK Home Office: “Hizballah to be banned alongside other terrorist organisations” (February 25, 2019), at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hizballah-to-be-banned-alongside-other-terrorist-organisations> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



Since the first publication of this briefing in 2017, the insights presented and the assessment of the threat posed by Hezbollah have not changed. Rather, in the past two years, the role Germany and Europe play in the organization's funding have only become clearer. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Hezbollah generates millions through organized crime, and that this money then flows into financing terrorist acts and war in the Middle East.

In recent years Hezbollah has become an even stronger actor in the Syrian civil war. As an extended arm of the government in Tehran, Hezbollah has carried out war crimes and crimes against humanity. Hezbollah may have lost thousands of fighters in Syria, but, in the conflict, it has also gained skills and knowledge that it could use in a new confrontation with Israel. After all, nothing has changed about Hezbollah's primary goal: destroying the Jewish state.

The danger Hezbollah poses, whether in Europe or in the Middle East, has not diminished. We therefore continue to call for a complete ban of Hezbollah in Germany and for the entire organization to be listed as a terrorist organization at the European level.

What is Hezbollah?

Hezbollah is a Lebanese Shi'a terrorist organization founded by Iran in 1982 during the Lebanese civil war. In doing so, Iran's mullah regime aimed to export the Islamic revolution that had taken place in Iran in 1979 and set up similar regimes in other Middle Eastern countries.

Shortly after its founding, members of the organization carried out highly publicized attacks, including a suicide bombing that killed 241 US marines in Beirut in October 1983.⁹ However, the organization only went public under the name Hezbollah when it published its manifesto in 1985.¹⁰ In the following years, due to massive material and financial support from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the "Party of God" (the literal translation of Hezbollah) became one of the most powerful military factions during the Lebanese civil war: Hezbollah was able to establish and expand its dominant position, especially in the Shi'a strongholds in the Bekaa Valley and the southern city districts of Beirut—positions it maintains to this day.

Is Hezbollah a Regular Political Party?

With the Taif Agreement ending the civil war in 1990, Hezbollah entered a new era. Since then, it has participated in elections but not given up its weapons. However, its electoral participation cannot hide the fact that Hezbollah has only gotten involved in democratic processes for tactical reasons: The organization continues to adhere to its goal of establishing an Islamist dictatorship like the one in Iran. The only thing that has changed is the strategy with which it attempts to reach this goal. To this point, the acting Secretary-General of the "Party of God" since 1992, Hassan Nasrallah, stated:

⁹ Michaels, Jim: "Recalling the deadly 1983 attack on the Marine barracks" (October 23, 2013), in: *USA Today*, at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/nation/2013/10/23/marines-beirut-lebanon-hezbollah/3171593/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁰ Pinzano, Martin: "Hizballah – Organisation zwischen Miliz und Partei" [Hezbollah – organization between militia and party], Diplom thesis 2011, in: *Beiträge zur inneren Sicherheit* No. 36, at: https://www.hsbund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/2_Zentralbereich/20_Referat_W/50_Publikationen/15_Beitraege_Innere_Sicherheit/band_36.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3 (accessed on September 30, 2019).



"We do not want to establish an Islamic state with violence and force. Instead, we prefer to wait for the day on which we engage in a dialogue in an open atmosphere with our fellow citizens and convince them that an Islamic state is the only alternative."¹¹

Above all, Hezbollah's participation in elections misleads Western observers into dividing the organization into military and political wings. This perception is reflected in the EU's 2013 decision to place only the so-called military portion of Hezbollah on the list of terrorist organizations but not the political.¹² Hezbollah itself disputes this differentiation and takes every opportunity to publicly emphasize that it is one organization.

Only a few years ago, Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary-General Naim Qassem stated:

"We don't have a military wing and a political one; we don't have Hezbollah on one hand and the resistance party on the other...Every element of Hezbollah, from commanders to members as well as our various capabilities, are in the service of the resistance."¹³

The fact that this differentiation is artificial can also be seen in its organizational structure that is led by one unified level of leadership.¹⁴ Naim Qassem confirmed this as well in an interview with a US reporter:

"Hezbollah has a united leadership. All political, social, and jihadist efforts are bound to the decisions made by these leaders. The same leaders who are managing the parliament and governmental work are also managing the jihadist work in the struggle against Israel."¹⁵

How little regard Hezbollah has for democratic processes becomes clear whenever it believes it is in danger of losing influence in Lebanon; the "Party of God" does not hesitate, even for an instant, to assert its interests with violence. When the government tried to eliminate a telephone network operated exclusively by Hezbollah in May 2008 and, at the same time, fire the chief of security at Beirut's airport, a Hezbollah sympathizer, the terrorist group and Sunni militias battled intensely for several days.¹⁶ When the former Lebanese minister-president Rafik Hariri was murdered in 2005, Hezbollah members were the prime suspects according to the investigations of a UN tribunal.¹⁷ They were alleged to have carried out the murder on behalf of the Syrian regime, which felt its dominant position in Lebanon was endangered by Hariri possibly returning to politics.¹⁸ The organization also has no scruples when it comes to holding the entire country hostage to reach its political goals. In 2006, Hezbollah attacked an Israeli army patrol along the border and kidnapped two soldiers, plunging Lebanon into a 30-day war.

¹¹ Rodger Shanahan: *The Shi'a of Lebanon. Clans, Parties and Clerics*, 2005, p. 126.

¹² *Spiegel Online*: "EU setzt Hisbollah-Miliz auf Terrorliste" [EU places Hezbollah militia on terror list] (July 22, 2013), at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/eu-setzt-hisbollah-miliz-auf-die-eu-terrorliste-a-912397.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹³ *Audiatur online*: "Es gibt keinen speziellen "militärischen Flügel" der Hisbollah. Warum ihn also verbieten?" [There is no special "military wing" of Hezbollah. So why should it be banned?], (August 22, 2013), at: <http://www.audiatur-online.ch/2013/08/22/es-gibt-keinen-spezialen-militaerischen-fluegel-der-hisbollah-warum-ihn-also-verbieten/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁴ Levitt, Matthew: "On a Military Wing and a Prayer" (February 12, 2013), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/on-a-military-wing-and-a-prayer> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁵ Daraghi, Borzou, "Lebanon's Hezbollah savors increasing legitimacy" (April 13, 2009), in: *Los Angeles Times*, at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/apr/13/world/fq-lebanon-hezbollah13> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁶ *Die Welt*, "Hisbollah zieht Kämpfer aus Beirut ab" [Hezbollah pulls fighters out of Beirut] (May 10, 2008), at: <http://www.welt.de/politik/article1984641/Hisbollah-zieht-Kaempfer-aus-Beirut-ab.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁷ Groisman, M. and Bob, Y.: "Report: Special Tribunal for Lebanon to accuse Hezbollah of Hariri's assassination" (March 8, 2016), in: *The Jerusalem Post*, at: <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Report-Special-Tribunal-for-Lebanon-to-accuse-Hezbollah-of-Harris-assassination-447220> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

¹⁸ Bergman, Ronen: "The Hezbollah Connection" (February 10, 2015), in: *New York Times*, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/magazine/the-hezbollah-connection.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



Hezbollah and Iran

Besides the political and military components, Hezbollah also controls an impressive network of social institutions in Lebanon that it uses to secure support, especially among the Shi'a population. For example, the organization operates free schools and hospitals. However, it can only afford to offer these social benefits and maintain its military strength through financial and material support from Iran. Experts believe that the terrorist group receives up to US\$700 million from Tehran each year.¹⁹ In February 2016, a "Party of God" representative described the relationship between the two actors: *"Hezbollah is more than just an Iranian ally. The relationship is more like that of a father and a son."*²⁰ This statement highlights how close the relationship is between Hezbollah and Iran. As mentioned, Hezbollah continues to openly support the rule of Islamic jurists, as practiced in Iran: In Lebanon, Hezbollah aims to establish a totalitarian government in which the Shi'a clergy make policy.²¹

Further evidence that Hezbollah is first and foremost an extended arm of Tehran is its role in the Syrian civil war. The terrorist organization intervened in the neighboring country's conflict on the side of the Assad regime no later than the summer of 2012; starting in 2013, Hezbollah openly participated in larger military operations. In the conflict, Hezbollah pursues closely intertwined political and military objectives. Hezbollah's primary political goal is the survival of the regime in Damascus. If Assad were overthrown, Hezbollah would be politically and geographically isolated in Lebanon. This political objective is linked to its military goal: Maintaining the supply route running through Syria that enables Hezbollah to receive most of its weaponry and critical material from Iran.

This supply route through Syria ensures Iran's link to arm Hezbollah primarily with missiles. Since the last war with Israel in 2006, the terrorist organization has been able to vastly increase the number of missiles it possesses. The Israeli government now assumes that Hezbollah has at least 150,000 missiles.²² Not only is the quantity of missiles a problem, but the fact that portions of the arsenal could hit targets throughout Israel down to Eilat.²³

Hezbollah also wants to keep Syrian territory open for any future military operations against Israel. With Hezbollah's support— sending between 7,000 and 10,000 combatants²⁴ in Syria alongside thousands of other Shi'a militants — the regime in Damascus was able to virtually win the civil war. Hezbollah's participation in the war in Syria presents a serious problem for Israel in the long term. Even though around 1,600 fighters²⁵ from the "Party of God" died in Syria, and a large number were wounded, Hezbollah was able to gain valuable

¹⁹ Knipp, Kersten: "Der Iran - Regionalmacht in Nahost" [Iran – regional power in the Middle East] (August 27, 2019), in: *Deutsche Welle*, at: <https://www.dw.com/de/der-iran-regionalmacht-in-nahost/a-50185328> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁰ Rizk, Ali: "What Hezbollah stands to gain from Iran's nuclear deal" (February 16, 2016), in: *Al-Monitor*, at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/iran-nuclear-deal-hezbollah-support.html#ixzz436236gcT> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²¹ Levitt, Matthew: "On a Military Wing and a Prayer" (February 12, 2013), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/on-a-military-wing-and-a-prayer> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²² Issacharoff, Avi: "Israel raises Hezbollah rocket estimate to 150,000" (November 12, 2015), in: *The Times of Israel*, at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-raises-hezbollah-rocket-estimate-to-150000/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²³ Harel, A. and Cohen, G.: "Hezbollah – From terror group to army" (July 12, 2016), in: *Haaretz*, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/st/c/prod/eng/2016/07/lebanon2/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁴ Jones, S. G.: "The Escalating Conflict with Hezbollah in Syria" (June 20, 2018), in: Center for Strategic and International Studies, at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-conflict-hezbollah-syria> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁵ Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SyriaHR), "More than 570 thousand people were killed on the Syrian territory within 8 years of revolution demanding freedom, democracy, justice, and equality" (March 15, 2019), at: <http://www.syriaHR.com/en/?p=120851> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



knowledge and battlefield experience for its next conflict. Experts emphasize that Hezbollah has already adapted its strategic planning based on its experiences in Syria.²⁶

Hezbollah's activities are not limited solely to Lebanon and the Middle East region. The organization has a global network of followers in North America, Latin America, Africa, and Europe and can therefore carry out terrorist attacks at a moment's notice around the globe. The Shi'a holy warriors have already carried out attacks outside of the Middle East on behalf of or in cooperation with the Iranian regime in the past. One may remember, for example, the attacks on the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and on the Buenos Aires Jewish community center in 1994. The global reach demonstrated by these attacks was one reason then-CIA director George Tenet classified Hezbollah as more dangerous than Al Qaeda in 2003.²⁷ This assessment continues to be valid and the organization has even been able to expand and strengthen its networks in recent years. Currently, Hezbollah is primarily using these and other organized criminal networks, such as the drug trade and money laundering, to fund its activities.²⁸

Hezbollah's Symbol

At the center of Hezbollah's emblem, large green Arabic letters depict the name of the organization. A fist holding a machine gun rises out of the "A" in "Allah," referring to the supposed divine legitimacy of Hezbollah's "resistance." The book resting on the right side of the "A" symbolizing the Quran, underscores this message. The globe shown beside the book represents the organization's claim to internationality.

Under the word "Hezbollah," small red letters read "the Islamic resistance in Lebanon" ("al-muqawamah al-islamiyah fi lubnan"), and under the machine gun is a quote from the Quran surah 5:56: "the party of Allah will be triumphant" ("fa-inna hizbu llah hum al-qalibun").

It is no coincidence that Hezbollah's symbols are similar to those of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Pasdaran), whose foremost tasks is to maintain the Islamist system under the rule of the Iranian spiritual leader and export the "Islamic revolution" throughout the Middle East. The Pasdaran provided indispensable financial and military aid in establishing Hezbollah in Lebanon. The name "Hezbollah," which was suggested by none other than Ayatollah Khomeini,²⁹ and the emblem of the Shi'a organization leave no doubt as to Iran's fundamental influence upon the "Party of God."

Hezbollah's Antisemitism

Because of its close organizational and personnel connections to Iran, Hezbollah's ideology is also strongly influenced by the regime in Tehran. As in the Islamic Republic, the organization's ideology centers around the idea of eliminating all Jews and encompasses all elements of modern antisemitism.

²⁶ Pollak, N. and Ghaddar, H.: "A Transformative Experience: Understanding Hezbollah's Involvement in Syria" (August 15, 2016), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/a-transformative-experience-understanding-hezbollahs-involvement-in-syria> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁷ Levitt, Matthew: "Hezbollah: Financing Terror through Criminal Enterprise" (May 25, 2005), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hezbollah-financing-terror-through-criminal-enterprise> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁸ Levitt, Matthew: "Hezbollah's Transnational Organized Crime" (April 21, 2016), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/hezbollahs-transnational-organized-crime> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

²⁹ Afshon Ostovar: *Vanguard of the Imam. Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guards*, 2016, p. 116.



For example, Hezbollah spreads the myth of a global Jewish conspiracy. The organization advertised a series broadcast in 2003 on their television channel "Al-Manar" (the lighthouse) with the words: *"The episodes show how Jews do not hesitate to carry out the worst crimes in order to realize their Jewish dream."*³⁰ The series shows, for example, that Jews are supposedly responsible for both world wars, the development of chemical weapons, and releasing the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also claims that Jews control the media in order to assert their interests.³¹ Holocaust denial is another key element of the terrorist group's antisemitic efforts. From the organization's perspective, the murder of the European Jews is an "[...] invention of Zionist propaganda [...]" that "[...] successfully serves Zionism in realizing its goals."³²

The end goal of this antisemitic ideology is to destroy the Jewish state. Hassan Nasrallah emphasized this in an interview: *"We are an Islamic movement and respect all governments that support Islam and fighting the Israeli enemy, which is our key objective."*³³ The justification for this existential struggle can be found in the "Party of God's" manifesto from 1985: *"This enemy is the greatest danger to future generations and the destiny of our countries [...]"*³⁴ Here, Israel is presented as an existential danger to all Muslims, and Hezbollah therefore rejects all negotiations, discussions, or peace treaties. The policy document continues:

*"Our fight will therefore not end until this entity has been eliminated. We did not recognize any agreement with [Israel], no peace treaty [...]. We emphatically condemn all plans for negotiations with Israel."*³⁵

Destroying the Jewish state is not Hezbollah's only goal, however. The terrorist organization also sees itself in a global and existential conflict with all Jews. In 1997, Nasrallah clearly stated:

*"If we searched the whole world for a more cowardly, lowly, and weaker individual in spirit, ideology, and religion, we would find no one worse than the Jews — I do not say the Israeli: we must know our enemy."*³⁶

Hezbollah clarified its proposal for resolving this conflict in an earlier statement from 1992: *"It is an open war until the elimination of Israel and until the death of the last Jew on earth."*³⁷

Nasrallah re-emphasized this goal in 2002, stating: *"If they all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide."*³⁸

³⁰ Buck, Christiane: "Adolf Hitler war in Ordnung" (November 18, 2003), in: *Die Welt*, at: <http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article273847/Adolf-Hitler-war-in-Ordnung.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

³¹ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb Hizbu'llah: *Politics and Religion*, 2002, p. 104.

³² Esther Webman: *Die Rhetorik der Hisbollah: die Weiterführung eines antisemitischen Diskurses [Hezbollah's rhetoric: continuation of an anti-Semitic discourse]*, in: *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 12 (2003), p. 48.

³³ Noe, Nicholas: *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah*, 2007, p. 188. In addition: *"The fact that we are engaged in an existential battle with Israel is an honor for us [...]"* *ibid.*, p. 63.

³⁴ Bündnis gegen Antisemitismus Kassel (BgA-Kassel): "Shrinking Place in their heads oder: Wie mit Christine Buchholz eine Fürsprecherin des internationalen Antisemitismus nach Kassel kam" [Shrinking place in their heads or: how Christine Buchholz, a proponent of international anti-Semitism, came to Kassel] (May 28, 2019), at:

<https://bgakasselblog.wordpress.com/2019/05/28/shrinking-place-in-their-heads/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

³⁵ The Bruns International: "Hezbollah promises Israel a blood-filled new year, Iran calls for Israel's end" (December 31, 1999), at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20030114160147/http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns/9900/issue14/intnews/israel.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

³⁶ Noe, Nicholas: *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayed Hassan Nasrallah*, 2007, p. 171.

³⁷ *The New York Sun*: "Nasrallah's Nonsense" (March 11, 2005), at: <http://www.nysun.com/editorials/nasrallahs-nonsense/10439/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

³⁸ *ibid.*



This is not merely rhetoric. Hezbollah's attacks on Jewish institutions show that it intends to actively work toward realizing this goal on a global scale.

Hezbollah in Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany is undoubtedly the center of Hezbollah's European activities. Its presence in Germany stretches back to the 1980s when many Lebanese Shiites fled the civil war in their home country. Hezbollah followers and members were among those refugees.

In recent years, the number of Hezbollah supporters and members in Germany has remained steady but high. The German Office for the Protection of the Constitution reports that the organization has 1,050 members and followers nationwide³⁹ with Berlin as a focal point (250 people).⁴⁰

The terrorist organization's supporters and members are affiliated with around 30 mosque associations in Germany, which are typically funded by donations and member fees.⁴¹ Little is known about Hezbollah's activities in Germany even though the authorities are aware of their networks and the institutions with known links such as the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH),⁴² the Imam Reza Mosque in Berlin⁴³, the Imam Mahdi Center in Münster,⁴⁴ or the Al Mustafa Community in Bremen.⁴⁵ Though details about these activities have only reached the public in a few cases, the facts clearly show that differentiating between a military and political wing in no way reflects reality and actually makes it more difficult for security agencies to investigate the organization. On this point, terrorism expert Matthew Levitt commented:

"The irony is that by limiting the designation to Hezbollah's "military wing," the E.U. effectively undermined its ability to seize any funds under this asset forfeiture regime. Hezbollah accounts in Europe are not likely to list as account holders "Hezbollah military wing." Legally, any funds tied to Hezbollah but not expressly linked to its military wing remain untouchable in Europe. Money being fungible, Hezbollah will likely continue soliciting funds in Europe but under the rubric of political and

³⁹ Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution: "Verfassungsschutzbericht 2018" [Report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2018], at: <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/download/vsbericht-2018.pdf> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴⁰ Kopietz, Andreas: "Al-Kuds-Marsch in Berlin – Die Clans, die Hisbollah und die schmutzigen Geschäfte" [Al Quds March in Berlin - the clans, Hezbollah, and dirty deals] (June 1, 2019), in: *Berliner Zeitung*, at: <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik/al-kuds-marsch-in-berlin-die-clans--die-hisbollah-und-die-schmutzigen-geschaefte-32625436> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴¹ Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution: "Presseinformation: Verbot des Vereins 'Waisenkindprojekt Libanon e. V.'" [Press release: ban of the Association 'Waisenkindprojekt Libanon e. V.']. (April 8, 2014), at: <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/presse/pi-20140408-wkp-verbot> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴² *Hamburger Morgenpost*: "'Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg' – An der Alster liegt Irans Propaganda-Zentrale" [Islamic Center Hamburg – Iran's propaganda center lies near the Alster] (June 20, 2008), at: <http://www.mopo.de/islamisches-zentrum-hamburg--an-der-alster-liegt-irans-propaganda-zentrale-19548712> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴³ *Berliner Morgenpost*: "Konspirative Treffen in der Moschee" [Conspiratorial meeting in the mosque] (July 24, 2006), at: <http://www.morgenpost.de/printarchiv/berlin/article104601859/Konspirative-Treffen-in-der-Moschee.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴⁴ *Bild*: "Polizeipräsident trifft Hisbollah-nahe Gruppe" [Police president meets with Hezbollah-affiliated group] (December 7, 2018), at: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/terrornetzwerk-muensters-polizeipraesident-trifft-hisbollah-nahe-gruppe-58863536.bild.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴⁵ Bremen State Office for the Protection of the Constitution: "Verfassungsschutzbericht Bremen 2018" [Report of the Bremen State Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2018], at: <https://www.verfassungsschutz.bremen.de/sixcms/media.php/13/VS%202018.pdf> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



social activities. Siphoning off funds for less altruistic activities such as the group's militia or terrorist activities would not be difficult at all.”⁴⁶

Once a year, Hezbollah followers and members make a public appearance as part of “Quds Day” (Arabic for “Jerusalem Day”). This event was brought to life in 1979 by the Iranian Revolution’s leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. Since then, on the last Friday of Ramadan, demonstrations calling for Israel’s destruction take place around the world. Since the 1980s, there have also been Quds Day events in Germany; since 1996, the central demonstration has taken place in Berlin. In 2015, the slogan “*Death to America, death to Israel, damnation to the Jews and victory to Islam,*” was called out from a car with loudspeakers at the demonstration.⁴⁷ For many years, participants were allowed to display Hezbollah emblems as part of demonstrations. It was not until 2016, after political pressure from the American Jewish Committee that, Berlin Senator of the Interior Frank Henkel (CDU) banned demonstrators from carrying the terrorist organization’s emblems. A report commissioned by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Berlin Ramer Institute and carried out by the renowned law office Redeker Sellner Dahs significantly contributed to this decision. The report states:

“There are overriding reasons to believe that the criteria for the criminal act of incitement of the people will again most likely be carried out by demonstrators showing relevant Hezbollah symbols this year. In conjunction with the high probability of expected concurrent circumstances at this year’s demonstration, this also implies an immediate threat to public order.”⁴⁸

However, prohibiting Hezbollah symbols has not changed the antisemitic character of the Quds demonstration, and antisemitic incidents still occurred in the following years.

Hezbollah's work with refugees

In April 2016, national headlines reported on revelations made by the AJC Berlin Ramer Institute: The organizers of the Quds demonstration were working with refugees through “Refugee Club Impulse” (RCI), which had applied for €100,000 in funding from the state of Berlin’s project fund for cultural education. Photographs held by the AJC Berlin Ramer Institute proved that the two activists actively participated in the Quds demonstrations and documented the activists displaying Hezbollah’s emblem, highlighting their affiliation with the terrorist organization. Only after AJC published this information did the Berlin Senate reject funding for the controversial project. State Minister of Culture Monika Grütters also withdrew her nomination of the RCI for a “special prize for cultural projects with refugees.” The extent to which Hezbollah followers systematically attempt to recruit and influence refugees in Germany is uncertain. Still, there is a legitimate

⁴⁶ Levitt, M. and Prohiv, J.: “There Is No Distinct Hezbollah ‘Military Wing,’ So Why Ban It?” (July 25, 2013), in: The Washington Institute, at: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/there-is-no-distinct-hezbollah-military-wing-so-why-ban-it> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴⁷ Jüdisches Forum für Demokratie und gegen Antisemitismus (JFDA) [Jewish forum for democracy and against anti-Semitism]: “Pressemitteilung: ‘Tod Amerika, Tod Israel, verdammt seien die Juden und Sieg dem Islam’ – Strafanzeige wegen Volksverhetzung von Lala Süsskind” [Press release: ‘Death to America, death to Israel, damnation to the Jews and victory to Islam’ - criminal charges of incitement of the people brought by Lala Süsskind] (July 15, 2015), at: <http://jfda.de/blog/2015/07/15/pm-tod-amerika-tod-israel-verflucht-seien-die-juden-und-sieg-dem-islam-strafanzeige-wegen-volksverhetzung-von-lala-susskind-jfda/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁴⁸ American Jewish Committee (AJC) Berlin: “AJC begrüßt Hisbollah-Fahnenverbot bei diesjährigem Islamistenaufmarsch” [AJC welcomes ban of Hezbollah flags at this year’s Islamist demonstration] (June 28, 2016), at: <https://ajcberlin.org/de/media/meldungen/ajc-begr%C3%BC%C3%9Ft-hisbollah-fahnenverbot-bei-diesj%C3%A4hrigem-islamistenaufmarsch> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



reason to be concerned, as young unaccompanied refugees are especially vulnerable to Islamists' recruitment efforts.⁴⁹

In the past, however, the terrorist organization has by no means restricted its activities in Germany to demonstrations.

As early as 1989, police arrested a member of Hezbollah who was planning attacks in Germany. The terrorist had gathered information about Israeli, Jewish, and American targets, and security agencies found plans for building bombs in his apartment.⁵⁰

Large segments of the German public only became aware of Hezbollah and its activities after the Mykonos attack on September 17, 1992, when Hezbollah teams assassinated four exiled Kurdish-Iranian politicians on Tehran's behalf.⁵¹ The Berlin Appellate Court commented in its judgment at the time:

*"Hezbollah is to be viewed largely as an offshoot of Iranian politics. It was established by Iran, and Iran continues to play a key role in funding, equipping, and training its members. This is not done altruistically. Iran uses Hezbollah not only to spread the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon, but also to fight opponents of the Iranian Islamic regime with militant means."*⁵²

In addition, Hezbollah attempts to recruit people in Germany for its activities. The most famous case is likely that of Steven Smyrek. The German convert to Islam was arrested by Israeli security agencies at Ben Gurion Airport in November 1997 after Hezbollah had sent him to Lebanon for weapons and explosives training and then tasked him with scouting out possible locations for attacks in Israel.⁵³ According to his statement, his goal was to carry out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv or Haifa.⁵⁴

There are also more recent examples: On July 16, 2008, 29-year-old Khaled Kashkoush was arrested upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. Up until that point, the Arab-Israeli had been studying medicine in Göttingen. According to Israeli security agencies, the medical student was recruited and paid by Hezbollah to gather information on other Arab-Israeli students in Germany in order to find more recruits. He was supposed to find a job in an Israeli hospital to collect information about security agents or soldiers being treated there.⁵⁵ It is not a coincidence that Kashkoush was recruited in Göttingen. The "Waisenkindprojekt Libanon e. V." (WKP, Orphan Project Lebanon) was based in the student city in Lower Saxony until it was prohibited on April 8, 2014. The association's chair and Kashkoush's recruiter was Hisham Hassan, a surgeon in the city's university clinic. The association was able to collect several million euros until it was banned by the Minister of the Interior at the time, Thomas de Maizière. It then forwarded the money to Hezbollah's "Shahid Foundation" (Martyr Foundation) in Lebanon. It uses the funds to support the children of deceased "Party of

⁴⁹ Klatt, Thomas: "Wie antisemitisch ist der Refugee Club Impulse?" [How anti-Semitic is the Refugee Club Impulse?] (May 20, 2016), in: *Deutschlandfunk Kultur*, at: https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/streit-um-foerdergelder-in-berlin-wie-antisemitisch-ist-der.1079.de.html?dram:article_id=354731 (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵⁰ Levitt, Matthew: Hezbollah. The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God, 2013, p. 62.

⁵¹ Berlin Appellate Court: "Entscheidung in der Strafsache (19/93)" [Decision on criminal matter (19/93)], at: https://web.archive.org/web/20071008112848/http://www.kammergericht.de/entscheidungen/Strafsenate/1_StE_19-93.pdf (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Erdmann, Lisa: "Deutscher Gotteskrieger – 'Ich habe Angst, wenn er rauskommt'" [German holy warrior – 'I'm afraid of when he gets out'] (January 29, 2004), in: *Spiegel Online*, at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/deutscher-gotteskrieger-ich-habe-angst-wenn-er-rauskommt-a-284085.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵⁴ Levitt, Matthew: Hezbollah. The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God, 2013, p. 214ff.

⁵⁵ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "Arrest of Hezbollah agent from Kalansua" (August 6, 2018), at: <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/terrorism/hizbullah/pages/arrest%20of%20hizbullah%20agent%20from%20kalansua%206-aug-2008.aspx> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



God” members and fighters. When justifying the ban, the German Office for the Protection of the Constitution stated:

*“Because the WKP contributed to securing the livelihood of deceased Hezbollah fighters’ family members by collecting and providing donations for the “Shahid Foundation,” it intentionally supported and encouraged Hezbollah’s fight against Israel, thereby violating the precepts of international understanding. The certainty that family members will receive financial support if the fighter dies increases the willingness of young Hezbollah members to actively participate in the fight against Israel. The WKP’s financial support also contributed to glorifying those who have died in Hezbollah’s struggle against Israel. This, in turn, provides motivation for Hezbollah fighters or those who want to participate in fighting Israel.”*⁵⁶

In 2008, the Ministry of the Interior also banned Hezbollah’s television channel “Al-Manar.”⁵⁷ The French television authority had already prohibited the European satellite reception service Eutelsat from broadcasting Al-Manar TV in 2004. The channel can still be received privately using satellite antenna, but public broadcasting is prohibited along with all of the channel’s activities in Germany.⁵⁸ The ban is justified by the channel’s content, which violates the precepts of international understanding set down in the German Basic Law.⁵⁹

Hezbollah and Organized Crime

Hezbollah poses a problem for Germany’s domestic security for more reasons than the cases described above. The “Party of God” uses Germany as well as other European countries to generate funds for its activities in Lebanon.

In 2008, customs agents at the Frankfurt airport arrested four Lebanese trying to take more than €8.5 million in cash to Lebanon. When their houses were subsequently searched, police seized well over €500,000. There are many reasons to believe that this money came from cocaine dealing and was intended for Hezbollah.⁶⁰ Even at that time, investigators were dealing with the transnational European network. In 2015, German investigators and security agencies uncovered a similar case.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Treasury discovered an international drug ring whose operations extended to Europe. Lead by an individual with close ties to Hezbollah, this network was responsible for laundering as much as \$200 million per month around the world, including via banks in Lebanon.⁶¹ American investigators involved in the case concluded that some of these funds were being funneled to Hezbollah.

⁵⁶ Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution: “Presseinformation: Verbot des Vereins ‘Waisenkinderprojekt Libanon e. V.’” [Press release: ban of the Association ‘Waisenkinderprojekt Libanon e. V.’] (April 8, 2014), at: <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/presse/pi-20140408-wkp-verbot> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵⁷ Focus: “Al Manar TV – Schäuble verbietet Sender in Deutschland” [Al Manar TV - Schäuble bans channel in Germany] (November 21, 2008), at: https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/al-manar-tv-schaeuble-verbietet-sender-in-deutschland_aid_350343.html (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵⁸ Deutscher Bundestag: “Drucksache 16/11544” [printed paper 16/11544] (January 5, 2009), at: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/115/1611544.pdf> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Ulrich, Andreas: “Koks für den Terror” [Coke for terror] (January 11, 2010), in: *Der Spiegel*, no. 2/2010, at: <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-68621892.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶¹ US Department of the Treasury: “Finding that the Lebanese Canadian Bank SAL is a Financial Institution of Primary Money Laundering Concern” (February 17, 2011), at: http://www.fincen.gov/statutes_regs/patriot/pdf/LCBNoticeofFinding.pdf (accessed on September 30, 2019).



Drugs are strictly forbidden by Islam, and trading with such substances is seen as un-Islamic. However, besides its financial objectives, Hezbollah has another goal: “In 1980, a fatwa was written that provided a justification for producing and trading with drugs by stating that these drugs were meant for Satan, America, and the Jews. ‘If we can't kill them with weapons, we will kill them with drugs.’”⁶²

During a routine check, customs agents found nearly €500,000 in the possession of two German-Lebanese travelers. This chance find led to a far-reaching transnational investigations in which the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) also participated, leading to a wave of house searches in January 2016. Investigators believe that the two travelers laundered around €10 million for South American drug cartels in 2015 alone, with part of the money going to Hezbollah. This conclusion was drawn because U.S. agencies consider a leading figure of this criminal group, Mohamad Nouredine, to be responsible for Hezbollah's money-laundering network.⁶³ In November 2018, a Parisian court sentenced Nouredine to prison for money laundering, along with a dozen other defendants.⁶⁴

The Bundestag's scientific service also believes that Hezbollah continues to be involved in German organized crime. A 2018 report states the German attorney general conducted a total of 36 investigations into people affiliated with Hezbollah that year.⁶⁵ It can therefore safely be assumed that the investigations and chance findings described above represent only the tip of the iceberg, and that Hezbollah is deeply involved in organized crime in Germany.

Indeed, U.S. law enforcement have uncovered other cases of Hezbollah supporters involved in organized crime in Europe. In one such case, individuals with close ties to Hezbollah attempted to purchase massive quantities of heavy weaponry from an undercover officer in the United States, including anti-aircraft weapons and 10,000 machine guns.⁶⁶ The money for these weapons was to be provided by a German-Lebanese citizen living in Slovakia.⁶⁷ When asked what these weapons were for, the Hezbollah operative explained that they were intended for the fight against “the Jews.”⁶⁸

Hezbollah's Most Significant Activities in Europe

1982-92 Several European and U.S. citizen kidnappings in Lebanon: 96 people kidnapped, at least eight dead.⁶⁹

1983 Attack on American and French bases in Beirut, 305 dead.⁷⁰

⁶² Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives: “Emerging Threats and Security in the Western Hemisphere: Next Steps for U.S. Policy” (October 13, 2011), at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-112hrg70665/pdf/CHRG-112hrg70665.pdf> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶³ US Department of the Treasury: “Treasury Sanctions Key Hizballah Money Laundering Network” (January 1, 2016), at: <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0331.aspx> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶⁴ *Al Arabiya*: “Lebanese businessman Mohamad Nouredine jailed in Paris drug trial” (November 29, 2018), at: <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/business/economy/2018/11/29/Lebanese-businessman-Mohamad-Nouredine-jailed-in-Paris-drug-trial.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶⁵ German Bundestag: “Drucksache 19/9163” [printed paper 16/11544] (April 5, 2009), at: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/091/1909163.pdf> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶⁶ US Department of Justice: “Arrests Made in Case Involving Conspiracy to Procure Weapons, Including Anti-Aircraft Missiles” (November 23, 2009), at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/arrests-made-case-involving-conspiracy-procure-weapons-including-anti-aircraft-missiles> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁶⁷ Levitt, Matthew: Hezbollah's Organized Criminal Enterprises in Europe. In: Perspectives on Terrorism, Vol. 7, Issue 4, p. 30.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 33.

⁶⁹ Country-data.com: “Lebanon – The Hostage Crisis,” at: <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8105.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



- 1983 Attack on US Embassy in Beirut, 63 dead.⁷¹
- 1985 Hijacking of TWA flight 847 en route from Athens to Rome followed by stops at multiple airports around the Mediterranean, one dead. One of the four hijackers was Imad Mughniyeh,⁷² Hezbollah's second-in-command. After the incident, the United States placed him on the FBI list of most wanted terrorists.
- 1985 Attack on a synagogue in Copenhagen.⁷³
- 1985-86 13 bombings in Paris carried out by an organization linked to Hezbollah,⁷⁴ 13 dead, at least 300 injured.⁷⁵
- 1989 Murder of Kurdish opposition member in Vienna by Iran and Hezbollah members.⁷⁶
- 1992 Attack in Mykonos Restaurant in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, four Kurdish-Iranian opposition politicians killed; three Swedish politicians returned to Sweden shortly before, avoiding the attack. Partially based on testimony from one of the masterminds, Youssef Amin, the Berlin appellate court's judgment from August 10, 1997, arrived at the conclusion that the attack was commissioned by Tehran and carried out by Hezbollah representatives in Berlin. In 2007, those charged with the crime were released from prison after 15 years and deported to Iran, where they were welcomed home as "heroes of the nation."⁷⁷
- 1992 Attack on Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, 29 dead and 242 injured.⁷⁸
- 1994 Attack on Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, 80 dead and more than 300 injured. The organization Ansar Allah, a branch of Hezbollah, took responsibility for this attack. After the investigations into the attack dragged on, President Nestor Kirchner reopened them in 2005. Subsequently, charges were brought against Hezbollah representatives and the former Iranian president Ayatollah Rafsanjani as well as former and current members of the Iranian government. In addition, Argentinian authorities issued arrest warrants.⁷⁹
- In July 1994, Hezbollah bombed the Israeli Embassy in London, injuring 20 people.⁸⁰

⁷⁰ Levitt, Matthew: "The Origins of Hezbollah" (October 23, 2013), in: *The Atlantic*, at:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/10/the-origins-of-hezbollah/280809/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷¹ *Der Spiegel*: "Libanon – Wie Dien Bien Phu" [Lebanon – like Dien Bien Phu] (October 31, 1983), in: *Der Spiegel*, no. 44/1983, at: <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-14024320.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷² *Handelsblatt*: "Führungsmitglied der Hisbollah getötet" [Leading member of Hezbollah killed] (February 13, 2008), at: <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/usa-nennt-mughniyeh-moerder-fuehrungsmitglied-der-hisbollah-getoetet-seite-2/2921846-2.html?ticket=ST-2638942-ZHiHzbfcYa2Wv7aUgC6l-ap6> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷³ Levitt, Matthew: Hezbollah. The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God, 2013, p. 59.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Bigo, Didier: "Les attentats de 1986 en France : un cas de violence transnationale et ses implications (Partie 1)" [The 1986 attacks in France: a case of transnational violence and its implications] (online since: December 31, 2012), in: *Cultures & Conflicts* [Online], no. 04 | Winter 1991, at: <http://conflicts.revues.org/index129.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷⁶ Levitt, Matthew: Hezbollah. The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God, 2013, p. 59.

⁷⁷ Hakakian, Roya: "The End of the Dispensable Iranian" (April 10, 2007), in: *Spiegel Online*, at: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/looking-back-at-the-mykonos-trial-the-end-of-the-ispensable-iranian-a-476369.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷⁸ Israelnetz: "Argentinien erinnert an Anschlag auf israelische Botschaft" [Argentinian remembers attack on Israeli Embassy] (March 19, 2018), at: <https://www.israelnetz.com/politik-wirtschaft/politik/2018/03/19/argentinien-erinnert-an-anschlag-auf-israelische-botschaft/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁷⁹ Lombard, Jérôme: "Schweigeminute für AMIA-Opfer" [Moment of silence for AMIA victims] (June 6, 2019), in: *Jüdische Allgemeine*, at: <https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/juedische-welt/schweigeminute-fuer-amia-opfer/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁰ *BBC*: "Israel's London embassy bombed" (July 26, 1994), at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/26/newsid_2499000/2499619.stm (accessed on September 30, 2019).



- 2005 Former Lebanese minister president Rafiq al-Hariri dies on February 14. In 2011, investigations by a UN special tribunal led to arrest warrants issued for four Hezbollah members considered to be suspects.⁸¹
- 2011 Failed attack on Israeli ambassador in Istanbul. The Turkish authorities consider it to have been proven that Hezbollah was behind the attack.⁸²
- 2012 Planned attack in Azerbaijan against the Israeli ambassador⁸³ as well as against the principal and rabbi of the local Jewish school.⁸⁴
- 2012 Attempted assassination of then Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak in Singapore foiled by security agencies.⁸⁵
- 2012 Failed attack on members of the Israeli Embassy in Tbilisi.⁸⁶ Further attacks planned on Israeli targets in Cyprus, Thailand, and India were prevented or failed.⁸⁷
- 2012 Suicide attack in Bulgarian town of Burgas, five Israelis and local bus driver die.⁸⁸
- 2013 Denmark deports Hezbollah member who had no apparent reason for being in the country.⁸⁹
- 2015 Hezbollah member arrested in Cyprus. 8.5 tons of liquid ammonium nitrate, one of the basic ingredients for producing explosives, are found in his cellar.⁹⁰
- 2015 In London, investigators arrest a Hezbollah member who had stored over 3 tons of ammonium nitrate, a basic ingredient for producing explosives. The case only becomes public in 2019.⁹¹

Conclusion

Hezbollah represents a serious risk to the domestic security of Germany and the entire European Union for the reasons detailed above. It has hopefully also become apparent that the EU's and Germany's differentiation

⁸¹ *Spiegel Online*: "Uno-Tribunal veröffentlicht Anklage gegen Hisbollah-Mitglieder" [UN tribunal publishes indictment of Hezbollah members] (August 17, 2011), at: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/prozess-um-hariri-mord-uno-tribunal-veroeffentlicht-anklage-gegen-hisbollah-mitglieder-a-780753.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸² *Die Welt*: "Anschläge auf Israelis weltweit" [Worldwide attacks on Israelis] (July 20, 2012), at: https://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article108338767/Anschlaege-auf-Israelis-weltweit.html (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸³ The Times of Israel: "UK said to have foiled 2015 Hezbollah London bomb plot, then covered it up" (June 10, 2019), at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-said-to-have-covered-up-fact-it-foiled-2015-hezbollah-bomb-plot-near-london/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Karmon, Ely: "„Analysis / Iran and Hezbollah's Terror Escalation Against Israel" (July 22, 2012), in: *Haaretz*, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/analysis-iran-and-hezbollah-s-terror-escalation-against-israel-1.452953> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁶ Kulish, N. and Rudoren, J.: "Plots are Tied to Shadow War of Israel and Iran" (August 8, 2012), in: *New York Times*, at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/09/world/middleeast/murky-plots-and-attacks-tied-to-shadow-war-of-iran-and-israel.html> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁷ Karmon, Ely: "Analysis / Iran and Hezbollah's Terror Escalation Against Israel" (July 22, 2012), in: *Haaretz*, at: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/analysis-iran-and-hezbollah-s-terror-escalation-against-israel-1.452953> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁸ Jewish Telegraphic Agency: "Burgas bomber was working for Hezbollah, Bulgarian minister says" (April 7, 2014), at: <http://www.jta.org/2014/04/07/news-opinion/usa/burgas-bomber-was-working-for-hezbollah-bulgarian-minister-says> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁸⁹ Levitt, Matthew: "Inside Hezbollah's European Plots" (April 14, 2017), in: *The Daily Beast*, at: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-hezbollahs-european-plots> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁹⁰ US Department of State: "Country Reports on Terrorism 2015," at: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257516.htm> (accessed on September 30, 2019).

⁹¹ Mena-Watch: "Britische Regierung der Vertuschung von Hisbollah-Terror beschuldigt" [British government accused of covering up Hezbollah terror] (June 18, 2019), at: <https://www.mena-watch.com/britische-regierung-der-vertuschung-von-hisbollah-terror-beschuldigt/> (accessed on September 30, 2019).



between the "political" and the "military" wing of Hezbollah is fictitious, not reflecting the reality of Hezbollah's organizational structure.

On this, David Harris, CEO of the AJC, commented:

Isn't it high time for the EU to finish the work on Hezbollah it began with its initial decision in 2013? This important step would significantly hamper Hezbollah's ability to operate freely in Europe by empowering governments to shut down the group's organizing and fundraising efforts within EU borders. Terrorism poses a threat to us all. In responding, we need to be clear-eyed, resolute, and unflinching. Hezbollah is what it says it is — a doctrinaire, violent group rooted in Shiite Islam. No effort to pretend otherwise will succeed. No belief that it will change its spots because we're ready to meet them halfway can work, not when it comes to non-negotiable beliefs and faith.

Hezbollah poses an immediate and serious threat to Jewish life both in the European Union and in Germany, making it urgent that the EU take action. Especially in light of history, it is unfathomable that an organization openly calling for the murder of Jews has not yet been banned. We therefore call on those in positions of political responsibility to finally draw the necessary consequences and ban Hezbollah. This would not only increase domestic security, it would be an important step toward protecting Jewish life in Germany. The German government should also push for placing the entire Hezbollah organization on the EU list of terrorist organizations. This is warranted in part because the organization can continue to collect donations in Europe as long as it does so under the cover of its "political" wing, which makes it difficult for security agencies to effectively take action against Hezbollah.

Remarks: Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author. This analysis first appeared in the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Berlin Ramer Institute's "Hezbollah in Germany and Europe" brochure, November 2019, in Berlin.



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Previously, he served as AJC Berlin's Assistant Director for Policy and Public Affairs. In this role, he oversaw the office's public relations work, developing policy and content in line with AJC priorities.

From September 2015 to February 2019, Dr. Leemhuis worked as Consultant on Antisemitism Affairs at AJC Berlin. In this capacity, he led the Taskforce Education on anti-Semitism, a forum for educators to regularly exchange strategies on countering antisemitism through educational projects and initiatives.

Dr. Leemhuis studied political and oriental studies at the Philipps University of Marburg and the University of Berkeley, California. He received his Ph.D. in 2018, writing on German Middle East policy in the 1960s and 1970s.



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