



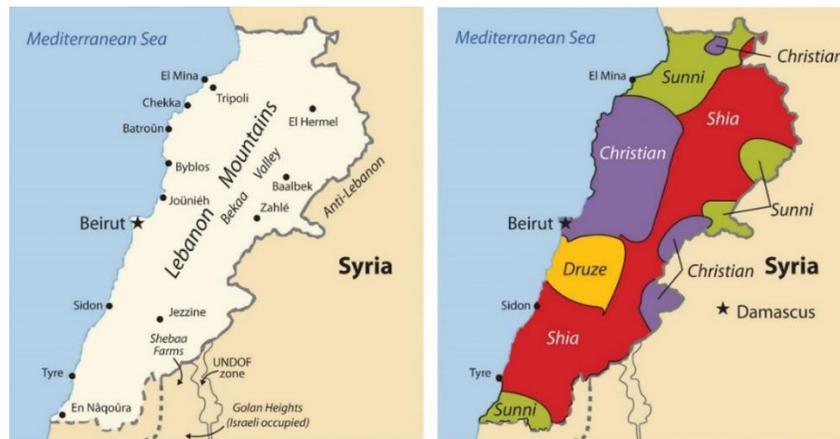
Lebanon & Hezbollah Fact Sheet

Government

Lebanon is a non-functioning Republic, where 3 prominent offices are divided amongst the different religious groups. The President must be a Christian, the Prime Minister is a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Assembly is a Shia Muslim. There is a unicameral National Assembly, with 128 seats and members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by majority vote. Assembly members serve 4-year terms and seats are apportioned among the Christian and Muslim denominations. In Oct of 2016, Christian, former general, and ally of Iran, Michel Aoun [was chosen](#) as President. In Dec. of 2016, Saad Al-Hariri became Prime Minister for the second time. He [quit and then un-resigned](#) in late 2017, decrying Hezbollah control over the country.

Population

Lebanon's population [totals](#) 6.1 million (including refugees). It is 54% Muslim (roughly evenly divided between Sunni and Shia), 40.5% Christian (broken down further into 21% Maronite Catholic, 8% Greek Orthodox, 5% Greek Catholic, 6.5% other Christian), 5.6 % Druze, and other.



Maps courtesy of CIA World Factbook

The total amount of refugees in Lebanon are about 1.8 million. There are [450,000](#) Palestinian refugees and [1,500,000](#) Syrian refugees.

The Modern History of Lebanon

In the 1920's, the French carved off the nation now called Lebanon from Syria to create a Christian majority Arab nation. However, because of emigration and higher birthrates, Muslim Lebanese now make up a solid majority. (The Shia in particular had a higher birthrate.) Post-1948, a large group of Palestinian Arabs – mostly Sunni Arab – also moved to Lebanon, further upsetting the balance. In 1975, a full-scale civil war broke out in Lebanon, as various Christian, Muslim and Druze groups pushed for greater power within the nation. This civil war lasted until 1990. Both Syria and Israel intervened, with Israel at one point setting up its own zone in Southern Lebanon, and Syria eventually becoming the occupying power over the entire country. After 1990, all of the various militia groups were disarmed, except for the most powerful militia,

Hezbollah. Post-2005, the Cedars Revolution, a series of popular demonstrations for Lebanese independence from Syria and favoring more democracy, resulted in Syrian troops leaving the nation. However, since then, Hezbollah has come to exercise power over the entire country, essentially as “a state within a state.” Since 2005, the U.S. [has given](#) more than \$1.4 billion to the Lebanese Army, providing weapons, equipment, and training. In 2016, the aid to Lebanon amounted to \$85.9 million.

Hezbollah

The Hezbollah – or “Hizbullah”, meaning “The Party of God,” and sometimes [using](#) the cover name of “Islamic Jihad” – militia “[has](#) effectively taken over the Lebanese government” and [has become](#) the “most powerful non-state armed force on the planet.” It is increasingly [intertwined](#) with the Lebanese Armed Forces, and U.S. military aid [seems likely](#) to have been given by the LAF to Hezbollah. President Aoun [has given](#) Hezbollah the legal authority to operate as a legitimate military force. This is in violation of UN Resolution 1701, which was adopted in August 2006 at the end of the 34-day Second Lebanon War, and which [mandates](#) “the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that...there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.” Israel has said that Hezbollah “[controls](#)” Lebanon’s conventional military. It also is [increasingly infiltrating](#) the Lebanese government. Hezbollah is strong enough that it has been able to [override a ban](#) by the Lebanese government to allow an Iran-backed Iraqi militant commander to visit the Lebanon-Israel border.

Hezbollah is a Shiite Islamist political party, militant group and designated terrorist organization, which was founded in the 1980’s by Iran. It was originally created to oppose Israel and the West. Iran [funds](#) Hezbollah, annually \$830 million, a huge boost (from \$200 million) after the JCPOA. According to a Saudi Arabian newspaper report, on April 25th, 2017, Hezbollah [received](#) \$600 million worth of Iranian aid, almost completely in hard cash, which came from the U.S. Iran deal related payments. Hezbollah maintains an extensive security apparatus, political organization, and health and social services network in Lebanon, with a payroll of around 80,000. Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Unit [has more](#) than three hospitals and 12 health centers. Hezbollah’s schools serve around 15,000 students, many of whom receive financial assistance and scholarships. Hezbollah controls the Lebanese Satellite television network *Al-Manar TV*, whose [budget](#) alone is at least \$15 million per year. *Al-Manar* was [designated](#) by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity” in 2006. Hezbollah holds many seats in the Lebanese National Assembly, dominating the Shia majority areas. [Hassan Nasrallah](#) has led Hezbollah as general secretary since 1992, although the Iranian Supreme Leader, now Ayatollah Khamenei, [serves](#) as Hezbollah’s ultimate source of religious, political, and ideological guidance and authority.

Hezbollah has long been an effective proxy for Iranian foreign policy. Iran has sent Hezbollah fighters to [Iran](#), [Iraq](#), Syria, and [Yemen](#). Hezbollah [offers](#) fighters a two-year contract consisting of \$500-\$1,200 in monthly salary plus benefits. Hezbollah [has](#) “40,000 and 45,000 armed members divided evenly between conscripts and reservists,” *The Jerusalem Post* reports. When its fighters are killed, Hezbollah’s Martyrs’ Foundation [provides](#) financial assistance and health and social services to the families of the “martyrs.” For each “martyr,” Hezbollah pays his family between \$25,000 and \$45,000. Also, the Foundation for the Wounded provides assistance to those who have been injured during combat.

Hezbollah Involvement in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen

Hezbollah has as many as [9,000 fighters](#) in Syria, where they are working to defend the Assad regime. Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian civil war has alienated some of its [Lebanese Shia constituents](#) and [Sunni Muslims](#) in Lebanon and across the Middle East. The former [is exacerbated](#) because the poor Shia neighborhoods are providing fighters while the upper middle class and rich neighborhoods are benefiting from the war. Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria has also resulted in rampant small crime, drugs, and prostitution among the Shia, and directly led to a decline in the benefits provided by the group to the poor. It is estimated that Hezbollah has lost [2000](#) – [2500](#) fighters in Syria, and suffered [4000](#) – [7000](#) wounded. Much of the casualties [come from](#) the elite forces, and have included dozens of high-ranking commanders, which has greatly hurt morale. In addition to fighting in Syria, Hezbollah has also been tasked with training an

Alawite militia and other pro-Assad forces. However, because of Hezbollah's involvement in Syria, it has been [transformed](#) from a terror group to a [full-fledged army](#), especially since Russia intervened in Syria. Hezbollah fighters have become familiar with advanced Russian weaponry and Russian military strategies. In response to Hezbollah involvement in Syria, both Sunni Islamist groups ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra have conducted cross border assaults into Lebanon. These groups [have been](#) responsible for abductions of Lebanese soldiers and civilians, attacks against Lebanese personnel and local policemen, and suicide bombings in civilian areas.

Hezbollah is also involved in the fighting in Iraq and [Yemen](#). In Yemen, it [fired](#) a ballistic missile at Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh, and it has been [involved in attacks](#) against the U.S. Navy and ships from other nations.

The Hezbollah Threat to Israel

Hezbollah, which most recently fought Israel in 2006 during the Second Lebanon War, continues to prepare for another war with the Jewish State. A recent report [stated](#) that a renewed war with Israel is "inevitable," and is certain to be "more violent and destructive" than previous conflicts. It has [moved](#) the bulk of its military infrastructure into the Shiite villages in southern Lebanon and has a "vast network of advanced tunnels" along the border. Journalist Ron Ben-Yishai has [written](#) that Hezbollah has promised to assist poor Shiite villagers "on the condition that at least one rocket launcher would be placed in one of the house's rooms or in the basement, along with a number of rockets, which will be fired at predetermined targets in Israel when the order is given." Hezbollah has [approximately](#) 150,000 rockets that can strike in northern Israel, thousands of rockets capable of hitting Tel Aviv, and several hundred that can reach anywhere in the country. Hezbollah could fire probably [1,000 a day](#).

Hezbollah's Terrorism

The U.S. State Department [designated](#) Hezbollah a Foreign Terrorist Organization in Oct. 1997. It has conducted terror attacks all over the world. Hezbollah has murdered more Americans than any other terror group than al-Qaeda. Nicholas Rasmussen, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, [has testified](#) that "the group seeks to develop and maintain a global capability to carry out acts of terror," further warning that while there were no imminent threats, Hezbollah was actively trying to target the U.S. in the homeland. Some prominent examples of Hezbollah attacks on U.S. interests:

- 1983: [U.S. Embassy bombing](#): This bombing in Beirut killed 63 people, mostly embassy and CIA staff members, several soldiers and 1 Marine. 17 of the dead were Americans.
- 1983: [Marine barracks bombing](#): This bombing killed 241 U.S. marines and 6 civilians at the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut.
 - On May 30, 2003, Judge Royce Lamberth [found](#) Iran legally responsible for providing Hezbollah, with financial and logistical support that helped them carry out the attack.
- 1984: [U.S. Embassy Annex bombing](#): Following the earlier Embassy attack, the embassy was moved to a supposedly more secure location in East Beirut. However, on September 20, 1984, another car bomb exploded at this embassy annex, killing 20 Lebanese and 2 U.S. soldiers.
- 1996: [Khobar Towers bombing](#): Resulted in the deaths of 17 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia.
- 2000's: [Hezbollah Training of Iraqi & Afghani Terror Attacks](#): Hezbollah provided training and EFP's to both Shia and Sunni insurgents against U.S. troops during the 2003 Iraq War and the Afghani War. This resulted in more than 1000 U.S. deaths, and thousands of injuries.

Hezbollah's Activities in the Americas

"Hezbollah operatives [run](#) one of the largest and most sophisticated global criminal operations in the world" to raise money for terrorism. It has been involved in global money-laundering, drug-trafficking operations, arms smuggling, cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting of currency. Hezbollah has been [active inside the U.S. for decades](#), engaging in a range of activities that include fundraising and money laundering. Among the most profitable was a cigarette smuggling ring based in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 2001, international intelligence sources identified Lebanese residents operating for Hezbollah in South America's tri-border area

([Argentina](#), [Paraguay](#) and [Brazil](#)). That area [has come to be](#) a major source of funding for Hezbollah's terror activities. Venezuela [has provided](#) state support in terms of immigration and banking to Hezbollah. In January 2011, one of the largest Hezbollah narcotics trafficking and money laundering schemes was [disrupted](#). A Drug Enforcement Administration investigation revealed that Hezbollah laundered as much as \$200 million a month from the sale of cocaine in Europe and the Middle East. "In the [past decade](#), Hezbollah's growing involvement in transnational organized crime has evolved into a multi-billion dollar global enterprise endorsed and coordinated by the group's top leaders. Hezbollah's involvement in producing and selling counterfeit medicines such as Captagon — a powerful amphetamine — [is well documented](#) and so is its growing involvement in [cocaine trafficking](#)."

Hezbollah has also been involved in terror attacks in South America. Most spectacularly, on July of 1994, Hezbollah operatives [blew up](#) the [AMIA Jewish community center](#) in Buenos Aires, that killed 85 people and injured hundreds more, and sent a suicide bomber to take down a flight on [Alas Chiricanas Airlines](#), a Panamanian commuter airliner carrying 21 mostly Jewish passengers, including several Americans. In 2015, Hezbollah and Iran [may have assassinated](#) Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who was supposedly about to reveal more proof of Iranian and Hezbollah involvement in the Buenos Aires bombing. In October of 2017, a joint [FBI-NYPD investigation](#) led to the arrest of two individuals who were allegedly acting on behalf of Hezbollah. At the direction of their Hezbollah handlers, one person allegedly "conducted missions in Panama to locate the U.S. and Israeli Embassies and to assess the vulnerabilities of the Panama Canal and ships in the Canal," according to a Justice Department press release. The other allegedly "conducted surveillance of potential targets in America, including military and law enforcement facilities in New York City."

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