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(slide with Chapter & Chatter Café picture)

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-hezbollah>

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Who is Hezbollah?

Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon, where it has fostered a reputation as “a state within a state.” Founded during the chaos of the fifteen-year Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), the Iran-backed group is driven by its violent opposition to Israel and its resistance to Western influence in the Middle East.

Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and many other countries, and has deep-rooted military alliances with repressive, anti-Israel regimes in Iran and Syria.

Cross-border clashes between Hezbollah and Israel escalated in recent years, particularly amid Israel’s ongoing war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip that broke out last year. In a major intensification of its battle with Hezbollah, several weeks ago (September 2024) Israel killed longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah, and has now launched a ground offensive against the group in southern Lebanon.

A little Hezbollah History

1943: After twenty-three years as a French territory as a result of the settlement at the end of WWI (Treaty of Versailles), Lebanon gained independence. Its new leaders signed the National Pact, which created a government system dividing power among the major religious groups.

1971: The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) relocates its headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon.

1983: In April, Beirut’s U.S. embassy is bombed, killing 63 people. In October, suicide attacks on barracks housing U.S. and French troops kill 305 people. A U.S. court decides Hezbollah is behind the attacks.

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1975–1990: Lebanon’s civil war rages as the country’s religious, political, and ethnic sects vie for control, leading to invasions by Israel and Syria and the involvement of the United States and other Western forces, as well as the United Nations.

1984: A car bombing attributed to Hezbollah killed dozens of people at the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut.

1992: In March, the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed in an attack attributed to Hezbollah. Later that year, Hassan Nasrallah became Hezbollah’s secretary-general after Israeli forces assassinated his predecessor. Hezbollah then wins eight seats in Parliament after participating in national elections for the first time.

1989: Lebanon’s parliamentarians meet in Saudi Arabia, and sign an agreement to end the civil war and grant Syria guardianship over Lebanon. The agreement also orders all militias except for Hezbollah to disarm.

1994: Car bombings at Israel’s London embassy and a Buenos Aires Jewish community center are attributed to Hezbollah.

1997: The United States designates Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization.

2005: Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri is assassinated. His death, attributed to Syria, kick-starts the Cedar Revolution. A UN tribunal later implicates Hezbollah in Hariri’s death.

2006: Hezbollah abducts two Israeli soldiers, sparking a monthlong war with Israel that leaves more than one thousand Lebanese and fifty Israelis dead.

2011: Syria descends into civil war. Hezbollah eventually sends thousands of fighters to support Syria’s president, Bashar al-Assad’s regime.

2012: A suicide bombing targeting a bus carrying Israeli tourists in Bulgaria kills six people. The European Union blames Hezbollah.

2013: The EU designates Hezbollah’s armed wing a terrorist organization after considerable debate among the bloc’s members.

2018: Israel discovers miles of tunnels into Israel from southern Lebanon that it says belong to Hezbollah.

2019: Economic woes trigger mass protests calling for the political elite, including Hezbollah, to give up power. Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigns.

2020: Hezbollah vows revenge after a U.S. drone strike kills Iranian Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani. Later that year, a top judge begins investigating officials tied to Hezbollah in relation to explosions at a Beirut port that killed hundreds.

2023: Hezbollah launched attacks across the Israel-Lebanon border in a show of support for Palestinians amid the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Hezbollah and Israel then traded attacks at the border, which is where we are now, raising fears that Lebanon will be dragged into a full-scale war.

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2024: As I said earlier, Israel killed longtime Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an air strike several weeks ago. This has been followed by a series of strikes that killed other leaders and an attack triggering explosions in pagers used by the group's members that resulted in thousands wounded.

Source: CFR research. (U.S. Council on Foreign Relations)

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB and JACK JEFFERY

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The Israeli attacks on Hezbollah left Lebanon and much of the Mideast in shock as Israeli officials celebrated major military and intelligence breakthroughs.

Hezbollah had opened a front to support its ally Hamas in the Gaza Strip a day after the Palestinian group's surprise attack into southern Israel.

The recent strikes in Lebanon and the assassination of Nasrallah are a significant escalation in the war in the Middle East, this time between Israel and Hezbollah.

Lebanon's most powerful military and political force now finds itself trying to recuperate from severe blows, having lost key members who have been part of Hezbollah since its establishment in the early 1980s.

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Hassan Nasrallah

Since 1992, Nasrallah had led the group through several wars with Israel, and oversaw the party's transformation into a powerful player in Lebanon. Hezbollah entered Lebanon's political arena while also taking part in regional conflicts that made it the most powerful paramilitary force.

Nasrallah had served as Secretary-General since the assassination of his predecessor by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in 1992.

After Syria's uprising in 2011 spiraled into civil war, Hezbollah played a pivotal role in keeping Syrian President Bashar Assad in power. Under Nasrallah, Hezbollah also helped develop the capabilities of fellow Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq and Yemen.

<https://apnews.com/article/hezbollah-lebanon-nasrallah-israel-8b2ae56a54d641c6910a79e9e5699824>

Hezbollah is an Iranian partner force, helping Tehran project power across the region, train allied militias (reportedly including Hamas), and threaten U.S. interests and allies across the region.

Clashes between Hezbollah and Israel since the October 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel have displaced tens of thousands on both sides of the border.

Reports estimate that Hezbollah's fighters number between 40,000 and 50,000 or more. That figure includes the Radwan Force, an elite unit trained to conduct special operations. Hezbollah's arsenal of rockets, missiles, and drones is estimated at over 150,000.

Hezbollah is aligned with the ideology of Iran's government and fully backs Iranian strategic objectives. The State Department's 2022 Country Reports on Terrorism states that Iran provides Hezbollah with "most of its funding, training, weapons, and explosives, as well as political, diplomatic, monetary, and organizational aid."

Hezbollah also provides weapons and training to Houthi militants in Yemen, and Hezbollah commanders have reportedly assisted the Houthi campaign against international shipping in the Red Sea.

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A Conversation With Foreign Minister Abdallah BouHabib of Lebanon

by Abdallah BouHabib and Ayman Mohyeldin

How did Hezbollah originate?

As stated earlier, under a 1943 political agreement, political power is divided among Lebanon's predominant religious groups—a Sunni Muslim serves as prime minister, a Maronite Christian as president, and a Shiite Muslim as the speaker of Parliament. (Nothing could go wrong there!)

Tensions among these groups evolved into civil war as several factors upset the delicate balance. The Sunni population had grown with the arrival of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, while Shiites felt increasingly marginalized by the ruling Christian minority. Amid the infighting, Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in 1978 and again in 1982 to expel Palestinian guerrilla fighters that used the region as their base to attack Israel.

A group of Shiites influenced by the theocratic government in Iran—the region's major Shiite government, which came to power in 1979—took up arms against the Israeli occupation.

Seeing an opportunity to expand its influence in Arab states, Iran and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) provided funds and training to the budding militia, which adopted the name Hezbollah, meaning "The Party of God."

It earned a reputation for extremist militancy due to its frequent clashes with rival Shiite militias, such as the Amal Movement, and its attacks on foreign targets, including the 1983 suicide bombing of barracks housing

U.S. and French troops in Beirut, in which more than three hundred people died. Hezbollah became a vital asset to Iran, bridging Shiite Arab-Persian divides as Tehran established proxies throughout the Middle East.

Hezbollah bills itself as a Shiite resistance movement, and it enshrined its ideology in a 1985 manifesto that vowed to expel Western powers from Lebanon, called for the destruction of the Israeli state, and pledged allegiance to Iran's supreme leader.

It also advocated an Iran-inspired Islamist regime, but emphasized that the Lebanese people should have the freedom of self-determination.

What role has it played in Lebanese politics?

Hezbollah has been a fixture of the Lebanese government since 1992, when eight of its members were elected to Parliament, and the party has held cabinet positions since 2005. The party marked its integration into mainstream politics in 2009 with an updated manifesto that was less Islamist than its predecessor and called for "true democracy." The most recent national elections, in 2022, saw Hezbollah maintain its 13 seats in Lebanon's 128-member Parliament, though the party and its allies lost their majority.

Hezbollah essentially operates as a government in the areas under its control. It manages a vast network of social services that include infrastructure, health-care facilities, schools, and youth programs, all of which have been instrumental in garnering support for Hezbollah from Shiite and non-Shiite Lebanese alike. (Much like Hamas has done in Gaza) Even so, polling in 2024 found that "despite Hezbollah's significant influence in Lebanon, relatively few Lebanese support it."

At the same time, Hezbollah maintains its military arm. Under the 1989 Taif Agreement, which was brokered by Saudi Arabia and Syria and ended Lebanon's civil war, Hezbollah was the only militia allowed to keep its arms. Analyst and Brigadier General (Ret.) Assaf Orion, of Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, says Hezbollah possesses "a larger arsenal of artillery than most nations enjoy," and a 2018 report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies called it "the world's most heavily armed non-state actor." In June 2024, experts speculated that Hezbollah has 150,000–200,000 rockets and missiles of various ranges.

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What is Hezbollah's connection to Syria?

Hezbollah finds a loyal ally in Syria, whose army occupied most of Lebanon during Lebanon's civil war. The Syrian government remained as a peacekeeping force in Lebanon until it was driven out in the 2005 Cedar Revolution, a popular protest movement against the foreign occupation. Hezbollah had unsuccessfully pushed for Syrian forces to remain in Lebanon, and has since remained a stalwart ally of the Assad regime. In return for Tehran's and Hezbollah's support, experts say, **the Syrian government facilitates the transfer of weapons from Iran to the militia.**

Hezbollah's experience fighting in Syria has helped it become a stronger military force.

Hezbollah publicly confirmed its involvement in the Syrian Civil War in 2013, and it sent some seven thousand militants to assist Iranian and Russian forces in supporting the Syrian government against largely Sunni rebel groups.

So, there you have it folks, Hezbollah joins our previous study of middle east terrorist groups in the Middle East.

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Want to learn more about this topic or conduct your own research? We have EBSCOhost available either here at our libraries or home. You can search from fifteen different online resources that provide e-journals, e-books, newspapers, peer-reviewed articles, and more to aid your search. You can conduct a basic or advanced search or search one resource or all at once, read full-text articles, create a login, save your searches, and get help with your citations. We used the keywords Hezbollah and military to

search all of the EBSCOhost online resources we can access, and it returned 600 different articles, newspapers, and e-book choices.

If you are accessing this online resource from home, you will need to visit our website at cald.us/digital-library and click on the EBSCOhost for Home link, located under our listing of online resources from A to Z. It will ask for you to enter your library card. Please remember that this requires you to enter your number without any spaces. If you need help, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly staff with your questions.

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Speaking of tech help, Jim, did you know that the Camdenton Library offers a weekly computer class? These classes are intended for older adults who may not be familiar with computers. Each week will be a different lesson, from how to turn a computer on to learning what different buttons do to everything in between that you need to know to operate a computer. Attendees will meet in the Camdenton Library Computer Lab on Thursdays at 1 pm, allowing them to learn their lessons on our computers. Registration is required for this class and can be done by calling the Camdenton Library staff at (573) 346 – 5954.

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For those between the ages of 12 and 18 who are Taylor Swift fans, the Osage Beach Library will be celebrating the return of her Eras tour to the United States with a Swiftie Party on Thursday, October 17, from 4 to 5 pm. Attendees will make Taylor Swift-inspired bracelets, answer trivia questions, and listen to Taylor's music. Also, attendees are invited to wear Taylor-inspired outfits, but they are not a requirement. For more information, please call the Osage Beach Library at (573) 348 – 3282.

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The Camdenton Library is holding its annual Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, October 26. Teens and adults can register for this event through our Calendar of Events, which has a link to this event in the description. Once registered, participants can drop off their chili and get their station set up between 9 and 11 am on Saturday. Patrons will be the official taste testers, and the tasting will start at 11:30 am and run until 1:30. The winner will be announced at 2 pm and will receive a Chili Bean Trophy and a \$30.00 gift

card. For more information, please click the link in the description or call the Camdenon Library at (573) 346 – 5954.

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Since it is spooky season, what would a library be without at least one haunted room? The Osage Beach Library is busy listening to the ghosts and goblins at the library and is working diligently to turn their meeting room into a Haunted Meeting Room. They invite the public to visit the Haunted Meeting during their hours of operation starting October 21st. The last day to visit will be October 31st.

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Teens aged 12 to 18 are invited to register for the Ultimate Smash Tournament at the Camdenon Library on Friday, October 25, from 6 to 8 pm. During the tournament, there will be alphabetical seeding and a double elimination style, meaning we will have four players per match; the top two players from each match will advance to the next level. We will use the Library's game console and equipment for this tournament. Each round will last seven minutes. Some Smash power-ups are allowed; the ones allowed will be listed on the night of the tournament. Seating is limited; get signed up today!

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Janet Sing (J.S.) Perry, a Missouri author, will be at the Stoutland Library on Tuesday, October 29, at 5:30 pm. Janet grew up in Competition, Missouri, but spent thirty-five years in North Carolina. She graduated Cum Laude from Western Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice in 1997. In 1997, Janet retired from Gould Killian, a CPA firm in Asheville, North Carolina, freeing her to pursue her relentless research on the Civil War's impact on civilians. After twenty years of research, Janet finally wrote her novel *Coldiron*, published in August 2024.

Coldiron is the story of two Fulton, Missouri residents, Sarah and Ruth who discover the story of Samantha Coldiron and her flight from a man trying to kill her. As far as Sarah and Ruth know, a series of mishaps in a quest for life-saving salt at the end of the Civil War leads Samantha to a cache of gold that hasn't been recovered since. It is told in alternating chapters of Sarah and Ruth's breakneck journey to North Carolina in 1984 and

Samantha's harrowing flight out of North Carolina trying to escape Frank Daniels in 1864. Sarah and Ruth only have one week to get to North Carolina, find where Samantha once lived, and ask the current owner if they can look for the gold and get back to Missouri before they both lose their jobs.

Janet lives on a century-old farm with her husband, Bill, in Competition, Missouri. She is a re-enactor who loves to make her own period-piece dresses. Janet is diligently working on her next novel.

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The Osage Beach Library is looking for poets who want to share their writing with others on Wednesday, October 30, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm for their next Open Mic Poetry Night. For more information, please contact the Osage Beach Library at (573) 348 – 3282.

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Ramone from the University of Missouri Extension office will be at the Camdenton Library on Thursday, October 31, at 4 p.m. for a FREE class on hydroponics for growing leafy greens and herbs all year round. To register for this class, please call the Camdenton Library at (573) 346 – 5954.