

An analysis of the islamic group hezbollah politics essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Hezbollah literally means the ' Party of God'. The Lebanese Hezbollah has multiple translations including Hizbullah, Hezbollah, Hizballah, Hizbollah and Hizb Allah (as used by Al-Jazeera). It is also referred to as ' Islamic Jihad (Islamic Holy War)' or ' Islamic Jihad Organization'. Some call Hezbollah as Ansar al-Allah (followers of God) & ' Al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah'. There are references made as the ' Organization of the oppressed on earth', ' Revolutionary Justice Organization', ' Organization of Right against wrong', and also as the ' followers of the Prophet Muhammed'. Hezbollah's members often introduce themselves as the sons of the Umma (muslim community).

Identity:

Essentially we can call Hezbollah as a political and military organization. It was founded in 1982 to fight Israel in southern Lebanon. The group is headed by Sheik Hassan Nasrallah.

The Arab & Muslim world, (along with by some European Union countries) look at Hezbollah as a legitimate, militant, political party in Lebanon; while the Israeli government and many Western governments view it as an Islamic fundamentalist, or Islamist terrorist organization.

As it evolved, Hezbollah outgrew it's originally objectives of expelling Israel and the Americans and French from Lebanon. It diversified into various wings to establish itself as an identity of note, not only in its area of operation, but across the world.

Its military men and material supply is primarily credited to Iran who is often seen as the soul behind the face of Hezbollah.

In addition, it has a dominant civilian arm, wherein they run hospitals, schools, orphanages and even a television station. Finance largely comes by Iran and Syria, but it also raises funds itself by charities & some commercial activities.

Hezbollah has a notable representation in the Lebanese parliament. It currently holds 80 seats out of 128 in Lebanese Parliament. Prime area of operation for them is the Bekaa Valley, suburbs of Beirut, and southern Lebanon.

Lebanon has a population of app. 3 million people, out of which about 40% belong to Shia community. Hezbollah's social services programme is very popular amongst Shias. Some of its propagandas have been regarded as anti-Israeli or even anti-Semitic, but it doesn't necessarily qualify it as a terrorist organisation.

Prime areas of operation:

In Lebanon, Hezbollah operates mainly in the Al Biqa' (Bekaa Valley), along with southern suburbs of Beirut & southern Lebanon. Over a period of time, it has established centres in Europe, Africa, and South & North America etc. The training bases are mostly in Biqa Valley, while its headquarters and offices are in southern Beirut and in Ba'albek.

Culture:

Members of Hezbollah say that their culture is based on the Holy Koran, the Sunna and the legal rulings of the faqi (whom they call their source of imitation).

<https://assignbuster.com/an-analysis-of-the-islamic-group-hezbollah-politics-essay/>

Organisation's strength:

It is estimated that the organization has over ten thousand fighters and this can strength can be easily increased if and when needed from their reserves from its stronghold areas in Lebanon. To add to it, they have numerable activists and moral supporters. Their militia is equipped with small arms including automatic rifles, mortars, rocket grenades, and Katyusha rockets. Hezbollah member have been seen on television conducting military parades in Beirut which often include tanks and armoured personnel carriers (that might have been taken over from Lebanese army)

Funding:

Hezbollah's primary sources of aid are from Iran and Syria. They provide sourcing in terms of finances, weapons & training, explosives, and even political, diplomatic, and organizational aid. It is estimated that Iran probably provides annual assistance worth app. 50 million dollars. However, Hezbollah has the capability and willingness to act independently.

Families of suicide bombers are believed to be facilitated by 'The ' Martyr's Charity' (Bonyad-e Shahid). In 2001, Paraguayan police raided the home of Hezbollah operative Sobhi Mahmoud Fayad and found receipts from the Martyr's Organization totalling more than three million dollars for donations Fayad sent, though the authorities believed he had sent over fifty million dollars to Hezbollah since 1995.

Hezbollah operates a worldwide network of fundraisers. In addition, funds are also raised by 'charity funds.' These funds are donated by some extremist

Islamic institutions while are not directly connected to Hizballah. While these funds pay for its military and terrorist operations, other funds enable them to provide its members with day jobs.

History:

Hezbollah had a long gestation period from its incorporation in 1982 to 1985. It was marked by 3 key events: (1) Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon from and its Invasion in 1982 (2) Iranian revolution's effects on the Arab's political scenario. (3) Affirmation of the Shiite communities in 1960s & 70s.

Israel repeatedly invaded Lebanon since 1973. In 1982, it occupied southern Lebanon up to the capital Beirut, killings thousands. It was against the background of this brutal invasion, coupled with the arrival of foreign forces, namely, America, France & Italy that Hezbollah came into picture. Its goal was simply to remove the foreigners and popularise the Islamic movement in Lebanon.

If the group was not necessarily conceived by Iran, it was surely was aided in its inception by arrival of over 1000 'revolutionary guards' from Iran.

Hezbollah cells establishing its base in Lebanon in 1982 and expanded & strengthened ever since. It developed a count of about four thousand members, equipped with over eleven thousand rockets, anti-tank weapons and heavy mortars. They also established a network of social assistance, mosques and schools in southern Lebanon.

During mid eighties, they launched a flurry of suicide bombings including an attack on the America's embassy and marine base in Beirut. Members of the <https://assignbuster.com/an-anlysis-of-the-islamic-group-hezbollah-politics-essay/>

organisation were often responsible for kidnapping and detention of hostages in Lebanon.

It gained a name for its hit & run tactics. It also was particular in kidnapping of Israeli military personnel. Although, there have been accusations of carrying out attacks on civilian targets abroad, no evidence has confirmed the claims.

Amongst the muslim community, Hezbollah soon received acclaim and creditability. So much so that it replaced the other prominent organization in Lebanon, namely Amal, as the dominant force. Over the years, their military operations grew to include attacking outposts, ambushing, laying explosive devices, and launching long range mortar shells and rockets at outposts.

Israel eventually withdrew from Lebanon in the month of May 2000.

Hezbollah made claims that a portion of land comprising of shebaa farms, golan heights and other places which lie on the Israeli side of the border were belonged to Lebanese. Though UN dismissed their claims, Hezbollah continued terror attacks on Israeli towns in order to liberate these lands and to free prisoners held by Israel. Later, they exchanged the bodies of 3 Israel's kidnapped soldiers in return their prisoners.

Since Israel's withdrawal, the organisation's focus shifted to increase and expand its activities within Israel with the objective of conducting attacks in Israel's own territory, hence spoiling any attempt at talks or opportunity to return.

Hezbollah has eventually stabilised the border, excluding the areas around the Shebaa Farms, which are still occupied by Israel.

OBJECTIVES

Hezbollah says that freedom, justice, peace and people's rights are the values on which a society develops & rises. Freedom, they say, is the key element for the rise; while rights lead to justice and it ultimately results in peace.

Adoption & practice of these values demand commitment and focus on all as they are all universal: freedom is not what is available to one group and denied to another, rights should be prevalent everywhere; limited justice is injustice; peace by nature has to be for all.

The organisation believes divine religions are responsible for establishment of these values. They specifically credit Islam, declaring it clearest and most comprehensive be it in theory or practical concepts.

It is an organisation based on striving current that has been based its struggle to achieve these values in Lebanon region while eliminating all those barriers that may obstruct their goal.

Keeping in view its values of peace, Hezbollah says it rejects all forms of aggression and terrorism. They condemn world's outlook to certain instances as accepted violence and terrorism while rejecting the counter-violence, which, they say, is a natural human reaction to violence and terrorism.

Sheik Ibrahim al-Amin, the leader of Hezbollah issued their manifesto on 16th Feb 1985; it was titled ' An Open Letter: The Hezbollah Program'.

The manifesto identified the following three primary objectives of Hezbollah:

To put an end to colonialist entities in Lebanon by expelling Americans, French and their allies from their land.

To submit the Phalanges to a just power and bring them all to justice for the crimes they have perpetrated against Muslims and Christians.

To allow all their people to choose their own future and have a government of choice. The organisation encouraged people to incorporate Islam which guarantees justice & liberty for all. They said that only an Islamic regime could stop attempts of infiltration on the country.

They call all oppressed people across the world as their friends. Ones who fight their enemies & defend them from their evil are its friends. They called out for their ' friends' to overlook their different viewpoints on the methods of struggle, and on the levels on which it must be carried out, and asked them to consolidate cooperation in view of the grand purpose.

Hezbollah has always had an underlying objective of spreading the message of Islam. They want all the oppressed to study the divine message in order to bring justice & peace into the world. However, they claim that they don't want to impose Islam upon anybody. ' We don't want Islam to reign in Lebanon by force' is the message.

Their opposition to the then existing system is worked on two major grounds

(a) They believed that no reform or modification could remedy the present regime and it demanded radical change, and (2) Hostility of the world imperialism to Islam needed correction.

Another objective that Hezbollah had in their agenda was to make an impression on the minds of high percentage Christian population in the country. They advocated that the politics followed by the political chiefs through the Lebanese front and the Lebanese forces didn't guarantee peace and tranquillity to the Christians of Lebanon and it also proved that outside help was of no use to the Christians of Lebanon when they need it most. They insisted that the Christians should answer the appeal from heaven and have recourse to reason instead of arms, to persuasion instead of confessionalism. Hezbollah asked the Christians to tolerate that Muslims shared with them certain domains of government saying that ' if you search for justice, who is more just than Allah?'. They said that it is Allah who sent the message of Islam through his successive prophets in order to judge the people and give everyone his rights. The organisation made it clear that it doesn't we anticipate vengeance against Christians and that their fears were unjustified.

They called upon the Christians to embrace Islam so that they shall be happy in this world and the next; and asked them to open themselves up to Islam where they will find salvation and happiness upon earth and in the hereafter.

Hezbollah has had rejection for both the USSR and the US, calling them both capitalist and communist, and rendering them incapable of laying the

foundations for a just society. Similar were the rejections against UNIFIL calling them as messengers of world arrogance to occupy areas evacuated by Israel and serve as a buffer zone.

Hezbollah repeatedly stressed on the necessity for the destruction of Israel. They saw in Israel the vanguard of the US in their Islamic world. They called them the hated enemy that must be fought until the hated ones got what they deserved. They saw it as the greatest danger to their future generations and to the destiny of their lands. The organisation's primary assumption in their fight against Israel states was that the Zionist entity has been aggressive since its inception, and built on lands wrested from owners at the expense of the rights of the Muslim people. Hence, they said that their struggle will end only when this entity is obliterated. Hezbollah made it clear that they intend no treaty or cease fire or peace agreements, whether separate or consolidated. They vigorously condemned all plans for negotiation with Israel, and regarded all negotiators as enemies. Therefore they rejected all programs that included the recognition, direct or implied, of the Zionist entity.

Hezbollah functioned against Israel in four main ways: (a) They brought terrorists and collaborators across the border with use of foreign documents (b) They set up a terrorist organization inside Israel and in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip (c) Promoted cross border operations like smuggling of weapons and terrorists (d) Worked on financial support for Palestinian organizations and groups.

In conclusion of their objectives and conceptions Hezbollah says that ' these objectives serve as basis and inspire their march and ones who accept them should know that all rights belong to Allah and those who reject them, Hezbollah will be patient with them, till Allah decides between its followers and the people of injustice.'

HEZBOLLAH - AN ISLAMIST ORGANISATION

Critics across the world claim that the real reason why Hezbollah was set up was to spread the Iranian Islamic revolution into Lebanon and throughout the Arab world. Since Israeli withdrawal, organisation has continued to fight the Israeli defense forces (through its active fighting force known as the Islamic Resistance) around the disputed, Shebaa farms area. UN has regarded Shebaa farms as Syrian territory. Hezbollah still considers the area a part of Lebanon and continues to fight for it. The Shebaa farms were overtaken by Israel from Syria during the 1967 war. Syria was asked to notify the United Nations that it considered the area to be part of Lebanon but no official statement was ever sent. As a result, most of the specialists believe that Hezbollah's attempt to recapture the area was a pretext (backed by Syria) of keeping military pressure on Israel.

Hezbollah's dedication has been on liberation of Jerusalem, along with the elimination of Israel. It has openly advocated the establishment of Islamic rule in Lebanon. They are dedicated to creation of Iranian style Islamic republic in Lebanon and removal of all non-Islamic influences from area. Its approach has been strongly anti-Western and anti-Israeli.

Hezbollah considers the Iranian model as best form of governance. It finds an Islamic republic as the ideal and eventual form of state and enjoys co-operation of other militant Islamic organizations in pursuit this goal.

Islamic Revolution in Iran, that promoted the inception of Hezbollah, consolidated new Islamic thoughts. It generalized Islamic expressions against the West, labelling them as arrogant, hypocrites and the oppressed. Hence, it was obvious for these ideologies in Iran to find place in Lebanon. It was very quickly translated into direct support from the Islamic Republic of Iran through its revolutionary guards and then to Hezbollah that was fighting the Israeli occupation. This religious and ideological tie had a great effect on generating vital material and moral support to Hezbollah. The group ideological virtues saw no legitimacy in existence of Israel; the conflict of legitimacy which was actually based on religious ideals. The seed of resistance is embedded in the ideologies of the group

The US Policy makers see ‘ the party of God’ as the manifestation of the Islamist phenomenon. Understandably too, as Hezbollah has positioned itself as an opponent of U. S. policy in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon. It has been involved in various notorious incidents like attack on the marine barracks in killing over two hundred marines, the kidnapping of US citizens, and bombing of the embassy. It had a declared goal of removing the Americans (diplomats and otherwise) from Lebanon.

Some observers think that Hezbollah has had little real support in the general population (even among the Lebanese Shii Muslims). Variations on these views can be often heard and read, especially by those whose

conclusions are based on conjecture rather than field work. Reality, though, seems very different, especially when you consider the level of popular support that the organisation enjoys.

There is always a temptation to dismiss Hezbollah as an extremist or terrorist group. But one can't deny the fact that the organisation has managed to build an extremely impressive social base in Lebanon. It is probably the most effective and efficient political party in the country. Across the areas of its significant presence, especially the suburbs of Beirut, the northern Beqaa valley, Baalbek, and in parts of southern Lebanon, Hezbollah provides a gamut of services.

The medical facilities offered are much superior to the ones provided by government hospitals, which the poor would otherwise have to rely upon. Doctors working in their hospitals say that medical facilities are available to and are used by both Muslims and Christians.

In addition, the group offers a network of schools, community centres; companies and facilities like food distribution centers for the needy.

Hezbollah runs its own engineering and construction company, and has been lending material support and expertise to ones whose homes have been destroyed by Israeli attacks or during clashes within Lebanon. Regular pensions and other assistance are provided to families of martyred members of the party.

What these examples reflect is that the party works on two complementary aspects. It has focus on the militant pursuit of its objectives, while

simultaneously working extremely hard to build and sustain a political constituency.

Last few years has seen a trend of increasing cooperation between Hezbollah and operational entities on other Palestinian terrorist organizations. This is particularly evident between Hezbollah and the Tanzim. In fact, in recent months Hezbollah has served as an ‘ external command’ for the Tanzim organizations in the territories.

They have been enough instances for Hezbollah supporters to draw references from; for example the French resistance against the Nazis, resistance of the Americans against the colonialists etc. We know how the free world countries and the people across the world have respect for these resistances. Therefore, when Hezbollah resisted in Lebanon, it should be seen as its legitimate and sacred right, similar to that was once exercised by the French and American peoples. Considering their resistance as “ terrorism” maybe is a kind of injustice, discrimination, besides being a renunciation of the Bill of Human rights and the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, the organisation calls on the peoples of the world to differentiate between aggression of terrorism, and the honest resistance that they believe was the only way to deter the aggression and confront the terrorism resulting from that aggression. They claimed that Israel was an aggressive entity which practiced terrorism as occupation is a form of terrorism.

The group advocates that it is legitimate in war to attack soldiers and shouldn’t be labelled as terrorism. They say resistance of occupation is not

terrorism because the occupiers are normally armed combatants. Hence, it defies the definitions of terrorism which only applies to ' non-combatants' or to those ' not taking an active role part in hostilities.' It is therefore not illegal to use force in resisting an occupier, provided that civilians are not made the specific object of attack.

The group adheres to the creed of the Muhammadan Islam and human values emanating from it. They say that this observance is derived from ideological conviction based on proofs and evidences and not from emotional liking or sectarian, denominational or racial group spirit. Therefore, they are always ready to exchange dialogues with others about their convictions, creeds, methods and positions. They do not impose their convictions on anyone, as they do not like anyone to do so, proposing a mutual understanding with others.

Hezbollah claims that it is its religious duty to consider, as its religious task, serve human beings, protect their rights, maintain their interest, make all needed efforts to provide them with a dignified life and develop their society. Keeping in view their desire to focus on fulfilling their duties toward that human being, the organisation has efficiently contributed in providing humanitarian services to the citizens in various areas of the country without discriminating one citizen from another, or one sect from another.

They have made contributions in many domains; some of them being restoration of damaged buildings, providing farming guidance, selling utilities for the least cost prices (sometimes even for free), providing primary and intermediate schooling, offering the needy students with scholarships to

continue their college schooling plus giving them scientific orientation, securing fresh water to the areas where the public water network fail to reach etc.

Probably, the most important contribution was that Hezbollah sacrificed its own blood and lives, in order to maintain is the right of the Lebanese human beings in their land and in determining the political system they desire.

Hezbollah's inception resulted in immediate formation of the Islamic resistance units for the liberation of the occupied territories and for the expulsion of the aggressive Israelis. Besides its core objective of freedom, the group has always been equally concerned about the presentation of Islam which addresses the mind, and reasons. They have been focused on presenting Islam that is confident of its fundamentals – it's very civilized understanding of men, life and the universe.

They have made efforts to show Islam as being self-assured about its capability to achieve the basis of right and justice. They were anxious to present Islam as the religion that is open hearted towards all the nations and their varied political and cultural trends along their numerous experiences. It wants Islam to be seen as the guardian for human rights – the one who defines choices, adopts convictions and expresses them socially.

They decided to form political pressure in social benefits announced in the Bill of Human Rights such as education, pedagogy, medical case etc. There has been evident anxiousness to prioritize their cultural projects which utilize persuasiveness & polarization by the civilized and the human methods

confirmed by the Bill of the Human Rights. The group has been keen to offer <https://assignbuster.com/an-analysis-of-the-islamic-group-hezbollah-politics-essay/>

a model of systematically targeting the enemy which represents a challenge / threat to the existence of the entire nation along with its regimes and people.

Hezbollah members say that they condemn the conflict that doesn't serve the main aim, of fighting the enemy, or one which could create discord at the front, that has to be unified around the common interests.

They have tried time and again to make it clear that the kind of Islam they want is a civilized endeavour that rejects injustice, humiliation, slavery, subjugation, colonism and blackmail, while stretching out its arms for communication among nations on the basis of mutual respect; Islam as the religion which never accepts controls or delegations by others, simply for the sake of manipulating the rights and the interests of the nation. They say they promote the religion that recommends communication among civilizations and rejects collision amongst those civilizations. An Islam that believes in cultural communication among nations, and refuses setting up barriers and also sees it as its right to remove those barriers by the diplomatic means is what Hezbollah advocates. But they say, when others launch wars against it, they believe it is their natural right to defend its representing supporters and their achievements.

Hezbollah wants people to see Islam as a message that aims at establishing justice, security, peace and rights for all people irrespective of the nation, race or religion they belong. They say that they don't have any complex toward anybody, but they feel it's their responsibility toward others - to

make others understand the essence of their religion away from obligation and fanaticism.

It doesn't seek application of Islam by force or violence but by peaceful political action. They insist that Islam rejects violence as a mean to gain Power, and this formula should be adopted by the non-islamists as well. They say if Islam becomes the choice of the majority then they will apply it; else, they will continue to coexist and discuss till correct beliefs are reached