**Introduction**

A draft order was laid in Parliament on 25 February and it will proscribe Hezbollah in its entirety — rather than just its military wing — as a terrorist organisation, which will bring the UK into line with the US, Canada, Israel and the Arab League. The order will make it a criminal offence to be a member, or invite support for Hezbollah, and will carry a sentence of up to 10 years’ imprisonment.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt emphasised that the UK Government remains ‘staunch supporters of a stable and prosperous Lebanon’ and the decision ‘does not change our ongoing commitment to Lebanon, with whom we have a broad and strong relationship.’ However, he argued that ‘by proscribing Hezbollah in all its forms, the government is sending a clear signal that its destabilising activities in the region are totally unacceptable and detrimental to the UK’s national security.’

Hezbollah leaders have historically made clear that the organisation has a unified leadership structure and that there is no distinction between its military and political wings. But the UK and EU had maintained the fiction of a separate political and military wing, deciding not to ban the political wing in counter-terrorism legislation. In March 2008, after Hezbollah was involved in operations targeting British forces and civilians in Iraq, the UK added Hezbollah’s military wing to the list of proscribed terrorist organisations as set out in the Terrorism Act 2000. Speaking to the House of Commons, then Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that the British Government would “continue to call on Hezbollah to end its status as an armed group, to participate in the Lebanese democratic process, and to do so on the same terms as other political parties” but argued that “Proscription will not affect Hezbollah’s legitimate political and social wings.”

Some MPs have argued that proscribing Hezbollah in its entirety could destabilise Lebanon or preclude UK contact with Hezbollah politicians and thus, by extension, the government of Lebanon. The UK currently provides training and financial support to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the DfID’s 2018/9 budget is set to allocate £100m to Lebanon.

This BICOM briefing describes the history of Hezbollah, its ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war fighting for the regime of President Bashar Assad, its regional policies, and its terrorist and criminal activities in Europe and the UK. It also analyses the practical significance of the whole organisation being proscribed as a terrorist group.

**Hezbollah as a movement and militia in Lebanon**

Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based organisation formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. According to Matthew Levitt, research fellow at the Washington Institute, Hezbollah cannot be truly understood without an appreciation of its political, social and military activities in Lebanon. Levitt argues that the organisation has multiple identities which include: a social and religious movement, with an ideological affinity to Iran’s revolutionery doctrine of velayat-e faqih; a pan-Shia movement that has advocated the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon; an Iranian proxy group that constitutes Lebanon’s largest militia; and a global criminal and terrorist organisation.

Hezbollah is a key political actor within Lebanon, leading the pro-Syrian March 8 faction, which also includes the Shiite Amal party and the Christian-aligned Free Patriotic Movement. In October 2016, the Lebanese government elected Hezbollah political ally Michel Aoun as President and in May 2018 Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 of Lebanon’s 128 parliamentary seats in the country’s first parliamentary elections since 2009, which gave Hezbollah de facto veto power in the formation of the next government. Hezbollah-affiliated groups now hold two ministries and a ministry of state, with Ali Hassan Khalil and Gebran Bassil remaining in their posts as finance and foreign ministers and Jamil Jabak appointed Minister of Health, which has one of the country’s largest budgets. Analysts view Jabak’s appointment as signalling Hezbollah’s determination to exercise more direct influence over the government and a greater involvement in public services. In 2005, a UN tribunal charged Hezbollah members with terrorism, its ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war fighting for the regime of President Bashar Assad, its regional policies, and its terrorist and criminal activities in Europe and the UK. It also analyses the practical significance of the whole organisation being proscribed as a terrorist group.

Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based organisation formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. According to Matthew Levitt, research fellow at the Washington Institute, Hezbollah cannot be truly understood without an appreciation of its political, social and military activities in Lebanon. Levitt argues that the organisation has multiple identities which include: a social and religious movement, with an ideological affinity to Iran’s revolutionery doctrine of velayat-e faqih; a pan-Shia movement that has advocated the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon; an Iranian proxy group that constitutes Lebanon’s largest militia; and a global criminal and terrorist organisation.

Hezbollah is a key political actor within Lebanon, leading the pro-Syrian March 8 faction, which also includes the Shiite Amal party and the Christian-aligned Free Patriotic Movement. In October 2016, the Lebanese government elected Hezbollah political ally Michel Aoun as President and in May 2018 Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 of Lebanon’s 128 parliamentary seats in the country’s first parliamentary elections since 2009, which gave Hezbollah de facto veto power in the formation of the next government. Hezbollah-affiliated groups now hold two ministries and a ministry of state, with Ali Hassan Khalil and Gebran Bassil remaining in their posts as finance and foreign ministers and Jamil Jabak appointed Minister of Health, which has one of the country’s largest budgets. Analysts view Jabak’s appointment as signalling Hezbollah’s determination to exercise more direct influence over the government and a greater involvement in public services. In 2005, a UN tribunal charged Hezbollah members with terrorism, its ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war fighting for the regime of President Bashar Assad, its regional policies, and its terrorist and criminal activities in Europe and the UK. It also analyses the practical significance of the whole organisation being proscribed as a terrorist group.

Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based organisation formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. According to Matthew Levitt, research fellow at the Washington Institute, Hezbollah cannot be truly understood without an appreciation of its political, social and military activities in Lebanon. Levitt argues that the organisation has multiple identities which include: a social and religious movement, with an ideological affinity to Iran’s revolutionery doctrine of velayat-e faqih; a pan-Shia movement that has advocated the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon; an Iranian proxy group that constitutes Lebanon’s largest militia; and a global criminal and terrorist organisation.

Hezbollah is a key political actor within Lebanon, leading the pro-Syrian March 8 faction, which also includes the Shiite Amal party and the Christian-aligned Free Patriotic Movement. In October 2016, the Lebanese government elected Hezbollah political ally Michel Aoun as President and in May 2018 Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 of Lebanon’s 128 parliamentary seats in the country’s first parliamentary elections since 2009, which gave Hezbollah de facto veto power in the formation of the next government. Hezbollah-affiliated groups now hold two ministries and a ministry of state, with Ali Hassan Khalil and Gebran Bassil remaining in their posts as finance and foreign ministers and Jamil Jabak appointed Minister of Health, which has one of the country’s largest budgets. Analysts view Jabak’s appointment as signalling Hezbollah’s determination to exercise more direct influence over the government and a greater involvement in public services. In 2005, a UN tribunal charged Hezbollah members with terrorism, its ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war fighting for the regime of President Bashar Assad, its regional policies, and its terrorist and criminal activities in Europe and the UK. It also analyses the practical significance of the whole organisation being proscribed as a terrorist group.

Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based organisation formed in 1982 following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. According to Matthew Levitt, research fellow at the Washington Institute, Hezbollah cannot be truly understood without an appreciation of its political, social and military activities in Lebanon. Levitt argues that the organisation has multiple identities which include: a social and religious movement, with an ideological affinity to Iran’s revolutionery doctrine of velayat-e faqih; a pan-Shia movement that has advocated the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon; an Iranian proxy group that constitutes Lebanon’s largest militia; and a global criminal and terrorist organisation.

Hezbollah is a key political actor within Lebanon, leading the pro-Syrian March 8 faction, which also includes the Shiite Amal party and the Christian-aligned Free Patriotic Movement. In October 2016, the Lebanese government elected Hezbollah political ally Michel Aoun as President and in May 2018 Hezbollah and its political allies won 70 of Lebanon’s 128 parliamentary seats in the country’s first parliamentary elections since 2009, which gave Hezbollah de facto veto power in the formation of the next government. Hezbollah-affiliated groups now hold two ministries and a ministry of state, with Ali Hassan Khalil and Gebran Bassil remaining in their posts as finance and foreign ministers and Jamil Jabak appointed Minister of Health, which has one of the country’s largest budgets. Analysts view Jabak’s appointment as signalling Hezbollah’s determination to exercise more direct influence over the government and a greater involvement in public services. In 2005, a UN tribunal charged Hezbollah members with terrorism, its ongoing involvement in the Syrian civil war fighting for the regime of President Bashar Assad, its regional policies, and its terrorist and criminal activities in Europe and the UK. It also analyses the practical significance of the whole organisation being proscribed as a terrorist group.

Hezbollah first emerged in 1982 but did not coalesce into a centralised party until 1985. According to Hezbollah’s deputy Secretary-General, Naim Qassem, the 1982-5 period was foundational “for the crystallisation of a political vision, the facets of which were harmonious with faith in Islam as a solution” and for the establishment of “an effective jihad operation,” quoted in Levitt, ‘Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of the Party of God’ (Hurst, 2013). In 1985 Hezbollah announced its ideological platform.
assassinating Lebanon’s former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Hezbollah is an Iranian proxy receiving large amounts of money from the Islamic Republic. Iran played a central role in Hezbollah’s creation, sending approximately 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) advisers to train Hezbollah members in 1982. Since then, the IRGC and Hezbollah have consistently cooperated to attack Israeli and Western targets in the Middle East and around the world. IRGC Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani is now considered to be the default military commander of Hezbollah since the group failed to officially appoint a new military commander after Mustafa Badreddine was killed in 2016. In June 2018 US Treasury under-secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, Sigal Mandelker, said that Iran annually sends more than $700m to Hezbollah, three times more than been previously estimated. Mandelker also accused the Iranian regime of using shell and front companies, and forging documents to conceal its tracks to “fund terrorists, support weapons of mass destruction proliferation or exploit its own people through corruption and human rights abuses”. In 2017, the Kuwait daily al-Jarida cited an official aide to Mohammad Ali Jafari, the commander of the IRGC, who claimed Iran had established facilities for manufacturing and upgrading missiles in Lebanon and recently handed them over to Hezbollah.²

Hezbollah’s increasing military capability makes it closer to an army than a militia. Hezbollah has an estimated 120,000-150,000 rockets and missiles, including sophisticated anti-tank weapons, dozens of unmanned aerial vehicles.

² For more information on Iran and Hezbollah’s Precision Missile Project see BICOM Briefing | Hezbollah’s Precision Missile Project, http://www.bicom.org.uk/analysis/bicom-briefing-hezbollah’s-precision-missile-project/
vehicles, advanced anti-ship missiles, advanced anti-aircraft missiles, and aerial defence systems. Israeli intelligence assesses that Hezbollah is capable of firing at least 1,200 missiles at Israel per day in a future conflict, a number that the editor of the Al-Akhbar newspaper, Ibrahim al-Amin – who is reportedly close to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah – claimed was an underestimate. Hezbollah has approximately 45,000 fighters, 5,000 of whom have completed advanced training in Iran and 20,000 of whom are organised in reserve units. In comparison, the Lebanese Armed Forces have 60,000 soldiers on active duty.

The Iranian transfers and Hezbollah’s rearmament are both direct violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the Second Lebanon War in 2006 War and which mandated the ‘disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon’ and forbade ‘sales or supply of arms and related materiel to Lebanon except as authorised by its Government.’

Hezbollah is also considered to be deeply antisemitic. In his book A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad, Robert Wistrich says Hezbollah’s propaganda for holy war ‘has relied on the endless vilification of Jews as ‘enemies of mankind,’ ’conspiratorial, obstinate, and conceited’ adversaries full of ‘satanic plans’ to enslave the Arabs adding that ‘It fuses traditional Islamic anti-Judaism with Western conspiracy myths, Third Worldist anti-Zionism, and Iranian Shiite contempt for Jews as “ritually impure” and corrupt infidels’. During a speech in 1998 published on Nasrallah’s official website, Nasrallah referred to Israel as ‘the state of the grandsons of apes and pigs – the Zionist Jews’ and condemned them as ‘the murderers of the prophets’.

Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war

Hezbollah supported President Bashar Assad in the civil war because Syria is a vital strategic ally for the group, through which weapons and ammunition flow from Iran, and through which its solders travel for training in Iran. Between 2011-2017, 1,700 Hezbollah fighters have been killed and 7,000 wounded in Syria.

Intelligence agencies believe Hezbollah has 5,000 to 8,000 fighters in Syria. In the first two years of the war Hezbollah limited its contributions to a covert advisory role, training, and security for sensitive military and religious sites. As rebel forces grew stronger, Syria and Iran’s reliance on Hezbollah as a fighting force grew, turning the group from a local militia to a key player in Iran’s regional army.

Hezbollah fighters have been significantly involved in some of the civil war’s most intense battles in key strategic areas, notably in the towns of Salma in Latakia, Sheikh Miskeen in Daraa, Nubl and Zahraa in Aleppo, and Deir az-Zour. According to an official from the Syrian military, Hezbollah’s decision to send thousands of its fighters to Aleppo and to thwart a series of suicide attacks was essential for the regime’s victory there. During the Battle of Martyr Abu Omar Saraqib, a failed rebel offensive in late October 2016 to break the siege of east Aleppo, Hezbollah and regime forces recaptured areas as well as adjacent rebel positions. Somewhere between 28 and 35 Hezbollah fighters died in the battle, out of a total 143 pro-regime fighters killed.

Hundreds of Hezbollah fighters participated in the Assad army’s killing of more than 1,000 civilians in the Ghouta district in the eastern suburbs of Damascus. According to reports, 3,000 Hezbollah fighters were sent to the al-Makr base in the Damascus suburbs following orders from Major-General Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force. It was reported that 100 Hezbollah fighters died in clashes with rebels in the area.

Hezbollah played a key role in the six-month siege of two majority-Sunni villages of Zabadani and Madaya in July 2015. After capturing the towns, Hezbollah and regime forces took control of checkpoints and subjected the residents to starvation, and constant rocket and sniper fire. According to Doctors Without Borders, at

---

4 The Axis of Evil: Iran, Hizballah, And The Palestinian Terror. Dr Shaul Shay, former deputy head of the National Security Council of Israel

6 Russia is Learning About Hezbollah, Alexander Corbeil, Carnegie, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/67651
7 Hezbollah forces participating in Ghouta massacre, Ynet, March 12 2018, https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5159205,00.html

Hezbollah fighters played a leading role in securing the Syrian-Iraqi border. According to a Hezbollah commander, more than 8,000 Hezbollah fighters were involved in recapturing over 70 per cent of land lost by the regime in eastern Syria, and the group has also participated in the battles for key strategic towns such as Mayadin, Bukamal, and Al Bu Kamal city in eastern Deir Ez-Zor province, which was managed by an Iranian-led joint operations room under the control of IRGC Quds Force commander Soleimani\footnote{All eyes are on Hezbollah in Syria’s Deir ez-Zor, Mona Alami, Al-Monitor, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/syria-war-hezbollah-lebanon-deir-es-zor-regime-isbattles.html}. These victories enabled Iran to open a land corridor to the Mediterranean and Lebanon through Syria and Iraq. Hezbollah was also intimately involved in establishing communication lines and logistics routes between fighters on different fronts.\footnote{In addition to its offensive strategy, Hezbollah has financed and trained local Shiite militia groups. According to researcher Aymen Jawad Tamimi, these local militias include Quwat Rhida, the National Ideological Resistance (NIR), Liwaa al-Imam al-Mahdi, and Junud Mahdi. Tamimi believes that Quwat al-Ridha is the core group for Hezbollah in Syria and seems to be operating under Hezbollah Supreme Leader Nasrallah. See http://www.aymennjawad.org/17665/quwat-al-ridha-syrian-hezbollah}

Hezbollah has used the civil war to build a new strategic base in the Syrian Golan Heights

---

\footnote{The attacks on the US Embassy in Beirut on 18 April 1983 and US marine barracks on 23 October 1983 were orchestrated by Imad Mugniyeh, a Hezbollah commander. Originally part of Fatah’s elite fighting unit of Force 17, Mugniyeh stayed in Beirut following the Palestine Liberation Organisation’s evacuation. He created Islamic Jihad [not to be confused with Palestinian Islamic Jihad] with Iran Quds Force leader Ali Akbar Mohtashamipour, which carried out the two attacks on US forces.}
which fulfils three goals: to build a platform for attacks against Israel; to prevent the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) flanking Hezbollah defences in southern Lebanon during a war; and to shield against a possible thrust by rebel forces from the southwest in a strategic approach toward the Syrian capital.

Despite a Russian-American agreement that Iranian and Hezbollah forces would pull back from the border with Israel, as well as Russian guarantees to Israel, Hezbollah fighters are still deployed in the area. Russian forces were rebuffed in early September when they accompanied the Syrian army’s 11th Division to push Hezbollah forces out of their position in the border town of al-Qusayr, which the group recaptured from rebel forces in April 2013.

Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian civil war has provided it with sophisticated military experience. The group's military cooperation with Russia and the Syrian regime has given it experience in simultaneously commanding artillery groups, tactical units and intelligence units for key battles; improved its drone capability as well as the lethality and targeting of short-range missiles; improved its command-and-control architecture, and helped it learn how to fuse intelligence sources to generate more targets and maintain logistical support in battle.

Hezbollah actions in the UK and Europe

Since 1982 Hezbollah has built an extensive, $1bn-a-year global network that relies on operatives and supporters predominately from the Lebanese Shia diaspora communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Hezbollah targeted Western interests in Lebanon, Europe and South America through embassy bombings, hijackings and kidnappings.

Hezbollah was among the first groups to exploit the potential of hostage videos. In the 1980s, in order to influence US and Israeli decisions, Hezbollah abducted several American and British hostages, such as Terry Waite, and in some occasions filmed them being hanged. In 1995, due to Hezbollah's involvement in international terrorism, the US Treasury Department listed the group as a Specially Designated Terrorist Global Entity.

Hezbollah had extensive links to Iraqi Shia militias during the 2003-9 Coalition invasion and occupation of Iraq when 179 British soldiers were killed by Iraqi insurgents. In 2005, Hezbollah's Unit 3800 began efforts to support the operation of the Shia 'Special Groups in Iraq' and the Mahdi Army, one of the largest and most lethal groups in Iraq. According to a 2010 US Defence Intelligence Agency report, Unit 3800 and Department 9000 of the IRGC-Quds Force's Ramazan Corps were providing "the training, tactics, and technology to conduct kidnappings, small unit tactical operations, and employ sophisticated improvised explosive devices IEDs" (47 UK soldiers were killed in Iraq due to IEDs). Unit 3800 – which has also conducted training missions in Syria, Yemen and Iran – drew on expertise from Hezbollah's Unit 1800 which provides support to Hamas as well as Hezbollah's own special operations community within Lebanon. In August 2010, the Obama Administration reported that Hezbollah is "the most technically capable terrorist group in the world" which provides material, financial, and political support to "several Palestinian terrorist organisations, as well as a number of local Christian and Muslim militias in Lebanon." The UK banned Hezbollah's military wing in 2008, after its involvement in operations targeting British forces and civilians in Iraq. In May 2007, Hezbollah-trained Iraqi operatives kidnapped five British citizens in an attack on the Iraqi Ministry of Finance. One of the kidnapped was a technology consultant who was installing software to track the billions of dollars in international aid and oil revenue flowing through Iraqi government coffers that was being diverted to Iran's proxies in Iraq.

---

13 UK military deaths in Iraq, July 7 2016, BBC https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10637526
Hezbollah has also operated on UK soil. In 1987 Hezbollah played a role in the Iranian leadership’s assassination attempt of Amir Parvis, a former Iranian cabinet member and British chairman of the National Movement of the Iranian Resistance who was injured by a car bomb in London. Two years later, Mustafa Mahmoud Mazeh, tasked with assassinating Salman Rushdie, died when an explosive he was preparing detonated prematurely inside his London hotel room.

Hezbollah operatives have engaged in terrorist and criminal activities across Europe. Hezbollah carried out the 2012 attack on a tour bus in Burgas that killed five Israelis and their Bulgarian bus driver.

Most of Hezbollah’s activities in Europe are focused on money-laundering, drugs trafficking, and other criminal activity. Individuals and companies have been designated as Hezbollah terrorist entities for carrying out illicit business activity in Europe on behalf of Hezbollah. Operatives have been arrested in Lithuania and France and offices of a Hezbollah-linked charity blacklisted in Germany have been raided. In January 2016 law enforcement and judicial authorities from France, the US, Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, supported by Europol, took action against a prominent Lebanese crime group suspected of being involved in financing terrorism through Hezbollah’s military wing. The group was responsible for the laundering of profits from cocaine sales throughout Europe.

Other notable examples of criminal activity include:

- Hussein Bassam Abdallah, a dual Lebanese-Canadian citizen, was sentenced to prison in 2015 for plotting an attack in Cyprus. He was caught stockpiling 8.2 tons of ammonium nitrate, a popular chemical explosive, in ice-packs. Abdallah pleaded guilty to all eight charges against him, including participation in a terrorist group (most likely Hezbollah). According to Cypriot authorities, a French-Lebanese dual national, who was living in Atlanta, and her associate, Joseph Asmar, in Paris, were arrested in October 2015 on charges of conspiring to launder narcotics proceeds and international arms trafficking on behalf of Hezbollah. According to a DEA investigation, the pair laundered cocaine and weapons on behalf of “Hezbollah and other independent criminal groups in Iran.” According to court documents, they also offered to use “Hezbollah-connected associates” to provide security for narcotics shipments. One of these Hezbollah associates, located in the UK, laundered £30,000 to an undercover DEA agent.

- Colombia-based Hezbollah operative and British citizen Mohammad Ammar was arrested in the US in October 2016 for laundering narcotics proceeds through banks in Miami. Court documents stated that Ammar “is known for facilitating the laundering of illicit monies from or through Holland, Spain, the UK, Australia and Africa”.

- US and European law enforcement agencies uncovered Hezbollah's extensive European network as part of its worldwide drug trafficking and money laundering enterprise. In February 2016, in what was called 'Operation Cedar', authorities arrested “top leaders” of Hezbollah’s “European cell”. These included Mohamad Noureddine, who worked directly with Hezbollah's financial apparatus to transfer Hezbollah funds through his companies, as well as Noureddine's partner, Hamdi Zaher El Dine, a Hezbollah terrorist operative.

- The DEA's Project Cassandra, which was carried out with law enforcement agencies in France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium, as well as European Union agencies such as Europol and Eurojust, disrupted a “massive Hezbollah drug and money laundering scheme”. Fifteen individuals were arrested in January 2016 in raids across Europe, in which 500,000 euros, $9m worth of watches, a luxury vehicle, and several million dollars’ worth of property were....

17 Ibid.,
18 Ibid.,
The practical significance of a full proscription

Constraining Hezbollah’s ability to fundraise. Under current British law, it is a criminal offence to belong to, fundraise, and encourage support for any part of the military wing of Hezbollah. However, under the guise of its ‘political wing’ Hezbollah can raise funds for its activities in the UK, as well as potentially undermining local counter-terrorism efforts. A full proscription would significantly constrain the group’s ability to raise funds and prevent it from using UK banks to transfer money around the world.

British law enforcement agencies would have greater powers to freeze Hezbollah’s assets in the UK, including those masquerading as charities. For example, in 2017 the Charity Commission announced a probe into the relationship between the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) Trust and the organisers of the Al Quds rally.

Any expression of support for the group would be deemed a criminal offence, in the same vein as any public support for Boko Haram, al-Qaeda, ISIS or the 61 other armed groups currently listed as ‘international terrorist organisations’ under the Terrorism Act 2000.

This would close the loophole that allows Hezbollah supporters to march on the streets of London with Hezbollah flags on Al-Quds Day, a date chosen by Ayatollah Khomeini to call for Israel to be destroyed. Because the political and military wings of Hezbollah use the same flag, the current interpretation of UK legislation creates a situation whereby British Police and the Crown Prosecution Service are unwilling to classify the use of Hezbollah flags as an offence under Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

At the same time, British officials could still meet with their Lebanese counterparts. The explanatory notes to the Terrorism Act 2000 clarify that the arrangement of ‘genuinely benign’ meetings with proscribed groups are permitted. Such meetings are interpreted as those ‘at which the terrorist activities of the group are not promoted or encouraged, for example, a meeting designed to encourage a designated group to engage in a peace process.’

Neither should the proscription affect the UK’s ability to send funds to the Lebanese Armed Forces. The US, which considers Hezbollah a terrorist organisation in its entirety, has provided $1.7 billion to the LAF since 2006.


Copyright © Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre 2019

For more information please contact BCIOM:
0207 636 5500
info@bicom.org.uk