

A Guide to the 2006 Israel/Hizbollah Conflict

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Hizbollah

- Literally, *Hizb Allah*, “party of God.”
- Official flag puts a machine gun in God’s hand.
- Comprises 18% of Lebanon’s 128-seat national assembly.
- Fundamentalist Shiite terrorist¹ organization formed in Lebanon in 1982 in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution.
- In the 1980’s kidnapped Westerners in Lebanon; bombed the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983; hijacked TWA flight 847; bombed the Israeli embassy and Jewish community center in Argentina in the 1990’s.
- Originally funded primarily by Iran. Now also engaged in taxation in southern Lebanon and drug sales to raise money. (*Terror Incorporated*)
- Has Iranian-manufactured weapons. According to the IDF, Hizbollah should be assumed to have every weapon that Iran has.
- Iran has declared that it will not permit Hizbollah to be separated from its weapons.
- In violation of UN resolution 1559 that “[C]alls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.”
- “Hezbollah is a Lebanese umbrella organization of radical Islamic Shiite groups and organizations. It opposes the West, seeks to create a Muslim fundamentalist state modeled on Iran, and is a bitter foe of Israel. Hezbollah, whose name means “party of God,” is a terrorist group believed responsible for nearly 200 attacks since 1982 that have killed more than 800 people. Experts say Hezbollah is also a significant force in Lebanon’s politics and a major provider of social services, operating schools, hospitals, and agricultural services, for thousands of Lebanese Shiites. It also operates the al-Manar satellite television channel [banned in France and legally a terrorist organization in the U.S. –JMH] and broadcast station.” (CFR)
- “Hezbollah is an Islamic resistance group and political party based in Lebanon. Founded by Shia Muslims to resist Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the group’s political and military success has made it a model for other Islamic movements worldwide.” (Al Jazeera, in English)



¹ According to the U.S., Israel, U.K. and others.

Hamas

- Name means “zeal” or “destruction,” and is also an acronym for “Islamic Resistance Movement.”
- Fundamentalist Sunni terrorist¹ organization formed in Gaza as a challenge to Arafat’s Fatah movement.
- Primary force behind terrorism in Israel.
- Financed by Iran, private Saudi donations, and various money laundering schemes abroad. (*Terror Incorporated*)
- “ Hamas is the largest and most influential Palestinian militant movement. In January 2006, the group won the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) general legislative elections, defeating Fatah, the party of the PA’s president, Mahmoud Abbas, and setting the stage for a power struggle. Since attaining power, Hamas has continued its refusal to recognize the state of Israel, leading to crippling economic sanctions. Hamas maintained a cease-fire brokered in March 2005 until June 9, 2006, when it ended the truce after reports that errant Israeli shell killed several civilians on a Gaza beach. The Israeli Defense Forces later denied responsibility for the deaths. Historically, Hamas has sponsored an extensive social service network. More notoriously, the group has also operated a terrorist wing carrying out suicide bombings and attacks using mortars and short-range rockets. The group has launched attacks both in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and inside the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel.” (CFR)

World Positions

- U.S., President Bush (July 16): “ This recent flare-up helps clarify a root cause of instability in the Middle East — and that is Hizbullah and Hizbullah’s relationship with Syria, Hizbullah’s relationship to Iran, and Syria’s relationship to Iran. Therefore, in order to solve this problem it’s really important for the world to address the root cause.”
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (July 13): “ A difference should be drawn between legitimate resistance and rash adventures carried out by elements inside Lebanon and those behind them without consultation with the legitimate authority in their state or coordination with Arab countries, thus creating a gravely dangerous situation exposing all Arab countries to destruction. The Kingdom views that it is time that these elements alone bear the full responsibility of these irresponsible acts and shoulder the burden of ending the crisis they have created.” (trans. IMFA)
- France, Prime Minister Villepin (July 17): “ The President of the [French] Republic has decided to send the prime minister to Beirut today to [...] express the solidarity of the French people with the Lebanese people.” (trans. JMH)
- Israel, Prime Minister Olmert (July 17): “ Iran and Syria still continue to meddle, from afar, in the affairs of Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority, through Hizballah and the Hamas. [...] We yearn for the day when peace will prevail between us, for the mutual benefit of our peoples from both sides of our common border. [...] And in Lebanon, we will insist on compliance with the terms stipulated long ago by the international community, as unequivocally expressed only yesterday in the resolution of the 8 leading countries of the world: The return of the hostages,

¹ According to the U.S., Israel, and E.U.

Ehud (Udi) Goldwasser and Eldad Regev; A complete cease fire; Deployment of the Lebanese army in all of Southern Lebanon; Expulsion of Hizballah from the area, and fulfillment of United Nations Resolution 1559.” (trans. IMFA)

- Hizbollah, Hassan Nasrallah (7/16/2006): “Our fighters are ready and they love the confrontation.” (trans. CNN)

General History

- 1948: Israel declares independence. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq declare war on Israel.
- 1949: Armistice agreements put an end to fighting.
- 1956: Israel wages Sinai campaign to banish Egyptian fighters from the Sinai peninsula, and to open the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran to Israeli-bound ships. Israel captures the Sinai and Gaza strip.
- 1957: UN peace-keeping forces patrol the Sinai.
- 1964: Russia through Egypt creates the PLO, to be run by Yasser Arafat. PLO immediately begins terror attacks to destroy Israel.
- 1967: Egypt expels UN forces from the Sinai and re-closes the Straits of Tiran. Israel attacks Egypt and Jordan, re-annexing the Sinai and Gaza, annexing the Golan Heights, and reunifying Jerusalem. For the first time in 1,897 years Jerusalem is in Jewish hands.
- 1970: PLO expelled from Jordan. PLO moves to southern Lebanon.
- 1972: PLO orchestrates murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.
- 1973: Egypt and Syria attack Israel on Yom Kippur. (Israeli warplanes fly over the lines of battle and deep in Syria, demonstrating the near futility of tanks in the region.)
- 1974: PLO terrorists infiltrating from Lebanon take Israeli school children hostage in Ma'alot. They later murder some 20 Israelis, mostly teenage girls.
- 1975: Civil war in Lebanon. Christian militias battle pro-Palestinian militias.
- 1976: Syria invades Lebanon. Syrian forces would remain until April, 2005.
- 1977: Likud comes to power in Israel, ending Labor's reign. Menachem Begin appointed Prime Minister.
- 1977: Egypt's Anwar Sadat visits Begin in Jerusalem.
- 1979: Sadat and Begin sign a peace accord. (Sadat's parents were Nazi sympathizers and Begin's were killed in the Holocaust.)
- 1981: Sadat assassinated.
- 1982: Israel attacks PLO operations in Lebanon. Israel will keep 1,000 soldiers in its “security buffer” for 18 years, until 2000.
- 1993: Israel's Operation Accountability against Hizbollah in Lebanon.
- May 1994: PLO begin to assume control over Gaza.
- July 1994: Israel and Jordan sign a peace accord. (Israel and Jordan had a secret, sometimes informal, peace agreement much earlier.)
- 1996: Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath against Hizbollah in Lebanon.
- May 1999: Hizbollah attacks northern Israel
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- 2000: Israel leaves Lebanon.

- 2000: Hizbollah kidnaps three Israeli soldiers.
- September 2000: Beginning of renewed PLO violence against Israel (“second Intifada”).
- 2003: Israel trades 430 prisoners for the bodies of the three soldiers that Hizbollah kidnapped in 2000.
- 2005: Israel unilaterally withdraws from Gaza.
- 2006: Current crisis erupts.

Sources and Resources

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- IMFA. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.mfa.gov.il>.
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