



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)**

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Further limitations on Al-Manar broadcasts:

The Spanish government ordered the banning of Hezbollah TV station's broadcasts to Latin America via its satellite company, Hispasat.

The Spanish government ordered its satellite company, Hispasat, to cancel the contract it signed last year with the French satellite company Globosat according to which it would broadcast Al-Manar programs to Latin America. It should be noted that the contract did not include broadcasting Al-Manar in Spain (**Reuters**, June 29, 1995).



The Hispasat-broadcast Al-Manar logo

Hispasat, which broadcast Al-Manar's programs to Latin America, belongs to a privatized telecommunications organization today owned by three Spanish companies,

BBVA (a bank), Retevisión¹ and Telefonica. One of Hispasat's main shareholders is Eutelsat, a company established by the European space agency which was later privatized and registered in France. Its CEO and chairman of the board is Giuliano Berretta and its Deputy CEO and corporate director is Jean Paul Brillaud.

☑ **As in the past, the Spanish decision was denounced by Hezbollah and its sponsors, who claim that their right to freedom of expression has been infringed.**

- ❖ **The vice president of Hezbollah's political branch in Lebanon, Mahmoud Katami**, stated that banning Al-Manar's broadcasts was part of an effort to "surround" Hezbollah. He claimed that the decisions to ban Al-Manar's broadcasts in certain regions of the world were "a communications witch hunt and repression of [freedom of] opinion." He noted that Hezbollah was ready to withstand any and all pressure exerted on it, and that such pressures would not stop the organization's activity against Israel (**Radio Sawa**, July 1, 2005).
- ❖ **The Lebanese National Audiovisual Media Council which met in Beirut** criticized the recent "aggression" against Hezbollah's television station, presenting the banning as prejudicial to all Arab mass communications. In the wake of the meeting, the Council's president, '**Abd al-Hadi Mahfouz**, said that they had decided to organize a meeting between media people from Lebanon and the rest of the Arab world to formulate and adopt a common stance on the matter. He claimed that defending Al-Manar's broadcasts meant "defending all Arab channels that relay the region's problems to the West" (**Daily Star**, Lebanon, July 1, 2005).
- ❖ An article in a Syrian newspaper also attacked Hispasat's canceling of Al-Manar. It claimed that the Al-Manar affair broke the "rules of the political game" and was an example both of shutting them down through fear of the "Arab voice" and of depriving them of their liberty because they were afraid the truth would emerge. It also claimed that France was leading the campaign

¹ Retevisión is the public entity in Spain responsible for operating the public telecommunications system and the transmission of radio and television signals.

against Al-Manar and that Spain was following in its footsteps (Ali Qassem writing in the Syrian daily **Al-Thawra**, July 3, 2005).

☑ The Spanish action came after steps were taken against Al-Manar in France and the United States:

- ❖ After a decision handed down by the **French high court**, Al-Manar was removed from the Arab package of broadcasts aired in France and Europe by Eutelsat (December 15, 2004).²
- ❖ Al-Manar was designated as “a terrorism supporting organization” by the **American Department of State** on December 17, 2004.

☑ The move by the Spanish government shows that **the European effort to remove Hezbollah’s Al-Manar from their satellite broadcasts not only continues but is even gaining momentum**. It is possible that the French initiative to put the issue on the agenda at the meeting of the Council of the European Ministers of Culture on May 23, 2005 led to a greater awareness among them.

☑ According to our information, the only satellite companies which include Al-Manar in their cable TV packages are **Arab**, whose broadcasts are received in the southern parts of Europe as well as in the Arab and Muslim countries; and one called **Asiasat**, which markets Al-Manar to the Asian countries (See **Appendix**).

² For further information see our bulletin at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/ENGLISH/MARKETING%20TERRORISM/PDF/DEC7_04.PDF.

Appendix

Satellite companies which still provide their subscribers with Al-Manar:



❖ **Asiasat, which broadcasts Al-Manar to Asia.** The company is registered in Bermuda. SES Global, which is registered in Luxemburg (as are some other satellite companies), holds 34% of Asiasat's stock. Al-Manar is broadcast by **Asiasat 35 (405.5E)** as part of its **package of Arabic programs.**



❖ **Nilesat, which broadcasts Al-Manar to the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Europe.** The company is **Egyptian**; its board of directors has eleven members, five of whom are representatives of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union. Al-Manar is broadcast by **Nilesat 102 (7w)** as part of its **package of Lebanese programs.**



❖ **Arabsat, which broadcasts Al-Manar to the Middle East and North Africa; its programs are also received by some European countries.** The company belongs to **Arab League countries**, represented at company conferences by Arab Ministers of Communications. Most of the shares belong to **Saudi Arabians.**