



**Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

September 7, 2008

Hezbollah uses its summer camps to indoctrinate youngsters with radical Shi'ite Islamic ideology, which includes: terrorist culture, hatred against Israel, Hassan Nasrallah's personality cult, the glorification of Hezbollah's martyrs. The aim is to prepare the youngsters mentally for supporting Hezbollah and, in due course, for joining the organization.



Boys and girls in veils listen to a lecture of an armed and uniformed Hezbollah operative at a summer camp in south Lebanon organized by Al-Shabab, a children's organization operating in villages adjacent to the Israeli border and associated with Hezbollah (Al-Akhbar, August 21). In the summer camp, the children were indoctrinated with Hezbollah's ideology, mainly hatred against Israel.

Overview

1. **Education** is a major **component** in Hezbollah's spectrum of activities (similarly to Hamas, which also places significance on education). Hezbollah and its Iranian supporters realize that extensive "educational" activities for children and teenagers are crucial for indoctrinating the future generations of Lebanese Shi'ites with the principles of Hezbollah and the Islamic revolution in Iran. That is reflected in documents and literature seized by the IDF in the second Lebanon war.¹

2. As part of its educational activities, Hezbollah annually organizes large-scale summer camps for children and teenagers. The summer camps are attended by tens of thousands of members of the **Imam al-Mahdi Scouts**, Hezbollah's Scout movement, as well as members of other youth organizations. More than just a place for regular social and cultural activities, the summer camps are used to inculcate their participants with the values of Iranian radical Islam, nurture terrorist culture, and inspire hatred against Israel. Hassan Nasrallah's personality cult and the glorification of Hezbollah's senior terrorist martyrs (mainly the organization's leader Abbas Mussawi and its military commander Imad Mughniyah²) are also major components of the summer camps' activities.

Indoctrination of children³ according to an article in the Hezbollah-affiliated Al Akhbar

3. On August 21, 2008, the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper **Al-Akhbar** published an extensive article on the summer camp of the **Al-Shabab** organization, whose members are **children under the age of 10**. According to the article, the organization was founded in 2000 in the villages which lie near the Israeli border (called "confrontation villages" by Hezbollah). According to the article, Hezbollah ("the resistance") maintains massive presence in those villages. The organization's summer camp is held annually for the sixth year in a row.

¹ For details, see our Information Bulletin: "[Hezbollah as a case study of the battle for hearts and minds](#)" (June 2007).

² Summer camps are also used by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip as an important means for indoctrinating youngsters and preparing them for military activities. See our Information Bulletin: "[Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism. Some camps offer military training to prepare future ranks of operatives for the terrorist organizations](#)" (August 24, 2008).

³ Indoctrination is a form of education designed to inculcate a target audience with a particular doctrine, not allowing the subjects of indoctrination to critically examine what they are taught or to come to their own conclusions. Indoctrination is designed to achieve a biased result that would be in line with a predetermined worldview, unlike democratic education methods, where looking for proof and critical thinking are encouraged.

4. Al-Akhbar reporter **Amal Khalil** visited a large Hezbollah compound located in **Wadi Tair Filsay**, in southern Lebanon, south of the Litani River. The compound is located below a mountain on which gigantic photographs of Hassan Nasrallah and Imad Mughniyah are hoisted. According to the article, **4,000 teenagers** aged 14-20 come to the compound in the months of July and August. They belong to various youth organizations that are taking part in Hezbollah's activities. The compound includes a camp called **Amjad**, designated for the Al-Shabab organization. The organization's members enjoy routine camp activities (sports, entertainment, arts, etc.) and undergo Hezbollah's indoctrination, detailed by the reporter:

a. A Hezbollah operative, introduced as a resistance officer, was seen at the camp (see his image on the front page). He used to walk among the children in uniform and carrying military equipment, including an M-16 rifle on his shoulder. Described in the article as "the star of the camp", the Hezbollah operative preached to the children **"to prevent any doubt about the fact that Israel is an absolute evil and enemy."**

b. The children faced a barrage of questions from the Hezbollah operative about Israel, its ideology and its so-called "aggression". The children were required to answer the questions **as if they were taking part in a military course and having their final examination**. When the children moved uncomfortably, the Hezbollah operative did not hesitate to excite them and prepare them for watching a Hezbollah-produced film called "The Victory Generation".

c. Designed to complement Hezbollah's indoctrination of children, the movie shows Israeli children who, according to Hezbollah, train in the use of weapons from the age of five (sic!).⁴ The movie says that the training is part of the "culture of hatred and murder they [the Israeli children] absorb, in order to send gift rockets to Lebanon [during] the July 2006 aggression [i.e., the second Lebanon war]". The article says that, having watched the movie, a child should "understand the struggle for survival so that he gets his priorities straight, **and be able to carry arms when necessary**, and obtain the necessary knowledge."

5. By demonizing Israel and portraying it as the root of all evil, Hezbollah seeks to inculcate children and teenagers with hatred against Israel and to motivate them to take part in the violent struggle for its elimination. A research article of the Egyptian newspaper Ruz al-Yusuf (August 18, 2006) deals with the militias of 10-15 year olds trained by Hezbollah's Imam al-Mahdi Scouts. According to the research, the children's first lesson deals with the destruction

⁴ That false claim is a mirror image of Hezbollah's (and Palestinian terrorist organizations') common practice of dressing up young children in uniform and giving them plastic or wooden weapons. That is a means of indoctrinating them with hatred against Israel and with the culture of resistance (i.e., terrorism) from kindergarten, through elementary schools and high schools, to universities (see photograph of kindergarten children in uniform below).

of the State of Israel, in order to prepare an elite generation of Muslim children willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of Allah in the struggle against Israel.



Uniformed children wearing yellow headbands in one of the Hezbollah-affiliated kindergartens (photograph found in the second Lebanon war in the possession of Hezbollah operatives in south Lebanon)



Hezbollah's children's militias. Research by Egyptian newspaper Ruz al-Yusuf on the indoctrination of Lebanese children and teenagers (August 18, 2006)

Activities of the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts, Hezbollah's youth movement which has tens of thousands of members⁵

The Scouts swear allegiance to Hassan Nasrallah



A poster produced by the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts: a photograph of Hassan Nasrallah accompanied by the caption: "According to Al-Hussein's example, those who cry [for him] should cry".⁶ In the background, the Scouts are marching and giving Nasrallah a raised-arm salute.

⁵ The photographs that follow are taken from the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts website (August 26, 2008). For details on the organization, see our Information Bulletin: "[Hezbollah's Shi'ite youth movement, 'The Imam al-Mahdi Scouts,' has tens of thousands of members. According to captured documents, they are indoctrinated with the principles of radical Iranian Islam. That indoctrination includes the personality cult of Iranian leader 'Ali Khamenei and Hezbollah's 'battle legacy;' national Lebanese symbols are minimized](#)" (September 11, 2006).

The Scouts on a military parade⁷



Studying the Quran in summer camps⁸



⁶ Hussein bin Ali, killed in the Battle of Karbala in 681, the senior martyr revered by the Shi'ites. He is also referred to as the Imam al-Mahdi, i.e., the hidden imam, and Hezbollah's Scout movement is named after him.

⁷ Formerly, the media also published photographs of children and teenagers who were members of Hezbollah's youth organizations in uniform and with weapons. During the past year, Hezbollah has avoided publishing such photographs to prevent criticism.

⁸ Hamas also organizes summer camps in the Gaza Strip in which children memorize the Quran.

The Scouts at a ceremony on the occasion of the prisoner swap, in which terrorists' bodies were returned to Hezbollah⁹



⁹ Hezbollah frequently has the youngsters take part in the organization's activity as part of their indoctrination.