Overview

Iran, which established Hezbollah during the First Lebanon War, attached major importance to indoctrination activity among Shiite youth from Hezbollah’s inception. Iran considered this activity a principal instrument of influence for designing the future image of Shiite Islamic society in Lebanon, and as leverage for gaining an influential position in this society. This is indeed a long-term investment, which includes the establishment of educational and cultural institutions. However, the Iranians believed that without it they would not be able to realize their vision in Lebanon, and to this end, they were prepared to invest large sums of money for a period of up to several decades.

As a result of this Iranian perception and the large financial resources placed at Hezbollah’s disposal, from its inception, Hezbollah has established a large-scale educational infrastructure among the Shiite population. This infrastructure includes two educational networks operating among the Shiite population in Lebanon (kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools); a youth movement (the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts); and the “Sports Mobilization,” an institution which promotes extensive sports activity among Shiite youth. This educational activity, including its various expressions, takes place in the “state within a state” built by Hezbollah among the Shiite community in Lebanon with massive Iranian financial support.

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1 Shimon Shapira, Hezbollah between Iran and Lebanon, Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad (2000), p. 140 (Hebrew); hereinafter: Shimon Shapira.
2 See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from June 20, 2019, “Hezbollah operates networks of private schools indoctrinating the Shiite community in Lebanon with the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and with loyalty to Hezbollah and the path of terrorism”
3 See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from July11, 2019, “The Imam al-Mahdi Scouts Association: Hezbollah’s youth movement which indoctrinates youth with Iranian radical Shiite Islam and serves as a source of youngsters who join Hezbollah”
4 The ITIC is carrying out a research project analyzing Hezbollah’s civilian institutions. Seven such foundations and institutions have been examined so far as part of this project (see appendix).
One of the institutions established by Hezbollah as part of its educational infrastructure is called the “Education Mobilization.” This institution is engaged in the indoctrination of the youth, based on strengthening Shiite Islam in its Iranian version, and promoting support for Hezbollah, for Iran, and for the struggle against Israel. The objective of this indoctrination is to prepare the younger generation to join as operatives in the ranks of Hezbollah upon graduating their studies, and at the same time enhance Hezbollah’s impact among the Shiite population. For this purpose, the Education Mobilization assists Shiite students in the various educational institutions. Hezbollah’s assistance finds its expression in aid with tuition, textbooks, remedial lessons, courses in advance of the matriculation exams and university entrance exams, workshops, trips etc. The Education Mobilization activity actually complements Hezbollah’s indoctrination through its networks of private schools (the Al-Mahdi and the Al-Mustafa school networks) and through the youth movement (the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts Association).

Right: Emblem of the Education Mobilization (Radio Nour website). Hezbollah’s emblem is shown with the inscription “Education Mobilization” (top left). Left: Another emblem of the Education Mobilization, which is widespread mainly in social media (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization in Hermel). This emblem includes the following text: “Education Mobilization, knowledge and jihad.” On the left, there is a drawing of a student holding a book, while his silhouette is that of a fighter (wearing a helmet and boots). This emblem emphasizes the expectation that upon graduation, students will enlist in the ranks of Hezbollah for military activity.

►An examination of the Education Mobilization activities as published on its website shows that the main values inculcated by this institution among students are radical Shiite Islam (in its Iranian version); support for Hezbollah; support for Iran and the “Axis of Resistance”; and the values of jihad (holy war) and Shahada (self-sacrifice of a Muslim for the sake of Allah during battle against an enemy). For this purpose, the Education
Mobilization initiates a variety of events and activities in universities and among the Shiite population, mainly in southern Lebanon, which mostly take place on Shiite holidays and on Hezbollah’s anniversaries and memorial days (for example, on the anniversary of the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon). On the other hand, the analysis of the Education Mobilization activities shows that social activities or marking Lebanese national holidays are marginal in the activities promoted by the Education Mobilization among Shiite students.

Right: Hezbollah operative explaining about various types of weapons during a meeting with students and lecturers in the Al-Massar academic institute in the village of Al-Lubuwwa in the Bekaa Valley (Education Mobilization website, no date). Left: Hezbollah operative talking to high school students taking part in an educational youth camp on the Litani River bank in the village of Tair Filsay in southern Lebanon. The camp was organized by the Education Mobilization (Education Mobilization website, no date).

Apparently, the United States has not designated the Education Mobilization as a terrorist entity and has not imposed any sanctions on it, although this is a Hezbollah institution; and although Hezbollah has been designated as a terrorist and criminal organization; and although this institution is engaged in the indoctrination of youth in preparation for recruiting them to Hezbollah.

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5 The Education Mobilization does not appear in the US Department of the Treasury’s SDN website (Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List).
“Life cycle” of youth from Hezbollah’s perspective: infancy, adolescence, studies, academic 
studies, military activity, heroic death (which is indicated by a coffin with Hezbollah’s emblem). 
The poster about the “life cycle” appears along with Quran copies sent by students to the Shrine 
of Sayyida Zaynab, a holy Shiite site in Syria, in memory of the souls of “Shahids of the Holy 
Defense” (reference to Hezbollah’s shahids in the Syrian civil war) 
(Facebook page of the Education Mobilization, the Second Region [southern Lebanon, south of 
the Litani River], March 21, 2019).

Structure of the study

- The study includes the following sections:
  - Education Mobilization: overview
  - Target audiences and the values inculcated by the Education Mobilization
  - Indoctrination of students: two test cases
  - Education Mobilization activity at the Lebanese University
  - Funding sources
  - Ties with Iran
  - Replicating the Education Mobilization to other Iranian proxies in the Middle East
  - Appendix: List of the ITIC’s publications on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure

6 The ITIC wishes to thank Alma Center for providing information that assisted it in writing the current 
document.
Education Mobilization: overview

Since the inception of Hezbollah, Iran engaged in nurturing the Shiite youth in Lebanon and recruiting it to Hezbollah by the student organizations. Cultural committees and student mobilization offices were set up in Beirut’s universities and colleges. Iran took care of the students’ welfare, promoting their studies and holding conventions and conferences on a variety of topics, from Islamic thought to the armed struggle against Israel.⁷

The Education Mobilization was established under the name of the “University Student Mobilization” in 1985, three years after the establishment of Hezbollah (its name was changed afterwards). It was preceded by the “Lebanese Union of Muslim Students,” which was embraced in its entirety by Hezbollah, while adapting the Union's organizational structure to Hezbollah’s needs and objectives (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 269, February 2014). The Education Mobilization describes its objective as supporting the “resistance” (i.e., Hezbollah) by providing it with scientific skills. Another objective is the dissemination of the “culture of resistance” (i.e., supporting Hezbollah and its ideology) among students, and spreading Islam (i.e., radical Shiite Islam) (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 269, February 2014). These objectives of the Education Mobilization are attained by assistance provided to Shiite students in private as well as state schools and universities in Lebanon, with the aim of preparing them for recruitment to Hezbollah upon their graduation.

In the ITIC’s assessment, the Education Mobilization is subordinate to Hezbollah’s Executive Council, like most of the foundations of Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure. The Education Mobilization is headed by Hajj Yusuf Marei. Under him are the official in charge of academic activity (Hossein Ismail); the official in charge of youth (Hajj Nasser Ghazalah); official in charge of state education (Fadi Jouni); and the official in charge of private education (Haidar Hamid). Officials in charge of education in the various regions in Lebanon operate under the central Education Mobilization (Education Mobilization website).

⁷ Shimon Shapira, pp. 142-143.
Education Mobilization Director Hajj Yusuf Merei delivering a speech at the Education Mobilization’s annual graduation ceremony (Al-Khiyam website, December 2, 2010)

Following are the names of officials in charge of the Education Mobilization in the various regions:

- The official in charge of the Education Mobilization in Beirut is Hajj Osama Nasser al-Din. The official in charge of private universities on behalf of the Education Mobilization in Beirut is Salman Harb.

- The Education Mobilization official in the First Region in southern Lebanon is Haidar Muwassi. The Education Mobilization official in the Second Region is Hajj Safa Safa. The official in charge of universities in the Second Region is Hamza Sharaf al-Din.

- The official in the Bekaa Valley is Hajj Hossein al-Hajj Hassan. The official in the central sector of the Bekaa Valley is Hajj Ali Qassem al-Hajj Hassan.

- The official in northern Lebanon is Dr. Yahya Farahat. His deputy is Abbas Ja’far. Another official acting in this region is Atef Jawad, the Education Mobilization official in Jubeil and Kisrawan.

In addition, there are several professional institutions subordinate to the Education Mobilization. These institutions specialize in activity among the various target audiences (Baqiyatullah, issue No. 269, February 2014; Education Mobilization website):

- The Teachers Union:
  - This is a professional union of 6,000 teachers from all over Lebanon (updated to 2014). The official in charge of the Teachers Union in Lebanon is Yusuf Zalghut, and his deputy is Yusuf Bassam, who also serves at the same time as

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8 Southern Lebanon, which is Hezbollah’s main area of activity, is divided into two regions: the first is north of the Litani River, and the second is south of the river.
the official in charge of public relations in the Education Mobilization. The Union holds training sessions and professional training for teachers in various fields, such as the use of technology for instruction purposes; coping with students’ behavior problems; leisure activities such as trips and sports days for teachers.

- Besides the above, the Union is also engaged in increasing teachers’ awareness of the activity of Hezbollah and the Iranian axis (“the Axis of Resistance”) through workshops and meetings; promoting Shiite Islam and inculcating the value of Shahada (willingness for self-sacrifice for the sake of Allah) in teachers, with the purpose of having them inculcate these values in their students;

◆ **The Higher Education Association:** This is a professional association of university lecturers. The official in charge is Dr. Abdallah Zi’our. The Association holds seminars, discussions and workshops on topics of importance for Hezbollah, such as psychological warfare; the impact of technology on society; the Arab Spring; Takfir organizations (i.e., jihadi organizations) etc.

◆ **The Academic Activity Committees and the Female Student Department:** These bodies are engaged in Education Mobilization activities among university students.

◆ **The High School and Vocational School Department:** This body is engaged in Education Mobilization activity among high school students.

◆ **“Private Education Portfolio” and “State Education Portfolio:**” These bodies are engaged in Education Mobilization activity among students in Lebanon’s private and state education systems.

◆ **Youth Department, youth and university student organizations, and Youth Forum for Youth Policy:** These bodies are engaged mainly in external relations with similar bodies in other parties (such as Amal Movement’s Main Youth and Sports Bureau).

◆ **Scientific Instruction and Training Portfolio:** This body is engaged in remedial lessons for students having difficulties in their studies, and in intensive courses in preparation for the matriculation exams and the university entrance exams. In


9 The same values are also inculcated in students of the Hezbollah school network and in Hezbollah’s youth movement.
addition, this body holds workshops to help students graduating from high school choose what to study at the university.

The Education Mobilization has a main office in Beirut, apparently in the neighborhood of Sfeir, in Beirut’s southern suburb (Education Mobilization website; Jabal Amel news website, no date; Facebook page of the Education Mobilization at the Al-Rasul Al-A’zam University, August 4, 2015). In addition, there are probably also additional centers, in accordance with the Education Mobilization’s geographical distribution, for example, a center in Nabatieh (Nabatieh website, November 14, 2015). However, it seems that the overwhelming majority of Education Mobilization activities take place on campuses and at schools, while also drawing on the facilities of the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts (Education Mobilization website).

Target audiences and the values inculcated by the Education Mobilization

The Education Mobilization maintains various kinds of activities in accordance with the various target audiences. The most common types of activity are educational and cultural workshops; religious ceremonies; appreciation ceremonies for outstanding students which are related to Hezbollah and its supporters; awarding scholarships; meetings with politicians and journalists who support Hezbollah; exhibitions; sports competitions; extra classes for students who have difficulties in their studies; ceremonies at the elementary schools for girls coming of age and starting to wear a hijab (Janoubia, June 16, 2015; Education Mobilization website).

In order to examine the types of preferred activities, the target audiences, and the values inculcated in activities of the Education Mobilization, the ITIC chose a sample of 470 activities published on the official website of the Education Mobilization during 2012-2018. Following are the main findings:

- **Target audiences:** School faculty (teachers, principals) (34%); high school and vocational school students (22%); university and academic institute students (22%); elementary school students, mainly girls coming of age (10%); university and academic institute lecturers (6%), and parents of students (3%).

The address of the website is http://tarbaweya.org. Information on the various activities appears on the website without mention of date; however, a thorough examination of the contents reveals that it is related to 2012 and onward. Therefore, it seems that the same actually reflects the years 2012-2018.
Values: Education Mobilization activities incorporate the main values which Hezbollah wishes to inculcate in its supporters, activists, and operatives: promoting **Shiite Islam** in its Iranian version (54%), **Shahada** (25%), **jihad** (13%), social values such as aid to the needy (5%) and discussions on strategic issues (3%).

Main forms of activity: Lectures, workshops, courses, visits, ceremonies, trips, mainly trips to jihadi tourism sites combined with pilgrimage to holy sites\textsuperscript{11}, meetings (mostly meetings with senior politicians or with military wing operatives), contests, and exhibitions (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 269, February 2014).

Timing of the various events: Such events take place in Shiite holidays (31%), Hezbollah anniversaries (for instance, the anniversary of the IDF’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon) (20%), Lebanese national holidays (such as Mother’s Day, Teachers Day) (3%), and in many cases, without any particular reason. A special concentration of activities can be found at the beginning and end of every school year.

External relations: The Education Mobilization plays a significant role in Hezbollah’s external relations system. Delegations of the Education Mobilization participate in events of parallel bodies in other parties and also accept visits of similar delegations. Emphasis is placed on parallel Palestinian organizations and various powers in the Lebanese political system, mainly from the March 8 Alliance (Education Mobilization website).

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\textsuperscript{11} The “Resistance Society” established by Hezbollah among the Shiites in Lebanon created a system of its own “jihadi tourism.” These sites are visited by Hezbollah supporters (and sometimes by other civilians or guests), constituting yet another building block in Hezbollah’s indoctrination. Prominent such sites are museums (for example, in Malita, in southern Lebanon), parks (for example, Iran’s Garden in Maroun al-Ras, near the border with Israel), sites of important battles against Israel (for instance, the Beaufort; and in recent years, also sites in Syria, such as Al-Qusayr), graves of shahids and senior Hezbollah figures (for instance, the “shahid garden,” the cemetery in Beirut’s southern suburb where Imad Mughniyeh is buried, or the grave of Sayyid Abbas in Nabi Shit).
The results of the sample indicate that the main target audiences of the Education Mobilization are high school students, students in universities and academic institutes, and school faculties. In its activity, the Education Mobilization places special emphasis on reinforcing Shiite Islam in its Iranian version and inculcating the values of Shahada (self-sacrifice) and jihad (holy war). On the other hand, social activity (helping the needy) occupies a secondary place. Most of the events take place in Shiite holidays and in Hezbollah’s commemoration dates, while national Lebanese holidays hardly receive any attention.

Hezbollah activity among students and lecturers on behalf of the Education Mobilization

Hezbollah fighter explains on various types of weapons during a meeting with students and lecturers in the Al-Massar academic institute in the village of Al-Lubuwwa in the Bekaa Valley (Education Mobilization website, no date)

Hezbollah fighter talking with high school students at an educational youth camp on the Litani River bank in the village of Tair Filsay in southern Lebanon. The camp was organized by the Education Mobilization. According to the Education Mobilization website, the objective of the camp was “to build the human being and prepare them for life […] raise a generation of youth with values of citizenship and collective activity” (Education Mobilization website, no date)
Hezbollah fighter meets with female activists of the Education Mobilization in southern Lebanon as part of a “jihadi trip.” The trip included visits at the grave of a shahid and a Hezbollah post. During the visit, the fighter talked with them about “jihadi spirit” and the virtues of Sayyida Zaynab (the daughter of Imam Ali and Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter, revered by the Shiites) and the connection with Imam Al-Mahdi (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization, The Second Region [in southern Lebanon], May 4, 2016)

Right: Armed Hezbollah fighter talking to female student members of the Nour Club, an Education Mobilization student cell at LIU (Lebanese International University). The talk took place during a trip organized by the Education Mobilization to the village of Naqoura in southern Lebanon. Left: Senior official of the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon, Mohammad Sadeq Fadli, talking to the participants in the trip (Facebook page of the Nour Club, February 25, 2018)

Concept of jihad and Shahada as reflected from a seized booklet

During the Second Lebanon War, the IDF seized copies of a booklet entitled “Jihad” from Hezbollah operatives. Apparently, the booklet was originally intended for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and as usual, was embraced by Hezbollah and used for indoctrination purposes. The booklet was issued by the Imam Khomeini Cultural Center in Harat Hreik, in Beirut’s southern suburb, in May 2004. It dwells on jihad and Shahada, two main values inculcated in Hezbollah’s educational system and in Hezbollah’s military operatives.
The booklet includes many quotes of Iranian leader Khamenei, who considers jihad a doctrine and modus operandi through which all Muslims can sacrifice their lives for the sake of Allah and reach Paradise. The culmination of jihad is Shahada, heroic death for the sake of Allah. Jihad and Shahada are two main components in the Islamic religious worldview of Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor Khamenei (p. 12). The introduction to the booklet reads that “The Emir of the Faithful” (the title of Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb) said that “jihad is one of the gates of Paradise, opened by Allah to His adherents. This gate does not open before all people, but only before those close to Allah and His loyal adherents.” According to the first chapter of the booklet, Shahada is the aspiration of the righteous and a prize coveted by every jihad fighter. For a human being, to end his life in Shahada (i.e., as a shahid) for the sake of Allah is an honor. Moreover, as victory is the aspiration of every jihad fighter, so is Shahada.

Indoctrination of students: two test cases

An examination of the extensive activity of the Education Mobilization among students indicates that major emphasis is placed on Shiite Islam on the basis of the concept of the Islamic Revolution in Iran while glorifying the leader Khamenei (as is customary in Hezbollah’s schools and youth movement). In addition, an extensive activity takes place, whose purpose is to increase support for Hezbollah and shahids who were killed in fighting. Following are two test cases demonstrating the values inculcated by the Education Mobilization in its two main target audiences: university and high school students (Hawiyati Facebook page; Facebook page of the Education Mobilization, the Second Region (south of the Litani River)).
First test case: activity at Beirut universities in the 2018 summer semester

The activity which took place in the 2018 summer semester at the universities of Beirut was entitled “My identity – hope and resoluteness.” It was launched on July 12 with a ceremony attended by Hezbollah’s chairman of the Executive Council. The activity started on July 16 and finished on August 16. There were 38 meetings, which included discussions, lectures, and workshops on various topics, which were delivered by senior clerics and academics (Hawiyati Facebook page, July 10-11, 2018).

The main topics discussed in the universities during the summer semester included:

- Discussion of Hezbollah’s status in the Lebanese state (5% of the events)
- Women’s status (including an interview with a female member of Hezbollah’s Shura Council, Dr. Rima Fakhri) (8% of the events)
- Contents intended for the younger generation, including the relation between the younger generation and Iran (21% of the events). For example, “Pioneering youth in Imam Khamenei’s discourse;” and “Social media” (24% of the events).
- Academic skills: time management, coping with pressure, reduced-price courses in English, French, data analysis software, Internet etc. (13% of the events).
- “The Axis of Resistance,” i.e., countries and organizations led by Iran. For example, a lecture about “Saudi Arabia, from a hidden role to global terrorism” (13% of the events).
- Prominent Shiite topics, to which a great deal of time was devoted (for instance: relations between the sexes, or offenses against values by the media and commitment to religion).
Right: Death notice issued by the Education Mobilization for the shahid Mohammad Hassan Khalil, who was a second-year student of psychology at the Sidon extension of the Lebanese University’s Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (Facebook page in memory of the shahid Hussein Ali Aloush). Mohammad Khalil was killed in Syria, in the Aleppo region (2016). Left: “Plaque of Shahids of the Education Mobilization,” awarded to the shahid Hassan Ali Jafal, an Education Mobilization activist killed in Syria in the battle for Zabadani (2015). The plaque includes the following quote of Imam Ruhollah Khomeini: “Those who died as shahids will be rewarded with happiness in the world to come; Those who sacrificed their souls in the convoy of light will be rewarded with happiness in the world to come; Those who raised those jewels will be rewarded with happiness in the world to come” (Facebook).

Second test case: activity in southern Lebanon in the first half of 2019

During the first half of 2019, the Education Mobilization organized 50 events in the Second Region of southern Lebanon (the area south of the Litani River). The main target audience in these events was **high school students** (23 events); 14 events were intended for **university students** while 12 events were intended for **teachers and lecturers**. Some of the events took place on **Shiite memorial days** (for example, anniversaries of the birth and death of relatives of the Prophet Muhammad) and Lebanese Teachers Day.

Lebanese Teacher Day ceremony of the Education Mobilization in the state high school of the village of Adloun. Hezbollah flag can be seen at the ceremony (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization – the Second Region, March 16, 2019)
About half of the events were dedicated to the assimilation of Shiite Islam and included ceremonies, lectures, knowledge contests and lotteries concerning important Shiite anniversaries. Events also included social values (such as the campaign against drugs), trips, sports, and assistance in studies (in advance of graduation exams and the university entrance exams). In addition, there were activities for the assimilation of the Shahada values (self-sacrifice for the sake of Allah, willingness to become a shahid). A special event was dedicated to the value of Shahada: personal Quran books belonging to high school students were collected and sent to the Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab south of Damascus in memory of the souls of Hezbollah operatives who died as shahids defending the Shrine (“Shahids of the Holy Defense”). It should be recalled that defending the Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab was used as the preliminary justification for Hezbollah’s intervention in the civil war in Syria; over 47 Hezbollah operatives were killed at the site. 

Photos of students’ copies of The Quran which were sent to the Shrine of Sayyida Zaynab (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization, the Second Region, March 21, 2019). The photos show Quranic verses and the Al-Fatiha prayer (the opening chapter of the Quran) in memory of the souls of “Shahids of the Holy Defense” who sacrificed their lives defending Sayyida Zaynab’s Shrine. In addition, the photos feature the “life cycle” of the youth, in accordance with the model which Hezbollah seeks to inculcate in its supporters: infancy, childhood, adolescence, studies, academic studies, military activity in the ranks of Hezbollah, heroic death. To the right of the image symbolizing a fighter, there is a coffin bearing the Hezbollah emblem.

Sayyida Zaynab is the daughter of Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb and Sayyida Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, and the sister of Imams Hassan and Hussein. She gained a special status in Shiite Islam because of her role in the Battle of Karbala: she accompanied her brother Hussein to the battle, experienced all the difficulties with him, and witnessed the death of her family members. In spite of all that, after the death of her brother, she remained steadfast.
Education Mobilization activity at the Lebanese University

The Lebanese University was established in 1951. It consists of 19 faculties and 48 extensions throughout Lebanon. It has about 7,000 lecturers and about 81,000 students study there. Its annual budget is about US$250 million, most of which is intended for salaries and a small portion is allocated for operational costs (equipment, maintenance of buildings, leasing, office equipment etc.). The University's president since 2016 is Prof. Fouad Ayyoub (“The Lebanese University” in the Arab Wikipedia; Janoubia, June 17, 2019).

According to Hezbollah’s opponents, Hezbollah’s student cells in this university, particularly on the main campus in the neighborhood of Al-Laylaki-Al-Hadath in southern Beirut, are more active than student cells of other parties and also more than Hezbollah’s cells in the other higher education institutions in Lebanon. This extensive activity is due to two facts: the one is the fact that the campus is very close to Beirut’s southern suburb, Hezbollah’s stronghold, due to which in June 2015, more than half of the students on the campus were Shiite; and the second is the fact that in the ethnic division of public positions in Lebanon, the post of rector of the Lebanese University is reserved for the Shiites (Janoubia, June 16, 2015).

Following are several examples of the activity of Hezbollah’s student cells at the Lebanese University:

◆ On the anniversary of the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon (May 25) in 2015, Hezbollah flags were waved on the main campus and portraits of Hezbollah shahids were hung there (Janoubia, June 16, 2015).

◆ In December 2016, Hezbollah’s student cell in the Faculty of Engineering banned public playing of songs of famous Lebanese female singers such as Fairuz and Julia Boutros, on the pretext of “respect for others” (Janoubia, December 1, 2016; An-Nahar, December 5, 2019; DW news website, December 5, 2016; Farah News, December 6, 2016). Hezbollah reacted in a semiofficial manner on December 5, 2016. It claimed that the ban on playing songs is anchored in an agreement between the students and the faculty management. Hezbollah stated that it expected all students to adhere to these instructions; the matter was inflated in the media in order to sow disagreement (Nabil Abdel Sater’s Twitter account, December 5, 2016).
In December 2018, Hezbollah’s student cell on the main campus published an invitation on behalf of the Education Mobilization to participate in a “jihadi overnight stay” in one of Hezbollah’s camps, including target practice, an evening of Shiite songs of mourning, and a meeting with a Hezbollah fighter (Janoubia, December 22, 2018).
Certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Education Mobilization upon the completion of B.A. studies in Arabic Literature, signed by Hassan Nasrallah. The certificate does not include the name of the academic institution awarding the degree (Facebook)

The intensive activity among the Shiite students at the Lebanese University, directed by the Education Mobilization, proved effective for Hezbollah. An ITIC study examining the profile of Hezbollah fatalities in the Syrian civil war revealed that at least 15 Hezbollah operatives killed in the war in Syria had attended the Lebanese University – much more than in any other academic institution.13

Funding sources

The Education Mobilization is essentially a staff unit, without extensive infrastructure of its own. Therefore, in the ITIC’s assessment, its ongoing activity is rather inexpensive. Most of the expenses stem from the intensive activity among high school and university students, as well as among teachers and lecturers. For instance, assistance with tuition, giving textbooks, remedial lessons, preparatory courses for the matriculation exams and university entrance exams, trips, sports etc. In addition, the Education Mobilization pays the salaries of a permanent staff working on its behalf throughout Lebanon.

Based on the fact that Iran has supported Hezbollah’s educational infrastructure from its inception, it can be assumed that the expenses of the Education Mobilization are financed by Iran, at least partly. It appears that some expenses are covered by payments collected for various services and charging entrance fees for various events.

13 See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from February 21, 2019, “Estimate of Hezbollah’s fatalities during the Syrian civil war and the conclusions arising from the analysis of their identity”
Publication of Education Mobilization preparatory courses in advance of the entrance exams for the Faculty of Arts and Construction (right) and the Faculty of Public Health (left). The cost of each course is LBP 36,000 (about USD 24) (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization, the Second Region, June 11, 2019)

Show for selling stationery and school supplies in Nabatieh, organized by the Education Mobilization. The items are sold at subsidized prices. As part of the show, there is also a lending library with over 7,000 used textbooks contributed by the Education Mobilization (Education Mobilization website, no date mentioned)

Ties with Iran

Since 2013, several visits are known to have been made by Iranian delegations to Lebanon. These delegations included lecturers, university graduates and senior officials in the Iranian educational system (Education Mobilization website).

One of the visits of senior officials from the Iranian educational system was attended by the following figures from the Iranian side: Dr. Fazlollah Kajouri, director general of Cultural and Society Affairs in the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology; Dr. Hosseinali Ghabadi, director of the Research Institute for Human Sciences and Cultural Studies; Dr. Mohammad Kafi, president of the Ferdowsi University in Mashhad; Dr. Gholamhossein Khajeh, president of the Shahid Chamran University in Ahvaz; Dr. Hassan Kalateh, head of
the Scientific and International Cooperation Office at the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology; and the Iranian Cultural Attaché to Lebanon, Dr. Mohammad Mehdi Shariatmadari (Education Mobilization website).

Meeting between a delegation of senior officials of the Iranian educational system and Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization activists (Education Mobilization website)

Replicating the Education Mobilization to other Iranian proxies in the Middle East

Iran replicates entities and civilian institutions established by Hezbollah in Lebanon with proven efficient results to other countries in the Axis of Resistance (Syria, Iran, Yemen) with Shiite population. The Education Mobilization model was also replicated to other countries and is used by Iranian proxies under various names.

Following are several examples:

◆ There is an entity called Education Mobilization among the Houthi rebels in Yemen (Ansar Allah). The ITIC does not have information on the modus operandi of this entity. However, its name indicates resemblance to Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization in Lebanon.
Emblem of the Education Mobilization in the Ansar Allah militia (the Houthi rebels) (Facebook page of the Education Mobilization of Ansar Allah). The emblem includes the following Quranic verse: “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Taught man that which he knew not” (Quran, Surah 96, 5). The name “Education Mobilization” appears below.

**Iraq:**

- **Educational Department of the Shiite militia Asaib Ahl al-Haq** (literally, “Groups of the Righteous People”) **handled by Iran.** An “educational department” of the militia maintains extensive “educational” activity among various target audiences: university students, youth, and school and kindergarten students.

Right: Activity of the “Student Department” in the Asaib Ahl al-Haq militia on the anniversary of the victory over ISIS and the liberation of all of Iraq (Asaib Ahl al-Haq website, December 27, 2017)

- **The “Academic Elite Foundation,”** whose modus operandi is similar to that of Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization, is part of the Hezbollah Battalions militia.
Emblem of the “Academic Elite Foundation” operating as part of the Hezbollah Battalions militia in Iraq (Hezbollah Battalions website). It includes the motif of a fist holding a pencil (similarly to the fist holding a weapon, in the emblem of Hezbollah in Lebanon). The emblem also features a map of Iraq and a Quran, with the inscription, “Academic Elite Foundation – Development and Innovation.”

- **Syria**: Lebanese Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization sponsors Lebanese students attending Syrian universities. Thus, for example, the Education Mobilization held a summer camp for these students in the Imam Khomeini Youth and Scout Compound in southern Lebanon. The activity in the camp included lectures, sports events, and screening of an Iranian film to mark the anniversary of Imam al-Mahdi's birth (Education Mobilization website).
Appendix

The ITIC's publications on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure

The ITIC is engaged in a research project whose aim is to map and elaborate on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure. The following publications have been issued as part of this project:

- “Hezbollah launched a campaign to raise money for military purposes using the Islamic Resistance Support Association” (February 12, 2019).
- “Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation: purpose, mode of operation and funding methods” (April 11, 2019)
- “Hezbollah’s Foundation for the Wounded: purpose, modus operandi and funding methods” (May 6, 2019)
- “Hezbollah’s socioeconomic foundations: Al-Qard al-Hasan, a quasi-bank that provides interest-free loans, mainly to members of the Shiite community” (June 3, 2019)
- “Jihad al-Bina Association in Lebanon: A Hezbollah social foundation engaged in construction and social projects among the Shiite community, being a major component in Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure” (June 23, 2019)
- “The Imam al-Mahdi Scouts Association: Hezbollah’s youth movement which indoctrinates youth with Iranian radical Shiite Islam and serves as a source of youngsters who join Hezbollah” (July 11, 2019)
- “Hezbollah operates networks of private schools indoctrinating the Shiite community in Lebanon with the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and with loyalty to Hezbollah and the path of terrorism” (July 21, 2019)