



Hezbollah's Women's Organizations Unit

August 11, 2019

Overview

► **Ever since its establishment, Hezbollah has been constructing a Shiite “mini-state” among the Shiite community in Lebanon, which caters for the needs of Shiite inhabitants in all spheres of life.** For this purpose, Hezbollah, with massive Iranian support, is engaged in **establishing a civilian system, which operates alongside its military infrastructure.** This civilian system is engaged in the spheres of education, culture, health, welfare, finance, sports, construction, agriculture, media, and more.

► The social institutions which were established by Hezbollah over many years **provide Shiite residents with a wide variety of services of the sort which is usually provided by the state,** while taking advantage of the weakness of the Lebanese central government and the long-time neglect of the Shiite community (mainly in southern Lebanon). Hezbollah's extensive civilian activity **is designed to create among the Shiites in Lebanon a “resistance society” which believes in the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and is committed to supporting Hezbollah in its struggle against Israel.**¹

¹ **Sheikh Naim Qassem, Hassan Nasrallah's deputy,** described Hezbollah's social concept as follows: **“Resistance, on our part, is a social worldview with all its aspects:** military, cultural, political, and media-related resistance” (Naim Qassem, “Resistance Society: The Will of Shahada and the Creation of Victory,” Dar Al-Maaref al-Hikmiyah, 2008, p. 8).

The Women's Organizations Unit is the main institution in Hezbollah taking care of the women's sector.² The unit is subordinate to Hezbollah's Executive Council. Its purpose is to inculcate Shiite Islam and the Iranian worldview in the women and strengthen, through them, the support of Hezbollah and its hegemony in Shiite society. Hezbollah attaches special importance **to women's role in raising a younger generation imbued with Hezbollah's ideology and supporting their husbands who enlist in Hezbollah.** This is the background for the women's indoctrination in various forums (classes, courses, workshops and summer camps) where they are instructed in a variety of topics. For example: How to raise children on Hezbollah's ideology; How is it possible to function as a shahid's mother or wife; How to fulfill the role of both mother and father if the husband dies. **All this is designed to provide Hezbollah's fighters, who are considered as potential shahids, with peace of mind knowing that if they are killed in battle, their families will continue to function properly.** However, **Hezbollah refrains from recruiting women for fighting.** Instead, they mainly attend to their family duties and provide assistance to their husbands serving in the ranks of Hezbollah.



Group ceremony of girls coming of age at the Al-Mahdi schools in Mashghara, Kafr Fila and Al-Ahmadiyah. A total of 88 girls coming of age from these schools took part in the ceremony (Facebook page of the Al-Mahdi school in Mashghara, February 20-24, 2019). The girl in the middle is holding a photo of a shahid.

² The Women's Organizations – *Al-Hay'at al-Nisa'iyyah* in Arabic.



Left: Operative of Hezbollah’s military wing holding a sign that reads, “Forgive me” (asking for his mother’s forgiveness because he may not return from battle) (Facebook). Right: Operatives of the military wing comforting a shahid’s mother (Facebook)

Structure of the study

►The study includes the following sections:

- ◆ Shiite Islamic religious law foundation for the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit
- ◆ Designation, leadership and structure of the Women's Organizations Unit
- ◆ Characteristics of the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit
- ◆ Values inculcated by the Women's Organizations Unit
- ◆ Parallel women's organizations in Iranian Shiite proxies in the Arab world
- ◆ **Appendix:** The ITIC's publications on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure

Shiite Islamic religious law foundation for the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit

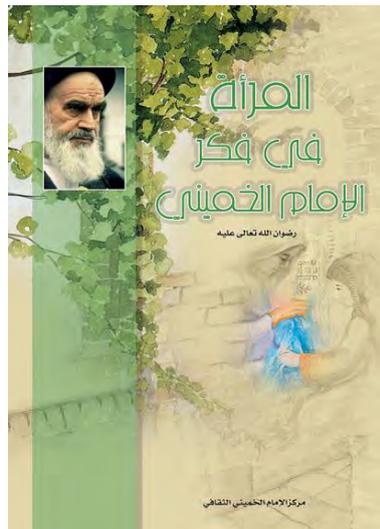
Women's status in Khomeini's teachings

► **Women's status in the Shiite Islam of the twelve Imams** is based on two historic role models: **Fatimah**, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad and wife of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib; and **Zaynab**, the daughter of Ali and Fatimah, sister of Imam Husayn. **Fatimah is a role model as a daughter, wife and mother:** as the daughter of the Prophet, after his death she took a clear stance in favor of making the Imams his successors, with her husband, Ali bin Abi Talib, as the first of them; **Zaynab is a role model as a sister:** the sister of Imam Husayn, who suffered the ordeal of the Karbala Battle with him, encouraged him and his men and also adhered to him and to his positions after his death, defying enemy rulers. They are both perceived as women who in their daily life **fulfilled their classic role** – taking care of their household duties and raising children. However, when the need arose, **they acted just as they were expected for the sake of Islam** (Naim Qassem, "Resistance Society: The Will of Shahada and the Creation of Victory," Dar al-Maaref al-Hikmiya, 2008; Arabic Wikipedia, "*Al-Khutba al-Fadakiya*"; Janoubia, May 9, 2015; Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018).

► The leader of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Imam Ruhollah Khomeini, whose teachings are inculcated in the Shiite population of Lebanon, referred at length to women's status and their various rights. According to Khomeini, **"women in the Islamic regime enjoy the same rights as men**, including the right to study, work, own property, elect and be elected [...]. **However, there are things which are forbidden for men because they lead them to corruption, and other things forbidden for women because they corrupt."** Khomeini did not forbid women to go to work, on condition that they kept Islamic religious law (Sharia): **"Women can work, but with hijab."** Khomeini even called on women to study in order to close the gap created as a result of the attitude to women until the Islamic Revolution, relying on a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad: **"Seeking knowledge is an obligation of every Muslim man and woman"** (Association of the Imam Khomeini Cultural Centers, "Women in the teachings of Imam Khomeini," Al-Maaref Association, August 2015).

► As for the role of women in society, Khomeini called on them **to take part in the construction of society through proper education of their children:** "You, women, won the honor of being mothers, and with this honor you are preferred than men. The child's first

school is the mother's lap. **A worthy mother will raise a worthy child; If a mother is unworthy, heaven forbid, she will raise an unworthy child.**" In addition, **Khomeini called on women to take active part in social and political activity**, in a way that will preserve the society in which they are living. As far as women's participation in jihad is concerned, Khomeini believes that **"jihad is not an obligation for women, but defense is an obligation of every individual according to their abilities."** Furthermore, Khomeini believes that **women have an important role in supporting the operatives fighting at the front, for example, by treating the wounded** (Baqiyatullah, Issue No. 120, 2002).



Cover of the book "Women in the Teachings of Imam Khomeini," Al-Maaref Association, August 2015 (website of the Al-Maaref Association)

Women's roles in Hezbollah according to Sheikh Naim Qassem

► Deputy Secretary-General of Hezbollah Sheikh Naim Qassem devoted a chapter of his book "Resistance Society" (2008) to discussing women's status and their roles as part of Hezbollah's activity. Sheikh Naim Qassem describes women's role in several areas: **indirect assistance to jihad fighters in their military activity** (giving shelter, supply, conveying information etc.); **restraint when receiving news of the death of a son, brother or husband, so as not to cause fighters to hesitate before leaving for battle** (i.e., raising the morale of the "resistance society"); **taking political positions in accordance with Hezbollah's worldview** while following news and events concerning the "resistance movements"; **coping with psychological warfare** and contradicting messages spread by the enemy; **complementing the activity of Hezbollah fighters and creating a whole "resistance society,"** all of which – not only its military activity – poses a challenge for

the enemy (Naim Qassem, “Resistance Society: The Will of Shahada and the Creation of Victory,” Dar Al-Maaref al-Hikmiya, 2008, pp. 61-70).



Right: Women's Organizations from Nabatieh during a planting project on the border between Israel and Lebanon (website of the municipality of Nabatieh Fawqa, August 21, 2017). Left: Food package sent by the Women's Organizations in collaboration with the Islamic Resistance Support Association (IRSA) to Hezbollah fighters who were fighting on the ridges of the Syrian-Lebanese border in the summer of 2017. The attached note reads, “To those who made us stand tall, to the keepers of honor and refusal, the loyal soldiers of the Imam of the current generation.” Signed: “Women's Organizations, the South, the First Region” (Facebook)

► On the other hand, Sheikh Naim Qassem believes, based on Imam Khomeini, **that it is not necessary for women to participate in combat missions in the ranks of Hezbollah**. In his book “Resistance Society,” the sheikh notes **three reasons for that**: Shiite religious law does not impose on women the obligation to fight; women should be protected from enemy’s harm; and there is no need for women to fight (there are enough men occupy fighting positions).

Designation, leadership and structure of the Women's Organizations Unit

Purpose of the Women's Organizations Unit

► **The declared purpose** behind the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit in Hezbollah is “**to disseminate Islamic culture (i.e., of Shiite Islam) in accordance with Imam Khomeini’s teachings**” (Baqiyatullah, Issue No. 120, 2002). Another important role of the Women's Organizations is **to constantly sense** the (Shiite) society in which Hezbollah is operating, **bringing to the surface issues because of which the public is preoccupied**. In addition, the Women's Organizations Unit is engaged in **encouraging enlistment in Hezbollah**. Furthermore, the Women's Organizations Unit **plays a role in the external**

relations with other women's organizations³ (Ya Sour website, January 2018; Saksakiyah's website, March 23, 2018; Sayda.net, May 15, 2018). The Women's Organizations Unit makes a point of mentioning that **its activity is voluntary** (Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018). However, in practice, cases were found where **prizes were raffled off or financial grants** (albeit for token amounts) **were given** to women who took part in the activities (Facebook pages "Women's Organizations – Baflay," "Because you are a basil plant," "Youth and Thought – Sohmor," and "Siraj al-Ruh," March-November 2018).



Right: Raffling off visits to holy sites in Iraq among women participating in an event on behalf of the Women's Organizations in the village of Baflay in southern Lebanon (Women's Organizations – Baflay Facebook page, March 19, 2018). Left: Awarding prizes to women participating in the Quran summer camps of the Women's Organizations in the village of Faroun in southern Lebanon, on Eid al-Ghadir (Siraj al-Ruh Facebook page, September 8, 2018)

Leadership of the Women's Organizations Unit

►The Women's Organizations Unit was established in **1991** by **Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, who heads the Women's Organizations Unit up till now and serves as member of the Executive Council.** Hajja Afaf **comes from a family of senior Shiite religious scholars.** Her grandfather is the senior cleric **Sayyid Nour al-Din Nour al-Din,** and her uncle on her mother's side is **Sayyid Abd al-Karim Nour al-Din.** She studied Islam with religious scholars of her family. For 24 years, Hajja al-Hakim taught religion classes at the Burj al-Barajneh state high school (in Beirut's southern suburb) and in the Al-Ameliya Girls College in Beirut. In 1977-2003, she was the only teacher of religious studies in Lebanon.

►In 1991, she founded Hezbollah's Women's Organizations Unit upon request of senior Hezbollah figures. She lectures and preaches throughout Lebanon and writes for many Islamic magazines. She often participates in international conferences. She is a member of

³ Thus, for example, in August 2016, a delegation of Iranian women visited the branch of the Women's Organizations in the Bekaa Valley (Al-Ahed news website, August 8, 2018).

women's organizations and religious associations and has published dozens of research studies and articles on issues concerning women and Shiite Islam.



Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, who heads the Women's Organizations Unit, delivering a speech at the 2013 annual fast-breaking meal of the Women's Organizations (Al-Ahed, July 12, 2013)

► Alongside Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, there are several additional senior women: **Fatima Shahadah**, the official in charge of the Women's Organizations **in the First Region of southern Lebanon** (LebanonFiles, December 18, 2014); **Khadija Sallum**, Hezbollah activist for 27 years, was the official in charge of the Women's Organizations in the **Beirut** area (Momahidat, June 2, 2015) and is currently the **official in charge of culture** in the Women's Organizations (Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018); **Jamila Mostafa**, the official in charge of the Women's Organizations **in the Bekaa Valley area** (Lebanese National News Agency, August 8, 2016); **Hajja Amira Burghul**, senior official in the Women's Organizations (Janoubia, May 9, 2015); **Dr. Rima Fakhri**, member of Hezbollah's Political Council for 11 years and a senior official at the Women's Organizations (Ya Sour website, January 2018; Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018); **Hoda Issa**, in charge of the **Information Portfolio** in the Women's Organizations in Beirut; **Fatimah Ziour**, in charge of the **Culture Portfolio** in the Women's Organizations in Beirut; and **Samar Hamadah**, in charge of the **Social Activity Portfolio** in the Women's Organizations in Beirut (Al-Ahed, June 27, 2018).

Structure and deployment of the Women's Organizations Unit

► In the ITIC's assessment, the center of the Women's Organizations Unit **is located in the southern suburb of Beirut**. There are branches of the unit among the Shiite population in the Bekaa Valley, southern Lebanon, and Beirut's southern suburb. The Women's Organizations Unit has various departments: **Media, Culture, Social Activity, Department of Female Academics and Students, and the Neighborhoods' Committees** (website of the Baheth Research Center, April 9, 2018; Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018; Al-Ahed, June 27,

2018). Most of the activists in the Women's Organizations are **volunteers or contract workers** and that is why it is difficult to ascertain the total number of women working there (Janoubia, May 9, 2015).

► Activists in the Women's Organizations Unit are referred to as “sisters” or “those preparing the ground” (i.e., preparing the ground for the advent of Imam Al-Mahdi by their very activity aiming to receive compensation which is not material). Sometimes, the women are referred to as *Zaynabiyyat* (after Sayyida Zaynab) (Janoubia, May 9, 2015). They are also referred to as “basil plants.”⁴

► **Hajja Afaf al-Hakim**, the official in charge of the Women's Organizations Unit, also serves as **chairwoman of three associations which she founded: Women’s Association for Social Guarantee, the Mother and Child Association, and the Lebanese Culture Association** (resume of Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, Momahidat website). It can be estimated **that these associations are in fact also part of Hezbollah’s Women's Organizations Unit**, or, at least, that their activity matches that of Hezbollah’s Women's Organizations Unit.

Patterns of activity

► Women’s activity in Hezbollah starts **at age 4-5 in the Al-Mahdi Scouts, in the girls’ troops**. This activity is designed **to prepare the girls for coming of age**⁵, when they will be required to wear the hijab and start fasting and praying. At the coming of age ceremony, every girl is given a copy of the Quran, clothing for prayer or a head covering. After coming of age, classes are about **the adolescent girl** and her relations with herself and her environment as a woman, **and her relations with the family as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother**.

► Many classes are devoted **to marriage in general and marriage to a Hezbollah operative in particular: how to raise children on Hezbollah’s values; How to function as a shahid’s mother or wife; How to fulfill the role of both the mother and father in the event that the father is missing or if he dies as a shahid**. These values and contents reflect, among

⁴ In Arab poetry, **a loved one is sometimes referred to as a “basil plant.”** Many advantages are attributed to this herb in medicine, as a perfume, and in cooking. In addition, this herb is mentioned in the Quran and Hadith as an especially fragrant plant. Both grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad, Hasan and Husayn, who have special status in Shiite Islam, received the title “the two basil plants” (Arabic Wikipedia, “*Rihan*”).

⁵ According to Sistani, at the age of eight years and nine months (Sistani’s official website, Questions and Answers page); According to Fadlallah, at the age of 12, seven months and 20 days, or earlier, according to physiological signs (Muhammad Abdallah Fadlallah, “The Age of Puberty according to Sharia, Bayyinah website, February 22, 2016).

other things, Hezbollah's wish to provide each of its fighters, a potential shahid, with **peace of mind, knowing that if he is killed in battle, his wife will remain virtuous and the family will not fall apart**. If the girl has not joined the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts, she can directly join the activity of the Women's Organizations (Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018).



Group ceremony of girls coming of age at the Al-Mahdi schools in Mashghara, Kafr Fila and Al-Ahmadiyah. A total of 88 girls coming of age from these schools took part in the ceremony, out of 1,270 girls coming of age from the entire Lebanon in 2019 (Facebook page of the Al-Mahdi school in Mashghara, February 20-24, 2019). The girl in the middle is holding a photo of a shahid.

►The Women's Organizations Unit carries out extensive activity through the **Neighborhoods Committees**. For every neighborhood, there is a woman in charge on behalf of the Women's Organizations. This woman is familiar with the female residents and **the political inclination** of each. The official in charge of the neighborhood also collects information on any **mourning ceremony meeting or joyful event** in her area and sends a **delegation** on behalf of the Women's Organizations **to pay its condolences or extend its congratulations**. Thus, **preliminary acquaintance is formed with the women of the families**. The Women's Organizations also publicize themselves and **invite women** to take part in their activities (Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018). Following such activity among families of shahids, it is quite common for sisters of a shahid to subsequently join the Women's Organizations (Janoubia, May 9, 2015).

►The Women's Organizations Unit **holds ceremonies, trips** (inter alia intended for women in traditional society who almost never leave their own village all life long), **mourning gatherings, "jihadi meetings," election meetings** (in the relevant years), **workshops, festive dinners, and donation campaigns for the needy**. As a rule, **women's activity in Hezbollah is separate, without involving men**. However, in case it is required, sheikhs, Hezbollah fighters or men of relevant professions arrive at the sites of the women's activities to deliver speeches (Janoubia, May 9, 2015; Legal-Agenda website, May 4, 2018).



An evening of readings in the Quran for Women's Organizations in the village of Deir al-Zahrani in southern Lebanon, with the participation of shahids' mothers. The evening was held on the anniversary of the IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon (Rashed Network Facebook page, May 27, 2019).

Activity dates and target audiences of the Women's Organizations Unit

► In order to examine the dates of activity of the Women's Organizations Unit and the target audiences, the ITIC carried out a textual search of the term "Women's Organizations" in 2018, and also examined three representative Facebook pages (Women's Organizations in Beirut, Women's Organizations in the First Region in the south, and Women's Organizations in the village of Baflay in the south). A total of **186 activities** of the Women's Organizations carried out throughout Lebanon were found in the search. Activities are carried out throughout the year, thus creating a **sort of a calendar of Shiite, Khomeini and Hezbollah**-related contents encompassing many spheres of life.

► An examination of the dates on which activity took place revealed that many events (About 23%) take place **independently** of any dates or particular anniversaries. Of the events taking place on anniversaries or commemoration dates, particularly noteworthy are **Shiite holidays and festivals** (Eid al-Ghadir, anniversaries of the birth and death of the Prophet Muhammad's family members, the Ashura; a total of about 48%) **and Hezbollah's anniversaries** (Withdrawal's Day, Shahid's Day, Shahid Leaders' Day, Anniversary of the Second Lebanon War; a total of about 8.5%). **Events of the Iranian axis (about 2%) and Lebanese national holidays** such as Mother's Day and Teachers' Day (about 3%) **receive only marginal attention.**

► As for the target audience of the Women's Organizations' activity, most of the activity (about 68%) is intended **for the Women's Organizations and the general public.** However, noteworthy are **families of shahids** (mostly mothers; about 5%) **and the younger generation** – children, **girl scouts of the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts, and orphans** (about 16%).

As for the geographical spread of the activity, the situation is similar to that of the rest of Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure: **most of the activity takes place in southern Lebanon** (about 48%) **and in Beirut** (about 46%), **and the lesser part takes place in the Bekaa Valley and northern Lebanon.**



Right: Activists of the Women's Organizations Unit in the village of Banafoul in southern Lebanon meet with a jihad fighter as part of the opening of the organizations' 2019 summer activity (Rassed Network Facebook page, July 1, 2019). Left: Trip organized by the Women's Organizations in the Jebchit area, in collaboration with the Sports Department in the area, in Iqlim al-Tufah, which is an important area in Hezbollah's battle legacy. The trip took place around the anniversary of the Second Lebanon War (Panohat Facebook page, July 17, 2019).

Values inculcated by the Women's Organizations Unit

In order to examine **the leading values** inculcated in the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit, the ITIC selected two test cases: **the activities of the Women's Organizations Unit in the summer of 2018; and the contents of the official website of the woman in charge of the Women's Organizations** (the website called "Momahidat," i.e., those [women] who prepare the ground).

Activities of the Women's Organizations Unit in the summer of 2018

►A great deal of information was received from the website of **the Women's Organizations Unit in Beirut** about **the summer activities of 2018**.⁶ The declared purpose behind the summer activity, as appeared in a prior publication about it, is **"to provide tools for women's involvement in family life"** (Al-Ahed, June 27, 2018). The activity was divided into summer camps according to age groups (Facebook page "Because you are a basil plant):

⁶ It appears that the activity is **substantially subsidized by the Women's Organizations**, as the price per participant is **only USD 10** (plus USD 23 for transportation, if needed), not including trips (Facebook page "Because you are a basil plant").

◆ **Al-Mahdi Generations Summer Camp** for ages 9-12, where major emphasis was placed on **preparation for coming of age** (for example, drawing clothes conforming to Islamic religious law in order to learn their proper criteria) and on respecting parents in accordance to Shiite Islam (for instance, a story on friendship and family, including a discussion of Imam Zayn al-Abedin's prayer concerning parents).

◆ **Basil Summer Camp** for ages 13-17, where more **jihadi contents** were included, **such as a jihadi meeting and a film about a shahid**, alongside preparation for the role of a woman in traditional society. **Major emphasis was placed on home economics** (for example, learning how to sew).

◆ **Summer Camp of Those Preparing the Ground** for ages 18-30, where contents were similar to those of the activity for ages 13-17.

► Websites relating to **the activity of the Women's Organizations Unit in southern Lebanon** also provided a great deal of information on the summer activities. It is evident that activity in the south is less formal and is not necessarily incorporated in a framework of summer camps. Southern Lebanon also presented division into age groups (for example, ages 14 and above will study **Islamic religious law and pillars of faith**, whereas ages 17 and above will study about **choosing a partner for life**) (Facebook page of Safa Muqled, June 30, 2018).

► The noteworthy types of activity in southern Lebanon were **courses and workshops about the Quran**, workshops on **society and culture, trips** and courses on **the women's involvement in the family** (Siraj al-Ruh Facebook page, September 8, 2018). In addition, the Women's Organizations held in this area **a summer camp for children for learning the Quran by heart** (Facebook page of the School of Quran – Shaqra, July 7, 2018). In total, the Women's Organizations' activities in the summer of 2018 in southern Lebanon were attended by **39,526 women** (it should be taken into account that it is likely that many women took part in more than one activity) (Siraj al-Ruh Facebook page, September 8, 2018).



Certificate of appreciation for the mother of the shahid Hassan Mohammad Ali Daikh (Abu Ali) on behalf of the Women's Organizations in the village of Salaa in southern Lebanon (Facebook page in memory of the shahid Hassan Mohammad Ali Daikh). Hassan Daikh, who was a sniper, was killed in May 2013, apparently in the battle over the village of Al-Qussayr.

Contents of the website of Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, the head of the Women's Organizations Unit

►The website Momahidat (i.e., those [women] preparing the ground) is **the official website of Hajja Afaf al-Hakim, who heads the Women's Organizations Unit.** The structure of the website and the sections which were chosen to be included appropriately reflect the values which the Women's Organizations wish to inculcate in the activists and the general public.

Three types of sections can be shown:

- ◆ **The first type deals with the role of the woman in traditional society. For example, home economics, raising children, and religious laws on family issues.**

This type includes the sections “News on Women and Society,” “Research Studies” (studies on women’s issues and on family issues), reports and articles (international Islam), “Women’s Issues – Articles” (medicine, identity, learning, creating history, politics, legislation and law, feelings, the issue of work, the family); “Family Issues – Articles,” “Theories in Women’s Issues,” “Criticism of Women’s Thought,” “Woman and Family – Religious Laws” (laws of marriage and divorce, women’s laws, laws of hijab – men-women interrelationship, issues in family laws, various issues in women’s laws), “Mother and Child,” “Bibliography for the issue of Women and Family,” “Women and Family in the Quran,” “Women and Family in Thought and in Real Life”, “My Daughter, this is because I love you,” “A Family Mirror” (health, nutrition, education), “Your Home is more Beautiful” (house plants, keeping the home tidy), “Problems and Solutions” and “From the Heritage of our Grandmothers.”

- ◆ **The second type focuses on classical Shiite contents, emphasizing the two female figures serving as outstanding role models (Sayyida Fatimah and Sayyida**

Zaynab) and on the woman’s role in preparing the ground for the appearance of Imam Al-Mahdi. This group includes the sections “Sayyida Fatimah” (in the Quran, in the Hadith, as a wife, as a mother, what women wrote about her, articles about her, stories about her, how she is regarded by religious scholars, by poets, her sermons, her prayers), “Sayyida Zaynab” (how she is regarded by poets, in the Hadith, articles about her, what women say about her, stories about her, her prayers, visit at her tomb), “Momahidat” (what women say about Imam Al-Mahdi, meetings with Imam Al-Mahdi), “Selected Muslim Women” (women in the Prophet Muhammad’s family, women of the Quran, female companions of the Prophet, female storytellers, female jihad fighters, female religious scholars, female poets, modern women); “Women in the lives of the Prophet and His Family Members” (women in the life of the Prophet, women in the lives of Imams); “My Freedom is in... my Hijab!” (news on hijab, hijab in history, hijab in the Quran, hijab in stories, hijab religious laws, articles on hijab, hijab in teachings of leaders and religious scholars, hijab in shahids’ last wills, Fatimid-Zaynabi hijab); “Brotherhood and Mercy”; “Holy Tombs” (tombs of selected women, holy tombs in Lebanon); “Women who Walked in the Light of Islam” and “Ashura 1440 File” (women who supported Husayn, articles, children of Karbala, selected Karbala women, the Ashura lens, women’s religious law in Ashura, sermons of Sayyida Zaynab, tombs of the women in the Prophet’s family, the journey of the Prophet’s female captives, women’s role in Karbala, female rebels for Husayn, female shahids of the Husayni revolution, women of the Prophet’s family in Karbala, women of Husayn’s companions in Karbala).



Operative of Hezbollah’s military wing in Syria holding a sign that reads, “My sister, your hijab is dearer than my blood” (Facebook page “They Threaten us with Death while we Long for Shahada”)

◆ **The third type deals with women’s involvement in the “Resistance Society.”**

This type includes the sections “**Women of Resistance**” (articles on the “women of resistance,” women in the resistance for the occupation, “literature of the resistance”); “**To the Female Jihad Fighter**” (last wills of shahids for their mothers, last wills of shahids for their wives, last wills of shahids for their sisters); “**The Family and the Soft War,**” and “**Women and the Soft War**” (“the soft war” refers to the battle for hearts and minds and psychological warfare resorted to by Hezbollah’s enemies against Hezbollah’s supporters).



Left: Operative of Hezbollah’s military wing holding a sign that reads, “Forgive me” (asking for his mother’s forgiveness because he may not return from the battle) (Facebook). Right: Operatives of the military wing comforting a shahid’s mother (Facebook)

Parallel women’s organizations in Iranian Shiite proxies in the Arab world

► **Iran exported the experience of Hezbollah’s Women's Organizations** to other militias established by it in the Arab world. In the Iranian militias in Iraq, Yemen, and the Gaza Strip, there are **institutions parallel** to Hezbollah’s Women's Organizations, whose patterns of activity are similar and they are inspired by Hezbollah:

- ◆ In the **Asaib Ahl al-Haqq** militia in Iraq, there is a **Women’s Department** (website of the Asaib Ahl al-Haqq)
- ◆ In the **Hezbollah Battalions** militia in Iraq, there is a **Zaynabiyat Unit** (website of the Hezbollah Battalions militia)
- ◆ In the **Sayyid al-Shuhada Battalions** militia in Iraq, there is a **Women’s Department** (Facebook page of the Women’s Department in the Sayyid al-Shuhada Battalions)

- ◆ In the **Al-Saberin** movement in the Gaza Strip, there is a **Women’s Activity Bureau** (website of the Al-Saberin movement)
- ◆ In the **Ansar Allah** militia (the Houthis) in Yemen, there is an institution named **The Free [Women] of Yemen**, which is also referred to as **The Women’s Organization** (website of the Ansar Allah militia; Al-Ahed news website, June 13, 2018)



Right: Military display of force by the Free [Women] of Yemen (Al-Ahed, June 13, 2018). Left: Food packages sent by the Free [Women] of Yemen in Sana’a to the fighters at the front (website of the Ansar Allah militia, June 14, 2018). Among Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Women's Organizations do not directly participate in the fighting.

Appendix

The ITIC's publications on Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure (February-August 2019)

►The ITIC is engaged in a research project whose aim is to map and elaborate on Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure. **The following nine 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 2019).
- ◆ “**Hezbollah's Martyrs Foundation:** purpose, mode of operation and funding methods” (April 2019)
- ◆ “**Hezbollah's Foundation for the Wounded:** purpose, modus operandi and funding methods” (May 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 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 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 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 2019)
- ◆ “**Hezbollah's Education Mobilization:** An institution engaged in the indoctrination of Shiite students in Lebanon's state and private educational systems, in preparation for their joining Hezbollah upon graduation” (July 2019)
- ◆ “Sports in the service of terrorism: **Hezbollah's Sports Mobilization** conducts extensive sports activity, using it for indoctrinating and preparing youth to join the ranks of Hezbollah” (July 2019)

- ◆ **“The Islamic Health Organization:** Hezbollah institution providing health services to Hezbollah operatives and the Shiite population in general as a means for gaining influence and creating a Shiite mini-state within Lebanon” (August 2019)
- ◆ **“Art and culture used by Hezbollah as instruments of indoctrination”** (August 2019)