Hezbollah’s media empire

Overview

Hezbollah established a Shiite “mini-state” among the Shiite community in Lebanon, which caters to the needs of Shiite inhabitants in all spheres of life. For this purpose, Hezbollah is engaged in building a civilian system, which operates alongside its military infrastructure, in the spheres of education, culture, health, welfare, finance, sports, construction, agriculture, and more. The institutions established by Hezbollah and the intensive civilian activity 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 government and years of neglect of the Shiite community. Hezbollah’s extensive civilian activity is designed to create among the Shiites in Lebanon the so-called resistance society which supports Hezbollah in its struggle against Israel. In the background, there is a neglect suffered by the Shiite community in Lebanon for generations.

The “resistance society,” created by Hezbollah with massive Iranian support, is based on three pillars: The first pillar is Hezbollah’s military infrastructure, which is designed to operate against Israel but also supports Hezbollah’s grip of the Shiite population. The military infrastructure places Hezbollah in a political power position in the internal Lebanese scene and provides it with major influence on decision making in Lebanon; the second pillar is a large-scale network of civilian institutions contributing to the improvement of the socioeconomic situation of the Shiite population and strengthening its support of Hezbollah; and the third pillar is a media empire which plays an important role in disseminating the ideology and political messages of Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Middle East and throughout the rest of the world. Such an extensive media empire in the

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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 possession of a terrorist organization is unprecedented among terrorist organizations operating around the world.

Hezbollah’s media empire is directed by the Media Relations Unit, headed by Hajj Muhammad Afif, who is also Hassan Nasrallah’s media advisor. Hezbollah has an extensive infrastructure of traditional media outlets (a TV channel, radio station, and newspapers), websites, and social media. In addition, prominent media outlets in Lebanon consistently support Hezbollah’s propaganda strategy. This media infrastructure serves as an efficient instrument for the dissemination of propaganda messages to all the target audiences, based on a comprehensive propaganda strategy serving Hezbollah and Iran. In the ITIC’s assessment, the operation of Hezbollah’s extensive media infrastructure, with the Al-Manar TV Channel as the most important media outlet, involves an annual expense of tens of millions of dollars. In the ITIC’s assessment, most of the expenses of Hezbollah’s media empire, including the Al-Manar TV Channel, are financed by Iran. Indeed, the media layout has some revenues of its own (obtained from advertising and donations). However, the scope of advertising on the Al-Manar Channel is relatively low, and it is evident that this is not Al-Manar’s main funding source.

Hezbollah’s media system is directed at large target audiences around the globe in four languages. Hezbollah’s main target audience is the Lebanese population. In second place, there are audiences in the Arab / Muslim world, mainly countries and organizations affiliated with the Iranian axis. In third place, there are target audiences throughout the world (mainly English and French speaking Western countries and Spanish speaking Latin American countries). All Hezbollah’s media outlets operate in Arabic. The two main media outlets, the Al-Manar TV Channel and the Al-Ahed newspaper, also operate in English, French and Spanish.
Hezbollah’s most important and highest quality media outlet is the Al-Manar TV Channel, broadcasting in four languages: Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. It also has its own website. The channel broadcasts via four satellites: three Russian and one Indonesian. The most prominent topic in the content of the Al-Manar broadcasts is Hezbollah (“the resistance”). The channel also broadcasts Iranian content (the Islamic Revolution, tourist sites in Iran, Iranian films dubbed in Arabic or with Arabic subtitles) and Shiite content (prayers and ceremonies).

The Al-Manar Channel is Hezbollah’s main media outlet, reporting on news items, cultivating the personality cult of Hassan Nasrallah, inculcating Hezbollah’s ideology, engaging in the glorification of shahids, preaching loyalty to the Islamic Revolution in Iran and its leaders, and engaging in propaganda and psychological warfare (which are mainly aimed at the State of Israel, the pro-Western Arab countries, the United States, and other Western countries). In addition, the Al-Manar Channel is a major instrument which supports Hezbollah’s fighting in times of tension or during war.
The Al-Manar TV Channel, Hezbollah’s leading media outlet: screenshot of a report on a telegram sent by Nasrallah to Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif (Al-Manar TV Channel, August 15, 2019)

The Al-Manar Channel has a correspondent in the Gaza Strip, Imad Eid, who is also the director of the Al-Manar office in the Gaza Strip. The channel also has two correspondents in Judea and Samaria, operating from Ramallah: Khaled al-Faqih and Dib Horani. In the ITIC’s assessment, the reports of the Al-Manar correspondents from Ramallah could not take place without the Palestinian Authority’s approval.

In January 2018, the US Department of the Treasury added the Al-Manar Channel and Radio Nour, two main Hezbollah media outlets, to the list of Hezbollah’s sanctioned institutions. However, it appears that the rest of Hezbollah’s media outlets, the Media Relations Unit and prominent figures in Hezbollah’s media empire are not included in the US sanctions list. Since 2004, France, Egypt and Saudi Arabia stopped providing satellite services to the Al-Manar Channel, and several countries (including Germany) banned the channel’s broadcasts on their territory. However, measures against the Al-Manar Channel in the international and inter-Arab arena proved ineffective, as Hezbollah found alternative satellite services from Russia and Indonesia.

Hezbollah maintains a considerable presence on social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter. It has many hundreds of profiles, pages, and accounts, inciting terrorism and disseminating the radical ideology of Hezbollah and Iran. In 2018, accounts of Hezbollah on Facebook and Twitter were blocked several times. However, Hezbollah continues using these networks while violating their terms of use. Thus, in practice, Hezbollah’s presence on Facebook and Twitter still continues without any significant damage.
Inciting terrorism against the United States on a Twitter account affiliated with Hezbollah

Right: Photo showing the devastation of the US Embassy in Lebanon after the detonation of a car bomb by Hezbollah (April 18, 1983). The following text was attached to the photo: “This is how embassies should be disciplined. This is what Imad [Mughniyeh] taught us.” (Twitter account of Amani Amar, August 8, 2019). Left: Map of Hezbollah’s targets in Israel, presented by Hezbollah’s Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in one of his interviews. The following text is attached to the photo: “It [i.e., the US Embassy in Lebanon] should be on the map of obliteration” (“The Eyes of the Axis of Resistance” Twitter account, August 7, 2019).

Has Hezbollah’s media empire sustained damage as a result of the economic crisis in Iran? The Lebanese Al-Modon news website recently published a report entitled “Hezbollah’s economic crisis: cuts in the budget in order to carry on with the war mechanism” (August 19, 2019). According to the report, the economic crisis also had an adverse effect on Hezbollah’s media. According to the same report, some Hezbollah media employees suffer from delays in the payment of their salaries, lack of permanent employment, and ad hoc employment methods (i.e., working through sub-contractors).

However, the reliability of this information is doubtful. According to the findings of an examination carried out by the ITIC (August 2019), no impairment is evident in Hezbollah’s media layout. The Al-Manar TV Channel and the Al-Nour Radio station continue their broadcasts without any significant changes. Hezbollah’s websites, as well as the Al-Ahed news website, are updated every few minutes. Baqiyyatullah magazine is also published regularly, every month. In the ITIC's assessment, the reason for all this is the high priority of Hezbollah’s media layout in the eyes of Iran and Hezbollah.
Structure of the study

The study includes the following sections:

- Hezbollah’s Media Relations Unit
- The leading media outlet: Al-Manar TV Channel
- The Al-Nour Radio station
- Newspapers and magazines: the Al-Ahed newspaper and Baqiyatullah magazine
- Hezbollah’s official websites
- Hezbollah’s presence on social media
- Lebanese media outlets supporting Hezbollah
- The international and inter-Arab measures against Hezbollah’s media empire

Appendix: The ITIC’s publications on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure

The ITIC wishes to thank Alma Center in Israel’s Galilee for providing the ITIC with information for the present study.
Hezbollah’s Media Relations Unit

The institution responsible for the operation of Hezbollah’s media infrastructure and its direction is the Media Relations Unit, which is subordinate to Hezbollah’s Executive Council. This unit also serves as Hezbollah’s spokesman’s office. The Media Relations Unit releases official announcements on behalf of Hezbollah, documents Hassan Nasrallah’s speeches and meetings, provides media coverage of meetings and statements of other senior Hezbollah figures, disseminates and reports about activities and ceremonies attended by Hezbollah MPs, and invites to Hezbollah's official events (Media Observer website, no date mentioned; Media Relations Unit’s website, no date mentioned; Janoubia, April 22, 2015).

Since 2014, the Media Relations Unit is headed by Hajj Mohammad Afif, who is also Hassan Nasrallah’s media advisor. Hajj Mohammad Afif had been the news and political program director of Al-Manar Channel, a position which he also held during the Second Lebanon War and received praise for his work (Al-Akhbar, July 17, 2014; Ya Sour website, April 27, 2016). An indication of Hajj Mohammad Afif’s importance may be found in the fact that he was the first to comment on the latest quadcopter incident in Beirut, even before Hassan Nasrallah’s speech.3

Hajj Mohammad Afif, head of the Media Relations Unit and Hezbollah’s secretary general’s media advisor (Media Relations Unit’s website)

As part of its function as Hezbollah’s spokesman’s office, the Media Relations Unit organizes tours for journalists at times when Hezbollah wishes to convey its messages to

3 See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 29, 2019, “Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah said he would retaliate for the quadcopter attack in Beirut which he claimed Israel had carried out, and for the killing of two Hezbollah operatives in an Israeli attack in Syria.”
journalists in a focused manner. Thus, for example, in April 2017, the unit organized a tour for Lebanese and foreign journalists on the border between Israel and Lebanon in order to show them the fortification work and downplay its importance (as part of Hezbollah’s propaganda). The tour was attended by representatives of over fifty Lebanese and foreign media outlets (LBC, Al-Jadid, Al-Manar, An-Nashra, Araby Press, the Syrian TV, and Al-Jazeera, among others). When visiting the area near the border, the journalists were accompanied by a Hezbollah officer who introduced himself as Ihab.

The Media Relations Unit director Mohammad Afif was present during part of the tour. Ihab explained in great detail about the IDF’s deployment in the Galilee and elaborated on various kinds of fortifications built by the IDF on the border with Lebanon in recent years, referring to examples of such fortifications on the ground (Al-Jadid Channel, An-Nahar, An-Nashra News Agency, Al-Araby al-Jadeed website, Araby Press website, and the Facebook page of Mohammad Allouche, April 20, 2017).

Hezbollah officer Ihab explains to the journalists visiting southern Lebanon about the fortifications around Kibbutz Hanita in northern Israel (Al-Ahed news website, April 20, 2017)

Al-Manar Channel, Hezbollah’s leading media outlet

The Al-Manar Channel is Hezbollah’s most important media outlet. It started broadcasting in 1991 on cables and registered with the Lebanese Registrar of Companies in January 1997 under the name of Lebanese Communication Group L.C.G. S.A.L. The group is engaged in the investment in, distribution and production of cinema, television and radio products. Ibrahim Farhat is the director-general of the channel and chairman of the board of directors. The deputy director-general is Dr. Ibrahim al-Mussawi, former
director of Hezbollah’s Media Relations Unit. **Hajj Youssef Zbib** is a member of the board and the channel’s engineering director (Sada Sour website, August 25, 2019)⁴. The channel is registered as a *société anonyme Libanaise* (SAL) with capital of about $17 million. The address of the company is Harat Hreik, in Beirut’s southern suburb.

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Ibrahim Farhat, Al-Manar Channel’s director-general (Al-Manar Channel’s website, September 16, 2017)

The headquarters of the Al-Manar broadcasting station in Beirut after it was bombed by the IDF in the Second Lebanon War (Al-Akhbar, July 12, 2007). The channel’s broadcast was cut off but it resumed after a while.

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⁴ His only son, Hassan Youssef Zbib, was killed in the IDF attack in the Damascus area against operatives handled by the Iranian Qods Force. See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 29, 2019, “Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah said he would retaliate for the quadcopter attack in Beirut which he claimed Israel had carried out, and for the killing of two Hezbollah operatives in an Israeli attack in Syria.”
The Al-Manar Channel is known for its on-site correspondents throughout the Arab world. The channel has a reporter in the Gaza Strip and also in areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. When there are unusual developments in the internal Lebanese scene, its correspondents there send breaking news from the ground. The channel's correspondent in southern Lebanon, Ali Shueib (see below), often shoots reports and videos of IDF activity close to the Lebanese-Israeli border, in accordance with Hezbollah's propaganda policy.

Starting in 2000, the channel also broadcasts on satellite. It broadcasts from Beirut's southern suburb. Its broadcasts are relayed via four satellites, three Russian and one Indonesian. The four satellites are Express AM06 (a Russian satellite broadcasting to Europe and the Middle East); Express AM44 (a Russian satellite broadcasting to the Middle East and East Africa); Express AM08 (a Russian satellite using two frequencies, broadcasting to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa); Palapa-D (an Indonesian satellite broadcasting to Australia and Southeast Asia) (Al-Manar Channel's website; LyngSat website, August 6, 2019).

The channel's average rating was 6.4% (as at 2018, according to the Al-Hall website, February 22, 2019). The channel has an office in the Gaza Strip and collaborates with other channels, Hamas’s Al-Aqsa Channel being one of them. Al-Manar is a member of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) in spite of the measures taken against it by Egypt and Saudi Arabia (see below).

The Al-Manar Channel's main target audience is the Lebanese population, then the audiences in the Arab / Muslim world, and on third place are audiences around the world,

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^ Imad Eid has served as a correspondent and director of the Al-Manar office in the Gaza Strip in recent years. According to his Facebook page (updated to August 2019), he is still holding these positions.
mainly western countries and the countries of Latin America. In order to reach these target audiences, the channel broadcasts in four languages: Arabic, English, Spanish and French. It also has an online newspaper (Al-Ahed), with a Twitter account in these four languages (see below).

The channel has its own website, almanar.com.lb. The website posts the items and investigative reports published by Al-Manar as well as news flashes. Al-Manar’s program list is updated on the website. The site is divided into the following topics: Lebanon, Arab and Regional, International News, Journalism, Photographed Investigative Reports, Most Important News, and more. Following are screenshots of the Al-Manar Channel’s website in four languages, from August 15, 2019:
Broadcast content

In order to examine the leading content in the channel broadcasts, the ITIC found and documented 63 films, series and programs broadcast on the channel in 2018-2019. The content can be divided into six main types: general programs, journalism and media, talk shows, political documentaries, religious content, and series. The most common topic in the channel's content is the “resistance” (i.e., Hezbollah). This topic is reflected in broadcasting speeches of Hezbollah's senior figures; covering Hezbollah’s ceremonies and events; interviews with politicians supporting the “axis of resistance” (Lebanese, Yemeni, and Iranian politicians); broadcasting programs about the residents of southern Lebanon during the time the IDF was deployed there; and in programs on the “resistance” (i.e., terrorist organizations) in Syria, Lebanon, and other countries. In all,
the topic of “resistance” was covered in 13 programs, films and series, that is, about 20% of all the programs broadcast during the examined period.

Other prominent topics broadcast on the Al-Manar Channel in 2018-2019:

- **Iran** (seven programs, i.e., about 11%; including content on the Islamic Revolution, as well as reports on Iran, dealing with topics such as tourist sites or the Iranian automobile industry). In addition, the channel broadcast **Iranian films with Arabic subtitles or dubbed in Arabic** (in addition to the Arabic films broadcast on the channel).

- **Shiite content** (five programs, i.e., about 8%; including prayers and ceremonies, in addition to a trivia show on Quran and religion, among other things).

- **The war in Yemen** (five programs, i.e., about 8%).

- **Current event shows** (six, i.e. about 9.5%).

- **Dramas and comedies.**

The Al-Manar Channel **nurtures the personality cult of Hezbollah’s Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah,** which is carried out through all of Hezbollah’s media outlets. In addition, the channel provides wide coverage of the activity of other senior Hezbollah figures, including the deputy secretary general **Sheikh Naim Qassem;** chairman of the Executive Council **Hashem Safi al-Din;** chairman of the Judicial Council Mohammad Yazbek; Central Council member **Nabil Qaouq;** and chairman of the Loyalty to Resistance bloc in the Lebanese Parliament **Mohammad Raad.**

The **Israeli military activity near the border is covered on a regular basis on the news bulletins of the Al-Manar Channel.** The channel’s correspondent in southern Lebanon Ali Shueib (for details, see below) documents the IDF’s activity on an ongoing basis. Security incidents occurring near the border are exclusively covered by the channel’s correspondents from this perspective of hostility towards Israel and complete conformity to Hezbollah’s propaganda. On the other hand, it seems that since 2018, the scope of media coverage given by the Al-Manar Channel to **Hezbollah’s involvement in the fighting in Syria** has decreased, in view of the achievements recorded by the Syrian regime.⁶

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⁶ In 2017, the Al-Manar Channel extensively covered Hezbollah’s involvement in the fierce battles around the border between Syria and Lebanon, which were intended to mop up the area from jihadi terrorists. The Hezbollah operatives were portrayed as the guardians of Lebanon who sacrifice their lives to protect the country’s residents. Al-Manar’s most senior reporters covered the events on the ground and received exclusive accessibility to the fighting zones.
The program breaks on the channel are mainly directed at the Lebanese population, Hezbollah’s main target audience. They feature, among other things, songs glorifying Hezbollah; videos of Hezbollah operations carried out against Israel in the past; calls on the public to attend events organized by Hezbollah; and information on forthcoming speeches of Hassan Nasrallah. Some of the messages in the program breaks are directed against Israel, sometimes with Nasrallah’s threats heard on the background.

Al-Manar’s correspondents in the Gaza Strip and Ramallah

The Al-Manar Channel has correspondents in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria. The Channel’s correspondent in the Gaza Strip is Imad Eid, who has been a correspondent and director of the Al-Manar officer in the Gaza Strip over the past few years. The channel has two correspondents in Judaea and Samaria, Khaled al-Faqih and Dib Horani, who are based in Ramallah.

Khaled al-Faqih is a veteran journalist from Ramallah who has been the Al-Manar Channel’s correspondent in Judea and Samaria for many years. Most of his reports are from confrontation and demonstration sites and from his meetings with Palestinian residents throughout Judea and Samaria. He also reports about events and incidents in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel, although he is based in Ramallah (Al-Manar Channel, May 26, 2019).

Dib Horani, a resident of Ramallah, is another correspondent of the channel in Judea and Samaria. His latest report (live) was on September 1, 2019, during Hezbollah’s attack in Israel’s northern community of Avivim.


According to his Facebook page (updated to August 2019), he is still holds this position.
Dib Horani, Al-Manar’s correspondent in Judea and Samaria, reporting about confrontations on the Temple Mount (Al-Manar Channel, February 22, 2019)

Hassan Hussein Abdallah: Al-Manar Channel’s director who posthumously became a role model

Hassan Hussein Abdallah, the Al-Manar Channel’s director, was killed in February 2015. After his death, he became a role model for Hezbollah operatives engaging in propaganda. Abdallah was born in 1982 in the village of Aitaroun in southern Lebanon. He began working in the media in 1999 as an operative of Hezbollah’s Central Combat Information. He managed to shoot videos of Hezbollah attacks in Aramta, Al-Bayada (the IDF’s Rotem Outpost⁸) and Ali al-Taher before the IDF left the Security Zone. Hassan Abdallah accompanied the IDF’s withdrawal from the Security Zone in May 2000. Then he shot a video of the abduction of the IDF soldiers in Har Dov (Shebaa Farms), operated in southern Lebanon in 2000-2006 and instructed the operatives of Hezbollah’s Central Combat Information. In 2006 he took part in the Second Lebanon War.

After the Second Lebanon War, Abdallah began working at the Al-Manar Channel as a director. When the civil war in Syria broke out (in 2011), he returned to part-time activity in the Media Unit and was wounded while working in Aleppo in 2014. In February 2015 he was killed while shooting a film on the siege of the Shiite villages of Nubl and Zahra, north of Aleppo (Al-Akhbar, February 18, 2015; Al-Manar Channel, February 20, 2015; Facebook).

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⁸ The Rotem Outpost was an IDF outpost on Ras Bayada, on the beach, at the western edge of the Security Zone in Lebanon. The outpost was constantly under Hezbollah’s attacks.
Hassan Abdallah's outstanding works include a series of films glorifying Hezbollah's operatives and shahids:

**“Tayf al-Liqa” (“A Meeting with a Ghost”):** The story of a Central Combat Information photographer who accompanies a Hezbollah fighter in a mission of planting an IED against an IDF force. The film includes **flashbacks** to the photographer’s childhood and adulthood, documenting the **neighborhood and environment** where he grew up. As the film proceeds, the two men lose their way and are assisted by **another fighter**, whom they meet by chance, who asks them to give **his regards to his mother when they complete their mission**. At the end of the film, the photographer meets the mother of that operative, who reveals to him that **her son was killed as a shahid a few years earlier** (i.e., making him realize that they were assisted by his ghost) (Al-Akhbar, February 18, 2015; the Al-Manar Channel website).

**DVD package of the film “A Meeting with a Ghost”** (Dar Al-Manar’s website)
“Nuqtat Fidaa” (“The Point of View of Fidaa”): The story of a medic by the name of Fidaa Mughniyeh, who treats men hit during the Second Lebanon War while risking his own life (Al-Akhbar, February 18, 2015; website of the Ayn Baal network, April 30, 2017).

“Sariyyat al-Ishq” (The Platoon of Yearning): The story of the suicide bomber Haytham Dbouq, who blew himself up in a car bomb against an IDF convoy in Tell Nhas on August 19, 1988 (Al-Manar Channel’s website).

The “Ayyam Majidah” (Days of Glory) film series: Each of these films is about a showcase operation carried out by Hezbollah before the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon. Before he died, Abdallah managed to make two films in this series: the attack on the Aramta Base and the attack on the Rotem Outpost (Al-Manar Channel’s website).

Advertising on the Al-Manar Channel

The Al-Manar Channel broadcasts relatively few commercials, from Lebanese advertisers only. This demonstrates that the main source of funding is Iran, while commercials and donations constitute only a secondary source of revenue.

Following are two commercials for example:

- Commercial of an optics store chain named Optic Raja, with branches in Lebanon.

Right: Optic Raja optics store chain advertising on Al-Manar. Left: The husband, pleased with the glasses that he bought, convinces his wife, who suffers from vision problems, to buy glasses (from a commercial for Optic Raja)
Commercial for a fashion chain named 2H, selling children’s clothes. The speaker in the commercial speaks English with an American accent.

The Al-Nour Radio Station

Overview

Radio Al-Nour is a Lebanese radio station which is owned by Hezbollah and represents its propaganda strategy. It broadcasts from Beirut in Arabic only. Radio Al-Nour started operating in 1988 and received its broadcasting license in 1999. It broadcasts 24 hours a day on three frequencies (covering most of Lebanon, northern Israel, and part of the Syrian coast). The station also broadcasts live on the Internet. Among its declared objectives: “Calling for the awakening of the forces of the nation and directing its capabilities to support the project of resistance (i.e., Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations) in order to restore our holy sites and liberate our occupied land [i.e., Israel].” The station’s average rating in 2017 was 7.1% (“Radio Al-Nour,” Arabic Wikipedia; Radio Al-Nour’s website; Al-Hall website, February 22, 2019).
The building of Radio Al-Nour which was bombed by the IDF in the Second Lebanon War (Radio Al-Nour’s website, August 8, 2011 – the anniversary of the bombing of the building). In times of war, Radio Al-Nour serves as an important channel to convey messages to the fighting troops and raise their morale.

Radio Al-Nour’s CEO is Youssef al-Zein, and the editor-in-chief is Abbas Shuqeir. The programs broadcast on the station encompass a large variety of topics: politics, economy, society, education, culture, philosophy, religion, history, science, development (of health, agriculture, nutrition and safety), leisure, sports, and programs for the family, youth, and children. A total of 95% of the content broadcast is original production. In addition, the station has an extensive, advanced news broadcasting system (Radio Al-Nour’s website; Al-Hall website, February 22, 2019).
Content of the broadcasts

To examine leading content on Radio Al-Nour broadcasts, the ITIC found and documented 29 programs broadcast in August 2019 and 45 commercials broadcast on the station during the first six months of 2019.

Following are the types of content which appeared in the broadcasts:

- Most of the content was devoted to **Shiite topics** (including reading Quran chapters, programs on hadith, and advertising courses and events marking Shiite commemoration dates). Another important topic was **social content**, including announcements on the opening of vocational trainings, a program matching up job seekers and others who recruit employees, and programs on sports, books, and social media.

- **Content on the resistance** (i.e., Hezbollah), which included publicizing invitations to Hezbollah events (memorial ceremony for the shahid Mostafa Badr al-Din, the ceremony of the Shahid Leaders Day, etc.); Nasrallah’s speeches; and a program on the battle of Wadi Saluki in the Second Lebanon War.

- **Content relating to Iran** was also prominent. For example, a program on the life of Imam Khomeini and reports on events marking the 40th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

- **Many current event shows**, **notices of the ministries of the Lebanese government**, and **commercials, most of them of businesses in southern Lebanon**.

Hezbollah’s newspapers and magazines

Baqiyyatullah magazine

Baqiyyatullah was founded in **1991** and is described as an Islamic magazine which set itself the goal of **making content accessible in simple language adapted to readers of various levels of education**. As at 2011, the magazine had **about 15,000 subscribers**, mainly among **Hezbollah operatives** (website of the Al-Maaref al-Islamiyya network; Janoubia, July 7, 2011). The editorial board is in the building of **the Islamic Al-Maaref Cultural Association** in Beirut’s southern suburb (Al-Ma’mourah neighborhood). The magazine is printed and published by **Dbouk International for Printing & General Trading**.
The editor-in-chief is Sheikh Bassam Mohammad Hussein, a senior Shiite cleric who wrote several books about Ashura and appears on the Iranian Al-Kawthar TV Channel (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 335, August 2019; website of the Al-Kawthar TV Channel; website of Al-Minbar Publishing; website of Imam al-Kazem’s Tomb; website of the Islamic Al-Maaref Cultural Network). Other senior figures on the editorial board are the general supervisor Sayyid Ali Abbas al-Mussawi, the editor Naha Abdallah, and the director Sheikh Mahmoud Karnib (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 335, August 2019).

Right: Logo of Baqiyyatullah magazine. It consists of the name of the magazine as well as the slogan “For a reader who seeks the truth.” The magazine is described as “An Islamic cultural, comprehensive monthly” (website of Baqiyyatullah magazine). Left: Sheikh Bassam Mohammad Hussein, the editor-in-chief (Facebook page of Sheikh Bassam Mohammad Hussein)

Content of Baqiyyatullah magazine

To examine the leading content and the values which Baqiyyatullah wishes to inculcate in its readership, the ITIC selected the latest issue, published in August 2019, as a test case. The issue includes the following articles (Baqiyyatullah, issue No. 335, August 2019):

- “Youth following the path of the Quran:” Article on various aspects of the Shiite faith among youth. These are actually citations from a book of the senior Shiite cleric Ayatollah Mojtaba Tehrani, who was one of Imam Khomeini’s students.
- “In the eyes of the beholder” – An article about proper clothes according to Shiite Islam.
“Say to people proper words” – An article about the importance of proper wording and clearly expressing oneself according to Shiite Islam.

“Gatherings loved by Allah” – A review of the types of gatherings looked upon favorably by Shiite Islam (for purposes of studying, reading the Quran, etc.), and such that are frowned upon (for example, gatherings where the enemies of Allah are praised, mixed gatherings of both women and men, etc.).

“Man should choose friends according to his discretion” – Article about the importance of friendship between one person and another according to Shiite Islam.

“Where does their resoluteness come from?” short interviews with youngsters of the “resistance society,” i.e., the Shiite society which is being created in Lebanon by Iran and Hezbollah. The interviews focus on the question of where they draw their resoluteness from and what influenced them in choosing their way. They have the following answers: the mosque, Ashura [Shiite] gatherings, shahids’ last wills, Nasrallah’s speeches, activity of the Educational Mobilization, the Imam al-Mahdi Scouts etc.

The cover page of issue 335 of Baqiyyatullah magazine (August 2019), whose content was examined by the ITIC (website of Baqiyyatullah)

In addition to these articles, the August 2019 issue also included several regular sections:

Two editorials, devoted to the image of Imam Ali bin Abi Taleb and to addiction to computer games.
“The light of loyalty” – **Quotes from the teachings of Imam Khomeini (religious laws of clothing) and Imam Khamenei (pilgrimage to Mecca).**

“Islamic knowledge” – This section included an article on rules of **prayer in public**; an article on **morality** (corruption resulting from conduct); explanation for the **Al-Ahed prayer**, and an article by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on the subject of “Beware the torments of the next world.”

“Around the world” – This section included an item on the world’s fastest train in Japan; and on the other hand, an item on a **commendation awarded on behalf of Imam Rida’s Tomb to the Iranian soldiers who shot down the American aircraft over the Persian Gulf.**

“The Oasis” – Short stories, a “Test yourself” section on the Quran; and a **quotation from a shahid’s last will.**

Readers’ letters.

Events and commemoration dates: This section included an article on **the Shiite holiday of Al-Ghadir**, an article on **the Second Lebanon War**, and an interview with the chairman of Hezbollah’s Political Council, Sayyid Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid. The interview focused on the factors that allowed Hezbollah’s victory over Israel in the Second Lebanon War.

Family and society: **Impressions of a long-time teacher regarding youth in the “resistance society;”** and an article on the **role of computer games in the psychological warfare waged against Hezbollah supporters.**

**Jihad and shahada:** This section included the **life story of the shahid Ali Mahmoud Saleh**, killed in the Second Lebanon War, and an interview with the **wounded jihad fighter Fadi Qarout.**

Publicizing the names of the winners in a **Shiite knowledge competition** held by the magazine. Prizes for first to third place were **visits to holy tombs**; places 4-6 received **money prizes** of LBP 50,000, 100,000 and 200,000 (about USD 33, 66 and 132, respectively).

**In summary:** The content of the magazine includes an **overdose of indoctrination** – on the **Shiite faith**, on **Hezbollah and the Shiite resistance society**, and on **Iran** (both in the Shiite religious sphere and in the current political context).
The Al-Ahed newspaper

The Al-Ahed newspaper was founded in **1984** as a weekly and in **1999** began to appear also on the Internet. In recent years, the hard copy of the newspaper is not published anymore and its entire activity is conducted on the Al-Ahed news website, which serves as an official media outlet of Hezbollah. The internet newspaper Al-Ahed appears in **Arabic**, **English**, **Spanish** and **French**. On the newspaper’s website, there are regular sections on the following topics: Lebanon, Palestine, the Persian Gulf, Yemen, the world, “Eye on the enemy” (a section which monitors Israel), and video. Apart from the above, there are also special sections (for instance, the section “The Sword of Victories,” which in August 2019 presented selected stories from the Second Lebanon War).

Logo of the Al-Ahed newspaper (Al-Ahed news website)

The Al-Ahed newspaper provides a great deal of propaganda on events taking place in Lebanon, in the Middle East, and in Israel. It also publishes information on the activity of Hezbollah’s senior figures and cultivates the personality cult of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The newspaper has a photo archive covering events that took place vis-à-vis Israel and in Lebanon from the 1980s until the present day.
Al-Ahed newspaper’s website in Arabic (August 15, 2019)

Al-Ahed newspaper’s website in English (August 15, 2019)

Al-Ahed newspaper’s website in Spanish (August 15, 2019)
In addition, the Al-Ahed website has a Facebook page, Twitter account and an app for Apple and Android devices. There is also a possibility to join WhatsApp and Telegram groups in order to receive updates.
Right: Al-Ahed website’s Facebook page in French (August 25, 2019)
Left: Al-Ahed website’s Facebook page in Spanish (August 25, 2019)

Right: Registration page to a Telegram group operated by the Al-Ahed website. Left: Explanation how to register to WhatsApp groups operated by Al-Ahed
Overview

Hezbollah operates an official website named Al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya – Lubnan (“the Islamic Resistance – Lebanon”, hereinafter: “Al-Muqawama website”). This is Hezbollah’s leading website. Hezbollah also operates another official website, named The Central Combat Information. In addition, Hezbollah’s social institutions operate their own website (Jihad al-Bina Association, the Martyrs Foundation, the Foundation for the Wounded etc.).
Al-Muqawama ("the resistance") website


- Al-Muqawama is Hezbollah’s leading official website. It consists of a large quantity of content of various kinds:
  - News reports, including headlines from the Al-Ahed news website and links to the website's articles.
  - The section of “The Islamic Resistance” (i.e., Hezbollah), which includes three subsections:
    - “The Islamic Resistance:” This subsection presents a (partial) list of Hezbollah’s killed operatives according to their date of death, along with their biographies. In addition, the section features significant events in the history of Hezbollah, for example: the IDF’s withdrawal from the Security Zone in 2000, prisoner exchange deals, the Second Lebanon War, abductions, quality operations, suicide bombing attacks, and Hezbollah’s involvement in the civil war in Syria.
    - “Zionist terrorism:” This subsection includes articles on Palestinian and Lebanese terrorists imprisoned in Israel, a section on the Shebaa Farms, a review of so-called Israeli massacres in Lebanon, and major hostilities such as the Second Lebanon War and Operation Grapes of Wrath.
    - The Islamic Resistance Support Association (IRSA): This subsection includes general information on the IRSA, a Hezbollah civilian institution...
engaged in fundraising for military purposes.\(^9\) In addition, it explains how to donate money and there are several examples of donations received.

- **The secretary general:** As part of Hassan Nasrallah’s personality cult, the website presents the activity of Hezbollah’s secretary general, his interviews, meetings, and speeches. In addition, there are details of his biography, divided into childhood, religious studies, activity in Hezbollah, the leadership period, and a collection of articles written about him in various media outlets.

- **Hezbollah:** The activity of Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure; reports on Hezbollah’s political activity (press releases, declarations, meetings and visits of the senior figures) and reports on the political activity of Hezbollah’s MPs.

- **The commanders:** Activity and news on Hezbollah commanders and senior Iranian figures: Hajj Imad Mughniyeh, Sheikh Ragheb Harb, Sayyid Abbas Mussawi, Imam Moussa Sadr\(^10\), Imam Khamenei, and Imam Khomeini.

- **“Shahid of the Day”** – Every day, a biography of a shahid killed on that day is presented.

- **“On this day”** – Every day, important events which took place on that day are presented.

- **Video, photos, and audio:** A large collection of visual content, including Nasrallah’s speeches, resistance songs directed and photographed, shahid photos, photos of significant events in the history of Hezbollah (for example, the IDF’s withdrawal day), posters created to mark important events, and cartoons.

- **“In short”** – This section includes selected quotations and brief biographies of important figures, such as Iranian leaders and Imad Mughniyeh’s mother.

- **“Exclusive – Resistance:”** Items and articles on the “resistance” (i.e., Hezbollah). For example, the full version of Nasrallah’s interviews and speeches, selected events and incidents from the Second Lebanon War, “Battles of the Ridges” (on the Syrian-Lebanese border) in the summer of 2017.

- **News:** The content is similar to that of the “Exclusive – Resistance” section, yet it is arranged in chronological order (for instance, on August 12, 2019, this section

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\(^9\) See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from February 12, 2019, “Hezbollah Launched a Campaign to Raise Money for Military Purposes Using the Islamic Resistance Support Association.”

\(^10\) A prominent Lebanese Shiite leader whose activity led to the establishment of the Amal movement.
featured an item on the battle of Marj Ayoun, which was waged around that date (the Second Lebanon War, 2006).

**News of the enemy:** Selected content from the Israeli media, focusing on content which indirectly serves the propaganda that Hezbollah wishes to convey. For example, the exposure of a plan to build a railroad between Israel and the Arab countries (Hezbollah’s message: opposition to normalization between Israel and the Arab states); paving roads for rapid evacuation of residents of Israel’s north (Hezbollah’s message: deterrence, northern Israeli residents will have to be evacuated); warning of the IDF Ombudsman regarding a shortage of manpower in the Israeli army (Hezbollah’s messages: the IDF is weak, Israel is deterred).

**Milestones in history:** Important events in the history of Hezbollah from 1990s until 2011.

**The content of the political document** of Hezbollah from 2009.\(^\text{11}\)

**Link to a website** created in memory of **Engineer Hossam Khosh-Nevis**, who headed the Iranian authority to assist in the reconstruction of Lebanon, which operated in southern Lebanon after the Second Lebanon War.

**Violation of Lebanon’s sovereignty:** Reports on the so-called violation of Lebanon’s sovereignty by Israel in 2016-2017. What is referred to is daily documentation of Israeli flights in the skies of Lebanon, penetration of vessels into Lebanon’s territorial waters and the activity of Israeli ground forces near the border between Israel and Lebanon.

**Survey:** The question in the last survey was: “**How to support the Palestinian resistance?**” Possible answers were: with arms, with money, with volunteers, by standing with the Palestinian cause, or all of the above is correct. By the end of 47 days in which the survey was open, results were as follows: 69.62% - All answers are correct; 17.4% - with arms; 7.67% - by standing with the Palestinian cause; 3.24% - with volunteers; and 2.06% - with money.

**Getting in touch:** The website’s e-mail address and links to a YouTube channel (closed down) and to a Twitter account opened in March 2019.

**RSS service and joining a distribution list.**

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\(^{11}\) See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from December 18, 2009, “Has Hizbullah Changed? The 7th Hizbullah General Conference and its Continued Ideology of Resistance”
Computer games

In 2013-2016, Hezbollah distributed a series of computer games entitled “Play-Resist.” The series, which includes 13 network games (Flash), is divided into the following subsections: “The Series of Liberation Games” which are about events prior to the IDF’s withdrawal from the Security Zone; “The enemy is in the range of fire” games, which are based on sport games; “Various games,” which are based on familiar formats, such as Pacman; two separate games, “Eye in the Sky” (in which the player is required to fly a Hezbollah UAV to defined targets in Israel and collect intelligence about them) and “the forthcoming morning” (a two-dimensional game similar to table hockey, describing selected events in the history of the military struggle between Hezbollah and Israel).

The Central Combat Information website

Another official Hezbollah website is The Central Combat Information. This website covers events on the ground throughout all the arenas of the Axis of Resistance (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen etc.) and publishes photos, videos and articles on significant events and important attacks in the history of Hezbollah. In addition, the website also includes maps of the control zones of the Axis of Resistance in any of the relevant counties (emphasis is placed on the control zones of the Syrian regime and the Houthis in Yemen); cartoons; and selected content from the Israeli and the “takfiri” media (i.e., the media of the jihadi organizations).
Right: Homepage of the Central Combat Information. The headline features an item on Hezbollah’s condolences to the people and leadership of Yemen on the death of the Houthi leader’s brother (website of the Central Combat Information, August 15, 2019). Left: Report on the website about the IDF’s fortification work in the Rmeich area (website of the Central Combat Information, March 23, 2019)

Websites of Hezbollah’s civilian institutions

In addition to websites serving Hezbollah as a whole, Hezbollah’s civilian institutions operate their own websites. Following are several examples:

Homepage of the website of the Martyrs Foundation (August 22, 2019)

Homepage of the website of the Foundation for the Wounded (August 22, 2019)
Hezbollah’s presence on social media

Hezbollah maintains considerable presence on social media, mainly on Facebook and Twitter, and in many cases succeeds in circumventing regulations forbidding the spread of content supporting terrorism, constituting a violation of the terms of use. There are many hundreds of profiles, pages and accounts spreading content and messages supporting Hezbollah’s policy and ideology, even though they are not necessarily operated by Hezbollah operatives. Among the types of users, there are Hezbollah operatives, Hezbollah supporters, wounded fighters, and family members of shahids. One cannot rule out the possibility that some of the accounts are fictitious (bots).

Examples of the presence of Hezbollah on Facebook and Twitter

In addition to operatives, supporters, and family members of shahids, it is possible to find on Facebook official pages of institutions in Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure, many pages devoted to the commemoration of shahids, and local news pages with a clear tendency to support Hezbollah. Following are several examples of Hezbollah’s presence on Facebook:

- The Facebook page “Morning of Ayta” is a local news page of the village of Ayta ash-Shaab, in southern Lebanon. In addition to routine local news (municipality activity, advertising of businesses, blessings on holidays, birth and death notices, etc.), the page regularly features invitations and reports (including live broadcasts) of Hezbollah’s activity in the village. For example: a sport day organized by the Sports Mobilization, graduation ceremony of the Educational Mobilization, and funerals of shahids. In addition, there are posts on this Facebook page of content
relating to Hezbollah’s fighting against the IDF in the village during the Second Lebanon War, especially around the anniversary of the war.

Cover of “Morning of Ayta” Facebook page (Morning of Ayta Facebook page, August 20, 2019)

Invitation to an event of “Meeting in the Square” of the Sports Mobilization (one of Hezbollah’s social institutions) due to take place on August 21, 2019, including completions in various branches of sport (“Morning of Ayta” Facebook page, August 20, 2019)

The Facebook page “The Shahids of the Holy Defense:” This page is dedicated to commemorating Hezbollah shahids from all times while giving special attention to fatalities of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war (who are referred to as “the Shahids of the Holy Defense”). The page is kept up-to-date almost daily, posting photos, last wills, biographies, and stories related to Hezbollah shahids (as part of Hezbollah’s shahid cult).
“Shahid” Facebook page: This is the official page of Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation. The page is updated every few hours, posting content in accordance with the policy of the Martyrs Foundation: invitations to funerals and memorial ceremonies of shahids, photo of the shahid of the day (in fact, every day, photos of all shahids killed on that date are posted, with the name of every shahid and the year of his death), stories of shahids’ lives, various ways to donate money to the Martyrs Foundation, interviews with friends and relatives of shahids, and more.

Right: Profile page of the “Shahid” Facebook page (“Shahid” Facebook page, August 20, 2019). Left: Mother of the shahid Hossein Ismail al-Ashhab relating how he used to celebrate the Shiite holiday of Al-Ghadir (“Shahid” Facebook page, August 20, 2019)

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12 For details about this institution, see the ITIC’s study from March 14, 2019, “Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation: Its purpose, mode of operation and funding methods”
“Walaa Hamoud” Facebook page belongs to a female relative of the shahid Hossein Hamoud, who was killed in the town of Zabadani (Syria) in November 2015. His relative regularly posts photos of the dead operative and his family, including current photos of his children. This is intended to demonstrate how the family carries on with its life in spite of his death. Other content on the page is devoted to the commemoration of other shahids and to spreading political messages conforming to Hezbollah’s policy (for instance, posters against the “Century Deal,” disseminated by Hezbollah on the recent global Jerusalem Day initiated by Iran, in May 2019). The dissemination of such content, as well as adding “like” to many pages affiliated with Hezbollah, are intended to show that the family of the shahid does not resent Hezbollah for the death of their son but keeps supporting Hezbollah.

![Facebook profile of Walaa Hamoud](image1)

Right: Photo of the shahid’s mother visiting the home of another shahid (Facebook page of Walaa Hamoud, August 12, 2019). Left: Facebook profile of Walaa Hamoud (Facebook page of Walaa Hamoud, August 20, 2019)

Twitter account and Facebook page of Ali Shueib, a Hezbollah prominent media figure

One of the most prominent figures on Hezbollah’s social media is Al-Manar correspondent Ali Shueib, who has a Twitter account and a Facebook page. Ali Shueib was born in Burj Hamoud (Beirut) in 1970, and at age 16 moved to Al-Sharqiya, where his family comes from in southern Lebanon, out of his desire to watch Hezbollah’s activity against Israel from a short distance. In 1992, he began operating as part of Hezbollah’s Media Unit in the south. The first photo that he took was of the then secretary general of Hezbollah, Sayyid Abbas Mussawi, in Jebchit, on the day he died (the last photo of him alive).
Subsequently, he worked as a photographer on the Al-Manar Channel and correspondent of Radio Al-Nour in southern Lebanon, among other events, during the IDF Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath, on the day the IDF withdrew from Lebanon, and in the Second Lebanon War (Al-Akhbar, March 25, 2019).

On his Twitter and Facebook accounts, Shueib posts many contents conforming to Hezbollah’s policy. He focuses on the following topics: the so-called weakness of Israel’s society and army (for example, posting photos of soldiers sleeping or crying and emphasizing the deficit in Israel’s budget); playing down the importance of the fortifications on the border between Israel and Lebanon; personality cult of Nasrallah and Khamenei (posting photos and quotes) and focusing on Hezbollah’s military power, for the purpose of deterrence (for example, posting photos and videos from the Second Lebanon War and from battles in Syria).
Right: Israeli combat gear allegedly abandoned during the Second Lebanon War. The following text is attached to the photo: “This is where the demonstration of power of your war machine came to an end. This will no doubt happen wherever the spirit is fighting in the body of our men of the resistance. July 2006, the teaching and the lesson” (Ali Shueib’s Twitter account, August 7, 2019). Left: Instructions of Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei to the pilgrims to Mecca who wish to distinguish themselves from the Saudis (Ali Shueib’s Twitter account, August 10, 2019)

Photo posted by Ali Shueib on his Twitter account on August 26, 2019, the day after Nasrallah’s speech in which he threatened with retaliation against Israel for the quadcopter attack in Beirut. Ali Shueib blessed Nasrallah and said that the outcome of his speech is that Lebanon’s skies are free of drones, and Israeli soldiers remain on the Israeli side of the fence (Ali Shueib's Twitter account, August 26, 2019)

Al-Manar Channel’s presence on Twitter

The Twitter account of the Al-Manar Channel, Hezbollah’s leading media outlet, in English, Arabic, French and Spanish:
Tagging campaigns on Twitter

One of the most prominent activities of Hezbollah on Twitter (and also on Facebook, albeit on a lesser scale) is tagging campaigns (with hashtags). Once in a while or depending on special events or developments, a hashtag is selected which represents Hezbollah’s position or reflects support for Hezbollah’s policy, and many users post tweets on that topic attaching the selected hashtag. This is one of Hezbollah’s ways to generate commitment, unity and solidarity among its supporters, as well as a kind of power demonstration on social media. Thus, public compliance with these campaigns, time and
again, results in the selected hashtag reaching the top of the list of common hashtags in Lebanon within a few hours.

Following are several examples of tagging campaigns of Hezbollah operatives and supporters in 2019:


The “Challenge of Supporting the Resistance” tagging campaign began on April 23, 2019. As part of this campaign, users posted hundreds of tweets in praise of donating money to Hezbollah, mainly through the Islamic Resistance Support Association (IRSA). The timing of the campaign was decided following a report on April 22, 2019, according to which the US Department of State offered $10 million in return for information on the funding sources of Hezbollah (Reuters, April 22, 2019).

During the campaign, dozens of photos and videos were published, of people donating money through collection boxes placed by the Islamic Resistance Support Association in public places and private homes as well as through collection boxes of the Al-Imdad Charitable Association, which also belongs to Hezbollah.

Fundraising for Hezbollah through Twitter

Right: A girl named Malak Wehbi donating money through a collection box of the Islamic Resistance Support Association at the center of the Islamic Health Organization (two civilian institutions of Hezbollah). The following text was attached to the photo: “For your eyes, Sayyid [Hassan Nasrallah], the funds and our souls and everything we have” (Malak Wehbi’s Twitter account, April 23, 2019). Left: A man named Hassan Durra donating money through a collection box of the Islamic Resistance Support Association at a private home. The following text was attached to the photo: “$10 million to anyone who will provide information on the funding of Hezbollah. Idiots! For Hezbollah, we will sacrifice our blood before our money, before anything” (Hassan Durra’s Twitter account, April 23, 2019)
The “It is their right to get a bullet” tagging campaign began on May 25, 2019. During this campaign, users published hundreds of tweets against the call to allow members of the former South Lebanon Army (SLA) to return to Lebanon. The timing of the campaign was decided in response to a tagging campaign of the opponents of Hezbollah, which started on May 24, 2019, under the title “It is their right to return.” Within the tagging campaign, tweets were published against the call and against the possibility that members of the South Lebanon Army would return to Lebanon, focusing on the integration of some of them in Israeli society and even in the Israeli defense establishment and mentioning the “crimes” perpetrated by SLA members, according to Hezbollah supporters.

Cultivating personality cult of Hassan Nasrallah

The “I have faith in you, and that’s enough” tagging campaign began on June 11, 2019. During this campaign, users published on Twitter hundreds of tweets supporting Hezbollah leader Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah. The timing of the campaign was decided following the death of Nasrallah’s sister on June 10, 2019. The users posted declarations of support and loyalty to Nasrallah, sometimes with quotes from his speeches and many photos of him.

Tweet as part of the campaign, which includes the following text attached to Nasrallah’s photo: “Our pride among nations. Our pride for a glorious tomorrow due to a decisive victory. We will give our soul, children and money for him” (Ali Nasser al-Din’s Twitter account, June 11, 2019).

Left: Tweet posted during the campaign, which includes the following text attached to Nasrallah’s photo: “Just say a word, Sayyid” (Abu Eissa’s Twitter account, June 11, 2019)
The “Embassy of the Civil War”\textsuperscript{13} tagging campaign began on August 7, 2019. During this campaign, users posted hundreds of tweets condemning a statement published by the US Embassy in Lebanon regarding the incident of Qabr Chamoune in July 2019.\textsuperscript{14} Users condemned the very publication of the statement, which they believed was inappropriate intervention in Lebanon’s internal affairs, and even intimated that the embassy should be physically hit.

The “Peace upon the Shahids of the Promise Fulfilled” tagging campaign began on August 10, 2019. During this campaign, users posted hundreds of tweets praising Hezbollah shahids who fought in the Second Lebanon War and were killed during or after it (one of the titles of this war used by Hezbollah is “the Promise Fulfilled”). Users published photos and paintings of shahids, along with praises and sometimes even details of the battle legacy of the shahids in the war.

Glorification of shahids

Right: Video (since deleted) on Ali Mahmoud Saleh. The following text is attached to the video: “The shahid commander Ali Mahmoud Saleh, or ‘defeater of the Merkava [Israeli tanks]’, who was one of the outstanding missile launchers of the resistance and the hero of the Al-Ezinya operation before the liberation [i.e., before the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon]\textsuperscript{15}. In the July War [i.e., the Second Lebanon War], he hit over 17 Merkava tanks, destroyed them and burned the invaders” (Malak Wehbi’s Twitter account, August 10, 2019). Left: Photos of Bilal Khayr al-Din (Abu Ja’afar) and Hamza Haidar (Abu Abbas), referred to in the tweet as “among the heroes of Operation Promise Fulfilled (reference to the abduction of the Israeli soldiers that triggered the Second Lebanon War) (Hossein Balout’s Twitter account, August 10, 2019). Note: Both of them were killed in Syria during Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian civil war.

\textsuperscript{13} The original reads “Safarat al-Fitna”, literally, “the embassy of war between brethren” (in Lebanon’s case, a sectarian war).

\textsuperscript{14} Shooting at the convoy of Lebanon’s Minister of Refugees Salah al-Ghreib, which stirred a strong internal Lebanese dispute.

\textsuperscript{15} Firing an anti-tank missile on an IDF outpost in the former Security Zone, on January 31, 2000 (the IDF sustained three fatalities).
Lebanese media outlets supporting Hezbollah

Al-Akhbar daily

In addition to the media outlets which are owned by Hezbollah and its Media Relations Unit, there are two Lebanese media outlets which strongly support Hezbollah and its propaganda strategy: the Al-Akhbar daily and the Al-Mayadeen TV Channel. The daily Al-Akhbar was founded in August 2006, immediately after the Second Lebanon War ended. It describes its political stance as “leaning to the left” and asserts that it “belongs to the camp of those rejecting the American hegemony” (terminology reminiscent of that of Iran). The daily gives priority to investigative reports relating to daily life and to social issues rather than traditional news system. The editor-in-chief and the chairman of the board is Ibrahim al-Amin, who is strongly connected to Hezbollah’s leadership and to Hassan Nasrallah in particular. Due to the close affiliation with Hezbollah, it often receives exclusive information (biased in favor of Hezbollah) on internal Lebanese issues, on the Palestinians, and on Israel.

Al-Akhbar consists of the following sections: Lebanon, Arabs, the World, Culture and People, Sports, Opinions, and an economic supplement. It employs many reporters, who specialize in a variety of topics and are operating in many countries. It has Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts and is very popular in Lebanon.

Al-Akhbar supports Hezbollah and reflects its policies. However, in the past, there were cases where it criticized Hezbollah’s conduct on Lebanese internal issues. For example, on September 15, 2017, the newspaper devoted a special section, consisting of
three articles, to the issue of Hezbollah’s choice to ignore Lebanese internal affairs. The articles in this section were written by the editor-in-chief Ibrahim al-Amin and two other reporters, who chose to address – directly and indirectly – Hezbollah’s leadership without sparing them harsh words describing the problem, considering themselves as those sounding the “wake up call” who love Hezbollah and wish for its best.16 On the other hand, in external issues, such as the military struggle against Israel, the newspaper clearly reflects Hezbollah’s positions. Furthermore, news items related to Hezbollah (including Hassan Nasrallah’s speeches) are quite prominent in the daily.

Interview with Hassan Nasrallah on the Al-Akhbar daily (July 13, 2019)

**Al-Mayadeen Channel**

The Al-Mayadeen Channel is an independent satellite TV news channel. It was founded in 2012 by the Lebanese Tunisian-born journalist Ghassan bin Jiddo. Based in Beirut, it broadcasts 24 hours a day. The channel is focused on news, broadcasting more than 10 news bulletins every day. The budget of the channel is $40 million, and its main sources of funding are donations from Saudi, Palestinian and Lebanese figures, as well as trade in the channel’s stock in Europe and in South America (Al-Mayadeen Channel's website; “Al-Mayadeen Channel,” Arabic Wikipedia). The channel supports the Iranian policy and Hezbollah, and its owner is closely related to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

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16 This address was based on their feeling that the civil war in Syria was coming to an end. Following that, Hezbollah’s supporters were expecting Hezbollah to end its considerable role in fighting outside the borders of Lebanon and to shift its attention and resources to internal Lebanese issues.
The channel’s owner Ghassan bin Jiddo, born in 1962, is a Shiite Lebanese journalist holding a BA in the Humanities. He began working in the media in 1990 and served as a correspondent of the BBC in Tehran starting in late 1995. In 2000, he started to work at the Al-Jazeera Channel, resigning in 2012 in protest over the way the Arab Spring events were covered. After his resignation, he established the Al-Mayadeen Channel. The channel supports the Iranian policy, Hezbollah, and the Syrian regime and is considered close to Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (“Ghassan bin Jiddo,” Arabic Wikipedia).

The channel provides direct broadcasts on its website as well as via the following satellites: NileSat Orbit, Hot Bird, Eutelsat 36B, Eutelsat 7 West A, Galaxy 19. Additional satellites mentioned in relation to the channel (although it is not possible to determine whether it still uses them) are Badr 4, Arabsat, Arabsat 5C, Nilesat, and Noorsat (Al-Mayadeen Channel’s website; “Al-Mayadeen Channel,” Arabic Wikipedia; Lyng Sat website, August 12, 2019).

In addition to the news bulletins, the channel broadcasts 19 programs (updated to August 2019). Nearly half of the programs (eight) are also devoted to current events and news, and the rest are divided between the following topics: documentary and general content (four); Iran (two); culture (two); society (one); Shiite Islam (one); and global jihad (one) (Al-Mayadeen Channel’s website).
The international and inter-Arab measures against Hezbollah’s media empire

The American sanctions

An examination of the names of media outlets and prominent figures in Hezbollah’s propaganda activity which are on the US Department of the Treasury’s SDN list\(^1\) reveals that **Hezbollah’s two prominent media outlets** (the Al-Manar Channel and Radio Al-Nour) **are included on the sanctions list**. However, the US sanctions list does not include media outlets and senior Hezbollah figures related to Hezbollah’s media layout. Following are the details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the media outlet / figure</th>
<th>Included on the US sanctions list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Manar Channel</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio Al-Nour</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Media Relations Unit</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Al-Ahed newspaper</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baqiyatullah magazine</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Afif</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrahim Farhat</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ibrahim al-Mussawi</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youssef al-Zein</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbas Shuqeir</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheikh Bassam Mohammad Hussein</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sayyid Ali Abbas al-Mussawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naha Abdallah</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Sheikh Mohammad Karnib</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali Shueib</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) According to the SDN (Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List) and the US administration’s website.
Blocking the broadcasts of the Al-Manar Channel and withholding its satellite services

Since 2004, France, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (each of them separately) stopped allowing Hezbollah to use their satellite services. However, every time Hezbollah found alternatives and began broadcasting via other countries’ satellites. Today, the Al-Manar Channel continues its broadcasts via satellite services received from Russia and Indonesia. Finding the alternatives enabled Hezbollah to continue the Al-Manar broadcasts in the various languages, and measures against its broadcasts proved ineffective so far.

In November 2008, Germany blocked the channel’s broadcasts on its territory. In December 2004, the Al-Manar broadcasts were blocked by France on Eutelsat, the French satellite. In 2015, the (Saudi) Arabsat stopped relaying the channel’s broadcasts on its satellite as well as the broadcasts of the Al-Mayadeen Channel ("Al-Manar Channel," Arabic Wikipedia); In 2016, the Egyptian satellite Nilesat stopped providing the channel with broadcasting services (Hezbollah’s website, April 10-19, 2016), even though the Al-Manar Channel remained a member in the Arab States Broadcasting Union.

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18 In November 2008, the German Interior Ministry announced that it was banning the Al-Manar broadcasts in Germany. The Interior Ministry’s spokesman, Markus Bayer, stated that the ban would enter into effect on November 11, 2008. Banning the broadcasts is anchored in Clause 9 of the German Constitution, according to which an organization cannot act with the intention of violating international understandings. The meaning of the ban on the Al-Manar broadcasts is that the German satellite channels cannot offer the Al-Manar Channel as part of their channel packages. In response to the ban, the Al-Manar Channel’s management published a statement condemning the “strange measure” of the German Interior Ministry, claiming that the decision is political and is legally unfounded. According to the statement, this was a blatant violation of the freedom of speech as reflected in human right laws and international laws. The statement said that the channel was targeted by the “American and Zionist oppressive policy” (Lebanese News Agency, November 23, 2008). The director of the Al-Manar Channel, Abdallah Qusseir, said the ban was part of an organized propaganda campaign against the channel, which was carried out by the "Jewish lobby in Europe" (Al-Manar, November 23, 2008).
The Al-Manar Channel appears on the list of the Arab States Broadcasting Union (the Al-Manar Channel was highlighted on the list by the ITIC) (ASBU website, August 25, 2019)

Removing accounts on Facebook and Twitter

During 2018, official Hezbollah accounts were blocked several times on Facebook and Twitter. During the second half of December 2018, Twitter blocked 22 accounts affiliated with Hamas and Hezbollah, complying with a request of the Israeli Justice Ministry. Among others, the account of Hezbollah’s deputy secretary general Sheikh Naim Qassem was blocked (timesofisrael.com, December 20, 2018). In addition, the Al-Manar Channel in English reported that Facebook and Twitter closed down Hezbollah accounts in March, June and August 2018. Facebook also closed down Hezbollah accounts in late 2017. However, in the ITIC’s assessment, these measures have not been effective and Hezbollah’s activity on Facebook and Twitter has not sustained any substantial damage.
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 analyze Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure. So far, the following 12 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)

“Hezbollah’s Women’s Organizations Unit” (August 2019)