



The Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy: A Hezbollah foundation intended to inculcate jihad and the shaheed culture within Shiite society in Lebanon

March 12, 2020

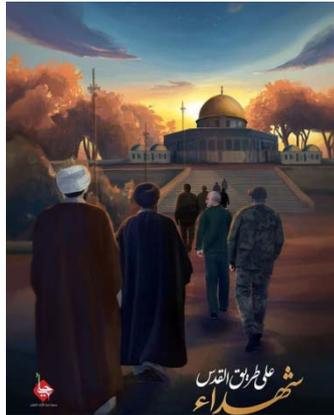
Overview

An important component in building the so-called resistance society is the **inculcation of the values of jihad and shahada (heroic death for the sake of Allah) among the Shiite population in general and the younger generation in particular**. An examination of Hezbollah's civilian institutions revealed that they **are also engaged in cultivating the shaheed culture**, each in its own way and according to its field of specialization (education, culture, art, youth organizations, etc.). In addition, **Hezbollah established a designated foundation named the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, whose activity is dedicated to the promotion of shaheed culture**.

- ▶ The Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy (hereinafter: the association) is engaged in a wide variety of activities: publishing books on the lives of shaheeds; disseminating shaheeds' wills and pictures and stories on their lives on social media; establishing museums; setting up monuments; promoting jihadi "tourism sites;" holding exhibitions and seminars; and operating a center dedicated to keeping shaheeds' belongings and documenting their lives, in Beirut's southern suburb.
- ▶ **The association is part of Hezbollah's "mini-state" established among the Shiite sect in Lebanon, which caters to 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, in the spheres of education, culture, health, welfare, finance, sports, construction, agriculture, and more¹. The social institutions established by Hezbollah with Iranian support provide the Shiite residents of Lebanon 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 years of neglect of the Shiite sect. Hezbollah's extensive civilian activity **is designed to create among the Shiites**

¹ Detailed information on Hezbollah's civilian foundations can be found in the ITIC's series of publications issued in the past year.

a “resistance society” which supports Hezbollah in its struggle against Israel. Sheikh Naim Qassem, Hassan Nasrallah’s deputy, described it as follows: “Resistance, on our part, is a social worldview with all its aspects: military, cultural, political, and media-related resistance”² (for a list of the ITIC’s publications on Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure, see Appendix).



Right: Emblem of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy (Facebook page of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy)³. Left: Poster published by the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy on the occasion of the Shaheed Leaders Day (February 16, 2020). The poster shows Hajj Qassem Soleimani leading Hezbollah’s three most senior shaheeds (Hajj Imad Mughniyeh, Sayyid Abbas al-Mussawi, and Sheikh Ragheb Harb) on their way to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Instagram account of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, February 16, 2020)

The Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy: an overview

► **On October 2008**, the Lebanese Interior Ministry gave permission for the establishment of **the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy**. Among the **declared objectives** of the association, which are specified in its establishment license: “disseminating the **resistance culture and an effort to construct the resistance society**;” “delving into **the significance of**

² Sheikh Naim Qassem, “Resistance Society: The Will of Shahada and the Creation of Victory,” Dar Al-Maaref al-Hikmiyah, 2008, p. 8.

³ The emblem of the association features the word *Ahyaa* (“[they are] alive”), which is taken from two Quran verses on shaheeds. The first is Surat Al-Baqarah, 154: “And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, “They are dead.” Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.” The second is Surat Aal Imran, 169: “And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision” (Sahih International’s translation of the Quran).

shahada and explaining its role in creating life and protecting the homeland, the land and the holy sites;” “writing the history of **the achievements of the resistance** and promoting scientific and historic studies in this field;” “**erecting monuments in shahada sites and building museums to commemorate the role of shaheeds** in creating history and life.” To this end, the association operates a library and a research center and holds **exhibitions and seminars** on shahada (the Lebanese Gazette⁴, October 7, 2008).

► **The center of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy** is in **Al-Imdad Center** in Beirut's southern suburb (**Al-Imdad** is a charity association affiliated with Hezbollah and Iran). It appears that the association belongs to the **Media Relations Unit, which is subordinate to Hezbollah’s Executive Council**⁵. The association operates **in collaboration with various institutions belonging to Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure which also engage in commemorating shaheeds. These institutions include the Women’s Organizations**⁶, **the Education Mobilization**⁷, **the Mleeta tourism site**⁸, **and the Martyrs Foundation.**

Senior officials of the association

The senior officials of the association and its founders are Hezbollah figures who held or currently hold various posts in Hezbollah’s civilian institutions. Following are details about some of them.

► **Sheikh Moussa Daher** is a Hezbollah figure **servicing as director of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy**. Previously, he served as director of the Center for Keeping the Shaheeds’ Belongings, which is operated by the association (see below). **The sheikh is a disciple of senior Shiite cleric Haidar Mohammad Kamel Hobballah** (who graduated religious studies in Iran). **He translated many books on Shiite Islam and the Islamic Revolution in Iran from Persian into Arabic** (the official website of cleric Haidar Hobballah,

⁴ *Al-Jaridah al-Rasmiyah* (hereinafter: The Lebanese Gazette).

⁵ See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from October 2019, “Hezbollah’s media empire”

⁶ See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from September 2019, “Hezbollah’s Women’s Organizations Unit

⁷ See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from 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 foundation”

⁸ See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from October 2019, “Jihadi tourism: visits to battle legacy sites and shahid tombs as an indoctrination tool for spreading Hezbollah’s ideology”

no date; website of the Al-Ghadir Research Center, publishing and advertising, no date; website of Kitab Pedia, no date; Baqiyyatullah magazine, Issue No. 132, from 2002).



Sheikh Moussa Daher, the association director, delivering a speech at the book launch for “Montasser” (“The Victor”) about the life of the shaheed student Mohammad Hossein Jouni, who was killed on the Syrian-Lebanese border⁹ (Ya Sour website, November 29, 2018)

► **Sheikh Yusuf Abd al-Ridha Aassi** is one of the founders of the association. Today, he is **the deputy director of Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation** (Al-Ahed news website, November 10, 2018). Following are personal details about him:

- ◆ **Shiite cleric** born in 1962, a disciple of **Sheikh Mohammad Abbas Dehaini** (Lebanese Shiite cleric, graduate of Fadlallah’s Institution) and **Sayyid Mohammad Hossein Fadlallah** (Lebanese Gazette, October 4, 2004; official website of cleric Sheikh Mohammad Abbas Dehaini; Mouqawimoun website).
- ◆ In February 2002, **he was one of the founders of the Al-Maaref al-Hikmiyah Institute**, which is engaged in disseminating Shiite Islam through research institutes, publishing books etc. (Lebanese Gazette, February 18, 2002; website of the Al-Maaref al-Hikmiyah Institute).
- ◆ Previously, he served in various posts in Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation: **In October 2004, he was the chairman of an association representing Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation¹⁰** (Lebanese Gazette, October 4, 2004).

⁹ Mohammad Hossein Jouni, resident of the village of Al-Abbasiyah in southern Lebanon, was a Hezbollah operative. He was killed in June 2015 in a battle (against jihadi organizations) in the Aarsal ridges on the border between Syria and Lebanon. Concurrently with his military activity, he had been active for many years in Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization.

¹⁰ For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from April 2019, “Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation: purpose, mode of operation and funding methods.” He was the chairman of an association representing the Martyrs Foundation – not the director of the Martyrs Foundation itself.

- ◆ **In January 2006**, he was one of the **founders of Atlas Holding, a company owned by Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation** (profile of Atlas Holding SAL at the Lebanese Registrar of Companies¹¹).
- ◆ **In 2010–2015**, after the establishment of the association, he was **in charge of education and culture in Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation** (Al-Ahed news website, November 10, 2010; Al-Mustafa International University’s website, November 16, 2015).
- ◆ **In February 2020**, the US Department of the Treasury put his name on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN) due to his activity.



Sheikh Yusuf Abd al-Ridha Aassi, one of the founders of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy (Baqiyatullah Magazine, Issue 326, 2018)

Hossein Qassem Khalifa:

- ◆ One of the founders of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy. Previously (March 1998) among the **founders of the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Maaref Islamic Culture Association** (Lebanese Gazette, March 25, 1998). In May 1998, he received permission to issue a non-political weekly in Arabic and English, which is **Baqiyatullah, today – Hezbollah’s monthly**¹² (Lebanese Gazette, May 25, 1998). In March 2004, he transferred the ownership of the magazine to the Al-Maaref Association, converting it into a publication dealing with religious issues (Lebanese Gazette, March 8, 2004).
- ◆ In January 2009, he received permission to establish and head **the Al-Walaa Publishing House and Library**¹³ (Lebanese Gazette, January 21, 2009). This institution focuses on the dissemination of Shiite contents and Khomeini’s ideology – for instance,

¹¹ **Atlas Holding SAL owns about 10 Lebanese companies operating in the spheres of medicine, trade, and fuel and its derivatives** (MEDIC – a company dealing with medical equipment and cosmetics; Shahed Pharm – a pharmacological company; Amana Fuel – a company dealing in fuel and oil products, including a network of gas stations; and Amana Plus – a company dealing in fuel and oil products, as well as the import, marketing and distribution of oil products.

¹² See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from October 2019, “Hezbollah’s media empire”

¹³ **Al-Walaa**, literally, “the loyalty.” The term refers to the loyalty to the path of Imam Ali.

biographies of religious scholars, including that of Imam Khomeini (Facebook page of Dar al-Walaa).

► **Najwa Mohammad Raad:**

◆ **Writer and researcher in the field of oral history.** Authored several books and short stories, and several **studies, including one on the Zionist movement** (YouTube channel of Al-Thaqalayn Satellite TV, February 6, 2019).

◆ **Wrote several books on shaheeds: The Life of the Shaheed Samir Matout¹⁴, The Life of the shaheed Ahmad Ali Shueib¹⁵, and stories of shaheeds and fighters from the time of Hezbollah’s fighting in Syria** (websites of Good Reads and NWF, no date; Al-Ahed news website, August 23, 2017).

◆ Currently, **she is in charge of the Documentation and Writing Department in the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy** (Facebook page of the “New Day” TV show on Al-Kawthar TV, February 24, 2017).



Najwa Raad, in charge of the Documentation and Writing Department in the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy (YouTube channel of the Al-Thaqalayn Satellite TV, February 6, 2019)

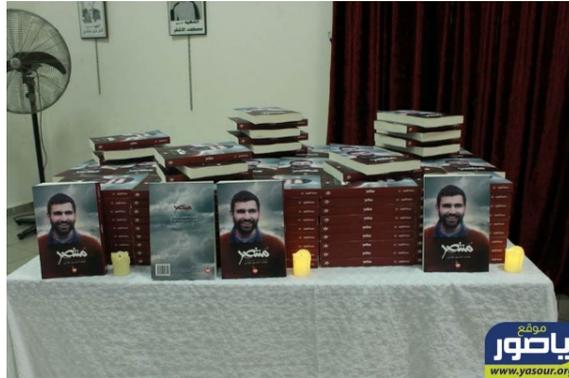
The association’s fields of activity

The main fields of activity of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy are **publishing** books, mainly biographies of shaheeds; **disseminating Internet publications** relevant to its objectives; **operating a center for keeping the belongings of shaheeds**; and holding **exhibitions**. As stated above, the association comprises **the Documentation and Writing**

¹⁴ Killed in the Ali al-Taher Outpost in February 1987 (Hezbollah’s website, February 23, 2013).

¹⁵ Killed in the outposts of Alman –Al-Shomariya in April 1987 (Twitter account of the Martyrs Foundation, April 18, 2019; Hezbollah’s website, December 17, 2007).

Department, headed by **Najwa Raad**, which is mainly engaged in **publishing shaheeds' biographies** (Facebook page of the “New Day” TV show in Al-Kawthar TV, February 24, 2017).



The book “Montasser” (“The Victor”) on the life of the shaheed Mohammad Hossein Jouni, killed on the border between Syrian and Lebanon. The book was published by the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy (Ya Sour website, November 29, 2018)

► **The association is very active on social media.** It runs a **Facebook page** (1,174 followers and 697 likes, updated to February 21, 2020); a **Telegram account** (222 members, updated to February 21, 2020); and an **Instagram account** (840 followers, updated to February 21, 2020). Using these platforms, which are updated on average once a day, the association disseminates content **promoting the glorification of shaheeds**. For instance, **quoting shaheeds' wills** in social and religious events (for example, on Mother’s Day in Lebanon); releasing **photos of shaheeds** at various events held around the anniversary of their death; **short stories from shaheeds' biographies**; and **photos and other graphically designed products on anniversaries of the death of shaheeds**.

Dissemination of photos and wills of shaheeds on social media



Right: The shaheed Ali Younes Atwi, killed in the Second Lebanon War, in a publication of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy on the occasion of Teachers' Day in Lebanon (Instagram account of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, March 9, 2020). Al-Atwi was a high school teacher in southern Lebanon. **Left:** Quote from the will of the shaheed Abdou Sa'id Aghazadeh, killed in February 1997 in the Security Zone, apparently in an attack by an Israeli force near the Delaat Outpost (known in Lebanon as Dabche Outpost; Hezbollah website, January 14, 2008). In this excerpt, the shaheed turns to his mother and asks for her forgiveness for not lending her his attention, claiming that his actions were for the sake of Allah (Instagram account of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, March 3, 2020)



Right: Quote from the shaheed Mohammad Abdullah Fayad, killed in an attack on the Ali al-Taher Outpost (1993). The quote was published on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran: “We wish to declare in front of the whole world that Imam Khomeini’s path is still in our hearts and in the hearts of all the believers...” (Instagram account of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, February 7, 2020) **Left:** Photos of shaheeds killed in the attack on the Ghazlan Outpost (known in Lebanon as Bir Kallab) in January 1989 (Facebook page of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, January 28, 2020)

► **The Center for Keeping Shaheeds' Belongings** was established in 2002. Its objective was “to write the history and document the life of every shaheed of the Islamic resistance, from birth until death.” This is done by collecting **information on the life of the shaheed** (for example, through interviews with his friends and family); collecting documents related to the

shaheed (wills, letters etc.); and collecting and keeping **his personal belongings** (uniform, shoes etc.).

► The center is located in **the Imam al-Kazem Complex in Hayy Madi** (in Beirut's southern suburb)¹⁶. So far, it comprises **more than 8,000 items, more than 9,000 stories related orally** (about 4,000 hours of audio and about 800 hours of video), **more than 10,000 documents, and more than 7,000 photos** (website of the Center of Shaheeds' Belongings of the Association for the Revival of Resistance Legacy, no date; Al-Ahed news website, April 26, 2011; Hezbollah website, May 28, 2015).



Right: Exhibition of the belongings of the shaheed Mohammad Hossein Jouni, killed on the border between Syria and Lebanon. Concurrently with the exhibition, a book launch was held for his biography, issued by the association (Ya Sour website, November 29, 2018). The shaheed's belongings include certificates of appreciation for academic achievements awarded by Hezbollah's Education Mobilization, as well as a plaque of appreciation awarded by the Islamic Resistance Support Authority (IRSA), which is given by Hezbollah to every family of shaheed¹⁷.

Left: Overview of the Imam al-Kazem Complex in Hayy al-Madi, which is where the Center for Keeping the Shaheeds' Belongings is located (Facebook page of the Imam al-Kazem Complex, October 22, 2016)

► The association assists in or initiates **exhibitions** on issues related to its activity. The most prominent exhibition in which the association was involved was the **Qurban Exhibition on the occasion of Shaheed's Day 2019¹⁸**. The exhibition took place in the Imam Hussein Complex in

¹⁶ **Moussa al-Kazem was the seventh Imam** according to the belief of the Shiite main stream, the Twelver Shi'a. Thus, according to their belief, he is a direct heir to the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Kazem served as Imam about 35 years, from age 21 (Wikipedia).

¹⁷ For further details, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from February 2019, "Hezbollah launched a campaign to raise money for military purposes using the Islamic Resistance Support Association"

¹⁸ Literally, sacrifice, offering. The name "Qurban Exhibition" was probably chosen due to its historic context: at the end of the Battle of Karbala, Sayyida Zaynab (the daughter of Imam Ali bin Abi Talib and Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter) was standing over the body of her brother, Imam Hussain, and cried, "Allah, please receive this offering ["Qurban"] from us." This is one of the well-known quotes of Sayyida Zaynab from the Battle of Karbala, which symbolizes her continued adherence to the purpose for which her brother went to the battle, although he and many of his friends and family were killed (article by Salah al-Ta'i on the Kitabat fil Mizan website, October 14, 2015).

Tyre and included **artistic works on shahada** (heroic death for the sake of Allah)¹⁹. Other exhibitions in which the association is involved display **the belongings of shaheeds**.



Note written by one of Hezbollah’s fighters before he died, in which he expresses his longing to enter paradise in order to be close to Imam Hussain rather than because it has rivers and flowers. The note was displayed in the Qurban Exhibition (Facebook page of the Qurban Exhibition, January 2, 2020)

¹⁹ **The painter Ahmad Abdallah, whose art is recruited for Hezbollah**, was one of the artists whose works were displayed in the exhibition. See the ITIC's Information Bulletin from September 2019, “Art and culture used by Hezbollah as instruments of indoctrination”

Appendix

The ITIC's publications on Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure (February 2019-March 2020)

► The ITIC is engaged in a research project whose aim is to map and analyze Hezbollah's civilian infrastructure. **So far, the following 21 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).
- ◆ **“Funding Terrorism:** The method for transferring donations to Hezbollah through the Islamic Resistance Support Association” (March 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 Iranian identity:** Ceremony of Hezbollah operatives in southern Lebanon with conspicuous personality cult of Iranian Leader Ali Khamenei” (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)
- ◆ **“Hezbollah’s media empire”** (October 2019)
- ◆ **“Resistance society: Hezbollah’s municipal activity”** (October 2019)
- ◆ **“Jihadi tourism: visits to battle legacy sites and shahid tombs as an indoctrination tool for spreading Hezbollah’s ideology”** (October 2019)
- ◆ **“Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, in an interview with an Iranian magazine affiliated with Supreme Leader Khamenei, emphasizes the importance of its civilian institutions”** (October 2019)
- ◆ **“Twitter suspended accounts affiliated with Hezbollah, especially Al-Manar. However, an Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center examination revealed that Hezbollah continues to maintain significant presence on Twitter, even after the suspension”** (November, 2019)
- ◆ **“Hezbollah’s Twitter Presence (Update)”** (November 2019)
- ◆ **“Hezbollah’s Twitter Presence (Update 2)”** (November 2019)
- ◆ **“Soccer in the use of terrorism: Hezbollah’s Al-Ahed soccer team is used as a means by Hezbollah to increase its popularity and acquire legitimacy”** (December 2019)
- ◆ **“Green Without Borders: a Lebanese environmental organization that collaborates with Hezbollah and supports its activity near the Israeli border”** (February 2020)
- ◆ **“The Martyrs Foundation – Palestinian Branch: a Hezbollah foundation operating in Lebanon, used as a channel for transferring Iranian financial support to families of Palestinian shaheeds”** (March 2020)