Findings of the study

This document is the second in a series of studies aimed to examine the scope and conduct of Hezbollah’s civilian institutions and the extent of their influence on the local population. As a case study, the ITIC chose several main Shiite cities and the rural areas surrounding them in the three main Shiite population regions: southern Lebanon, the southern suburb of Beirut (Dahieh), and the Bekaa Valley. In each of them, the activity of Hezbollah’s civilian institutions will be examined in comparison with that of Lebanese government institutions or other Shiite organizations (the Amal Movement and other Shiite institutions which are not affiliated with Hezbollah but operate under its auspices). The city of Bint Jbeil was the first in this series of case studies. Nabatieh, a large city with a Shiite population, in southern Lebanon, was chosen to be the second case study.

Following are the findings of an examination of Hezbollah’s civilian institutions in Nabatieh:

◆ In the city of Nabatieh and the rural area surrounding it, Hezbollah, with massive Iranian support, has established a substantial infrastructure of social institutions providing the local population with a wide variety of services. As in Bint Jbeil, Hezbollah’s two prominent spheres of activity are education and health, in which Hezbollah is dominant, albeit not exclusive.

◆ Prominent in the area of education is the Al-Mustafa School, which is part of Hezbollah’s school network. The students are mainly children of high-ranking Hezbollah figures and well-off families in the Resistance Society. The Al-Mustafa school in Nabatieh includes several educational institutions, from kindergarten to high school. This is the largest educational institution in Nabatieh (1,722 students), and the number of students and teachers exceeds the number of students and teachers at each of the other state or private schools in the city. Its level of study is relatively high.

1 See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from December 2020, “The civilian infrastructure established by Hezbollah among the Shiite population in Lebanon: the city of Bint Jbeil as a case study”
The tuition fee is high, but the school provides scholarships or subsidies to population groups associated with Hezbollah (for example, children of shaheeds, of wounded Hezbollah operatives or of clerics). In the town of Sharqiya, west of Nabatieh, there is an elementary school, a branch of Hezbollah’s Al-Mahdi school network.

Prominent in the health sector is the Zahra Clinic, which is part of Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Organization (it is also referred to as “the Hospital of the South”). It provides a variety of medical services, including specialists, lab tests, and vaccinations. Apart from that, Nabatieh and the neighboring village of Toul have two other healthcare institutions, the Islamic Health Organization’s Mental Health Center and the Ragheb Harb Iranian Red Crescent Hospital (Ragheb Harb was a Khomeinist sheikh handled by Iran; he operated in the village of Jebchit, west of Nabatieh, at the time of the IDF’s presence in Lebanon. He was posthumously named “Sheikh of Shaheeds” and became the symbol of Hezbollah’s struggle against Israel). The hospital has 50 beds and an emergency room, an operating room and a pediatrics department.
Hezbollah’s other civilian institutions also have branches in Nabatieh and its environs, providing services to the population in their areas of activity: a pharmacy (selling Iranian medications at reduced prices); Hezbollah’s Foundation for the Wounded (which has a physiotherapy and rehabilitation center in Nabatieh); two troops of the Al-Mahdi Scouts Movement; the Education Mobilization, which indoctrinates Shiite students in the Lebanese education systems; women’s organizations; a quasi-banking institution (the Al-Qard al-Hasan association); Jihad al-Bina; the Sports Mobilization (which runs, inter alia, a soccer school); cultural institutions belonging to the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Maaref Islamic Cultural Association; Hezbollah companies; and a gas station belonging to Hezbollah’s Al-Amana chain of gas stations.

On October 29, 1994, Hezbollah operatives managed to infiltrate into the IDF’s Dlaat Outpost. They hoisted the Hezbollah flag on one of the embankments and threw an IED into the IDF’s observation post. They then fled unscathed. The event was widely covered by the media and became part of Hezbollah’s battle legacy.
The municipal area: A joint list of Hezbollah and Amal (Loyalty and Development) won the recent municipal elections in 2016. In Nabatieh there are two municipalities, headed by two mayors who are closely affiliated with Hezbollah – at least one of them is a Hezbollah member (Dr. Ahmad Kahlil, who is also in charge of Hezbollah’s Hospital Unit). Hezbollah’s municipal power helps it acquire influence on the ground and sometimes even gain funding for its civilian activity (thus, for example, the Nabatieh municipality is a client of Arch Consulting and Meamar Construction, two Hezbollah companies which have been sanctioned by the US since September 2020).

Projects planned by Arch Consulting for the Nabatieh municipality. Left: Plan of the Nabatieh Park. Right: Nabatieh parking lot (Arch Consulting website)

In summary: Hezbollah’s civilian institutions have an extensive presence and activity in Nabatieh and its rural area. However, Hezbollah does not enjoy exclusivity in the civilian services provided to the local population since there are other state institutions and institutions of the Amal Movement and other Shiite institutions. Nevertheless, Hezbollah is the dominant organization in the Nabatieh region, since apart from the civilian infrastructure, it maintains security and military control in southern Lebanon and wields major influence at the local municipal level. All these components contribute to the strength of the Resistance Society and assist Hezbollah in gaining the local population’s support in the campaign against Israel and within Lebanese politics.

The structure of the study

- Part One: The city of Nabatieh: Overview.
- Part Two: Hezbollah’s civilian institutions in Nabatieh and the extent of their impact on the local population:
  - Hezbollah’s educational institutions
• Overview
• The Al-Mustafa school
• The Al-Mahdi school in Sharqiya
• Educational institutions of other Shiite organizations
• Academic institutes and branches of the universities in Beirut
◆ Hezbollah’s healthcare services
  • Healthcare institutions of Hezbollah and the Iranian Red Crescent
  • Healthcare institutions of other entities
  • Hezbollah’s subsidized medical services
◆ The Foundation for the Wounded
◆ Training and inculcating youth with radical ideology: the Imam Al-Mahdi Scout Movement and the Education Mobilization
◆ Women’s organizations
◆ Quasi-banking institution (the Al-Qard al-Hasan Association)
◆ Jihad al-Bina
◆ Sports Mobilization
◆ Municipal activity
◆ Culture
◆ Hezbollah companies
  • Commissioning work by the Nabatieh municipality from Hezbollah companies
  • A gas station belonging to the Al-Amana chain
◆ Welfare services
The city of Nabatieh: Overview

Overview

The city of Nabatieh is the capital of the Nabatieh Governorate and the Nabatieh District and an important city in southern Lebanon. Its population is mostly Shiite, but it also has a Greek Catholic minority. In 2008, the population was estimated at 35,000, and in 2011 at 38,500 (Wikitic; Tareq Jaber's website; Al-Rehab network, April 4, 2011).

Overview of Nabatieh (Al-Khiyam’s local news website, March 4, 2018)

- Nabatieh provides a variety of services to its rural area. There are hospitals in the city, educational and cultural centers, restaurants and bank branches serving the villages in the region. Prominent in the economic activity of the city is the Nabatieh open market, which has been active every Monday for several hundred years. A main source of livelihood is the city's food industry (the entry “Nabatieh” in the Arabic Wikipedia; Janoubia, June 28, 2014; An-Nahar, August 7, 2019). Every year, the city hosts the main Ashura ceremonies, which attract tens of thousands of Shiite pilgrims.

- Nabatieh has a government office building, which includes the seat of the Nabatieh Governorate. In addition, the city has branches of government ministries and various services of the Lebanese state: the Population Registry Office, the Land Registry Office, a representation of the Ministry of Agriculture, a branch of the Telecommunications Ministry, and a branch of the Lebanese Registrar of Companies.

- The local government in Nabatieh is divided into two municipalities: the Nabatieh municipality and the municipality of Nabatieh al-Fawqa (i.e., Upper Nabatieh) (Dawlati

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3 Ashura is the 10th day of Muḥarram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. For the Shiites, it is a day of mourning on the death of Imam Hussain bin Ali, the founder of Shiite Islam, and the members of the family of the Prophet Muhammad, in the Karbala Battle in the 7th century CE. In this battle, Sunni Muslims defeated the Shiites, and in their memory, Shiite believers perform a ceremony which includes self-flagellation and self-injury. The violent nature of the ceremony in Nabatieh is inspired by Iran.
website; Al-Nashra, October 27, 2020). Nabatieh has branches of the following banks: Bank Audi, Fransabank, BLOM Bank, the Central Bank of Lebanon, Creditbank, BLC Bank, and Fenicia Bank. In addition, the city has a Western Union branch and two offices of OMT Lebanon (Google Maps).

**The security aspect**

- On the eve of the First Lebanon War (1982), a Palestinian force of Fatah’s Qastal Brigade, a brigade the size of a battalion operated in the Nabatieh region (the Jarmak Battalion, about 200-250 fighters). The Palestinian military presence and terrorist attacks, and the IDF retaliatory operations, harmed the Shiite population, leading to increasing tension between it and the Palestinian terrorists. The Shiite community and the Amal organization, which emerged from the community during the Lebanese civil war, waged a violent struggle against Palestinian control in southern Lebanon. This struggle was unsuccessful, since the Palestinian military force was far superior to them. *When the IDF entered Lebanon in June 1982, it was perceived by the Shiites in southern Lebanon as a liberating force, and IDF soldiers were welcomed by the residents of southern Lebanon.*

- The Beaufort Castle was a front line outpost of the Palestinian terrorists on the outskirts of the Nabatieh region, whose high altitude enabled them to dominate the roads leading from the Litani River. The Beaufort outpost was intended to delay the IDF’s advance or cause it to sustain as many fatalities as possible. The Palestinians fought against an IDF force that attacked them until the last fighter. The battle ended at dawn on June 7, 1982. The IDF forces continued to advance along the roads of the Nabatieh region leading westward toward Sidon, bypassing the city of Nabatieh (which was later taken over without significant resistance). Nabatieh remained under the control of the IDF until the IDF’s withdrawal in 1985.

- However, within a year of the IDF’s entry into Lebanon, the favorable reception that the IDF forces had received from the Shiites turned into hostility. This was reflected in attacks against the IDF forces with the participation of Shiite organizations (initially led by Amal as part of a “struggle against the occupation” policy, and later joined by Hezbollah, until it became the dominant force while the IDF remained in the security zone). The Shiites’ activity against the IDF was triggered, inter alia, by the continued presence of the IDF in Lebanon even after the Palestinian operatives were driven out of Lebanon; The IDF’s responses to the guerrilla activity against it that harmed the Shiite civilian population; and
Amal's ambition to become the dominant force among the Shiite community after the IDF’s withdrawal from Lebanon.

The most notable turning point in the Shiite population’s relations with the IDF, and the State of Israel in general, was an incident that took place at the Ashura ceremony in Nabatieh: on October 16, 1983, tens of thousands of Shiites gathered in central Nabatieh to celebrate Ashura Day. During the ceremony, an IDF convoy, unaware of the event and its religious importance, attempted to pass through Nabatieh. The passage of the convoy interrupted the Ashura ceremony and an attempt was made to remove those celebrating from the road. The participants began throwing stones at the convoy and overturned some of the vehicles. In response, IDF soldiers opened fire, killing two residents and wounding 15 others.

The Ashura Day Incident in 1983 (Ya Sour website, October 19, 2003)

In his book, The Vanished Imam: Musa al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon, Fouad Ajami wrote about the great impact of the Ashura incident in Nabatieh:

“...The die was cast in the south. The next day Sheikh Muhammad Mehdi Shams al-Din, Musa al-Sadr’s [leader of the Amal movement] designated clerical deputy and vice-chairman of the Higher Shia Council, issued a fatwah [religious ruling] calling for “civil disobedience” and “resistance to occupation in the south.” Dealing with Israel, he said, was “absolutely impermissible.” Shams al-Din made his call for civil disobedience from Beirut. However, in southern Lebanon, in the territory occupied by Israel, there were other clergymen, who sided with a completely different policy. The drivers, suicide bombers and “martyrs” were already waiting outside the door. On November 4, 1983, a suicide bomber drove a car bomb into the Israeli headquarters in Tyre [...] An uncompromising war broke out between the Shiites and the Israeli
occupation forces. In 1984 alone, more than 900 attacks were carried out against Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon.”

The spread of the Iranian ideology and the influence of Hezbollah in the Nabatieh region

In the years when the IDF was in Lebanon, Hezbollah’s power center in the Nabatieh region was the town of Jebchit, to the west of the city. This is due to Sheikh Ragheb Harb, a young Shiite cleric from a devout farming family, who was to play an important role in the Khomeinist awakening in Lebanon. At the age of 17, he moved to Beirut to study religion and a year later went to Iraq to study in Al-Najaf. In Al-Najaf, he met prominent Shiite clerics, some of whom were to hold key positions in Hezbollah (Abbas Mussawi, for example).

When Sheikh Ragheb Harb returned to Lebanon in 1973, he served as a teacher in the town of Jebchit and as a cleric in various villages in the region. In June 1982, when the IDF entered Lebanon, he was in Iran on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam al-Rida and a meeting with Imam Khomeini. He quickly returned to Lebanon and began to round up supporters for jihad against Israel and to call on the Lebanese population to refrain from any cooperation with Israel (Wiki Shia, the entry on Sheikh Ragheb Harb; Shimon Shapira, “Hezbollah between Iran and Lebanon”).

According to Shimon Shapira’s book, Sheikh Ragheb Harb was arrested by Israel on charges of subversive activity in the spring of 1983. Some months after his release, the sheikh was summoned to Iran, where he met with top Iranian officials. From his meetings in Iran, he returned to southern Lebanon, full of recognition of the mission that he was charged with in Tehran, to represent Imam Khomeini in southern Lebanon. His Iranian handlers equipped him with funds to finance his activity and bodyguards to protect him. Upon his return, he headed Hezbollah’s operations in southern Lebanon. He apparently

6 Shimon Shapira, Hezbollah between Iran and Lebanon (Hebrew) – Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2000, pp. 120-121. In his book, Shimon Shapira writes that during the 19th century, Iranian families began to settle in Jebchit and Nabatieh which, due to their location, served as a link between the trading cities of the Land of Israel and Damascus. In 1918, dozens of Iranian families lived in Nabatieh and Jebchit who engaged in trade and brought economic prosperity to the region. At the same time, they also had a religious influence, for example the Ashura ceremonies in their violent form (until the 1920s, the scenes of self-injury to the point of bloodshed at the Ashura ceremonies were unknown in Lebanon) (Hezbollah between Iran and Lebanon, pp. 17-18).
also played an active role in that activity. On the night of February 16, 1984, he was killed and became the “Sheikh of Shaheeds” (Sheikh al-Shuhada), a symbol of Hezbollah's struggle against Israel. According to a report in As-Safir (April 3, 1984), the Amal movement detained two Shiites from the village of Tibnit, who confessed to killing Sheikh Ragheb Harb and operating in the service of Israel.

Sheikh Ragheb Harb (Hezbollah website, February 17, 2013)

The conduct and influence of Hezbollah’s civilian institutions in the city of Nabatieh

The education system in Nabatieh

Hezbollah’s social institutions have a significant presence in Nabatieh and the surrounding communities. These institutions provide a wide range of services to the local population, above and beyond the services provided by Lebanese state schools and Shiite institutions and the Amal Movement operating in the region. In particular, Hezbollah’s presence and activity are prominent in the areas of medical services (where it is dominant) and education, with Hezbollah operating a school system whose students outnumber those of other educational institutions operating in the city. Below, the activity of Hezbollah’s institutions will be examined according to their various spheres of operation, in comparison with the activity of state institutions and institutions of other Shiite organizations operating in the Nabatieh region.

► According to the Lebanese Ministry of Education, there are 23 educational institutions in the city: eight state institutions and 15 private ones (free and paid). Hezbollah’s Al-

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7 Ibid., p. 121.
Mustafa School, the most prominent of the various schools operating in the Nabatieh region, also comes under the definition of private school. Following is data about the city’s educational institutions (School Guide for the 2017-2018 school year on the website of the Educational Center for Research and Development of the Lebanese Ministry of Education):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Elementary school</th>
<th>Middle school</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>Total students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Administration</th>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>135</td>
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<td>Samih Dakhil Shahin State Middle School</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fariha al-Hajj Ali State Middle School for Girls</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>140</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hassan Hamad Ghandour State Middle School</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nabatieh Model Mixed State Middle School</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yusuf Salman Chamoun State School and Kindergartens</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abdel Latif Fayad Mixed State</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Nabatieh Vocational School</td>
<td>Mixed Civil Science School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Al-Zahra Mixed Elementary School</td>
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<td>136</td>
<td>166</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model Middle School for Education</td>
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<td>401</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>23</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Schools (paid)</td>
<td>Al-Mustafa</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>Nabatieh National Protestant School</td>
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<td>412</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Maqqased al-Khayriya al-Islamiya Mixed High School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antonine Sisters Al-Sayyida High School</td>
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<td>295</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1462</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Model al-Lycee Mondiale</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Al-Kawthar Model</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>267</td>
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<td>Al-Nukhba al-Ameliya School</td>
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<td>118</td>
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<td>201</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Rihanat al-Tarbia High School</td>
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<td>244</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Canadian-Lebanese Academy of Excellence</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hezbollah’s educational institutions

Overview

Hezbollah operates two networks of private schools in the Shiite community: the Al-Mahdi School Network and the Al-Mustafa School Network, which has a more elitist character and a higher level of education. The studies in Hezbollah’s education system are designed to create a new generation of Shiite youths, imbued with Khomeinist ideology, some of whom will join Hezbollah’s ranks upon graduation. In Hezbollah’s schools, children and teenagers are educated from kindergarten to high school graduation. At these schools, students undergo Shiite-radical indoctrination based on the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. This indoctrination includes the glorification of Khomeini and Khamenei, the assimilation of the value of shahada (self-sacrifice), adherence to the path of “resistance,” and identification with the shaheeds who were killed fighting in the ranks of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem, who preaches for the establishment of the Resistance Society among the Shiite community, is the dominant figure in the Al-Mustafa School Network. These schools are attended by children of wealthy families affiliated with Hezbollah, as well as the sons of senior Hezbollah officials. The large number of Al-Mustafa school graduates who joined Hezbollah, and the large number of those killed as shaheeds in its ranks indicates, from Hezbollah’s perspective, that the education system that it is cultivating among Shiite youth is indeed fulfilling its purpose.

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8 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from July 2019, “Hezbollah operates networks of private schools indoctrinating Shiite youth in Lebanon with the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and with loyalty to Hezbollah and the path of terrorism”
The Al-Mustafa School in Nabatieh

The Al-Mustafa School in Nabatieh, which is owned by Hezbollah, is the city’s biggest educational institution. The number of students (1,722) and teachers (170) exceeds the number of students and teachers at each of the public or private schools operating in Nabatieh. The Al-Mustafa School comprises a number of educational institutions, from kindergartens to a high school. The school describes itself as a “private high school that provides religious education for boys and girls from kindergarten to the end of high school, in Arabic, French and English.”

The school is located at the western entrance to Nabatieh and is attended by students from the city itself and dozens of surrounding villages. In addition to classrooms and offices, the school complex has three halls, a library, a computer lab, playrooms, science labs, and prayer houses for men and women (Islamic Religious Education Association website (Al-Mustafa Schools), undated) The school principal is Dr. Qassem Kalout, and one of the previous principals, Ibrahim al-Mussawi, currently serves as a Member of Parliament on behalf of the Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc (Hezbollah) in the Lebanese Parliament (Rita Sabbah’s Twitter account @ritasabbah24, November 28, 2019; Radio Al-Nour, November 2020).
Subsidized studies

In contrast to the Al-Mahdi school network, students at the Al-Mustafa school network include children of high-ranking members of the Resistance Society: children of senior Hezbollah officials and children of the traders and businessmen who fund the organization’s activities (Janoubia, August 22, 2017). The tuition fees are considered the highest in Lebanon. As at September 2018, it was more than four million Lebanese pounds per year (according to the conversion rate at the end of December 2018: $2,650). One reason for this is the network’s subsidized tuition for the children of Hezbollah shaheeds (Samer’s Twitter account @samerjazzo, August 19, 2018; Samar Hamzeh’s Twitter account @samarohamzeh and Muhammad’s Twitter account @Za3eem_AL7ara, September 25-26, 2018).

The tuition fees at the Al-Mustafa School are considered to be the highest in Nabatieh (Dr. Abdallah Bassel’s Twitter account @Abdallah_Bassel, September 7, 2019), but the school has a fund to help needy students and grants scholarships. The school estimates that about 36% of students use the aid fund (Islamic Religious Education Association website (Al-Mustafa Schools), undated). The Al-Mustafa School network provides scholarships and/or subsidies to various population groups, especially those affiliated with Hezbollah (Twitter account of the Islamic Religious Education Association website (Al-Mustafa Schools), April 1, 2019).

The following are the groups eligible for scholarships or subsidies at the schools:
- Children of shaheeds and wounded operatives
- Children of clerics
- Students who have learned the Quran by heart
- Children of graduates of the school network
- Outstanding students
- Orphans
- There is a discount for siblings from the same family who attend the school

In addition to classroom studies, the Al-Mustafa School in Nabatieh holds other activities such as field trips, leisure trips, religious activity and various ceremonies (for example, a coming-of-age ceremony for students). The school also provides students with basic clinic services and accident insurance, as well as counseling and guidance for those with behavioral problems or those with scholastic difficulties (Islamic Religious Education Association website (Al-Mustafa Schools), undated). The Al-Mustafa School in Nabatieh has an alumni association, which assists outstanding students, participates in various ceremonies, directs the graduates to further academic studies and gives extra classes to students with scholastic difficulties (Facebook page of the Al-Mustafa Nabatieh Alumni Association).

Standard of education

In objective metrics such as the number of students per class and the number of students per educational staff member, the comparison between the Al-Mustafa School in Nabatieh and the city's other educational institutions places it at the average level. The school ranks 14th out of 23 in the number of students per class (20; the municipal average is 19.7) and seventh out of 23 in the number of students per educational staff member (10.1; the municipal averages is 12) (School Guide for the 2017-2018 school year on the website of the Educational Center for Research and Development of the Lebanese Ministry of Education).

However, the overall level of education at the Al-Mustafa school network is considered to be relatively high in Lebanon, and the network’s students regularly win various awards for their academic achievements. The following are some examples relevant to the Al-Mustafa School (website of the Islamic Religious Education Association (Al-Mustafa Schools), undated):

- In 2019 and 2020, students from the school came in second in a translation competition held by the American University of Culture and Education (AUCE) and in a competition on “The Phenomenon of Corruption in Lebanon,” and received an honorable mention in a competition on proper speech, public speaking, reciting poems, and syntax.
In 2018, the school won the Arab Robotics Competition, and students from the school won the Women’s Rights Committee competition, Outstanding Science Students Competitions (including one held by the Lebanese American University, LAU), the first places in the Main Lebanon Arabic Language Competition and the first places in robotics competitions.

In 2017, faculty and students from the school won first place in a Quran competition, first place in a robotics competition in Lebanon, first place in the Arabic short story competition held by the Lebanese American University (LAU), first place in the Dr. Hassan Muhammad Nur al-Din Poetry Competition and first and second places in a robotics in the service of the wounded competition and in a general robotics competition.

In 2016, students from the school won second place in a competition on the role of young people in building the homeland, first place in a photography competition and first place in a poem recitation competition held by the Lebanese International University (LIU).

In 2015, students from the school won second place in Lebanon in a painting competition, seventh and eighth places in a physics competition, first place in southern Lebanon and 10th place in Lebanon in an essay competition on the subject of “What Kind of Lebanon do you Want?”, “Most Beautiful Literary Text” award and several prizes in a dialogue and civil peace competition held by Bishop Salim Ghazal.

Al-Mahdi school in Sharqiya

In the town of Sharqiya, west of Nabatieh, there is a branch of Hezbollah’s Al-Mahdi school network: an elementary school with 1,059 students (School Guide for the 2017-2018 school year on the website of the Educational Center for Research and Development of the Lebanese Ministry of Education).
Educational institutions of other Shiite organizations

In the Nabatieh region, there are branches of two other Shiite institutions:

- **Al-Rahma High School of the Al-Mabarrat Association**, which belongs to the Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah Institutions. The school was established in 2000 and includes kindergartens, an elementary school, a middle school and a high school. The curriculum at the school is the official Lebanese curriculum and studies take place in Arabic, English and French. The school also has a program for mainstreaming students with special needs and a program for children of expatriates. In addition to classrooms, the school has a hall, a prayer house, sports fields (some of which are covered), a health food store, a Quran study hall, a library, a clinic, a science lab, an art studio, etc. (The Al-Mabarrat Association website). In the 2017-2018 school year, the school had 86 classrooms, 185 teachers and 15 administrative staff members, and a student body of 2,043: 501 in kindergarten, 948 in elementary school, 429 in middle school and 165 in high school (School Guide for the 2017-2018 school year on the website of the Educational Center for Research and Development of the Lebanese Ministry of Education).

- **A center of the Al-Imdad Association**, which is a branch of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, which is actually a school for students with special needs. The center is known as the Nabatieh Center although it is actually located in the nearby village of Harouf (The Al-Imdad Association website).

Academic institutes and extensions of the universities in Beirut

Several institutes and extensions of the universities in Beirut also operate in Nabatieh and the nearby villages, some of which are apparently affiliated with Hezbollah (or at least

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9 Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah was a senior Shiite cleric who studied in Najaf, Iraq, returned to Lebanon and played an important role in shaping the radical Shiite movement in Lebanon. He established a network of educational, charitable and healthcare institutions which operated among the Shiite population. This network is currently managed by Fadlallah’s son and also has a presence in Nabatieh.

10 The Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is an Iranian aid organization. Its first branch in Lebanon was opened in Beirut in 1983, on the order of Imam Khomeini. It later expanded its activity and opened branches in the south and in the Bekaa Valley. The association provides assistance to vulnerable populations through the provision of monthly allowances, food distribution, financing medical treatments, etc. (Shimon Shapira, “Hezbollah between Iran and Lebanon” – Tel Aviv University and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, fourth edition (2006), p. 146).
hold Hezbollah propaganda activity) (Google Maps Service, Education Mobilization website).

Following are the institutes and extensions:

- The Al-Manar Academic Institute (affiliated with Hezbollah).
- CIS College Institute
- ATC College Institute for Information Technology
- Al-Afak Academic Institute
- The Al-Amjad Academic Institute (affiliated with Hezbollah)
- Foonoon (Arts) Academy
- Al-Nur Academic Institute
- An extension of the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Business Administration at the Lebanese University
- An extension of the American University of Culture and Education (AUCE)
- An extension of the Faculty of Science of the Lebanese International University (LIU)
- International Institute for Vocational and Technological Education

Hezbollah’s healthcare services

Health institutions of Hezbollah and the Iranian Red Crescent

*The Ministry of Health website lists six medical centers in the city of Nabatieh, two of which belong to Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Organization* (list of medical centers in Lebanon, Lebanese Ministry of Health website, 2017):

- The Islamic Health Organization’s Al-Zahra Clinic (also known as the Hospital of the South or the Medical Center of the South). The clinic provides services such as

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11 For example, on October 10, 2016, students at the Institute held a rally in solidarity with Yemen, following the deaths of many civilians in International Coalition airstrikes two days earlier (Al-Manar Channel, October 10, 2016). They were apparently civilians in areas under the control of the Iranian-backed Houthis.

12 In August 2020, the Al-Afak Institute announced a collaboration with the Al-Mabarrat Charitable Association, which belongs to the Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah Institutions (Wadi Press website, August 17, 2020).

13 Four Hezbollah operatives killed during the organization’s involvement in the Syrian civil war attended this institute (Database for the Study of Hezbollah’s Shaheeds in Syria, January 2019).

14 Hezbollah conducts intensive activity among the students at the Lebanese University. Several Hezbollah operatives killed in the fighting in Syria had attended the Al-Afak Institute (6), AUCE (5) and the Lebanese University (15).

15 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from June 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.”
vaccinations, lab tests, imaging tests and emergency medicine, and has specialists in the following fields: family medicine, endocrinology, cardiology and vascular medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, dermatology, ENT, ophthalmology, nutrition, gastroenterology, neurology, general surgery, urology, respiratory system, orthopedics, dentistry, and an orthopedic orthotics specialist. It also operates a pharmacy (Islamic Health Organization website).

- **The Islamic Health Organization’s Nabatieh Mental Health Center.** This is a psychology center and an addiction treatment clinic. This center treats over 200 cases a month and serves residents of the Nabatieh Governorate and the Southern Governorate (Islamic Health Organization website).

![Left: The Islamic Health Organization’s Nabatieh Mental Health Center (Islamic Health Organization website, November 20, 2015) Right: The Islamic Health Organization’s Al-Zahra Clinic in Nabatieh (Islamic Health Organization website, September 15, 2016)](image)

- **The Iranian Red Crescent’s Ragheb Harb Hospital** operates in the village of Toul, near Nabatieh. This hospital has 50 inpatient beds, 10 operating room beds, 10 beds in the department of pediatrics and 10 beds in the emergency room. In addition, the hospital performs lab tests and imaging tests, and has departments in the following areas of specialization: surgery (seven operating rooms), pediatrics, outpatient clinics (gynecology, audiology, ophthalmology, nutrition, dentistry, etc.), obstetrics, cardiac catheterization, cardiovascular and cardiac intensive care (Ragheb Harb Hospital website; Lebanese Ministry of Health website).
In March 2020, as part of its program to fight COVID-19, Hezbollah set up a testing center in a parking lot in Nabatieh. In addition, it carried out disinfection and information operations in the city (Facebook page of the Rassed Network, March 22-27, 2020).

Healthcare institutions of other entities

The following are healthcare institutions of other entities located in the Nabatieh region and serving the residents of the city and the surrounding rural area:

- **Nabatieh Governmental Hospital.** A public hospital with 50 inpatient beds, 20 operating room beds and 10 beds in the department of pediatrics. The hospital employs 35 doctors and 55 fulltime nurses. It carries out lab tests and imaging tests (Lebanese Ministry of Health website).

- **Nabatieh Red Cross Center.** No information is available about the scope and nature of the services at the center, but it is evident that the center is located in a relatively large building (Lebanese Ministry of Health website).

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16 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from April 2020, “Hezbollah’s coping with COVID-19: A test case of the conduct of the mini-state established by Hezbollah in Lebanon”
The Ministry of Health's First Aid Center. Despite its name, this is a medical center for all intents and purposes. It provides services such as lab tests, imaging tests and vaccinations, and dispenses medications for chronic illnesses. The center has a staff of specialists in the following fields: public health, pediatrics, nutrition, orthopedic surgery, ophthalmology including surgery, dentistry, urology, cardiovascular, gastroenterology, gynecology, dermatology and plastic surgery (Lebanese Ministry of Health website; Facebook page of the Nabatieh First Aid Center).

Nabih Berri Nabatieh Governmental University Hospital (despite its name, the hospital is actually located in the nearby village of Kfarjoz). The hospital opened in 1998 and was expanded in 2013. It now has 174 beds in the following departments: plastic surgery, surgery, pediatrics, NICU, obstetrics, and imaging (Al-Khiyam’s local news website, March 23, 2013; Facebook page of the Nabih Berri Governmental Hospital Physicians in Nabatieh).

Pharmacies

There is a pharmacy in Nabatieh called Al-Mortada, which belongs to Hezbollah’s chain of pharmacies. The pharmacy sells Iranian drugs at discounted prices (Heba Harb’s Twitter account, July 2, 2020; Abu Khader’s Twitter account, October 17, 2020).

In addition, there are at least eight pharmacies in the city of Nabatieh which are not known to be affiliated with Hezbollah: Ibn Sina, Al-Janah, Saloum, Duna, Baalbeki, Badir, Jaber and Al-Mustaqbal. It should be noted that opposite the entrance to the Al-Mustaqbal pharmacy is a collection box for the Sayyid Fadlallah Institutions, but it is impossible to determine whether this is an indication of the pharmacy’s affiliation (Google Maps service).

Hezbollah’s subsidized medical services

The medical services of Hezbollah’s Islamic Health Organization are subsidized in various ways, but the ITIC does not have information on the extent of the subsidies. One of the methods for subsidizing the Al-Zahra Clinic, like other institutions of the Islamic Health Organization, is giving discounts on commemorative dates taken from Shiite Islam or from Hezbollah’s battle legacy (known as “health days”). On these days, healthcare activity combined with propaganda activity take place.

Here are some relevant examples of such activity at the Al-Zahra Clinic in Nabatieh:
On March 10, 2012, the Education Mobilization’s Teachers Union held a Health Day at the Al-Zahra Clinic on the occasion of Teachers Day, during which members of the union and their spouses had free medical and lab tests (Al-Ahed, March 10, 2012).

On March 9, 2016, the Education Mobilization’s Teachers Union held a Health Day at several centers of the Islamic Health Organization in southern Lebanon, including the Al-Zahra Clinic, on the occasion of Teachers Day. As part of the Health Day, the clinic offered free testing (cardiovascular, diabetes, blood lipids, blood pressure and early detection of breast cancer), as well as a 40% discount on imaging tests and lab tests (Lebanese National News Agency, March 9, 2016).

In the last quarter of 2018 and in the first quarter of 2019, four Health Days were held at the Al-Zahra Clinic, during which free services were provided (Islamic Health Organization website, May 14, 2019).

The Foundation for the Wounded

Hezbollah’s Foundation for the Wounded takes care of wounded or handicapped operatives who were wounded as a result of Hezbollah’s activity or Israeli attacks in Lebanon. The Foundation mainly takes care of the medical rehabilitation and reintegration of the wounded in society and in the labor market. The Al-Abbas Center for Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, which belongs to the Foundation for the Wounded, was established in the 1990s and is located in the Foundation building in Nabatieh, which also houses the Foundation’s Southern Lebanon branch. The Center provides various kinds of physiotherapy and rehabilitation treatment through the use of modern equipment, with the aim of helping the wounded resume their normal life (website of the Foundation for the Wounded; Baqiyyatullah magazine, issue no. 308, May 2017).

For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from May 2019, “Hezbollah’s Foundation for the Wounded: purpose, modus operandi and funding methods”
Training and inculcating youth with radical ideology: the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts and the Education Mobilization

Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization is active in Nabatieh. This institution indoctrinates Shiite students in Lebanon’s state and private educational systems, preparing them for joining the ranks of Hezbollah\(^\text{18}\). The Education Mobilization is extensively active in the various educational institutions in Nabatieh, mainly the academic institutions and the Hassan Kamel Sabah State High School (the Education Mobilization’s website). The Education Mobilization annually holds a **central fair** in southern Lebanon where it sells stationery and school supplies at subsidized prices and lends textbooks (Education Mobilization’s website; Ya Sour, September 10, 2015; Hezbollah website, December 21, 2020).

Education Mobilization’s school supply fair in Nabatieh in September 2015. A sign advertising the Al-Manar Academic Institute can be seen in the left photo (Ya Sour, September 10, 2015)

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\(^{18}\) For further details, 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”
In Nabatieh, Hezbollah operates two troops of the Imam Al-Mahdi Scout Movement, whose purpose is to train and inculcate youth with Shiite radical Islamic ideology according to the Iranian concept of the Guardianship of the Islamic jurist\(^\text{19}\). The boys troop is named after Al-Imam al-Sajjad\(^\text{20}\) and the girls troop is named Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa Troop (Facebook page of Fawj Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa; website of the Foundation of the Wounded, December 30, 2017). In addition, Nabatieh is the seat of the Jabal Amel 2 Commission of the Al-Mahdi Scouts Association, which is in charge of troops from Sidon to Jebchit and in part of Iqlim el-Kharroub (the region between the Zahrani and Awali rivers) up to the western Bekaa Valley (Nabatieh municipality website).

![Right: Leaders of the Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa troop of the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts visiting a shaheed’s family on Shaheed Day 2020 (Facebook page of the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts troop in Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa, November 16, 2020). Left: Girls of the Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa troop in an event honoring Hussein Assi (who was wounded fighting in Syria) (website of the Foundation for the Wounded, December 30, 2017)](image)

**Amal movement activity**

Amal’s youth movement, the Al-Resalah al-Islamiya Scouts Association, also has a troop in Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa, named after the shaheed Abd al-Hassan Atwi (a Nabatieh resident killed in an attack against an IDF’s outpost in the city in June 1984) (Facebook page of the Al-Resalah al-Islamiya Scouts Association in Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa; Amal Movement’s “We shall not forget our shaheeds” Facebook page, June 28, 2019).

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\(^{19}\) For further details, see, the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from July 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”

\(^{20}\) **Al-Imam al-Sajjad (Ali bin Hussain, Zayn al-Abedin)** is the Shiites’ fourth Imam. He was present at the Battle of Karbala, where his family members were killed, and also other important battles. He authored a book of prayers highly regarded by Shiite Islam (“Ali al-Sajjad” and “Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiya,” Arabic Wikipedia).
The Amal Movement’s Youth and Sports Office, which is the institution corresponding to Hezbollah’s Education Mobilization and Sports Mobilization, is also active in Nabatieh. The office initiated the renewal of the pledge of allegiance to the Amal Movement (Marwanieh’s local news website, March 21, 2019); organized New Year’s celebrations (Al-Nashra, December 20, 2018); and held a parade on horseback in the city on the anniversary of the disappearance of Imam Moussa Sadr (Ya Sour, August 29, 2015).

The Women’s Organizations

The Women’s Organizations unit is the main institution in Hezbollah that deals with the women’s sector. Its goal is to instill Shiite Islam and the Iranian worldview among women, so that they in turn will intensify support for Hezbollah and its hegemony in Shiite society. There is extensive activity by women’s organizations in the city of Nabatieh, for example: holding Ashura ceremonies (Araby Press, September 2018); a rally of solidarity with Jerusalem following US President Trump’s decision to recognize it as the capital of Israel (Ya Sour, January 2018); and planting trees on the border with Israel, in collaboration with the municipality of Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa (Al-Nabatieh al-Fawqa Municipality’s website, August 21, 2017).

The corresponding institution in the Amal Movement, the Women’s Affairs Office, also holds extensive activity in Nabatieh. For example, Ashura ceremonies (Facebook page of the Amal Movement’s Women’s Affairs Office, October 3, 2017); contacts with Christian institutions (ZNN website, December 25, 2017); and meetings with members of parliament (Sawt al-Farah website, June 22, 2020).

Quasi-banking institution (the Al-Qard al-Hasan Association)

Hezbollah’s Al-Qard al-Hasan Association specializes in quasi-banking activity, consisting primarily of providing loans and operating charitable community funds in accordance with Islamic religious law (which forbids charging interest). In recent months, following increased US pressure on the Lebanese financial system, the Association has expanded its quasi-banking services, with the goal of becoming a Lebanese bank.

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21 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 2020: “Hezbollah’s Women’s Organizations Unit.”

22 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from June 2019: “Hezbollah’s socioeconomic foundations: Al-Qard al-Hasan, a quasi-bank that provides interest-free loans, mainly to members of the Shiite community”
for all intents and purposes. The Al-Qard al-Hasan Association has two branches in the city of Nabatieh (Facebook page of the Al-Qard al-Hasan Association, March 10, 2020).

**Jihad al-Bina**

- **Hezbollah’s Jihad al-Bina Association** is a branch of the Iranian Jihad al-Bina Organization, which deals with rehabilitation of war damage and reconstruction of buildings in the wake of both current military events and in large-scale clashes. During routine periods, the association carries out diverse activity among members of the Shiite community in the areas of agriculture, industry, education, healthcare and welfare.

  The Association is active in Nabatieh, for example, holding an annual agricultural produce and handicrafts fair and various vocational trainings (Ya Sour, September 6, 2015; Al-Ahed newspaper, June 17, 2016).

**The Sports Mobilization**

- **Hezbollah’s Sports Mobilization** is an institution that establishes sports teams and initiates sports events in Shiite population centers. This is because Hezbollah perceives sports as a means of inculcating its ideology among young people and attracting them to its ranks, based on the connection between sports and the jihadi-military sphere.

  The Sports Mobilization carries out extensive activity in Nabatieh. For example: **Al-Wa’ad al-Sadeq Soccer School**, established in 2014 on the second anniversary of the Second Lebanon War (Facebook page of the Al-Manar Academic Institute, August 29, 2014); **skeet shooting tournament** in February 2018 (Ward al-Aan, February 13, 2018); and the **renovation of the local sports field** in June 2019 (Facebook page of the Rassed network, June 14, 2019).

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23 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from November 2020: “Hezbollah expands its banking services due to US pressure on the Lebanese banking system”

24 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from 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”

25 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from 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”
Municipal activity

Hezbollah conducts extensive local government activity in cities and towns located in areas with a Shiite population. Hezbollah has a permanent representation in the municipal institutions, as a means for gaining influence on the ground and funding for its civilian activity. In the last municipal elections, in 2016, Hezbollah and Amal’s joint Loyalty and Development Party won in Nabatieh and Nabatieh al-Fawqa (Lebanese National News Agency, May 23, 2016).

In the ITIC’s assessment, the two mayors in Nabatieh and Upper Nabatieh are affiliated with Hezbollah, and at least one of them is a member of the organization:

- The Nabatieh municipality is headed by Dr. Ahmad Kahil, who is probably a Hezbollah activist. At the same time, he is also in charge of Hezbollah’s Hospital Unit (Iran Press, March 27, 2020; Corona News, April 1, 2020; Radio Nour, December 15, 2020).

- Nabatieh al-Fawqa municipality is headed by engineer Yasser Ghandour, who is affiliated with Hezbollah. Ghandour has an undergraduate degree in Construction Engineering and Public Works from the Lebanese University, an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Administration from the Islamic Azad University and a graduate degree in Human Resources from the same university (Yasser Ghandour’s Facebook page). In the list of liked pages on Ghandour’s Facebook page there are, among others, pages of the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts, the Mleeta jihadi tourism...

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26 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from October 2019, “Resistance society: Hezbollah’s municipal activity”
site, and the Shaheed Issa Ali Burji. All these pages may indicate that Ghandour is at least a Hezbollah supporter and maybe even a member of the organization.

Right: Nabatieh mayor Dr. Ahmad Kahil lecturing at a festive meal breaking the fast in honor of graduates of Iranian universities in Lebanon. The ceremony was held in the city and was attended by Hezbollah’s official in charge of the Liberal Professions Unit in the Second Southern Region, engineer Rabīʿa Ṭaqash (Al-Khiyam’s local news website, May 22, 2019). At the time, Taqash was also a member of the Nabatieh municipality (local news website of the city of Nabatieh, May 10, 2019). Left: Nabatieh al-Fawqa Mayor Yasser Ghandour speaking at a municipality ceremony (Kull al-Fussul magazine, December 14, 2020)

From the list of liked pages on the Facebook page of the mayor of Nabatieh al-Fawqa Yasser Ghandour. Inter alia, there are pages of the Imam Al-Mahdi Scouts, the Mleeta jihadi tourism site, and a page commemorating the shaheed Issa Ali Burji. There are also other liked pages: Al-Imdad Association center in Nabatieh, centers of the Islamic Health Organization in Dahieh, the Al-Manar channel program Panorama Today, many Shiite municipalities throughout Lebanon, the Foundation for the Wounded, and more (Facebook page of Yasser Ghandour).

Hezbollah’s Municipal Activity Association holds extensive activity in Nabatieh, which includes, among other things, vocational training and assistance to small businesses; maintenance and repair of electricity poles and roads; various sports events; and religious activity such as distributing presents to children on the occasion of Eid al-Adha; donating books to the Ashura library; and meeting an academic researcher on the subject of Imam Ali
(Facebook page of the Rassed network and Facebook page of the Municipal Activity Association in the Second Region, August 2019).

Culture

One of the civilian areas of activity to which Hezbollah attaches great importance is culture and arts. Hezbollah’s activity in these fields includes, inter alia, holding lectures for Hezbollah supporters by clerics, members of parliament, academics, and military operatives; holding art exhibitions and “jihadi exhibitions” (where weapons used by Hezbollah and artifacts of shaheeds are displayed); producing films, plays and shows (including extensive importation of cultural products from Iran); and publishing books on Shiite Islam, the support of Hezbollah and its values, and the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

In the city of Nabatieh, there are branches of various cultural institutions belonging to the Hezbollah-affiliated Al-Maaref Islamic Cultural Association:

- **Al-Nour Literacy Association.** The association holds extensive activity in Nabatieh and its environs (website of the Al-Nour Association).

- **Al-Mi’raj Association.** It held intensive activity to promote prayers in Nabatieh in 2016-2020 (website of the Al-Mi’raj Association).

- **Imam Khomeini Cultural Centers.** A center of the association was opened in Nabatieh in July 2008. In view of the COVID-19 constraints during 2020, it is impossible to determine the scope of its current activity. However, it is known that the center comprises a library, a computer and Internet hall, a lecture auditorium, and a meeting room (website of the Imam Khomeini Cultural Centers).

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28 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 2019, “Art and culture used by Hezbollah as instruments of indoctrination”

29 An association that preserves and disseminates Imam Khomeini’s path through the establishment of centers for holding seminars and meetings, setting up public libraries, and publishing works by senior clerics and thinkers (website of the Al-Maaref Association).
Hezbollah companies

Commissioning work by the Nabatieh municipality from Hezbollah companies

The Nabatieh municipality is a client of Arch Consulting and Meamar Construction, Hezbollah-owned companies which are subject to US sanctions. Meamar Construction took part in the preparations for the establishment of a produce market in the city in 2014 (Nabatieh municipality website, August 2, 2014). Arch Consulting planned for the municipality a park, a parking lot, and elevating a street in the city, projects whose overall cost amounted to $4 million (Arch Consulting website).

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30 Arch Consulting is owned and controlled by Hezbollah. On September 17, 2020, it was sanctioned by the American administration’s Department of the Treasury. For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from October 2020, “United States sanctions two of Hezbollah’s construction companies. Both are related to Jihad al-Bina, a major association in Hezbollah’s civilian infrastructure”
A gas station belonging to the Al-Amana chain

There are at least eight gas stations operating in Nabatieh (Google Maps service). One of the stations belongs to Hezbollah’s Al-Amana chain of gas stations. Al-Amana is owned by Atlas Holding, which belongs to the Hezbollah Martyrs Foundation31.

Another gas station, the Al-Aitam gas station, belongs to Al-Aitam General Trading and Fuel Company and is owned by the Shiite institutions run by the son of Sayyid Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah. The Hezbollah and Al-Aitam chains of gas stations played an active role in breaking the gas station strike declared in Lebanon in November 2019, as a show of strength by Hezbollah following the wave of protests in Lebanon32.

Welfare services

Mabarrat al-Imam Rida Charity Association, which belongs to the Sayyid Fadlallah institutions, operates in Nabatieh. The Association was established in 2007 following the demolition of a building of a previous association, which operated in Al-Khiyam. The Association was established following the Second Lebanon War due to the increase in the number of orphans in the region in the wake of the war. The Association center in Nabatieh takes care of orphans, severe welfare cases, and people with special needs. The center has a library, a dental clinic, a restaurant, a laundry, and a clinic for periodic tests and vaccination campaigns (website of the Al-Mabarrat al-Khayriya association (Sayyid Fadlallah institutions)).


31 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from April 2019, “Hezbollah’s Martyrs Foundation: purpose, mode of operation and funding methods” and the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from May 2020, “Funding terrorism: US sanctions imposed on an extensive network of Hezbollah companies supporting its military-terrorist activity.”

32 For further details, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from December 2019, “Hezbollah’s Position on the Wave of Protests in Lebanon,” the section entitled “Keeping the gas stations open: A test case for preventing the crisis from leaking into areas under Hezbollah control.”