



# PERSPECTIVES

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## Hezbollah Pushes Lebanon Toward Iranian Domination

by Dr. Edy Cohen

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The Islamic Republic of Iran established Hezbollah in Lebanon in the early 1980s, funded it, and equipped it with advanced weapons. In the process, it transformed the country's Shiite community, which was once insignificant and oppressed, into a highly organized community with a powerful militia. The greater Lebanese Republic, however, is at its lowest point since it gained independence from France in 1943. Lebanon is barred from much international assistance because of the presence on its soil of Hezbollah, which seeks to exploit the country's distress to push it once and for all into the arms of the Islamic Republic.

Lebanon is suffering the worst economic [crisis](#) in its history. It is locked in a horrendous spiral of inflation, unemployment, and recession. Suicides are rising among Lebanese citizens who are in despair over rampant famine, poverty, and hardship. Banks do not permit account holders to withdraw their money. Laws are enacted against Syria that indirectly affect Lebanon's economic life. On top of all that, the presence in Lebanon of the Hezbollah terrorist organization has led to boycotts of the country by the US and the Gulf States and an economic blockade.

Hezbollah is the culprit behind Lebanon's suffering, and has been for more than 30 years. Hezbollah grows drugs for export to European countries. It bypasses the Lebanese establishment and pays no taxes. It operates sea and land crossings along the border with Syria. It receives goods from Iran, as well as money and weapons, that it does not report. Hezbollah not only does nothing to contribute to the Lebanese state but harms its foundations.

The greatest fear among Hezbollah's senior officials is that the Lebanese people will once again take to the streets *en masse*, as they did earlier this year. This is why

Hassan Nasrallah, the organization's secretary general, occasionally tries to find ways to stabilize Lebanon's dire economic and social situation.

Nasrallah is Lebanese, but his loyalty is to the Islamist regime in Iran, and part of his purpose is to render Lebanon completely dependent on the Islamic Republic. This could be inferred from a speech he made recently to the Lebanese people in an ostensible attempt to assuage their anger over the economic crisis. In his opening words, he raised the possibility of turning to the Chinese for help—an idea most experts view as camouflage for his real intention, which is to turn to Iran. Nasrallah serves Ayatollah Khomeini, not the Lebanese people, and he is doing his utmost to turn Lebanon into an Iranian province.

After raising the Chinese straw man, Nasrallah [expanded](#) on the great bounty Iran can offer and its allegedly benevolent intentions:

I have heard people say that Hezbollah wants to make Lebanon like Iran. ... The Lebanese have a friend named Iran, and you can talk to them and say, "Sell us gasoline and oil for Lebanese pounds. Help us." They need dollars and euros. When an Iranian sells to a Lebanese for a Lebanese pound he makes a great sacrifice...

Iran...has its own capacity in oil, fuel, electricity. Iran even sells to neighboring countries. It provides for most of its own needs. What is there to fear from this example? Lebanon has no such capabilities. For 40 years, Iran has persisted in the face of sanctions. ... In the face of all the difficulties they faced they survived. No country has stood so firm after undergoing what Iran went through. ... No one wants to change Lebanon economically or culturally, or change the Lebanese system of government. If China, Iran, or Russia is ready... we will talk to any country in the east, west, north, or south.

Nasrallah is trying to signal the Lebanese people that they have no choice but Iran, but they are not stupid. They understand that if Lebanon falls into Tehran's clutches, they will have to recite the funeral eulogy for Lebanese sovereignty—a concept that is already hanging by a thread, as Hezbollah largely rules the country.

The situation in Lebanon is very serious, but as long as it tolerates Hezbollah and its vast supply of illegal weaponry, the World Bank, the Western countries, and many Arab countries will refuse to assist it. As Hezbollah will never give up its weapons, the future for Lebanon looks extremely grim.

*This is an edited version of an [article](#) that appeared in Israel Today on July 13, 2020.*

*Dr. Edy Cohen (Ph.D. Bar-Ilan University) is fluent in Arabic and specializes in inter-Arab relations, the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism, Jewish communities in the Arab world. He is a researcher at the BESA Center and author of the book The Holocaust in the Eyes of Mahmoud Abbas (Hebrew).*