The following information was provided to the Research Directorate by the editor of the *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* (MEIB) during a 1 March 2005 telephone interview. The Hezbollah manages many social services that support the impoverished population of southern Lebanon. People in southern Lebanon know that if they join the Hezbollah, they will receive better protection and financial security. The population in this region knows not to go against the Hezbollah because it depends on it. Since the Hezbollah is supported by most of the population in southern Lebanon, there is generally no need to force people to join the group. However, according to the editor, some people have been punished for not joining the Hezbollah. The editor added that, to his knowledge, Lebanese who live in Latin America—where there is a large Lebanese community—have been threatened by the Hezbollah for refusing to provide financial support to the Hezbollah in Lebanon, and that members of their families who still live in Lebanon have been threatened.

This information could not be corroborated by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

**Reasons for recruitment by the Hezbollah**

"Most Arab Israelis who have collaborated with Hezbollah appear to have been motivated not by religious or national solidarity, but by the prospect of financial gain" (MEIB Sept. 2002; see also ibid. Feb.-Mar. 2004b; ibid. Aug.-Sept. 2003). The Hezbollah used its financial resources to build grassroots support among the lower classes in Lebanon (MEIB Feb.-Mar. 2004a), not only by paying its fighters "much more than the going 'militia wages," but also by offering "much-needed social services to the local population" (ibid. Feb. 2002). For example, several sources reported that the Hezbollah "has raised its cash offers to militants" (*Haaretz* 10 Feb. 2005; see also CSS 10 Feb. 2005; *Irish Examiner* 10 Feb. 2005). The Hezbollah is now reported to be willing "to pay $100,000 for a whole operation whereas in the past they paid $20,000, then raised it to $50,000" (*Haaretz* 10 Feb. 2005). According to *Haaretz*, "it is unclear if this [increase in pay] reflected a heightened desire to see violence flare up or a death of recruits" (ibid.; see also *Irish Examiner* 10 Feb. 2005).
In October 2000, "the outbreak of the second intifada . . . helped legitimize involvement in armed activity against the state" (MEIB Sept. 2002). Some recruits therefore still "appear to have been motivated primarily by their ideological commitments" (ibid. Feb.-Mar. 2004b).

**Method of recruitment**

The Hezbollah also recruited Palestinians who had been wounded during the intifada (MEIB Aug.-Sept. 2003). For example, according to the MEIB, one organization called the Iranian Committee for Aiding Wounded Victims of the Intifada "flew hundreds of mild to moderately wounded Palestinians . . . to Tehran and provided them with free medical care at military hospitals" (ibid.). "During their recuperation, the prospective recruits were showered with attention . . . and persuaded to join Hezbollah" (ibid.).

**Place of recruitment**

According to a report from the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "Hezbollah is extremely adept at recruiting members from local populations in areas where they have networks on the ground" (8 Sept. 2003). The duties of the Hezbollah cells include recruiting new members (WINEP 8 Sept. 2003). Although the Hezbollah recruited Palestinians mainly in the West Bank, it also recruited operatives in the Gaza Strip (MEIB Feb.-Mar. 2004b).

**Recruitment of children**

The Hezbollah also recruited children in 2002 and 2003, and created a social group for children under 15 years called the "al-Mahdi Brigades" (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 17 Nov. 2004). In 2003, "children led the annual Jerusalem Day parade, dressed in military fatigues and carrying toy rifles " (ibid.). The Hezbollah "did claim responsibility for several armed attacks carried out by minors up to 1994," although this practice was reportedly stopped in 2000 (ibid.).

No information on the forced recruitment of persons who have completed military service could be found by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

**References**


Irish Examiner. 10 February 2005. "Hezbollah 'Recruiting Palestinians in Bid to Foil


Additional Sources Consulted

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