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GREEN WITHOUT BORDERS

The Operational Benefits of Hezbollah's Environmental NGO

On April 14, 2020, two incidents occurred along the Israel-Lebanon border, although only one garnered significant attention. In the widely covered event, peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) broke up a “short standoff” between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in which the two sides pointed guns at each other. The intervention took place just south of the Blue Line marking the de facto international border, in the area between the Lebanese village of Adaisseh and the Israeli village of Misgav Am.¹ In the second incident, four kilometers to the north, near the Lebanese village of Kfar Kila and the Israeli town of Metula, UNIFIL personnel trimmed back trees that were blocking security cameras’ line of vision along the border barrier. Four days earlier, Hezbollah media had published pictures of what it called an initiative by Green Without Borders (GWB), a Hezbollah-affiliated NGO, to plant dozens of trees obstructing “spy cameras” installed by the “Zionist enemy” on the border wall.² UNIFIL acted only because the trees were planted on the Israeli side of the Blue Line, although this territory is claimed by Lebanon.



Recent provocations confirm that GWB is more than an NGO; it is a Hezbollah front, providing the militant group cover for operational activities prohibited under UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701—from conducting preoperational surveillance to firing rockets at Israel.

“THE SHADE OF RESISTANCE”

Green Without Borders registered as a Lebanese environmental nonprofit on June 30, 2013.³ According to its blog, the group’s mission includes planting trees, cleaning forested areas, establishing public parks, running nurseries, and locating and fighting forest fires, especially in Shia-dominated areas in southern Lebanon and the Beqa Valley.⁴ However, through cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of the Environment, municipal organizations, and other Hezbollah entities—especially Jihad al-Binaa—the organization also seeks to aid the “southern Green resistance.”⁵ In 2017, Hajj Zuhair Nahle, president of GWB, told Lebanon’s *Daily Star* that “we do not hide this [affiliation with Hezbollah]. All our brochures include this and in all our media campaigns...we write, ‘The trees are the shade of the resistance.’”⁶ Nahle emphasized that despite the group’s environmental intentions, tree planting also has a strategic national security dimension, serving as “a veil on the eyes of the enemy in addition to a wall behind which the resistance fighters protect themselves.”⁷ The article described Nahle as gleeful that the organization is a “thorn in Israel’s side.”⁸

Jihad al-Binaa, Hezbollah’s construction arm, is among GWB’s closest collaborators. In 2007, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Jihad al-Binaa for using deceptive means to “raise funds for the terrorist organization and to bolster the group’s standing by providing construction services in Southern Lebanon” in the wake of the Second

Lebanon War.⁹ Jihad al-Binaa’s director-general, Muhammad al-Hajj, attended the GWB inaugural conference, billed “Southern Green Resistance,” and praised the new group for its planned contributions to the overall resistance project.¹⁰ Al-Hajj and Nahle also jointly attended a January 2014 tree-planting event honoring martyrs and their families, held in Lebanon’s Khiam detention center.¹¹ The two organizations frequently combine efforts, planting trees in symbolic locations and at symbolic times—such as “Hezbollah Commanders Day”—to commemorate Hezbollah’s *shahids* (martyrs) and “irrigate the land with their pure blood.”¹² GWB volunteers have also planted trees at the Hezbollah-built “Preserve of the Shahids of the Resistance” and near the site of a March 1985 suicide bombing in Marjeyoun, which killed twelve IDF soldiers and wounded fourteen others.¹³

GWB partners with several other Hezbollah entities, including the Education Mobilization unit,¹⁴ Imam Mahdi Scouts Association,¹⁵ Islamic Health Organization,¹⁶ and al-Mahdi and al-Mustafa school networks,¹⁷ and members of Hezbollah’s parliamentary bloc have also endorsed GWB.¹⁸ The most recent campaign by the NGO, “A Tree for Every Citizen,” commenced in 2014–15 and was publicized on GWB’s blog.¹⁹ Notably, Hezbollah parliamentarians Mohammad Raad and Hassan Fadlallah attended the campaign’s inaugural event at the Jaber Cultural Center in Nabatiyah, along with other political and civil society leaders.²⁰ The U.S. Treasury Department has since designated Raad—Hezbollah’s leading figure in parliament, a member of the group’s Shura Council since 2009, and a close confidant of Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah—for “manipulating institutions in support of the terrorist group’s financial and security interests.” The joint action against Raad and parliamentarian Amin Sherrri was the department’s first-ever designation of sitting elected Lebanese officials.²¹

Moreover, the two founders of GWB, Muhammad Ali

Shakar and Hussein Muhammad Haydar, have the same names as high-ranking figures in Hezbollah's Association for Municipal Activity, although it remains uncertain whether they are actually the same individuals.²² But Zuhair Nahle, the organization's president, has not shied away from expressing his ideological affinity for Hezbollah and its chief sponsor, Iran. Nahle's January 2018 Facebook profile pledged his "love and loyalty to [Iranian Supreme Leader] Ali Khamenei" and included a hashtag pronouncing, "I am in favor of the Governance of the Islamic Jurist."²³ Nahle also "liked" the pages of Hezbollah's civilian institutions, Iranian civilian institutions, and several Hezbollah *shahids*.²⁴

INTELLIGENCE-COLLECTION PLATFORM

Although purportedly an environmental organization, Green Without Borders has built several lookout towers just inside the Lebanese border, from which Hezbollah operatives conduct surveillance of Israeli territory using military-grade binoculars. In June 2017, the IDF publicly identified five GWB towers along the border in Sector West. Hezbollah operatives use these towers at Ras Naqoura, Aalma al-Chaeb, Dhayra, Ramiyah, and Ayta al-Shab to facilitate their surveillance of Israel near the Blue Line.²⁵ IDF military intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Herzi Halevy, speaking before the 2017 Herzliya Conference, described the installations as a means for Hezbollah to "further entrench its terrorist infrastructures."²⁶ The IDF released photos and video of the structures, clearly marked as belonging to GWB, and noted in a statement that Hezbollah's reconnaissance from these posts began in April 2017, if not earlier.²⁷ In July 2018, the UN secretary-general identified two additional GWB posts, reporting to the Security Council that the organization had erected seven facilities along the Blue Line within UNIFIL's area of operations.²⁸ Patrols by UNIFIL and UN Observer Group Lebanon gained access to one of the GWB sites in

Aitaroun "almost daily." They were, however, unable to visit the other six sites—in Aitaroun, Ayta al-Shab, Marwahin, and Adaisseh in Sector East, along with two sites in Labbunah in Sector West—because they "are purportedly located on private property."²⁹

In October 2018, the IDF released photographs of individuals in civilian clothing conducting surveillance of Israel from the GWB outpost near the Lebanese village of Adaisseh. The post is less than a kilometer from the Israeli border and the Israeli village of Misgav Am and close to the trees planted to block security cameras in early April 2020.³⁰ Although the IDF did not detect any arms, an official noted the use of "military equipment and infrastructure," including military-grade binoculars and cameras, likely in preparation for an attack against Israeli civilian or military targets.³¹ Five months later, in March 2019, the UN secretary-general reported on a newly confirmed GWB site in Yaroun, in Sector West, bringing the total number of publicly identified GWB outposts to eight.³² In early May 2020, Israeli defense officials identified an additional eight GWB posts along the Blue Line (see map on p. 5).

IMPEDING UN PATROLS

After the IDF reported the first few Hezbollah observation posts in June 2017, Israel's UN ambassador, Danny Danon, wrote to the UN Security Council president noting the exact coordinates of these installations. He also asked the Security Council to demand that the government of Lebanon dismantle Hezbollah's GWB observation posts—which clearly served military, not environmental, purposes—and prevent future Hezbollah activity in southern Lebanon, especially along the Blue Line.³³

Ambassador Danon wrote that two months earlier, in April 2017, "a group of locals" had denied a

UNIFIL patrol access to an observation post flying the GWB flag. He insisted that such blatant obstruction of UNIFIL's Security Council–mandated operations was unacceptable.³⁴ UN spokeswoman Eri Kaneko, when asked at a press conference about the alleged violation of Resolution 1701, stated that UNIFIL had reported on GWB activities “for the last two years” and continued to closely monitor activities close to the Blue Line, in cooperation with the LAF. Although UNIFIL was denied access to the observation post in April, she said that it had “not observed any unauthorized armed persons at the location or found any basis to report a violation of the resolution.”³⁵

UNIFIL did verify that GWB was a registered Lebanese NGO accredited for environmental work³⁶—but its ability to effectively report on whether the group was engaging in activities beyond the scope of its credentials, including violations of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, has been regularly stymied. In fact, while UNIFIL patrols have been able to inspect GWB sites from time to time—typically in close coordination with LAF patrols, since the sites occupy what locals describe as private property—the NGO has a long history of denying UNIFIL access to its outposts. The UN secretary-general reported that in the first half of 2018, UNIFIL patrols were repeatedly denied access to GWB sites in Ayta al-Shab and Marwahin and to two sites in Labbunah, all in Sector West, as well as the site in Adaisseh, in Sector East.³⁷

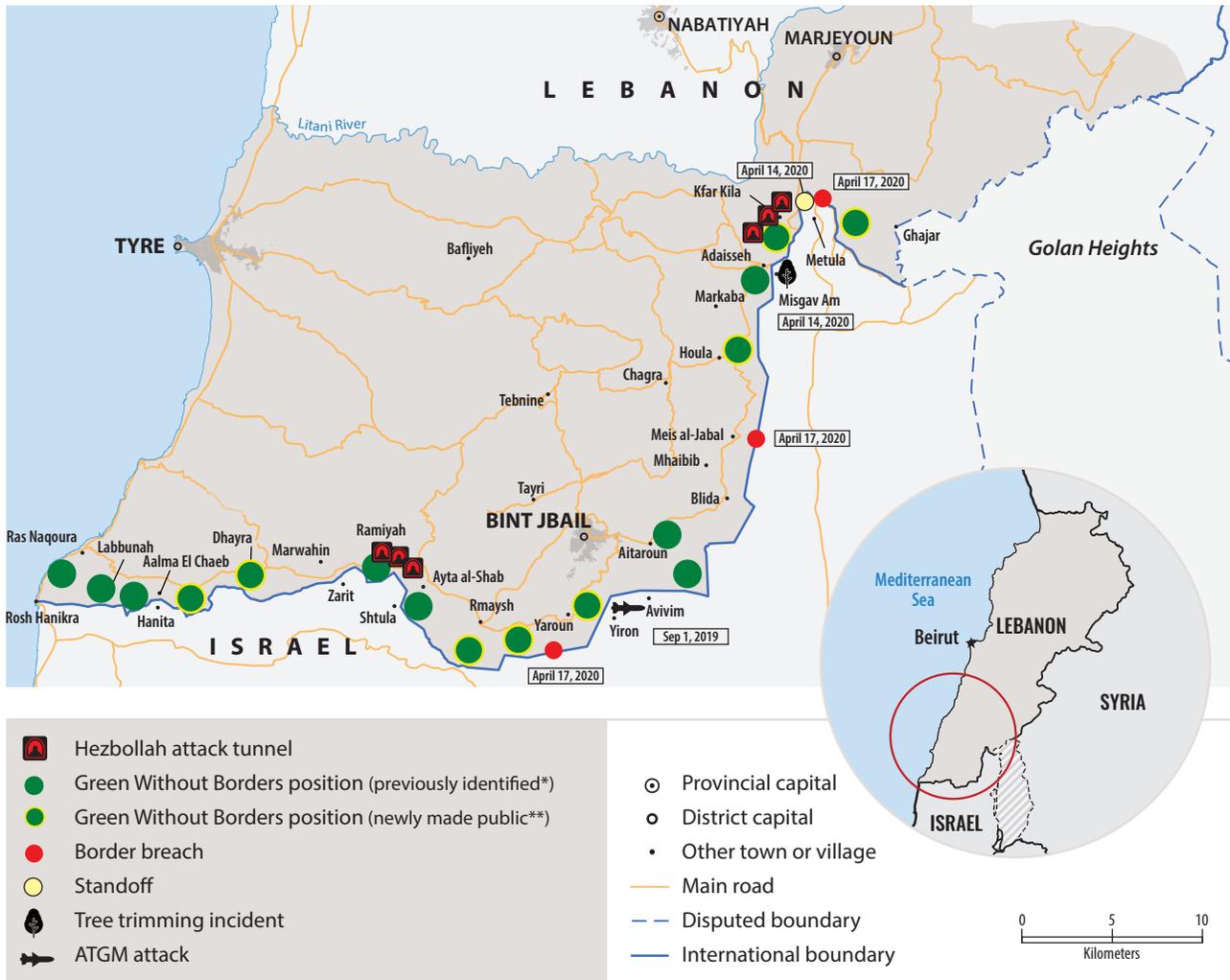
In one particular instance in May 2018, “individuals wearing green uniform-like attire” stopped three UNIFIL patrols and four patrols of Observer Group Lebanon at the gates of a GWB facility near Aitaroun and denied them entrance. (GWB personnel have been known to wear green uniforms with the NGO's patch on the shoulder.³⁸) The men claimed the UN patrols could enter only with an LAF escort;³⁹ municipal authorities in the Lebanese town of Bint Jbail later confirmed that the area had been designated as a nature reserve to protect the area's forest, limiting public access.⁴⁰ The Bint Jbail union of municipalities

informed UNIFIL authorities that the LAF would provide a detailed plan of GWB activities in Aitaroun and propose an alternative route for UNIFIL patrols.⁴¹ But when patrols resumed a few days later, two of them—one of which was operating in close coordination with the LAF—were stopped yet again at the gate of the GWB facility.

According to the UN secretary-general's report to the Security Council, the UNIFIL head of mission and force commander briefed the LAF commander, Gen. Joseph Aoun, on this series of incidents, and General Aoun assured him that LAF intelligence in Saida would guarantee UNIFIL's full freedom of movement. The UN issued several demarches to the Lebanese government, and on June 19, 2018, UNIFIL's head of mission and force commander successfully visited the area joined by the LAF's South Litani Sector commander. They agreed to resume closely coordinated joint patrols along the road in question, resulting in a single joint patrol through the area. In late June, UNIFIL's head of mission and force commander again raised the issue with the LAF's South Litani Sector commander, but the issue apparently remains unresolved.⁴²

Twice within three days in July 2018, a UNIFIL patrol conducted in coordination with the LAF was prevented from patrolling a road leading to a GWB site (in Sector West at Aitaroun) because of a barrier blocking the road.⁴³ Then, in May 2019, an individual in civilian clothes stopped an Observer Group Lebanon patrol at the eastern gate of the GWB site in Aitaroun. This individual stated that according to the mayor of nearby Maroun al-Ras, the patrol required an LAF escort to travel on this particular road. When contacted by the patrol, the mayor claimed the escort to be an LAF requirement, and the LAF confirmed this assertion. Later, however, the LAF told UNIFIL that patrols were, in fact, allowed at the site, and that the Observer Group was denied entry because the individual at the gate was new on the job.⁴⁴

GWB PRESENCE ALONG THE LEBANON-ISRAEL BORDER



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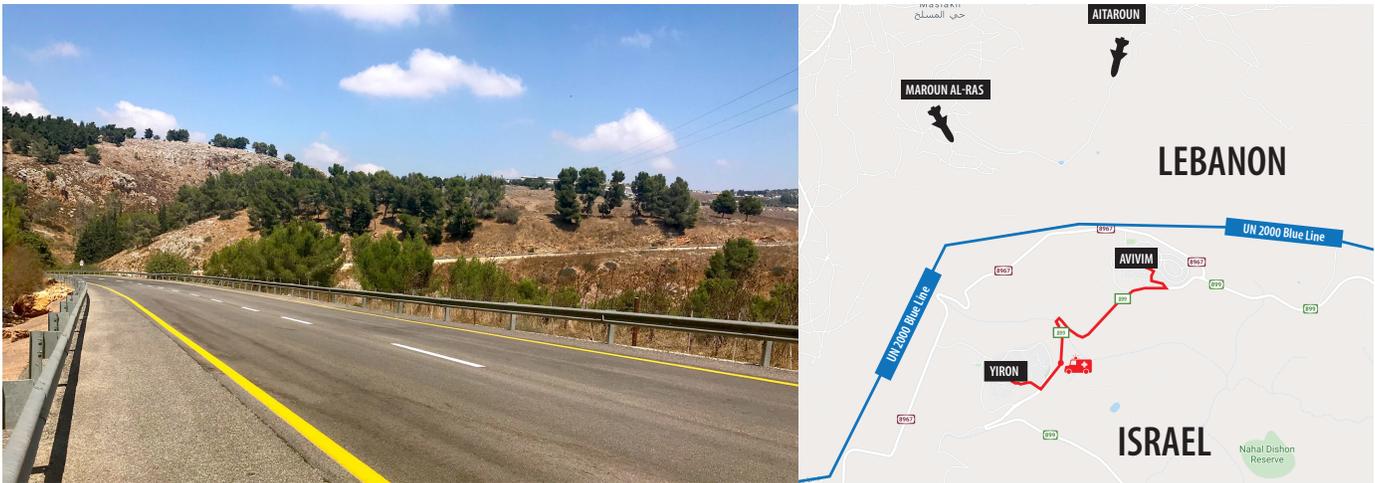
*IDF and UN, June 2017–March 2019

**Assaf Orion and Stephane Cohen, May 2020

UN reporting usually attributes such alleged mistakes to individuals, without noting any organizational affiliation. But in an April 2019 incident near Ramiyah—close to the site of a Hezbollah tunnel and a GWB post—four people in civilian clothes who explicitly said they were Hezbollah members threatened a UNIFIL patrol at a temporary observation post, claiming that the post was on private property and that the patrol was staying in the area “at their own risk.” (To its credit, UNIFIL later established temporary observation posts nearby, six times a week, with a clear view

of the area to which it was denied access.⁴⁵)

Even after Hezbollah publicly took credit for using GWB sites as launchpads for rocket attacks against Israel, in clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions (discussed shortly), UNIFIL patrols were still denied access to GWB facilities. As recently as December 2019, three people in civilian clothes stopped an Observer Group Lebanon patrol on a road bordering the GWB site in Ramiyah and stated that the patrol required an LAF escort.⁴⁶



At left: Israel's Route 899, where the September 1, 2019, Hezbollah antitank guided missile attack occurred. The road connects Kibbutz Yiron and Kibbutz Avvim. At right: launch points for the attack and site where Israeli ambulance was almost hit.

COVER FOR ANTITANK MISSILE ATTACK

On September 1, 2019, Hezbollah operatives fired three antitank missiles at an IDF military ambulance near the Israeli border community of Avvim.⁴⁷ The attack was a response to Israeli strikes the week before targeting Hezbollah operatives in Syria and a propellant mixer—part of Hezbollah's precision-guided-missile program—in Beirut. On the day of the attack, five members of a local IDF artillery battalion, disregarding explicit military travel restrictions in anticipation of a retaliatory attack from Hezbollah, departed the Avvim base in the ambulance to visit other members of the battalion stationed nearby, at Kibbutz Yiron. Their vehicle was nearly struck while en route.⁴⁸

Hezbollah soon claimed responsibility for the attack, publishing video of two separate Kornet rocket launches targeting the military ambulance as it turned a bend in the road and drove uphill to the back entrance of Kibbutz Yiron. (It did not publish video of the third launch, which was poorly aimed.) Hezbollah named the rocket units that conducted the attack after Hasan Zbib and Yasser Daher, the two Hezbollah operatives killed in the Israeli airstrike in Syria the week before.⁴⁹

Based on technical data, UNIFIL later concluded that the missiles were fired from the area of two adjacent GWB locations near the neighboring villages of Maroun al-Ras and Aitaroun.⁵⁰

Proceeding logically, UNIFIL requested that the LAF grant it access to these GWB sites, and the LAF quickly responded, confirming it would facilitate access. But the next day, September 20, 2019, the LAF officer on the ground granted the UNIFIL patrol only partial access to the sites on the pretense that the land was private property.⁵¹ The LAF also denied UNIFIL the use of necessary technical equipment (although the report did not specify what type).⁵² "Despite repeated communications by the [UNIFIL] Mission leadership with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the political leadership of Lebanon," the UN secretary-general reported to the Security Council, "UNIFIL has not been granted full access on the grounds that the sites are private property."⁵³

UNIFIL requested access to a separate GWB site in Ayta al-Shab on September 23, but the request was not immediately approved.⁵⁴ The next day, five people in civilian clothes turned a UNIFIL team away from a GWB site in Ramiyah, in Sector West. They claimed the team required an LAF escort, even though UNIFIL had had regular, unrestricted access to the site since

2017.⁵⁵ When UNIFIL and Observer Group members returned in October 2019, two GWB employees prevented them from approaching the Blue Line at the B29 position marker, using the same justification.⁵⁶ The restrictions on movement may well have been related to Hezbollah's tunnel project, since just four months earlier, in May, the IDF had exposed and destroyed the longest identified Hezbollah tunnel ever dug from Lebanese territory into Israel. The tunnel, which stretched nearly a kilometer and ended beneath the Israeli border villages of Shtula and Zarit, had its entrance in Ramiyah, not far from the GWB locations.⁵⁷

According to the most recent UN secretary-general report on Resolution 1701, dated March 2020, UNIFIL has finalized its investigation into the September 2019 Hezbollah missile attack and shared its findings with all parties. Hezbollah claimed responsibility for the missile strikes, which the UNIFIL mission believes were launched from the two GWB sites near the neighboring villages of Maroun al-Ras and Aitaroun.⁵⁸ Yet despite repeated requests to the LAF and senior Lebanese officials, UNIFIL had not been granted access to these sites. The secretary-general also lamented that UNIFIL had not been given access to all the locations on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line related to the Hezbollah attack tunnels.⁵⁹

HEZBOLLAH BATTLES TWO "VIRUSES" AT ONCE

Even as Lebanon battles the coronavirus pandemic—and simultaneously grapples with an unprecedented financial crisis—Hezbollah remains focused on challenging Israel along the Blue Line. Indeed, three days after the concurrent standoff and tree-trimming of April 14, 2020, Israeli forces found that the security fence had been cut in three places—near Avivim, Yiftah, and Metula—a discovery they believe may have prevented cross-border attacks.⁶⁰ The breaches came days after an Israeli airstrike reportedly

targeted a Hezbollah vehicle in Jdeidat Yabous, Syria. No one was killed in the strike, although reports suggested a senior Hezbollah operative narrowly escaped death.⁶¹ According to other reports, Israel may have warned the Hezbollah operative because it planned to target only the arms he was delivering, not the man himself, to reduce the likelihood of retaliation.⁶² Regardless, the journalist Ibrahim el-Amin boasted in the Hezbollah-affiliated *al-Ahkkbar* that the breaches demonstrated that Hezbollah could carry out a tit-for-tat warning strike at the heavily guarded security fence, signaling an effective response to Israel's strike in Syria.⁶³

Hezbollah believes it must simultaneously fight two viruses on two different fronts. It has deployed volunteers in Lebanon to demonstrate its utility in fighting the coronavirus, but at the same time has sent operatives to engage in militant activities along the border with Israel. This two-pronged strategy should not be a surprise. Ali Kourani, a Hezbollah operative convicted in 2019 of carrying out preoperational surveillance in New York, described the terrorist wing of Hezbollah's Islamic Jihad Organization as the group's "antivirus to the problem that is Israel."⁶⁴ Even in the age of a global pandemic, Hezbollah views Israel as its perennial enemy.

Seeking an expanded capacity to carry out attacks against Israel away from UNIFIL's prying eyes, Hezbollah invested time and money to build a series of tunnels under the Blue Line and into Israel, but these have now been exposed and destroyed. (Some were near GWB posts, but it is unclear if a connection can be made.) As a result, Hezbollah is now even more dependent than before on using its purportedly civilian institutions for illegitimate operational purposes. By building surveillance posts, denying UNIFIL unrestricted access in southern Lebanon, and granting Hezbollah logistical and operational platforms from which to fire rockets into Israel, GWB has effectively become part of Hezbollah's military infrastructure.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The UN secretary-general's next report on implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701 is due in July 2020, providing a natural timeline for following up on Hezbollah's illicit activities along the Blue Line. In the meantime, Lebanon and the international community can take concrete steps to address the threats to Lebanon's sovereignty and regional stability posed by Hezbollah entities such as GWB.

LEBANON

The October 2019 protests in Lebanon underscored the desperate state of the Lebanese economy and the role Hezbollah has played in exacerbating the country's economic woes. Today, the financial and public health implications of the coronavirus pandemic have brought the Lebanese economy to a tipping point. As Lebanon seeks international support to fend off the worst potential consequences of its financial burdens, it will have to address the corruption and sectarianism that continue to undermine any recovery effort.

Hezbollah—simultaneously a key party in the current government and an aggressively sectarian movement independent of the government—acts in ways that further its own narrow interests and those of Iran at the expense of the broader Lebanese public and the authority of the Lebanese state. From assassinating Lebanese politicians and using Lebanese citizens as human shields for its precision-guided-missile project to attacking UN forces and undermining the Lebanese financial system, Hezbollah continues to prioritize its own party interests, putting civilians and national interests at risk.⁶⁵ Hezbollah's aggressive activities along the Blue Line similarly threaten to undermine Lebanese society.

To avert another crisis—namely, a war on the southern border—the Lebanese government and armed forces must live up to their commitments under

UN Security Council Resolution 1701. These include securing Lebanon's borders and deploying the LAF, together with UNIFIL forces, throughout the south so that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is "free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL."⁶⁶

When the UN Security Council last renewed UNIFIL's mandate, it specifically "urged all parties to ensure that the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the Force's access to the Blue Line in all its parts is fully respected and unimpeded." The Security Council additionally called out the government of Lebanon, demanding that it "facilitate the mission's access in line with resolution 1701 (2006), while respecting the country's sovereignty."⁶⁷ The extent of Lebanese government compliance should be the yardstick by which the government's actions are measured.

Specifically, given the UNIFIL investigation that determined that Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel from two GWB sites, the Lebanese government should decertify GWB as a legal environmental NGO.

UNITED NATIONS

Increasingly, UNIFIL reports have become overcautious, failing to document Hezbollah violations transparently for fear that the group could become still more aggressive toward UNIFIL soldiers and patrols. Note, for example, that in 2017, after pictures and video emerged of Hezbollah surveillance of Israel from GWB platforms, UNIFIL stated that it had "not observed any unauthorized armed persons at the location or found any basis to report a violation of the resolution."⁶⁸ This failure by UNIFIL to remark on unarmed militants engaged in cross-border surveillance ultimately emboldened GWB to use two of its posts as platforms to carry out a cross-border missile attack. Yet the basis for reporting such a violation was clearly documented; the only reason UNIFIL had not directly observed such activity was that GWB and

other Hezbollah personnel denied them access to the area. At a minimum, UNIFIL reports should include the specific geographical, statistical, and chronological data related to violations and patrol routes, which UNIFIL already collects but does not make public.⁶⁹

The UN secretary-general, in his last report to the Security Council, noted that UNIFIL is still denied access to many areas on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line. In particular, it could not secure access to locations related to the rocket attack on September 1, 2019, including GWB sites. The secretary-general thus called on the LAF and Lebanese government to facilitate UNIFIL access “to all locations necessary for it to implement its mandate.”⁷⁰ To that end, UNIFIL forces, patrolling with the LAF when necessary, should respect denial of access to points within its areas of responsibility only when the denials are issued by Lebanese national officials, not “members of the local community” or any other nongovernmental figures. Similarly, only Lebanese government officials should be able to deem open areas—including roads—“private property” to which UNIFIL can be denied access. In addition, UNIFIL should have access to private property when compelling evidence suggests that the property is being used to cover illicit activities. For example, UNIFIL should be granted access to the Kfar Kila cement factory where Hezbollah built attack-tunnel entrances. (These tunnel entrances were definitively exposed when Israel pumped its own cement through the tunnels. The cement emerged in plain view on the Lebanese side of the border.⁷¹)

UNITED STATES

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations should continue to press members of the Security Council to reframe and more clearly define UNIFIL’s mission and rules of engagement so that it can fully implement its mandate.

Congress, meanwhile, should insert conditionality and reporting requirements into future Defense and State

Department military aid packages. In other words, the Lebanese government’s ability to receive full aid packages should be linked to active LAF deployment along the Blue Line and cooperation in ensuring that UNIFIL patrols gain access to areas along the border and within their areas of responsibility.

The U.S. government should also add Hezbollah’s GWB to the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorist entities under Executive Order 13224. GWB, like its partner Jihad al-Binaa, which the U.S. Treasury Department designated in February 2007, is an established Hezbollah entity that easily meets the threshold for designation.⁷² Indeed, the organization provides clear and undeniable material support to Hezbollah, including for operational endeavors such as surveillance, antiaccess/area-denial activities, and rocket attacks. Typically, the Treasury Department designates persons or entities providing financial or logistical support to terrorist organizations, and the State Department designates those engaging in terrorist activities.⁷³ In light of the scale and scope of GWB’s activities, it could be designated by either department.

The UN, for its part, cannot designate Hezbollah and its constituent entities, since its designations are limited to entities tied to al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Islamic State. The United States, however, could press other countries that have unilaterally designated all or part of Hezbollah—such as Britain, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Bahrain, and Argentina—to add GWB to their designation lists as well, as either a new or a derivative entity.

Washington should also press regional bodies that have designated all or part of Hezbollah—including the European Union,⁷⁴ the Gulf Cooperation Council,⁷⁵ and the Terrorist Finance Targeting Center⁷⁶—to blacklist GWB. Even those countries and regional bodies that only ban Hezbollah’s military wing, such as the EU, have solid grounds on which to proscribe GWB, given its direct military support to Hezbollah militant operations.

CONCLUSION

On April 22, 2020, less than a week after Hezbollah operatives breached the Israel-Lebanon border fence, the international community marked Earth Day—an always timely reminder of the importance of protecting the environment. A line must be drawn, however, in cases where terrorist or militant organizations use environmentalism as a front for their aggression. As far back as 2010, Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah made clear that environmentalism

fit within the militant group's broader agenda. Speaking three years before the founding of Green Without Borders, at an event marking the planting of Jihad al-Binaa's millionth sapling, Nasrallah described planting trees as one way of "resisting Israel." Foreshadowing recent events, he noted that strategically placed saplings could provide cover to Hezbollah fighters in southern Lebanon.⁷⁷ Lebanon and its international partners, including the United Nations, should not stand idly by and allow Hezbollah to prepare and carry out acts of violence under the guise of environmentalism.

NOTES

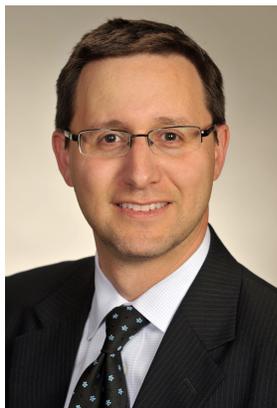
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