

Hezbollah-Linked LPG Tanker Sails to East Mediterranean

by [Noam Raydan \(/experts/noam-raydan\)](/experts/noam-raydan)

Mar 28, 2025

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

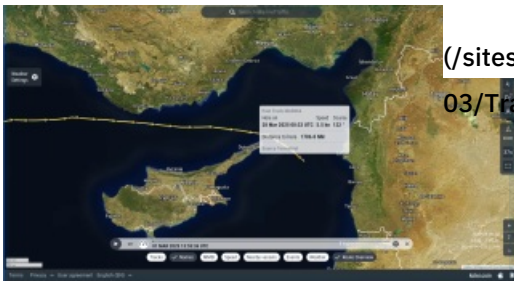
Part of a series: [Maritime Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/maritime-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/maritime-spotlight)

or see Part 1: [Tracking Maritime Attacks in the Middle East Since 2019\(/policy-analysis/tracking-maritime-attacks-middle-east-2019\)](/policy-analysis/tracking-maritime-attacks-middle-east-2019)

Past ties between the Marina and the Lebanese terrorist group, along with the ship's deceptive practices at sea, merit U.S. scrutiny.

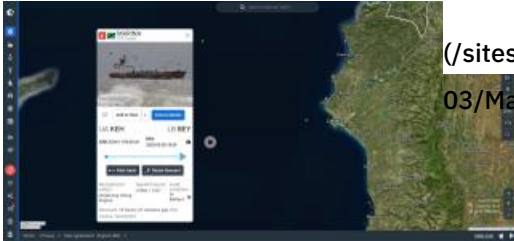
On March 27, the U.S.-sanctioned liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker *Marina* (IMO 9005493) was identified sailing between Cyprus and Syria (see image below), signaling a final destination of Beirut via its automatic identification system (AIS). The ship then went offline—i.e., switched off its AIS—suggesting it may have continued its journey to Syria's Baniyas oil terminal. Such behavior would match that of several other Syria-bound ships tracked by the author in recent years (and recent months) as they seek to obfuscate tracking of their navigation off Syria's coast by using Lebanon as a fake destination (see analysis [here \(https://thefuse.org/the-art-of-sanctions-busting-part-two-how-three-lpg-tankers-set-sail-for-syria/\)](https://thefuse.org/the-art-of-sanctions-busting-part-two-how-three-lpg-tankers-set-sail-for-syria/) and [here \(https://www.mees.com/2022/11/25/geopolitical-risk/turkey-syria-lpg-shipments-the-lebanon-link/79262460-6cbd-11ed-8eb1-b1df5d76e525\)](https://www.mees.com/2022/11/25/geopolitical-risk/turkey-syria-lpg-shipments-the-lebanon-link/79262460-6cbd-11ed-8eb1-b1df5d76e525)).

The *Marina* case raises several additional questions given that the U.S. Department of the Treasury [identified \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2572\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2572) the vessel in September 2024 as property in which Lebanese Hezbollah has an interest. Notably, Maritime Spotlight cannot yet confirm that the vessel is still linked to Hezbollah, and has not yet received a satellite image confirming its final destination. But the [sanctioning \(https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=50526\)](https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/Details.aspx?id=50526) of the ship by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, and its implicit involvement in energy deals conducted by a network linked to Hezbollah and Iran—along with its history of delivering LPG to Syria—calls for attention and investigation from officials in Washington.



(/sites/default/files/2025-03/TracksofMarinaCyprusSyriaMarineTraffic.png)

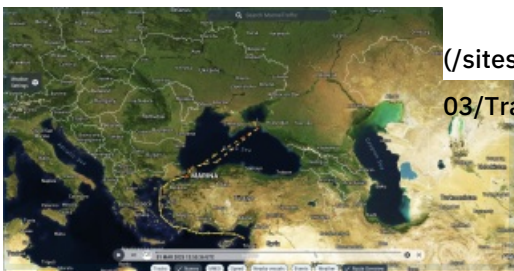
Screenshot from MarineTraffic shows tracks of the *Marina* between Cyprus and Syria on March 28, 2025.



(/sites/default/files/2025-03/MarinaDestinationBeirut.jpg)

Screenshot indicating Beirut as the *Marina*'s destination.

The most recent AIS data on the *Marina*'s voyage—which was gathered by the author via MarineTraffic—has been confirmed with fellow tracker Samir Madani of TankerTrackers.com. And Bridget Diakun, an analyst with Lloyd's List Intelligence, confirmed that on March 23 the LPG tanker even briefly signaled a destination of Baniyas before switching to Beirut the next day. Similar navigational behavior was observed earlier this month, particularly in Russia-linked oil tankers heading to Syria, as discussed in a [Washington Institute analysis](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/syrias-quest-oil-may-include-russian-shipments) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/syrias-quest-oil-may-include-russian-shipments>) published March 5. Data from MarineTraffic shows that the *Marina* was in the Black Sea earlier this month and seen at Kerch, in Russia-occupied Crimea.



(/sites/default/files/2025-03/TracksMarinaBlackSeaMarineTraffic.png)

Screenshot from MarineTraffic shows tracks of the *Marina*, observed in the Black Sea earlier in March.

Profile of the *Marina*

The *Marina*, whose name appears to have been changed in some databases to *Cayka*, was involved in transporting LPG to Syria before the December 2024 collapse of the Assad regime. In 2022, [sailing under the Togolese flag](https://www.mees.com/2022/11/25/geopolitical-risk/turkey-syria-lpg-shipments-the-lebanon-link/79262460-6cbd-11ed-8eb1-b1df5d76e525) (<https://www.mees.com/2022/11/25/geopolitical-risk/turkey-syria-lpg-shipments-the-lebanon-link/79262460-6cbd-11ed-8eb1-b1df5d76e525>), the ship traveled from Turkey's Dortyol port to Baniyas while falsely signaling a destination of Beirut. The *Marina* is among a few LPG tankers to have transported LPG to Syria in recent years with frequent trips between Dortyol and Baniyas. Others include the Tanzania-flagged *Alpha Gas* (IMO 8817693), which the U.S. Treasury Department likewise [identified](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2572) (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2572>) as being linked to Hezbollah—and which was seen earlier this month in the Black Sea.

In a September 11, 2024, press release, the Treasury Department highlighted its actions against individuals involved in Hezbollah’s financial operations, including Muhammad Qasir (who was killed by Israeli forces in October 2024) and Muhammad Qasim al-Bazzal. These two “prominent” group officials were accused of managing a “channel for transporting LPG and other oil distillates on behalf of [Hezbollah].” The release noted further that a Bazzal-represented company identified as European Lebanese International Trade S.A.R.L. (ELIT) was involved in transporting “dozens of LPG shipments” carried by the *Alpha Gas* and *Marina* to the Baniyas port. Bazzal reportedly “procured” the *Marina* in 2020 and “reached an agreement to pay for the purchase” of the *Alpha Gas* in 2022 from Hokoul, identified by the [Treasury Department \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm767\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm767) as a front company for Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps–Qods Force. (Bazzal was targeted in a further Treasury Department action on [March 28 \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0063\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0063). For a deeper discussion of Hezbollah procurement channels, see [this analysis \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollahs-procurement-channels-leveraging-criminal-networks-and-partnering-iran\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollahs-procurement-channels-leveraging-criminal-networks-and-partnering-iran) by Washington Institute expert Matthew Levitt.)

What to Watch

Illicit shipping and oil smuggling networks don’t die—they evolve. Accordingly, and based on the discussion in this post, U.S. officials and analysts should keep monitoring the *Marina* and *Alpha Gas* with an eye to whether their ownership changes or stays the same. As noted by the Treasury Department in its [March 28 statement \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0063\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0063), ownership of shipping companies can be transferred to mask connections to U.S. adversaries and terrorist groups like Hezbollah.

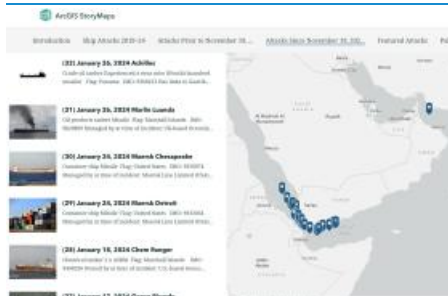
View the maritime incident tracker here.

(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/756ca769315d4b879ca7fdd6bd4a82be>)



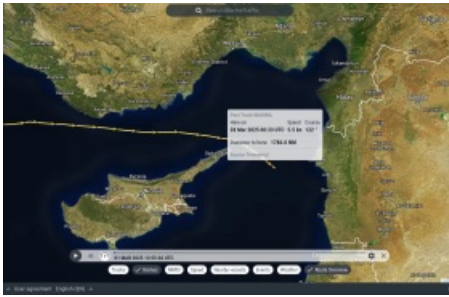
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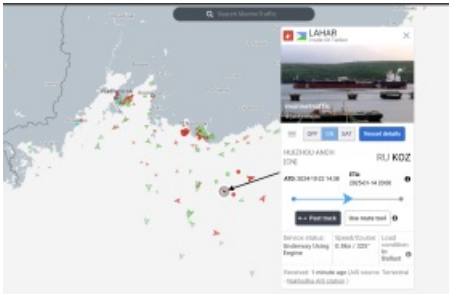
[Tracking Maritime Attacks in the Middle East Since 2019](/policy-analysis/tracking-maritime-attacks-middle-east-2019)

(</policy-analysis/tracking-maritime-attacks-middle-east-2019>)



Hezbollah-Linked LPG Tanker Sails to East Mediterranean

(/policy-analysis/hezbollah-linked-lpg-tanker-sails-east-mediterranean)



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