

Global Gangsters: Hezbollah's Latin American Drug Trafficking Operations

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The director of the Institute's counterterrorism program testifies on how the group's postwar funding crunch will likely spur it to double down on raising money via its extensive criminal networks in the West.

The following is an excerpt from prepared remarks submitted to the U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. To read the full testimony, download the PDF on this page.

In the wake of Israel's blistering military response against Hezbollah, the group is facing a cash shortfall at a time when it has lost key leaders, fighters, weapons, stockpiles of cash and gold, communication systems, and infrastructure. On top of that, it has to contend with a new Lebanese government that is beginning to do its part to implement the November 2024 ceasefire. As Hezbollah seeks to recover, it is certain to look to criminal enterprises—including laundering drug money—to fill the gap, as it has in the past after less severe financial crises. Nor is the risk limited to terrorist financing alone. Many Hezbollah networks involved in narcotics trafficking have had operational ties as well. Coming on the heels of the beating that Israel inflicted on Hezbollah and its patron, Iran, U.S. authorities worry about the prospect of reprisal attacks from them and their proxies. For these reasons, today's hearing on Hezbollah's Latin American drug trafficking operations is extremely timely...



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