

Hearing on the Blacklisting of Hezbollah by the European Union

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Articles & Testimony

The director of the Institute's Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence addressed the EU Parliament regarding why European countries should designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. The following is an excerpt from his prepared remarks; [download the PDF to read the full testimony](#).

"The long awaited results of the Bulgarian investigation into the July 2012 bus bombing in Burgas, released in part in early February, quickly spurred a spirited debate within the European Union on the issue of whether or not to proscribe the military wing of Hezbollah, Lebanon's Party of God, as a terrorist organization. The Bulgarian investigation determined that the military wing of Hezbollah was behind the Burgas bombing that left six dead and described a sophisticated Hezbollah plot led by a cell that included Canadian and Australian citizens. Recently, some have questioned the strength of the evidence accumulated by investigators from Bulgaria, Europol, and beyond, but based on my own interviews in Washington and in several European capitals, including Sofia, such doubts are wildly misplaced. Moreover, under the EU's own threshold for such designations, laid out in Common Position 931 (CP 931), the statement of a "competent authority" such as the Bulgarian Interior Minister on February 5, 2013, and the confirmation of that position by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister on June 12, 2013, are both perfectly suitable listing criteria.

"Far more evidence of Hezbollah's terrorist activities exists beyond the Burgas bombing. Even as officials around the world digested the findings of Bulgarian investigators, they were hit with yet an additional source of damning evidence exposing Hezbollah activities in Europe when the trial of another Hezbollah operative -- a European citizen -- concluded on March 21 in Cyprus. The Cypriot court convicted Hossam Taleb Yaacoub, a Swedish-Lebanese citizen arrested just days before the Burgas bombing, on charges of planning attacks against Israeli tourists. Taken together, the two cases present the most compelling case for a European designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist group than ever before..." ❖

Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament, Brussels

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