

# The Reemergence of Hizballah in Turkey

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**W**ith secularism, PKK terrorism, and other Turkish issues increasingly becoming international concerns, a dangerous Islamist trend has been overlooked: radical groups inspired more by the revolutionary ideology of Iran than domestic issues such as Kurdish nationalism are staking their own claim to power. One such group is Hizballah in Turkey (HiT), a Kurdish faction recovering from a government crackdown after years of violence. Although HiT's current efforts seem limited to aggressive social activism, the group's track record, like the PKK's, makes future violence likely. What can Ankara do to prevent HiT from "winning hearts and minds" in conservative areas of Turkey? And what implications does the group's reemergence hold for the wider U.S. campaign against radical Islamism?

In this Washington Institute Policy Focus, investigative journalist Rusen Cakir outlines HiT's violent origins and analyzes the scope and direction of its most recent activities. From terrorist training in Iran to mass demonstrations on the streets of Turkey, the group has proven highly adaptive in its efforts to remain independent over the years. In response, the author argues, Turkey and the United States must do what they can to counter the group, jointly and independently -- Ankara by waging its own hearts and minds campaign in mosques nationwide, and Washington by stemming any HiT efforts to mobilize Kurds in northern Iraq. The alternative is another potent Islamist force in the Middle East, aligned with Iran's radical ideology and dedicated to toppling a U.S.-allied government. ❖

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