



# **Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee of Intelligence and Security's Review into the Re- Listing of Hizballah External Security Organisation - Additional evidence provided on notice**

**Additional evidence provided in response to the question from Celia Hammond MP**

**Is there any evidence that having the full listing in other countries has increased the profile or the recruitment or sympathies for Hizballah? Have they used it as a tool for recruitment? Have they got more profile because of it?**

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**Attachment 3** – Weinthal, B (2021) "Germany sees increase of Hezbollah supporters and members – intel", *The Jerusalem Post*, <https://www.jpost.com/international/germany-sees-increase-of-hezbollah-supporters-and-members-intel-670092>.

## Summary

In April 2020, German's Interior Minister announced that any association with or public expression of support for Hizballah was banned immediately. Previously, Germany had banned involvement only with Hizballah's Military Wing.

There have been two written questions posed to the German Government in the Bundestag on the effects of German's ban on Hizballah. An English translation has been provided of these questions and their responses.

In summary:

- Since the ban in April 2020, there has been a noticeable decline in public support for Hizballah.
- The ban on Hizballah has not affected Germany relationship with Lebanon in development, foreign or security policy.
- Germany counts 1050 individuals as Hizballah affiliates. A media article quoted an German intelligence report that this number had increased to 1250 but AIJAC is unable to verify this number as the intelligence report is no longer available to the public. The media article is included in attachment 3.
- Hizballah continues to have a presence in Germany, despite the ban, in mosques and some community groups. According to the German Government there has been no fundamental restructuring of Hizballah in Germany following the ban.
- The risk of an attack by Hizballah on German soil is assessed as low because Hizballah perceives Germany as a safe haven.

Due to the time constraints, these documents have been quickly translated from German. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, there may be some errors in translation. AIJAC can also provide the original German documents, at the request of the committee.

**Submitted by Dr Colin Rubenstein, executive director AIJAC, and Naomi Levin, senior policy analyst, AIJAC.**

## Attachment 1

### **Question to the German Federal Government from the FDP Parliamentary Group, includes responses from the German Federal Government.**

*[Translated from German]*

Small request [*Kleine Anfrage*] of the MPs Benjamin Strasser, Stephan Thmae, Grigorios Aggelidis, Renata Alt, Nicole Bauer, Jens Beeck, Dr. Jens Brandenburg (Rhein-Neckar), Sandra Bubendorfer-Licht, Dr. Marco Buschmann, Hartmut Ebbing, Dr. Marcus Faber, Daniel Föst, Otto Fricke, Thomas Hacker, Reginald Hanke, Peter Heidt, Torsten Herbst, Dr. Gero Clemens Hocker, Reinhard Houben, Olaf in der Beek, Gyde Jensen, Karsten Klein, Daniela Kluckert, Pascal Kober, Konstantin Kuhle, Ulrich Lechte, Till Mansmann, Dr. Wieland Schinnenburg, Matthias Seestern-Pauly, Frank Sitta, Dr. Hermann Otto Solms, Bettina Stark-Watzinger, Dr. Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, Katja Suding, Linda Teuteberg, Gerald Ullrich, Sandra Weeser, Nicole Westig, Katharina Willkomm and the FDP parliamentary group.

## **Answers**

In response to the minor question from MPs Benjamin Strasser, Stephan Thmae, Grigorios Aggelidis, other MPs and the FDP parliamentary group

### **Effects of Hezbollah's ban on the activities of its supporters in Germany**

Preliminary remark from the questioner

On December 19, 2019, with the resolution of a motion by the factions of the FDP, CDU / CSU and SPD, the German Bundestag called on the Federal Government to change the distinction between a military and a political arm of the Islamist militia "Hezbollah", which had been practiced until then, repeal and prove it is prohibited from operating (cf. Bundestag printed paper 19/16046).

In April 2020, the Federal Minister of the Interior for Home Affairs issued a ban on activities, combined with several raids on the premises of clubs and organizations that support the terrorist militia. The resolution of the German Bundestag also calls for the Federal

Government to advocate classifying Hezbollah as a terrorist organization at a European level.

The Federal Government has confirmed that “bilateral talks with European partners” have been held, and that the German EU Council Presidency is advocating a “united position [...] with a view to the activities and evaluation of Hezbollah” and I will also seek the “discussion on this topic” in the future (cf. answer to the written question from Abg. Benjamin Strasser 2020, 8-070).

According to the Federal Government, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution is assuming a personal potential in the low four-digit range even eight months after the ban on activities was issued (see Bundestag printed paper 19/25939).

This corresponds to the information in the latest report on the Protection of the Constitution, which documents a potential of 1,050 supporters of Hezbollah, which was not yet completely banned at the time.

The question therefore arises as to whether Hezbollah will continue to act on German territory, whether money laundering will be carried out for it and whether other acts of financing will be carried out.

Nonetheless, it is feared that support structures will shift to those EU member states that have not yet implemented any measures the Hezbollah ban have taken (vgl. ELNET Deutschland, <https://elnet-deutschland.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Hiszbollah-Briefing.pdf>, letzter Abruf am 7. April 2021).

*1. Have travel or emigration movements of people from the Hezbollah environment been observed in Germany as a reaction to the ban on Hezbollah activity?  
If so, in which countries and how is information exchanged here with the target countries?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge in the sense of the question.

*2. Has the ban on Hezbollah's activity in Germany led to the relocation of organized crime, organizational structures and financial flows within the European Union?*

*a) If so, where to?*

*b) To what extent does the Federal Government have any knowledge of the relocation of financial flows to Switzerland and member states of the European Economic Area?*

Questions 2, 2a and 2b are answered in a factual context.

No statement can be made about the relocation of such offenses in the area of organized crime due to the short recording period since the prohibition of activities came into force.

The Federal Government has no knowledge of the relocation of organizational structures and financial flows within the European Union.

*3. Can it be observed that Hezbollah's supporters in Germany have organised/restructured in other ways, but continue to support the organisation?*

*a) If so, how is the environment organised?*

*b) From which associations and organisations has the support area in Germany been largely nourished since the ban on activities?*

Questions 3, 3a and 3b are answered in a factual context.

The Federal Government has no knowledge of any fundamental structural changes within the "Hizb Allah" supporters.

As before, the supporters of "Hizb Allah" in Germany maintain organisational and ideological cohesion, among other things in local mosque associations, which are financed primarily from donations. Accordingly, they are not networked in a uniform, nationwide structure, but are presumably looking for isolated regional meeting places, including. Mosque and cultural associations.

These associations, however, are not homogeneous "Hizb Allah" associations, but contact points for Shiite Muslims, which also include sympathisers of "Hizb Allah".

*4. Since April 2020, has any persons from a group associated or suspected of being associated with Hezbollah committed crimes that have been suspected or confirmed to have been committed for the benefit of Hezbollah?*

*If so, which offenses were committed and how often?*

The public prosecutor at the Federal Court of Justice does not record in its registers whether a person belongs to the potential person attributable to "Hizb Allah".

The question could therefore only be answered under the aspect of the investigation proceedings initiated on suspicion of criminal offenses according to Sections 129a, b of the Criminal Code (StGB) in connection with "Hizb Allah".

The Federal Government does not provide any information on newly initiated and still covert investigations by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, which relate to such criminal acts since April 2020. Despite the basic constitutional obligation of the federal government

to meet the information requirements of the German Bundestag, the parliament's interest in information takes a back seat to the legitimate interests of secrecy after careful consideration of the concerns concerned.

Information on this would specifically hinder or even thwart further investigative measures, which is why it follows from the principle of the rule of law that the affected interest of the general public in ensuring the proper functioning of criminal justice and prosecution (cf. BVerf-GE 51, 324 [343 f.]) here has priority over the interest in information.

*5. In how many cases did the ban on Hezbollah in Germany lead to criminal prosecution measures to the knowledge of the Federal Government?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of violations of the Association Act in the context of the prohibition of activity against "Hizb Allah". The prosecution of such crimes is the primary responsibility of the federal states.

*6. What information is there about the volume of money laundering that can be traced back to Hezbollah supporters in Germany prior to the ban (please break down by year since 2015 if necessary)?*

*7. What is the knowledge about money laundering in Germany that can be traced back to Hezbollah supporters since the ban on Hezbollah was issued?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge in the sense of the question.

*8. What is the status of the Federal Government's efforts to enforce the provisions of the resolution of the German Bundestag of December 19, 2019 on Hezbollah at EU level?*

*a) What specific measures has the Federal Government taken in particular to come to a joint assessment of the question of listing (please list conversations, meetings and initiatives in chronological order)?*

*b) What are the obstacles from the perspective of the Federal Government in order to come to a joint assessment of the question of listing and how does it plan to address these obstacles?*

Questions 8, 8a and 8b are answered in a factual context.

The Federal Government is in regular talks with all EU partners on the subject of the EU-wide classification of the entire Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. Such a decision

requires consensus, which is not currently emerging. There is no overview of discussions, meetings and initiatives.

*9. In which other EU member states do Hezbollah bans already exist at the national level? To what extent is the Federal Government in exchange with other states in this regard?*

The German Government is aware that the EU member states Slovenia and the Netherlands have classified the entire Lebanese "Hezbollah" as a terrorist organisation. In addition, various EU member states have enacted their own national measures, such as entry or symbol bans, against the "Hizb Allaah".

The exchange with other EU member states takes place with regard to the handling of the "Hizb Allah" on a regular basis as well as in the context of individual criminal investigation processes. The federal government does not provide a complete overview in the European context.

*10. What is the Federal Government's knowledge of connections between extremist structures in Germany and Hezbollah?*

*a) Was there any further contacts between right-wing extremists from Germany and Hezbollah beyond the delegation trip of NPD representatives (see <https://taz.de/Europaeische-Neonazis-bei-der-Hisbollah/!5582324/>, last Accessed April 6, 2021)?*

*b) What connections exist between Islamists in Germany and Hezbollah?*

Questions 10, 10a and 10b are answered in a factual context.

Hezbollah occasionally sympathises with other extremist organisations for ideological or strategic reasons. The focus here is primarily on those from the Shiite organisational spectrum. The Federal Government does not have any further findings.

*11. Are there any indications of negative effects of the ban on Hezbollah on development, foreign and security cooperation between Germany and Lebanon?*

According to the Federal Government, the prohibition of Hezbollah in Germany had no development, foreign or security policy consequences for relations with Lebanon.

## Attachment 2

### **Question to the German Federal Government from the Alliance 90/Greens Parliamentary Groups, includes responses from the German Federal Government.**

*[Translated from German]*

Answer to the small question of the deputies Dr. Irene Mihalic, Dr. Konstantin von Notz, Omid Nouripour, other MPs and the parliamentary group ALLIANCE 90 / THE GREENS

- Printed matter 19/28325 -

### **Implementation and consequences of the Hezbollah ban in Germany**

The Shiite terrorist organization Hezbollah (also Hizb Allah, “Party of God”) was banned from activity by the Federal Minister of the Interior and Home Affairs Horst Seehofer on April 30, 2020 after police searches in numerous cities.

The most important ideological goal of the politico-military organization, which controls parts of the Lebanese state and is represented in parliament as a political party, is the annihilation of the state of Israel (see <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2020/04/betaetigungsverbot-hizb-allah.html>; <https://ajcgermany.org/de/broschuere/ajc-broschuere-2019-die-hisbollah-deutschland-und-europa>).

In addition, investigations into the so-called Cedar Operation revealed Hezbollah's links to international organised crime.

The organisation should, inter alia cooperate with South American cartels in cocaine trafficking and money laundering (see Spiegel Online from 23 September 2020 “Global Money Laundering Group”, available at: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/libanon-warum-die-hisbollah-von-hassan-nasrallah-an-economic-power-is-a-ed8d714f-da46-45c6-bd78-ad623eab7503>).

As early as 2013, the Council of the European Union put the organisation's military arm on the EU terror list.

Parts of the political or civil arm of the organization, which are made up of cultural associations, mosques and foundations, were still able to operate in Germany.



After bans in numerous other countries, such as in the USA and Great Britain, it was repeatedly pointed out that Germany could function as a retreat for the terrorist organisation (see <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article207646507/Terrormiliz-Was-aus-Deutschland-s-Hezbollah-Prohibition-follows.html>).

According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) in Germany, around 1,050 supporters from the Islamist spectrum are assigned to the organization.

According to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, four associations are considered to be sub-organizations of Hezbollah: the Imam Mahdi Center in Münster, the El-Irschad e. V. in Berlin-Neukölln, the Al-Mustafa Community in Bremen and the Community of Lebanese Emigrants e. V. in Dortmund (see <https://ajcgermany.org/de/broschuere/ajc-broschuere-2019-die-hiszbollah-deutschland-und-europa>).

In addition, the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution is aware of 30 other cultural and mosque associations in which, according to the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution, “a clientele who is close to Hezbollah or its ideology meets regularly” (cf. Report of the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2018, p. 50). After the ban on activities, gatherings of Hezbollah supporters and the wearing of the organization's marks are prohibited.

The questioning group is of the opinion that the ban on activities should not be an end in itself, but must be part of a larger strategy to combat the activities of the anti-Israel terrorist organisation Hezbollah. In view of the meetings of people close to Hezbollah that are still taking place in other cultural and mosque associations, the question arises of the success of the ban on activities to date.

In the opinion of the questioners, it should also be critically examined to what extent the goal of smashing Hezbollah's recruiting and financing network, which was supposed to be achieved with the ban on activities, could be advanced - especially with a view to the role of Hezbollah in organized crime and in international drug trafficking (see Goertz 2018: 67; <https://ajcgermany.org/de/broschuere/ajc-broschuere-2019-die-hiszbollah-deutschland-und-europa>; <https://www.ardaudiothek.de/organisiertes-verbrechen-recherchen-im-verborgenen/die-libanon-connection-3-3/86784960>).

## **Preliminary remarks by the Federal Government**

Some of the questions cannot be answered openly for reasons of the state's welfare.

Working methods and procedures of the federal intelligence services are particularly worthy of protection with a view to the future fulfillment of the legal mandate from § 1 paragraph 2 of the Federal Intelligence Service Act (BNDG).

Details of the intelligence service's knowledge are also in need of protection.

Publication of details relating to such knowledge would lead to a significant weakening of the possibilities available to the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) to obtain information.

This would result in considerable disadvantages for the Federal Intelligence Service to fulfill its mandate. It can be detrimental to the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany. This is why the relevant information is classified as classified information in accordance with the General Administrative Regulations on Material Secrecy Protection (VSA) with the VS grade "VS - Confidential" and is sent separately to the German Bundestag as Annex 1. \*

1. *What knowledge do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the state offices for the protection of the constitution have about the activities of Hezbollah in the Federal Republic of Germany since 2018?*

The supporters of "Hizb Allah" maintain organisational and ideological cohesion in Germany, among other things in local mosque associations, which are primarily financed from donations. In addition, the "Hizb Allah" uses Germany as a retreat and recruitment area as well as for Procurement and fundraising activities. For further details refer to the Constitutional protection reports referred by the federal and state governments

2. *Which people are counted as members of Hezbollah, and how many people are there currently in total?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of the formal membership numbers of "Hizb Allah" in Germany. The federal government currently counts around 1,050 people as part of the extremist potential of "Hizb Allah" in Germany.

3. *How often have incidents and / or persons or groups in the context of Hezbollah been the subject of consultations between the Federal Government, its subordinate authorities and the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution in the Joint Anti-Terror Center (GTAZ)?*

In the Joint Counter-Terrorism Center (GTAZ), there is a regular and event-related exchange between the authorities belonging to the GTAZ group on relevant issues. A statistical evaluation of the frequency of the consultations is not carried out.

*4. What consequences, to the knowledge of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, did the prohibition of Hezbollah have on the activities of the terrorist organization in Germany?*

As a result of the ban on activities, the use of the organisation's symbols at meetings or in public is prohibited. A decline in public expressions of sympathy is therefore to be expected and in some cases already discernible. As a result of the searches, mosque associations avoided references to "Hezbollah" in their public statements as part of the implementation of the ban on activities.

In addition, the supporters of the organization usually disguise the reference to "Hezbollah" through conspiratorial behavior and isolation. It follows that, from the perspective of the security authorities, the phenomenon in Germany is to a not inconsiderable degree in the dark and that it is difficult and so far only to obtain knowledge about activities relevant to criminal law.

*5. What is the knowledge of the analysis of the documents and data carriers seized during the searches of the four associations on April 30, 2020, particularly, but not exclusively, with a view to the networking of Hezbollah, the recruitment of new members, the financing of their own work, the donations to other organizations or groups, both at home and abroad, as well as to possible attack planning?*

After careful consideration, the Federal Government is of the opinion that an answer cannot be given.

This information cannot be presented for reasons of the state's welfare. The information would enable conclusions to be drawn about the need for clarification, the level of knowledge and the general mode of operation of the intelligence services. This could make gaining knowledge more difficult or, in individual cases, impossible. This can permanently impair the functionality of the intelligence service and thus represent a disadvantage for the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany. The requested information thus affects secrecy interests that require protection in such a way that the public interest outweighs the parliamentary right to information and the data cannot be transmitted openly. With regard to the principle of defensive democracy, the Federal Government also considers the information of the type requested to be so sensitive that even a slight risk of a leak cannot be borne and transmission to the German Bundestag's secret protection agency is therefore ruled out.

*6. To the knowledge of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, to what extent does Hezbollah continue to*

*have its structures in Germany after the ban by the Federal Minister of the Interior and Home Affairs Horst Seehofer in Germany changed or adapted?*

The individual association structures continue to exist even after the prohibition of activity, as no organization bans have been issued in this respect. There was and does not exist a superordinate umbrella organization of "Hizb Allah" in Germany. The Federal Government has no further information.

Please also refer to the answers to questions 1 and 4.

*7. To what extent have the group's assets been confiscated in Germany so far (please break down as detailed as possible)?*

No assets of "Hizb Allah" were confiscated in Germany.

*8. To the knowledge of the federal government, to what extent do the federal government and its subordinate authorities or the state Offices for the Protection of the Constitution identify a relocation of activities after the ban on activities of the four associations, which are considered sub-organizations of Hezbollah to other associations or municipalities or the attempt to continue the activities, and if so, in what specific form?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of this.

*9. What knowledge do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the state Offices for the Protection of the Constitution have, as far as the Federal Government knows, about the 30 other cultural and mosque associations that are not subject to the ban on activities, but which, according to the Hamburg Office for the Protection of the Constitution, "regularly meets a clientele who are close to Hezbollah or their ideology" (Report of the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2018, p. 50)?*

*a) How high is the potential of these clubs estimated (please break down as detailed as possible)?*

Please refer to the answer to question 2. A breakdown according to individual clubs will not be undertaken.

*b) To what extent are all or some of the cultural and mosque associations intended by the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution under observation by the Federal*

*Office or by the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, and if so, which cultural and mosque associations specifically?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of which specific mosque associations are actually meant. In addition applies the following: the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), in the framework of its statutory mandate in accordance with Sections 3 and 4 of the Act on Cooperation between the Federal and the States in matters of the protection of the Constitution and via the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BVerfSchG), especially in terms of groups of people and thus also cultural and mosque associations, can only process this information under the proviso that certain legal requirements are met.

*c) Are officials or association members of the associations that are subject to the prohibition of activity under observation by the Federal Office or by the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, and if so, how many people in total?*

With regard to the four associations that were searched within the scope of the ban on activities, there were sufficient indications that they may be part of the "Hizb Allah" in Germany. Accordingly, processing takes place in accordance with the legal requirements of §§ 3, 4 BVerfSchG. The processing of groupings of persons usually also includes the chairmen of the board of directors and officials. The extent to which members are also processed cannot be answered across the board, as this depends on their involvement in the group of people and an assessment in the individual case.

*d) Why is the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH), which has been under observation by the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution for a long time due to its Islamist orientation, has a close ideological and financial connection to the Iranian regime and participates in the annual Al-Quds- Day is involved (cf. report of the Hamburg State Office for the Protection of the Constitution 2019, p. 70 ff.), not been affected by the federal government's ban on activities?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of this.

*e) What knowledge does the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution have about the activities of members of the associations affected by the ban to the knowledge of the Federal Government?*

Please refer to the answers to questions 4 and 8.

*10. To the knowledge of the federal government, what information do the federal government and its subordinate authorities or the state offices for the protection of the constitution have about activities of Hezbollah in connection with organized crime?*

The Federal Government is not yet aware of any cases in which "Hizb Allaah" is organizing activities in the area of organized crime.

*11. To the knowledge of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, to what extent can connections be established between Hezbollah and organised crime groups and organizations?*

Since the 2018 reporting year, the Organised Crime (OC) federal situation report has also looked at links between OC and terrorism or politically motivated crime.

In the reporting years 2018 and 2019, the Federal Government was informed of one procedure from the OC area with references to "Hizb Allah". The groups of offenders showed connections to "Hizb Allah" in the form of "political proximity" and financial support.

*12. As far as the Federal Government is aware, what is the knowledge of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, on the investigations that were carried out as part of the "Operation Cedar", and to what extent there are connections to Germany (see Spiegel Online, op. cit.)?*

If the question is in connection with the "Cedar" investigation of the Essen customs investigation office, reference is made to the Federal Government's answer to question 6 of the FDP parliamentary group's Small Question on Bundestag printed paper 19/9163 of March 20, 2019.

In January 2016, the perpetrators of the above "Cedar" investigation arrested in Germany were extradited to France. In December 2018, the Paris Regional Court ruled on money laundering, drug trafficking and membership in a criminal organization. The perpetrators were sentenced to several years' imprisonment (two to ten years) as well as high financial penalties. The people from Germany were released from prison in 2020 after serving their prison sentence.

*13. To the knowledge of the Federal Government, to what extent are the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution aware, that high-ranking representatives of the security staff at Rafiq Hariri Airport in Beirut were involved in the international smuggling of goods (see ndr.de: Die Lebanon-Connection (2/3), available at <https://www.ndr.de/nachrichten/info/Das-Organisiert-Verbrechen-Flet-5,audio835634.html>)?*

- a) Was this issue discussed in bilateral talks between the Federal Government and Lebanon?*  
*b) To the knowledge of the Federal Government, what security policy conclusions do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution draw from this matter?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of this.

- 14. To the knowledge of the Federal Government, to what extent do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution have knowledge, that Hezbollah is involved in the import of drugs into Germany or that it benefits from the import of drugs into Germany?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge that the “Hizb Allaah” is involved in the importation of drugs into Germany or that they benefit from the importation of drugs into Germany.

- 15. To the knowledge of the federal government, to what extent do the federal government and its subordinate authorities or the state offices for the protection of the constitution have knowledge, that Hezbollah itself uses facilities or structures for money laundering in Germany or that it benefits from money laundering in Germany in other ways?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of this.

- 16. To the knowledge of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the state offices for the protection of the constitution, to what extent does Hezbollah use so-called “hawala banking” in Germany (see [https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland / liba non-why-the-hezbollah-of-hassan-nasrallah-an-economic-power-is ta-ed8d714f-da46-45c6-bd78-ad623eab7503](https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/liba-non-why-the-hezbollah-of-hassan-nasrallah-an-economic-power-is-ta-ed8d714f-da46-45c6-bd78-ad623eab7503))?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge that “Hizb Allah” uses what is known as “hawala banking” in Germany.

- 17. To the knowledge of the Federal Government, how do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution assess the*

*relevance of mosque and cultural associations for the networking of Hezbollah against the background of alleged activities in organised crime?*

According to local knowledge, sympathizers of "Hizb Allah" do not network in a uniform nationwide structure, but are presumably looking for isolated regional meeting places, including Mosques and cultural associations. These are not homogeneous "Hezbollah" associations, but contact points for Shiite Muslims, who also include sympathizers of "Hezbollah".

For the rest, please refer to the answer to question 1.

*18. To the knowledge of the Federal Government, what is the opinion of the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, what effects does the ban of Hezbollah have on the annual Al-Quds Day, which takes place on May 8 this year, and with the announced demonstrations on this day that for years have been characterised by anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel?*

As a result of the prohibition of activities, the display of "Hezbollah" symbolism during demonstrations such as "Al-Quds Day" is prohibited and no longer has to be explicitly forbidden by a notice during the demonstration.

*19. Do the prosecution powers extend against Hezbollah and the PKK in relation to Sections 129, 129a, 129b of the Criminal Code (StGB), respectively*  
*a) both for membership participation and*  
*b) on support and*  
*c) soliciting members and supporters,*  
*or on which of the activities named under letters a to c and / or on which other criminal offenses?*

*20. With regard to Hezbollah and the PKK, are there one or more criminal prosecution authorizations currently running for the Federal Public Prosecutor only or also for State Public Prosecutor's offices and for which offenses, and for Sections 129, 129a, 129b StGB for which of the 19a to 19c mentioned undertakings?*



*21. Are there any, and if yes, which and why, are there differences in the scope of the law enforcement powers vis-à-vis Hezbollah and the PKK and for which offenses, and for which of the activities mentioned in questions 19a to 19c under sections 129, 129a, 129b of the Criminal Code?*

Questions 19 to 21 will be answered together because of the factual context.

In accordance with Section 129b, Paragraph 1, Clause 4 of the Criminal Code (StGB), authorisation can be granted in general or for individual cases. The scope of the authorisation is generally based on the underlying application from the law enforcement authority. In case a general authorisation has been granted it will apply to all investigative proceedings regardless of the public prosecutor's office with reference to the respective association.

On September 20, 2019, the Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection (BMJV) issued a general authorization in accordance with Section 129b (1) sentence 3 of the Criminal Code to prosecute past and future crimes by members of the "Hizb Allah" association, also: "Hezbollah".

On September 6, 2011, the Federal Ministry of Justice (V) issued a general authorization in accordance with Section 129b (1) sentence 3 of the Criminal Code to prosecute past and future crimes committed by the European leadership, the person responsible for Germany and the person responsible for the sectors existing in Germany (Saha) or regions (Eyalet) and areas (Bölge) of the PKK and its sub-organization in Europe CDK (Kurdish Democratic Organization - Koordinasyon Civata Demokratie a Kurdistan), as far as there is a reference to Germany in accordance with Section 129b (1) sentence 2 StGB.

In addition, the BMJV issued individual authorizations for the PKK for constellations that do not come under the general authorization. These concern both, the modalities of supporting and advertising as well as proceedings against members below the hierarchy level specified in the general authorization. With regard to Hezbollah, no further individual authorizations have been granted since the general authorization was granted.

*22. As far as the federal government is aware, how do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the state Offices for the Protection of the Constitution, assess the potential risk of attack currently posed by Hezbollah members and persons close to Hezbollah (cf. <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/hetze-geldwaesche-rekrutierung-wie-die-hisbollah-in-berlin-im-hidden-acts/25285418.html>)?*

The Federal Government currently has no knowledge of specific attack plans in Germany. "Hezbollah" always poses an abstract threat to Jewish, Israeli and American goals. For further answers, please refer to the preliminary remark.

*a) To what extent do the federal government and its subordinate authorities or the state offices for the protection of the constitution know that Hezbollah is spying on Jewish, Israeli or US attack targets in Germany in particular?  
Should such findings be available, which concrete ones?*

Please refer to the answer to question 22.

The federal government has no reliable information according to which "Hezbollah" spies on Jewish, Israeli or US targets in Germany.

According to the current state of knowledge, the likelihood of attacks by "Hizb Allah" in Germany is still classified as low, as this runs counter to the interests of the organization, for which Germany is more of a safe haven.

*b) To the knowledge of the Federal Government, to what extent do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution fear an increased risk of attacks by Hezbollah in the event that the trouble spots in the Middle East escalate?*

The Federal Government currently has no knowledge of specific risk situations in Germany. The foreign policy situation basically also has an impact on the reactions of "Hizb Allah" and its followers worldwide. The killing of the Shiite leaders Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al Muhandi in January 2020 showed that from the side of Hezbollah at least clear warnings are being issued against the Western actors.

It is difficult to make a prognosis of the possible reactions of "Hezbollah" if the trouble spots in the Middle East escalate. From the point of view of the organisation and its members, the destruction of Israel and the "liberation" of Jerusalem are the most important goals, although this is to be understood in the context of a long-term strategic orientation. In order to achieve these goals, however, "Hezbollah" is not prepared to endanger its existence. In order to maintain power in Lebanon, it is important to acquire funds regardless of the flow of money from Iran. In this respect, according to the local assessment, it is regarded as unlikely that "Hizb Allah" will endanger a possible safe haven through an attack in Germany.

For further answers, please refer to the preliminary remark.

*23. On the assessment of the Federal Government, to what extent did the Hezbollah's ban in Germany had any consequences for foreign policy, particularly with regard to Lebanon? If there were any consequences, what specifically?*

According to the Federal Government's assessment, Hezbollah's ban on activities in Germany had no foreign policy consequences for relations with Lebanon.

*24. Through which concrete efforts has the Federal Government attempted to achieve the goal of an EU-wide classification of the entire Hezbollah as a terrorist organization before,*

*during and after the German EU Council Presidency, and what chance does the Federal Government see for a near future Implementation of this goal?*

The Federal Government is in regular talks with all EU partners on the subject of the EU-wide classification of the entire Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation. Such a decision requires consensus, which is not currently emerging.

*25. As far as the Federal Government is aware, what knowledge do the Federal Government and its subordinate authorities or the State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution have, of the European network of Hezbollah, in particular, but not exclusively, of Hezbollah members and the Hezbollah environment in France? Do bilateral discussions and / or exchange of information take place at government level or between the security authorities? If so, what exactly?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of a corresponding structural networking within the meaning of the question. "Hezbollah" is a global organization. Please refer to the answer to question 1 regarding the structures of the supporters in Germany. In this context, there are also individual international connections and relationships. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the Federal Intelligence Service also exchange information with foreign bodies as part of their statutory duties. With regard to the further answer to the question, reference is made to the preliminary remark.

*26. What knowledge does the Federal Government have about the cooperation between members and assistants of Hezbollah with representatives of the Syrian intelligence services and the Syrian embassy staff in Berlin to spy on and / or intimidate Syrian refugees in Germany?*

After careful consideration, the Federal Government is of the opinion that an answer cannot be given. The local knowledge cannot be presented for reasons of the state's welfare. The information would enable conclusions to be drawn about the need for clarification, the level of knowledge and the general mode of operation of the intelligence services. The Syrian intelligence services could develop appropriate defence strategies. This could make gaining intelligence more difficult or, in individual cases, impossible. This could limit the functionality of the intelligence service and thus represent a disadvantage for the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany. The requested information thus affects confidentiality interests that need to be protected in such a way that the public interest outweighs the parliamentary right to information and an open transfer of the data cannot take place. With regard to the principle of defensive democracy, the Federal Government also considers the information of the type requested to be so sensitive that even a slight risk of leak cannot be borne and transmission to the German Bundestag's secret protection agency is therefore

ruled out.

*27. What knowledge does the Federal Government have about the material responsible for the explosion in the port of Beirut being used in bombs by the Syrian government, and what role does Hezbollah play in this (cf. <https://www.spiegel.de/politics/abroad/beirut-what-connects-Hezbollah-with-the-mysterious-case-of-rhosus-a-000000-00-0002-0001-0000-000172636964>)?*

The Federal Government has no knowledge of this.

*28. Is the Federal Government holding talks with political representatives of Hezbollah about the ongoing government negotiations in Lebanon, and if so, is it influencing Hezbollah, which, in the opinion of those questioned, is significantly blocking the government negotiations?*

The German government is not holding talks with representatives of Hezbollah about the government negotiations in Lebanon.

## Attachment 3

**Weinthal, B (2021) “Germany sees increase of Hezbollah supporters and members – intel”, *The Jerusalem Post*, <https://www.jpost.com/international/germany-sees-increase-of-hezbollah-supporters-and-members-intel-670092>.**

### **Germany sees increase of Hezbollah supporters and members – Intel**

The number of Hezbollah supporters and members rose from 1,050 in 2019 to 1,250 in 2020 across Germany.

By BENJAMIN WEINTHAL JUNE 5, 2021 20:10

There has been an increase in the number of members and supporters of the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah in Germany, according to a report by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the domestic intelligence agency for the German state of Lower Saxony.

According to the German language intelligence report reviewed by The Jerusalem Post, the number of supporters and members rose from 1,050 in 2019 to 1,250 last year.

There are about 180 Hezbollah members and supporters in the state of Lower Saxony, a rise of 20 members from 160 in 2019.

Lower Saxony's Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the formal name for its domestic intelligence agency, wrote that “Hezbollah denies the right of the state of Israel to exist and fights it with terrorist means. In Germany the followers of Hezbollah maintain organizational and ideological cohesion, among other things, in local mosque associations, which are primarily financed by donations.”

The report added that: “For the Shi'ite community, ‘Hezbollah,’ founded with the help of the Islamic Republic of Iran, demands the application of the Islamic legal system of Sharia.” Last year Germany's Interior Ministry banned all Hezbollah activities within the territory of the federal republic.

Hezbollah is cited 37 times in the 436-page intelligence document that covered the year 2020. The report documents security threats to the constitutional and democratic system of the state of Lower Saxony.

The report did not explain the reasons for the increase in Hezbollah members and supporters in Germany and Lower Saxony.

Hezbollah uses “their propaganda against Western institutions” and is, as a result, “directed against the international understanding and the peaceful coexistence of peoples,” noted the report.

The intelligence agency said Hezbollah’s anti-Western ideology and terrorism permits it to be subjected to observation by German intelligence officials.

According to the report, Hezbollah “supporters from the same associations visit the same mosques.” The report said the “mobilization potential of Hezbollah should not be underestimated in Germany.”

In Lower Saxony there are supporters of Hezbollah, as well those who sympathize with Hezbollah, in many organized associations.

The pro-Hezbollah associations are active in the cities of Hanover and Osnabrück in southern Lower Saxony as well as in the area of the city-state of Bremen, noted the report. The intelligence data said the associations are financed mainly through membership fees and donation activities.

“The connection to the Hezbollah takes place via functionaries who come from Lebanon always again for special occasions, for example, the anniversary of the withdrawal of the Israeli army from southern Lebanon or on high Muslim holidays.”

The number of Islamists increased in Germany by roughly 700 to 28,715 in 2020. The German Muslim Brotherhood network, which is largely aligned with the terrorist organization Hamas, grew by 170 members to 1,900 in 2020.

In addition to Germany, Hezbollah’s entire movement has been classified as a terrorist organization by the US, the Arab League, the Netherlands, Israel, Canada, the United Kingdom, Austria, Czech Republic, Japan, Lithuania, Slovenia, and many additional European and Latin America countries.

France, Spain, Italy and the European Union have merely designated Hezbollah’s so-called military wing a terrorist entity.