

If it Quacks Like a Duck...

The Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah is a proxy for Iran that has carried out terrorist activities around the globe at Tehran's behest and helped the Assad regime kill tens of thousands of Syrians. While the United States designated Hezbollah as a terrorist group in the late 1990s, the European Union has not.

Yet, clearly Hezbollah is a terrorist group. Hezbollah has killed more Americans than any group other than al-Qaeda and has launched dozens of attacks against Israel since it withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000. American officials describe Hezbollah as the most technically capable terrorist organization. Centered in Lebanon, it targets U.S. allies and interests in the Middle East and across the world.

This fact was borne out when Hezbollah operatives carried out a suicide bombing on a passenger bus transporting Israeli tourists at the Burgas Airport in Bulgaria last summer. The bus was carrying 42 Israelis—mainly youths—to their hotels after arriving on a flight from Israel. The explosion killed five Israelis as well as the Bulgarian bus driver and injured 32 Israelis.

Given Hezbollah's attack on innocent tourists on European soil, it is high time for the European Union to finally designate the group as a terrorist organization and to cut off Hezbollah's ability to use Europe's financial networks.

In February, members of the House of Representatives sent letters to Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov and European Commission Vice-President Catherine Ashton that urge the European Union to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. The letters, each of which received 111 signatories, were spearheaded by Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Henry Waxman (D-CA).

The letter to Minister Tsvetanov, which thanks Bulgaria for the courageous release of its investigative report that provides indisputable evidence that Hezbollah was behind the Burgas bombing, calls for Bulgarian action to build an urgently needed European Union consensus to isolate Hezbollah.

In light of the report's conclusive findings, the letter to High Representative Ashton urges the European Union to swiftly place a terrorist designation on Hezbollah. Designating Hezbollah would enable the European Union to block the fundraising and travel it relies upon to plan and carry out acts of international terrorism.

Given the deadly consequences of inaction, no time should be wasted. As the old saying goes, if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it must be a duck. If Hezbollah is determined to kill innocent civilians for its political goals, it must be designated a terrorist group.