

BILIRAKIS-DEUTCH-KELLY-ISRAEL-SIRES LETTER TO EU MINISTERS

Dear Ministers of the Council of the European Union,

As members of the United States Congress committed to partnership between our country and the European Union in the vital effort to fight terrorism, we write to urge the Council to include Hezbollah on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations.

Hezbollah's fingerprints are on terror attacks across the globe, including on European soil. On July 18, 2012, five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian were killed and dozens were injured in a terrorist attack in Burgas, Bulgaria. The method of the attack, the type of explosive used, and its intended victims mirror many attacks perpetrated around the world by Hezbollah.

In 1983, Hezbollah killed hundreds of French and American soldiers when they bombed the barracks of the Multinational Force in Lebanon. In a murderous barrage in Buenos Aires, Hezbollah bombed the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and the AMIA Jewish Community Center in 1994. In 2006, Hezbollah fired thousands of missiles into northern Israel.

Suicide bombing was introduced to the Middle East by Hezbollah, and the group has continually engaged in the practice against military targets and innocent civilians. The group is known for abducting foreigners and holding them hostage, sometimes for years. South Lebanon's instability and lawlessness is primarily due to Hezbollah's presence in the region; even though Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701 specifically call for the disbanding of all militias in Lebanon, Hezbollah continues to expand there.

For decades, Iran and Syria have armed, financed, and trained Hezbollah. Both countries provide Hezbollah with stockpiles of missiles that can easily hit cities and towns in Israel. Additionally, with the acquiescence of the Assad regime, weapons and equipment are regularly shuttled from Iran through Syria to the hands of Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon. In recent days, the world has watched as Hezbollah returns the favor by supporting Assad's murderous attacks against his own people.

Some argue that Hezbollah, besides acting as an armed militia, also serves as a political party and provider of social services. However, it is undeniably first and foremost an organization that perpetrates acts of terrorism. Moreover, and even more disturbingly, Hezbollah's services are provided almost exclusively in order to advance the organization's terrorist agenda.

The U.S. Department of State designated Hezbollah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) when the label was established under the U.S. Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. Groups designated as FTOs immediately have their assets frozen, and support of the group is criminalized. In light of Hezbollah's flagrant identification with terror, its implication in a long and ongoing series of violent acts, and its close alliance with a brutal regime in Damascus that is responsible for daily terrorism on a national scale, we urge the Council of the European Union to do the same.

Respectfully,

WAXMAN-ROYCE LETTER TO EU COUNCIL PRESIDENT, CYPRUS

September xx, 2012

The Honorable Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis

Foreign Minister

Republic of Cyprus

We are writing to urge you to revisit the disappointing European Union Council decision not to designate Hizbollah as a terrorist entity despite increasing reports indicating Hizbollah is operating in Europe to finance, plan, recruit, and execute terrorist plots.

Hizbollah has a long and deadly history of carrying out terrorist attacks against European citizens, soldiers and diplomats and targeting Americans and Israelis living, working and travelling in Europe. In the last year alone, Hizbollah and its partners in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force, have been implicated or are suspected to be behind attempted and successful terror plots in the United States, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Azerbaijan, India, Georgia, Kenya, Cyprus and Bulgaria.

While you have stated that the Council would revisit the issue with "tangible evidence" of Hizbollah's involvement in terrorist activities, we would submit there is a deep body of evidence and intelligence underlying decisions by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands to classify in its entirety Hizbollah as a terrorist organization and action by the United Kingdom and Australia to place the "Hizbollah External Security Organization" on their terrorist lists.

Moreover, there is precedent in the European Union for action to isolate Hizbollah over its support for terror and incitement. In May 2002, the European Union froze the assets of seven Hizbollah leaders in its financial sanctions list for terrorism. In March 2005, the European Parliament adopted a resolution recognizing that "clear evidence exists of terrorist activities on the part of Hezbollah," and called on the European Union Council to take "all necessary steps to curtail them." And, France, Spain and Germany have taken measures to restrict Hizbollah's al-Manar media station. The recent Hizbollah plots on European soil must be met with a response.

Indeed, Cypriot authorities are currently prosecuting an identified Hizbollah operative arrested for an attempted terror attack against Israeli tourists to the island that had strong similarities to the deadly attack executed against Israelis in Bulgaria just two weeks later. Cyprus has long shown leadership in standing up to terrorism, and it would be particularly meaningful for Cyprus - itself a target of Hizbollah's plotting - to take the initiative on this issue in its term as President of the Council of the European Union.

We hope you will act to build the consensus within the European Union Council that is urgently needed to weaken Hizbollah's terrorist infrastructure - an issue that directly affects us all. We look forward to working with you and your counterparts to increase engagement between the United States and the European Union to prevent and deter future Hizbollah-sponsored terrorist operations.

Sincerely,