

Explaining Israel's Pager Attack on Hezbollah

Can you imagine the level of physical and psychological trauma throughout Lebanon and parts of Syria this week as thousands of Hezbollah pagers exploded, leaving many Islamic militants injured, hundreds of them critically, and several of them dead? It sounded more like something out of a sci-fi movie than real life, especially at the scale on which it occurred.

Amid all the trauma and suffering, here's what you need to know.

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Hezbollah, which in Arabic means "The Party of God," is a Shiite Muslim organization founded in 1982, inspired by the theocratic vision of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. It has always represented radical Islamic ideology and, in that regard, is no different than Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, ISIS or Hamas. Hezbollah shares the same goals as an Islamic State and has a deep hatred for both America and Israel.

In the words of Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, current leader of Hezbollah, a registered political party in Lebanon holding a fair amount of seats, "[Israel] is an aggressive, illegal and illegitimate entity, which has no future in our land. Its destination is manifested in our motto, 'Death to Israel.'"

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Funded by Iran, Hezbollah is based largely in Lebanon, where it has launched thousands of rockets and missiles into

northern Israel for decades, including hundreds in recent weeks alone. According to estimates, Hezbollah currently has between 130,000-200,000 missiles, a staggering amount of weaponry. These deadly weapons are pointed straight at Israel and can reach virtually any location in the land.

Like Hamas, Hezbollah has no interest in a two-state solution but rather desires the complete elimination of Israel. Also like Hamas, the terrorist group embeds itself in civilian areas, making it more difficult for Israel to retaliate without inflicting civilian casualties. But its soldiers are said to be better trained than those of Hamas, and they are far more equipped militarily than Hamas soldiers.

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