

US does not differentiate between Hezbollah arms

The [United States](#) said Tuesday it does not differentiate between Hezbollah's armed and political wings as it again urged [Europe](#) to blacklist the group, a decision diplomats indicated could be imminent.

A formal request to brand [Lebanon's](#) most powerful political and military movement as a terrorist group was filed by [Britain](#) and is to be discussed at closed-door talks June 4 of a committee overseeing the EU list of people and groups subject to its asset freezing regime, European diplomats said.

The decision would require unanimity from all 27 European Union states.

In an email, State Department spokesman

Patrick Ventrell told AFP the US was "increasingly concerned about Hezbollah's activities on a number of fronts -- including its stepped up terrorist campaign around the world, and their critical and ongoing support" for the Bashar al-Assad regime.

"Countering these activities has been, and will remain, one of our highest priorities," Ventrell said.

"The United States does not distinguish between Hezbollah's political/military/terrorist wings," he noted, adding US information indicates "Hezbollah's numerous branches and subsidiaries share common funding, personnel, and leadership, all of which support the group's violent actions."

"We have been urging our European partners -- and other countries around the world -- to take a wide range of steps to crack down on Hezbollah, including sanctions and increased law enforcement cooperation with the United States," the spokesman added.

The United States and [Israel](#), both of which have the Lebanese Shiite group on their terror blacklists, have long urged Europe to follow suit.

US President Barack Obama expressed concern on Monday over Hezbollah's "active and growing role" aiding Syria's army against rebels trying to topple the government in a phone call to Lebanese President Michel Sleiman.

Lebanon is officially neutral on the violence in Syria, but a range of Lebanese groups are openly intervening in the conflict that has killed more than 70,000 people since it began in March 2011.

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