

Exclusive: IRGC-Hezbollah Captagon Ring Compromised by War Over Profits - Middle East Transparent



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Friday 27 April 2012

The scandal of captagon pills fabricated in Hezbollah religious seminaries (or hawzas) in the city of Baalbek, in Lebanon's eastern regions, shed a new light on the contradiction between the "most noble" epithet, employed by Hezbollah to describe its members and supporters, and a criminal activity worthy of organized crime. When the story first came out, Hezbollah gave it a deaf ear, until its security organs resorted to a known disinformation tactic, claiming it was Hezbollah itself which uncovered the fabrication and distribution network and allowed authorities to dismantle it even though some of those implicated were relatives of prominent Hezbollah dignitaries.

Not so, says **Middle East Transparent Correspondent in the Bekaa valley**. If true that some Hezbollah organs played a role in uncovering the illegal Captagon network, this was, rather, in the context of internal struggles, mafia style, over the division of the enormous profits gained through drugs fabrication and distribution.

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The story started with the seizure by the Drugs Enforcement Office of two Captagone manufacturing machines at the Tripoli port, in northern Lebanon. Investigations lead to a certain **Hashim al Mussawi**, brother to Hezbollah's member of parliament **Hussein al Mussawi**. Then, a major

discovery was made: Captagon manufacturing was taking place in the basement of two Hezbollah religious seminaries in the city of Baalbeck: the “*umm al-Banin*” seminary (or “*hawza*”) in the “*al-assira*” neighbourhood and the “*Imam al-Mujtaba*” seminary in the “*Sharawna*” locality, which had been theater to recurrent clashes between armed gangs and the army. Raids followed in the shiite villages of “*Iaat*”, “*Nabi sheet*”, and “*Brital*”, in which manufacturing machines, millions of “Captagon” pills ready-made, and raw ingredients were seized. Arrests were made and more “laboratories” were raided in the the “Choueifat” and “Hay Assullum” neighbourhoods, both in Beirut’s Southern *Dahiyé*, a Hezbollah stronghold usually referred to in Lebanese jargon as Hezbollah’s “security perimeter”. Lebanese media reported that the two brothers of Hezbollah mp al Mussawi had been arrested. Other sources, however, indicated they were never put in custody and that arrests were limited to clans with no political connections.

IRGC Connection

As if the official version was not embarrassing enough for a party claiming to be a party of “God” and of “resistance”, insider information prove that criminal activities were condoned and supervised by members of Hezbollah’s top hierarchy aided by Iran’s IRGC, the so-called Pasdaran force.

Exclusive insider information indicate that the financing and equipping of Captagon manufacturing laboratories was ensured by Iran’s IRGC under the in the aftermath of the July 2006 war. Work started under a religious fatwa made by **Sheikh Mohamed Yazbek**, member of Hezbollah highest Shura Council and the official “agent” (a shiite religious term meaning “representative” accredited to collect the “*khoms*” religious tax from Shiites who consider Ayatollah Khamenei as their “*marjaa*”). Sheikh Yazbek’s “fatwa” legalized the manufacture and sale of Captagon pills on the condition that they were not consumed by followers of the *Wilayat-e-Faqih*.

The “hidden stitch” in the unfolding of the story was the leaking of information on the criminal network by none other than top hierarchs in Hezbollah itself. Not out of remorse or ethical principles.

Hezbollah’s “Bekaais” marginalized by “Southerners”

Hezbollah, according to insiders, is being torn between the three influential “southerners”, **Hassan Nasraalh**, his nephew (and designed successor) **Hashem Safieddine** and Nasrallah’s eternal deputy **Sheikh Naim Qassem**, on the one hand, and the only leadership member who comes from the Bekaa valley, **Sheikh Mohamed Yazbek**, who heads the “High Legal Committee” (equivalent of a fatwa authority) in the party. Sheikh Yazbek and his “Bekaai” current have been alienated by their increased marginalisation in a party which was, originally, founded in the 1980s by three prominent clergymen from the Bekaa: Sheikhs **Tfaily** (ex secretary general, now a public opponent of Hezbollah), **Mussawi** (ex secretary general, killed in an Israeli strike on his convoy) and Sheikh **Yazbek** himself. Hezbollah’s Bekaa members accuse “southerners” of “kidnapping” the party’s leadership positions and of keeping to themselves the “fruits” of the party’s successes.

It is a fact that the Hezbollah’s “*Majles Shura al-Qarar*” (Executive Shura Council) is composed of the seven highest hierarchs in Hezbollah, **five of whom come from South Lebanon** (Nasrallah, Safieddine, Qassem, Mohamed Raad and Abdullah Qassir), one from the Bekaa (Sheikh Yazbek himself) and one from “*Burj al Barajne*”, in Beirut souther Dahiy, Hajj Hussein Khalil, Nasrallah

so-called “political assistant.

To add insult to the injury, “*Bint Jbeil*” in South Lebanon was designated “Capital of the Resistance”. No similar “honor” was bestowed on any locality in the Bekaa Valley. More substantial, however, was the preferential treatment due to southern villages and towns destroyed during the July 2006 war, with funds arriving from both Arab Gulf countries and Iran, compared to the marginal financial support given to villages of the Bekaa which were no less affected by the war. The marginalisation of the Bekaa Valley goes back to the 1980s, when the “South Lebanon Council” was founded to “compensate” villagers for damages incurred due to “Israeli aggressions”. Even if a sizeable chunk of the Council’s budget is pocketed by leaders of Hezbollah’s ally, the very corrupt Amal Movement, no such council was ever created to tend to the Bekaa needs.

To counter their marginalisation, Hezbollah’s dignitaries in the Bekaa valley, gave their benediction to the resumption of the **cannabis culture**. Sheikh Yazbek, himself from « *Budai* » in the Bekaa, used this culture to enhance his popularity in the region. More recently, he used his religious position as « **general legal agent of the Revolution’s Guide, Ali Khamenei, in Lebanon** » in a more pragmatic way. As the « legal agent of an Ayatollah » (all Ayatollah’s, including Ayatollah Sistani, have agents charged with the collection of the « *Khoms* » religious tax), he had a formidable financial resource which, combined with his alliance with the « Resistant MP », Hussein al Mussawi, was all that was required to start the Captagon fabrication project. Captagon **fabrication machines were imported from Iran**, with the name of mp Mussawi as « end user » and basements of religious seminaries (both inaugurated after the July 2006 war) were used as « laboratories ».

All was in perfect order, except that **the distribution of « dividends » was not satisfactory to all concerned**. While the al Mussawi clan pocketed most of the Bekaa Valley drugs proceeds (Captagon and other drugs), Hezbollah’s share was too small.

If leaks had originated inside Hezbollah, the reasons were far from being « ethical », « islamic ». Such leaks are known to be practiced by Mafia clans.

Sheikh Yazbek’s son linked to Assassination of Mognieh

How to explain Sheikh Yazbek’s total passivity since the scandal broke out two months ago? Sources inside Hezbollah point out two damaging accusations : Sheikh Yazbek’s son, « Hussein » was arrested by Hezbollah a year ago when Syrian authorities discovered that he had been selling arms (from depots under the supervision of his father) to insurgents against the Assad regime. Even worse, Hezbollah **insider sources** claim the son, « Hussein Yazbek », is suspected with having links to Israel and with a potential role in the assassination of Hezbollah’s military leader, Imad Mognieh, in Damascus, more than three years ago !

In the meantime, Hezbollah has been unusually lenient in dealing with the **al Mussawi clan**. As it turned out, the son of Hezbollah’s ex secretary General, the « martyr » Abbas al Mussawi was implicated in the narcotics business, Hezbollah’s internal security chief, **Hajj Wafik Safa**, used his influence with the official Airport Security Service to allow al Mussawi junior and family to board a plane to **Baghdad**.

Hezbollah persists in denying its implication in the scandal, yet the two Baalbeck seminaries are

closed by judiciary order, along with a “nylon factory” in Choueifet near Beirut.

As for the criminals arrested by Lebanese authorities, they all belong to the *Hamiyyé*, *Zein* and *Miqdad* “minor” clans. **No Mussawis, No Yazbeks.. and no Corleone!**

* *Captagon (fenethylamine) is a synthetic stimulant similar to amphetamine. Although banned in most countries in the 1980s, illegally produced and smuggled Captagon — sometimes containing amphetamine instead of fenethylamine — is a common drug of abuse in the Middle East.*