

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Are relatives of PKK members or suspected PKK members subject to harm or discrimination from the Turkish authorities?
2. Is there an organisation in Turkey called Hezbollah/Hizbollah?
3. What are its aims?
4. What are its objectives?
5. Are there any factions of this group?
6. What activities does it undertake?
7. How does it treat the Kurdish minority in Turkey?
8. Are people of Kurdish origin likely to join Hizbollah or co-operate with it in any way?

RESPONSE

1. Are relatives of PKK members or suspected PKK members subject to harm or discrimination from the Turkish authorities?

In April 2005, Abdulkadir Bartan, an alleged member of the PKK, was detained. Amnesty International is unaware of where he is being held and fear he may be at risk of torture or “disappearance” (Amnesty International 2005, *Turkey: Possible “disappearance”/fear of torture or ill-treatment, Abdulkadir Bartan*, 20 April, EUR 44/017/2005, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR440172005> - Accessed 16 January 2006 – Attachment 1).

Little other recent information was located as to whether suspected PKK members are subject to harm or discrimination from the Turkish authorities; however, the Human Rights Association of Turkey reported in 2003 that the Turkish Security Forces (Turkish authorities) had demolished houses, forced evictions and otherwise destroyed villages as a policy to combat the PKK insurgency. It further stated:

While the PKK's attacks contributed to demolition of houses, forced evictions and destruction of villages, evidence collected by the Human Rights Association (HRA), as well as judgements by the European Court of Human Rights highlight that the Turkish authorities bear responsibility for the majority of such acts. Data released by the Immigrants Association for Social Cooperation and Culture show that among 2139 families interviewed, 2116 did not identify PKK activities as a cause for displacement.

In response to the guerrilla tactic deployed by the PKK, those villagers who refused to become village guards or were suspected of supporting the PKK were attacked by the Turkish Security Forces or by village guards. As a result, villages or settlements that were considered as problematic were systematically destroyed. Houses, fields and forests were burned down and the livestock was killed, in front of the victims who had no time to rescue their personal belongings. These acts were often accompanied by other human rights violations, including brutality, humiliations, threats, enforced disappearances, extra-judicial executions and torture. Following the destruction of their property and villages, the victims had but no other solution than to leave and resettle somewhere else ('House demolitions and forced evictions perpetrated by the Turkish Security Forces: A form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against the Kurdish population', 2003, Human Rights Association of Turkey website, May <http://www.ihd.org.tr/repspec/omctihd/research.htm> - Accessed 13 January 2006 – Attachment 2).

The *Guardian Unlimited* reported that Turkish authorities have 'used' Hezbollah to "crush rebels in the PKK". Political scientist Ersin Kalaycioglu at Istanbul's Sabachi University stated that Hezbollah was tolerated by the Turkish authority on the basis that Hezbollah fights the PKK "[t]hey were tolerated on the basis that the enemy of my enemy is my friend...but when Hizbullah stopped being of use to the government it clamped down on them with a vengeance" (Smith, H. 2003, 'Suicide bombers are buried in Turkey's breeding ground of extremism,' *Guardian Unlimited*, 27 November, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/turkey/story/0,12700,1094244,00.html> – Accessed 13 December – Attachment 3).

2. Is there an organisation in Turkey called Hezbollah/Hizbollah?

Various sources confirm the existence of an organisation called Turkish Hezbollah (alternative spellings: Hizbullah, Hizbollah). In addition, there is also an organisation in Turkey which is called Kurdish Hezbollah.

According to GlobalSecurity.org Turkish Hizbullah is believed to have been created in the mid 1980's at the height of an armed separatist Kurdish rebellion waged by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party known as the PKK. Hizbullah declared war on the PKK because of its Marxist ideology, saying it wanted an independent Kurdish state based on Islamic principle for the country's estimated 12-million Kurds. There have been widespread allegations in the mainstream Turkish press that Hizbullah was encouraged by, if not actually linked to, rogue elements within the Turkish security apparatus who supported the group's attacks against Kurdish nationalists. Turkish officials say Hizbullah is receiving arms and training from neighbouring Iran and could be responsible for the murders of several leading Turkish pro-secular academics and journalists in recent years. The bodies uncovered over the past week, however, are thought to belong mostly to Kurdish businessmen with pro-Islamic leanings, who refused to pay protection money to Hizbullah.

('Military', 2000, Global Security.org, 24 January, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2000/01/000124-turkey1.htm> - Accessed 13 December 2005 – Attachment 4).

Country Research wrote to Adjunct Professor Cecile Van de Voode of the University of South Florida and who is the co-author of 'Turkish Hizballah: A Case Study of Radical Terrorism' (2004) to seek clarification if Turkish Hezbollah (TH) and Kurdish Hezbollah (KH), which have been referred to in several documents are one in the same organisation – Attachment 5). Prof Van de Voorde replied on 13 December 2005 stating;

The phrases "Turkish Hizballah" and "Kurdish Hizballah" do refer to the same ethnic Kurdish group of Sunni extremists that was founded in south eastern Turkey in the late 1980s. The group has received (and continues to receive) financial support from countries like Iran, networks such as Al-Qaeda, and active or passive supporters worldwide. Its recent revival extends well beyond the borders of Turkey and Europe. Much like the LTTE in Sri Lanka developed from a group of Tamil nationalists into an international terror network with solid financial and logistical ramifications throughout the world, TH/KH has cleverly used its radical front (and charitable causes) to seek and obtain ideological, financial, and logistical support from displaced Kurds and other sympathizers in the Muslim (Sunni) community (Van de Voorde, C. 2005, Email: 'Re: Request for information – Turkish Hizballah', 13 December – Attachment 6).

Previous Country Research Response TUR22917 advised that Faik Bulut, a Middle East expert and author of 'Code Name Hizballah', speaking to the *Turkish Daily News*, stated that "the organisation in Turkey could not be compared to the real Hizballah". Bulut advised:

...the word Hizballah is used for an organization actively involved in armed, military action, and from this point of view there can not really be any talk of an organization called Hizballah in Turkey. "There are Islamic organizations which have taken up armed struggle. These are called Hizballahi. But they cannot establish a central structure for themselves, each of them are local autonomous structures, wherever they are... that this structure was the result of efforts by those influenced by the Iranian Islamic revolution and sympathetic to Islam. These attempted to organize in Turkey after receiving military and political training in Afghanistan and Iran.

...Hizballah was an active organization in the Middle East with a central structure which relied on the people for its support and was involved in actions for the benefit of the people.

...There are no similarities between this organization and the groups in Turkey from the point of view of fighting methods and performance. The few people trained by the real Hizballah are not enough to merit the name here. It means there is no organic relation between Hizballah and the groups in Turkey. These groups have relations with other groups in Iran which want to export the Islamic revolution to Turkey. The Iranian government abandoned the idea of exporting the Islamic revolution to Turkey from 1990 on. But there are some groups which have not abandoned the idea and which hold some element of governmental power. These have used the groups in Turkey.

Bulut also identified the following Turkish Hizballah groups and associated individuals:

- Kasimpasa Hizballah.
- Southeast Hizballah.
- Diyarbakir Hizballah (menzil group) Fidan Gungor, Mansur Guzelsoy, Ubeydullah Dalar.

- Batman Hizbullah (Dawn group) Giyasettin Ugur.
- Science group (Diyarbakir- Batman group) Huseyin Velioglu. He changed his surname in 1995. Educated at the School of Political Sciences.
- Batman Hizbullah (Islamic Action people) When they were caught in Istanbul, MIT (National Intelligence Organization) identification cards were found on them. The details on the cards were correct. Additionally, 40 kilogrammes of C-4 was found. But an investigation into these explosives was not conducted.
- Silvan Hizbullah, Mardin-Nusaybin Hizbullah, Bingol Hizbullah, Urfa Hizbullah, Mus and its vicinity Hizbullah, Gaziantep Hizbullah. Other regions' Hizbullah.

According to FORSNET a Turkish anti-terrorism website:

The goal of Hizbullah groups is to destroy the constitutional regime of Turkey and to introduce an Islamic state resembling to the one in Iran. To reach their target they adopted a three staged strategy "communication-community-holy war ('Terror Organisations in Turkey,' FORSNET [undated] (RRT Country Research 2003, *Research Response TUR22917*, 17 January – Attachment 7).

In 1992, Human Rights Watch first called for investigation of links between Hizbullah and the Turkish Security Forces. Fikri Saglar, who served as a government minister that year, expressed the view that "the founder, promoter and indeed user of Hizbullah in the southeast was the high command of the Armed Forces. Hizbullah was expanded and strengthened on the basis of a decision at the National Security Council in 1985, and some of them were even trained at security force headquarters..." (Interview in *Siyah-Beyaz* (Black and White) newspaper, quoted in Kod Adi: Hizbullah (Codename: Hizbullah), Faik Bulut and Mehmet Faraç; Ozan Publications, March 1999.) ('What is Turkey's Hizbullah?', 2000, Human Rights Watch, 16 February, <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/tur0216.htm> - Accessed 16 January 2006 – Attachment 8).

3. What are its aims?

4. What are its objectives?

5. Are there any factions of this group?

6. What activities does it undertake?

An article which appeared in the journal of the *Turkish Weekly* (2004) written by Suleyman Ozoren and Cecile Van de Voode, outlined Hezbollah's aims, objectives and organisational structure.

According to a U.S. Department of State report, 'Turkish Hizbullah is a domestic terrorist group of mostly Kurdish Sunni Islamists with no known ties to Lebanese Hizbullah. Turkish officials and media assert that Turkish Hizbullah has received limited Iranian support.'¹⁶ Turkish Hizbullah, also known in Iraqi Kurdistan as the Kurdish Revolutionary Hizbullah (*Hisbullahi Kurdi Shorishger*), is thus composed of Kurds, a large ethnic group that is predominantly Sunni Muslim and concentrated in the mountainous regions of the border area between Turkey, Iran and Iraq. The 'network is alleged to be responsible for numerous assassinations and disappearances over the past decade, including a number of high-profile terrorist incidents. . . . 1999 estimates suggested that Hizbullah may have as many as 25,000 adherents, including 4,000 armed militants.'¹⁷ Hizbullah members are economically and socially alienated from mainstream society: they typically come from low-income families and half of them are not steadily employed, which reflects the situation of the Turkish socio-

economic crisis. More importantly, one fourth do not have any kind of education and about a third of the members only have an elementary-school-level education.¹⁸

Based in southeastern Anatolia, Turkish Hizballah originally operated mainly in the cities of Diyarbakir, Van, Batman and Mardin. Members of the terrorist group habitually gathered in and around bookstores, where they discussed their ideologies and spread their propaganda. According to official reports, the founding members of Turkish Hizballah initially gathered at one bookstore, *Vahdet*, but they were never able to form a homogenous group.¹⁹ Due to ideological divergences and leadership disputes, Turkish Hizballah separated into two major groups: *Ilimciler* (Scientists) and *Menzilciler* (Rangers). The *Ilimciler*, led by Huseyin Velioglu, met at the Ilim Bookstore, whereas the *Menzilciler*, led by Fidan Gungor, congregated at the Menzil bookstore. Beside leadership struggle, the two factions were opposed in the tactics they used to accomplish the goal of the terrorist organization. While the *Ilimciler* defended armed struggle and comprised Hizballah's most brutal factions, the *Menzilciler* believed it was too early for such radical action and opposed, for instance, attacks on suspected PKK-KONGRA GEL members.²⁰ An intra-group struggle stemmed from the battle for leadership and caused the death of over a hundred people on both sides. In 1994, the assassination of *Menzilciler* leader Fidan Gungor by *Ilimciler* members almost obliterated the dispute between *Ilimciler* and *Menzilciler*, but the truce was short-lived and the factions remain opposed to this day.

In the late 1990s, Hizballah attempted to widen its area of operation to cities in the western part of Turkey, especially Istanbul. The ongoing conflict between Hizballah and PKK-KONGRA GEL in southeastern Turkey was the major impetus for the shift. Still, western cities like Istanbul did not prove to be as favorable an environment as southeastern cities had been (e.g., Diyarbakir, Van, or Mardin) for the development of Hizballah. The efforts of the group were seriously curbed as major operations were carried out against Hizballah cells in and around Istanbul in early 2000, one of which led to the killing of Huseyin Velioglu, the *Ilimciler* group leader, and the arrest of his two top lieutenants, Edip Gumus and Cemal Tutar.

With regard to its ideology and goals,

The ideology defended by Turkish Hizballah is similar to the principles almost all terrorist organizations have adhered to throughout the world and history. According to Turkish Hizballah, the world is divided between two forces, Good and Evil, which represent the Ultimate Truth. 'It is likely that in closing themselves off from others, they became isolated and lived in an imagined community that struggled to destroy the 'unjust other' in order to prove that they were the "just selves".'²¹ Based on such ideology, Turkish Hizballah has opposed every group that has deviated from what they believe to be the true path of Islam, including other Islamic movements and organizations.

Hizballah's brand of radicalism further derives from 'the threat of the Modern Kharijites'.²² The uncompromising principles defended by the Kharijites (*Hariciler*) were in fact the source of the first rebellion against the rulers of the Islamic world.²³ The Kharijites divided the world into two parts, one that belonged to true Muslims and another belonging to nonbelievers; they declared a jihad against all nonbelievers and apostate Muslims and used any means available to them in order to rid the world from the infidels.

The ultimate goal of Turkish Hizballah is to overthrow the constitutional secular regime of Turkey in order to introduce a strict Islamic state inspired by Iran. Accordingly, a two-fold scheme has been devised: people are first invited into the

group (the term officially used is *davet*, to invite) and then, once the group has secured enough supporters, it can deal with other organizations in the region.²⁴ Besides, as has been observed in other terrorist groups, Turkish Hizballah follows the rigid rule of ‘you are either with us or against us.’ Those who believe in the same values and means as Turkish Hizballah side with the group, while those who do not are against it. If they choose not to change their mind and join the struggle, opponents of Turkish Hizballah are destroyed by any means available and necessary. Thus, the ‘unjust others’ targeted by Turkish Hizballah have included moderate Kurdish businessmen who support the secular constitutional government, as well as religious individuals who do not embrace the ideology of the terrorist group.

The organisational structure of Turkish Hezbollah,

The structure of Turkish Hizballah clearly defines each position by the specific functions assigned to each individual (see Figure 1). There are three major levels in the hierarchy of the group: leadership, top council (*Sura*) and lower-level (city) council.

Leadership. The first level of the hierarchy of Turkish Hizballah is the leadership. It is divided between two individuals: the spiritual leader and the political leader. The former has no power or influence on the decision-making or the execution of the operations; he does, on the other hand, have to support the members by means of religious motivation. The latter has decision-making power regarding the activities of the group: he can modify or change the directions of general operations. Although political and spiritual leadership positions are typically not assumed by one man, Huseyin Velioglu was an exception, since he served as both the spiritual and the political leader of *Ilimciler*, the dominant Hizballah faction.

Top council. The second major hierarchical structure of Turkish Hizballah is the top council, or *Sura*, a central committee composed of high-ranking political and military members. Important decisions regarding the group are discussed and made by the Top Council, which controls both the military and the political wings of Hizballah.

Lower-level council (city-level council). At the local level, that is, in Turkish cities and towns, the hierarchy of Hizballah is divided between the military and the political branches, following a pattern similar to the *Sura* framework. The military wing is the unit that carries out the armed operations of the Hizballah in Turkey. The leader of the military wing, who can be a member of either the *Sura* or a lower-level council, is responsible for the execution of the armed operations on behalf of either council he has membership in. The military wing is composed of unit leaders and operation teams or units. Within each lower-level council, unit leaders are in charge of directing military operations carried out by up to three operation teams. They are supervised by the city leader and direct his orders to the operation units. The latter come last in the chain of command of the military wing; they are typically composed of two to six people. As a rule in the *Ilimciler* group, operation teams are bound by secrecy: members know only of the members in their own team, not of any members of the group in general (according to official reports, members of operation team A will have code names starting with A, for instance, whereas members of a group B will have code names starting with B).

The political wing, on the other hand, is responsible recruiting new members and communicating the precepts of Hizballah to persuade the people of Turkey to establish an Iranian-like regime. The leader of the political wing of Hizballah is a member of the *Sura*. High-ranking officials of the political wing are in charge of

public relations and propaganda operations. Furthermore, Hizballah radicals perform duties of propaganda and recruitment in units operating in local schools and colleges. Finally, the public unit, generally organized in and around mosques, as well as in neighborhoods and villages, has no influential role in the decision-making process regarding the future operations of the Hizballah.

Turkish Hezbollah's activities and modus operandi,

When Turkish Hizballah first came to the attention of the Turkish public, it was often mistaken for the Lebanese movement of the same name. The major differences between the two groups, as explained above, were rapidly clarified and Turkish Hizballah steadily gained notoriety throughout the 1980s and 1990s 'for the killings of Kurdish rebel sympathizers . . . at the height of a conflict between Turkish security forces and the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party.'²⁵ Ever since its emergence in Turkey, Hizballah has been operating in great secrecy. Unlike most terrorist groups, it typically does not claim responsibility for its actions and usually does not publish any written propaganda. Turkish Hizballah started out as 'a mainly urban phenomenon' observed in predominantly Kurdish cities of southeastern Turkey and became particularly known for its distinct 'style of assassination carried out in broad daylight, often by pairs of young assassins using pistols of Eastern European manufacture'.²⁶

Initially, only suspected members or sympathizers of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (then PKK) were targeted by Hizballah. Opponents of governmental policies and separatists 'were being killed at the rate of two a day . . . [and] more than a thousand people were killed in street shootings from 1992 to 1995.'²⁷ In the late 1990s, however, Hizballah started killing secularists, moderate Muslims, representatives of Kurdish religious charitable foundations and clerics from other religious movements. One of the first widely publicized incidents attributed to Turkish Hizballah was the April 1997 grenade attack on the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The attack, originally attributed to 'some hard-core group', specifically targeted 'the spiritual heart of hundreds of millions of Orthodox Christians all over the world' and occurred in a 'climate of extreme nationalism and militarism'.²⁸ In January 2000, police and security forces became yet another tactical target to boost the motivation of the group members when Police Chief Gaffar Okkan and five police officers were assassinated in Diyarbakir, the largest city in the southeastern Turkey. Okkan had led a very successful operation to take apart Hizballah factions the year before and had subsequently been added to the death list of the group.

A 2000 indictment of high-ranking *Ilmçiler* members actually specified that the activities of Hizballah in Turkey 'included shootings, arson, assault with meat cleavers, kidnapping, beatings and attacks with acid on women not dressed in an Islamic manner.'²⁹ Kidnapping is indeed one of the methods of operation favored by Hizballah in Turkey. Targets vary from PKK-KONGRA GEL members and sympathizers to members of other religious movements; businessmen have also been kidnapped for ransom, as was discovered during recent police raids.³⁰ Above all, Turkish Hizballah has set a gruesome record for torture in Turkey. The *Ilmçiler* group in particular has resorted to extremely brutal torture techniques in a methodical and premeditated manner. Some have argued that Turkish Hizballah is an intrinsically fundamentalist and terrorist group in which 'killing and torturing were perceived of as inherently a part of their mission.'³¹ Turkish Hizballah victims are characteristically bound and gagged and subjected to severe torture prior to being killed. Some tortured bodies are even buried alive and most corpses have thus far been recovered from shallow graves, concrete blocks, or coal sheds.³² Such tactics have been used either to merely inflict pain on the victims or to persuade them of the validity and righteousness of Hizballah's struggle in Turkey. Even individuals from

the *Menzilciler* group and other religious people opposed to Hizballah's ideology and tactics have been subjected to torture by the *Ilimciler* group.

Suspected support from Iran.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution posed the first major threat to the stability of Turkish-Iranian relations in the twentieth century.⁴¹ Regarding terrorism in particular, the activities of PKK-KONGRA GEL and other right-wing terrorist groups have increased Turkey's suspicions about neighboring Iran. For example, during his interrogation, Abdullah Öcalan alleged that Iran had served as a mediator between Hizballah and PKK-KONGRA GEL and members of Hizballah have asserted they received training in Iran.⁴²

In April 1998, the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* claimed to have uncovered evidence of links between Iran and various radical Islamist groups outlawed in Turkey, including Hizballah. In an effort to dismiss the allegations, the Iranian Embassy in Ankara declared: 'Iran recognizes no group entitled Turkish Hizballah (party of God) in Turkey' and also rejected 'any link with the Turkish Hizballah or any other illegal group in Turkey'.⁴³ Even Hizballah members, in fact, have dismissed those claims as inconceivable and revolting. However, *Cumhuriyet* affirmed that the Iranian regime was in effect the 'spinal cord' of Turkish Hizballah and that their accusations were supported by a 'statement made by the Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi'.⁴⁴

In June 2000, as officially reported by the Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran [RONCRI], Turkey 'sent Iran a detailed dossier drawn up by its security forces on the Turkish Hizballah, a fundamentalist organization suspected of carrying out hundreds of assassinations with support from Iran'.⁴⁵ Official reports abound regarding members of Turkish Hizballah receiving weapons, financial support and training from Iran, notably from the Iranian Secret Service.⁴⁶ Both Iranian and Turkish officials have vehemently denied that members of Turkish Hizballah had ever been armed or trained by the Iranian government, but no investigation has ever been launched to establish the truth. Even allegations that Turkish Hizballah has formally approved of the Iranian Revolution have not been verified and the Turkish terrorist group therefore remains officially unrelated to its Iranian neighbor. Overall, it has been noted that the relationships entertained by the 'Iranian theocratic regime with the neighboring Turkey have never been easy ever since the victory of the Islamic revolution of 1979'.⁴⁷ Turkey keeps accusing Iran of not only helping Turkish Islamist and terrorist groups to create an Islamic Republic, but also supporting and protecting PKK-KONGRA GEL separatists (Ozoren, S & Van de Voorde, C. 2004, 'Turkish Hizballah: A case Study of Radical Terrorism', *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* [undated] <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=28> - Accessed 13 December 2005 – Attachment 9).

Janes Intelligence Review (1999) stated that Turkish Hezbollah is divided into two branches:

The Ilim branch:

This was first organised around the Ilim bookstore in 1987 under the leadership of Huseyin Velioglu and is the one that the name Hizbullah is most closely associated with. It advocates armed struggle and is closer to the reformist rather than the traditionalist line of ideology in Iran. It thus supports rapprochement with the West and refuses the religious leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini preferring a more Turkish, Sunni Islam ideology. Its organisational structure is as follows:

- Propaganda group. This is responsible for media and for 'scientific' research. It serves to disseminate Hizbullah ideals and agitate public demonstrations
- Social group. This group is responsible for public relations concerning the masses.
- Intelligence group. This body investigates potential and new members and uses moles to penetrate other Islamic organisations
- Military group. This group conducts violent operations and comprises the revolutionary army. It also adopted the principle of "raiding" carried out by early Muslims in the Koran and thus is involved in robbery and theft to provide financial resources for the organisation.

Menzil branch:

It is regarded as the more moderate of the two branches, emphasising communication and education rather than violence. It was established in the mid 1980s at a meeting in Istanbul under the leadership of Fidan Gungor. As a result of a divergence of opinions, Gungor was kidnapped and killed in 1993 by the Ilim Hizbullah branch. The group is known to have used the name 'Islamic People's Movement' (Islami Halk Hareket) in 1993. It is close to the Islamic movement in Iran and accepted the religious leadership of the late Ayatollah Khomeini ('The Hizbullah Movement in Turkey', 1999, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 16 August CISNET Turkey CX36811 – Attachment 10).

7. How does it treat the Kurdish minority in Turkey?

8. Are people of Kurdish origin likely to join Hizbollah or co-operate with it in any way?

As identified previously, Suleyman Ozoren and Cecile Van de Voode in their article 'Turkish Hizbollah: A Case Study of Radical Terrorism' referred to a U.S. Department of State report which stated, "Turkish Hizbollah is a domestic terrorist group of mostly Kurdish Sunni IslamistsTurkish Hizbollah, also known in Iraqi Kurdistan as the Kurdish Revolutionary Hizbollah (*Hisbullahi Kurdi Shorishger*), is thus composed of Kurds, a large ethnic group that is predominantly Sunni Muslim and concentrated in the mountainous regions of the border area between Turkey, Iran and Iraq..." (Ozoren, S & Van de Voorde, C. 2004, 'Turkish Hizbollah: A case Study of Radical Terrorism, *The Journal of Turkish Weekly* [undated] <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=28> - Accessed 13 December 2005 – Attachment 9; 'Hizbollah in Turkey Revives: Al-Qaeda's Bridge between Europe and Iraq?', 2005, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch #946, 25 January <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2240> – Accessed 12 December 2005 – Attachment 11).

Members of Turkish Hezbollah initially cooperated and received military training in the PKK camps. Cooperation soon turned to rivalry with Hezbollah accusing PKK of murdering Muslims. Consequently Hezbollah set out to kill its Kurdish PKK rivals which lasted for many years and resulting in over 500 Kurdish deaths ('In the Spotlight: Turkish Hezbollah,' 2003, Centre For Defence Information, 10 December http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=1928&from_page=../index.cfm - Accessed 2 December 2005 – Attachment 12).

There is additional evidence that Kurds, specifically PKK members, have been targeted by Hezbollah. According to Human Rights Watch, on February 9, 2000, *Cumhuriyet* (Republic) reported that a high ranking Hizbullah member confessed in police custody to killing Ramazan Sat on behalf of the organization on July 2, 1992 "because he was PKK." Batman police, who also suspected Ramazan Sat of being a PKK member, had interrogated him under torture for twelve days the preceding March. Ramazan Sat used photographs of his injuries in order to bring a prosecution against a number of Batman police officers. Although torture was and still is widespread in Turkey, Ramazan Sat's case was unusual in that he had not only the courage to complain, but also the evidence to substantiate his complaint. A Hizbullah bullet ensured that he never lived to testify against his torturers ('What is Turkey's Hizbullah?', 2000, Human Rights Watch, 16 February, <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/tur0216.htm> - Accessed 16 January 2006 – Attachment 8).

In addition, an article posted on the Kurdistan website reiterates that Hezbollah has targeted Kurds (Xulam, K. 2000, 'Turkey and Its Hezbollah and the Kurds', Kurdistan website, 24 February <http://kurdistan.org/Articles/hezbollah.html> - Accessed 2 December 2005 – Attachment 13).

According to the World Socialist Web Site, the Turkish army, police and secret police worked closely with Hezbollah as well as right-wing death squads. The right-wing militias have been particularly active in the predominately Kurdish south-east of Turkey terrorising the population and killing mainly Kurdish nationalists and intellectuals, among others (Leicht, J. 2000, 'Government crackdown against the Hezbollah in Turkey,' World Socialist Web Site, 16 February <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/feb2000/hezb-f16.shtml> - Accessed 2 December 2005 – Attachment 14).

The *Guardian Unlimited* reported that Hezbollah has been "equally reviled by the government and by many Kurds" themselves (Tisdall, S. 2001, 'What's in a name? Too much in Turkey,' *Guardian Unlimited*, 25 January <http://www.guardian.co.uk/elsewhere/journalist/story/0,7792,428001,00.html> – Accessed 13 December 2005 – Attachment 15).

The question (Are people of Kurdish origin likely to join Hezbollah or co-operate with it in any way?) was also sent to Adjunct Professor Cecile Van de Voorde for comment who advised the Tribunal;

As far as your second question is concerned, however, I would not dare make such a general statement. People of Kurdish origin with a strong nationalist sentiment may support the ideology, cause or actions of a group like PKK/KONGRA-GEL. Kurds with a stronger agenda who are opposed to the secular government of Turkey and favour a strict application of shariah law might sympathize or get involved more or less directly with TH/KH. I certainly do not wish to label any and all Kurds potential terrorists. Many Kurds vehemently disapprove of the actions of either one of these groups. Nonetheless, you should certainly be aware of and pay attention to the very strong notion of ethnic identity inherent in the Kurdish community (Van de Voorde, C. 2005, Email: 'Re: Request for information – Turkish Hizballah', 13 December – Attachment 6).

List of Sources Consulted

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Global Security.org	http://www.globalsecurity.org/
Federation of American Scientist	http://www.fas.org/main/home.jsp
Turkish Weekly	http://www.turkishweekly.net/

UNHCR *REFWORLD* UNHCR Refugee Information Online

Databases:

Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.</i>
RRT Library	<i>FIRST</i>	RRT Library Catalogue

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