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Expose: As a result of the explosion of Hezbollah's weapons depot in South Lebanon – the "Peace Generations Organization for Demining", owned by Hezbollah, is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic

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Executive Summary

The explosion in Ain Qana on September 22 shined the spotlight on the "Peace Generations Organization for Demining", a civilian organization owned by Hezbollah, which, until now, was less known than other civilian organizations owned by Hezbollah. Hezbollah established it in 2008 with the sponsorship of "Immen Sazan Omran Pars", a private Iranian company that we believe operates with the patronage of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Forces (IRGC), as part of the lessons learned from the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

Our assessment is that the explosion exposed one of the organization's secret goals – to disguise Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic in south Lebanon (the use of civilian buildings in the heart of villages for storing weapons and as launch sites for missiles and rockets).

Immediately after the explosion, all comments made by authorities close to or affiliated with Hezbollah stuck to the same story – that the building that exploded was used to store mines and unexploded ordnances belonging to the Peace Generations Organization for Demining. We believe that this cover story was concocted beforehand to explain the unforeseen explosion in the weapons depot and in Hezbollah's operational launch sites spread out in south Lebanon's urban territory.

This assessment is reinforced after examining past events as well. In both incidents of explosions of Hezbollah ammunition depots, the first in the village Khirbet Salem (July 14th, 2009), and the second in Tair Filsay (October 12, 2009), the immediate response of Hezbollah authorities was stating that the explosion was caused by old ammunition collected after the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

If the organization's objective is in fact demining and neutralizing the threat to innocent civilian passerby of mines and unexploded ordnances scattered in the field, why then does the organization store these mines and explosives inside a civilian building in the heart of a residential area? The organization's behavioral pattern seems illogical: on one hand, it neutralizes threats to civilians and distances them from them, and on the other hand it brings those same threats to the civilians' doorstep. Moreover, a Hezbollah operative was killed in the blast, and after attempts at hiding the incident, Hezbollah publicly announced his death 5 days after the explosion and the operative's funeral in the village a-Zararia in south Lebanon.

Note that there were many rumors on social media of injured and casualties in an explosion that were denied by Hezbollah. In addition, Hezbollah did not allow government authorities access to the site of the explosion by sealing off the area.

Following the initial responses of Hezbollah officials to the explosion (the cover story), widespread campaigns were launched with the goal of giving the impression that the entire population supporting Hezbollah agrees with and consents to the "human shield" tactic, thus diverting attention away from the precise location of the blast (that can expose Hezbollah's operational activity and harm Hezbollah) towards talk that is general and supportive.

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)

The campaigns seemed like an orchestrated war on the public's awareness. As a rule, this war's objective is to strengthen the narrative and neutralize the dialogue of public awareness that can harm Hezbollah's operational activity.

The aforementioned circumstances (the past and present cover story, the organization's illogical behavior, the Hezbollah operative's death and the war on awareness) only reinforce our assessment that Hezbollah's use of the organization's name and reputation and even its use of the organization's facilities are a disguise for Hezbollah's weapon and launch array spread out in in south Lebanon as part of its "human shield" tactic, in which Hezbollah uses civilian buildings located in the hearts of villages for storing weapons and for launching rockets and missiles.



In the image (above): the organization's logo
(taken from its Facebook page)

General

Hezbollah's civilian wing operates alongside its military one, and a significant part of its goals is supporting Hezbollah's military activity by using civilian health, educational, environmental, and other organizations and associations.

Considerable amounts of material have been published on these organizations and associations, their ties with Hezbollah's military wing, and their work for its benefit. Two main and well-known examples are the "Islamic Health Organization" and Lebanese NGO "Green Without Borders".

Although Hezbollah's "Islamic Health Organization" is highly involved in the health field within the Shiite community in general and within Hezbollah in particular, part of its tasks is assisting the Hezbollah's military branch day-to-day and in times of emergency with transportation and concealment of weapons.

At face value, Hezbollah's "Green Without Borders" is seemingly an NGO that works for the improvement of the environment, but in fact serves as an intelligence-gathering infrastructure for Hezbollah on the border area with Israel.

[*Green Without Borders at www.terrorism-info.org.il](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il)

[*Green Without Borders: The Operational Benefits of Hezbollah's Environmental NGO at www.washingtoninstitute.org](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org)

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)

A huge blast occurred noontime on September 22nd in a house in town Ain Qana, located in the area of al-Tuffah in south Lebanon. The explosion's echoes were heard all across South Lebanon, and clouds of smoke were seen in the area between Jaba' and Ain Qana.



In the image: a regional map and the location of Ain Qana.



In the image: the housing complex in which the explosion occurred in Ain Qana (the house that exploded is indicated with the red arrow)

Many indicators that have accumulated over the hours following the explosion, as well as Hezbollah's behavioral patterns in the field, point to one clear conclusion: the explosion occurred in a building owned by Hezbollah and was used for storing weapons, the nature of which is not currently known (if they are missiles /rockets /mines).

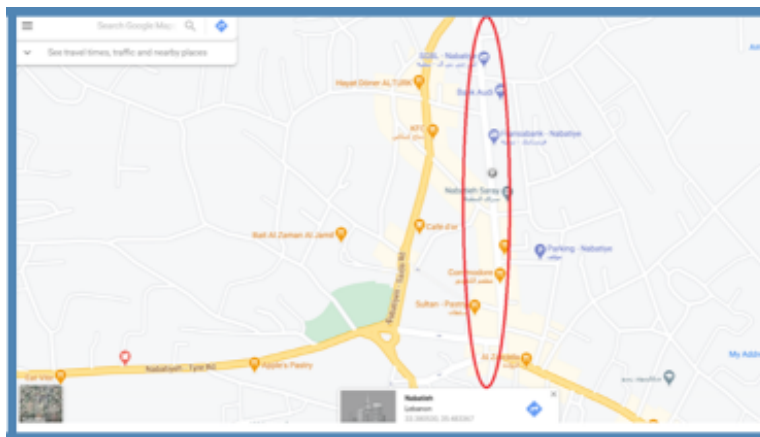
Immediately after the explosion, many Hezbollah-affiliated authorities claimed that it occurred in a "Peace Generations Organization for Demining" center. Thus, the spotlight was shined on a civilian organization affiliated with Hezbollah, that until now was not as well-known as other organizations.

"Peace Generations Organization for Demining": Affiliation with Hezbollah and Iranian Funding

The "Peace Generations Organization" was established in 2008 and received a license from Lebanon's Ministry of Internal Affairs in September that same year (authorization no. 1053 from September 11, 2008). According to the license's data, the organization's main headquarters are in the "Savaa" commercial center on Hassan Kamal al-Sabbah road in Nabatieh Altahata:



In the image: satellite image of the town Nabatieh. The area of the organization's headquarters is circled in red.



In the image: Hassan Kamal al-Sabbah road in Nabatieh Altahata is circled in red, in which the organization's main headquarters are located.

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)

The organization's objectives, specified in its license, are as follows:

1. Clearing of minefields from any cluster munitions, suspicious objects and unexploded ordnances, and rehabilitation of these areas for their future use in agriculture and construction.
2. To be an organization of advocacy campaigns, by establishing centers dedicated to raising awareness to mines and unexploded ordnances, as part of its goal to increase the public's level of caution and train demining teams.
3. Care for the needy, injured and mine victims – provision of suitable treatment, medicine, attending to their family, social, medical, and educational affairs, and provision of humanitarian services and charity.
4. Efforts, alongside certified authorities, at rehabilitating mine victims, organization of appropriate courses that will swiftly and intensely train them in professions with high demand in the labor market, establishment of housing for disabled people and professional institutes for their emotional, social, educational and professional rehabilitation.
5. Establishment of medical centers (clinics and hospitals) for medical treatment of victims.
6. Publishing of flyers, posters and booklets about mines and their dangers. Before beginning activity related to demining in Lebanon, a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the organization and Hezbollah.

The organization began operating in August 2009 with the funding of an Iranian company named "Immen Sazan Omran Pars", an "international company that provides consulting and services". Our assessment is that there is a high chance this company operates with the IRGC's patronship.

The company demines landmines and explosives, and its offices are in the Amajadia neighborhood in Tehran.

The company's contact information, including physical address and directions, telephone number, mail, fax number, web address, etc., can be found in the company's website: [ISOP-co \(Immen Sazan Omran Pars\)](http://ISOP-co) and in the link: [کتاب اول](#).

This is a private joint-stock company and seems to be family-owned since its 3 highest members share the same last name. The company's list of members and Protocol for Appointments to Entities (that was published in the papers) from 2018 can be found in the link [رسمیو](#).



In the image: the "Immen Sazan Omran Pars" logo

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)

Likewise, the organization began operating under the supervision of the LAF's "National Center for Actions Concerning Landmines and Cluster Munitions", headed then by "Amid" (Brigadier General) Mohammed Fahmi (Lebanon's Minister of Interior and Municipalities Today), who was the LAF's representative in the organization's establishment ceremony. Mohammed Raad, Head of Hezbollah's "Loyalty to the Resistance" Bloc, participated as well.



Some of the organization's founders are:

- **Mahmud Abdullah Rhal**, who served also as the organization's representative in the Lebanese government. Rhal, the organization's manager, passed away in July 2020, and was given the title "the Jihad's slain", "the slain one of the Jihad and the Resistance" and "the Commander".
- **Nedal Mustapha Berjoy**, who served as director of Hezbollah's "Foundation for the Wounded" in south Lebanon.
- **Tarek Ali Kassem**, a Hezbollah and Amal Movement candidate for the municipal elections in the town Blat in 2010, and came in second place.
- **Alaa Ali Aldabs**, a lawyer from Nabatiyeh, registered in Beirut's Bar Association (member no. 8682), and who is an ardent Hezbollah supporter on social media.
- **Amjed Mohammed Marweh**, (a man by this name is the man responsible for Hezbollah's center in a-Zarariya, as of June 2020).
- **Dr. Walid Adel Ramchan**

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Leaders in Hezbollah's civilian wing participate frequently in the organization's events and ceremonies, thus giving them patronage. Sheikh Nabil Kauk, Hezbollah's head of southern Lebanon, participated in a drilling exercise the organization held in south Lebanon in October 2009. In addition, Hezbollah was invited to the organization's "Demined Field Delivery Ceremony" in the town Al-Sharqiya Junior in May 2010, which was sponsored by Mohammed Raad. Also, in May 2015, the organization's sixth anniversary ceremony was sponsored by Hajj Mohammed Fanish (Hezbollah), Lebanon's Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, as well as being attended by Ahmed Safi Al Din, Hezbollah's first man responsible for the south Lebanon area, and by Dr. Hassin Rhal, head of Hezbollah's Electronic Advocacy Unit. Parliament member Ali Fiyad (Hezbollah) gave a speech in a landmine and cluster munition victims "empathy" meeting that the organization held in "Wadi Al Hagir" natural reserve in April 2018.

In Hassan Nasrallah's address in the 4th annual commemoration of the victory in the Second Lebanon War, in 2010, Nasrallah addressed the "prolonged hostile act, [that is the use of] cluster munitions scattered in the south". According to Nasrallah, "...last year, in the elections, I promised that we have begun to operate, and alas, the Resistance – with its Jihad warriors or with one of the civilian organizations, "Peace Generations" – landmines and cluster munitions were demined, and our Shahids have fallen."

Up to November 2010, the organization demined 197,000 cluster munitions and cleared 52% of the mined area in south Lebanon, the area of which is 45 square kilometers. According to the organization's Facebook page, it demines 3-7 square kilometers of mined areas (landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded ordnances) every week. In addition, the organization does intensive advocacy work regarding landmines and cluster munitions.



The "Peace Generations Organization" – A Cover Up for the "Human Shield" tactic

Hezbollah did not publish a public statement regarding the blast in Ain Qana, however, we discovered several addresses to it: Military expert, former "Amid" (Brigadier General) Amin Hatit, affiliated with Hezbollah, told "Sputnik News" that the explosion occurred in a depot housing unexploded ordnances from the Second Lebanon War and that it is still unknown if the cause was an Israeli attack, or a technical failure.

Journalist Salem Zahran, who hold close ties with Hezbollah, tweeted that "the fire in Ain Qana is the result of the explosion of an exploded ordnance collection center..."

"Almanar" journalist Hassan Halifa reported that the building that exploded belongs to a demining center of mines removed from the field, and that the explosion occurred as a result of stored unexploded ordnances.

A military source closely affiliated with Hezbollah confirmed with French news agency "France Peres", that preliminary information points to the explosion in Ain Qana occurring in a Hezbollah center housing ammunition, however, it is not a depot.

Hezbollah operatives in the Ain Qana supplied an informal version, according to which explosion occurred as a result of the Israeli hostility's landmines and unexploded ordnances that the Peace Generations Organization removed from the fields in the southern villages and stored until they will be able to be disposed of.

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)

Immediately following the explosion, as can be seen, all statements made by authorities closely associated or affiliated with Hezbollah stuck to the version that it occurred in a building used to store landmines and unexploded ordnances demined by Hezbollah's "Peace Generations Organization".

Is this actually a cover up prepared in advance to explain the unexpected explosion in Hezbollah's weapons depots scattered all over south Lebanon's urban territories?

This assessment is reinforced after examining past events as well. In both incidents of explosions of Hezbollah ammunition depots, the first in the village Khirbet Salem (July 14th, 2009), and the second in Tair Filsay (October 12, 2009), the immediate response of Hezbollah authorities was stating that the explosion was caused by old ammunition collected after the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Undoubtedly, Hezbollah desires to stick the blame on Israel as well...

If the explosion did not occur in a Hezbollah operational site, and there is no cover up, why does the Peace Generations Organization seek to neutralize the landmine and unexploded ordnance threat to innocent civilians, and then store this threat inside a civilian building in the heart of residential area?

It seems the organization's behavior is illogical : on one hand, it neutralizes the threat and distances it from civilians, and on the other hand brings the same threat to the civilians' living quarters...

In addition, on September 27th, 5 days after the explosion, Hezbollah announced the death of Ali Najib Marweh ("Abu Hassan") from a-Zarariya "while performing his Jihad duty".

While the official statement was content with providing only these details, not specifying when and where he was killed, civilians claimed on social media that Marweh died in the explosion in Ain Qana, despite Hezbollah's denial of casualties as a result of the explosion.

Informal reports claimed that the blast in Ain Qana was a result of human error that led to a huge explosion in a rocket and missile depot. 4 Hezbollah operatives were killed in the blast and verifying their situation was not possible because of the security lock down imposed by Hezbollah on the area surrounding the accident.

Eye witnesses claimed that the Red Cross tried to evacuate the wounded, but was unable to because Hezbollah operatives that were spread around the area prevented them from doing so, while the Islamic Health Organization evacuated them to a hospital in Beirut. According to reports, Marweh died in the explosion in Ain Qana after being hospitalized in critical condition (which can explain the 5-day gap between the explosion and the announcement of his death).

Peace Generations Organization for Demining" is apparently a disguise for Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic ("Alma's" Exposure)



In the image: Ali Najib Marweh ("Abu Hassan") – a Hezbollah operative killed in the explosion in Ain Qana.

<https://www.almarkazia.com/ar/news/show/254999/>

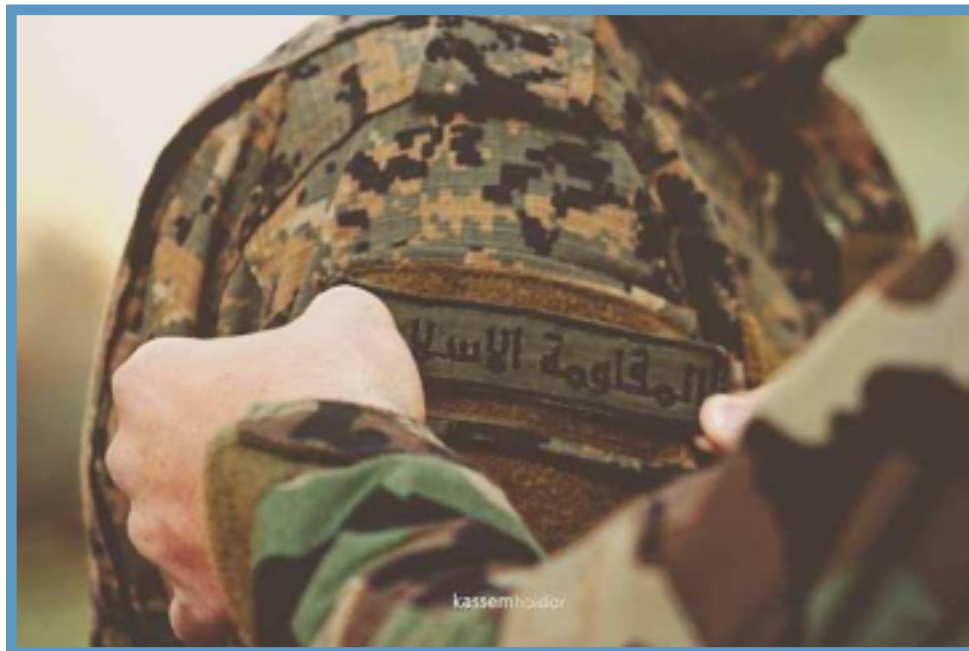


<http://www.yasour.org/2018/ar/news/details/news-53072>

As a result of the explosion – widespread “human shield” campaigns were launched online as a tool in the war on awareness:

Our assessment that this is a cover up and that the weapons depot that exploded in Ain Qana is one of many Hezbollah has in south Lebanon villages, is reinforced by the widespread campaigns launched online immediately after the blast. In response to blames placed on Hezbollah, its supporters on social media took advantage of the situation to open the matter of storing weapons in civilian houses to debate and began 3 wide hashtag campaigns (in which tens of thousands of hashtags were tweeted over the course of a few days): #we_are_all_resistance, #all_our_houses_are_depots, and #all_our_houses_for_the_resistance (#كلنا مقاومة) (#المقاومة), in which Hezbollah supporters expressed their willingness to allow Hezbollah to use their homes in any way it wishes, even at the price of their ruin, and even their willingness to lay down their lives for Hezbollah.

Here are two examples for these tweets. The first one is an image shared by username i4aKed Abudw (IsaKedfree33), depicting a Hezbollah operative sporting a patch saying even if they place the sun in our right hand and the moon in our left, we will not abandon the Islamic resistance #we_are_all_resistance:



<https://twitter.com/sajedfree1313/status/1308743865155944448/photo/1>

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The second example is an tweet uploaded by user-name Abu Tafesh (@eLU8xTK2M90iEzv), in which he attached a picture of a kid in uniform holding a (real) weapon, and wrote: "#we_are_all_resistance – for those who rejoiced for yesterday's calamity and for those who blown up in the explosion of Ain Qana, we tell them: we are from the school of purification, and you are from the school of the impure. We hide our resistance and its weapons in wombs and we give weapons to every child and train them to fight when they are young. We bring them to the battlefronts while they are in the prime of their youth. So know, those who rejoined in the calamity, that you are the defeated."



<https://twitter.com/eLU8xTK2M90iEzv/status/1308673455722827776/photo/1>

This campaign is extremely out of the ordinary, considering that Hezbollah invests much effort into hiding its operational infrastructure in south Lebanon. The fact that Hezbollah is using it points to its urgent need to handle the increasing criticism against it in Lebanon, including the criticism after the blast in Beirut. Even so, the response of thousands to this campaign indicates the fact that Hezbollah's base of support by the Shiite community, despite the difficulties, continues to support Hezbollah's "Resistance" narrative.

The war of awareness's goal is to strengthen the narrative and neutralize any talk or public knowledge that can harm Hezbollah's operational activity. Our assessment is that the first step (immediately after the explosion) was to provide a cover story for it, as described above. The second step, after the explosion, was the launching of widespread campaigns online with the goal of creating the impression that all of the people supporting Hezbollah agree with and consent to Hezbollah's "human shield" tactic, thereby diverting attention away from talk of the explosion in a specific place (that can expose Hezbollah's operational activity and harm Hezbollah), towards talk that is more general and supportive. The campaigns seemed to be a war on awareness prepared in advance.

The hashtag campaigns' intensity and content are in terms of "the hat burns on the thief's head" and we believe they strengthen the claim that Hezbollah waged a war on awareness because of the blast.

Conclusion

The fact that Hezbollah's engineering unit is producing explosives in Ain Qana was already tweeted on August 7th, and that Hezbollah holds large quantities of explosive materials, reinforces our assessment. The tweet was attached with a satellite image with the indication of the area of the building in which the explosion occurred. For security reasons, the Twitter username was not published.



In the image – the tweet mentioned above.

Everything we described (the cover story in the present and past, the illogical behavior of the Peace Generations Organization, the Hezbollah operative's death and the Hezbollah's war on awareness) strengthen our assessment that the use of the organization and even its facilities are a cover up for Hezbollah's weapon and missile-launching array spread out in south Lebanon as part of its "human shield" tactic, in which we believe Hezbollah disguises its use of civilian buildings in the heart of villages for storing weapons and for launching rockets.