

# Ali Abd Al Nur Shalan: purchasing and transporting weapons - Hezbollah's point person

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**Who is "Mouyas'ar"? How is he connected to "Yasser Muhammad"? What's his connection to the Beirut port explosion? How does he fit into the radical Shiite axis human shield tactic and the business shield tactic led by Iran? How does he keep bypassing the sanctions?**

### **1. Background:**

Ali Abd Al Nur Shalan <sup>1</sup> (nickname:<sup>2</sup> *Mouyas'ar*) born in the 1960's in Lebanon. Shalan is a Lebanese businessman whose business is carried out mainly in Syria and has close ties to senior Hezbollah figures. Thanks to his longstanding experience in acquiring weapons for both Hezbollah and the Assad regime, Shalan played a central role in purchasing weapons and smuggling it for Hezbollah as part of the war in Syria. Because of his actions, Shalan is considered a key facilitator for Hezbollah's weapons smuggling and Hezbollah's main point person when it comes to purchasing and transporting weapons and explosives.

In 2015, the U.S. Treasury Department began increasing its focus on Hezbollah's procurement infrastructure, including procurement agents and companies involved in numerous procurement activities of sensitive technology and equipment significantly expanding Hezbollah's weapons capabilities. In July of that year, the U.S. Treasury Department disclosed and classified the alleged suspects in this Hezbollah network; among them, Abd Al Nur Shalan.

**The U.S. Treasury Department said in a statement: "Shalan is a businessman with close ties to the Hezbollah leadership, accountable for supplying weapons and materials and re-transporting them to Hezbollah and its Syrian partners for at least 15 years. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, Shalan has played a crucial role in the supply of weapons that Hezbollah needs...."**<sup>3</sup>

The "business activity" takes place under different identities and under the cover of "business shields" that are in fact seemingly "innocent" civil companies that are a "front" and are a cover, protecting and supporting the true and illegal activities of the radical Shiite axis behind the scenes. An example of a "business shield" in the energy sector can be seen in our report regarding the Lebanese energy market published April 2021.

<https://israel-alma.org/2021/04/06/hezbollah-uses-coral-and-liquigas-as-business-shields-to-control-lebanons-energy-market/>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/abd-al-nur-shalan>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.syria.tv/%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%AD-%D9%88%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D9%88%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%BA%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%A9>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sy.usembassy.gov/ar/pr-07212015ar/>

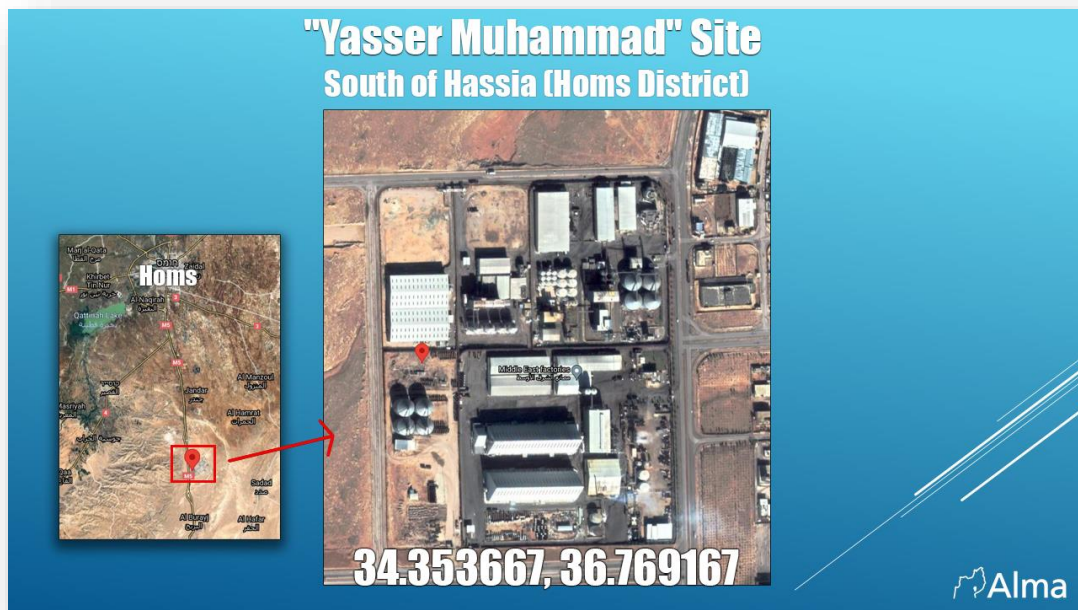
**2. Shalan's history of involvement in Hezbollah's procurement and supply network:**

- In 2009, Shalan coordinated with Hezbollah and senior Syrian officials the purchase and shipment of thousands of rifles to Syria.
- In 2010, Shalan acted as the main mediator in an arms purchase deal involving Hezbollah, Syrian officials, and companies from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.
- In the same year, Shalan obtained on behalf of Hezbollah tons of the chemical compound Anhydride, used to make explosives and drugs.
- In 2012, Shalan helped Hezbollah once again to obtain weapons and military equipment while smuggling them into Syria.<sup>4</sup>

**3. Shalan's connection to the production of precision missile parts site, in the industrial zone in the Syrian city of Hassia:**

According to various indications, Shalan's name was linked to a military site located in a factory in the civilian industrial area South of Hassia (Called the "Middle East Factories"), located in the Homs region. The site (Google Maps coordinates 34.35366, 36.76916) was bombed in an airstrike attributed to Israel in November 2017.

The information collected indicates that intensive Iranian activity took place in the industrial zone of Hassia. The bombed location was a site for the manufacture of Iranian precision missile parts built in a copper and metal factory inside an industrial workshop owned by Shalan. Because he was under U.S. sanctions in 2015, Shalan ran the site under the code name "Yasser Muhammad".



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alarabiya.net/aswaq/economy/2020/08/25/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D9%88%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B2-%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A3-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA>

As can be understood from the data, here too, the radical Shiite axis led by Iran used the human shield tactic combined with the business shield tactic.

*Hassia Industrial Zone:*



*Photo circulated in the Syrian Media after the attack attributed to Israel.*

#### 4. The connection to the Beirut port explosion:

In the months following the Beirut port explosion that took place in August 2020, a global network of foreign figures and companies linked to the Assad regime and Hezbollah, allegedly related to the shipment of ammonium nitrate that caused the explosion, began to be exposed.<sup>5</sup>

Several circumstantial indications<sup>6,7,8</sup> indicate that the nitrate ammonium stored in the port was intended for the Assad regime. After the imposing of U.S. and European sanctions on Syria in 2012, the Syrian regime sought out alternative methods to ensure the flow of oil, weapons, and explosives onto Syria. One of these ways was through Hezbollah's procurement network; In order for the shipments to eventually reach the Syrian regime, the suppliers sent them to the port of Beirut addressed to Hezbollah shell companies that consistently changed their identity. After that, Hezbollah made sure to deliver, or rather smuggle, the shipments directly into Syria.

Shalan was linked as one of the suspects in the network exposed, due to his reputation as an important figure in Hezbollah's procurement network and his close ties to senior Hezbollah figures.<sup>9</sup> Shalan is a significant part of a complex network of Lebanese and Syrian businessmen working for the Assad regime and Hezbollah, bypassing U.S. and European sanctions by setting up shell companies.

We do not have concrete information on Shalan's involvement in the ammonium nitrate issue in the port of Beirut. In our estimation, it is highly likely that Shalan, as a key figure in Hezbollah's procurement and transport of weapons and components, was indeed involved in a very important procurement for the two allies, the Assad regime and Hezbollah.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sawtbeirut.com/lebanon-news/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%88%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://thelevantnews.com/2021/02/%D8%B5%D9%81%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%87%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%BA%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://kataeb.org/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A3-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A/2021/02/22/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.sawtbeirut.com/lebanon-news/%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%88%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%82-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://kataeb.org/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A3-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AA-%D8%B6%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A/2021/02/22/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1>



5. **Ali Abd Al Nur Shalan's business ties and continued circumvention of sanctions using business shields:**

It is our assessment that the two new companies, "Kopteck" and "Techno Cooper", which Shalan co-founded, were formed to continue to circumvent the sanctions. The "business activity" of the radical Shi'ite axis led by Iran continues under the cover of "business shields" in the form of "Sherha al-Abras Leltajarah" and Hassan Abdul Rauf Mahfouz. Radical Shi'ite axis elements like Ali Abd Al Nur Shalan, are constantly setting up business shields. When one "business shield" is exposed, a new "business shield" will be established in its place.

Shalan is the co-founder and owner of 99%<sup>10</sup> of the shares of Orient Star LLC,<sup>11</sup> also known by its Arabic name "Sherha Nijim al-Shark" (East Star Company), which was founded in September 2016 after the enacting of U.S. sanctions on Shalan. The company's headquarters address is located on the outskirts of Damascus, "Yelda, Def al-Sheshuk", property number 207. At the same property listed by Shalan's company there are two other companies called,<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> "Sherha al-Al-Qama" and "Sherha al-Tajhezat" and "Almoad al-Auliya Leltajarah".

The remaining percentage belongs to a man named Faras Nazar Sanduuk.<sup>14</sup> Sanduuk, born 1980, holds a degree in Economics (accounting faculty) from Damascus University. Sanduuk is also a founding partner in three other companies, in all of which he holds 1% of the ownership. The names of the other three companies are "Sharkat Talaki Leltajarah", "Sharkat Thufak" and "Sharkat Najam al-Haiyah".

All three of these companies are under American sanctions and are controlled by Muhammad Qassem al-Bazal,<sup>15</sup> a Lebanese national also under sanctions,<sup>16</sup> a collaborator with Hezbollah and Iran facilitating the importing of fuel.<sup>17</sup>

According to our indications, it was Faras Sanduuk who rented out the property on the outskirts of Damascus, where Shalan's company resides.<sup>18</sup>

In early 2021, Shalan's company entered a partnership establishing two companies manufacturing and trading electricity cables.<sup>19</sup> The names of both companies are "Techno Cooper" and "Kopteck" and both were established on January 21, 2021. Their co-founders were: As'ad Ma'ad, Mohammad Ayman al-Sadat, Imad al-Din Slough,

<sup>10</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%AC%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%85%D8%A9/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A7/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3-%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B5%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%82/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm767>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.levantnetworks.com/2020/01/23/syrian-accountants-alleged-hezbollah-fronts/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://albaath.news.sy/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2072016.pdf>

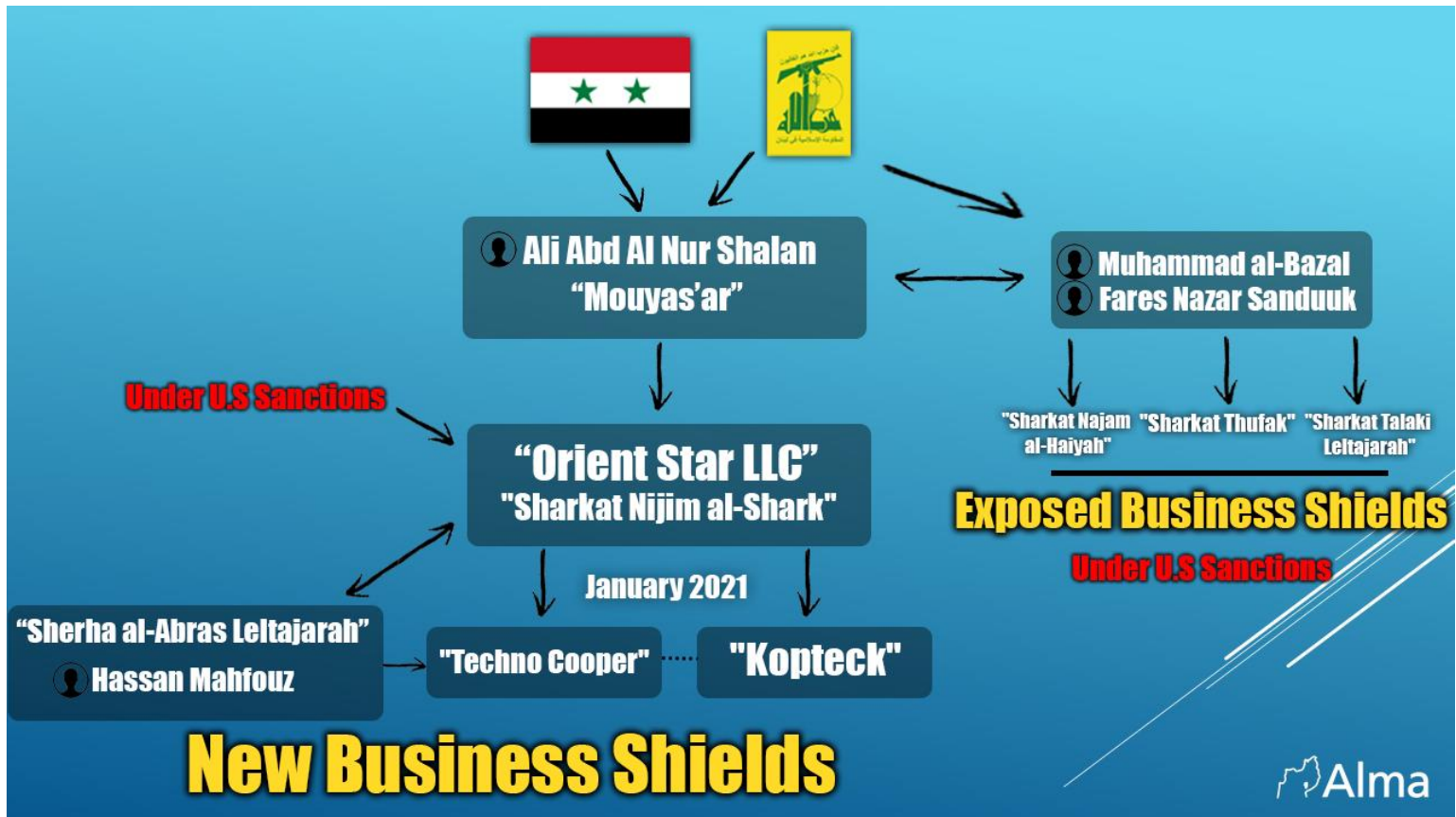
<sup>19</sup> <http://www.al->

[rustomlaw.com/ar/Company1/page9/pn3/ext\\_param0%7C/%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A9%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%8B](http://www.al-rustomlaw.com/ar/Company1/page9/pn3/ext_param0%7C/%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A4%D8%B3%D8%B3%D8%A9%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%8B)

Sherha al-Abras Leltajarah (company) and Hassan Abdul Rauf Mahfouz (the latter two – are partners in both companies, the rest are only partners in the first company- "Techno Cooper").

Sherha al-Abras Leltajarah is a large company with an immense reputation in the cable industry.<sup>20</sup> Its headquarters are in Damascus<sup>21</sup> and two of its most prominent individuals (each holding 20% of the shares) appear to be Muhammad Ali bin Zakaria al-Abras<sup>22</sup> and Abdullah Ali al-Abras<sup>23</sup>. Hassan Abdul Rauf Mahfouz<sup>24</sup>, Holds a 25% stake in “Kopteck” and 12.5% of “Techno Cooper” shares.

The difficulty in criminalizing straw companies stems from the difficulty that their founders deliberately create in understanding their business structure and their business relationships. We tried to simplify the complexity in the following diagram:



<sup>20</sup> [http://www.abrasgroup.com/index\\_ar.html](http://www.abrasgroup.com/index_ar.html)

<sup>21</sup> [https://ar-ar.facebook.com/pg/abrasgroup/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://ar-ar.facebook.com/pg/abrasgroup/about/?ref=page_internal)

<sup>22</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%86-%D8%B2%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B5/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B5/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://aliqtisadi.com/%D8%B4%D8%AE%D8%B5%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A4%D9%88%D9%81-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B8/>