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Bahrain first Arab country to blacklist Hezbollah as terrorist organization



Bahrain on Tuesday became the first Arab country to blacklist the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Its alleged backing and training of radical Shiite groups against Bahrain was the main reason given for the decision.

The Bahraini cabinet has tasked the interior and foreign ministries with implementing the decision.

“The measure is to protect Bahrain’s security and stability from Hezbollah’s threats,” Bahraini MP Adil al-Asoumi told Al Arabiya.

There is evidence that Hezbollah is instigating violence against the government in Bahrain, Asoumi added. The country has a Shiite majority, but is ruled by a Sunni monarchy.

Evidence against Hezbollah

Intelligence has been gathered from defected Syrian soldiers, who had previously “trained Bahraini cells, with Hezbollah backing, to carry out terrorist operations in the country,” Asoumi said.

The regime in Damascus has long been backed by its regional allies Hezbollah and Iran, who are both enemies of Manama.

“When we were in Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, we met with defected Syrian soldiers. They told us that in the past years, the Syrian regime was conspiring against the people of Bahrain” in coordination with Iran and Hezbollah, Abdulhalim Murad, deputy head of Bahrain’s Islamist al-Asala bloc, told Al Arabiya.

Hezbollah is not only a threat to Bahrain, but the rest of the Gulf region, so “we call on our Gulf brethren to confront the terrorist organization to secure Gulf security,” said Asoumi.

In Europe, only the Netherlands lists Hezbollah as a terrorist group, while Britain blacklists its military wing.

Outside Europe, the United States, Canada and Israel have long blacklisted the group, allowing them to criminalize Hezbollah activities, freeze its bank accounts and monitor suspected members.