

How was Hezbollah able to deploy its network in France?

April 17, 2024

Hezbollah present in France without being worried? The information may surprise. The Shiite Islamist organization, sponsored by Iran, is known for exporting its rigorism and terrorism. Many French citizens have been victims of attacks by the Party of God or its affiliated organizations. The bloodiest, on October 23, 1983, targeted the Drakkar building in Beirut, where the 1st Foreign Parachute Regiment was stationed: 58 dead.

Then there was the terrorist wave of 1985 and 1986, with around ten bomb attacks that killed 14 people and injured nearly 300 on French soil. The bloody episode is over, but Hezbollah is far from having deserted Europe. Active wherever Lebanese and Shiite Muslim diasporas are present, it now engages "mainly in social, civil, and religious activities aimed at promoting pro-Shiite influence," says **Carmit Valensi, a researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University**, specializing in Syria and Lebanon. "The European continent is targeted by Hezbollah because of its proximity, its banking and commercial facilities, and its greater permissiveness than the United States," observes Christophe Ayad, a senior reporter at Le Monde, who has just published "Geopolitics of Hezbollah" (PUF, 2024).

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