



Spotlight on Terrorism: Hezbollah, Lebanon and Syria July 22 – 29 , 2024

The Northern Arena*

2,028 attacks

- 373 Hezbollah operatives killed
- 80 operatives of other organization killed
- Five non-affiliated operatives killed
- One Lebanese army soldier killed
- One Lebanese internal security operative killed

***Updated from October 8, 2023**

Overview¹

- ▶ During the past week Hezbollah claimed responsibility for 50 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel. Twelve children and adolescents were killed and more than 40 people were injured when a rocket hit a soccer field in Majdal Shams² in the Golan Heights. An IDF soldier and two civilians were injured in other attacks. Hezbollah continued to attack cities, towns and villages it had not previously attacked in northern Israel and increased its attacks on Israeli Air Force planes in the skies over south Lebanon.
- ▶ Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley. Hezbollah announced that ten of its operatives were killed in attacks. The Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party announced the death of an activist.
- ▶ Hezbollah continued waging a battle for hearts and minds in preparation for an all-out war. Articles in a Hezbollah-affiliated newspaper displayed Hezbollah's aerial defense system and its achievements. Hezbollah published a video of an Israeli Air Force base photographed by a Hudhud drone.

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² For further information, see the July 29, 2024 ITIC report, "[Reactions to the Hezbollah Rocket Attack on Majdal Shams.](#)"

► The criticism of Hezbollah in Lebanon continues. The leader of the Phalanges Party accused Hezbollah of wanting the residents of south Lebanon to live with war for another thousand years, and an exiled Lebanese religious scholar called on Nasrallah to stop the military operations in the Lebanese territory immediately.

► According to the Lebanese ministry of health, 490 people have been killed in Lebanon since the fighting began on October 8, 2023. A BBC investigation found that more than 60% of the Lebanese settlements in the border area were attacked and that 55 square kilometers in the Galilee and the Golan Heights had been burned by deliberate Hezbollah arson attacks.

South Lebanon

Hezbollah attacks

► During the past week (July 22 to July 29, 2024), Hezbollah claimed responsibility 50 attacks on military and civilian targets in northern Israel, compared to 44 the previous week. Hezbollah used anti-tank missiles, artillery, UAVs and various types of rockets, including heavy rockets. Twelve children and adolescents were killed and more than 40 people were injured when a Hezbollah Falaq 1 rocket hit a soccer field in Majdal Shams. An IDF soldier and two civilians were wounded in Hezbollah attacks:

◆ **Continued attacks on Israeli communities which had not previously been under attack:** On July 22, 2024, Hezbollah attacked Tzuriel, a moshav in the Western Galilee, with dozens of Katyusha rockets. The moshav had not been evacuated and lies eight kilometers (about five miles) from the border (Israeli media, July 22, 2024). Hezbollah claimed the attack was in response to an IDF attack on civilians in the town of Hanin in south Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 22, 2024). In a speech on July 17, 2024, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, threatened that in the event of an Israeli attack on civilians, the response would be directed towards previously untouched settlements.

◆ **Increase in anti-aircraft missile launches:** Hezbollah claimed responsibility for three anti-aircraft missile attacks on Israeli Air Force fighter jets in south Lebanon airspace, during the 24 hours between 12:35 a.m. on July 25, 2024 and 12:30 a.m. on July 26, 2024. According to Hezbollah, the attacks caused the planes to return to Israeli territory (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 25-26, 2024). The IDF did not relate to Hezbollah's claims.

◆ **Attack with an explosive drone:** On July 25, 2024, Hezbollah presented documentation of a July 19, 2024 explosive drone attack on a drone detection radar at an IDF border post. In the video, the drone can be seen passing near the UNIFIL base located beyond the border fence, circling around and exploding on the system (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).



Right: The drone-detecting radar before the attack. Left: The drone detonates (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).

► Hezbollah's attacks were the following (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 22-29, 2024, as of 1:00 p.m.):

- ◆ July 29, 2024 (until 1:00 p.m.): No claims of responsibility. A UAV that crossed from Lebanese territory to the Western Galilee was intercepted (IDF spokesperson, July 29, 2024).
- ◆ July 28, 2024: Two attacks. A direct hit to a moshav near the border, no casualties were reported (Israeli media, July 28, 2024).
- ◆ July 27, 2024: 12 attacks. A rocket hit a soccer field in the Druze town of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights, killing 12 children and adolescents and injuring at least 40 people. An Israel Navy missile ship intercepted a UAV in Israel's territorial waters in the Mediterranean Sea, the Galilee Panhandle was attacked by about 30 rocket launchers and electricity was cut off in some areas. No casualties were reported. Ten rockets fell in open areas (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 27, 2024).
- ◆ July 26, 2024: Nine attacks, including shooting at Israeli Air Force planes. A rocket hit a packing house; no casualties were reported (Israeli media, July 26, 2024).
- ◆ July 25, 2024: Ten attacks, including two incidents of anti-aircraft fire at Israeli Air Force planes. An anti-aircraft missile hit an open area in a kibbutz near the border, no casualties were reported. UAVs were intercepted in the Upper Galilee and offshore, and

fires broke out following failed interceptions; no casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 25, 2024).



Damage from a direct hit (Upper Galilee Regional Council spokesman's unit, July 25, 2024)

- ◆ July 24, 2024: Two attacks.
- ◆ July 23, 2024: Eight attacks. An IDF soldier was seriously injured by a rocket attack on Mount Dov. UAVs hit the Mount Miron area; no casualties were reported. Ten rockets fired at Kiryat Shmona were intercepted, another rocket fell in an open area. There were no casualties, fires broke out in the area (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 23-24, 2024).
- ◆ July 22, 2024 (from 12:00): Seven attacks. Ten rockets were launched into the Western Galilee; two civilians were injured and property damage was recorded. Eight UAVs launched into the north of the country were intercepted (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, July 22, 2024).

IDF response

► In response to Hezbollah's attacks, Israeli Air Force fighter jets and UAVs attacked Hezbollah targets and operatives in south Lebanon and the Lebanon Valley, including armed squads of terrorist operatives, terrorist facilities, buildings used for military purposes, munitions warehouses, observation posts, rocket launching sites and rocket launchers (IDF spokesperson, July 22-28, 2024).

Hezbollah casualties

► Hezbollah reported the deaths of ten operatives (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 23-29, 2024, as of 1:00 p.m.):

- ◆ Sadeq Ataf Atawi, aka Malak, born in 1989, from Shaqra in south Lebanon.
- ◆ Abdallah Muhammad, aka Abbas, born in 2000, from Rab al-Thalathin.
- ◆ Abbas Hussein Hamoud, aka Amir, born in 2000, from Markaba.

- ◆ Fadel Samih Nur al-Din, aka Mujahed, born in 1992, from Markaba.
- ◆ Naim Ali Farhat, aka Malal, born in 1991, from Beit Shama in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Muhammad Ali Mustafa Mreish, aka Mehdi Yaghi, born in 1993, from al-Bashoura and a resident of the al-Ajniha al-Khamsa area.
- ◆ Ahmed Hekmat Musa, aka Zulfiqar, born in 1999, from Tripoli and a resident of Ali al-Nahari in the Lebanon Valley.
- ◆ Hassan Halal al-Saidi, aka Ali al-Hadi, born in 1993, in Toul.
- ◆ Abbas Fadi Hejazi, aka Abbas al-Hurr, born in 1995, from Majdal Salem.
- ◆ Abbas Muhammad Salami, aka Zein al-Abedin, born in 1991, from Khirbat Salem and a resident of Shaqra in south Lebanon.



Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 23-29, 2024)

Syrian Social-Nationalist Party casualty

- Nusour al-Zuba'a (Eagles of the Storm), the military wing of the Syrian Social-Nationalist Party (SSNP),³ announced the death of one of its operatives, Ibrahim Akram al-

³ The Syrian Social-Nationalist Party was founded in the 1930s by the Lebanese Anton Saada under the influence of fascist right-wing circles in Europe, and established itself in both Lebanon and Syria. The party has a secular-nationalist ideology which views Syrians (inhabitants of "Greater Syria") as belonging to a superior Syrian race. Since 2005, Bashar al-Assad, president of Syria, has allowed the party to participate in political life, mainly because it does not pose a challenge to him. Its military wing (Nasour al-Zuba'a) was established in 2014 to assist Assad in the civil war, and was made up mostly of

Musawi, born in 2003, from Qarha in the Lebanon Valley. According to the organization, two other operatives were killed by IDF fire at Shihin in south Lebanon (al-Akhbar, July 22, 2024).



Ibrahim Akram al-Musawi (al-Akhbar, July 22, 2024)

Hezbollah Deploys for War

Hezbollah displays its aerial defenses

► On July 27, 2024, the Hezbollah-affiliated daily al-Akhbar published a video and a series of articles about Hezbollah's aerial defenses entitled, "Kings of the Sky." The paper printed pictures of the UAVs used by Hezbollah for intelligence gathering, deception and attack, the attack on the Israeli Tal Shamayim system in May 2024 and on Israel's aircraft and radar systems. A commander in Hezbollah's aerial formation who was interviewed by the newspaper said they were currently in an important experimental phase and could acquire a lot of knowledge in a few months, as reflected in the increase of the organization's rate of success during the war. He claimed that the formation used artificial intelligence technology for its operation. Ibrahim al-Amin, al-Akhbar editor-in-chief, claimed Israel could not form an accurate intelligence picture of the capabilities of the air array, and those which Hezbollah

Greek-Orthodox Christians in the rural areas of Homs and Hama. The organization's symbol is a stylized swastika, and its pro-fascist activists raise their arms in the Seig-Heil salute. In June 2023, the party announced that it considered itself part of the "axis of resistance" [Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq].

displayed in recent months were only a sample of what the organization could do in a broader conflict (al-Akhbar, July 27, 2024).



Right: Visual intelligence gathering, suicide and attack drones used by Hezbollah. Left: A display of some of Hezbollah's UAVs used by Hezbollah (al-Akhbar, July 27, 2024)

Hezbollah's difficulties in preventing Israeli targeted attacks

► Ali Amis, a Lebanese IT expert, estimated that over the past 14 years Israel constructed a "mine of information" about Hezbollah by means of the NSO Group's Pegasus spyware, which makes it possible to hack both iPhone and Android operating systems. According to Amis, Israel collected information about Hezbollah, its leaders and the location of military equipment, which was why Hezbollah banned the use of mobile phones. He added that once it became clear that Pegasus artificial intelligence could recognize voices, operatives were banned from using their phones near the leaders (Blinx, July 21, 2024).

► Munir Shehada, UNIFIL's former coordinator for the Lebanese government, claimed that Israel had obtained mobile and landline phone numbers and was using voice and facial recognition technology to track targets. In response, Hezbollah strengthened its security procedures, blocked access to the Internet with security cameras and ordered its operatives not to take and distribute pictures with their smartphones. Hezbollah also prevented the its operators and their families from using smartphones and ordered them to use encrypted telephones, mail and correspondence through the organization's wired network. In addition, Hassan Nasrallah, ordered his people to keep their phones in steel boxes for long periods of time (al-Sharq al-Awsat, July 27, 2024).

Hezbollah drone photographs Israeli Air Force base

► On July 24, 2024, Hezbollah published an 8:30-minute video, claiming it had been filmed by a Hudhud UAV the day before.⁴ The video focused on an Israeli Air Force base, which was described as located 46 km (about 29 miles) south of the Israel-Lebanon border, and included documentation of various sites around the base, including headquarters, fighter aircraft housing, helipads, runways, ammunition depots, fuel reserves, Iron Dome batteries and officers' quarters. Personal details of the base commander were displayed, including his photo. The video included documentation of a night sortie and a day sortie on July 9, 2024. The caption at the end of the video read, "weaker than a spiderweb," Nasrallah's often reiterated claim about Israel after the IDF withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000 (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 24, 2024). The IDF stated that the video was taken by a UAV which could only take pictures and that the activities of the base had not been affected (IDF spokesperson, July 24, 2024).



Right: Hudhud UAV. Left: Iron Dome launchers (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 24, 2024)

► "Sources in the resistance" boasted that "it was perhaps the only time in Israel's history that an aircraft penetrated the airspace of a major airbase." They noted that the timing of the publication of the video was related to Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit to the United States and his speech before Congress. They added that the video was also published to balance the Israeli attack on the Houthi port of Hudaydah in Yemen, and was intended to show that even when Israel was on high alert for the possibility of a Houthi attack, the "resistance" could infiltrate an aircraft without being noticed or shot down, part of the "unity of the support arenas." The "sources" concluded that the message conveyed by the video was that the

⁴ This was the third video made according to Hezbollah by UAVs. The first video was published on June 18, 2024 and included documentation of the Haifa area, the second video was published on July 9, 2024 and focused on IDF bases in the Golan Heights.

"resistance" continued to gather intelligence and could reach anywhere it wanted (al-Manar, July 24, 2024).

Hezbollah threatens to attack IDF tanks if Israel invades Lebanon

► On July 22, 2024, Hezbollah published a 1:17-minute video entitled, "You will have no tanks left." The video included an excerpt from Nasrallah's July 17, 2024 speech, when he threatened that "if [Israel's] tanks enter Lebanon and south Lebanon, [Israel] will not suffer from a shortage of tanks because [it] won't not have any tanks left." The video showed Merkava tanks during exercises as well as a Hezbollah arsenal of various types of anti-tank rockets and missiles, and pictures of launches and damage to IDF tanks in northern Israel during the current campaign. Also shown were launches of double-barreled Tharallah anti-tank missile systems⁵ (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 22, 2024).



Right: Hezbollah threatens to attack Israeli tanks. Left: Missile launch from the Tharallah system (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 22, 2024)

Iran sends Hezbollah electromagnetic weapons

► "A senior source" in the Iranian Qods Force claimed that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps had recently delivered bombs and missiles to Hezbollah with electromagnetic warheads allegedly capable of paralyzing Israel's communication systems and electrical infrastructure and all the electronic systems required to conduct combat. He added that if an all-out war broke out in Lebanon, Hezbollah would be able to launch its weapons using stationary launchers or UAVs and that the United States, the UK "and anyone who tries to hide Israel's lack of preparedness" would also be the target of an attack (Kuwait's al-Jarida, July 25, 2024).

⁵ The Tharallah system allows the launch of two Dehlavieh anti-tank missiles, an Iranian imitation of the Russian Kornet missile, and characterized by high transport and maneuverability. Hezbollah put the system into use in 2015 and presented it publicly for the first time in August 2023 (al-Manar, August 11, 2023).

Statements by Senior Hezbollah Figures

► Muhammad Raad, chairman of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that the "enemy" was crumbling and unable to deal with the "resistance," and that even if Israel were to equip itself with the most advanced weapons it would not be able to change the "equation." He claimed the disputes and issues within Israel hindered its functioning and prevented it from attaining its goals (al-Manar, July 23, 2024).

► Hassan Izz al-Din, a member of the Hezbollah faction in the Lebanese Parliament, said that the "Israeli enemy, humiliated and submissive," would arrive together with the United States to accept the terms of the "resistance in Palestine," as had occurred in Lebanon after the Second Lebanon War. He claimed that what prevented Israel from invading destroying Lebanon as it was doing in the Gaza Strip was the ability, power and weapons of the "resistance," some of which Israel was familiar with and some of which it was not. He added that the "enemy" was afraid of the "resistance's hidden surprises," and this was what deterred him and prevented him from carrying out "any act of stupidity, aggression or ground attack against Lebanon" (al-Nashra, July 28, 2024).

Internal Lebanese Criticism of Hezbollah

► Samy Gemayel, chairman of the Phalange Party, said he wanted the residents of south Lebanon to live in peace and quiet for at least 50 years and that the way to accomplish that was for the Lebanese state to enforce its sovereignty over south Lebanon. He wondered "if the only accepted opinion in the country is Hezbollah's, according to which the residents of South Lebanon will be forced to live in a state of war for another thousand years?" That was happening because they did not recognize the State of Israel and considered their weapons sacred. They were turning South Lebanon into a battleground for a combat which would never end, he said (OTV TV , July 24, 2024).

► Muhammad Ali al-Husseini,⁶ a Saudi Islamic researcher and lecturer of Lebanese origin, who lives outside Lebanon and is the secretary general of the Arab Islamic Council, criticized Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general. In an article he published in a Saudi newspaper, he called on Nasrallah to immediately publicly announce the cessation of military operations and

⁶ Muhammad Ali Al-Husseini was a Saudi Islamic researcher and lecturer of Lebanese origin. He received Saudi Arabian citizenship on November 15, 2021, and is the secretary general of the Arab Islamic Council in Lebanon. He has written more than books, and has non-factional unifying intellectual and political positions which oppose civil war and its supporters.

let the Lebanese army take full responsibility for the border area. He stated that if Nasrallah did not, he would bear full responsibility for everything the IDF did in Lebanon, for the destruction of Lebanon and for all the blood that would be spilled. He added that Nasrallah had the immense religious responsibility not to destroy not only himself, but a whole population and country (Okaz, July 23, 2024).

► Charles Jabbour, head of media and communications in the Lebanese Forces party headed by Samir Geagea, when asked who his enemy was, Israel or Hezbollah, said that "there was a big enemy and a small enemy." He said "it is not Israel which is delaying the election of the president in Lebanon, it is not Israel which eliminated Lebanese leaders before and after Rafiq al-Hariri, it is not Israel which preventing the existence of Lebanon as a de facto state, it is not Israel which is responsible for corruption in Lebanon, and it is not Israel that leaves Lebanon's borders open to the Iranian militias." He noted that Israel "was an enemy," but added that "the bigger enemy was the one that prevents the Lebanese from living in peace, stability and prosperity. In effect, the Iranian project is the main enemy " (Sky News in Arabic, July 26, 2024).

► Ghaith Yazbek, Lebanese Forces Party member of the Lebanese Parliament, called on Hezbollah to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and give control of south Lebanon to the Lebanese army. He said Israel would not dare to violate the decision, because the whole world would be opposing it (LBCI, July 22, 2024).

The Situation in South Lebanon

► The Lebanese ministry of health reported that the official death toll in Lebanon from the beginning of the war on October 8, 2023 to July 23, 2024, was 490, there were 2,016 wounded, and the number of displaced south Lebanese stood at 98,002 (Lebanese ministry of health, July 23, 2024). The data did not provide details about the dead, but the estimates were that at least 370 Hezbollah operatives and at least 70 operatives of other terrorist organizations had been killed, and therefore the number of civilian dead was about 50.

► A BBC investigation, based in part on satellite images, radar images and reports of military activity, estimated that between October 8, 2023 and July 5, 2024, Israel and Hezbollah had carried out a total of 7,491 cross-border attacks, with the number of Israeli attacks [allegedly] being five times higher than Hezbollah's attacks. The investigation also revealed that more than 60% of the settlements in south Lebanon near the border with Israel had, suffered damage from IDF attacks and that more than 3,200 buildings had been damaged. The Lebanese town of Aita al-Sha'ab was attacked at least 299 time since the start of the fighting,

Kafrkila more than 200 times, and Blida more than 130 times. The investigation also determined that a total area of 55 square kilometers in the Galilee and the Golan Heights had been burned, compared to an area of 40 square kilometers in Lebanon, stating that Hezbollah deliberately launched weapons which would cause fires (BBC, July 23, 2024).

Contacts for an Agreement in Lebanon

- ▶ Shawki Bou Nassar, Lebanon's ambassador to Russia, recently met with Michael Bogdanov, Russian deputy foreign minister, and said Lebanon was prepared to implement Resolution 1701. Bou Nassar claimed he was confident that Hezbollah would be careful to implement the resolution, provided that it was implemented in a balanced manner, so that Israel would also respect all its clauses regarding the cessation of violations of Lebanon's sovereignty, which he claims have reached 36,000 intrusions since 2006, as well as withdrawing from the territories in the Sheba Farm and the hills of Kafr Chuba (al-Joumhouria, July 23, 2024).
- ▶ Nicolas de Rivière, the French ambassador to the United Nations, said France was very concerned about the deterioration of the situation along the Israel-Lebanon border (the Blue Line) and remained fully committed to efforts to prevent escalation (Nicolas de Rivière's X account, July 24, 2024).

UNIFIL

- ▶ According to reports, Aroldo Lazzaro, UNIFIL commander, and his deputy, Hervé Lecoq, visited Israel and met with senior IDF officers and foreign ambassadors. "Sources" said that the atmosphere in the talks was "more positive" and Israel expressed a willingness to reach a diplomatic solution, which would include the return of the displaced to their homes in the north and distancing Hezbollah's forces north of the Litani River, but warned that they were prepared for a war if diplomatic efforts failed. According to the "sources," the "relatively calm" Israeli position was the result of fatigue caused by the fighting in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon and by American pressure. "Western sources" stated that Israel did not oppose the extension of UNIFIL's mandate without introducing changes (MTV Lebanon, July 24, 2024).
- ▶ UNIFIL spokesman Andrea Tenenti admitted that it was difficult to predict the path of escalation between Israel and Hezbollah, adding that UNIFIL forces were constantly monitoring the situation and were working to reduce escalation on the border (Sky News, July 24, 2024). He also said that the UN's position was that Resolution 1701 remained the most effective framework for dealing with the situation and that it has provided more than 17 years of relative stability "due to the commitment of the parties to maintain it." He noted that it was

important to maintain open communication channels with all parties to calm tensions and reduce the risks of misunderstandings that could lead to another conflict (Arab News, July 26, 2024).

Syria

The Syrian president visits Russia

► On July 24, 2024, Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, visited Moscow and met with the Russian president, Vladimir Putin. According to reports, they discussed bilateral political, economic and commercial relations, regional developments and possible scenarios (Syrian president's Telegram channel, July 25, 2024).



Assad and Putin shake hands (Syrian president's Telegram channel, July 25, 2024)

International Activity against Hezbollah

Germany bans Islamic Center activity

► On July 23, 2024, German security forces raided the Blue Mosque in Hamburg, where the Hamburg Islamic Center (Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg – IZH) is located, and at the same time, raided 53 other buildings and properties in Germany belonging to the Islamic Center. The raid, closing the center and banning its activity were carried out on the orders of Nancy Faeser, the German minister of the interior. She stated that the center was a direct branch of the Iranian regime, promoting extreme Islamic ideology and spreading aggressive anti-Semitism. She stated that in a previous raid in November 2023, evidence was found of the center's connections with Hezbollah and therefore it was decided to close it (DW, July 24, 2024). In response to Germany's decision, the Iranian foreign ministry summoned the German ambassador in Tehran for a meeting (Reuters, July 24, 2024).

American indicted for aiding Hezbollah

► The prosecution in the United States filed an updated indictment against Hadi Matar, an American citizen of Lebanese origin, 26 years old from New Jersey, for aiding Hezbollah. Hadi

Matar was accused of the attempted murder of writer Salman Rushdie⁷ in August 2022. According to the new charge, from September 2020 until the attack on August 12, 2022, Matar knowingly provided support and material resources to Hezbollah. According to the indictment, Matar tried to assassinate Rushdie, partly inspired by a speech by Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, in 2006, in which he promoted the Iranian fatwa calling for Rushdie's death. United States Attorney General Merrick Garland stated attempting to murder Rushdie was an act of terrorism carried out in the name of Hezbollah (United States Department of Justice website, July 24, 2024).

Salman Rushdie was a British American writer who published, among other things, the novel *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. The character of the Prophet Muhammad as it was described in the book has angered Muslims around the world including a fatwa calling for his death issued by Ruhollah Khomeini, the supreme leader of Iran. Rushdie became the object of several assassination attempts and death threats.