

Hezbollah's Financing Ecosystem Project

Hezbollah's Use of Clan Networks in the Diaspora:

The Fawaz Clan Case Study

Daniel Haberfeld and Dr. Eitan Azani¹

Introduction

This article is the second in a series of articles exploring the role of clans within Hezbollah's financial network. These clans operate as financial enablers, channeling funds across borders and engaging in a wide range of legal and illegal business, such as narcotics and arms trafficking, as well as money laundering through real estate, art, luxury goods, and more.²

The central question this report addresses is how Hezbollah organizes, manages, and integrates these clan-based networks abroad. This research examines the **Fawaz clan** and argues that, while some clans function primarily as crime-funding families, others play also a more strategic role within Hezbollah's funding and logistical infrastructure in the diaspora through the Foreign Relations Department (FRD) as well as the External Security Organization (ESO), also known or linked to the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO).

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²Azani, E., & Atiyas-Lvovsky, L. (2025). *Hezbollah's financing ecosystem: Crime families as a case study — The Ahmad Clan* (Dec. 17, 2025) [PDF]. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism https://ict.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Atiyas-Lvovsky_Ahmad-Clan_2025_12_17.pdf

Focusing on individuals from the Fawaz clan designated by the United States, the study examines their roles within Hezbollah-linked networks and identifies broader structural patterns. It also situates these individuals within the wider clan context by analyzing the family's origins and social ecosystem in Lebanon, **as well as its business ownership structures and principal hubs of operation in West Africa.**

This research relies on open-source information. While these sources provide valuable insight into network structures and patterns of activity, they are subject to limitations. As such, the analysis focuses on structural relationships, behavioral patterns, and institutional roles.

The first part of the research examines the Shiite clan system in Lebanon, the Lebanese Shiite diaspora, and Hezbollah's use of these clan-based structures. It also explains the general mechanisms through which Hezbollah is managing the clans via the FRD and channels the funds from the diaspora back to Lebanon.³ The second part of the research focuses on the Fawaz clan and analyzes its role within Hezbollah-linked networks in West Africa. The final section discusses the relationship between the Fawaz clan and the FRD and presents the study's conclusions.

Clans, kinship, and the Lebanese diaspora

The Clan in modern Middle East

Tribal and clan structures in today's Middle East continue to have substantial political and social influence⁴. Kinship-based frameworks, such as the "hamula", extended family, and clans,

³ Azani, E., & Atiyas-Lvovsky, L. (2025, April 8). *Hezbollah's financing ecosystem: Crime families as a case study*. International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT). <https://ict.org.il/hezbollahs-financing-ecosystem-crime-families-as-a-case-study/>

⁴ Wien, P. (2021). Tribes and tribalism in the modern Middle East: introduction. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 53(3), 471-472.

constitute mechanisms through which authority is exercised, protection is secured, resources are shared, and state institutions and political power are accessed.⁵

The main change in modern times is not in the core ideas or values of clans, but in the ways they operate. Clans are no longer limited to rural areas. They now function in urban neighborhoods, small villages, and even among diaspora communities.⁶ This shift is also seen in how clans are represented in political parties, militias, local governments, foundations, social networks, and international business groups.⁷ As a result, loyalty is now spread across several figures, such as the family or clan leader, political allies, militia leaders, and religious authorities.

Clans and family in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the idea of the clan is particularly complicated. Family and clan ties almost always shape how the state, citizens, and political parties interact. The family is the main point of social and political identity, while the state comes second. Scholars often refer to this pattern as *political familism*.⁸

In Lebanon, political familism⁹ affects how people access employment, use public services, receive legal protection, and access resources, since these are often distributed through family and sector networks. The political system is built around well-known families and dynasties. For many, being Lebanese means belonging to a certain family in a specific region, rather than having a direct connection to the state.¹⁰

⁵ Lindholm, C. (1986). Kinship structure and political authority: the Middle East and Central Asia. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 28(2), 334-355.

⁶ Marx, E. (1996). Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32(1), 209.

⁷ Wien, P. (2021). Tribes and tribalism in the modern Middle East: introduction. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 53(3), 471-472.

⁸ Joseph, S. (2011). Political familism in Lebanon. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 636(1), 150-163.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

In South Lebanon and Jabal Amal, the Shiite community is still organized around traditional structures. Clans and extended families are central to village life, land ownership, religious customs, and political connections. For many years, Lebanese Shiites struggled with economic challenges and political exclusion. These difficulties forced them to build strong support systems through family, clan, religious leaders, and, eventually, organizations such as Amal and Hezbollah.¹¹

The clan and the Lebanese diaspora

Lebanese migrants, particularly Shiites originating from southern Lebanon, have migrated in significant numbers to West Africa, Latin America, and other regions since the early twentieth century (mostly in pursuit for employment). Over time, even as second and third-generation communities emerged, patterns of solidarity and kinship with families in Lebanon continued, becoming especially prominent during periods of crisis, such as the 2006 war, Covid epidemics and 2024 war with Israel. This connection has continued despite language gaps, place-based identities, and everyday social life in the diaspora that have become largely more localized.¹²

In Lebanon families and clans typically reside in close physical proximity. This pattern changes significantly in the diaspora. Early waves of migration consisted primarily of men who relocated abroad in search of employment; other family members would join later, while parents often remained in Lebanon. These initial migrants laid the foundations for subsequent generations.

In the diaspora, clan members are dispersed across cities and even states. The Lebanese tend to settle within broader Lebanese communities in a given town, rather than clustering strictly along clan lines.

¹¹ Blanford, N. (2022, July 13). *Lebanon: The Shiite dimension*. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org>

¹² Leichtman, M. A. (2010). Migration, war, and the making of a transnational Lebanese Shi'i community in Senegal. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42(2), 269-290.

Despite this geographic dispersion, connections to the clan are maintained through periodic physical visits and, increasingly, through digital communication and social media platforms.

One of the main characteristics of the relationship between the diaspora and the family in Lebanon is the flow of remittances from the diaspora, mainly supporting parents' livelihoods in Lebanon.¹³ In fact, remittances from the diaspora to Lebanon reached approximately \$6 billion in 2023¹⁴ (as documented remittances). This demonstrates Lebanon's dependence on remittances from migrants, particularly from large West African communities.

Remittance transfer methods

During and after the 2024 war between Hezbollah and Israel, **cash inflows** from the diaspora declined significantly. After the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel on November 27, 2024, Beirut International Airport was placed under tight supervision, particularly by U.S. authorities, making cash transfers in luggage more difficult.¹⁵

The diaspora and their relatives in Lebanon continued to rely on **Al-Qard al Hasan bank** (linked to Hezbollah and sanctioned for it by the US Department of the Treasury in 2016¹⁶) for bank transfers. The bank was established with the aim of motivating Shia society to support Hezbollah¹⁷ and to overcome the regulated banking system. This continued until Israel targeted many of the bank's branches and shut down their operations during the 2024 war. After the

¹³ Leichtman, M. A. (2024, November 6). *Despite recent media coverage about Hezbollah's networks in West Africa, a majority of Lebanese Shi'a in Senegal have never visited Lebanon. Politics & Society.* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257205485_Migration_War_and_the_Making_of_a_Transnational_Lebanese_Shi%27i_Community_in_Senegal

¹⁴ Bechara, S. (2024, July 3). *Lebanon received \$6.7 billion in remittances in 2023: World Bank.* L'Orient Today. <https://today.lorientlejour.com>

¹⁵ Daoud, D. (2025, March 2). *Lebanon seizes funds bound for Hezbollah at Beirut airport.* The Long War Journal. <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2025/03/lebanon-seizes-funds-bound-for-hezbollah-at-beirut-airport.php>

¹⁶ Globes. (2024, February 22). *Hezbollah bank Al-Qard Al-Hasan could be its Achilles heel.* Globes English. <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-hezbollah-bank-al-qard-al-hasan-could-be-its-achilles-heel-1001471832>

¹⁷ Globes. (2024, February 22). *Hezbollah bank Al-Qard Al-Hasan could be its Achilles heel.* Globes English. <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-hezbollah-bank-al-qard-al-hasan-could-be-its-achilles-heel-1001471832>

ceasefire at the end of 2024, the bank announced it was reopening its branches, and activity resumed.

Due to the close social and organizational linkages among clans in South Lebanon, Shi'a diaspora communities, and Hezbollah, individuals holding accounts at Al-Qard al-Hasan are often viewed with suspicion, as the institution is widely perceived as being associated with Hezbollah's activities.

With the short collapse of Al-Qard al Hasan and the limited cash flow transfer system, the use of **formal bank transfers and other formal channels increased**. In parallel, there has been a reported increase in the use of **unregulated digital channels, such as cryptocurrencies and cash-transfer apps, including Wish Money** (in one case, a Hezbollah-linked charity account, Wata'awanu, was shut down by the digital payment provider Wish Money following regulatory warnings over its connections to Hezbollah¹⁸). In both cases, the Lebanese supervision is limited, enabling transfers through unregistered intermediaries that make it difficult to trace recipient identities and final destinations.

Hezbollah, Shia Families and the Lebanese Shia Diaspora

Hezbollah emerged from a family community structure. They were based on the Shiite communities in South Lebanon, Dahya, and the Baka valley, which were already organized around families, clans, and religious institutions. Ultimately, Hezbollah built its power on three axes (i.e., the hybrid terror organization): A social welfare network – schools, clinics, economic aid, and charitable institutions. Armed resistance against Israel, as part of a narrative of protecting Lebanon. And building a Shiite political party.

In the diaspora, Hezbollah has extended its Lebanon-based social welfare model to overseas communities, using it as a mechanism to sustain influence through the FRD (and through local

¹⁸Jadah, M., & Abdallah, M. (2025, October 14). *Whish Money suspends account of Hezbollah-affiliated charity, association president says*. *L'Orient Today*. <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1481074/registered-charity-has-its-account-suspended-by-whish-mo>

institutions such as the al-Mahdi Scouts, religious institutions, and more) and maintain organizational continuity across generations.¹⁹ This is why the organization is targeting countries with established Lebanese Shiite diasporas, including in West and Central Africa, and using them for fundraising and logistics.²⁰ In general, the Lebanese diaspora has become a significant source of private donations, investments, and business activity related to funding of Hezbollah.²¹

The role of family networks in Hezbollah's financing operations in the diaspora

To manage diaspora relations, Hezbollah operates a dedicated unit, the Foreign Relations Department (FRD). The FRD places official or semi-official representatives within Shiite communities worldwide (including West Africa, South America, and Europe).²²

Some of these representatives have been described as Hezbollah ambassadors; they raise funds, recruit operatives, coordinate Hezbollah's official visits, travel to Lebanon, and act as an intelligence conduit.²³ According to the 2024 FinCEN warning, the FRD is the “semi-overt” part of Hezbollah’s Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) or Hezbollah’s External Security Organization (ESO) structure: responsible for public presence, recruitment, fundraising, and intelligence gathering within diaspora communities.²⁴

According to the Washington Institute, the FRD members include Lebanese operatives dispatched abroad, as well as Hezbollah supporters already residing in the host countries. Most

¹⁹ Gunes, S. (2024, April 5). *Funding Hezbollah: The grassroots support from the Lebanese diaspora in South America*. Student Events. <https://www.studentevents.org>

²⁰ Inbar, E. (2024, November 18). *Hezbollah in Africa: Iran's proxy expands its reach*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies. <https://besacenter.org>

²¹ Ottolenghi, E. (2024, July 2). *How Hezbollah fundraises through crime*. The Cipher Brief. <https://www.thecipherbrief.com>

²² Financial Action Task Force. (2013, October). *Terrorist financing in West Africa*. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org>

²³ Financial Action Task Force. (2013, October). *Terrorist financing in West Africa*. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org>

²⁴ Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. (2024, October 23). *FinCEN alert to financial institutions to counter financing of Hizballah and its terrorist activities* (FIN-2024-Alert003). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://www.fincen.gov/system/files/shared/FinCEN-Alert-Hizballah-Alert-508C.pdf>

maintain close ties or (family ties) to senior Hezbollah officials, and many possess significant military training.²⁵

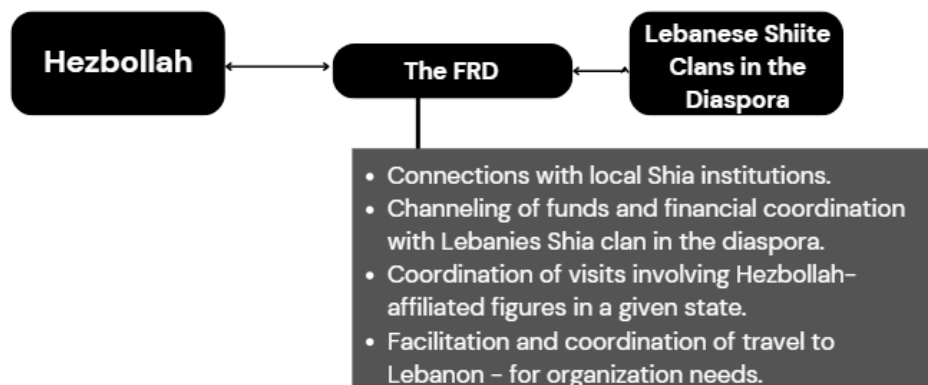
This process and position of the FRD representative can be understood as follows: funding (through illegal or legal business) occurs at the clan level in the diaspora; coordination of funds and local relationships is managed by the FRD; and allocation and utilization is conducted by Hezbollah headquarters in Lebanon. This structure allows Hezbollah to exploit the social depth of clan networks while maintaining organizational discipline and strategic oversight, particularly in the diaspora where direct command structures are less visible.

Money-transfer mechanisms used by Hezbollah-linked networks include money transfer accounts at Al-Qard al-Hasan, the physical movement of cash in suitcases, cryptocurrencies, and digital money-transfer applications. Families in South Lebanon with ties to Hezbollah often hold accounts at Al-Qard al-Hasan, which function as an important financial channel outside the formal banking system.

Members of the Foreign Relations Department (FRD) frequently maintain accounts within the Al-Qard al-Hasan and are estimated to use them to route funds onward to accounts linked to Hezbollah-affiliated institutions. According to a leaked dataset from a cyberattack targeting al-Qard al-Hasan²⁶, an FRD representative in the Ivory Coast, Sheikh Qubaisi was identified as a key conduit for transferring large sums of funds from the country to Lebanon.

²⁵ Levitt, M. (2016, December 2). *Hezbollah's 'diplomats' go operational*. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hezbollahs-diplomats-go-operational>

²⁶ Joffe, T. (2020, December 30). *Hezbollah-affiliated financial org hacked, information leaked*. The Jerusalem Post. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/hezbollah-affiliated-financial-org-hacked-information-leaked-653690>



FRD operation in the Diaspora

Given the above, the Fawaz clan stands out in this study for its strong social ties to Hezbollah-aligned communities in South Lebanon and its long history in the West African diaspora. Unlike clans that mainly operate as local criminal networks, the Fawaz family shows how family connections, legal business activities, and formal roles can come together to link diaspora communities to Hezbollah, especially through the Foreign Relations Department (FRD).

The Fawaz Clan

Overview

The Fawaz family originates from South Lebanon and maintains a presence across several villages in the south, where Hezbollah enjoys widespread support. Members of the family have been designated by the United States for involvement in Hezbollah-linked fundraising and operational networks in West Africa. These individuals are described in official designations as intermediaries linking diaspora communities, family-based business networks with Hezbollah's central leadership.²⁷

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2025, March 6). *Treasury Targets Africa-Based Hizballah Support Network*. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl9982>

The Fawaz Clan ties to Hezbollah in Lebanon

The Fawaz clan is distributed across several South Lebanese villages, including Jwayya (Jouaiya), Tebnine, Abbassiyeh, Ghassaniyyeh, Ansar, and Seir al-Gharbiyyeh. The Jwayya branch is the largest (with the Darwish family as an offshoot), with deep ties to Hezbollah-affiliated municipal, religious, and social institutions. For example, Mohamad Loutfi Fawaz (brother of a designated entity, mentioned later in the study - Abass Loutfi Fawaz) was nominated as the Moukhtar of Jwayya.²⁸ In the Tebnine branch, the Fawaz clan also holds a formal political position (The local mayor is a member of the Fawaz clan: Nabil Assad Fawaz), further embedding the family within governance structures aligned with Hezbollah.²⁹

In the villages where the clan resides, it is common to see Hezbollah commemorations, funerals of members of the family linked to Hezbollah who died during the war with Israel in 2024, and community events where pictures of Nassralah and flags of Hezbollah are showcased. This reinforces the Fawaz clan's identification with Hezbollah and shows that some members of the clan also take on a more active role, either politically or in the military wing.

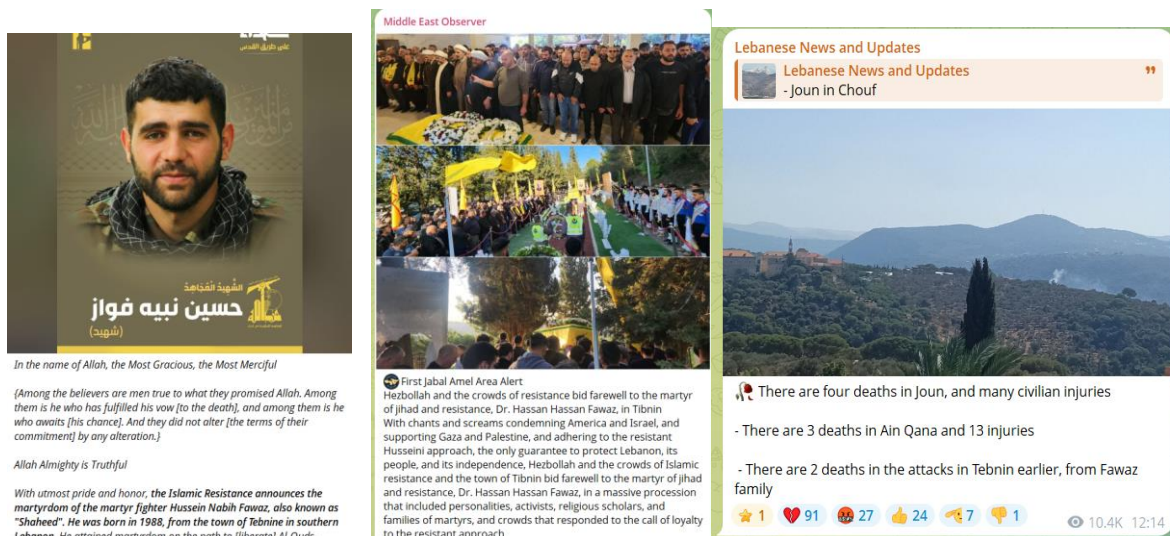
²⁸ 240 Analytics

²⁹ United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. (2022, August 29). *There is bread and salt between us*. United Nations. <https://unifil.unmissions.org/there-bread-and-salt-between-us>



Images: pictures showcasing support for Hezbollah in an official events, published by Jwayya Local Media on their Facebook page

Within the military wing in Lebanon, the Fawaz clan was found to be active. One such example is Hussien Nabih Fawaz, who was born in 1988 in the town of Tebnine and was killed during the war with Israel in 2024. His picture was posted under official Hezbollah graphics, and a post was published on the official military media telegram channel of Hezbollah.



Images: Posts feature pictures from funerals, portraits, and reports of the deceased family members linked to the Fawaz Clan.

The Fawaz Clan in West Africa and its ties to Hezbollah

The Fawaz clan maintains a substantial diaspora presence. While precise numbers are unavailable, social media analysis indicates that family members are distributed across West Africa, the United Kingdom, and Canada, maintaining some contact despite being far apart.

The Fawaz clan in West Africa and ties to the FRD

The Fawaz family gained international attention when three members were linked to Hezbollah following investigations in Nigeria and Senegal. Subsequent inquiries revealed that the family maintains a substantial presence in West Africa, operates numerous businesses, and reportedly maintains connections to Hezbollah's activities in the region.

U.S. Department of the Treasury designations indicate that three family members acted as official or semi-official representatives of Hezbollah, serving as members of the Foreign Relations Department (FRD) and the Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO), and were responsible for coordinating

fundraising, organizing visits from Lebanon, managing relations with community institutions, and transferring information and resources. Their businesses were also designated as fronts of Hezbollah funding.

Fawaz family designated entities:

Fouzi (Fawzi) Fawaz was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2015 as a member of the Hezbollah terrorist cell in Nigeria and described as a Hezbollah Foreign Relations Department (FRD) official in Abuja, Nigeria. Nigerian authorities had also issued a warrant for his arrest in connection with the discovery of the weapons cache in Kano in 2013.³⁰

Fawzi was born in Jwaya, Lebanon. His full name is Fawzi Reda Darwish-Fawaz (an offshoot of the Fawaz clan in Jwaya). According to US Sanctions information, he was either born in 1968 or 1973. Fawzi holds both Nigerian and Sierra Leonean citizenship.³¹ He also has a Qard al Hassan account, where he is listed as a major depositor³², a common practice among Hezbollah's funding facilitators. As in other cases, members of the Fawzi family in Lebanon also have accounts with al-Qard al Hasan.

al-Qard al Hassan Account number	Currency	Listed as
01-02-813-0-0-7706	USD	Major depositor
01-02-813-0-0-7536	USD	Major depositor

Table: Fawzi Rida Fawaz bank accounts in al-Qard al Hassan³³

Mustapha Fawaz was sanctioned alongside his brother, Fawzi Fawaz. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Mustapha was a significant financier of Hezbollah and a member of its Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO). He is described as a facilitator of money transfer between Nigeria

³⁰ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2015, February 26). *Treasury targets Africa-based Hizballah support network* (Press Release No. JL9982). <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl9982?utm>

³¹ OpenSanctions. (n.d.). OpenSanctions. Retrieved January 14, 2026, from <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-2mPKcPWuDytbXNj6tpDE2Y/>

³² 240 Analytics

³³ 240 Analytics

and Lebanon during the early 2000s. He was also involved in surveillance and reporting to the organization in Lebanon of both Israelis and the US in Nigeria.³⁴ In 2013, his name was linked to an arrest made on a Hezbollah-linked terror cell in Nigeria, together with two other activists.³⁵ But was later that year cleared of these charges.³⁶



Image: Nigerian Military officials stand near ammunition seized from suspected members of Hezbollah after a raid on a building in Nigeria's northern city of Kano, May 30, 2013.³⁷

Mustapha was born in Jwaya, Lebanon. His full name is Mustapha Reda Darwish-Fawaz (an offshoot of the Fawaz clan in Jwaya). According to US Sanctions information, he was born in 1964. Mustapha holds both Nigerian and Sierra Leonean citizenship.³⁸

³⁴U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2015, February 26). *Treasury targets Africa-based Hizballah support network* (Press Release No. JL9982). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl9982?utm>

³⁵ Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. *A cache of Hezbollah weapons was recently discovered in Nigeria and a Hezbollah network was exposed*. Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/20532/>

³⁶ Houssari, N. (2025, July 15). *Lebanon's central bank bans transactions with Hezbollah financial affiliate*. Arab News. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/485141/amp>

³⁷Jadah, M. (2013, October 22). *Lebanese men accused of 'terrorism' in Nigeria: Trial concludes*. Voice of America News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/lebanese-men-accused-of-terrorism-in-nigeria-trial-concludes/1773922.html>

³⁸OpenSanctions. Retrieved January 14, 2026, from <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-gAmDsiu8HdB8eRXbmi6k4h/>

The Treasury’s designation encompassed both brothers' jointly owned commercial entities, identifying them as part of a financial and logistical support network for Hezbollah operating in West Africa. These included: Amigo Supermarket Limited, a supermarket based in Abuja; Wonderland Amusement Park and Resort Ltd, an amusement park based in Abuja, Nigeria, and Kafak Enterprises Limited, a holding company operating in Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Mustapha and Fouzi Fawaz are the Managing Directors of this entity.³⁹

Company	What the company does	Designation
Kafak Enterprises	Holding company operating in Nigeria and Sierra Leone	2015
Wonderland Amusement Park and Resort Ltd	A supermarket based in Abuja	2015
Amigo Supermarket Limited	An amusement park based in Abuja, Nigeria	2015

Table: Commercial entities identified with the Fawaz brothers and have been designated in 2015⁴⁰

In another designation in 2013, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned **Abbas Loutfe Fawaz**. Abbas is described as an official in Hizballah's Foreign Relations Department in Senegal, playing a key role in Hizballah’s activities and in recruiting members. According to the designation, he “used supermarkets, which he owned and operated, in Dakar, Senegal, to raise funds for Hizballah and attract supporters. Fawaz hosted a visit to Dakar, Senegal, of Hizballah members from Lebanon to promote Hizballah's interests, garner support among the Lebanese expatriates, and solicit financial donations”...Abbas also “led a group of Hizballah members and supporters in

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2015, February 26). *Treasury targets Africa-based Hizballah support network* (Press Release No. JL9982). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl9982>

⁴⁰ 240 Analytics

secret meetings in order to devise ways to increase Hizballah's fundraising efforts and to promote Hizballah's popularity among Lebanese nationals in Dakar. Fawaz was deeply involved in Hizballah's efforts to influence the selection of a director of an influential Islamic institute in Dakar, and was also a key figure in arranging travel for a high-level Hizballah delegation from Lebanon.”⁴¹

Abbas Fawaz was born in Jwaya, Lebanon. His full name is Abbas Loutfe Fawaz (his brother is listed as the Moukhtar of Jwayya. According to US Sanctions information, he was born in 1978. Abbas holds Senegalese citizenship.⁴²

Account number	Currency	Listed as
15-01-813-0-0-2108	USD	-
15-02-813-0-0-2108	USD	-
15-02-813-0-0-3462	USD	-

Table: Abbas Loutfe Fawaz bank accounts in Qard al Hassan⁴³

Fawaz clan business in West Africa⁴⁴

Further open-source investigation into the Fawaz family provides a broader understanding of how this family has grown its business over the years in West Africa, moving its main hub of operations from Nigeria to Sierra Leone (there is also a presence of the Fawaz clan in Liberia, Senegal, Guinea, and more). While information on their current ties with the FRD is not available, they have expanded their capacity in the business realm, with a large presence in Sierra Leone

⁴¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury. (2013, June 11). *Treasury sanctions Hizballah operatives in West Africa* (Press Release No. JL1980). U.S. Department of the Treasury. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jl1980>

⁴² OpenSanctions. Retrieved January 15, 2026, from <https://www.opensanctions.org/entities/NK-gAmDsiu8HdB8eRXbmj6k4h/>

⁴³ 240 Analytics

⁴⁴ This section is presented with cautious consideration due to limitations in available information and the presence of similar names, which make it difficult to determine accuracy; therefore, it is discussed only in general terms.

and other states that openly support Hezbollah. For this report, the main focus will be on the hub and members in Sierra Leone as a hub for their business.

Sierra Leone

One of the most prominent businesses held by the Fawaz clan in **the Fawaz Group of Companies**, which is prominent in Sierra Leone, operates from 18 Charlotte Street in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and appears to function as a closely held family enterprise. Although the company's share register is not publicly available, open-source information consistently indicates family-based control over its core entities. The group's leadership structure includes Abdul Hamid Fawaz as Chairman, Alie Fawaz as Chief Executive Officer, and Mohamed Fawaz as Executive Director. This governance pattern is replicated across affiliated businesses, including Fawaz Logistics, a logistics and supply-chain company, and *The Valley*, a luxury residential and rental development in Freetown, both of which list the same family members in senior management roles. In addition, Fawaz Building Materials (FBM), a cement import and distribution business, is widely associated with Abdul Hamid Fawaz, who is frequently described as its owner or proprietor. The group's portfolio also includes Randcem, a cement brand presented as part of the broader Fawaz Group. Collectively, these entities suggest a vertically integrated, family-controlled business structure with significant commercial reach within Sierra Leone.⁴⁵

Company	What the company does
Sierra Paints	Manufactures and distributes decorative and industrial paints for residential, commercial, and infrastructure projects.
Fawaz Building Materials	Supplies construction materials such as cement, steel, roofing sheets, tiles, and general building supplies.
Randlyn Holdings	Investment and holding company overseeing diversified business interests across manufacturing, real estate, and trade.

⁴⁵ Fawaz Group of Companies. <https://fawazgrouperp.com/>

Pearl Hotel	Operates a hospitality business providing hotel accommodation, conference facilities, and guest services.
RANDCEM	Produces and distributes cement for major construction and infrastructure development projects.
Fawaz Real Estate	Develops, manages, and leases residential and commercial real estate properties.
The Valley	Develops mixed-use residential, commercial, and lifestyle properties (housing, retail, leisure).
Fawaz Logistics	Provides logistics, transportation, warehousing, and supply-chain services for local and regional trade.

Table: Companies linked with the Fawaz group of companies⁴⁶

According to local news site in Sierra Leone which exposes corruption and political issues in the country the Fawaz companies are “Operating under the guise of a legitimate business, he has been importing these products through the duty-free system, evading taxes and exploiting Sierra Leoneans by selling at exorbitant prices”⁴⁷, the author continues and implies connection to Hezbollah: “In the coming days and weeks, more will be revealed about his extensive criminal network. His financing sources are linked to dangerous terrorist groups in the Middle East, involved in laundering and spreading illicit funds. This is not just a fraudster defrauding the Government and the people—he is a threat to national security.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Fawaz Group of Companies. <https://fawazgrouperp.com/>

⁴⁷Wright, E. (2024, August 14). *Exposed: The deceit behind Fawaz Building Material and Randlyn Holding Company*. *The Calabash Newspaper*. <https://thecalabashnewspaper.com/exposed-the-deceit-behind-fawaz-building-material-and-randlyn-holding-company/>

⁴⁸Wright, E. (2024, August 14). *Exposed: The deceit behind Fawaz Building Material and Randlyn Holding Company*. *The Calabash Newspaper*. <https://thecalabashnewspaper.com/exposed-the-deceit-behind-fawaz-building-material-and-randlyn-holding-company/>

Further questions also arise with the fact that many of the companies under the Fawaz group are listed under the same address and use the same email address and phone number. While their operational services are hardly documented, local news from Sierra Leone present the companies as a leading one, with connection to the local community including occasional documented donations.

Information on stakeholders and executive managers of the Fawaz group of companies

Ali Fawzi Fawaz - presumably the son of Fawzi Fawaz, who has been designated by the United States. Ali, born in 1993⁴⁹, is the chief executive officer of the Fawaz group, according to their website,⁵⁰ and is listed as a lawyer in Lebanon.⁵¹

Ali is also registered as a stakeholder in ALMARWA AFRICA LTD⁵², a privately held company based in Abuja, Nigeria. The company maintains a low public profile, with very limited information available regarding its operations or business activities.

ALMARWA AFRICA LTD lists Kassem Youssef as a co-stakeholder. Kassem Youssef is also registered as a stakeholder in Kfak Industry, a designated entity that is linked to the Fawaz brothers, specifically Fawzi Fawaz and Mustapha Fawaz.⁵³

⁴⁹ 240 Analytics

⁵⁰ Fawaz Group of Companies. <https://fawazgroupcorp.com/>

⁵¹ 240 Analytics

⁵² Nigeria24.me. *Almarwa Africa Ltd – company, directors and contact information*. Nigeria24.me. Retrieved January 15, 2026, from <https://nigeria24.me/almarwa-africa-ltd>

⁵³ Nigeria24.me. *Almarwa Africa Ltd – company, directors and contact information*. Nigeria24.me. Retrieved January 15, 2026, from <https://nigeria24.me/almarwa-africa-ltd>

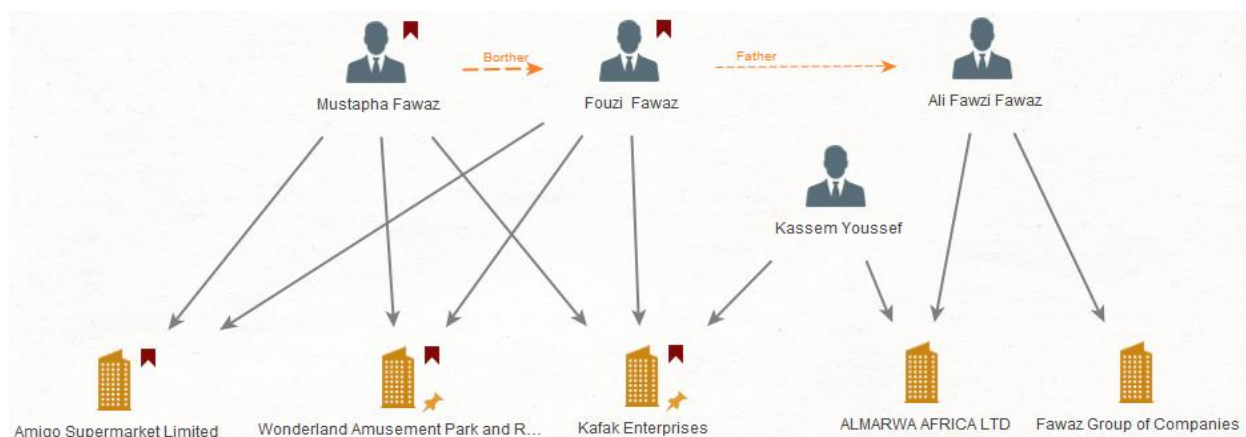


Chart: Ali Fawaz connection map⁵⁴ (Mark in red tag is a designated entity)

Ali also holds an account in al-Qard al Hasan and is presumably a Hezbollah non-military member.⁵⁵

Account number	Currency	Listed as
11-02-4232-67-0-97685	USD	Hezbollah non-military member

Table: Ali Fawzi Fawaz bank accounts in Al-Qard al Hasan⁵⁶

Abdul Hamid Fawaz is considered the engine behind this group of companies and is listed as the Chairman of the BOD. According to local news in Sierra Leone, Abdul Hamid Fawaz was reportedly involved in the embezzlement of funds from one of the major agricultural investments; however, he denied the allegations.⁵⁷

Mohamad Fawaz is identified on the Fawaz Group's website as a senior figure within the company and listed as an executive director. Further review of his publicly available social media

⁵⁴ Created via Maltego Platform.

⁵⁵ 240 Analytics

⁵⁶ 240 Analytics

⁵⁷ AYV Media Empire. (2020, January 10). *ACC wades into £16.9M Yoni rice farm scam*. AYV News. <https://ayvnews.com/acc-wades-into-16-9m-yoni-rice-farm-scam>

activity indicates that his family originates from Jwaya, placing him within that branch of the Fawaz clan. His social media posts over several years include expressions of support for Hassan Nasrallah and Hezbollah, suggesting ideological alignment rather than merely incidental or isolated engagement.



Images: Mohamad Fawaz's Facebook posts supporting Hassan Nasrallah, former secretary general of Hezbollah

Guinea

Other information on family members' businesses in West Africa includes **Abbas Loutfe Fawaz's** brother, **Rida Loutfi Fawaz**. Born in 1974 in Jouaiya, he holds 7 accounts on Qard al Hassan and lives in Guinea. He owns a store. The store sign displays "Fawaz General Trading Stores" and the types of products they sell, alongside brands such as Bosch and Schneider Electric.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ 240 Analytics

Discussion

The engagement of the Fawaz family by Hezbollah's Foreign Relations Department (FRD) reflects a strategic logic rather than an ad hoc or purely opportunistic relationship. When attempted to understand why the FRD nominated members of the Fawaz Family as their representative in West Africa, should look at certain aspects: The FRD does not rely on random supporters in the diaspora; instead, it selectively engages families that possess specific social, economic, and organizational attributes enabling them to function as reliable intermediaries between local communities in the diaspora and Hezbollah's central leadership in Lebanon.

First, the Fawaz family has strong ties within Shiite clan structures in South Lebanon, particularly in villages where Hezbollah maintains deep social and political influence. This tie provides the family with **ideological alignment, ensuring loyalty**. From the perspective of the FRD, such rootedness is essential for sustaining long-term organizational relationships rather than short-term transactional cooperation.

Second, members of the Fawaz family established economic and social footholds within West African Lebanese Shiite communities. **Through ownership and management of legitimate businesses** in many areas of expertise (real estate, holdings, materials, and more) and sustained community engagement, the family developed trust-based networks that could be **mobilized for fundraising, logistics, and coordination**. These locally embedded positions allowed FRD-linked actors to operate within a civilian environment, minimizing visibility while maximizing access to financial and human resources.

Third, the family demonstrated **organizational capabilities**, rather than merely generating funds. U.S. designations indicate that certain family members acted as coordinators: organizing visits from Lebanon, managing relationships with community institutions, identifying potential recruits, and **facilitating the movement of funds and information (both FRD-designated members of the Fawaz clan hold large al-qard al-Hasan accounts and are listed as major**

depositors). These functions align closely with the FRD's mandate as a semi-overt institutional arm responsible for sustaining Hezbollah's external presence.

Finally, the Fawaz family's presence across West Africa is particularly well-suited to FRD engagement (dual citizenship, for example, from both Nigeria and Sierra Leone). This flexibility enhances the FRD's ability to maintain operational continuity amid increased international scrutiny.

Taken together, **these characteristics explain why the FRD relied on the Fawaz family not simply as a funding network as other clans in service of Hezbollah funding, but as organizational nodes within Hezbollah's diaspora infrastructure.**

Conclusion

The Fawaz clan exemplifies how Hezbollah leverages extended family networks within the diaspora to facilitate its funding and organizational activities. Through the integration of shared interests, legitimate business operations, and formal positions within the Foreign Relations Department (FRD), the family links Shiite diaspora communities to Hezbollah's leadership in Lebanon. **This case study indicates that terrorist financing extends beyond the tracking of illicit funds and constitutes a social process embedded in familial relationships.**

When such networks are integrated into routine business and community activities, distinguishing them from legitimate diaspora operations becomes challenging. It is often difficult to separate lawful actions from concurrent illicit activities.

Although targeted sanctions against individuals and entities remain a critical tool, the Fawaz case and similar examples, such as the Nazzem clan, demonstrate the limitations of these measures. **Sanctions may disrupt specific individuals, but they do not dismantle the family-based networks that sustain Hezbollah's activities abroad. These networks adapt by reallocating roles, informally transferring ownership, or relying on unsanctioned relatives. Consequently, sanctions often disrupt diaspora support systems but rarely eliminate them entirely.**