

Hamas

Name: Hamas

Type of Organization:

- Political
- religious
- social service provider
- terrorist
- violent

Ideologies and Affiliations:

- Islamist
- jihadist
- Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated group
- pan-Islamist
- Qutbist
- Sunni

Place of Origin:

Gaza Strip

Year of Origin:

1987

Founder(s):

Ahmed Yassin, Mahmoud Zahar, Hassan Yousef, Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi, Mohammed Hassan Shama'a, Abdul Fattah Hassan Dukhan, Ibrahim Fares Al-Yazouri, Salah Shahada (Founder of the Qassam Brigades), Issa Al-Nashar

Places of Operation:

Gaza Strip, West Bank, Israel, Qatar, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran

Overview

Also Known As:

- Harakat al-Muqawana al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement);
- Al-Tiar Al-Islami (The Islamic Stream);
- Al-Athja Al-Islami (The Islamic Trend)¹

Executive Summary

Hamas is an offshoot of the [Muslim Brotherhood](#) that emerged in the Gaza Strip in the late 1980s, during the first Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) against Israel. The group's ideology blends Islamism and Palestinian nationalism and seeks the destruction of Israel and the creation of an Islamic state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Since 2017, Hamas claims to have severed its ties to the Brotherhood. The group also receives financial and military support from Iran. Qatar has also provided significant funding for the group.

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Hamas uses its provision of social services to build support amongst grassroots Palestinians, helping it to win the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections. However, the group's engagement in politics and welfare has not tempered its commitment to terrorism. Hamas's preferred methods include suicide bombings, rocket and mortar attacks, shootings, and kidnappings. Hamas as a whole or its armed faction have been labeled terrorist organizations by the United States, Israel, the United Kingdom, the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan.

Although Hamas formed a Palestinian Authority unity government with its rival Fatah in early 2006, the two groups continued to clash, often violently, leading Hamas to forcibly expel Fatah from the Gaza Strip in 2007. The terror group has ruled Gaza since, surviving on Iranian and Qatari aid, as well as income from the smuggling tunnels it has built beneath the Gaza-Egypt border. In 2013, the Egyptian army sealed off most of the tunnels, throwing Hamas and Gaza into a financial crisis.

Governance did not moderate Hamas. The group has been responsible for thousands of Qassam rockets fired at Israeli towns, a 2006 cross-border raid resulting in the five-year captivity of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, and three wars with Israel, most recently in the summer of 2014. In May 2017, Hamas unveiled a new guiding political document that seemingly accepted a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and east Jerusalem. In the same document, however, Hamas reaffirmed its refusal to recognize Israel, as well as its commitments to violence and the creation of a Palestinian state in the entirety of the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. In October 2017, Hamas and Fatah agreed to allow the PA to reassert its authority in Gaza, but the two sides have stalled on discussions over Hamas's weapons.

Hamas has thus far refused to disarm and its leaders have remained committed to the group's strategy of so-called armed resistance. Despite the new political document and reconciliation agreement with Fatah, Hamas shows no signs of renouncing its dedication to violence or the creation of an Islamist state.

Doctrine

Hamas, the Palestinian offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, seeks to create an Islamist state of Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, replacing Israel, which Hamas does not recognize. Like its parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood (and unlike the secular, nationalist PLO), Hamas strives to create an Islamist state based on the principles of *sharia* (Islamic law). Hamas views the entirety of the land of Mandate Palestine—excluding the 80 percent of Palestine that became modern-day Jordan—as an Islamic birthright that has been usurped. To that end, Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist and has dedicated itself to violently seeking Israel's destruction. Hamas's slogan, spelled out in Article 8 of the organization's 1988 charter, sums up the terror group's belief system: "Allah is [our] target, the Prophet is [our] model, the Koran [our] constitution: Jihad is [our] path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of [our] wishes."²

On May 1, 2017, Hamas unveiled a new political program to supplement its 1988 charter. The so-called Document of General Principles & Policies excised all references to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas's origins in the movement. Hamas accepted in principle the idea of a Palestinian state along the pre-1967 boundaries if approved by a Palestinian national referendum. However, Hamas at the same time reaffirmed its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist, and repeated its call for a Palestinian state "from the river to the sea."³ The document also reaffirmed Hamas's dedication to "armed resistance" as the "strategic choice for protecting the principles and the rights of the Palestinian people."⁴

1988 Charter

Hamas's 1988 charter outlines four important themes crucial to Hamas's doctrine:

Theme One: Relationship to the Muslim Brotherhood

Hamas is a direct descendent of the Muslim Brotherhood, growing out of the Brotherhood's activities in Gaza, where it began setting up charitable organizations in the 1960s. Article 2 of the charter describes the Muslim Brotherhood as "a universal organization.... the largest Islamic Movement in modern times."⁵ Hamas is "one of the wings of the Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine."⁶ As such, Hamas adheres to an ideology in which Islam dominates all areas of life such as "culture, creed, politics, economics, education, society, justice and judgment, the spreading of Islam, education, art, information, science of the occult and conversion to Islam."⁷

Theme Two: Palestine

According to Article 11 of the charter, Hamas declares the entirety of pre-1948 Palestine as "an Islamic Waqf [religious endowment] consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up. Neither a single Arab country nor all Arab countries, neither any king or president, nor all the kings and presidents, neither any organization nor all

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of them, be they Palestinian or Arab, possess the right to do that. Palestine is an Islamic Waqf land consecrated for Moslem generations until Judgement Day.”⁸

Theme Three: Nationalism

For Hamas, nationalism is part of its *raison d'être*, and it has intertwined nationalism with religious ideology, making it “part of the religious creed.” According to Article 12 of the charter, no need to fight is “more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land.” The resistance and “quelling [of] the enemy become the individual duty of every Moslem, male or female.” The charter even allows for “a woman.... to fight the enemy without her husband's permission, [as well as] the slave: without his master's permission.”⁹ Hamas has elevated its actions in support of its nationalist agenda—violent and non-violent alike—to the level of religious obligations. Along these lines, Hamas views its struggle against Israel as a cosmic battle of good (Islam) versus evil (Israel). Hamas's charter is filled with language defining its mission in religious terms, casting Israel as an enemy of God. Article 28, for example, specifies: “Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people. ‘May the cowards never sleep.’”¹⁰

Theme Four: Israel and “armed resistance”

Hamas recognizes the fact that Israel exists, but does not recognize its legitimacy or right to exist. The introduction to the charter quotes Muslim Brotherhood founder [Hassan al-Banna](#) as saying “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”¹¹ Hamas upholds “armed resistance” as the only method to liberate Palestine. In Article 13 of the charter, Hamas renounces all peace plans or negotiations to resolve the issue of Palestine. Negotiations are a “contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Abusing any part of Palestine is abuse directed against [Islam]....”¹²

Hamas's Changing Strategies

Since Hamas joined the Palestinian Authority in 2006—and subsequently formed an independent government after its violent expulsion of the PA from Gaza – the international community has demanded that in order to gain international recognition, Hamas must renounce violence, recognize Israel, and recognize past agreements signed by the PLO. In a 2007 op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times*, Hamas's deputy politburo chief Mousa Abu Marzouk rebuked international demands, asking, “[W]hy should any Palestinian ‘recognize’ the monstrous crime carried out by Israel's founders and continued by its deformed modern apartheid state, while he or she lives 10 to a room in a cinderblock, tin-roof United Nations hut?”¹³ Hamas has remained rigid in its core beliefs, but has demonstrated some flexibility in its positions and strategies.

Hamas's adherence to its 1988 charter

In his 2007 *Los Angeles Times* op-ed, Abu Marzouk struck a conciliatory tone regarding Hamas's charter, referring to it as a revolutionary document that must be looked at in the context of the time when it was written. “If every state or movement were to be judged solely by its foundational, revolutionary documents or the ideas of its progenitors, there would be a good deal to answer for on all sides,” he penned.¹⁴ While Marzouk's statement does not entirely annul the charter, it suggests the possibility of a pragmatic path toward moderation in which Hamas is not bound by inflexible dogma.

However, just a year before Marzouk made this remark, Mahmoud Zahar, a co-founder of Hamas, declared that the group would “not change a single word in its covenant.”¹⁵ Similarly, a senior Hamas leader, Sami Abu Zuhri, stated that the Palestinian legislative council, in preparing for the 2006 elections, would “[adhere] to the constants and strategies outlined in the [Hamas] charter.”¹⁶

Hamas's 2017 political document

On May 1, 2017, Hamas convened a press conference in Qatar to unveil a new policy document, the first since the release of its organizational charter in 1988. The document—a supplement to Hamas's 1988 charter—omits the original charter's references to Jews and frames the Palestinian struggle as a nationalistic rather than religious one. Though the document accepts the idea of a Palestinian state along the pre-1967 lines, the charter continues to withhold recognition of the State of Israel. As the document outlines, Hamas continues to embrace “armed resistance” against Israel in its pursuit of the “liberation” of Palestine “from the river to the sea.”¹⁷ The document also makes no mention of Hamas's origins within the Muslim Brotherhood, which the group's leaders have claimed to disavow. In March 2016, Hamas spokesman [Sami Abu Zuhri](#) denied any links between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁸ Ahead of the document's release, Hamas leaders said the new document does not replace the original 1988 charter, which remains in effect with its linkage to the Brotherhood.¹⁹

The potential acceptance of pre-1967 lines

Hamas leaders have suggested that they may be willing to accept a state of Palestine within the areas captured by Israel in 1967 (the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem), but without the recognition of Israel. In 2006, Hamas's Prime Minister [Ismail Haniyeh](#) stated that Hamas would

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accept a *temporary* Palestinian state within the pre-1967 areas and a 20-year truce with Israel.²⁰

Hamas leaders have alluded to their potential participation in and acceptance of a PLO-Israel peace accord, but only if it were approved by a popular referendum of the Palestinian people. As Hamas and the PLO negotiated their unity deal in June 2014, Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri declared that while Hamas would continue to not recognize Israel, the group would not “obstruct” any future negotiations between Israel and the PLO.²¹

Hamas’s offers of a temporary truce, or *hudna*, however, demonstrate that it remains committed to the long-term goal of destroying Israel, and that Hamas sees a Palestinian state as a step in that direction.

Hudna

Hudna is an Arabic word for “truce” or “quiet.” Hamas co-founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin stated in 2003 that a *hudna* does not only signify the cessation of terrorist attacks; Israel would also be expected to “release prisoners, stop killing and dismantle settlements.”²²

In 2004, Hamas co-founder Abdel Azziz al-Rantisi offered a 10-year *hudna* in exchange for Israel withdrawing from all the territories captured in 1967, including east Jerusalem, saying: “we accept a state in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. We propose a 10-year truce in return for (Israeli) withdrawal and the establishment of a state.”²³ Israel rejected the offer, fearing that Hamas would use the 10-year lull to rearm and Israel, having given up all of the disputed territories, would find itself a victim of renewed Hamas terrorism. Indeed, Rantisi clarified that the *hudna* offer did not signify an end to the conflict.²⁴

Hamas offered Israel a *hudna* twice after that: in 2006 then-Prime Minister [Ismail Haniyeh](#) offered a 20-year truce for a temporary state in the territories,²⁵ and in 2008 then-politburo leader [Khaled Meshaal](#) called for a 10-year *hudna* in exchange for Israel’s evacuation from the territories. Meshaal told former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, that the offer of a 10-year *hudna* was “proof” of Hamas’s tacit recognition of Israel, while still avoiding any formal recognition of the Jewish state.²⁶ Despite Israel’s dismissal of the offer as a re-arming strategy for Hamas, Carter accepted the *hudna* as proof that Hamas had begun to accept Israel’s right to “live as a neighbor next door in peace.”²⁷

During the summer of 2015, Hamas and Israel reportedly discussed a long-term ceasefire of 10 to 15 years, according to various reports. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied direct or indirect contacts with Hamas. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was reportedly meeting with Hamas to discuss a long-term truce.²⁸ Fatah condemned Blair’s rumored role and said Hamas should coordinate its ceasefire talks through the PLO.²⁹

In September 2017, Hamas co-founder Hassan Yousef told the *Jerusalem Post* that Hamas was “prepared to make a long-term cease-fire” with Israel in exchange for lifting the blockade of Gaza instituted in 2007.³⁰

The gun is the ‘only response’

Despite what may be cracks in Hamas’s rigidity, the group remains committed to its foundational goals and the role in which it has cast Israel. In 2013, Haniyeh reaffirmed Hamas’s refusal to compromise or renounce violence, declaring the “gun” the “only response” to Israel.³¹ He argued that Hamas would obtain its goals “only through fighting and armed resistance,” and that “no compromise should be made with the enemy.”³² In May 2014, just weeks after Hamas and the PLO announced their intention to form a unity government, Abu Marzouk referred to the recognition of Israel as “a red line” that Hamas would never cross.³³

Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in October 2017 that would allow the PA to reassert its control over Gaza. But the sides delayed negotiation on Hamas’s armed wing. Abbas had demanded that Hamas disarm, while Hamas has insisted it will maintain its weapons.³⁴

Organizational Structure:

Hamas’s leadership has historically been split between its foreign-based political bureau and its Gaza-based government, which at times find themselves at odds. Various Hamas leaders have made contradictory claims on whether the group’s military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, operates independently or under the direction of the political wing.

Political bureau

The bureau is the Hamas’s principal authority. It is headed by [Ismail Haniyeh](#), who took over from Khaled Meshaal in May 2017.³⁵ The

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bureau was previously based in Syria until Hamas leaders fled in 2012, having endorsed the rebellion against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Meshaal moved to Qatar, while other Hamas leaders relocated to Egypt.³⁶ In June 2016, Meshaal announced his intention to step down by the end of the year ahead of Hamas's internal elections.³⁷ On February 13, 2017, [Yahya Sinwar](#), a founding member of the group's armed wing, won internal elections to replace Haniyeh as Hamas's top political leader in Gaza. Hamas also elected lawmaker Khalil al-Hayya as Gaza's deputy political leader.³⁸

The Shura Council (*Majlis al-Shura*) Hamas's central consultative body, is primarily responsible for making decisions. Smaller Shura committees are employed to supervise various government activities anywhere from military operations to media relations, and then report back to the Shura council.³⁹

Gaza government

Ismail Haniyeh is the former prime minister of Gaza's Hamas government, responsible for the daily rule of the Gaza Strip since Hamas forcibly expelled the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 2007. In April 2014, Haniyeh stepped down and assumed the role of deputy leader of Hamas as part of a failed reconciliation agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization.⁴⁰ As part of that deal, a new PA prime minister, Rami Hamdallah, assumed control of Gaza and the West Bank under a consensus government in June 2014, but the PA has since failed to extend its control over the coastal enclave. Hamas remains firmly in control of Gaza's government institutions and security services. In October 2016, the Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza announced that Hamdallah would no longer have authority over Gaza and that Haniyeh would replace him as prime minister.⁴¹ On February 13, 2017, Hamas elected Yahya Sinwar as its political chief in the Gaza Strip, replacing Haniyeh ahead of his then-expected ascendancy to politburo chief.⁴²

Hamas's Gaza government has been largely shunned by a large segment of the international community, while it has struggled to pay the salaries of 40,000 municipal workers in the strip.⁴³ In 2017, the PA made several moves to pressure Hamas to reconcile. That April, the PA drastically reduced salaries of thousands of civil employees in Gaza.⁴⁴ PA President Mahmoud Abbas also announced that the PA would no longer pay Israel for the electricity powering the Gaza Strip. As Israel does not engage directly with Hamas, the PA had continued to pay for Israeli electricity to the coastal enclave following Hamas's violent takeover in 2007. The PA's announcement threatened to cut power to more than 2 million in Gaza. Hamas accused the PA of collaborating with Israel, while Hamdallah called for Hamas to turn Gaza back over to PA control.⁴⁵ The PA ended its electricity payments to Israel that June, citing Hamas's failure to reimburse it for the electricity costs.⁴⁶

In September 2017, Hamas announced its intention to dissolve its government in Gaza and called on the PA to immediately resume responsibility for the Gaza Strip. Hamas agreed to the PA's demand to hold new parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza for the first time since 2006. The move followed talks in Cairo between Hamas and the Egyptian government.⁴⁷ That October, Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in Cairo to allow the PA to resume control of Gaza by December 1 and later take control of Gaza's border crossings. The sides delayed negotiation on Hamas's armed wing.⁴⁸

Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades

The Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades comprise Hamas's military wing. Created in 1991 with the reported aim to block negotiations between Israel and the PLO, the wing is named after a Muslim preacher who, in 1930, formed the "Black Hand," an anti-Zionist and anti-British organization.⁴⁹ Qassam Brigades leader [Mohammad Deif](#) is widely suspected of having ordered suicide bombings and other attacks carried out by the Brigades.⁵⁰

Political scientists Ilana Kass and Bard O'Neill described Hamas's relationship with the Brigades as reminiscent of Sinn Féin's relationship to the military arm of the Irish Republican Army, quoting a senior Hamas official who said, "The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigade is a separate armed military wing, which has its own leaders who do not take their orders [from Hamas] and do not tell us of their plans in advance."⁵¹ However, senior Hamas leaders have themselves pointed out that a neat separation between the political and military wing does not exist. Hamas's founder Sheikh Ahmad Yasin stated in an interview with Reuters that Hamas did not have uncoordinated wings: "we cannot separate the wing from the body. If we do so, the body will not be able to fly. Hamas is one body."⁵² This view was supported by Hamas military commander Salah Shehadeh, who said: "the political apparatus is sovereign over the military apparatus, and a decision of the political [echelon] takes precedence over the decision of the military [echelon], without intervening in military operations."⁵³

Deif has survived two assassination attempts, leaving him wheelchair-bound after losing his arms and legs in a July 2006 Israeli airstrike, as well as an eye in a September 2002 helicopter strike. Deif has since gone into hiding, and his deputy, Ahmad Jabari, took over the Brigades' leadership,

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with Deif remaining as the group's figurehead. Jabari was himself killed by an Israeli strike in November 2012, marking the beginning of Israel's Operation Pillar of Defense. Israeli authorities suspect that Deif resumed command of the Brigades after Jabari's death and that he was responsible for ordering the terrorist rocket fire attacks launched during Israel's summer 2014 conflict with Hamas.⁵⁴

Hamas has an estimated 20,000 fighters, with another 20,000 in its police and security forces.⁵⁵ Following the 2014 reconciliation agreement between Hamas and the PLO, it was revealed that some 25,000 Hamas employees in Gaza work in the security services, and that a majority of them belong to the Qassam Brigades.⁵⁶ According to one Qassam official, these employees would take orders from the Brigades—and not the Ministry of Interior—after the formation of a unity government with the PLO.⁵⁷

Financing:

In the six years following Israel's 2005 withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Hamas's budget reportedly grew from \$40 million to \$540 million.⁵⁸ Hamas's budget in 2013 was more than \$700 million, with \$260 million earmarked to the administrative costs of running Gaza.⁵⁹ In 2014, the Hamas government in Gaza signed a reconciliation agreement with the Palestinian Authority (PA) that called for the Hamas government to dissolve and for the PA to reassert control. The Hamas government's budget prior to its dissolution was reportedly \$530 million. As of 2016, Hamas reportedly had an approximate military budget of \$100 million, with \$40 million specifically earmarked for construction of tunnels beneath the Gaza-Israel border.⁶⁰

Hamas has since become more financially isolated as the Palestinian Authority began imposing financial sanctions on Gaza in 2017 in a bid to convince Hamas to turn over total control of the coastal enclave. As a result, Hamas has struggled to pay its municipal and military employees.⁶¹

To fill its coffers and fund its administrative and terrorist activities, Hamas turns to several sources: funding, weapons, and training from Iran; donations from the Palestinian global diaspora;⁶² and fundraising activities in Western Europe and North America.⁶³ Hamas has also sought to use Palestinian businesses to collect and transfer money. In June 2021, for example, Israeli authorities raided two money-exchange companies in the West Bank—the Beit Al-Maqdes Company in Tulkarm and the Marish Company for Money Exchange in Hebron—accused of transferring money to Hamas. According to Israeli authorities, the two companies transferred approximately \$410,000 to Hamas members in the West Bank. According to authorities, the businesses collected the funds from Palestinian businesses in the West Bank. Hamas has also allegedly used money-exchange companies in Gaza to transfer money from Iran.⁶⁴

Charities

Global charities affiliated with Hamas collect donations on its behalf. These charities operate in countries that label Hamas a terrorist organization, and are often themselves designated as terrorist organizations when exposed by authorities. For example, Ottawa labeled the Canadian charity International Relief Fund for the Afflicted and Needy a terrorist organization, and launched a “terrorist financing investigation,” which revealed the organization's funneling of approximately \$14.6 million worth of resources to various groups affiliated with Hamas between 2005 and 2009.⁶⁵

On December 6, 2001, the United States froze the funds of the Holy Land Foundation, then the largest Muslim charity in the United States. Following a long investigation by the FBI into the activities of the organization, five of its leaders were convicted on charges of funneling money and supplies to Hamas. Hamas had previously been designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization in the United States. According to the findings of the court, the charity, which was set up in the 1980s, gave millions of dollars to charities in Gaza and the West Bank, which were Hamas social institutions.⁶⁶ According to an FBI report of a bugged meeting of the foundation, the then-head of the American political arm of Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk, stated that the Holy Land Foundation was the “primary fund-raising entity in the United States” of the Palestinian resistance movement.⁶⁷

During the second intifada, Middle East charities created by Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and other governments collected and funneled millions of dollars to Hamas and other terror organizations for so-called martyr payments.⁶⁸ A group of terror victims' families took the Jordan-based Arab Bank to task for facilitating funding to Hamas terrorists through these “charities” in the first civil case against a financial institution accused of violating the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act. On September 22, 2014, after a 10-year legal process, a U.S. jury found Arab Bank liable for helping finance about two dozen Hamas suicide bombings.⁶⁹

Taxes and the tunnel economy

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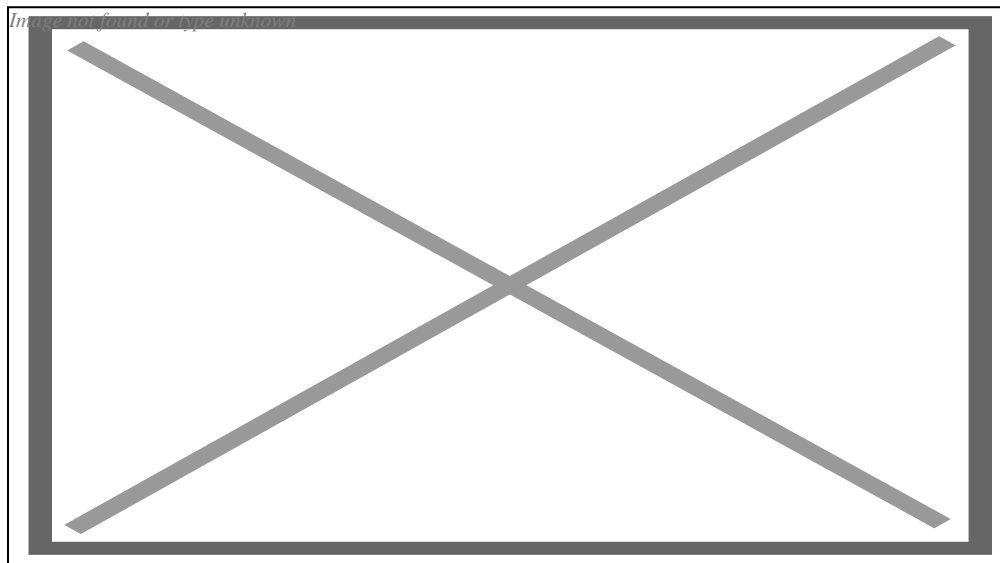
Hamas has spent years building a network of tunnels beneath the Gazan-Egyptian border in order to smuggle weapons and other goods. According to a 2012 *Journal of Palestine Studies* report, at least 160 children have died while digging the elaborate tunnel system.⁷⁰ The underground smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt has provided Hamas with a flow of tax revenue on smuggled goods, comprising roughly \$500 million of Hamas's annual budget for Gaza of just under \$900 million. The Egyptian military closed the tunnels in late 2013 after it deposed the Muslim Brotherhood government, sending Gaza into an economic crisis.⁷¹

Constructing the tunnels was not a cheap endeavor, as each tunnel is believed to have cost between \$80,000 and \$200,000. To pay for the tunnels' construction, Hamas turned to Gazan-based mosques and charities, which reportedly began offering pyramid schemes to invest in the tunnels with high rates of return. The number of tunnels reportedly grew from a few dozen in 2005, with annual revenue of \$30 million per year, to at least 500 by December 2008, with annual revenue of \$36 million per month.⁷²

By October 2013, Egypt claimed to have destroyed 90 percent of Gaza's smuggling tunnels. According to Ala al-Rafati, the Hamas-appointed economy minister, the resulting losses to the Gaza economy between June and October 2013 amounted to \$460 million.⁷³

Cryptocurrencies

Hamas seeks to bypass international financial sanctions through the use of cryptocurrencies, the movement of which is harder to trace than traditional currencies.⁷⁴ The Qassam Brigades website provides an animated instructional video on how to create a Bitcoin wallet—the decentralized digital method of storing Bitcoins—and make an anonymous donation to Hamas that cannot be traced by authorities. The site is available in multiple languages, including English, Arabic, French, and Russian.⁷⁵ To further avoid detection, Hamas's website generates links to individual Bitcoin wallets—making each transaction unique—on its site instead of using a cryptocurrency exchange, which can be more easily tracked by authorities.⁷⁶



Screenshot of the Qassam Brigades website. August 20, 2019.

In 2019, the Qassam Brigades created a portal on its website to collect donations through the cryptocurrency Bitcoin.⁷⁷ In May 2019, U.S. authorities arrested a New Jersey man who had sent a donation of \$20 in Bitcoin through the Qassam Brigades' website in April 2019, two months after explaining how the site worked to an undercover FBI agent. The suspect had previously sent \$100 to a Hamas member in Gaza via the wire transfer service Moneygram.⁷⁸ According to terrorism experts and the U.S. Treasury, Bitcoin is a small but growing medium for terror financing.⁷⁹ In August 2020, U.S. authorities seized more than \$1 million in cryptocurrency assets linked to Hamas's armed wing. Hamas allegedly saw a surge in bitcoin donations during and after its 11-day conflict with Israel in May 2021. Between May 10 and May 20 that year, the Qassam Brigades' website, alqassam.ps, saw an increase in traffic and engagement. During the same period, the Qassam Brigades' Telegram channel increased by 261,000 followers. Following the May 2021 conflict, one Hamas senior official claimed a continuous rise in the proportion of

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cryptocurrency in Hamas's finances.⁸⁰

Foreign investment

Iran

Iran has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas since the 1990s. In the U.S. case *Weinstein v. Iran*, the court noted that 1995-1996 "was a peak period for Iranian economic support of Hamas because Iran typically paid for results, and Hamas was providing results by committing numerous bus bombings such as the one on February 25, 1996."⁸¹

After Hamas's victory in the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, Iran provided Hamas an estimated £13-15 million a month for governing expenses.⁸² However, Iranian aid to Hamas has decreased since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war. While Iran has sided with the embattled Assad regime, Hamas has supported Syrian rebels seeking to overthrow Assad. As a result, Iran cut as much as £15 million a month to Hamas. In May 2013, Hamas's deputy foreign minister Ghazi Hamad acknowledged that Iran had financially supported Hamas since 2006, but was sending the group only a "tiny amount" of money to maintain ties to the Palestinian cause.⁸³ By March 2014, Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani said that relations between Hamas and Iran had returned to normal and that Iran continued to support Hamas as a "resistance organization."⁸⁴

Senior Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzouk said in July 2015, however, that all Iranian aid to Hamas "has stopped—both civilian aid to the Gaza Strip and military assistance to Hamas."⁸⁵ Marzouk said that relations between Hamas and Iran had not advanced in a direction that "interested" Hamas and accused Iranian officials later that month of lying about their support.⁸⁶ According to Marzouk, Hamas had not received any Iranian money since 2009.⁸⁷

Hamas and Iran reportedly renewed their financial ties in 2017. That August, Hamas's political leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, deemed the restored relationship as "excellent, or very excellent."⁸⁸ Sinwar also called Iran the "largest backer financially and militarily" of Hamas.⁸⁹

As of August 2018, Iran reportedly transferred \$70 million annually to Hamas.⁹⁰ Israeli authorities reported in August 2019 that Iran was increasing its funding to Hamas to \$30 million per month in order to obtain more intelligence on Israel's missile stockpiles.⁹¹ In November 2018, U.S. Special Envoy on Iran Brian Hook announced U.S. intentions to target Iran's funding of Hamas and Hezbollah as part of a series of renewed sanctions on Iran.⁹²

Qatar

Qatar has invested heavily in the Gazan economy. In October 2012, the country launched a \$254 million plan to modernize Gaza.⁹³ The country later upped its investment to \$400 million.⁹⁴ After Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in April 2014, the PA refused to pay the salaries of Hamas civil servants in Gaza. In June, Qatar stepped in and attempted to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas through Arab Bank to pay the salaries of 44,000 civil servants, but the United States reportedly blocked the transfers.⁹⁵ In November 2018, Qatar transferred \$15 million to the Hamas government to pay civil servants. Israel reportedly approved the payment on condition it did not go directly to Hamas. Qatari monitors oversaw the direct distribution of the funds to civil servants. Qatar promised to pay \$90 million over a six-month period.⁹⁶ A U.S. lawsuit filed in June 2020 alleged Qatar provided funding to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) through three Qatari financial institutions, the Qatar Charity, Masraf Al Rayan, and Qatar National Bank. The Qatar Charity is a member of the U.S.-sanctioned Union of Good charity network. All three institutions have links to members of the Qatari royal family. The plaintiffs are friends and family members of 10 U.S. citizens who died in terror attacks in Israel carried out by Hamas and PIJ. The lawsuit accuses Qatar of coopting "several institutions that it dominates and controls to funnel coveted U.S. dollars (the chosen currency of Middle East terrorist networks) to Hamas and PIJ under the false guise of charitable donations."⁹⁷ On June 26, 2020, Qatar transferred \$30 million to Hamas. The terror group claimed one-third of the amount would be distributed to 100,000 needy families.⁹⁸

Further, Qatar has provided a safe haven for Hamas's political leadership since 2012. In January 2015, then-Qatari Foreign Minister referred to then-Hamas politburo chief Khaled Meshaal as the country's "dear guest."⁹⁹ Hamas has utilized Qatari hotels and business centers for meetings and press conferences, such its May 1, 2017, press conference at Doha's Sheraton hotel to announce the group's new political document.¹⁰⁰

In April 2017, Yousef al-Ghariz, adviser to Qatar's ambassador to the Palestinian territories and head of the Qatari Committee for Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip told Al-Monitor that Qatar works with both Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. He also said that Qatar "doesn't get involved in any internal Palestinian political disputes."¹⁰¹

"Qatar can't continue to be an American ally on Monday that sends money to Hamas on Tuesday," then-Senator John Kerry said in 2009.¹⁰²

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In July 2014, Congressmen Peter Roskam (R-IL) and John Barrow (D-GA) collected signatures from 22 of their colleagues on a letter to Qatar's ambassador to the United States, Mohammed Bin Abdullah al-Rumaihi, demanding Qatar end its support of Hamas.¹⁰³ Qatar has continued to provide financial support to the Gaza Strip and provide shelter for Hamas's leaders in the country.

Saudi Arabia

During the second intifada Saudi Arabia passed millions of dollars to Hamas terrorists under the guise of charity. The Saudi Committee in Support of the Intifada al Quds transferred hundreds of millions of dollars to the families of suicide bombers, prisoners, and those wounded in the intifada as a financial incentive for terrorism. According to a de-classified U.S. State Department memoranda, "the United States provided evidence to Saudi authorities in 2003 that Saudi Arabia's al Quds Intifadah Committee was "forwarding millions of dollars in funds to the families of Palestinians engaged in terrorist activities, including those of suicide bombers."¹⁰⁴

Saudi Arabia has also invested in Gaza, pledging \$1 billion to rebuild infrastructure after Hamas's 2008 war with Israel.¹⁰⁵

Turkey

Turkey reportedly planned to donate \$300 million to Gaza's Hamas government in 2011,¹⁰⁶ while other reports cited that this would become an annual donation to Hamas.¹⁰⁷ Turkey has reportedly limited its financial investments in Gaza to non-governmental bodies to avoid directly providing aid to Hamas. After Israel and Turkey reestablished normalized ties in 2016, Turkey announced an investment of about \$3.5 billion for Gaza. In October 2018, the Palestinian Authority (PA) reached an agreement with Turkey for the country to boost its investments in both the PA-administered West Bank and the Hamas-run Gaza Strip.¹⁰⁸

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Hamas

Key Leaders



Ismail Haniyeh

Chief of Political Bureau, former deputy leader of Hamas, Hamas's former prime minister of Gaza, former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority



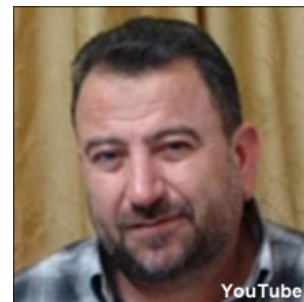
Khaled Meshaal

Head of Hamas's Diaspora Office; Former Chief of Hamas's Political Bureau



Yahya Sinwar

Leader of the Gaza Strip Political Bureau for Hamas



Saleh al-Aroui

Deputy leader



Moussa Mohammed Abu Marzouk

Member of Hamas's Political Bureau



Mohammed Deif

Chief of Hamas's military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades



Marwan Issa

High-ranking leader of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades



Ahmed Yassin

Co-founder of Hamas - deceased

Hamas



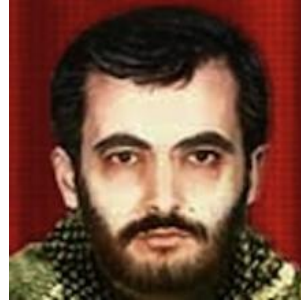
Abdel Azziz al-Rantisi

Co-founder of Hamas - deceased



Salah Shehadeh

Founder of the Qassam Brigades -
deceased



Yehya Ayyash

Bombmaker and former leader of
the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades
- deceased

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History:

- **June 15, 2021:** A poll by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research finds Palestinian support for Hamas increased after its May conflict with Israel.
According to the poll of 1,200 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, 77 percent believe Hamas won the May conflict. The same number said they believe Hamas fought the war to defend Jerusalem and its holy sites, rather than as part of an internal struggle with Abbas's Fatah party. The poll also finds 53 percent of Palestinians believe Hamas is "most deserving of representing and leading the Palestinian people," while only 14 percent prefer Fatah. Source: Joseph Krauss, "Poll finds dramatic rise in Palestinian support for Hamas," Associated Press, June 15, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/hamas-middle-east-science-32095d8e1323fc1cad819c34da08fd87>.
- **June 2, 2021:** Israeli authorities arrest senior Hamas member Jamal Tuile at his home in Ramallah.
Source: "Israeli security arrests senior Hamas official in Ramallah," *Jerusalem Post*, June 2, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/israeli-security-arrests-senior-hamas-official-in-ramallah-669856>.
- **May 31, 2021:** On May 22, Matthias Schmale, head of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) office in Gaza, tells Israeli media he does not dispute Israel's strikes in Gaza during its recent conflict with Hamas were "precise."
The interview sparks protest across Gaza. Schmale issues a statement of apology on May 25. On June 2, Hamas and other Palestinian factions in Gaza declare Schmale and UNRWA's deputy Gaza chief, David de Bold, persona non grata, claiming Schmale was "a major reason for the suffering of thousands of Palestinian refugees and UNRWA employees in the Gaza Strip." UNRWA recalls Schmale to Jerusalem and temporarily places Deputy Commissioner-General Leni Stenseth in charge of UNRWA's Gaza team. Sources: Nidal Al-mugrabi, "UN Gaza relief chief called in by bosses after comments over Israeli air strikes," Reuters, June 2, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/un-gaza-relief-chief-called-by-bosses-after-comments-over-israeli-air-strikes-2021-06-02/>; Khaled Abu Toameh, "Palestinians declare UNRWA Gaza director 'persona non grata,'" *Jerusalem Post*, June 2, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/palestinians-declare-unrwa-gaza-director-persona-non-grata-669915>.
- **May 25, 2021 - May 26, 2021:** On May 25, the United States pledges \$75 million toward reconstruction efforts in Gaza, provided the money does not benefit Hamas.
Egypt and Qatar also pledge \$500 million each toward Gaza's reconstruction. On May 26, Sinwar states Hamas will not touch "a single cent intended for reconstruction and humanitarian efforts," while claiming Hamas has never taken any international aid money intended for Gaza. He further states Hamas has sufficient money provided by Iran to fund its militant activities. Sources: "Blinken pledges \$75m in US assistance to Palestinians," *Al Jazeera*, May 25, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/25/netanyahu-vows-very-powerful-response-if-ceasefire-broken/>; "Qatar pledges \$500m for Gaza reconstruction," *Al Jazeera*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/26/qatar-pledges-500-million-to-gaza-reconstruction/>; "Hamas Chief Says His Group Has 'Sufficient' Money Provided By Iran," *Iran International*, May 27, 2021, <https://iranintl.com/en/iran-in-brief/hamas-chief-says-his-group-has-sufficient-money-provided-iran/>; "Hamas leader says group won't touch Gaza reconstruction aid," *Al Jazeera*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/26/hamas-leader-says-group-wont-touch-gaza-aid/>.
- **May 22, 2021:** Hamas holds a military parade in Gaza City to celebrate its perceived victory.
Sinwar makes his first public appearance to visit the family of Hamas commander Bassem Issa, who was killed during the fighting. A senior Hamas commander tells Israeli media a new round of fighting would begin if Israel targets Sinwar or Deif. Hours after the ceasefire goes into effect, Haniyeh says from Qatar that Hamas will continue "fighting for Jerusalem." He also refers to Deif as "the hero of Jerusalem." Haniyeh also praises Iran for its role during the conflict providing "money, weapons and technical support." Sources: Wafaa Shurafa and Samy Magdy, "Hamas defiant with military parade, appearance of top leader," Associated Press, May 22, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/hamas-israel-middle-east-health-coronavirus-pandemic-6ea82ef3966cccd0cee3dce815730d130>; "Hamas's Sinwar emerges to claim victory; group warns against hits on leaders," *Times of Israel*, May 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-sinwar-emerges-to-claim-victory-group-warns-against-hits-on-leaders/>; Tobias Siegal, "Hamas' Haniyeh vows to destabilize Jerusalem, thanks Iran for support," *Jerusalem Post*, May 22, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/hamas-haniyeh-vows-to-destabilize-jerusalem-thanks-iran-for-support-668791>.
- **May 10, 2021 - May 21, 2021:** Hamas joins with PIJ in launching more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel.
On May 20, Hamas and Israel agree to a ceasefire, which goes into effect at 2 a.m. on May 21. Israel says the ceasefire is unconditional and rewards calm with calm. Hamas claims it extracted concessions from Israel at the Temple Mount but does not specify further. Haniyeh praises Hamas's "victory" and claims the group destroyed Israel's attempts at normalization and integration with the Arab world. Haniyeh vows Hamas will maintain its focus on Jerusalem "until Al-Aqsa Mosque is liberated." In Al-Manara Square in Ramallah in the West Bank, protesters chant the name of Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif and proclaim, "Put sword against sword, we are Mohammed Deif's men." Thousands reportedly rally outside of Deif's home in Khan Younis in Gaza, chanting "victory" and waving Hamas flags. PIJ official Ali Barakeh calls the conflict a defeat for Netanyahu and "a victory to the Palestinian people." According to Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry, 232 people died in Gaza and more than 1,900 were wounded during the conflict. Israel claims at least 120 of those people killed belonged to Hamas and 25 belonged to PIJ. Israel reports 12 people, including two foreign workers, died in Israel during the conflict and more than 300 were wounded. Sources: Aaron Boxerman and staff, "Hamas chief says war foils Israel's attempts at Arab coexistence, normalization," *Times of Israel*, May 21, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-chief-says-war-foils-israels-attempts-at-arab-coexistence-normalization/>; Nidal Al-mughrabi, Jonathan Saul, and Rami Ayyub, "Israel and Hamas both claim victory as ceasefire holds," Reuters, May 21, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-truce-between-israel-hamas-begins-mediated-by-egypt-2021-05-20/>; "Live Updates: As Israel-Hamas Cease-Fire Holds, Gazans Survey Wreckage," *New York Times*, last updated May 21, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/05/21/world/israel-hamas-news>.
- **May 9, 2021:** Haniyeh writes to Khamenei asking for the Muslim world to support *al-Quds*—Jerusalem.
Haniyeh writes that Hamas will never abandon its "path to victory" in support of creating an independent Palestine with al-Quds as its capital. Source: "Hamas chief writes to Leader, asks Muslim world to support al-Quds," *Tehran Times*, May 9, 2021, <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/460758/Hamas-chief-writes-to-Leader-asks-Muslim-world-to-support-al-Quds>.
- **May 1, 2021:** Israeli media reports Iran allegedly agreed to pay Hamas \$30 million per month for intelligence on Israeli missile capabilities.
According to the reports, Hamas leaders agreed in late April to provide Iran with capabilities and location of Israel's missile systems in exchange for the money. Source: "Iran Reportedly Agreed To Pay Hamas For Intelligence On Israeli Missiles," *Iran International*, May 11, 2021, <https://iranintl.com/en/iran-in-brief/iran-reportedly-agreed-pay-hamas-intelligence-israeli-missiles>.
- **April 29, 2021:** Abbas indefinitely postpones Palestinian elections, scheduled for May 22.
Hamas and PIJ boycott the PLO meeting in which Abbas announces the delay. Abbas cites Israel's refusal to allow Palestinians in east Jerusalem to vote as the reason for the postponement, but local analysts suspect the delay is because Abbas fears a Hamas political victory. Hamas parliamentary bloc spokesman Mushir al-Masry calls for Abbas's dismissal and the revocation of all agreements made with him. Masry warns Abbas will face serious consequences for delaying the elections. Moussa Abu Marzouk warns the delay will negatively affect Palestinian reconciliation efforts. Sources: Adnan Abu Amer, "Hamas rallies opposition to Abbas after elections pushed back," *Al-Monitor*, April 29, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/05/hamas-rallies-opposition-abbas-after-elections-pushed-back/>; "Fatah intensifies efforts to postpone elections fearing a Hamas win," *Middle East Monitor*, April 20, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210420-fatah-intensifies-efforts-to-postpone-elections-fearing-a-hamas-win/>; "Hamas: Delaying election will affect future of Palestine reconciliation," April 28, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210428-hamas-delaying-election-will-affect-future-of-palestine-reconciliation/>.

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- **April 24, 2021:** After 36 rockets are launched into Israel overnight by smaller militant groups in Gaza, PIJ and Hamas issue a statement to Egypt that they are not looking for escalation with Israel.
Source: Jack Khoury, "Hamas, Islamic Jihad Not Seeking Escalation With Israel, Gazan Official Says," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), April 24, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-hamas-islamic-jihad-not-seeking-escalation-with-israel-gazan-official-says-1.9742459>.
- **April 12, 2021:** Hamas elects Meshaal to lead its office in the diaspora, making him second-in-command of Hamas.
Haniyeh remains Hamas's overall leader. Sources: Nidal Al-mughrabi, "Hamas elects former chief Meshaal to head diaspora office," Reuters, April 12, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/hamas-elects-former-chief-meshaal-head-diaspora-office-2021-04-12/>; Aaron Boxerman, "Khaled Mashaal tapped as Hamas's diaspora director," Times of Israel, April 12, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/khaled-mashaal-tapped-as-hamass-international-director/>.
- **March 25, 2021:** Hamas and the Palestinian Authority agree to establish a national unity government after the upcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections in May.
Source: "PA and Hamas to establish 'national unity government,'" Middle East Monitor, March 26, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210326-pa-and-hamas-to-establish-national-unity-government/>.
- **Hamas holds secretive internal elections in Gaza.**
On March 9, reports emanate from Gaza that Sinwar had lost re-election as Gaza's political chief to Nizar Awadallah, the former head of Hamas's advisory Shura Council. However, some Palestinian sources tell Israeli media that the vote is not final, and a second round would take place. On March 10, Sinwar wins re-election in a runoff vote. Sources: Agence France-Presse, "Hamas To Pick New Gaza Chief This Week: Party Sources," *Barron's*, March 9, 2021, <https://www.barrons.com/news/hamas-to-pick-new-gaza-chief-this-week-party-sources-01615298711?tesla=y>; Khaled Abu Toameh, "Hamas leader Sinwar ousted in secret vote – report," *Jerusalem Post*, March 9, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/hamas-elects-new-leader-in-gaza-661454>; Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Sinwar re-elected as Hamas chief in Gaza," Reuters, March 10, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2B2259>.
- **February 14, 2021:** Hamas's Sharia Judicial Council in Gaza rules that women need the permission of a male guardian to travel outside the home.
Women's rights advocates in Gaza decry the ruling as a violation of the Palestinian Basic Law guaranteeing equality. Source: Fares Akram, "Hamas court says women need guardian's approval to travel," Associated Press, February 15, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/travel-middle-east-womens-rights-israel-gaza-strip-ac6bdb0383b43d5c13af594374ada88>.
- **February 8, 2021:** Delegations from Hamas, Fatah, PIJ, and 11 other Palestinian factions meet in Cairo to discuss upcoming Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections.
The factions agree on guidelines for the upcoming elections. Hamas intends to hold internal elections before the general Palestinian elections. The agreement calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners by all sides and allows the factions to campaign in both Gaza and the West Bank. Sources: Nidal al-Mughrabi and Ali Sawafta, "Hamas and Fatah hold Egyptian-brokered reconciliation talks in Cairo," Reuters, February 8, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-politics-election-idUSKBN2A8162>; Hazem Balousha, "'Secretive' Hamas elections spark internal party row," Arab News, January 20, 2021, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1800621/middle-east>; Aaron Boxerman, "Fatah and Hamas agree on terms of 1st Palestinian election in 15 years," Times of Israel, February 9, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/fatah-and-hamas-agree-on-terms-of-1st-palestinian-election-in-15-years/>.
- **January 26, 2021:** Israeli authorities seize more than \$120,000 and goods worth hundreds of thousands of shekels that Hamas is allegedly transferring from Turkey to the West Bank.
According to the Israeli Defense Ministry, Hamas used West Bank-based company Sense Sanitary Company and Turkish company Tikkno Plus Ic Ve Dis to transfer the money and goods to the West Bank. The companies are jointly owned by Hamas operatives Abdallah Fuqaha in Turkey and Ayman al-Massri in the West Bank. Sources: Judah Ari Gross, "Israel seizes money, goods it says Hamas was sending from Turkey to West Bank," Times of Israel, February 15, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-seizes-money-goods-it-says-hamas-was-sending-from-turkey-to-west-bank/>; Ami Rojkes Dombe, "Once again, funds illegally transferred from Turkey to Hamas in Gaza," *Israel Defense* (Kfar Saba), February 15, 2021, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/48341>.
- **January 15, 2021:** Abbas announces there will be new parliamentary elections for the first time since 2006, when Hamas swept to power.
The Palestinian Authority also announces plans to hold presidential elections in the summer. Hamas and Fatah representatives meet in Jordan to negotiate a joint platform. Source: Daoud Kuttub, "Agreement between Fatah and Hamas paves way for Palestine coalition," Arab News, January 22, 2021, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1796886/middle-east>.
- **- : In early August, militants in Gaza begin sending incendiary balloons across the Gaza-Israel border.**
The balloons do not cause casualties but result in multiple fires in Israeli communities near the border. Israel responds with strikes against Hamas targets around Gaza. The fighting ends on August 31 with a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. On September 6, Haniyeh meets with Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon to reaffirm the "stability" of the "axis of resistance" against Israel. The leaders also discuss regional developments such as the previous month's announcement of formal ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Haniyeh and Nasrallah jointly condemn Arab normalization with Israel. Haniyeh also visits Lebanon's Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp and announces Hamas possesses rockets that can reach Tel Aviv. Sources: Judah Ari Gross, "IDF: 100 Hamas targets bombed in past month in response to fire-balloon attacks," Times of Israel, September 1, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-100-hamas-targets-bombed-in-past-month-in-response-to-fire-balloon-attacks/>; "Hamas and Hezbollah leaders meet in Lebanon," Middle East Eye, September 6, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanon-palestine-hezbollah-hamas-nasrallah-haniyeh-meeting>.
- **Egypt reportedly blocks Haniyeh from returning to Gaza because of his unapproved trip to Iran.**
Haniyeh makes a condolence call to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on January 5. On January 6, Haniyeh attends Soleimani's funeral in Tehran. Haniyeh speaks at the funeral and is photographed near Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Haniyeh reaffirms the Palestinians' commitment to resistance against Israel and the United States. Haniyeh also meets with Ismail Ghaani, the new head of the Quds Force. Haniyeh's trip to Tehran reportedly infuriates the Egyptian government, which had
- **January 3, 2020 - January 6, 2020:** Hamas releases a statement of condolence on January 3 after the death of Qasem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Quds Force, in a U.S. airstrike in Iraq earlier that day.

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expressly forbidden him from visiting Iran. Source: "Hamás leader praises Soleimani at Tehran funeral in show of support for Iran," Times of Israel, January 6, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-leader-praises-soleimani-at-tehran-funeral-in-show-of-support-for-iran/>.

- With Egypt's permission, Haniyeh leaves the Gaza Strip for the first time in three years to attend high-level meetings in Turkey and Qatar. Haniyeh leads a delegation that includes Saleh al-Aroui, Maher Saleh, Mousa Abu Marzuq, Nizar Awadallah, and Izzat al-Risheq. Haniyeh arrives in Turkey on December 8 and meets with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Days after the meeting, British media reports that Hamas has continued to plan terrorist attacks from a base in Istanbul with the knowledge of the Turkish government. On December 16, Haniyeh meets with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha. The delegation announces it also plans to visit Malaysia, Russia, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Kuwait. While in Istanbul, Haniyeh tells Turkish media that he is also trying to strengthen Hamas's relationship with Iran. Sources: Raf Sanchez, "Exclusive: Hamas plots attacks on Israel from Turkey as Erdogan turns blind eye," *Telegraph* (London), December 17, 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/12/17/hamas-plots-attacks-israel-turkey-erdogan-turns-blind-eye/>; "Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh visits Turkey, meets with Erdogan," *Jerusalem Post*, December 15, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hamas-leader-Ismail-Haniyeh-visits-Turkey-meets-Erdogan-610942>; Seth J. Frantzman, "Turkey and Qatar give warm embrace to Hamas leaders," *Jerusalem Post*, December 17, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Turkey-and-Qatar-give-warm-embrace-to-Hamas-leaders-611219>.
- **November 2, 2019 - November 3, 2019:** Twitter suspends several English and Arabic accounts belonging to Hamas, including its official @Hamasinfo and @HamasinfoEn accounts. Twitter also suspends accounts affiliated with Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV network. The suspensions come a week after a group of U.S. congressmen wrote to Twitter to complain about the presence of Hamas and Hezbollah accounts, to which a Twitter spokesman responded that the company differentiates between the political and military wings of said groups because they have members who have been elected to political offices. Sources: Adam Rasgon, "Twitter suspends Hamas- and Hezbollah-affiliated handles," *Times of Israel*, November 3, 2019, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/twitter-suspends-hamas-and-hezbollah-affiliated-handles/>; Tzvi Joffe, "Twitter Suspends Hamas, Hezbollah-Affiliated Accounts," *Jerusalem Post*, November 3, 2019, <https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hezbollah-affiliated-TV-stations-Twitter-suspended-606663>; Jackson Richman, Lawmakers accuse Twitter of allowing content from Hamas and Hezbollah, violating law," *Jewish News Syndicate*, October 23, 2019, <https://www.jns.org/legislators-accuse-twitter-of-allowing-content-from-hamas-and-hezbollah-violating-law/>.
- **November 12, 2018 - November 14, 2018:** Hamas and PIJ fire more than 450 rockets into Israel, killing one and wounding dozens. After Israel responds with airstrikes in Gaza, the groups agree to a ceasefire on November 13. Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman resigns on November 14 in protest of the ceasefire, briefly destabilizing Israel's governing coalition. Hamas claims the move as a victory. Sources: Oren Lieberman, "Biggest Israel-Gaza firefight since 2014 ends in ceasefire," *CNN*, November 13, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/13/middleeast/israel-gaza-tesnions-escalate-intl/index.html>; Judah Ari Gross and Raoul Wooltiff, "Hamas claims Liberman's resignation as a 'victory for Gaza,'" *Times of Israel*, November 14, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-claims-liberman-resignation-as-a-victory-for-gaza/>; Raoul Wooltiff, "Israel heads toward elections as Jewish Home says it will leave coalition," *Times of Israel*, November 16, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-heads-toward-elections-as-jewish-home-says-will-leave-coalition/>.
- **January 31, 2018:** The U.S. government designates Haniyeh as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. Hamas condemns the designation as a violation of international law. Sources: "Counter Terrorism Designations," U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 31, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20180131.aspx>; Adam Rasgon, "Hamas Calls U.S. Designation of Haniyeh as Terrorist Violation of Int'l Law," *Jerusalem Post*, January 31, 2018, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Hamas-calls-US-designation-of-Haniyeh-as-terrorist-violation-of-intl-law-540354>.
- Hamas and Fatah hold a series of meetings in Cairo between October 10 and October 11. On October 12, the two groups sign an Egyptian-brokered agreement to implement a 2011 reconciliation pact. Hamas and Fatah agree to allow the PA to resume control of Gaza by December 1. The PA takes control of Gaza's border crossings on November 1. The sides delay negotiation on Hamas's armed wing. Abbas demands that Hamas disarm, while Hamas insists it will maintain its weapons. Hamas reportedly agrees to halt all attacks against Israel. Sources: Hamza Hendaqi and Fares Akram, "Palestinian rivals reach preliminary deal on governing Gaza," *Associated Press*, October 12, 2017, <https://apnews.com/28b183dff81c41cc9e2bbd1e62361b26/Palestinian-rivals-reach-preliminary-deal-on-governing-Gaza>; Dov Lieber, "Translation of leaked Hamas-Fatah agreement," *Times of Israel*, October 13, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/translation-of-leaked-hamas-fatah-agreement/>; Dov Lieber, "In deal with Fatah, Hamas said to agree to halt attacks from West Bank," *Times of Israel*, October 15, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-deal-with-fatah-hamas-said-to-agree-to-halt-attacks-from-west-bank/>; Isabel Kershner, "Hamas Hands Gaza Crossings to Palestinian Authority in Unity Deal Milestone," *New York Times*, November 1, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/world/middleeast/hamas-palestinian-authority-borders-gaza.html>.
- Hamas announces its intention to dissolve its government in Gaza and calls on the PA to immediately resume responsibility for the Gaza Strip. Hamas agrees to the PA's demand to hold new parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza for the first time since 2006. The move follows talks in Cairo between Hamas and the Egyptian government. Sources: Fares Akram, "Hamas invites Abbas to resume control of Gaza," *Associated Press*, September 20, 2017, <https://apnews.com/e8438c54e9384220a423bcd33ed7fa5c/Hamas-invites-Abbas-to-resume-control-of-Gaza>; Mohamed Daraghme, "Hamas says it accepts reconciliation demands," *Associated Press*, September 17, 2017, <https://apnews.com/aec26df1cc2740c79103b3637e82d27/Hamas-says-it-accepts-reconciliation-demands>; Dov Lieber, "Abbas talks reconciliation with Hamas leader, but is mum on ending sanctions," *Times of Israel*, September 18, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/abbas-talks-reconciliation-with-hamas-leader-but-is-mum-on-ending-sanctions/>; "Press Release issued by Hamas," Hamas website, September 17, 2017, <http://hamas.ps/en/post/965/press-release-issued-by-hamas>.
- **August 17, 2017:** A suicide bomber blows himself up in the Gaza Strip, killing a Hamas fighter. Hamas blames ISIS, though there is no immediate claim of responsibility. It is the first suicide bombing to target Hamas. Source: Fares Akram, "Hamas militant killed by suicide bomber in Gaza," *Associated Press*, August 17, 2017, <https://apnews.com/6860fc74be8c4008b0a5d8547e23ed6c/Hamas-militant-killed-by-suicide-bomber-in-Gaza>.
- The PA ends payments to Israel for the Gaza Strip's electricity supply, blaming Hamas for failing to reimburse it for paying for Gaza's electricity. The PA calls for Hamas to return Gaza's governance back to the PA. Source: Nidal al-Mughrabi and Jeffrey Heller, "Israel reduces power supply to Gaza, as Abbas pressures Hamas," *Reuters*, June 12, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-power/israel-reduces-power-supply-to-gaza-as-abbas-pressure-hamas-idUSKBN1931XK>.
- **May 6, 2017:** Meshal steps down as Hamas's political bureau chief. Haniyeh is elected the new head of Hamas. Sources: "Ismail Haniyeh elected new head of Hamas," *Times of Israel*, May 6, 2017, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/ismail-haniyeh-elected-new-head-of-hamas/>; Khalid Meshal's speech during the inauguration of the new head of Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniya (an excerpt), "Hamas website, May 6, 2017, [http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-\(an-excerpt\)](http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-(an-excerpt)).
- **May 1, 2017:** Hamas releases a new political program excising all references to the Muslim Brotherhood and accepting a temporary

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Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem.

The new program continues to call for "armed resistance" as its primary strategy to liberate all of Palestine from the river to the sea. Sources: "Document of General Principles & Policies," Hamas, May 1, 2017, <http://hamas.ps/en/post/678/a-document-of-general-principles-and-policies>; Patrick Wintour, "Hamas presents new charter accepting a Palestine based on 1967 borders," *Guardian* (London), May 1, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/01/hamas-new-charter-palestine-israel-1967-borders>.

- Hamas and Fatah announce a reconciliation agreement and declaring plans to hold new elections. The parties do not set a timetable for moving forward.
Source: "Fatah and Hamas to form unity government," Al Jazeera, January 18, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/fatah-hamas-form-unity-government-170118031339203.html>.
- **October 13, 2016:** The Palestinian Legislative Council in Gaza announces that PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah would no longer have authority over Gaza and Haniyeh would replace him as prime minister in Gaza.
Sources: Becca Noy, "Ismail Haniyeh named prime minister in Gaza," Jerusalem Online, <http://www.jerusalemonline.com/news/middle-east/the-arab-world/ismail-haniyehs-comeback-24198>; Ahmad Abu Amer, "Hamas calls for return of Haniyeh government," Al-Monitor, October 21, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/hamas-return-haniyeh-government-gaza.html>.
- **June 10, 2016 - June 20, 2016:** Meshaal announces that he will not seek reelection.
Sources: Shlomi Eldar, "Hamas elections will mark end of Meshaal era," Al-Monitor, June 16, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/06/khaled-meshaal-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniyeh-shura.html>; Jack Moore, "Hamas Leader Khaled Meshaal to Step Down: Reports," *Newsweek*, June 16, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/hamas-leader-khaled-meshaal-step-down-reports-470564>; Nidal Al-Mughrabi, "Hamas chief Meshaal wants to step down: political sources," Reuters, September 23, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-hamas-vote-idUSBRE88M08720120923>; Avi Issacharoff, "Inside Hamas, a bitter and very personal battle for control," Times of Israel, March 19, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/inside-hamas-a-bitter-and-very-personal-battle-for-control/>; Dov Lieber, "Khaled Mashaal to step down as Hamas leader – report," Times of Israel, June 15, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/khaled-mashaal-to-step-down-as-hamas-leader-report/>.
- **April 1, 2016:** The Qassam Brigades releases photos of four Israelis it claims it's holding in Gaza.
The photos are of two living soldiers and the bodies of Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, both of whom were killed during the 2014 war. Hamas does not identify the two living captives. Hamas also denies it is negotiating with Israel for their return. Source: Diaa Hadid, "Hamas Releases Photographs Said to Show Captured Israelis," *New York Times*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/02/world/middleeast/hamas-releases-photographs-said-to-show-captured-israelis.html>.
- **March 16, 2016:** Egypt's Interior Ministry accuses Hamas of conspiring with the Muslim Brotherhood and coordinating the June 2015 assassination of Hisham Barakat, Egypt's chief prosecutor.
Barakat was killed in a Cairo car bombing. An Egyptian lawyer Tarek Mahmoud files to have Hamas declared a terrorist organization. Sources: "Muslim Brotherhood conspired with Hamas to kill prosecutor, Egypt claims," *Guardian* (London), March 6, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/06/muslim-brotherhood-hamas-prosecutor-egypt-assassinated-hisham-barakat>; "Egyptian court to consider ruling Hamas a terrorist organization," *Journal of Turkish Weekly* (Ankara), March 9, 2016, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/2016/03/09/news/egyptian-court-to-consider-ruling-hamas-a-terrorist-organization/>.
- **July 9, 2015:** The Israeli government reveals Hamas is holding captive two Israeli citizens in Gaza.
Avraham Mengistu, an Ethiopian-Israeli in his 20s, crossed into Gaza on September 7, 2014. The government did not reveal the identity of the other man except that he is an Arab-Israeli. An unidentified Hamas member says Hamas released Mengistu when they realized he was not a soldier and he left through a tunnel to Egypt. Source: Isabel Kershner, "Israel Says Hamas Is Holding Two Citizens in Gaza," *New York Times*, July 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/10/world/middleeast/mengistu-gaza-israel.html>.
- In early June, media reports surface of senior Hamas members meeting with Egyptian security officials in a bid to improve relations.
According to media reports, Hamas demands that Egypt open its Rafah border crossing with Gaza, while Egypt demands unspecified confidence-building measures from Hamas. Hamas reportedly agrees to some of Egypt's demands. On June 6, an Egyptian appeals court cancels a February court ruling listing Hamas as a terrorist organization. Egyptian lawyer Ashraf Farahat, who initially brought the case forward earlier in the year, says that he will request Egypt's Foreign Ministry label Hamas a terrorist organization. On June 10, Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Badr Abdel Atty reveals that Egypt is attempting to renew reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah and to renew Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. On June 13, Egypt opens the Rafah border crossing with Gaza to two-way traffic for the first time in three months. Seven trucks filled with building materials cross into Gaza. It is the first time since 2007 Egypt has allowed a commercial shipment to pass through Rafah. Between June 21 and June 30, Israeli intelligence reports Hamas amassing armed troops along the Gazan-Israeli border. During the same time, U.S. and Israeli media report that Hamas and Israel are engaged in direct talks on a long-term truce. On June 30, ISIS releases a video statement to "the tyrants of Hamas" threatening to overthrow the terrorist group's Gaza rule because it is not Islamic enough. Source: Jack Khoury, "Egypt Intel Officials Meet Hamas in Bid to Mend Rift," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), June 10, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/.premium-1.660452>; Stephen Kalin and Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Egyptian court cancels Hamas listing as terrorist organization: sources," Reuters, June 6, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/06/us-egypt-hamas-idUSKBN00M0BZ20150606>; Stuart Winer, "Egypt said working to reconcile divided Fatah, Hamas," Times of Israel, June 10, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/egypt-said-working-to-reconcile-divided-fatah-hamas/>; Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Egypt opens Rafah crossing into Gaza in sign of easing tensions," Reuters, June 13, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/13/us-palestinians-egypt-gaza-idUSKBN00T0BM20150613>; Avi Issacharoff, "Hamas masses troops on Israeli border, trains for new round of fighting," Times of Israel, June 28, 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-masses-troops-on-border-trains-for-new-round-of-fighting/>; Abraham Rabinovich, "Israel, Hamas In Talks to Achieve Long-Term Cease-Fire Agreement," *Washington Free Beacon*, June 22, 2015, <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/israel-hamas-in-talks-to-achieve-long-term-cease-fire-agreement/>; Ali Abdelaty, Dan Williams, and Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Islamic State threatens to topple Hamas in Gaza," Reuters, July 1, 2015, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/01/uk-palestinians-islamicstate-hamas-idUKKCN0PA2TT20150701>; Reuters, "ISIS Threatens Hamas in Gaza," *New York Times*, July 1, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/100000003775446/isis-threatens-hamas.html>.
- ISIS-aligned extremist groups, united under the banner Supporters of the Islamic State, claim responsibility for four bombings targeting Hamas interests across Gaza.
A spokesman says they "will stay like a thorn in the throat of Hamas, and a thorn in the throat of Israel." Source: Dia Hadid and Majd Al Waheidi, "ISIS Allies Target Hamas and Energize Gaza Extremists," *New York Times*, June 30, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/world/isis-allies-target-hamas-and-energize-gaza-extremists.html>.
- After Hamas security forces detain suspected pro-ISIS leader Adnan Mayit, his followers fire rockets at Israel.
In response, Hamas arrests more of his followers and later kills extremist leader Yousif Hounor. Source: Dia Hadid and Majd Al Waheidi, "ISIS Allies Target Hamas and Energize Gaza Extremists," *New York Times*, June 30, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/world/isis-allies-target-hamas-and-energize-gaza-extremists.html>.

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- January 31, 2015:** An Egyptian court labels Hamas's Qassam Brigades a terrorist organization. Hamas condemns the ruling as a "political, dangerous decision that serves only the Zionist occupation." A Qassam Brigades spokesman says Egypt could no longer act as a mediator between Hamas and Israel. On February 28, 2015, a second Egyptian court labels Hamas a terrorist organization and bans its activities in the country. Hamas condemns the ruling, which it claims "serves the Israeli occupation," and says it will have no effect on Hamas's operations. Source: Michael Georgy, "Egyptian court bans Hamas' armed wing, lists it as terrorist organization," Reuters, January 31, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/31/us-egypt-hamas-idUSKBN0L40BS20150131>, Michael Georgy, "Egyptian court bans Hamas' armed wing, lists it as terrorist organization," Reuters, January 31, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/31/us-egypt-hamas-idUSKBN0L40BS20150131>.
- : Third Israel-Gaza War.**
 On June 12, three Israeli teenagers, one of whom is an American citizen, go missing in the West Bank. Israel accuses Hamas of orchestrating their kidnapping. On June 30, the bodies of the three teenagers are found in a valley close to the West Bank city of Hebron. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blames Hamas for the murders. On July 2, a Palestinian teenager is abducted, his burnt corpse later discovered in east Jerusalem. Palestinian officials, including PA President Mahmoud Abbas, assert that the teenager was the victim of far-right Jews incensed at the deaths of the three Israeli teenagers. On July 7, Hamas's Qassam Brigades launch dozens of mortars, Qassam rockets, and Grad rockets at Israeli civilian centers in southern Israel. A Qassam spokesman tells Al-Monitor that Hamas has set numerous traps for Israeli soldiers in Gaza, while the group releases a video in which it prepares rockets. On July 8, Israel launches Operation Protective Edge, aimed at striking Hamas and ending the ongoing rocket fire from Hamas in Gaza. Israel launches a ground invasion on July 17 in response to continued rocket fire and the discovery of underground terror tunnels beneath the Israeli-Gaza border. On July 22, the European Union condemns Hamas's indiscriminate rocket fire and calls on Hamas and all terrorist groups in Gaza to disarm. On August 1, Israel declares an end to a 72-hour negotiated ceasefire after an attack on its soldiers in Rafah, during which three soldiers are killed. The Israeli army later announces that the soldier was killed in combat. On August 4, Israel announces a limited truce to allow for humanitarian aid to be delivered to Gaza. Two attacks on Israelis in Jerusalem leave one person dead and an Israeli soldier wounded. According to Hamas-affiliated Gaza officials, 1,831 Palestinians were killed and 1.8 million Gaza residents displaced as a result of the Israeli operation. Sixty-four Israeli soldiers and three civilians were also reportedly killed since the beginning of the latest violence. On August 5, an Egyptian-negotiated 72-hour ceasefire takes hold. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators head to Cairo to begin negotiating a longer truce. Hamas denies involvement after rockets sent from Gaza hit civilian centers in southern Israel on August 13, and a new five-day ceasefire goes into effect. On September 19, as Israel and Hamas near the deadline for the five-day ceasefire and negotiations on a permanent ceasefire, the Qassam Brigades launch 29 rockets into Israel, with two landing in Tel Aviv, four in Beer Sheva, and three near Sderot. Source: Yaakov Lappin, "Shin Bet Reveals Identity of Two Main Suspected Kidnappers," *Jerusalem Post*, June 26, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Shin-Bet-reveals-identity-of-two-main-kidnappers-360738>; Peter Beaumont, "Bodies of three missing Israeli teenagers found in West Bank," *Guardian* (London), June 30, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/30/bodies-missing-israeli-teenagers-found-west-bank>; Ali Sawaf, "Violent protests spread to Israel after burial of Palestinian teen," Reuters, July 6, 2014, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/07/05/uk-palestinians-israel-idUKKBN0FA05S20140705>; Adnan Aby Amer, "Hamas Readies for Israeli Ground Offensive with Tunnels, Traps," Al-Monitor, July 9, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/originals/2014/07/palestine-gaza-hamas-preparations-israel-ground-offensive.html>; "Operation Protective Edge: Israel bombs Gaza in retaliation for rockets," *Guardian* (London), July 8, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/08/operation-protective-edge-israel-bombs-gaza-in-retaliation-for-rockets>; Jodi Rudoren and Anne Barnard, "Israeli Military Invades Gaza, With Sights Set on Hamas Operations," *New York Times*, July 17, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/18/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-strip.html>; "EU Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process," European Union Delegation to the United Nations - New York, July 22, 2014, http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15300_en.htm; Harriet Sherwood, Jason Burke, Daniel Boffey, "Soldier believed captured by Hamas was killed in action, says Israeli army," *Guardian* (London), August 3, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/02/israel-rejects-talks-gaza-attacks-end>; Nidal Al-Mughrabi and Maayan Lubell, "Israel's seven-hour Gaza truce ends; violence hits Jerusalem," Reuters, August 4, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/08/04/us-mideast-gaza-idUSKBN0G008720140804>; "Israel-Hamas Cease-Fire Holding, Truce Talks to Open in Cairo," Voice of America, August 5, 2014, <http://www.voanews.com/content/israel-hamas-begin-72-hour-truce-gaza/1971724.htm>; Greg Botelho, Antonia Mortensen, and Reza Sayah, "Gaza CeaseFire in Question after Rockets, Airstrikes," CNN, August 13, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/13/world/meast/mideast-crisis/index.html>; Frederik Pleitgen, Jethro Mullen, and Laura Smith-Spark, "29 Rockets in 20 Minutes: Israel, Hamas Cease-Fire Breaks down," CNN, August 19, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/19/world/meast/mideast-crisis/index.html>.
- April 23, 2014:** Hamas and the PLO announce a new unity agreement that would lead to new Palestinian Authority elections. Source: Jodi Rudoren and Michael R. Gordon, "Palestinian Rivals Announce Unity Pact, Drawing U.S. and Israeli Rebuke," *New York Times*, April 23, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/24/world/middleeast/palestinian-factions-announce-deal-on-unity-government.html>.
- Second Israel-Gaza War.**
 On November 14, Israel launches Operation Pillar of Defense to quell Hamas rocket fire from Gaza. That same day, Israel assassinates Ahmed Jabari, the operational commander of Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigade, who had allegedly planned Gilad Shalit's 2006 capture. On November 15, Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Kandil announces his intent to make an official visit to Gaza. At the same time, Egypt's then-president Mohammed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, reopens the Rafah Crossing between Egypt and Gaza to allow wounded Gazans into Egypt. Toward the end of Pillar of Defense, Iran's IRGC admits to transferring technology to Hamas to allow them to "quickly" build long-range missiles. During Israel's eight-day operation, the Israeli army hits more than 1,450 targets in Gaza, killing more than 130 people. Egypt brokers a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel on November 21, and Meshal thanks Iran for supporting Hamas with weapons and financing. After the ceasefire takes hold, Israeli spy satellites spot an Iranian cargo vessel in an Iranian port loading rockets and other weapons that analysts say could be bound for Gaza. Source: "Factbox: Gaza Targets Bombed by Israel," Reuters, November 21, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/21/us-palestinians-israel-gaza-idUSBRE8AK0H920121121>; "Egypt PM to Visit Gaza Friday, Says Hamas Spokesperson," Aswat Masriya, November 15, 2012, <http://en.aswatmasriya.com/news/view.aspx?id=0f062799-4585-42eb-9aac-0fec3b594ce6>; Abdel-Rahman Hussein, "Mohamed Morsi's Approach to Gaza Air Strikes Falls Short for Many Egyptians," *Guardian* [U.K.], November 15, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/15/mohamad-morsi-gaza-israel-egypt>; "Iran Reportedly Admits Helping Gaza Militants Produce Long-Range Missiles," CBS News, November 21, 2012, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-reportedly-admits-helping-gaza-militants-produce-long-range-missiles/>; Peter Beaumont, "Ahmed al-Jabari: the Hamas 'general' who kept out of the limelight," *Guardian* (London), November 14, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/14/ahmed-al-jaabari-hamas-general>; "Israel and Hamas Reach Gaza Cease-Fire Agreement," CBS News, November 21, 2014, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/israel-and-hamas-reach-gaza-cease-fire-agreement/>; Yasmine Saleh and Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Hamas-Israel ceasefire takes hold but mistrust runs deep," Reuters, November 21, 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/21/us-palestinians-israel-hamas-idUSBRE8AD0WP20121121>; Uzi Mahnaimi, "Israel Vows to Destroy Iranian Rockets Destined for Gaza," *Sunday Times* (London), November 25, 2012, http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world_news/Middle_East/article1167684.ece.
- Hamas fires an anti-aircraft missile at an Israeli military aircraft for the first time. Authorities suspect the weapons came from Libya, where more than 1,000 missiles disappeared from military stockpiles after the fall of the Gadhafi regime in 2011. Source: Alex Fishman, "Hamas Launches Anti-Aircraft Missile From Gaza Against Israeli Military," *Al-Monitor*, October 16, 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulseen/security/01/10/hamas-fires-antiaircraft-missile.html>.
- The emir of Qatar becomes the first head of state to visit Gaza since Hamas took de facto control of that territory in 2007. "Emir of Qatar Become First Head of State to Visit Gaza since Hamas Took Control," Huffington Post UK, October 23, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/10/23/emir-of-qatar-historic-visit-to-hamas-gaza_n_2004960.html.
- : In January, Hamas's leaders flee their base in Syria because of the ongoing civil war, leaving for Egypt and Qatar.**

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In February, Hamas breaks with the Assad regime and publicly supports the Syrian opposition. Source: "Hamas Political Chiefs Exit Syria," BBC News, February 28, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17192278>; Fares Akram, "In Break, Hamas Supports Syrian Opposition," *New York Times*, February 24, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/25/world/middleeast/hamas-leader-supports-syrian-opposition.html>.

- **Hamas frees kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit after Israel agrees to release 1,027 Palestinian prisoners in exchange.**
Among the Palestinian prisoners freed by Israel is Ahlam Ahmad al-Tamimi, who was serving 16 life sentences for her role in Hamas's August 2001 suicide bombing of the Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem. Tamimi is deported to Jordan. Sources: Jeffrey Heller and Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Israel and Hamas Agree Prisoner Swap to Free Shalit," Reuters, October 11, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/11/us-israel-palestinians-shalit-idUSTRE79A58R20111011>; "Individual Charged in Connection With 2001 Terrorist Attack in Jerusalem That Resulted in Death of Americans," U.S. Department of Justice, March 14, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/individual-charged-connection-2001-terrorist-attack-jerusalem-resulted-death-americans>; Avi Issacharoff and Aimee Amiga, "Prisoners Deported Under Shalit Deal Arrive in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, and Qatar," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), October 19, 2011, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5201410>.
- **Hamas and Fatah sign a reconciliation accord, which falls apart soon thereafter.**
Source: Ethan Bronner, "Fatah and Hamas Sign Palestinian Reconciliation Pact," *New York Times*, May 4, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/05/world/middleeast/05palestinians.html>.
- **- : First Israel-Gaza War.**
Hamas ends a six-month ceasefire with Israel on December 18, a day before it officially expires. On December 27, in response to Hamas rocket fire, Israel launches Operation Cast Lead, a three-week-long military offensive in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that Hamas operatives regularly launch rockets into Israel "from, within or near residential and public buildings, including schools, mosques and hospitals.... [as well as] from densely populated areas and protected sites." Retaliatory strikes from Israel lead to damage to Palestinian infrastructure. By the second day of the operation, an Israeli defense official states that Israel has "harmed [Hamas's] capabilities in a major way, in a number of aspects," which includes the targeted killing of the head of Hamas special forces Ismail al-Ja'abari. During the operation, the Israeli Air Force targets the homes of Hamas commanders, which act as weapon warehouses and Hamas headquarters. Israel further blames Hamas for reportedly using its citizens as human shields, declaring that Hamas militants put Palestinian civilians in danger by basing military activities in towns and villages, firing rockets from populated areas, and taking cover in civilian infrastructure after firing. Israel declares a unilateral ceasefire on January 17. The next day, Hamas and other Palestinian groups fighting in Gaza also declare a one-week ceasefire. Sporadic rockets attacks and Israeli reprisals nonetheless continue. According to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Cast Lead results in 1,417 Palestinian casualties, 926 of them civilians. The IDF claims the number of Palestinian deaths to be 1,166, with 709 of these being "Hamas terror operatives." Thirteen Israelis are killed during the fighting, three of them civilians. According to Israeli Arab reporter Khaled Abu Toameh, it is difficult to distinguish between Palestinian civilians and Hamas militiamen, as "Hamas [orders] its gunmen to take off their uniforms to avoid being detected by the IDF." Sources: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>; "Timeline - Israeli-Hamas violence since truce ended," Reuters, January 5, 2009, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-palestinians-israel-gaza-timeline-idUKTRE50423320090105>; "Rights group names 1,417 Gaza war dead," *Washington Times*, March 19, 2009, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/mar/19/rights-group-names-1417-gaza-war-dead-1/Yaakov>; Lappin, "IDF Releases Cast Lead Casualty Numbers," *Jerusalem Post*, March 26, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel/IDF-releases-Cast-Lead-casualty-numbers>; "Operation Cast Lead," Institute for Middle East Understanding, January 4, 2012, <http://imeu.org/article/operation-cast-lead>; "Israel/Gaza Operation 'Cast Lead': 22 Days of Death and Destruction," Amnesty International, 2009, 67, 76, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/015/2009/en/8f299083-9a74-4853-860f-0563725e633a/mde150152009en.pdf>; Khaled Abu Toameh, "Analysis: Trumpets of Victory Strike False Note," *Jerusalem Post*, January 19, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Analysis-Trumpets-of-victory-strike-false-note>; Taghreed el-Khodary and Isabel Kershner, "Warnings Not Enough for Gaza Families," *New York Times*, January 5, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/06/world/middleeast/06scene.html>; "One Year After: Gaza Early Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment," United Nations Development Programme, accessed 21, 27, 42, 49, 57, 60, 89, 90, 91, <http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/gazaoneyear.pdf>; Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, "IDF surprises Hamas with largest Gaza operation since 1967; at least 225 killed," *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), December 28, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/idf-surprises-hamas-with-largest-gaza-operation-since-1967-at-least-225-killed-1.260365>; Hanan Greenberg, "IDF Ponders Response to Rocket Fire," *Ynet*, January 18 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3658356,00.html>; "Five rockets' fired into Israel," BBC News, February 28, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7916555.stm.
- **Israel creates a maritime blockade of Gaza in response to ongoing rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israeli communities along the Gaza border.**
Source: Samira Shackle, "Israel Tightens Its Blockade of Gaza for 'Security Reasons'," *Middle East Monitor*, October 14, 2013, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/blogs/lifestyle/7813-israel-tightens-its-blockade-of-gaza-for-security-reasons>.
- **Following factional fighting with Fatah, Hamas brings much of Gaza under its control on June 14.**
Abbas dissolves the PA government and dismisses Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who rejects Abbas' action. On June 15, Hamas fighters successfully overrun the Palestinian Authority's Gaza offices and expel PA forces from Gaza. Hamas assumes de facto governance in Gaza. Sources: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>; Conal Urquart, Ian Black, and Mark Tran, "Hamas Takes Control of Gaza," *Guardian* (London), June 15, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jun/15/israel4>.
- **June 25, 2006:** A group of Palestinian terrorists representing multiple terrorist groups, reportedly including Hamas, cross the Gaza border into Israel using an underground tunnel.
The assailants target an IDF military outpost, killing two soldiers and taking 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit hostage. Hamas denies involvement. Sources: Tim Butcher, "Soldier Kidnapped and Two Killed in Gaza Tunnel Attack," *Telegraph* (London), June 26, 2006, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/1522370/Soldier-kidnapped-and-two-killed-in-Gaza-tunnel-attack.html>; Steven Erlanger, "Tensions Rise After Israeli Is Kidnapped," *New York Times*, June 26, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/26/world/middleeast/26cnd-mideast.html>.
- **Tensions between Hamas and Fatah prompt Hamas to establish its own 3,000-man strong security force under the control of the Hamas-led Interior Ministry.**
Later in the month, Fatah, Hamas, and PIJ convene a conference to resolve disagreements and agree on a common position regarding Israel. Source: Tim Youngs and Ben Smith, "Hamas and the seizure of Gaza," U.K. House of Commons, July 7, 2007, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/RP07-60/hamas-and-the-seizure-of-gaza>.
- **- : On March 3, a Hamas delegation visits Moscow to meet Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and other Russian government and religious officials.**
It is the first Hamas state visit outside of the MENA region since Hamas joins the Palestinian Authority. On March 12, Israel closes Gaza's Erez Crossing into Israel as Hamas and Fatah negotiate forming a new Palestinian Authority government. On March 29, Hamas's Ismail Haniyeh is sworn in as the new Palestinian Authority prime minister. The United States and Canada say they will have no contact with the Hamas-led PA government. The United States and European Union suspend aid to the Palestinian Authority on April 7. Sources: Steven Lee Myers and Greg Myre, "Hamas Delegation Visits Moscow for a Crash Course in Diplomacy," *New York Times*, March 4, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/04/international/middleeast/04hamas.html>; Nicolas Pelham, "Gaza's Tunnel Phenomenon: The Unintended Dynamics of Israel's Siege," *Journal for Palestine Studies* 41, no. 4 (2012): 6-31, <http://www.palestine-studies.org/jps/fulltext/42605>; "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30,

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2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>; "TIMELINE: Key events since 2006 Hamas election victory," Reuters, June 20, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/06/20/us-palestinians-timeline-idUSL1752364420070620>.

- **Hamas participates in Palestinian Authority legislative elections for the first time.**
In the January 25 elections, Hamas's "Change and Reform" political party wins 44.45 percent of votes, while Fatah wins only 41.43 percent. On January 31, the so-called Quartet of Mideast peacemakers (the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia) demands that Hamas renounce violence, recognize the State of Israel, and adhere to past Palestinian agreements as a condition for recognition by the international community. Sources: The Second Legislative Elections: Results for the Electoral Lists: The Allocation of Seats," Central Elections Commission Palestine, accessed June 23, 2014, <http://www.elections.ps/tabid/818/language/en-US/Default.aspx>; "Quartet: Hamas Must Change Policy," CNN, January 31, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/01/30/hamas.funding/>.
- **April 17, 2004:** A joint suicide bomb attack by Hamas and Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade kills an Israeli border guard and wounds three others at the Erez Crossing in Gaza.
Hours later, an Israeli airstrike kills Hamas co-founder Abdel Azziz al-Rantisi, who had assumed leadership of Hamas after Yassin's death. Source: Conal Urquhart, "Israeli Missile Attack Kills New Hamas Chief," *Guardian* (London), April 18, 2004, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/apr/18/israel>.
- **On March 14, Hamas and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claim responsibility for two attacks at the Israeli port of Ashdod that collectively 10 Israelis.**
On March 22, an Israeli airstrike kills Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin. Sources: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>; James Bennet, "Leader of Hamas Killed by Missile in Israeli Strike," *New York Times*, March 22, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/22/world/leader-of-hamas-killed-by-missile-in-israeli-strike.html>.
- **On August 19, a suicide bomber blows up a bus killing at least 20 Israelis.**
Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claim responsibility. On August 21, Israel kills Hamas leader Ismail Abu Shanab. On August 23, the United States freezes the assets of six Hamas leaders, including Ahmed Yassin, and five international charities that aid Hamas. Source: James Bennet, "With Cease-Fire Crumbling, Israel Refuses to Suspend Raids Against Palestinians," *New York Times*, August 24, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/24/world/with-cess-fire-crumbling-israel-refuses-to-suspend-raids-against-palestinians.html>.
- **June 12, 2003:** A Hamas suicide bomber disguised as an ultra-orthodox Jew blows up a Jerusalem bus, killing 16 Israelis.
Source: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>.
- **March 27, 2002:** Twenty-five-year-old Abdel-Basset Odeh, disguised as a woman, blows himself up at the Park Hotel in the Israeli city of Netanya, killing 30 people and wounding nearly 150 more during a Passover Seder in an attack claimed by Hamas.
The bombing comes as the Arab League meets to discuss its Arab Peace Initiative, which Hamas had rejected. Two days later, Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield to eliminate terrorist strongholds in the West Bank by retaking PA-held territories. Sources: Joel Brinkley, "Mideast Turmoil: Mideast Bomb Kills At Least 19 in Israel as Arabs Meet Over Peace Plan," *New York Times*, March 28, 2002, <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/28/world/mideast-turmoil-mideast-bomb-kills-least-19-israel-arabs-meet-over-peace-plan.html>; "Terrorist Attack against the Park Hotel in Netanya (2002)," Israel Security Agency, accessed August 5, 2014, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/History/Affairs/Pages/theParkHotelInNetanya.aspx>; "Operation Defensive Shield (2002)," Ynet, March 12, 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3685678,00.html>.
- **Jordan's King Abdullah closes Hamas's headquarters in that country.**
Source: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>.
- **- : A series of Hamas suicide bombings in Israel kill more than 50 people.**
Source: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>.
- **February 25, 1996:** Twin Hamas bus bombings in Jerusalem kill 40 people, including American students Sara Duker and Matt Eisenfeld.
Hamas claims responsibility. In 2006, the Duker and Eisenfeld families win a \$327 million settlement in a U.S. court battle accusing Iran of sponsoring the 1996 Hamas bus bombings. Source: Rachel Gottlieb, "Parents Of Two Bombing Victims Take On Iran," *Hartford Courant*, February 9, 1999, http://articles.courant.com/1999-02-09/news/9902090099_1_gaza-strip-bombing-killed.
- **January 5, 1996:** Israel assassinates Yahya Ayyash, aka "The Engineer," who built bombs used in a number of Hamas attacks.
Hamas and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat hail Ayyash as a "martyr." Source: Joel Greenberg, "Arafat Accuses Israel of Killing a Palestinian Bomb Maker," *New York Times*, January 8, 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/08/world/arafat-accuses-israel-of-killing-a-palestinian-bomb-maker.html>.
- **April 6, 1994:** Hamas dispatches its first suicide bomber against Israeli civilians.
Nineteen-year-old Ra'id Zaqarna drives up alongside the No. 348 bus in Afula, Israel, and detonates his explosives, killing eight and wounding 44. Hamas claims the new tactic is in response to the February 25 massacre of 29 Palestinians at Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque by radical Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein. Source: Clyde Haberman, "Arab Car Bomber Kills 8 in Israel, 44 Are Wounded," *New York Times*, April 7, 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/07/world/arab-car-bomber-kills-8-in-israel-44-are-wounded.html>.
- **September 13, 1993:** Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat sign the Oslo Accords in Washington, D.C.
Hamas rejects the Accords, refusing to recognize the State of Israel. Sources: "Oslo explained," Al Jazeera, September 13, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/9/13/oslo-accords-explained.html>; Ghazi Hamad, "Walking a tight rope - Hamas and the Oslo Accords," Palestine Report, September 17, 2003, <http://www.palestinerreport.ps/article.php?article=24>.
- **April 17, 1993:** Hamas rigs a car to explode at a restaurant near the Israeli settlement of Mehola in the West Bank.
The explosion kills two Arabs and wounds eight Israeli soldiers and an Arab civilian. Source: "Car Bomb in West Bank Kills 2 Arabs; 8 Israelis Wounded," *New York Times*, April 17, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/17/world/car-bomb-in-west-bank-kills-2-arabs-8-israelis-wounded.html>.
- **An Israeli court convicts Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin of ordering Hamas members to kidnap and kill two Israeli soldiers.**
Source: "Timeline: The Evolution of Hamas," CNN, December 30, 2008, <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/meast/12/30/hamas.profile/>.
- **August 18, 1988:** Hamas publishes its official charter calling for the destruction of the State of Israel and its replacement with an Islamic state

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of Palestine.

The charter also calls for Muslims to “fight the Jews (killing the Jews)” before the arrival of Judgment Day. Source: “The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement,” Avalon Project, Yale Law School, accessed December 26, 2014, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

- **December 14, 1987:** Hamas issues its first manifesto, which emphasizes the spiritual imperative of Hamas’s mission: “Our sons and youths who love the eternal life more than our enemies love this life... Our people know the way of sacrifice and martyrdom and are generous in this regard.” Source: Paola Caridi, *Hamas: From Resistance to Government*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2012), 53.
- **December 9, 1987:** The Political Directorate of the Muslim Brotherhood meets in the home of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who creates a local political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood called *Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya* (Hamas), the Islamic Resistance Movement. Source: Jonathan Masters, “Hamas,” Council on Foreign Relations, November 27, 2012, <http://www.cfr.org/israel/hamas/p8968>.

Hamas

Violent history:

Violent activities:

Hamas maintains that “all types of legitimate resistance are practiced to end the oppressions and injustices imposed by Israel” and that it is Hamas’s right to “resist with all means, including armed resistance, guaranteed by divine and international laws,” according to its English-language website.¹⁰⁹ Hamas has employed various violent tactics against Israeli military and civilian targets.

In May 2017, Hamas unveiled a new political platform that continued to call for “armed resistance” as Hamas’s primary strategy to liberate all of Palestine from the river to the sea.¹¹⁰

Suicide Bombings

Hamas began using suicide bombings as a tactic against Israeli citizens on April 6, 1994, when a suicide bomber operating on behalf of Hamas drove alongside a bus in Afula, Israel, and blew up his car, killing eight people.¹¹¹ Hamas claimed at the time that the new tactic was in response to the February 25 massacre of 29 Palestinians at Hebron’s Ibrahimi Mosque by radical Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein.¹¹²

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Hamas has continued to dispatch suicide bombers to kill Israeli civilian and military targets, collectively killing hundreds of people. A 2007 study in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* found that Hamas was responsible for roughly 40 percent of suicide attacks during the Second Intifada, which collectively killed more than 1,000 people.¹¹³ Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal reportedly banned the tactic in 2005, but a music video imploring the return of suicide bombings reportedly aired on Hamas television in February 2016.¹¹⁴

Second Intifada

Between September 2000 and March 2004, Hamas carried out 425 terrorist attacks in Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. This included 52 suicide bombings, which killed 377 people and wounded 2,076 civilians and soldiers.¹¹⁵ Other attacks included shootings, stabbings, mortars, and bombings.¹¹⁶

Beneath the Gaza-Egypt border

Hamas has built a network of tunnels beneath the Gaza-Israel border for use in cross-border attacks, such as the June 2006 raid that resulted in the deaths of two soldiers and the abduction of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.¹¹⁷ Israel claimed to have destroyed 32 of these tunnels during its 2014 war with Hamas. The tunnels reportedly cost Hamas \$100 million to build.¹¹⁸

In August 2015, Hamas released a propaganda video of its members digging underground tunnels beneath Gaza, fighting Israeli soldiers, and a simulated takeover of an IDF base.¹¹⁹ In April 2016, Israeli media reported that Hamas had employed over 1,000 people to rebuild the tunnel infrastructure. Hamas was reportedly spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per month to rebuild the tunnels.¹²⁰ According to Ismail Haniyeh in January 2016, Hamas fighters “are digging twice as much as the number of tunnels dug in Vietnam.”¹²¹ A series of tunnel collapses in early 2016 killed several Hamas workers. Some Hamas operatives have blamed Israel for the collapses.¹²² Israel is reportedly working with the United States to develop a system dubbed the “Underground Iron Dome” to detect and destroy the underground tunnels.¹²³

In early April 2016, Israel blocked private cement transfers to Gaza after claiming that Hamas had been diverting shipments for its own use, likely the reconstruction of its underground tunnel network. Hamas threatened the situation will “explode” if Israel doesn’t lift the ban. The United Nations’ Middle East envoy condemned “those who seek to gain through the deviation of materials” as “stealing from their own people and adding to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza.”¹²⁴

Military capabilities & arsenal:

Prior to 1996, Hamas’s arsenal included only a few AK-47 rifles and a single rocket-propelled grenade. That year, Ahmed Jaabari began to overhaul Hamas’s artillery, according to Reuters. Jaabari took command of Hamas’s armed wing in 2002. Israel assassinated Jaabari in 2012.¹²⁵ In September 2013, the Qassam Brigades held a military parade displaying machine guns, sniper rifles, anti-tank RPGs, and revealing for the first time Hamas’s possession of SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles.¹²⁶ In July 2015, the group created a military training camp for 25,000 new recruits, some

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as young as 15.¹²⁷

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) estimated that Hamas had approximately 10,000 rockets in its arsenal at the beginning of July 2014.¹²⁸ By the end of that month, Hamas had fired more than 2,600 rockets at Israel, while the Israeli military estimated it destroyed an additional 3,000 rockets.¹²⁹ The IDF estimated Hamas still had approximately 5,000 rockets left.¹³⁰ By the end of the 2014 war, Hamas had fired approximately 4,600 rockets into Israel. Israeli intelligence estimated in March 2016 that Hamas had restored its rocket arsenal to its pre-2014 war levels of approximately 12,000.¹³¹

Hamas has relied on underground tunnels beneath Gaza's borders with Egypt and Israel. During Hamas's 50-day war with Israel during the summer of 2014, Hamas used these tunnels to stage raids inside Israel. Many of the tunnels into Israel were destroyed during the war, but Hamas has since sought to rebuild them. The Israeli military revealed in February 2016 that Hamas was "investing considerable resources" into rebuilding the tunnels.¹³² By March 2016, Israeli authorities estimated that Hamas had rebuilt at least 10 tunnels into Israel. Almost a dozen of these tunnels collapsed on the Hamas fighters digging them in early 2016, killing at least 10 Hamas members.¹³³

Hamas also has as many as 1,200 tunnels beneath the Gaza-Egypt border. The tunnels are used to smuggle commodities as well as weapons into Gaza.¹³⁴ In September 2015, Egypt began flooding many of these tunnels to cut off Hamas smuggling.¹³⁵ Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz confirmed in February 2016 that Israel had requested Egypt act against the tunnels.¹³⁶ Hamas has also reportedly used the Egyptian tunnels to transport aid to ISIS's Sinai Province group.¹³⁷

As of October 2017, Hamas reportedly maintained an armed force of 25,000.¹³⁸ Hamas's armed faction remained a point of contention in reconciliation negotiations with Fatah, which has demanded that Hamas disarm. Hamas agreed to halt all violence against Israel as part of the October agreement, but Hamas and Fatah delayed further discussion of Hamas's armed faction.¹³⁹

In 2020, Gaza militants began utilizing a new tactic called balloon bombs, sending clusters of balloons floating over the Gaza-Israel border with rudimentary explosives attached. Some of the balloons carry signs such as "Happy birthday" or "I Love You" to draw onlookers. Approximately one-third of the balloons crossing the border carry explosives while the rest act as decoys, according to Israeli officials. Balloons have included homemade explosives, grenades, and RPG warheads. Gaza militants have praised the balloons because they are inexpensive and regional winds will carry them farther into Israel.¹⁴⁰ The balloons reportedly have the support of all Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip, including Hamas. As of September 2020, the balloons had not caused any casualties but had resulted in multiple fires in Israeli communities near the Gaza border.¹⁴¹ In addition to the balloons, Hamas has continued to expand its rocket arsenal. In September 2020, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh announced Hamas had rockets capable of striking Tel Aviv and beyond from the Gaza Strip.¹⁴²

Violent Activities:

- **1993:** Hamas rigs a car to explode at a restaurant near the Israeli settlement of Mehola in the West Bank. The explosion kills two Arabs and wounds eight Israeli soldiers and an Arab civilian.¹⁴³
- **April 6, 1994:** Hamas dispatches its first suicide bomber against Israeli civilians. 19-year-old Ra'id Zaqarna drives up alongside the No. 348 bus in Afula, Israel, and detonates his explosives, killing eight and wounding 44.¹⁴⁴ Hamas claims the new tactic is in response to the Goldstein massacre.
- **February 25, 1996:** Twin Hamas bus bombings in Jerusalem kill 40 people, including American students Sara Duker and Matt Eisenfeld. Hamas claims responsibility.¹⁴⁵
- **February 1996 - March 1996:** A series of Hamas suicide bombings in Israel kill more than 50 people. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat condemns the bombings and the PA arrests 140 Hamas suspects.¹⁴⁶
- **September 2000 - March 2004:** Hamas carries out 425 terrorist attacks, including 52 suicide bombings, which collectively leave 377 people dead and 2,076 civilians and soldiers wounded.¹⁴⁷ A 2007 study in the *Journal Of Economic Perspectives* found that Hamas was responsible for 40 percent of suicide attacks during the Second Intifada, which collectively killed more than 1,000 people.¹⁴⁸
 - **June 1, 2001:** A Hamas suicide bomber blows up outside the Dolphinarium discotheque in Tel Aviv, killing 21 people and wounding 120.¹⁴⁹
 - **August 9, 2001:** Ahlam Ahmad al-Tamimi drives Izz al-Din Shuheil al-Masri from the West Bank village of Aqabah and to the Sbarro

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- pizza restaurant in Jerusalem where he sets off his explosives, killing 15 and wounding 130. Two U.S. nationals are among the fatalities and four U.S. nationals are among the wounded. Hamas claims responsibility. Tamimi reports on the bombing for Palestinian televised news. In 2003, Tamimi is sentenced to 16 life sentences for her role in the bombing. In October 2011, Tamimi is freed with more than 1,000 other prisoners and deported to Jordan after a prisoner swap for captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit.¹⁵⁰
- **March 27, 2002:** Twenty-five-year-old Abdel-Basset Odeh, disguised as a woman, blows himself up at the Park Hotel in the Israeli city of Netanya, killing 30 and wounding almost 150 others during a Passover Seder. Hamas claims responsibility.¹⁵¹
 - **November 1, 2002:** A Hamas suicide bomber blows up the No. 20 Egged bus in Jerusalem, killing 11 people and wounding 50 others.¹⁵²
 - **June 11, 2003:** A Hamas suicide bomber disguised as an ultra-Orthodox Jew blows up the No. 14A Egged bus in Jerusalem, killing 17 people and wounding over 100.¹⁵³
 - **August 19, 2003:** A suicide bomber blows up the No. 2 Egged bus in Jerusalem, killing at least 23 people and wounding over 130. Hamas and Islamic Jihad claim responsibility.¹⁵⁴
 - **March 14, 2004:** Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claim responsibility for a double attack at the Israeli port of Ashdod that kills 10 Israelis.¹⁵⁵
- **2001-2008:** From 2001 through May 2008, Hamas launches more than 3,000 Qassam rockets and 2,500 mortar attacks at Israeli targets.¹⁵⁶
 - **2005-2006:** According to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, 757 rockets land in Israel from Gaza between the 2005 disengagement and June 2006.¹⁵⁷
 - **June 25, 2006:** A group of Palestinian terrorists from multiple groups, including Hamas, cross the Gaza border into Israel using an underground tunnel and attack an IDF military outpost, killing two soldiers and taking 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit hostage.¹⁵⁸ Hamas denies participation.¹⁵⁹
 - **July 2006:** The kidnapping of Gilad Shalit leads to Israel's Operation Summer Rains, during which Hamas hits Israel with hundreds of rockets.¹⁶⁰
 - **2007:** Hamas's assumption of power in the Gaza does not moderate the group's ideology or actions, and the year begins with Hamas rocket fire into Israel.¹⁶¹ The group also remains at odds with Fatah, and the two factions violently clash:
 - **January:** Factional fighting claims the lives of 33 Palestinians, and members of the Hamas-led Interior Ministry's police force, the "Executive Force," kill a Fatah commander and his bodyguards in his Gaza home. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas outlaws the Hamas-controlled Interior Ministry's police force, calling for its 6,000 members to become part of the Fatah-loyal PA security forces.¹⁶² Hamas perceives this as "a green light to those who seek to shed the blood of the Executive Force members," according to Interior Ministry spokesman Khaled Abu Helal, who adds that the Executive Force will "deal firmly" with any attackers.¹⁶³
 - **March:** Despite the announcement of a unity government in March, Hamas and Palestinian Authority forces continue tit-for-tat battles.¹⁶⁴
 - **May:** During May alone, Hamas claims responsibility for approximately 300 Qassam rockets launched against Israel.¹⁶⁵
 - **June:** Hamas fighters overrun the Palestinian Authority's Gaza offices and forcibly expel Fatah from the strip.¹⁶⁶ The international community condemns Hamas's coup, but the terror group promises to remain in power.
 - **December 2008 – January 2009:** On December 27, in response to Hamas rocket fire, Israel launches Operation Cast Lead, a three-week-long military offensive in the Gaza Strip. The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that Hamas operatives regularly launch rockets into Israel "from, within or near residential and public buildings, including schools, mosques and hospitals.... [as well as] from densely populated areas and protected sites." Israel accuses Hamas of using its citizens as human shields, firing rockets from populated areas, and taking cover in civilian infrastructure. On January 18, Hamas and other Palestinian groups fighting in Gaza declare a one-week ceasefire. Sporadic rockets attacks and Israeli reprisals continue after the declarations.¹⁶⁷
 - **2011:** During the year, Hamas kidnaps approximately 20 Palestinian civilians and 30 political party members in Gaza. In March, a Hamas-led IED attack wounds a government employee in Jerusalem; and in April, Hamas fires an anti-tank missile at a school bus, killing an Israeli teenager.¹⁶⁸
 - **2012:** Hamas launches more than 750 rockets into Israeli territory before Israel launches a major retaliatory ground operation in November.¹⁶⁹
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Hamas

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- **2013:** *The Times of Israel* reports that Hamas has shifted from smuggling weapons into Gaza via Egypt and has developed a domestic industry capable of manufacturing rockets that are able to reach targets up to 50 miles away, including Tel Aviv.¹⁷⁰
 - **2014:** Hamas continues to call for violence against Israelis, while firing—or allowing others to fire—rockets into Israel from Gaza. Hamas members also continue trying to carry out terror attacks in Israel.
 - **February:** Israeli forces arrest a 15-member Hamas cell suspected of planting explosives along an Israeli highway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.¹⁷¹
 - **June-August:** Following the murder of three Israeli teenagers, for which Israel holds Hamas responsible, Hamas and other extremist groups resume rocket fire from Gaza into Israel. Israel responds with air bombardments and a subsequent ground invasion of Gaza. Despite attempts to negotiate a ceasefire, Hamas violates each ceasefire shortly after they come into force.¹⁷²
 - **July 7, 2014:** The Qassam Brigades launch dozens of mortars, Qassam rockets, and Grad rockets at Israel. A Brigades spokesman tells *Al-Monitor* that Hamas has set numerous traps for Israeli soldiers in Gaza, while the group releases a video in which it prepares rockets.¹⁷³
 - **August:** A 72-hour ceasefire goes into effect on August 5. Hamas has fired more than 2,200 rockets into Israel during the three-month conflict and is accused of launching attacks from civilian areas and encouraging Gaza's civilians to ignore Israeli evacuation warnings, effectively turning Gaza's population into human shields. The Israel Defense Forces destroys 32 tunnels underneath the Gaza-Israel border that Hamas uses to move terrorists and weapons.¹⁷⁴ Shortly before the ceasefire goes into effect, an Indian television reporter records footage of Hamas preparing and firing rockets outside of a hotel where foreign journalists are staying. According to NDTV, the report airs after its crew leaves Gaza because Hamas "has not taken very kindly to any reporting of its rockets being fired. But just as we reported the devastating consequences of Israel's offensive on Gaza's civilians, it is equally important to report on how Hamas places those very civilians at risk by firing rockets deep from the heart of civilian zones."¹⁷⁵ This follows other reports that Hamas has fired rockets from civilian areas, such as al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City,¹⁷⁶ while threatening journalists to deter them from covering such activities.
 - **July 9, 2015:** The Israeli government reveals Hamas is holding captive two Israeli citizens in Gaza. Avraham Mengistu, an Ethiopian-Israeli in his 20s, crossed into Gaza on September 7, 2014. The government did not reveal the identity of the other man except that he is an Arab-Israeli. An unidentified Hamas member says Hamas released Mengistu when they realized he was not a soldier and he left through a tunnel to Egypt. Mengistu remains in captivity.¹⁷⁷
 - **July 28, 2015:** Jordan state security court sentences 12 to prison for a Hamas plot to carry out violent attacks in the West Bank. Four of the defendants were sentenced in absentia to 15-year sentences. The other eight received sentences of one to five years. The defendants reportedly received training in Jordan and Gaza on bomb-making.¹⁷⁸
 - **August 26, 2015:** Hamas posts a video online of its members digging underground tunnels beneath Gaza, fighting Israeli soldiers, and a simulated takeover of an IDF base.¹⁷⁹
 - **April 1, 2016:** The Qassam Brigades releases photos of four Israelis it claims to be holding in Gaza. The photos are of two living soldiers and the bodies of Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul, both of whom were killed during the 2014 war. Hamas does not identify the living captives. Hamas also denies that it is negotiating with Israel for their return.¹⁸⁰
 - **April 18, 2016:** A bomb explodes on board a Jerusalem bus, wounding 21 people in an attack later claimed by Hamas. On April 20, a 19-year-old Palestinian man wounded in the explosion dies from his wounds.¹⁸¹
 - **May 29, 2018:** Hamas and PIJ fire at least 28 mortars at communities in southern Israel. The Israeli military responds by bombing Gaza facilities belonging to Hamas and PIJ. There are no casualties reported on either side. It is reportedly the largest confrontation between Hamas and Israel since the 2014 war.¹⁸²
 - **October 7, 2018:** A Palestinian gunman attacks the Barkan Industrial Park in the West Bank, killing two and wounding one. The attacker, identified as industrial park employee Ashraf Naalwa, reportedly binds two Israeli employees and shoots them at close range, killing them both. Naalwa flees afterward. On December 13, Israeli forces in the West Bank locate Naalwa, who dies in an ensuing firefight. After his death, Hamas's Qassam Brigades identifies Naalwa as a member and claim responsibility for the attack.¹⁸³
 - **November 12-14, 2018:** Hamas and PIJ fire more than 450 rockets into Israel, killing one and wounding dozens. After Israel responds with airstrikes in Gaza, the groups agree to a ceasefire on November 13. Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman resigns on November 14 in protest of the ceasefire, briefly destabilizing Israel's governing coalition. Hamas claims the move as a victory.¹⁸⁴
 - **December 9, 2018:** A drive-by shooting at a bus stop in the Ofra settlement in the West Bank wounds seven, including a 30-weeks pregnant
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Hamas

woman. Doctors perform an emergency delivery, but the baby dies later that week. On December 12, Israeli forces locate the gunman, Saleh Barghouti, who dies during an arrest raid in the West Bank. Hamas's Qassam Brigades claim responsibility for the attack and praise Barghouti as a martyr.¹⁸⁵

- **May 3-5, 2019:** On May 3, PIJ snipers wound two Israeli soldiers along the Gaza border during weekly protests. Israeli forces retaliate with a strike on a Hamas post near the border, killing two. PIJ and Hamas launch almost 700 rockets into Israel over the course of three days, killing at least four Israeli civilians and wounding dozens more. Most of the rockets are intercepted or fall in open areas, but at least 50 rockets reportedly hit Israeli population centers. Israel retaliates with airstrikes on more than 350 targets in Gaza. The airstrikes kill at least 29, including fighters from Hamas and PIJ, as well as civilians, according to Hamas, though Israeli military officials say some Palestinian civilians were actually killed by misfired Hamas rockets. It is reportedly the most violent conflict between the two sides since the 2014 war. PIJ threatens to launch a full-scale war with Israel. On May 5, Israel restarts its tactic of targeted assassinations after a five-year lull and kills Hamed Ahmed al-Khodary, a senior Hamas finance official accused of funneling Iranian money to PIJ and Hamas. Egypt negotiates a new ceasefire that goes into effect that night. Hamas claims that though this round of violence is over, the conflict will continue.¹⁸⁶
 - **March – June 2020:** Ahead of Israel's parliamentary elections, militants in the Gaza Strip begin sending explosives-filled balloons floating across the Gaza-Israel border. Approximately one-third of the balloons carry some type of explosive device while the rest act as decoys.¹⁸⁷
 - **August 2020:** On August 6, militants in Gaza resume sending clusters of balloon bombs over the Gaza-Israel border. On August 8, Lebanese media reports that Hamas and other factions informed Egyptian mediators that the period of calm along the Gaza-Israel border would soon end as militants called for an "escalation." On August 9, militants launch a rocket toward southern Israel. Israel's anti-missile system intercepts the rocket. On August 10, Hamas launches several rockets into the sea as a warning to Israel. On August 11, Israel closes the Karam Abu Salem commercial border crossing between Israel and Gaza. A spokesman calls the continued balloon bombs a message of anger to Israel over conditions in Gaza. The balloons do not result in casualties but cause several fires in Israeli communities near the Gaza border. Israel launches strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza in response to the balloon attacks. Between August 12 and August 30, Israel strikes 100 Hamas targets, according to the Israeli military. On August 31, Hamas and Israel agree to a new ceasefire brokered by Qatar, the Egyptian military, and the United Nations.¹⁸⁸
 - **December 2020:** On December 29, PIJ announces widescale military drills, reportedly organized by Iran, in preparation for a future conflict with Israel. PIJ launches eight rockets into the sea off of Gaza's coast. The drill includes Hamas and smaller armed groups.¹⁸⁹
 - **May 2021:**
 - **May 9:** As Israelis rally in Jerusalem on to mark Jerusalem Day, celebrating the 1967 capture of east Jerusalem from Jordan, riots break out on the Temple Mount as hundreds of Palestinians reportedly throw rocks and firecrackers at security forces. Israeli police storm the Temple Mount in response. The protests coincide with an expected Israeli supreme court decision on the eviction of Palestinians from their homes in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah. The decision is delayed because of the rioting. Haniyeh writes to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei asking the Muslim world to support Hamas.¹⁹⁰
 - **May 10:** Palestinians in Jerusalem throw rocks at an Israeli car, causing the driver to lose control. Hamas launches more than 150 rockets from the Gaza Strip toward Israeli border communities, with some reaching as far as Jerusalem and the nearby settlement of Beit Shemesh. One rocket strikes a house near Jerusalem, lightly wounding those inside. Hamas claims responsibility for the rocket fire, saying it is "in retaliation to [Israel's] crimes and aggression on the holy city and brutality against our people in Sheikh Jarrah and Al Aqsa Mosque." Hamas demands Israel remove its forces from both the Temple Mount and the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and sets a deadline of that evening. PIJ joins in launching rockets and posts a video online of an anti-tank missile striking an Israeli car near Gaza, wounding one. In response, Israel launches Operation Guardians of the Wall, launching airstrikes on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. At least nine people are killed and two wounded in Gaza. Israeli authorities claim the strikes killed eight Hamas operatives while the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza claimed the Israeli strikes killed 21 people, including 10 children. Hamas spokesman Abu Ubaida warns Hamas will increase its attacks if Israel increases theirs. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken calls for an immediate end to rocket attacks on Israel. Rocket attacks from Gaza continue into May 11 as the death toll rises to two Israelis and 26 in Gaza. At least 30 are wounded in southern Israel.¹⁹¹
 - **May 11:** Hamas claims to launch 137 rockets within a five-minute span toward the Israeli cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod, just south of Tel Aviv. Israel claims one-third of the rockets from Gaza had fallen short and landed inside the coastal enclave, resulting in increased Palestinian casualties. An Israeli strike in Gaza kills a Hamas commander and three PIJ commanders. The strike primarily targets Sameh Fahim Al-Mamlouk, a senior PIJ military commander. The other two PIJ fighters killed are field commanders who oversaw the group's rocket attacks. Rockets strike homes in the Israeli city of Ashkelon, killing two and wounding dozens of others, marking the first Israeli fatalities in the conflict. A rocket strike outside a home in Rishon Lezion kills one inside and a neighbor dies from a heart attack after the strike.¹⁹²
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- **May 12:** Hamas and PIJ continue to fire rockets toward Israeli cities. Israeli strikes reportedly kill 16 Hamas militants, including senior commanders. Rockets target Sderot and other Israeli communities near the Gaza border. A rocket strikes a home in Sderot, wounding three. A Kornet anti-tank guided missile strikes a Jeep in Israel's Netiv Ha'Asara, north of Gaza, killing a soldier and wounding three others. Hamas claims to fire 130 rockets in a single barrage. Israeli strikes kill six Hamas military commanders. Israeli operations also kill 13 members of Hamas's weapons manufacturing staff. Israel strikes a building in southern Gaza allegedly housing Hamas's military intelligence offices. Three senior Hamas officials, Gaza Brigade commander Bassam Issa, Khan Younis Brigade commander Rafa Salama, and Hamas intelligence chief Mohammed Yazouri, are also killed. Israeli media reports more than 1,200 rockets have been launched at Israel since the start of fighting on Monday, though 200 fell within Gaza. Israel's missile defense systems reportedly intercept 80 to 90 percent of the rockets. Israel destroys Hamas's central bank and internal security headquarters in Gaza. Moussa Abu Marzouk reportedly tells Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov Hamas is ready for a ceasefire if Israel ends its military campaign and the international community pressures Israel to end "military actions" at the al-Aqsa Mosque.¹⁹³
 - **May 13-14:** Israel strikes at least five Hamas cells preparing to launch anti-tank guided missiles. Israel's targets the home of Hamas military commander Iyad Tayib, which the IDF says was being used for terrorist purposes. A rocket strikes a building in Tel Aviv, wounding five Israeli civilians. Hamas spokesman Abu Ubaida claims Hamas has launched rocket strikes on Israel bigger than any seen since the 1948 Independence War. Rocket fire kills an Israeli soldier and a 5-year-old in Israel. As of May 13, at least 46 Israelis are wounded and seven are killed since the beginning of the conflict. In Gaza, the death toll reaches at least 109. Hamas and PIJ confirm 20 deaths between the two groups. In those four days, Israel claims to strike more than 700 Hamas targets in Gaza, including 50 Hamas fighters and 10 senior commanders. Hamas begins sending armed drones into Israel while continuing to target southern Israel, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem with rockets. The drones are either shot down or blown up in the air. That night, Israel mobilizes air and ground forces to strike inside Gaza. The Israeli military denies it is an invasion, insisting its forces are firing artillery from the Israeli side of the border. Egypt sends mediators to Israel to discuss a ceasefire. Hamas rejects a proposal for a three-hour lull in the fighting to further discussions. Abu Ubaida says Hamas views a potential Israeli ground invasion as an opportunity "to increase our catch" of dead or captive soldiers. Overnight, Israel conducts airstrikes on some 150 targets around Gaza while infantry near the Gaza-Israel border—but staying on the Israeli side—strike nearby Hamas positions. The IDF claims to damage several kilometers of Hamas's underground tunnels. According to some reports, Israel intentionally leaked misinformation of a ground invasion to draw Hamas into positions around and beneath the border for aerial bombardment.¹⁹⁴
 - **May 14:** Rioters from Lebanon approach the Israeli border and are repelled by Israeli forces. The rockets are fired from Syria, one falls into the sea or open areas of the Golan. There are no injuries or immediate claims of responsibility. IDF aircraft target a PIJ anti-tank missile operative, two Hamas anti-tank missile positions, and a Hamas surface-to-surface rocket position in Gaza. As of nightfall on May 14, more than 2,000 rockets have been fired toward Israel in five days of fighting. Approximately half of those projectiles are intercepted while 350 fall inside of Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry claims 126 Palestinians have been killed in five days of fighting, including 31 minors, while 950 are wounded. Israeli casualties rise to eight dead, including two children. Hamas reportedly passes messages to Israel that it is interested in a ceasefire. Israeli media reports increasing chances of a ceasefire over the weekend.¹⁹⁵
 - **May 15:** Hamas and PIJ continue to launch missiles toward Israeli cities. An Israeli airstrike destroys a building in Gaza hosting the offices of the Associated Press, Al Jazeera, and other media outlets. Israel accuses Hamas of using civilian infrastructure, including the building hosting press offices, as shields. Israel presents evidence that Hamas military intelligence units were operating in the building. Hamas launches dozens of missiles and rockets towards Tel Aviv, Beersheba, Ashdod, and Sderot, killing one in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan and raising the death toll in Israel to 10. Militants fire at least 120 rockets that night at southern Israel. Almost 300 rockets are fired throughout the day, about 40 of which fall inside Gaza.¹⁹⁶
 - **May 16:** Israel targets the home of Yahya Sinwar in Khan Yunis. He is reportedly unharmed. Militants fire at least 150 rockets toward southern Israel, striking buildings in Ashkelon and Ashdod, including a synagogue. At least 66 people are wounded in the strikes. Two rockets destroy five cars and a house in Ashkelon, while another lands near a supermarket in Beersheba. No injuries are reported in those strikes. Israeli airstrikes on Gaza continue, killing at least two and wounding 25, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. Israeli airstrikes target a Hamas tunnel system, which collapses and brings down houses above, killing 42. Israel says civilian casualties are unintentional. Since the beginning of the conflict, at least 192 have been killed in Gaza and 1,125 injured. Hamas and PIJ have launched more than 2,000 rockets and missiles since the beginning of the conflict. The United States and United Nations say they are working on a ceasefire agreement. The head of Israel's southern command says Israel could target Sinwar, Deif, and other top Hamas leaders.¹⁹⁷
 - **May 17:** The French and Egyptian governments issue a joint call for a ceasefire. U.S. officials reportedly tell Israeli leaders to begin winding down operations in Gaza. Israel kills Hussam Abu Harbeed, PIJ's northern division commander, in Gaza.¹⁹⁸
 - **May 18-19:** After a six-hour lull in rocket fire, Gaza militants continue to launch rockets toward Israeli cities. Hamas threatens to strike Tel Aviv. On May 18, a mortar shell strikes a packing house in Israel's Eshkol region, killing two Thai foreign workers and wounding 10 others. Rockets also target the Erez pedestrian crossing and Keren Shalom crossing into Gaza, wounding one Israeli soldier and forcing
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both crossings to close. The crossings are used to bring food and aid into Gaza. Hamas claims to fire multiple rockets toward six Israeli air force bases overnight. The Israeli military says there is no indication any of its bases were struck by rockets. At least 50 rockets are fired toward Israel, 10 of which fall within Gaza. The military strikes a PIJ cell preparing a rocket attack from central Gaza. The IDF claims to kill at least 10 members of Hamas and PIJ in overnight airstrikes in Khan Younis and Rafah in Gaza. The IDF also strikes several targets overnight in the upscale Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, where many Hamas commanders reportedly live. Israeli planes also target Hamas's network of underground tunnels in Gaza. Israeli media reveals the military has targeted Deif at least twice during the conflict, but he escaped both attempts. In Iran, IRGC commander Hossein Salami addresses a group of anti-Israel protesters in Tehran, declaring Iran will continue its "unwavering support for the Palestinian people." In Iraq, a spokesman for the Iran-backed militia Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba declares his group is ready to join with Hamas in confronting Israel. As of May 19, Hamas and PIJ have launched almost 3,700 rockets since the beginning of the conflict. The fighting kills at least 217 in Gaza and wounds 1,400, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry. The Israeli military says at least 160 Hamas and PIJ operatives have been killed since the start of the fighting. According to Israel's Magen David Adom, the fighting has killed 12 in Israel and wounded more than 330.¹⁹⁹

- **May 20:** IRGC Quds Force commander Ismail Ghaani writes to Deif to praise Hamas's actions during the conflict. Ghaani addresses Deif as a "living martyr" and writes he is confident of Hamas's victory. After an eight-hour lull in rocket fire overnight, Hamas and PIJ renew their campaign with salvos targeting Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beersheba, and neighboring communities. Rockets strike homes in Ashkelon and Ashdod, wounding one. An anti-tank missile strikes an empty military bus in southern Israel, wounding one. The Israeli military claims to strike at least three homes in Gaza's Khan Younis and Rafah belonging to Hamas commanders. As of May 20, Hamas and PIJ have launched more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel. Hamas and PIJ claim only 20 of their fighters have been killed in the fighting while Israel claims it has killed 130 fighters from both groups. An Egyptian intelligence official says a ceasefire is likely by the end of the week. Israel's security cabinet approves a truce for "quiet in exchange for quiet." A Hamas official confirms a truce will go into effect at 2 a.m. the following day.²⁰⁰
- **June 2021:** Ahead of a planned June 15 ultranationalist Israeli march in Jerusalem's Old City, Hamas calls on Palestinians to show "valiant resistance" and "rise up in the face of the occupier and resist it by all means to stop its crimes and arrogance." The march was originally scheduled for Jerusalem Day on May 10 but postponed because of the Gaza conflict. A Hamas spokesman calls the planned march "like an explosive that will cause a new campaign to protect Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to ignite." Egypt reportedly requests Hamas not cause an escalation that would embarrass Cairo. Hamas responds all options remain on the table, but escalation could be avoided "if the event doesn't get out of control."²⁰¹
 - **June 15-16:** Israeli soldiers clash with Palestinian protesters along the Gaza border. In Jerusalem, the march proceeds as planned as hundreds of Israeli ultranationalists parade through the Old City chanting nationalist slogans. Some also chant "Death to Arabs," which the Israeli government condemns. At the same time, Hamas launches incendiary balloons into southern Israel from Gaza, causing at least 20 fires. It is Hamas's first cross-border attack since a ceasefire ended 11 days of fighting in May. In response, Israel launches airstrikes against Hamas targets in the coastal strip on June 16. Israel claims to strike Hamas "military compounds ... used as facilities and meeting sites for terror operatives" in Hamas's Khan Yunis and Gaza Brigades. Palestinian media report some property damage but no casualties from the strikes. Hamas incendiary balloons start at least 24 fires. According to Egyptian mediators, Hamas is not interested in a major escalation.²⁰²
 - **June 17:** Hamas continues to send incendiary balloons into Israel, claiming they are a legitimate "popular action" against Israel and should not be considered a ceasefire violation. The balloons start at least eight fires in southern Israel's Eshkol and Sha'ar Hanegev regions. Moussa Abu Marzouk says Hamas could further escalate, but Hamas limits its strikes to the incendiary balloons. Israel targets Hamas rocket launcher sites and other military targets overnight. IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Aviv Kohavi warns Israeli military officials to prepare for another round of fighting with Hamas.²⁰³

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Hamas

Designations:

Designations by the U.S. Government:

August 29, 1995: The Department of the Treasury lists Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzouk as a Specially Designated Terrorist (SDT) under Executive Order 12947, prohibiting financial transactions between US persons or charities and the designated SDT.²⁰⁴

October 8, 1997: The Department of State lists Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This freezes any of the designated FTO's assets in U.S. financial institutions, bans admission of members to U.S., and bans providing "material support or resources" to the designated entity.²⁰⁷

March 18, 2010: The Department of the Treasury designates Al-Aqsa TV as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist pursuant to Executive Order 13224 as the station is controlled and financed by Hamas. According to Treasury, Al-Aqsa TV is "a primary Hamas media outlet and airs programs and music videos designed to recruit children to become Hamas armed fighters and suicide bombers upon reaching adulthood."²⁰⁹

January 24, 1995: The US Department of the Treasury designates Hamas a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization (SDTO) under, prohibiting financial transactions between US persons or charities and the designated SDTO.²⁰⁵ On this same date, the Department of the Treasury also lists Shaykh Ahmad Yasin (a.k.a. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin) as a Specially Designated Terrorist (SDT) under Executive Order 12947, prohibiting financial transactions between US persons or charities and the designated SDT.²⁰⁶

August 22, 2004: The Department of the Treasury lists Khalid Mishaal (a.k.a. Khaled Meshaal) as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order 13224, which blocks all property in the US or under possession or control of US persons, bans any property-related transactions by US persons or within US, including giving or receiving contributions to the entity.²⁰⁸

January 31, 2018: The Department of State and Department of the Treasury designate Ismail Haniyeh as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order 13224.²¹⁰

Designations by Foreign Governments and Organizations:

European Union— 15 member states froze Hamas' assets on September 11, 2003.²¹¹

New Zealand— listed the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades as a Terrorist Entity on October 11, 2011 under the Terrorism Suppression Act of 2002, which freezes the assets of terrorist entities and makes it a criminal offense to participate in or support the activities of the designated terrorist entity.²¹³

Canada—listed Hamas as a terrorist entity on November 27, 2002.²¹⁵

Israel—listed Hamas as a terrorist organization.²¹⁷ Designated the Gaza-based, Hamas-controlled Al-Aqsa TV station as a terrorist entity on March 6, 2019.²¹⁸

European Union— Office Journal of the European Union froze Hamas's European assets under Article 2(3) of Regulation (EC) No. 2580/2001 on December 21, 2005.²¹²

United Kingdom—listed the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades as a Terror Group under the Terrorism Act 2000 in March 2001.²¹⁴

Australia—listed the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades as a terrorist organization on November 9, 2003.²¹⁶

Japan—listed Hamas as a terrorist organization.²¹⁹

Hamas

Jordan—banned Hamas.²²⁰

Egypt—banned Hamas on March 4, 2014.²²¹ Egypt's Urgent Matters Court designated Hamas's armed wing a terrorist organization in January 2015 and Hamas as a terrorist group that February.²²² An appeals court canceled the designation in June 2015.²²³

Paraguay—announced the designation of Hamas as a global terrorist organization on August 19, 2019.²²⁴

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Hamas

Associations:

Ties to entities designated by the U.S. or foreign governments:

Terror Groups

[Hezbollah](#)

Hamas and Hezbollah have at times cooperated, though the groups have split somewhat over competing allegiances in the Syrian civil war. Despite tensions between Hamas and Hezbollah over the Syrian civil war, relations between the two groups are reportedly still good, a Hezbollah source told Al-Monitor in 2013.²²⁵

During the July 2014 conflict between Israel and Hamas, Hamas reportedly invited Hezbollah to join in its rocket campaign against Israel.²²⁶

In November 2015, leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah met in Beirut to discuss paramilitary coordination against Israel and ISIS.²²⁷ In January 2015, Hamas military leader Mohammed Deif reportedly called for Hezbollah and Hamas to unite in battling Israel.²²⁸ After the Gulf Cooperation Council designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization in March 2016, Hamas signed an Iranian statement of support for Hezbollah.²²⁹

[Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade](#)

Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade carried out several joint terrorist operations during the second intifada, including a March 2004 attack at the port of Ashdod that killed 10 Israelis,²³⁰ and a suicide bombing the following month at Gaza's Erez Crossing that killed a border guard and wounded three others.²³¹ The Brigade has also joined Hamas in launching rockets at Israel over the years, most recently during the July 2014 conflict.²³²

Hamas

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

On June 25, 2006, a group of Palestinian terrorists from multiple groups, including Hamas, crossed the Gaza border into Israel using an underground tunnel and attacked an IDF military outpost, killing two soldiers and taking 19-year-old Corporal Gilad Shalit hostage.²³³ Hamas denied any participation, but it was later revealed that the group—as well as members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad—were involved in the operation.²³⁴ Hamas and PIJ announced a formal agreement in 2012 to combine forces in their fight against Israel.²³⁵ The following year, the two groups announced plans to create a joint command and a new political vision for Gaza.²³⁶

PIJ and Hamas have since continued to coordinate politically and militarily.²³⁷

The two groups announced in December 2019 they would join forces against Israel in the next round of conflict with the Jewish state.²³⁸

ISIS

Hamas has reportedly used its underground tunnel system beneath the Gaza-Egypt border to transport aid to ISIS's Sinai-based affiliate, Wilayat Sinai.²³⁹ Hamas has also reportedly provided military training and medical aid to ISIS militants in the Sinai. In 2016, Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal called for a suspension of contacts with Wilayat Sinai as Hamas has moved to reconcile with Egypt. Despite this, the al-Qassam Brigades have continued their coordination with the ISIS affiliate.²⁴⁰

Israeli media reported in January 2017 that Wilayat Sinai had opened a media propaganda office in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has also reportedly continued to provide medical aid to wounded ISIS fighters from the Sinai.²⁴¹ The Times of Israel reported in February 2017 that “dozens” of top Hamas commanders had defected to Wilayat Sinai in the past three years.²⁴²

Relations between Hamas and Wilayat Sinai deteriorated in early 2018. That January,

Wilayat Sinai released a 22-minute execution video of an alleged Hamas collaborator. Also in the video, an ISIS agent identified as Abu Kazem al-Maqdisi called on ISIS supporters to attack Hamas in Gaza because the group failed to stop U.S. President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017. Hamas spokesman Salah Bardawil dismissed the declaration of war as an Israeli plot “in which Arab tools participate to distort the resistance.”²⁴³

Countries

Hamas

Iran

Iran has long been a benefactor of Hamas, providing weapons, training, and money. Though Hamas is a primarily Sunni organization, Iran's support transcended the Shiite-Sunni divide based on a common enemy in Israel.²⁴⁴ During the 1990s, Iran was a key financier of Hamas terrorism, providing financial rewards for bombings and higher rewards for higher death tolls.²⁴⁵ In 1993, Iran pledged \$30 million in annual support to Hamas. Iran also provided military training and weaponry such as improvised explosive devices, anti-tank munitions, and UAVs.²⁴⁶ Following Hamas's electoral victory in the January 2006 Palestinian elections, Iran equipped Hamas with an estimated \$23 million a month in financial and military aid, including for governing expenses.²⁴⁷

The Syrian civil war drove a wedge between Hamas and Iran, as Hamas had voiced support for rebel forces while Iran supports Syrian

President Bashar al-Assad. As a result, Iran reportedly cut approximately \$10 million a month to Hamas,²⁴⁸ reducing the group's funding to a "tiny amount" to maintain ties and its support of the Palestinian cause.²⁴⁹ Ghazi Hamad, Hamas's deputy foreign minister, remarked in May 2013: "I cannot deny that since 2006 Iran supported Hamas with money and many [other] things. But the situation is not like the past. I cannot say that everything is normal."²⁵⁰

The overthrow of Egypt's pro-Hamas, Brotherhood-controlled government in 2013 left Hamas without a major ally, leading the group to restore its relationship with Iran out of necessity. In 2014, Hamas and Iranian officials began to repair ties. In January 2014, senior Hamas official Bassem Naim claimed that ties between the two "had never been conclusively severed" and that several recent meetings had led to "a marked improvement and progression in the relationship."²⁵¹ Taher al-Nounou, an aide to Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, said relations were "almost back to how they were before."²⁵² That March, Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani said that relations between Hamas and Iran had returned to normal and that Iran continues to support Hamas as a "resistance organization."²⁵³

During the July 2014 Hamas-Israel conflict, Iranian officials admitted that Iran had transferred technology to Hamas to allow the terror group to build its own rockets. "Once upon a time, they [Hamas] needed the arms manufacture know-how and we gave it to them" and Hamas can now "meet their own needs for weapons," Larijani said.²⁵⁴ Senior Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzouk said in July 2015 that all Iranian aid to Hamas's political and military wings had ceased.²⁵⁵ He further accused Iranian officials of lying about support for Hamas, which he said had not received any Iranian money since 2009.²⁵⁶

Despite this reported breakdown in relations, leaders of Hamas's military wing have reportedly continued to receive funding from the Iranian government. British-Arab daily *Asharq al-Awsat* reported in April 2016 that Iran's [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#) (IRGC) intended to send Hamas forces into Iraq to aid in the liberation of Mosul from ISIS.²⁵⁷ Ahmed Yousef, a Hamas leader and political adviser to former Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, confirmed in January 2016 that Iranian aid to the Qassam Brigades slowed but never stopped completely. According to Yousef, Iran publicly supports Palestinian "resistance forces" as a challenge to the United States and Israel.²⁵⁸ After the slowdown in Iranian funding following the Syrian fallout, Hamas military leaders

North Korea

Hamas has allegedly received arms from North Korea. The link first became public after a cargo of North Korean weapons was seized in Bangkok airport in 2009. Investigators later confirmed that the cargo was destined for Iran, from where it was to be smuggled to Lebanon and Gaza. Western security sources also suspect that North Korea has offered Hamas advice on the building of tunnels, which has enabled Hamas to smuggle weapons and fighters in and out of Gaza. In July 2014, reports indicated that Hamas was attempting to buy arms and communication equipment from North Korea in order to continue attacks on Israel. The deal was reportedly worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.²⁷⁰

Hamas

Ties to other entities:

Hamas

Jordan

Hamas's leadership based itself in Jordan in the 1990s, and former Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal is himself a Jordanian citizen. In September 1997, Israel reportedly attempted to poison Meshaal, but supplied the antidote after Jordan threatened to reverse its 1994 peace treaty with Israel.²⁷¹ In 1999, Jordan banned Hamas and arrested several of its leaders.²⁷² Jordan expelled Meshaal and three other Hamas representatives that November.²⁷³

After a 10-day trip to Jordan in July 2012, Meshaal claimed that Hamas and the Jordanian government had reconciled, though Hamas had committed to not involve Jordan's Palestinian population in its activities. According to Meshaal, the new relationship focused on four principles: "The safety and stability of Jordan; Hamas's non-intervention in internal Jordanian affairs; Hamas' non-intervention in affairs concerning the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan; and finally on Palestinian-Jordanian relations."²⁷⁴ In 2013, Jordan reportedly refused a Hamas request to reopen its offices in the kingdom.²⁷⁵

In October 2011, Israel released more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in an exchange with Hamas for captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. Among those released was Jordanian citizen [Ahlam Ahmad al-Tamimi](#), who was serving 16 life sentences for her role in coordinating Hamas's August 2001 suicide bombing of the Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem. The bombing killed 15 and wounded 130. Tamimi was deported to Jordan after her release.²⁷⁶

Qatar

The emir of Qatar became the first head of state to visit Gaza after Hamas's 2007 coup.²⁷⁷ Since then, Qatar has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Gaza, pledging \$400 million to Gaza in 2012.²⁷⁸ After Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in April 2014, the PA refused to pay the salaries of Hamas civil servants in Gaza, and in response Qatar attempted to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas to pay the salaries of 44,000 civil servants. The United States reportedly blocked the transfers.²⁷⁹

Qatar has also hosted former Hamas politburo chief Khaled Meshaal since he left Syria in 2012.²⁸⁰ Qatari officials have referred to Meshaal as a "dear guest."²⁸¹ In June 2017, several Hamas leaders left Qatar amid rumors that the government had expelled them under international pressure. Hamas denied that the government had forced the Hamas leaders to leave.²⁸² Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani called Hamas a "legitimate resistance movement" and defended Hamas's presence in the country as a "political representation of the Hamas movement" meant to promote Palestinian unity.²⁸³ Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh met with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on December 16, 2019. The Hamas delegation reportedly received a warm reception from Al-Thani.²⁸⁴ In February 2020, Hamas announced Haniyeh would continue to run Hamas's political bureau from Doha, for the immediate future in order to continue traveling freely through the end of 2020 or early 2021.²⁸⁵ Murtaja was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2018.²⁸⁶

During the July 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel, Qatar and Turkey were considered Hamas's closest international allies.²⁸⁷ Qatar drafted a ceasefire proposal in July 2014 that adopted most of Hamas's demands, and without consideration of Israel's.²⁸⁸ Because of their close ties to Hamas, the United States invited Turkey and Qatar to a Paris meeting in mid-July 2014 to discuss a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. The move drew accusations from the Palestinian Authority and Egypt, suggesting that the United States was attempting to sideline them.²⁸⁹

Following the October 2017 reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah, rumors emerged that Hamas was dissatisfied with Qatar's role in the reconciliation talks. Hamas released a statement denying the rumors and praising its relationship with Qatar, which Hamas said has played a "pioneering role" in Gaza that "contributed significantly to prevent the collapse of the Gaza Strip during the years of siege."²⁹⁰

A U.S. lawsuit filed in June 2020 alleged Qatar provided funding to PIJ and Hamas through three Qatari financial institutions, the Qatar Charity, Masraf Al Rayan, and Qatar National Bank. The Qatar Charity is a member of the U.S.-sanctioned Union of Good charity network. All three institutions have links to members of the Qatari royal family. The plaintiffs are friends and family members of 10 U.S. citizens who died in terror attacks in Israel carried out by PIJ and Hamas. The lawsuit alleges Qatar Charity allegedly worked with Masraf Al Rayan bank and Qatar National Bank to forward Hamas and PIJ millions of dollars. It further accuses the Qatari government of facilitating "a financial institution that has been used to fund terrorism."

Hamas

Turkey

Turkey and Hamas maintain close political and financial ties. According to a December 2019 report in British media, Hamas has continued to use Istanbul as a planning base for terrorist activities. At least a dozen Hamas members moved to Istanbul in 2019, according to Israeli and Egyptian intelligence. This includes U.S.-designated financiers such as Kamal Awad, and military leaders who planned spats of suicide bombings in Israel in the 1990s. Turkey has continued to deny that Hamas is a terrorist organization. Turkish intelligence agents reportedly maintain close contact with Hamas operatives in Istanbul.²⁹⁷

The Turkish government has welcomed Hamas's leadership in the country for high-level meetings with Turkish officials, including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The meeting included Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, who left the Gaza Strip for the first time in three years.²⁹⁸ The meeting also included Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri. Both Arouri and Haniyeh are under U.S. sanctions and have rewards for their arrest. Nonetheless, they moved about freely in Turkey. Following the meeting, Erdoğan told media that Turkey "will keep on supporting our brothers in Palestine."²⁹⁹

Turkey has also provided Hamas with financial support. The country reportedly planned to donate \$300 million to Gaza's Hamas government in 2011,³⁰⁰ while other reports cited that this would become an annual donation to Hamas.³⁰¹ In February 2017, Israel arrested Muhammad Murtaja, the Gaza coordinator of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), on charges of fundraising for Hamas's military wing.³⁰² A year later in February 2018, Israeli authorities arrested a Turkish citizen and an Arab-Israeli suspected of fundraising and laundering money on behalf of Hamas.³⁰³ Following that arrest, a Hamas official in Lebanon praised Turkey's "loyalty" to the Palestinian people.³⁰⁴

During the July 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel, Qatar and Turkey were considered Hamas's closest international allies.³⁰⁵ Qatar drafted a ceasefire proposal in July 2014 that adopted most of Hamas's demands, and without consideration of Israel's.³⁰⁶ Because of their close ties to Hamas, the United States invited Turkey and Qatar to a Paris meeting in mid July 2014 to discuss a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. The move drew accusations from the Palestinian Authority and Egypt that the United States was attempting to sideline them.³⁰⁷

On August 12, 2015, then-political chief Khaled Meshaal met with Turkish leaders in Ankara, Turkey. The specifics of the meeting were not publicly revealed.³⁰⁸ Arab media reported in December 2015 that Hamas's top leader in Turkey had been expelled under U.S. and Israeli pressure as the Turkish and Israeli governments moved toward reconciliation. Hamas denied the reports.³⁰⁹ Later that month, Hamas denied rumors that Turkey intended to take control of Gaza.³¹⁰ In the June 2016 reconciliation agreement between Israel and Turkey, the Turkish government agreed not to allow fundraising for Hamas within its territory.³¹¹ Hamas rejected the reconciliation agreement, but reportedly acceded to

Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood has built grassroots support among Palestinians with the creation of charities in the Gaza Strip in 1960.³²³ Hamas was created in 1987 as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza.³²⁴ More than two decades later, Hamas continues to enjoy close ties to the Brotherhood. Hamas members were suspected of aiding in a jailbreak of Brotherhood activists, including former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi, in 2011.³²⁵ The Brotherhood-controlled Egyptian government in 2013 reportedly provided Hamas with support and turned a blind eye to illegal smuggling beneath the Egypt-Gaza border. After the downfall of the Brotherhood-controlled government that year, the Egyptian army closed off most of the tunnels, resulting in the loss of millions of dollars in revenue for the Hamas government and an economic crisis in Gaza.³²⁶

In January 2014, Cairo publicly hosted the first conference of Tamarud ("Rebellion"), a new anti-Hamas youth group.³²⁷ In March 2014, Egypt banned all activities by Hamas following a lawsuit against the group due to its connections to the Muslim Brotherhood.³²⁸

In March 2016, Egypt's Interior Ministry accused Hamas of conspiring with the Muslim Brotherhood and coordinating the June 2015 assassination of Hisham Barakat, Egypt's chief prosecutor, in a Cairo car bombing. Later that month, Hamas removed all pictures of former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi and any other signs of Muslim Brotherhood links from its Gaza offices. The move reportedly came after a meeting between Hamas leaders and Egypt officials who demanded Hamas renounce its links with the Brotherhood before Egypt would restore relations with Hamas.³²⁹ Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri later denied any links between his group and the Muslim Brotherhood.³³⁰

In May 2017, Hamas released a new guiding political document, which made no mention of the Muslim Brotherhood.³³¹

Hamas

PLO/Fatah/Palestinian Authority

Saudi Arabia

Hamas has remained separate from the PLO, emerging in the late 1980s when the PLO began to moderate its positions in order to launch a peace process with Israel. In 1996, Hamas contemplated joining the Palestinian Authority government but ultimately decided to remain apart.³³²

In the power-vacuum that followed PLO leader Yasser Arafat's death in 2004, Hamas ran in the January 2006 PA legislative elections and won a majority in the PA Legislative Council. After a year of clashes between Hamas and Fatah gunmen, Hamas expelled the PA's forces from Gaza and took control of the coastal strip. In April 2014, the PLO and Hamas signed a reconciliation agreement and pledged to form a unity government.³³³ The move helped derail U.S.-led peace talks between Israel and the PLO.

The sides failed to implement the reconciliation agreement, however, resulting in a continued split between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. At least five reconciliation agreements to date have failed. Hamas and the PA argue over who would retain control of Gaza's border crossings and assume responsibility for paying the salaries of civil servants.³³⁴

Hamas agreed to join the PLO in 2011 and 2014 under failed reunification deals with the Fatah-led PA. On November 2, 2016, Khaled Meshaal called for Hamas to join the PLO. In response, a senior PLO member told Israeli media that the PLO wants to bring Hamas under its wings.³³⁵

In January 2017, after unofficial talks in Moscow hosted by Russia, Hamas and Fatah announced an agreement to form a unity government.³³⁶ The parties agreed to form a new National Council that includes Palestinians in exile, and hold new elections. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other violent Palestinian factions agreed to the reconciliation, but the parties did not set a timetable for moving forward.³³⁷

In June 2017, in a move to pressure Hamas to reconcile, the PA ended payments to Israel for the Gaza Strip's electricity supply. The PA blamed Hamas for failing to reimburse it for paying for Gaza's electricity. The PA called for Hamas to return Gaza's governance back to the PA.³³⁸ That September, Hamas announced its intention to dissolve its government in Gaza and called on the PA to immediately resume responsibility for the Gaza Strip. Hamas agreed to the PA's demand to hold new parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza for the first time since 2006. The move followed talks in Cairo between Hamas and the Egyptian government.³³⁹

In October 2017, Hamas and Fatah signed an Egyptian-brokered agreement to implement a 2011 reconciliation pact. Hamas and Fatah agreed to allow the PA to resume control of Gaza by December 1 and later take control of Gaza's border crossings. The sides delayed negotiation on Hamas's armed wing.³⁴⁰

Hamas officials held meetings in July 2015 with the Saudi leadership in what some analysts suspect were attempts to sway Hamas away from Iran and built a Sunni coalition against the Persian country.³⁴¹ Also that summer, Saudi Arabia also reportedly attempted to mediate reconciliation between Hamas and Egypt.³⁴² In August 2015, citing Hamas meetings with Saudi Arabia's king and meetings with Egyptian leaders, Hamas officials told Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper that the group had been successfully elevating its international status.³⁴³

Hamas

Syria

Syria has long acted as a conduit between Hamas and its Iranian benefactor, allowing weapons and money to cross its borders. Hamas's political leadership was based in Damascus until 2012, when it relocated due to the ongoing Syrian civil war.³⁴⁴

Political connections to U.S. or global leaders:

United States

Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S. government, which has refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Hamas government in Gaza. Since Hamas and the PLO signed a unity deal in April 2014, however, the U.S. State Department announced its willingness to work with a unity government, as the cabinet is made up of technocrats unaffiliated with Hamas.³⁴⁵ Members of the U.S. Congress have since called for cutting U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority because of the unity deal.³⁴⁶

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter met with Hamas's political chief Khaled Meshaal in 2008 in an attempt to broker peace. During a press conference, Meshaal said Hamas accepts a Palestinian state with the June 4, 1967, borders with east Jerusalem as its capital.³⁴⁷ Meshaal also offered Israel a 10-year *hudna*, which he told Carter was proof of Hamas's tacit recognition of Israel.³⁴⁸ Meshaal and other Hamas leaders have since denied agreeing to the 1967 lines.

Iran

In March 2014, Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani announced the restoration of ties between Hamas and Iran and that Iran continues to support Hamas as a "resistance organization."³⁴⁹ During the July 2014 Hamas-Israel conflict, Iranian officials admitted that Iran had transferred technology to Hamas to allow the terror group to build its own rockets. "Once upon a time, they [Hamas] needed the arms manufacture know-how and we gave it to them" and Hamas can now "meet their own needs for weapons," Larijani said.³⁵⁰

Russia

Russia is a member of the Quartet of Middle East Peacemakers and has signed on to the Quartet's demands that Hamas recognize Israel, renounce terrorism, and accept past agreements before it receives international recognition. Russia has attempted to push Hamas toward these goals by inviting Hamas government representatives to Moscow for official meetings.

In March 2006, a Hamas delegation visited Moscow for three days of meetings with Russian officials, including Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.³⁵¹ It was the first Hamas state visit outside of the Islamic world since Hamas joined the Palestinian Authority. Hamas viewed the invitation as a way to foil American and Israeli attempts to isolate it, while Russian officials used the visit to try to convince Hamas to accept the Quartet's demands of recognizing Israel, renouncing violence, and accepting past agreements.³⁵²

In May 2010, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met with Hamas political chief Khaled Meshaal in Damascus. Israel condemned the meeting, during which Medvedev called for the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and for Hamas to reconcile with Fatah.³⁵³

In response to Israeli criticism, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said his country has "regular" contacts with Hamas, and "all other members of the Quartet on the Middle East maintain contacts with Hamas leaders in one way or another, although they are reluctant to admit this publicly, for some reason." During a November 2015 press conference, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov called Hezbollah and Hamas "legitimate societal-political forces."³⁵⁴

Qatar

Hamas

In 2012, the emir of Qatar became the first head of state to visit Gaza after Hamas's 2007 coup.³⁵⁵ Since then, Qatar has invested hundreds of millions of dollars into Gaza, pledging \$400 million to Gaza in 2012.³⁵⁶ After Hamas and Fatah signed a reconciliation agreement in April 2014, the PA refused to pay the salaries of Hamas civil servants in Gaza, and in response Qatar attempted to transfer hundreds of millions of dollars to Hamas to pay the salaries of 44,000 civil servants, but the United States reportedly blocked the transfers.³⁵⁷

Saudi Arabia

During the summer of 2015, Hamas officials held meetings with King Salman and other Saudi leaders.³⁵⁸ Observers viewed Salman's meetings with Hamas an attempt to sway the terror group away from Iran's influence.³⁵⁹

Turkey

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's ruling Justice and Development Party supports what analysts call "other neo-Islamist allies."³⁶⁰ This has resulted in Turkey investing millions of dollars into Gaza's Hamas government, (detailed in the financial support section). Turkey reportedly planned to donate \$300 million to Gaza's Hamas government in 2011,³⁶¹ while other reports cited that this would become an annual donation to Hamas.³⁶² During the July 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel, Qatar and Turkey were considered Hamas's closest international allies.³⁶³

Europe

In May 2006, after Hamas won Palestinian Authority legislative elections, Sweden granted a visa to PA Refugee Minister Atef Adawan, a Hamas member, to attend a conference in Sweden. After the conference, Adawan allegedly traveled to Norway where he met with Kaare Eltervaag, the head of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's Middle Eastern affairs. Afterward, he traveled to Germany where he met with Bundestag representative Detlef Dzembritzki, a member of the Social Democratic Party.³⁶⁴

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Media Coverage:

Arab media

English-language Arab media may focus more on the plight of the Gazans than in Western media, but Hamas is typically recognized as a militant organization, similar to what appears in Western coverage.

Where Arab media differs is in the opinion pages, where Hamas and the Palestinians may be shown in a more favorable light. In a June 2014 op-ed in *Al Arabiya*, for example, journalist Bakir Oweida declares, “How unlikely it is that Hamas would kidnap three Israeli settlers just weeks after signing a unity agreement with Fatah,” and blames Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for using the incident to hamper the reconciliation process.³⁶⁵

Media intimidation

During the most recent conflict between Israel and Hamas in July 2014, numerous reports alleged that Hamas restricted media coverage of its activities in Gaza, threatening reporters against covering terrorist activities and allowing only footage of wounded Gazans. The absence of photos of Hamas rockets did not go unnoticed by others in the media. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency’s Uriel Heilman questioned *The New York Times’* lack of coverage, in particular. Heilman concluded that Western media largely ignored or made few references to reports of Hamas’s usage of Gaza’s al-Shifa Hospital as its base or Hamas’s execution of suspected collaborators.³⁶⁶ He cited a tweet from freelance Italian journalist Gabriele Barbati that backed allegations of Hamas’s threatening of journalists: “Out of #Gaza far from #Hamas retaliation: misfired rocket killed children yday in Shati. Witness: militants rushed and cleared debris (July 29).”³⁶⁷

Uriel Heilman’s piece earned a response from *The New York Times’* vice president for corporate communications, Eileen Murphy, who defended her paper’s omissions: “Our photo editor went through all of our pictures recently and out of many hundreds, she found 2 very distant poor quality images that were captioned Hamas fighters by our photographer on the ground. It is very difficult to identify Hamas because they don’t have uniforms or any visible insignia; our photographer hasn’t even seen anyone carrying a gun. I would add that we would not withhold photos of Hamas militants. We eagerly pursue photographs from both sides of the conflict, but we are limited by what our photographers have access to.”³⁶⁸

A July 31, 2014 *Jerusalem Post* piece reported that Hamas had threatened international reporters to prevent reporting on the terror group’s use of human shields and use of civilian sites from which to launch rockets.³⁶⁹ According to the *Post*, Hamas interrogated French journalist Radjaa Abu Dagga, threatening to throw him out of Gaza.³⁷⁰ The French newspaper *Liberation* printed a report on Abu Dagga’s ordeal, but Abu Dagga requested its removal.³⁷¹ Hamas also told RT correspondent Harry Fear to leave Gaza after he tweeted that Hamas had fired rockets at Israel from nearby his hotel, and that the group was using human shields in Gaza’s al-Wafa hospital.³⁷²

While examining a July 20 photo essay in *The New York Times*, the Weekly Standard’s Noah Pollak discovered that of the seven images in the compilation, three were of distressed Gaza civilians, one was of smoke rising over Gaza, and three were of the Israel Defense Forces, including tanks and attack helicopters. “The message is simple and clear: the IDF is attacking Gaza and harming Palestinian civilians,” Pollak wrote.³⁷³ He questioned whether the *Times* had become an anti-Semitic mouthpiece or if it had been intimidated by Hamas. “These journalists must be terrified—and they also must know that the best way to ensure their safety is to never run afoul of the terrorists in whose hands their fates lie,” wrote Pollak.³⁷⁴

Hamas issued media guidelines, which, according to a translation by the Middle East Media Research Institute, ordered Gazans to refer to all dead as “innocent civilians” and to avoid posting pictures of terrorists online.³⁷⁵ Among Hamas’s guidelines, according to the translation, includes this directive: “avoid publishing pictures of rockets fired into Israel from [Gaza] city centers. This [would] provide a pretext for attacking residential areas in the Gaza Strip. Do not publish or share photos or video clips showing rocket launching sites or the movement of resistance [forces] in Gaza.”³⁷⁶

The media guidelines also included rules for Palestinian activists, including, “Do not publish photos of military commanders. Do not mention their names in public, and do not praise their achievements in conversations with foreign friends!”³⁷⁷

Notwithstanding the lack of photographic evidence, Western pundits recognized Hamas’s violent actions, while simultaneously chastising Israel

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for civilian casualties. Bob Schieffer called out Hamas during one episode of his “Face The Nation” television show: “In the Middle East, the Palestinian people find themselves in the grip of a terrorist group that has embarked on a strategy to get its own children killed in order to build sympathy for its cause, a strategy that might actually be working, at least in some quarters.”³⁷⁸

Western media

Though the United States labels Hamas a terrorist organization, media coverage of the group largely replaces the “terrorist” label with that of “militant.” Reuters, for example, will use the “terrorist” and “terrorism” labels only for quoted material. According to the Reuters handbook: “*Terrorism and terrorist should not be used as single words in inverted commas (e.g. terrorist) or preceded by so-called (e.g. a so-called terrorist attack) since that can be taken to imply that Reuters is making a value judgment.... Terror as in terror attack or terror cell should be avoided on stylistic grounds.*”³⁷⁹

Outside of the United States, some Western media outlets take a softer stance on Hamas. In a June 2014 photo essay on Hamas summer camps that train teenagers for subversive activities, the *Daily Mail* referred to Hamas solely as “a political organization,” despite the photographic evidence it provided to the contrary.³⁸⁰ In another example from British media, *The Guardian* profiled Hamas’s new government spokeswoman, Isra al-Modallal, in November 2013. *The Guardian* wrote that al-Modallal was educated in England, is the first woman to hold such a position, and wants to promote human rights.³⁸¹ The author makes no mention of Hamas’s violent activities, nor the contradictions between the group’s ideology and al-Modallal’s dedication to human rights. The author does quote al-Modallal saying she would have no contact with Israeli media.³⁸²

Despite failing to label Hamas a terrorist organization, Western media largely recognize the organization as a violent militant group, and regularly note that Hamas is dedicated to the destruction of Israel. In recent coverage of the group, the BBC noted Hamas’s “long record of attacks and its refusal to renounce violence.”³⁸³ Western columnists typically deride Hamas, while still imploring Israel to ease restrictions on the Palestinian civilian population. While U.S. media outlets such as the Associated Press and Reuters will mention Hamas’s ideology, the previously mentioned *Daily Mail* and *Guardian* articles lack a broader context for the issues on which they report. *The Guardian* demonstrates this further in a January 2014 piece on Hamas-Iran reconciliation talks, failing to provide any context—beyond a throw-away reference to the Muslim Brotherhood as Hamas’s “ideological parent”—of Iran’s sponsorship of terrorism or of Hamas’s pro-terror ideology.³⁸⁴

Israeli media

Israeli media tend to report on Hamas in line with the Israeli government’s designation of the group, namely, referring to Hamas as a terrorist organization. Given Hamas’s proximity – especially after its 2007 takeover of Gaza – Israeli media frequently report on the activities of Hamas leaders in Gaza and abroad. This coverage includes speeches and other actions that could affect the region.

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Rhetoric:

Yahya Sinwar, Gaza political leader, May 26, 2021

“We have sufficient financial resources... a large part of which are from Iran, and another part comes from Arab and Muslim donors and free people of the world who stand in solidarity with our people and their rights.”³⁸⁵

Ismail Haniyeh, chief of political bureau, May 21, 2021

“We have destroyed the project of ‘coexistence’ with Israel, of ‘normalization’ with Israel. What is coming after this battle is not what came before it...you will yet see many [diplomatic] contacts and successes. We have seen how our nation awoke...to stand behind Jerusalem, Palestine and resistance.”³⁸⁶

Abu Ubaida, spokesman of the Qassam Brigades, May 13, 2021

“Mass up as you wish, from the sea, land and sky. We have prepared for your kinds of deaths that would make you curse yourselves.”³⁸⁷

Abu Ubaida, spokesman of the Qassam Brigades, May 13, 2021

“The decision to bomb Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Dimona, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beersheba and closer and further than it, is easier for us than drinking water.”³⁸⁸

Ismail Haniyeh, September 6, 2020

Addressing a crowd in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon:

“Not long ago, our rockets only reached metres from Gaza’s borders. Today, the resistance in Gaza possesses rockets that can reach Tel Aviv and beyond Tel Aviv.”³⁸⁹

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