

# Hamas – The Islamic Resistance Movement of Palestine

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*For our struggle against the Jews is extremely wide-ranging and grave, so much so that it will need all the loyal efforts we can wield, to be followed by further steps and reinforced by successive battalions from the multifarious Arab and Islamic world, until the enemies are defeated and Allah's victory prevails.<sup>1</sup>*

Introduction to "The Charter of Allah: The Platform of Hamas"

*We say to this West, which does not act reasonably, and does not learn its lessons: By Allah, you will be defeated. You will be defeated in Palestine, and your defeat there has already begun. True, it is Israel that is being defeated there, but when Israel is defeated, its path is defeated, those who call to support it are defeated, and the cowards who hide behind it and support it are defeated. Israel will be defeated, and so will whoever supported or supports it.<sup>2</sup>*

Sermon of Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish'al at Al-Murabit Mosque in Damascus, February 2006

*Palestine means Palestine in its entirety—from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River, from Ras Al-Naqura to Rafah. We cannot give up a single inch of it. Therefore, we will not recognize the Israeli enemy's [right] to a single inch.<sup>3</sup>*

Mahmud Al-Zahar, leader of Hamas in Gaza on Hizballah's Al-Manar TV, January 2006

*Despite all the pressure, the Palestinians have become more determined in their struggles, and Hamas will never give up its fundamental strategy, which is resistance. We will not be satisfied with anything less than the Zionists' withdrawal from all of the occupied territories and, as the late Imam Khomeini said, Israel is a deadly tumor which we will never recognize as a state.<sup>4</sup>*

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Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish`al at a meeting with Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad, December 2005

*The Americans and the Europeans say to Hamas: Either you have weapons or you enter the legislative council. We say [we will have] weapons and the legislative council, there is no contradiction between the two.*<sup>5</sup>

Isma`il Haniya, lead Hamas candidate in Palestinian elections, January 2006

*She [Hamas suicide bomber Reem Al-Riyashi] is not going to be the last because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only over the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe.*<sup>6</sup>

Mahmud Al-Zahar, Hamas leader in Gaza, January 2004

*I don't trust the term "moderate." We are already moderate. But if people believe we will be moderate in the Western style, or a pro-Israeli style – that's not moderate. That's corruption.*<sup>7</sup>

Mahmud Al-Zahar, Hamas leader in Gaza, September 2005

*Hamas is a jihadi (fighting for a holy purpose) movement in the broad sense of the word jihad. It is part of the Islamic awakening movement and upholds that this awakening is the road which will lead to the liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea.*<sup>8</sup>

The Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas official Web site

Hamas, which won a majority of seats in the January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, is an Islamic extremist terror organization that calls for the eradication of Israel through acts of violence that are legitimized through a radical interpretation of Islamic theology. Hamas is the Arabic acronym for *Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya fi Filistin*, or the Islamic Resistance Movement in Palestine. Its goal is to replace Israel with a militant Palestinian Islamic state.

## The Emblem of Hamas



Official emblem of the Hamas movement<sup>9</sup>

The emblem of Hamas illustrates the ideology and goals of the movement. Central to the emblem is the depiction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem with Palestinian flags arrayed in semicircles on either side. The flag on the right side bears the first half of the Muslim confession of faith in Arabic: “*La ilaha ila Allah*” – “There is no other deity but God,” and the flag on the left is inscribed with the second half: “*Muhammad rasul Allah*” – “Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

At the pinnacle of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is Hamas’s vision of “Palestine” – a map that encompasses all of the territory that is now Israel as well as the Palestinian Authority-controlled areas of the West Bank and Gaza. Superimposed over the Al-Aqsa Mosque are two crossed swords that represent the jihad, or holy war, that is central to the tenets of Hamas ideology. Below the crossed swords is the inscription *Filistin* – Palestine, and lower half of the emblem bears a white semicircular banner with the full Arabic name of the movement, *Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya* – the Islamic Resistance Movement, and its Arabic acronym, *Hamas*, which is also the Arabic word for “zeal.”

## Origins

*We believe there is no substitute for the path of jihad for liberation.*<sup>10</sup>

Communiqué No. 34 issued by the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas

Hamas is a creation of the Palestinian branch of the extremist Muslim Brotherhood movement. The organization was created in 1988 by the late Sheikh Ahmad Yassin,<sup>11</sup> the Hamas ideologue and founder who was then a preacher of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood movement in Gaza. In concurrence with his teachings, Yassin and his followers formed Hamas as the “military wing” of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood.

Initially, the founders of Hamas were members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and ultimately all of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood's organizations and institutions were absorbed into the infrastructure of Hamas. In January 1991<sup>12</sup> the "Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions" emerged as Hamas's "military wing." The Battalions were named after the Syrian Islamic extremist preacher Sheikh `Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam. During the 1920s Al-Qassam preached in favor of jihad and organizing an armed revolt against then French-controlled Syria. He fled Syria for Haifa in British-controlled Mandatory Palestine in 1922, where he continued to preach and organize an armed revolt against the British. Al-Qassam was killed in a battle with British forces in 1935.<sup>13</sup> The estimated number of Hamas's Al-Qassam Battalions terrorist operatives is reported to be between 1,000 to 1,500 men.<sup>14</sup>

The movement's August 1988 covenant interprets the Islamic theological concept of jihad as "holy war" and calls for the obliteration of Israel through militant action. Its ultimate goal is the establishment of an Islamic radical state in place of Israel.<sup>15</sup> In 1988, Sheikh Bassam Jarrar, a Muslim Brotherhood preacher and prominent leader of Hamas, articulated the vision of his movement: the conquest of all of the territory of what is now Israel, as well as the West Bank and Gaza from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Thereafter, Hamas would conquer the entire world.<sup>16</sup>

## Ideology



Adaptation of Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood symbol with Hamas inscription, 1988<sup>17</sup>

*Allah is our objective.*

*The Messenger<sup>18</sup> is our leader.*

*Qur'an is our law.*

*Jihad is our way.*

*Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope.<sup>19</sup>*

Official slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood

*The Slogan of the Islamic Resistance Movement:*

*Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes.*<sup>20</sup>

Article Eight, official English version of the Hamas Covenant

The Hamas movement began as an ideological offshoot and the military wing of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, which was part of the international Muslim Brotherhood movement founded by Hassan Al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. Hamas continues to view itself as part of the larger Muslim Brotherhood movement as indicated in Article Two of the 1988 Hamas Covenant: "The Islamic Resistance Movement [Hamas] is one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. The Muslim Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times."<sup>21</sup>

The official English translation of the Hamas Covenant is emblazoned with two symbols representing Hamas. One is the present symbol of Hamas depicting the Al-Aqsa Mosque in use today. The other incorporates the symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood, indicating the movement's origins. The symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which consists of a Qur'an and crossed swords beneath it, is encircled by Palestinian flags on either side. Below the flags in a semicircle is the full name of Hamas – *Harakat Al-Muqawama Al-Islamiya* – the Islamic Resistance Movement.<sup>22</sup>

While the Muslim Brotherhood movement, like Hamas, interprets the Islamic theological concept of jihad as "holy war," it envisions the time for such a war to be at the end of days. At that time, a pan-Islamic state will be established that will be based on its ideologues' radical interpretation of *shari'a*, or Islamic law.

Hamas is more militant than the Brotherhood and departs from its ideology in its interpretation that the time for jihad, or holy war, is in the present. It is also more decidedly Palestinian nationalist in character and views itself as being at the forefront of Palestinian efforts to fight against Israel and, ultimately, destroy it.

The Hamas Covenant declares:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders. It goes back to 1939, to the emergence of the martyr 'Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam and his brethren the fighters, members of Muslim Brotherhood [sic]. It goes on to reach out and

become one with another chain that includes the struggle of the Palestinians and Muslim Brotherhood in the 1948 war and the jihad operations of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1968 and after.<sup>23</sup>

In consonance with the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb in his radical commentary on the Qur'an, *Fi Thilal Al-Qur'an (In the Shade of the Qur'an)*, and in his political tract, *Marakatuna ma'a Al-Yahud, (Our Struggle with the Jews)*, Hamas views the Muslim world as being in a state of severe crisis caused by the westernization of the Middle East. Western influence, represented by Israel, is therefore the most formidable enemy facing the Muslim world today. Hamas also shares the view that a state of war has existed between Muslims on the one side and Christians and Jews on the other since the founding of Islam in the seventh century. Qutb, referring to the Christians and Jews as the "enemies" of the Muslim world, writes:

The war against Islam started 1,400 years ago, when Muslims established their state in Madinah, and became distinguished by their character and firmly established the roots of their independence in faith, concept, and political system. *The enemies will never stop waging this war unless they achieve their goal of turning Muslims away from their faith, so that they become non-Muslims.*<sup>24</sup> [Emphasis added.]

In a departure from the view of mainstream Islam that accepts Jews as fellow believers in monotheism, Hamas espouses a theological anti-Semitism that regards Israel and Jews as an embodiment of evil in the world that will, in time, be destroyed as part of the Divine plan. The Hamas Covenant explains:

[T]he Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to the realization of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said: "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say, 'O Muslims, O Abdallah [servant of God], there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.' Only the Gharqad tree [evidently a certain kind of tree] would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews."<sup>25</sup>

Hamas, like its precursor, the Muslim Brotherhood, views Jews and Christians as "infidels" or "disbelievers," or enemies of the Divine revelation received by Muhammad.<sup>26</sup> In time, however, the "disbelievers" will be vanquished in a cataclysmic war, or jihad, which will result in the victory of the Muslim forces.

As an example of this attitude, Hamas leader Sheikh Bassam Jarrar has denounced all religions – with the exception of Islam – as false.<sup>27</sup>

Hamas continues to rely upon the support, writings, and teachings of Muslim Brotherhood ideologues. Muhammad Aqef, the current Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, issued a ruling in 2004 that called upon all of the branches of the Brotherhood throughout the world to commit themselves to the struggle against Israel.<sup>28</sup> Since 1994, Hamas has built a cult of legitimacy surrounding its suicide bombings, despite the fact that mainstream Islam forbids suicide. It cites the *fatwa*, or Islamic theological ruling, of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradhwawi, a well-known ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, who legitimizes suicide bombings via his own radical interpretation of Islamic theology.

Al-Qaradhwawi's radical theological rulings are prominently featured on the official Arabic Internet site of Hamas, the Palestinian Information Center (PIC), or, as it is known in Arabic, *Al-Markaz Al-Filistini lil`ilam*.<sup>29</sup> Al-Qaradhwawi's original *fatwa* on suicide bombings is entitled, "Hamas Operations Are Jihad and Those Who [Carry It Out and] Are Killed Are Considered Martyrs."<sup>30</sup> Using Al-Qaradhwawi's ruling to legitimize the violent activities of Hamas, the *fatwa* was listed on the Web site under the title "The Islamic Theological Origins of the Palestinian Resistance."<sup>31</sup>

In December 2001 Al-Qaradhwawi elaborated on his stance regarding suicide bombings by articulating the position that there are no innocent Israeli civilians: "In Israel, all men and women are soldiers. They are all occupying troops."<sup>32</sup> Hamas leader Isma'il Abu Shanab echoed Al-Qaradhwawi's assessment: "In our view, there is not a single person in Israel whom we don't view as a usurper of our land,"<sup>33</sup> and, therefore, a target for acts of violence carried out by Hamas.

Following the lead of Al-Qaradhwawi,<sup>34</sup> the Hamas movement does not refer to operatives who carry out suicide bombings as a "suicides"; instead, it refers to them as *shuhada'*, or "martyrs," and to the suicide bombings as '*amaliyat al-istishadiya* – "acts of martyrdom" or "martyrdom operations." Hamas lauds its operatives who carry out such attacks and provides them with full Muslim burial rites. The movement also provides for the material needs of the suicide bomber's family.

Other *fatwas* by Qaradhwawi on the Hamas Web site include: *Shari'a al-amaliyat al-istishadiya fi Filistin al-muhtala* – "The *Shari'a* of Martyrdom Operations in Occupied Palestine,"<sup>35</sup> and *Fatwa al-`ulama Al-duktur Yusuf Al-Qaradhwawi hawla musharaka al-nisa` fi al-`amaliyat al-istishadiya*—"Fatwa of the Islamic Scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradhwawi on the Participation of Women in Martyrdom Operations."<sup>36</sup>

Hamas leaders have also published their own *fatwas* endorsing suicide bombings, which are featured on the Hamas Web site. These include a *fatwa* by Sheikh Ahmad Bahr entitled *Makanat Al-shuhada' fi Al-Islam* – “The Place of Martyrs in Islam.”<sup>37</sup>

### **Methodology: Da’awa and Jihad**



*The world has to understand such operations are not suicide bombings. They are martyrdom operations. These are the most honorable and precious of sacrifices for achieving national and religious goals to end Palestinian suffering. They are justified by our religious scholars, and I think they are very effective in convincing the Israelis that their existence as an occupying power cost them too much. We are an occupied people; we have to continue our armed struggle by all means to resist occupation.*<sup>38</sup>

Hamas leader in Gaza Mahmud Al-Zahar

*We are ready to offer 1,000, 2,000, or even 10,000 martyrs every year. We are ready to keep offering martyrs for twenty years because we are sure we are moving in the right direction and that we will prevail in the end.*<sup>39</sup>

Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish'al

*The children of the kindergarten are the shaheeds (martyrs) of tomorrow.*<sup>40</sup>

Slogan displayed on a poster in a Hamas-run kindergarten

*Holy war is our way.  
Death for God is our highest wish.*<sup>41</sup>



### Poster displayed in a Hamas kindergarten

Hamas recruits activists to its ranks through the medium of *da'awa*, nonviolent ideological indoctrination that takes place in mosques, schools, and other social institutions. Mirroring the methodology of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas continues to indoctrinate its followers via its religious and social institutions, which include clinics, orphanages, colleges, summer camps, and sports clubs. Attendees of programs at these institutions receive social welfare services that are accompanied by presentations designed to indoctrinate them ideologically into the belief system of Hamas. The social institutions of Hamas thus provide a constant source of indoctrination across all levels of Palestinian society. As a result of this activity, the recruitment of suicide bombers has taken place at colleges, sports clubs, mosques, and other institutions sponsored by the organization.<sup>42</sup> The senior Hamas leader in the West Bank town of Ramallah, Hassan Yusuf, commented on the phenomenon by stating, "We like to grow them—from kindergarten through college."<sup>43</sup>

Suicide bombers are recruited for the 'Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions of Hamas based on their religious fervor and clean criminal record. At any one time, it is estimated that Hamas has prepared between five and twenty young men, generally ranging in age from their late teens to mid-thirties, who have completed their training to carry out suicide attacks.<sup>44</sup> Most of them are graduates of colleges or universities.<sup>45</sup>

The matériel required for a suicide bomber to carry out an attack is relatively simple. It includes: the cost of tailoring a custom-fit belt wide enough to hold six or eight pockets full of explosives and the explosive device itself, which consists of nails, gunpowder, mercury, acetone, a battery, an electrical switch, and a short cable. The largest expense item is providing transportation to an Israeli venue of the bombing. The total cost of a single suicide bombing is approximately \$142.<sup>46</sup> Following the attack, Hamas provides for the material needs of the bomber's family by giving each family between \$2,800 and \$5,000.<sup>47</sup>

The suicide bombers are promised that the first drop of blood shed by a "martyr" when he carries out his act of jihad instantaneously cleanses him of sin. On the Day of Judgment, he will face no reckoning, and, on the Day of Resurrection, he will be able to intercede for seventy of his relatives to enter Heaven, and he will have at his disposal seventy-two *huris*, the beautiful black-eyed virgins of Paradise.<sup>48</sup> He is also told that his family will be provided for.<sup>49</sup>

Hamas leader Isma'il Abu-Shanab explains the ideological motivation for the organization's suicide bombing attacks in the following manner: "Patriotism motivates and religion teaches you not to be afraid; it tells you that your soul will achieve happiness." When he was asked whether the bombers are promised a place in Paradise, he responded: "That is part of the Islamic belief, that those who sacrifice themselves in God's name will be rewarded. If you dream of a beautiful woman, you will have one."<sup>50</sup>

Throughout its history, Hamas has carried out acts of violence against Israeli civilians and soldiers, including suicide bombings, car bombings, kidnappings, drive-by shootings, and stabbing attacks. From September 2000 to early 2004, Hamas carried out 425 terrorist attacks of various kinds against Israel. As a result, 377 Israeli civilians and soldiers were killed and 2,076 were wounded.<sup>51</sup> Thus far, the weapons that Hamas has used include, for the most part, conventional weapons: hand grenades, Kalashnikov rifles, belts packed with explosives, and Qassam rockets. A recent assessment done by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service indicated that Hamas is reportedly developing more sophisticated explosive charges in order to carry out larger attacks aimed at buildings, and is believed to be experimenting with explosive charges in order to disperse chemical materials.<sup>52</sup> More recently, Hamas was reported to be developing biological and chemical weapons.<sup>53</sup>

The movement initiated its use of suicide bombings in Israeli population centers in 1994. During the period of September 2000 to April 2004, Hamas carried out 53 suicide bombing attacks that caused the deaths of 289 Israelis and injured 1,649.<sup>54</sup> Hamas communiqués claiming responsibility for suicide bombings and other attacks are catalogued on the official Internet site of the movement, the Palestine Information Center, in Arabic in a document entitled *Sijil Al-Majid* – "The Record of Glory."<sup>55</sup> The terrorists who carry out the attacks are referred to as *shuhada'* or "martyrs," and the movement publishes a memorial page for each of them on its Web site in a section entitled *Shuhada' wa mu`ataqalun* – "Martyrs and Prisoners."<sup>56</sup>

## Hamas's Designation as a Terrorist Organization



*We will not give up the resistance in the sense of jihad, martyrdom-seeking, sacrifices, arrests, the demolition of homes, and the uprooting of trees, at the same time, nor the shattering of the Israeli enemy's honor in all the confrontations – the war of tunnels and of security against the Israeli enemy, which ultimately led to its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank.<sup>57</sup>*

Mahmud Al-Zahar, leader of Hamas in Gaza on Hizballah's Al-Manar TV, January 2006

One year after the official emergence of Hamas, the movement was designated as an illegal terrorist organization by the government of Israel in September 1989.<sup>58</sup> Hamas was designated as a terrorist organization on January 23, 1995, by then President Bill Clinton in Executive Order 12947.<sup>59</sup> Following the 1996 passage of the Antiterrorism Act, the U.S. State Department designated Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.<sup>60</sup> After the September 11 attacks, Hamas was added to the U.S. Treasury Department's list of Specially Designated Global Terrorist organizations on November 2, 2001.<sup>61</sup> On December 22, 2003, the European Union designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.<sup>62</sup>

On December 4, 2001, the U.S. Treasury designated three entities "that provide financial and material support to Hamas" as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). Included among the organizations was the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) in Richardson, Texas, which was originally known as the Occupied Land Fund. Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzuq provided a significant amount of funds to the HLF during the early 1990s and designated the group as "the primary fund-raising entity for Hamas in the United States."<sup>63</sup>

Initially, the Occupied Land Fund was established in California in 1989. Three years later, it relocated to Texas and opened offices in California, Illinois, and New Jersey, with representatives throughout the United States. Other representatives of the organization operated in the West Bank and Gaza. Additionally, two Hamas financial institutions located in the West Bank and Gaza, Al-Aqsa Islamic Bank and Beit El-Mal Holdings, were also designated as SDGTs.<sup>64</sup>

In May 2003 the U.S. Treasury designated the Al-Aqsa Foundation in Aachen, Germany, as an SDGT that “funnels funds—including money donated for charitable purposes—to the militant terrorist group Hamas.” The Al-Aqsa Foundation’s offices are located in Rotterdam, Holland; Copenhagen, Denmark; Brussels, Belgium; Malmo, Sweden; Johannesburg, South Africa; San’a, Yemen; and Islamabad, Pakistan.<sup>65</sup>

Six Hamas leaders were also designated as SDGTs by the U.S. Treasury at that time. They included Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, then the leader of Hamas in Gaza, who, according to the U.S. Treasury Department, maintained “a direct line of communication with other Hamas leaders on coordination of Hamas’s military activities and openly admit[ted] that there is no distinguishing the political and military wings of Hamas.”<sup>66</sup>

The others were Khalid Al-Mish`al, then head of the Hamas Political Bureau and Executive Committee and today the leader of the movement; Imad Khalil Al-`Alami, a member of the Hamas Political Bureau operating in Damascus, Syria; `Usama Hamdan, a senior Hamas leader in Lebanon; `Abd Al-`Aziz Al-Rantisi, then a Hamas leader in Gaza reporting to Sheikh Yassin; and Musa Abu Marzuq, deputy chief of the Hamas Political Bureau operating in Damascus, Syria. Abu Marzuq was previously designated as a Specially Designated Terrorist by the U.S. Treasury on August 29, 1995.<sup>67</sup>

Five charities that provide support to Hamas and are part of the organization’s funding infrastructure in Europe were also designated. They include Commite de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens (CBSP) in France; a Swiss affiliate of the CBSP, the Association de Secours Palestinien (ASP); Interpal, or the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund, based in the United Kingdom; and Sanabil Association for Relief and Development, based in Lebanon.<sup>68</sup>

## Current Leadership

### Khalid Al-Mish`al – Leader of Hamas



*You must understand: liberation of the territories from the occupation is only one phase.... We do not distinguish between Palestine of 1948 and Palestine of 1967. Palestine is everything.*<sup>69</sup>

#### Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish`al

Following Israel's targeted assassination of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, Hamas's present leader, Khalid Al-Mish`al, was appointed the new leader of Hamas on March 24, 2004, in Damascus, Syria. He directs Hamas's activities from Damascus. Two days after his appointment, Al-Mish`al demonstrated his movement's fealty to Yassin's vision of the organization by reaffirming its central tenet – the destruction of Israel via a holy war or jihad. In remarks to a demonstration of 5,000 Palestinians in Ramallah, broadcast to the crowd via telephone, Al-Mish`al declared: "Hamas is in good health and will continue its jihad and resistance. We will continue our sacrifices until the end of the occupation."<sup>70</sup> The demonstrators responded with chants of "Death to Israel! Death to Israel!"<sup>71</sup>

Al-Mish`al was born in 1956 in the village of Silwad, then under Jordanian rule. Following the 1967 war, when Silwad came under Israeli sovereignty, Al-Mish`al and his family moved to Kuwait to join his father, who had gone there for employment several years earlier.<sup>72</sup>

Al-Mish`al completed his primary education at the Khalid Bin Walid School and the Al-Hariri Complementary School and his secondary education at the Abdallah Al-Salim High School in Kuwait.<sup>73</sup> Like all of the Hamas founders, Al-Mish`al was initially a Muslim Brotherhood activist. He became a follower of the organization and officially joined the movement in 1971 at the age of fifteen.<sup>74</sup>

Continuing his involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood, he headed a student organization at Kuwait University called the "List of the Islamic Right."<sup>75</sup> He received a degree in physics from Kuwait University in 1978<sup>76</sup> and lived in

Kuwait until 1990. Following Kuwait's expulsion of all Palestinians from that country as retribution for their support of Saddam Hussein's 1990 occupation of Kuwait, Al-Mish'al and his family left for Jordan.<sup>77</sup> Al-Mish'al was expelled from Jordan in 1999 and presently directs Hamas activities from Damascus.

#### **Mahmud Al-Zahar—Leader of Hamas in Gaza**



*History proves that this is the land of the Palestinian people and we will never give up any part of it. If our generation will not succeed to liberate all of historical Palestine, then that mission will be for the following generations.<sup>78</sup>*

*Oslo is not only dead, it has rotted.<sup>79</sup>*

*Negotiation is not our aim. Negotiation is a missile.<sup>80</sup>*

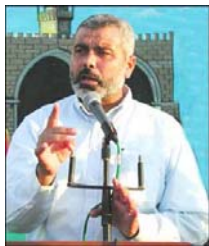
#### **Mahmud Al-Zahar, Hamas leader in Gaza**

Hamas's current leader in Gaza is Mahmud Khalid Al-Zahar. He is one of the founders of Hamas and served as Sheikh Ahmad Yassin's personal physician. Since the death of Sheikh Yassin in 2004, Al-Zahar has been considered part of Hamas's "collective leadership," which consists of Al-Zahar, Isma'il Haniya, and Said Siyam.<sup>81</sup> Al-Zahar, however, has become Hamas's most prominent spokesman in Gaza, and he continues to give weekly sermons at a mosque in Gaza.<sup>82</sup>

Al-Zahar was born in the Al-Zaytun district of Gaza City in 1945. He studied at `Ayn Shams University in Cairo, Egypt, graduated in 1971<sup>83</sup> with a medical degree, and remained in Cairo at the university for another five years to specialize in general surgery.<sup>84</sup> Al-Zahar returned to Gaza in 1976, where he became a lecturer at the department of medicine at the Islamic University of Gaza. At that time he joined the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>85</sup>

In 1987 Al-Zahar became one of the founders of Hamas, together with Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rantisi. Al-Zahar served as the organization's spokesman.<sup>86</sup> In 1989 Sheikh Yassin was arrested by the Israeli authorities and tried for ordering the murder of Palestinians who had collaborated with Israel. Sheikh Yassin was convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Together with Al-Rantisi, Al-Zahar took over the leadership of Hamas in Gaza. Subsequently, Al-Zahar became the unofficial representative of Hamas to the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1990.<sup>87</sup> In September 2003, he survived a targeted assassination attempt by Israel when his house was bombed by the Israeli Air Force.

### **Isma'il Haniya – Leader of the Hamas List for Palestinian Legislative Council**



Isma'il Haniya, Hamas's leading candidate in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, was born in 1962 in Al-Shati' refugee camp in Egypt-controlled Gaza. He received a degree in Arabic literature from the Islamic University in Gaza in 1987. At the university Haniya was active in Islamist activities and participated in the Palestinian intifada of 1987.<sup>88</sup>

Haniya was a close associate of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and became a prominent leader of Hamas after he was appointed as an assistant to Yassin in 1998.<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, he became Hamas's representative to the Palestinian Authority.<sup>90</sup> During the election campaign, Haniya appeared in election commercials on behalf of Hamas.<sup>91</sup> Although Hamas has not indicated its intentions with regard to which of its leaders will have posts in the new Palestinian government, Haniya is considered to be Hamas's choice for prime minister.

### **The Growing Prominence of the Hamas Political Bureau**

Following Israel's arrest of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in 1989, Hamas devised a strategy to ensure the continued operation of its leadership. Since the organization's establishment in 1987, Yassin had served as its leader and the central address for all of its activities. He received assistance from Muslim

Brotherhood activists in Jordan and maintained ties with Musa Abu Marzuq, a close associate from the Muslim Brotherhood who had departed from Gaza to study for his Ph.D. in the United States in 1974.<sup>92</sup>

Yassin's involvement in every aspect of Hamas activities and his centralized control over a small, tightly knit organization were nearly the cause of its downfall. His arrest by Israeli authorities in 1989 demonstrated the full extent of his involvement in all aspects of the organization's activities. Yassin was charged with premeditated murder, possession of weapons, incitement, the illegal transfer of \$500,000, assisting the escape of two convicts from prison, recruiting members for Hamas, and membership in an illegal organization.<sup>93</sup> In 1991, Yassin was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment plus fifteen years.<sup>94</sup>

The removal of Sheikh Yassin created a vacuum that temporarily destroyed the ability of Hamas to function. In his absence, the second tier of Hamas leadership, including individuals such as Ibrahim Ghawsha and `Imad Khalil Al-`Alami, who operated out of the Hamas office in Amman, Jordan, and Musa Abu Marzuq and Ahmad Bin Yusuf, who were living in the United States, rebuilt the organization's infrastructure. Abu Marzuq, one of the most senior leaders of Hamas abroad, became the acting leader of the movement and was appointed as the first chairman of the newly created Hamas Political Bureau in early 1991.<sup>95</sup>

The operations of the Hamas military wing, the `Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions, were transferred abroad to the responsibility of Abu Marzuq. From his home in Falls Church, Virginia, Abu Marzuq reinvigorated the activities of Hamas by selecting a new leadership cadre in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>96</sup> He also directed the terror activities of the `Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions<sup>97</sup> until his arrest in New York on terrorism charges in 1995.<sup>98</sup>

The current leader of Hamas, Khalid Al-Mish`al, also played a role in the metamorphosis of a new infrastructure for Hamas. Upon his arrival in Jordan in 1990, Al-Mish`al assumed responsibility for the international fund-raising efforts of Hamas at the organization's office in Amman.<sup>99</sup> After the arrest of Abu Marzuq in 1995, the fifty-member Hamas Consultative Council, or *Shura*, elected Al-Mish`al chairman of the Political Bureau,<sup>100</sup> but the official announcement of his appointment did not occur until eighteen months later, in December 1996.<sup>101</sup> Taking over Abu Marzuq's organizational portfolio, Al-Mish`al also assumed responsibility for the terror activities of the `Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions, which were relocated to the Hamas offices in Amman, Jordan, in 1995.<sup>102</sup>

Al-Mish`al was reelected political bureau chairman in March 2004.<sup>103</sup> Today the members of the Hamas Political Bureau include Abu Marzuq (who was deported



by the U.S. to Jordan in 1997 and returned to resume his activities as the bureau's vice chairman), Ibrahim Al-Ghawshah, Imad Khalil Al-`Alami, Muhammad Al-Nazzal, Sami Khater, and `Izzat Rashaq.<sup>104</sup>

From 1992 until 1999, Al-Mish`al led the Political Bureau from Amman, Jordan. He and three other Hamas representatives — Ibrahim Al-Ghawsha, Sami Khater, and `Izzat Rashaq<sup>105</sup>—were expelled from Jordan<sup>106</sup> on August 31, 1999.<sup>107</sup> From then until 2001 Al-Mish`al divided his time between Doha, Qatar, and Damascus, Syria.<sup>108</sup> Since 2001, Al-Mish`al has directed the organization's activities from Hamas offices located in Damascus.<sup>109</sup>

### **International Funds and Assistance to Hamas**

Since its establishment in 1991, the Hamas Political Bureau has metamorphosed to take on the responsibility of providing logistics and funding for Hamas terror operations. It has also acted as the liaison of Hamas to the Muslim world. As Abu Marzuq's deputy during the mid-1990s, Al-Mish`al served as the Hamas liaison to Muslim and Arab organizations.

In December 1993 Al-Mish`al participated in the international Popular Arab and Islamic Conference held in Khartoum, Sudan, which assembled an opposition front of Islamist radicals and Arab Marxists to oppose the September 1993 Oslo Accords. The conference was organized and sponsored by the Islamist radical government of Sudan, led by Hassan Al-Turabi. As the Hamas representative to the conference, Al-Mish`al declared that only a jihad would win back Palestinian land.<sup>110</sup> Naif Hawatmeh, the chairman of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, declared, "To hell with the Oslo-Washington agreement! We hope the conference will send a clear message—no!"<sup>111</sup>

As an integral part of his efforts to garner support for Hamas, Al-Mish`al headed numerous Hamas delegations to Muslim countries that had extended financial support to Hamas. He also maintained the movement's strong ties to Iran by meeting regularly with Iranian leaders, including then Iranian president Muhammad Khatami. At a 1999 meeting with Al-Mish`al and other radical Palestinian opposition leaders, President Khatami pledged, "The Islamic Revolution and the people of Iran will be with you."<sup>112</sup>

## Iran and Hamas



Hamas leaders Khalid Al-Mish`al and Musa Abu Marzuq meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed `Ali Khamene`i

Since its founding, Hamas has received funding for its social institutions from various Middle Eastern governments and from private donors. Through the early liaison efforts of Musa Abu Marzuq and Khalid Al-Mish`al, Iran became one of the chief financial sponsors of Hamas. In 1993, Iran promised a budget of some \$30 million to Hamas.<sup>113</sup> A 1994 report indicated that Iran provided \$3 million a year to both Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and one thousand families of Palestinian suicide bombers or detainees from both organizations received regular monthly payments from that country to support them.<sup>114</sup> In 1995, CIA Director James Woolsey stated that Iran had provided over \$100 million to Hamas, but did not provide details regarding the period of time over which the funds had been provided.<sup>115</sup> In 2002, an assessment by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service reported that Hamas was receiving between \$3 million and \$18 million each year from Iran, and was being paid \$35 million to fund terrorist attacks by Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) known in Farsi as VEVAK – *Vezerat- e Ettela'at va Amniat-e Keshvar*.<sup>116</sup> Hamas presently receives between \$30 million and \$50 million from Iran each year.<sup>117</sup>

In response to a request by Hamas, the Iranian government agreed to the opening of a Hamas embassy in Tehran in 1992. Hamas leader Imad Al-`Alami became the organization's first representative to Iran in 1993.<sup>118</sup> Iran also promised to provide training for 3,000 Hamas terrorists.<sup>119</sup> At that time, the Al-Quds Force (Jerusalem Force) of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) was tasked with providing Hamas with funding and training,<sup>120</sup> and specialized training camps for Hamas terror operatives were set up outside of Tehran.<sup>121</sup> Logistical support for Hamas activities was provided by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards<sup>122</sup> under the control of Iran's Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed `Ali Khamene`i, and by the Hizballah<sup>123</sup> movement in Lebanon. Iranian president Ahmadinejad is believed to have been a major figure in the formation of the Al-Quds Force<sup>124</sup> when he served as a senior officer in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' special "internal security"

brigade.<sup>125</sup> He reportedly served as the deputy commander of intelligence for the Al-Quds Force between 1989 and 1991.<sup>126</sup>

The Al-Quds Force, led today by General Qassam Sulaymani,<sup>127</sup> is responsible for providing logistical support for foreign terror organizations, including training, providing matériel, and cooperation, and its support of Hamas continues today.<sup>128</sup> It is also responsible for initiating and maintaining Iran's ties to Al-Qa`ida.<sup>129</sup> According to a U.S. intelligence analysis of the organization, the Al-Quds Force's training regimen includes guerrilla warfare operations and psychological warfare emphasizing the use of hand grenades, mines, booby-trap techniques, camouflage, and ambushes. The training that it provides for terrorist activities includes assassinations, kidnapping, torture, and the use of explosives. The analysis further stated that the Al-Quds Force has a presence in "most countries with substantial Muslim populations," and "their mission is to form relationships with Islamic militant and radical groups and offer financial support either to the groups at large or to Islamic figures within them who are sympathetic to the principles and foreign policy goals of the Iranian government."<sup>130</sup>

In recent years Palestinian Authority documents captured by the Israel Defense Forces indicate that Iran transferred large sums of money directly to the `Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions of Hamas. An intelligence report dated December 10, 2000, by Amin al-Hindi, then head of the Palestinian Authority's Palestinian General Intelligence, noted the transfer of funds by Iran to Hamas and other organizations opposed to the Palestinian Authority. The sum of \$400,000 was transferred by Iran to the `Iz al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions and another \$700,000 to other Islamist terror organizations opposed to the Palestinian Authority.

The document further indicated that the funds were intended to support the `Iz al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions and to encourage suicide bombings. The document also revealed that "Hamas leadership in Syria [i.e., the Political Bureau] maintains contact with operatives from the `Iz al-Din Al-Qassam Battalions in the Palestinian territories in all matters pertaining to carrying out military [i.e., terror] attacks against Israeli targets."<sup>131</sup>

During the years of Sheikh Yassin's leadership, Hamas received funding from Iran, but took great care to maintain its independence. Following the targeted assassination of Sheikh Yassin in 2004, the Hamas leadership – now headed by Khalid Al-Mish`al, whose Political Bureau had pioneered Hamas's ties to Iran – took their relationship one step further and invited the Iranians into Gaza.<sup>132</sup> Hamas has avoided a takeover of its local infrastructure by Hizballah and continues to maintain a certain level of independence as the result of Al-Mish`al's relationship with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah of Hizballah.<sup>133</sup>

In December 2005 Al-Mish`al visited Tehran, where he met with Iran's Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah `Ali Khamene`i, and the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran's official broadcasting network, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, quoted Khamene`i's words of encouragement to Al-Mish`al: "Resistance along with unity and adherence to Islam's statutes is the sole way to insure the Palestinian liberation in the future of the country's people." Khamene`i further declared, "[The] intifada proved that the Palestinian nation is mightier than the Zionist regime and America."<sup>134</sup>

Al-Mish`al also met with Iranian president Ahmadinejad. Following the meeting, in a statement released from Ahmadinejad's office the Iranian president stated, "We are all obliged to heed our religious and divine responsibilities in offering services to the Palestinian movement."

Ahmadinejad continued, "The Palestinian movement is not a movement restricted to a particular geographic region, but a movement of the entire Islamic *Ummah* [nation] that defines the future fate of Islam, and that is precisely why the enemies of Islam show so much sensitivity toward the Palestine issue."<sup>135</sup>

Ahmadinejad concluded:

Resistance is the secret for embracing victory, and the main ideal of the Islamic world is the liberation of the entire land of Palestine, the repatriation of all Palestinian refugees to their motherland, and the establishment of a popular political system in Palestine. The honor of Islam needs to be upheld, and we should all keep in mind that it is God that grants victory. Therefore, we all need to have full trust in God, and remain pious, since piety is the secret of our victory against our enemies.<sup>136</sup>

In response to Ahmadinejad's remarks, Al-Mish`al stated, "The Palestinian nation, Hamas movement [sic] and the Islamic world appreciate the stance adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran against the usurper regime of Israel and are proud of those stands that are serving the interests of the Islamic nations and the Islamic world." He continued:

Hamas is committed to restore the natural rights of the Palestinian nation and to liberate all of the occupied territories, including occupied Holy Quds [Jerusalem]. We do not recognize the legitimacy of Israel and are committed to continue with the resistance movement aimed at ending occupation and repatriating all of the refugees.<sup>137</sup>

Al-Mish`al further stated, "Despite all the pressure, the Palestinians have become more determined in their struggles, and Hamas will never give up its fundamental strategy, which is resistance."<sup>138</sup>

During his trip to Tehran, Al-Mish`al declared on December 15, 2005, that Hamas would increase its attacks against Israel if Israel took military action against Iran's facilities for the development of nuclear weapons:

Just as Islamic Iran defends the rights of the Palestinians, we defend the rights of Islamic Iran. We are part of a united front against the enemies of Islam.

Al-Mish`al concluded:

Each member of this front defends itself with its own means in its region. We carry the battle in Palestine. If Israel launches an attack against Iran, we will expand the battlefield in Palestine. We are part of a united front, and if one member of this front is attacked, it is our duty to support them.<sup>139</sup>

More recently, in January 2006 Iranian president Ahmadinejad met with Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish`al in Damascus, together with the heads of other Palestinian terrorist organizations, including Ramadan Abdallah Shallah of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine and Ahmad Jibril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. After meeting with Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, Ahmadinejad stated:

As far as the Palestinian issue is concerned, we share an absolutely similar position. We believe Palestine is the property of the Palestinians and therefore we will support their struggle. We see their struggle as the only way to expel the enemy and recognize the right of the Palestinian people. In this respect we support the right of return for Palestinian refugees.<sup>140</sup>

## Financial Support from Abroad



### Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

Charitable organizations operating in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries, and the West form the support network for Hamas's infrastructure throughout Gaza and the West Bank. In 2003, between \$25 million and \$30 million – the majority of the annual Hamas budget – came from these sources.<sup>141</sup>

Hamas has been supported by Saudi Arabia since its early days in Gaza, and has enjoyed support from nonofficial organizations and individuals in the Gulf states.<sup>142</sup> In 1998 the Saudi government welcomed Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin as an official guest of the kingdom and presented him with a gift of \$25 million that was donated by a member of the royal family. The Saudi royal family member was reported to be then Crown Prince Abdallah,<sup>143</sup> who is today King Abdallah.

Saudi funds for Hamas have been also collected and disbursed by official Saudi government bodies and private organizations. Documents captured from the Palestinian Authority by Israel in 2002 indicate that funds from Saudi Arabia's International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) were sent to local Hamas charitable committees, also known as *zakat* committees.<sup>144</sup> A document from the IIRO that was submitted to the Palestinian Authority listed fourteen committees and organizations that were given a total of \$280,000. All fourteen were affiliated with Hamas. The report noted that the funds were provided for the support of the Hamas committees and organizations as well as for those who were killed and wounded<sup>145</sup> in clashes with Israeli troops.

Additionally, a letter dated January 9, 2001, from the Palestinian Authority representative in Saudi Arabia to Yasir Arafat provides a list of individuals who were killed in the intifada; the list was given to him by the Saudi Committee to Support the Al-Quds Intifada. Payments from the committee were made to the families of the individuals on the list, of whom the majority were Hamas

terrorists. Hamas itself claimed responsibility for these attacks and specifically named the individuals involved. The remainder was from joint attacks between members of Hamas and Arafat's Fatah organization.<sup>146</sup>

In May 2002, Saudi Arabia Television Channel 1 broadcast a national telethon to raise funds for the Saudi Committee to Support the Al-Quds Intifada (also known as the Saudi Committee for the Relief of the Palestinian People), which was created by Prince Na'if bin Abd Al-Aziz, the Saudi Minister of the Interior, in 2000.<sup>147</sup> The telethon committee responsible for raising the funds and their disbursement consisted of the Saudi Ministries of Information and Interior, the Governorate of Riyadh, and the Saudi Committee for Supporting the Al-Quds Intifada. Saudi Arabia's interior minister, Prince Na'if, was responsible for the "overall operation of depositing the money into the special account" of the Saudi Committee at the National Commercial Bank in Saudi Arabia.<sup>148</sup>

Muhammad Al-Biker, the executive manager of the Saudi Committee to Support the Al-Quds Intifada, told the Saudi newspaper *Arab News*, "We support the families of Palestinian martyrs, without differentiating between whether the Palestinian was a bomber or was killed by Israeli troops."<sup>149</sup> The newspaper further noted, "*Arab News* has been shown official documents of the deposits to the families of Palestinian martyrs. The signatures, full name, and ID number of the recipients are clearly shown. During the past one year and a half, the committee carried out successfully 13 programs in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The Saudi Committee for Supporting Al-Quds Intifada [sic] undertakes 12 programs in the occupied territories."<sup>150</sup>

Another captured document from the Palestinian Authority dated March 17, 2002, indicated that the Hamas-affiliated Tulkarm Zakat (Charitable) Society received its tenth payment totaling 2,040,000 Saudi riyals – \$545,000 – from the Saudi Committee to Support the Al-Quds Intifada. The payments were made to 102 families whose sons were killed during the intifada, and 20,000 Saudi riyals – \$5,340 were paid to each family. The list includes the names of known Hamas "martyrs" – i.e., suicide bombers – who carried out attacks in Israel.<sup>151</sup>

In 2003 a reported 60 percent of Hamas's budget – between \$12 million and \$14 million – came from Saudi Arabia.<sup>152</sup> As result of U.S. pressure, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states reduced their funding of Hamas in 2004.<sup>153</sup> A year later, however, Saudi Arabia renewed its funding of Hamas through the Saudi Committee to Support the Al-Quds Intifada. In August 2005 an appeal was made on Saudi Arabia's Iqra` TV to raise funds for the Saudi Committee to Support the

Al-Quds Intifada. Donors to the committee were requested to send their donations to “Joint Account 98” which is located at “all banks in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”<sup>154</sup>

In September 2005, a senior Hamas leader named Ya`aqub Abu`Assab from the Jerusalem neighborhood of Al-Sawana was arrested by Israeli security forces. Abu `Assab, who was active in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and Ramallah is believed to have acted as a West Bank Hamas liaison to Hamas headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Abu `Assab reportedly admitted to investigators that he received hundreds of thousands of dollars from Hamas headquarters in Saudi Arabia. He also reportedly received instructions for Hamas activities from Saudi Arabia and reported on Hamas activities in his area.<sup>155</sup>

### **Funding from Western Europe**

Hamas continues to receive funds from a number of nonprofit charitable organizations in Europe. Two organizations linked to Hamas funding - Le Comite de Bienfaisance et le Solidarite avec la Palestine (CBSP) in France and InterPal – the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund in Britain – were declared illegal terrorist organizations by the Israeli government in May 1997.<sup>156</sup> The CBSP was designated as an SGDT by the United States in 2003.<sup>157</sup> Four offices of the organization operate in France in Paris, Lyon, Lille, and Marseilles. It raises funds among the Muslim population in France, particularly in mosques and Islamic centers focusing on the Palestinian and North African communities. The amount of funds raised by CBSP for Hamas is estimated to be millions of dollars a year.<sup>158</sup>

InterPal, or the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund in the UK, reportedly transferred \$6 million to Hamas institutions in 2002. An estimated \$3 million-\$4 million of the funds was used by Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>159</sup> InterPal was designated as an SGDT by the United States in August 2003.<sup>160</sup> The U.S. Treasury Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence described InterPal’s activities in the following manner:

Interpal, headquartered in the UK, has been a principal charity utilized to hide the flow of money to Hamas. Reporting indicates it is the conduit through which money flows to Hamas from other charities, e.g., the Al Aqsa Foundation, and that it oversees the activities of other charities. For example, the Sanabil Association for Relief and Development represents



Interpal in Lebanon. Reporting also indicates that Interpal is the fundraising coordinator of Hamas, a coordination point for other Hamas-affiliated charities. This role is of the type that includes supervising activities of charities, developing new charities in targeted areas, instructing how funds should be transferred from one charity to another, and even determining public relations policy.<sup>161</sup>

InterPal raises funds in the UK among the Muslim population in that country and transfers funds to Hamas-linked charitable and social welfare institutions in the Palestinian Authority areas. The majority of the funds collected by InterPal are collected at Islamic centers, mosques, Muslim conventions, fundraisers, and other social activities.<sup>162</sup>

Hamas also continues to receive funds from the Al-Aqsa Foundation, which operated in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Pakistan, South Africa, and Yemen.<sup>163</sup> In 2001 the Al-Aqsa office in Holland raised \$650,000; in 2002 it raised 600,000 Euros.<sup>164</sup> In 2002 its office in Aachen, Germany, was closed by the German government, and in April 2003, Dutch authorities froze the Al-Aqsa Foundation's accounts.<sup>165</sup> Additionally, criminal charges have been filed against three officials of the Al-Aqsa Foundation in Denmark for supporting terrorism.<sup>166</sup>

Nevertheless, the Al-Aqsa Foundation's activities have continued through its other European offices, and via a separate charitable organization in Belgium called the Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA). In 2004, the IARA was designated as an SDGT by the U.S. Treasury Department, which describes the organization as being "responsible for moving funds to the Palestinian territories for use in terrorist activities, notably serving as a conduit to Hamas." The Treasury report continued, "In part, funds were raised through IARA collection boxes marked 'Allah' and 'Israel,' signaling the funds would be directed towards attacks against Israelis. Within the last year, IARA was reportedly linked to the Belgium office of the Al-Aqsa Foundation, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist."<sup>167</sup>

## Activities in the U.S.



Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzuq

Support for Hamas in the United States has been expressed through several organizations, including the now-defunct Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), which distributed an English translation of the Hamas Covenant<sup>168</sup> and the organization's communiqués.<sup>169</sup> A second organization, the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, raised funds that have been used to recruit Hamas suicide bombers and to support the families of the suicide bombers. On December 4, 2001, President George W. Bush announced the freezing of the Holy Land Foundation's assets and its designation as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the U.S. Treasury:

Hamas has obtained much of the money that it pays for murder abroad right here in the United States, money originally raised by the Holy Land Foundation. The Holy Land Foundation is registered with the IRS as a tax-exempt charity based in Richardson. It raised \$13 million from people in America last year. The Holy Land Foundation claims that the money it solicits goes to care for needy Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Money raised by the Holy Land Foundation is used by Hamas to support schools and indoctrinate children to grow up into suicide bombers. Money raised by the Holy Land Foundation is also used by Hamas to recruit suicide bombers and to support their families.<sup>170</sup>

Subsequent to the arrest of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin in 1989, the external leadership of Hamas led by Musa Abu Marzuq took over the leadership of the movement. From 1989 until 1992, Abu Marzuq reorganized the leadership structure of the movement in Gaza and the West Bank<sup>171</sup> by appointing new leadership<sup>172</sup> and sending directives to the West Bank and Gaza from his residence in Falls Church, Virginia.<sup>173</sup>

During that time Abu Marzuq appointed Muhammad Salah of Bridgeview, Illinois, to be in charge of Hamas's "military affairs,"<sup>174</sup> which made him responsible for appointing commanders of the 'Iz Al-Din Al-Qassam

Battalions – the wing of the movement responsible for terror attacks – in the West Bank and Gaza. He also disbursed funds and directed their distribution for the terror activities of Hamas by using his own bank accounts.<sup>175</sup> From 1990 to 1994, six Hamas attacks were carried out with funds provided by Musa Abu Marzuq. The terrorists who carried out the attacks were recruited by members of the Al-Qassam Battalions who were appointed by Abu Marzuq from the United States.

Muhammad Salah was arrested in Israel in January 1993 for being a member of Hamas and transferring funds to the organization from the United States.<sup>176</sup> He was convicted of being a Hamas operative and sentenced to five years imprisonment; and was released in November 1997.<sup>177</sup>

Eight months after his return to the U.S., Salah was arrested by the FBI on suspicion of transferring funds from a nonprofit organization called the Qur'anic Literacy Institute (QLI) located in Bridgeview, Illinois, to Hamas.<sup>178</sup> In June 1998, \$1.4 million in assets belonging to him, his wife, and the QLI were seized by the Federal authorities.<sup>179</sup> Salah was alleged to be involved in a money-laundering operation for the purpose of funding Hamas terror attacks in Israel.<sup>180</sup>

More recently, the family of an American victim of Hamas terrorism filed a civil suit in the United States against U.S. organizations involved in supporting Hamas. In December 2004, a Chicago court awarded \$156 million in damages to the Boim family, whose son David was murdered in a Hamas attack in Israel. The jury found the Holy Land Foundation, the Islamic Association for Palestine, Muhammad Salah, and the Qur'anic Literacy Institute liable in the young man's murder because they helped to finance Hamas.<sup>181</sup> The defendants in the case have filed an appeal.

### **Saddam Hussein's Support of Hamas**

*We are glad of the Istishhadiyah [martyrdom] and heroic spirit of the Palestinian people. By Allah, what the Palestinian people does is beyond my expectations...*<sup>182</sup>

Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein

Following the collapse of the Oslo Accords in 2000, Khalid Al-Mish'al spent a great deal of time visiting Baghdad to confer with Taha Yasin Ramadan, the

former vice president of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime. From September 2000 through the early months of 2003, the Hussein regime provided awards of \$25,000 to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers, including those of Hamas.<sup>183</sup> According to the Arab Liberation Front, a Palestinian pro-Ba'athist organization operating within the Palestinian Authority, Hussein's government paid \$25,000 to each family of a suicide bomber, and \$10,000 to other Palestinians killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers, for a total of \$35 million.<sup>184</sup>

At a pro-Iraq rally called by Hamas in Gaza in early January 2003, the leader of Hamas in Gaza at that time, Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rantisi, called upon Iraqis to use suicide bombings against American forces in Iraq: "Prepare an army of would-be martyrs [suicide bombers] and prepare tens of thousands of explosive belts. The American aggressors, the American invaders are now on Iraqi soil; therefore, Iraqis must confront them with all possible means, including martyrdom [suicide] operations."<sup>185</sup>

Al-Rantisi continued, "Blow yourselves up against the American army. Bomb them in Baghdad. We say to the United States that their flag will go down while the Iraqi flag shall fly everywhere."<sup>186</sup> Hamas founder Sheikh Yassin echoed the call by urging Iraqis "to destroy every [American] tank, to kill every [American] soldier."<sup>187</sup>

## **Hamas and Al-Qa`ida**



While Hamas has focused its energies on Palestinian-controlled areas, Al-Qa`ida has emerged as a sister Sunni Muslim extremist terror organization with Muslim Brotherhood roots. It was therefore not surprising that Hamas has had some contact and cooperation with Al-Qa`ida. At the same time, Hamas's desire is to keep its followers focused on the Palestinian cause as its special role in the larger jihadist movement. In Hamas's view, Al-Qa`ida's role is to focus on the larger conflict, while Hamas's task is to focus on its jihad against Israel.

In June 2000, Nabil 'Ukal was arrested for allegedly planning to carry out a series of terrorist attacks in Israel. 'Ukal was reportedly first sent by Hamas to Pakistan in 1997,<sup>188</sup> where he studied terrorism tactics in the training camps of Al-Qa`ida.<sup>189</sup> A network of Palestinians within Al-Qa`ida assisted him in traveling to the training camps and subsequently became his contacts to the organization when he returned to Gaza and initiated his plans to carry out attacks there.<sup>190</sup>

'Ukal was instructed upon his return to set up a network in Israel to recruit and train Palestinian operatives for the organization.<sup>191</sup> In September 2000, he was charged with receiving military training in the terrorist camps of Al-Qa`ida, belonging to the radical Hamas movement, and plotting to build mobile-phone bombs and kidnap Israeli soldiers.<sup>192</sup>

Several months after his arrest, an additional twenty-two members of the network were arrested. Members of the network included operatives of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad from the West Bank and Gaza and members of the Islamic Movement from the Israeli Arab population. The recruits were to be sent to Al-Qa`ida training camps in Afghanistan.<sup>193</sup>

'Ukal also reportedly received financial and other types of assistance from the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Yassin. After he returned from his 1997 trip to the training camps, Sheikh Yassin learned of 'Ukal's training and provided him with \$5,000. Subsequently, Yassin gave 'Ukal another \$5,000 when 'Ukal told him that he planned to go back for additional training from Al-Qa`ida in June 2000. 'Ukal was prevented from departing for a second course of training when he was arrested while attempting to depart from Gaza International Airport.<sup>194</sup>

In recent years, Hamas has viewed Al-Qa`ida as a reinforcement against local competition from Hizballah, which has been competing with Hamas for followers among the Palestinians. It has also made a number of efforts to make contact with Al-Qa`ida in order to bolster its operational and financial capabilities. Jordanian security sources reported in 2003 that two agents of Hamas went to Afghanistan to recruit members of the Al-Qa`ida network to join its operations.<sup>195</sup> Hamas operatives were also reported to have made contact with Al-Qa`ida for financing and operational purposes. Additionally, three Hamas operatives were arrested by Israel in 2003 after they returned from an Al-Qa`ida training camp in Afghanistan.<sup>196</sup>

## **Hamas and Fatah**

The relationship between Hamas and Fatah has been a complex one. At various times, both organizations have cooperated with one another and, at other times, openly confronted one other with violence.

Since the emergence of Hamas in 1988, there has been an atmosphere of competition between the followers of Yasir Arafat's Fatah movement and the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood who established Hamas. With the advent of the Oslo Accords in 1994 and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, efforts were made by Arafat's Fatah movement and Hamas to arrive at a mutual understanding to avoid internecine violence. These efforts have led to a series of informal agreements between the PA and Hamas.

In September 1995, an understanding was reached between the PA and Hamas. It provided for an undertaking by Hamas not to carry out terror attacks in or launch attacks from territory controlled by the Palestinian Authority.<sup>197</sup> This provision allowed Hamas to continue carrying out terror attacks while avoiding causing the PA embarrassment.

Over the past decade the PA also made efforts to co-opt members of Hamas within its own political structure by appointing members of the movement to ministerial positions, including the Gaza Hamas leader Imad Faluji, who served as the Palestinian Authority's minister of sports. Efforts of the PA to recruit members of Hamas into the PA's Preventive Security Services (PSS) were a prominent feature of the PA's policy toward Hamas. Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Authority's PSS in Gaza, declared in a 1998 interview that the recruitment of such individuals into his Preventive Security Service is a "personal goal": "We have enlisted into the ranks of the Preventive Security Service many of our brothers active in other organizations opposed to the [peace] agreement and I have considered this to be a personal goal."<sup>198</sup>

In April 2005 Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas made another effort to co-opt armed members of Hamas and other terrorist organizations into the Palestinian security services; they were required to pledge in writing that they would refrain from carrying out terror attacks in exchange for a job in the Palestinian security forces or in one of the Palestinian Authority's government ministries.<sup>199</sup> Although a reported 90 percent of the members of the terrorist organizations signed the pledge and accepted positions within the Palestinian Authority, they simultaneously continued their violent activities.

Today, as a result of Hamas's victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, in recent days Hamas has been making demands of Fatah. On February

8, 2006, Hamas demanded that PA president Abbas turn over three of the Palestinian Authority's security force branches that were controlled by Fatah to come under the command of Hamas. They include the "regular" police, the counterintelligence force, and civil defense.<sup>200</sup> Abbas has thus far refused to do so.

## Conclusion



## Hamas's Victory in the Palestinian Elections

*Hamas will not recognize Israel. We will not give legitimacy to occupation.*<sup>201</sup>

Hamas leader Khalid Al- Mish`al, February 2006

*Hamas is not shocked by this overwhelming victory. We did not fall upon Gaza from the moon. We are living in this society and know what the street wants and what their conscience is. As for a future government, we are putting all the possibilities on the table. What has the Israeli government presented to us? Nothing. Oslo is not only dead, it has rotted.*<sup>202</sup>

Mahmud Al-Zahar, Hamas leader in Gaza, January 2006

Although Hamas had anticipated a great increase in its political power within the Palestinian Authority as a result of its winning the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, it did not announce a detailed plan for the reform of the Palestinian Authority. In actuality, Hamas had hoped that it would become an influential force within the Palestinian Authority rather than the governing structure of the Palestinian Authority. In a pre-election interview with Al-Jazeera, Mahmud Al-Zahar explained Hamas's political agenda for the Palestinian elections: "We have to cut our relations in all levels with the Israelis

and to establish and strengthen our relations with the Arabic and Islamic world through the Egyptian and Jordanian channels. Also, we have to establish an independent economic system and run a very effective educational system. We want to reconstruct Palestinian infrastructure and establish an efficient health services mechanism. All these are known for everybody, and it is not the time to speak about the details.”<sup>203</sup>

In effect, Hamas was as surprised as the rest of Palestinians that it won 74 out of 132 seats in the council. However, Hamas must still create a coalition with other parties in order to form a government. It is presently hoping that it will be able to co-opt members of Fatah and other parties to help it rule.

While many in the West hope that Hamas will change to become somehow more moderate, statements by Hamas leaders since the elections have reaffirmed the organization’s ideological commitment and desire to continue its jihad against Israel. Hamas continues to view the world with a long-term strategy based on generations rather than decades, and the latest development for them is just one more step in their plan of establishing an extremist Islamic state “*min al-nahr ‘ila al-bahr*” – from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. As an indication of Hamas’s vision for the future, Hamas founder and ideologue Sheikh Ahmad Yassin preached to his followers that Israel would be destroyed by 2027: “I had it from the Qur’an and then from reading history. The Qur’an promises Muslims victory and what God says will be fulfilled.”<sup>204</sup>

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