



The United States Designates Muslim Brotherhood Branches as Terrorist Organizations

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Overview¹

- ▶ The Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928, became one of the central movements of political Islam, with branches throughout the Middle East and in Western countries. The movement is based on the belief that "Islam is the solution," with a vision of establishing the worldwide rule of Muslim law (sharia).
- ▶ Although the movement claims that it promotes its vision by peaceful means, via a socio-economic network and psychological preparation, extremist factions emerged from within it which support violence and terrorism, with Hamas as the most prominent example. As a result, **several countries have outlawed the movement, including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.**
- ▶ **In January 2026, the American administration designated the movement's branches in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, and the leader of the Lebanese branch, as terrorist entities due to their support for Hamas.** The Lebanese branch, al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, was also designated a terrorist organization because it attacked Israel alongside Hezbollah during the Israel-Lebanon war.
- ▶ The current American move came after years of unsuccessful efforts by the administration to outlaw the movement. Hamas' October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre, together with pro-Hamas demonstrations across the United States, and recognition of the potential threat posed by the movement which aspires to "destroy Western civilization from within," changed the administration's position and led to the first official action against the movement's branches.
- ▶ However, the movement as a whole has not been designated as a terrorist organization and its activity in the United States has not been banned. That is perceived as a compromise by the administration, given various political and legal difficulties, and a desire not to confront close allies, Qatar and Turkey, both of which are the movement's largest supporters, provide backing to Hamas and are involved in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ **In ITIC assessment, the American designation reflects the administration's dissatisfaction with the Islamist agenda promoted by the Muslim Brotherhood in the West in general and the United States in particular. However, since the three designated branches are already in confrontation with the local governments in their respective countries, and as long as Qatar and Turkey continue to sponsor the Muslim Brotherhood and prevent more tangible steps against the movement, the American designation will have little impact on the continued activity of the Muslim Brotherhood, primarily in Western countries.**

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

Background²

- ▶ The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 as a protest movement against the British occupation of Egypt. Over the years, however, it underwent transformations and expanded into hundreds of branches and affiliates worldwide.
- ▶ At the core of the movement's ideology is the worldview that "Islam is the solution" to all the afflictions of the Arab and Muslim world, which stem from challenges posed by the West and its values. The movement does not distinguish between religious and political issues, advocates spreading Islamic values throughout the world and establishing a supranational political entity governed in accordance with *sharia* (Islamic law). A key component in realizing this vision is the idea of "preparing hearts" through extensive educational and cultural systems which will lay the social and political foundations for achieving the movement's goals.



The movement's logo (al-Jazeera, January 18, 2014)

- ▶ Over the years the movement's decentralized structure and personal rivalries within the leadership led to broad interpretation of how to implement the ideology, with pragmatic factions operating alongside conservative forces and extremist factions expressing support for political violence and terrorism. Two rival leadership centers currently exist, one operating in Turkey led by Mahmoud Hussein and the other operating from London led by Salah Abdel Haqq. Both are Egyptian activists who fled Cairo in 2013 after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood government and the seizure of power by the army commander, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, now president of the state.
- ▶ The Hamas charter defines the movement as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.³ Although Hamas is widely designated as a terrorist organization, it maintains ties with organizations affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood operating in other countries, including the West, ranging from operational cooperation in promoting

² See the March 2011 ITIC report, [The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic mass movement whose worldview is based on the belief that "Islam is the solution" and on the stated aim of establishing a world order based on Islamic religious law \(a caliphate\) on the ruins of Western liberalism](#), and the December 2011 report, [The Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab World and Islamic Communities in Western Europe](#)

³ See the January 2006 ITIC report, terrorism-information.org.il/en/18894.

terrorist frameworks, fundraising and transfer of donations, to influence and "awareness" activity to advance the movement's goals.⁴

- ▶ In recent years, many countries have outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood:
 - ◆ Following the violent unrest that erupted in Egypt in the summer of 2013 when the army took control of state institutions and removed Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamed Morsi from the presidency, the new regime designated the movement as a terrorist organization (BBC, December 25, 2013). Over the years, Egypt also exerted pressure on the United States to take a similar step (al-Jazeera, April 30, 2019).
 - ◆ Following the measures Egypt took against the movement, Cairo's allies among the Gulf State joined the campaign. Saudi Arabia designated the movement a terrorist organization in March 2014 (BBC, March 7, 2014), the UAE in November 2014 (Reuters, November 16, 2014) and Bahrain in 2017 (al-Jazeera, July 6, 2017).
 - ◆ For years the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was considered an ally of the Hashemite monarchy. However, the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan in 1994 created tensions which escalated with the wave of Arab Spring protests which began at the end of 2010, and the regime attempted to limit the movement's power. In April 2025, Jordanian security services announced the exposure of a Muslim Brotherhood cell which possessed advanced technology for manufacturing missiles and UAVs, after which the government outlawed the movement and banned its activity in the kingdom (The New Arab, April 30, 2025).
 - ◆ In September 2025, Kenya designated the movement a terrorist organization over concerns in Nairobi that it was creating an infrastructure for religious radicalization and violent activity at a time when the country was under terrorist attack by al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda's affiliate in the Horn of Africa operating from neighboring Somalia (Kenya Times, September 21, 2025; Citizen Digital, September 22, 2025).
 - ◆ In Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood stands at a crossroads. The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 and the rise of the new regime of Ahmad al-Sharaa ostensibly provided an opportunity for the movement to return to prominent activity after years in which it was pushed to the margins and was almost non-existent following the violent repression by the Hafez al-Assad regime, centered on the massacre in the city of Hama in 1982. Following the fall of the regime, the Syrian branch issued a statement of support for the transitional government, called for preserving stability in the state and expressed readiness to participate in rebuilding its institutions (website of the Syrian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, December 22, 2024). However, in August 2025, the communications adviser to the president of Syria, Ahmad Muwafaq Zaidan, published an article entitled "When Will the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria Dissolve Itself?" in which he justified it as a necessary step to prevent internal divisions and enable mass participation in building the state (al-Jazeera, August 22, 2025). Al-Sharaa himself was also quoted as denying he was an "extension" of any Islamic organizations, including the

⁴ See the September 2025 ITIC report, [The Global Sumud \("Perseverance"\) Flotilla in the Service of Hamas](#), the December 2023 report, [The organizations leading the pro-Hamas demonstrations in Britain since the outbreak of Operation Iron Swords](#) and the March 2024 report, [Support for Hamas in Belgium and the Netherlands since the Outbreak of the Swords of Iron War](#).

Muslim Brotherhood (Sky News Arabic, August 27, 2025). In response, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria published a new policy document entitled "Coexistence in Syria," presenting its vision of Syria as a democratic state based on popular sovereignty, separation of powers, rule of law, peaceful transfer of power and ensuring the state's monopoly on weapons (Syrian Observer, October 23, 2025).

The American Designation

- ▶ On November 24, 2025, Executive Order 14362 was signed, which instructed the secretaries of state and the treasury to prepare for designating the Muslim Brotherhood branches in Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt as foreign terrorist organizations due to support for violence and destabilization campaigns against their own states and American interests. The order explained why those three branches were chosen: the military[-terrorist] wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Lebanon, al-Fajr Forces, joined Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestinian terrorist organizations in firing rockets at civilian and military targets inside Israel after the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre;⁵ on October 7, 2023, a Muslim Brotherhood leader in Egypt called for attacks on United States partners and American interests; and for an extended period of time Muslim Brotherhood leaders in Jordan provided material assistance to the Hamas military-terrorist wing (White House website, November 24, 2025).
- ▶ On January 13, 2026, in accordance with the executive order, the Treasury Department designated the three branches and Mohammad Takkoush, who heads the Lebanese branch, as specially designated global terrorists (SDGT) (United States Treasury Department website, January 13, 2026). The State Department designated the Lebanese branch, known as al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) due to attacking Israel and planning attacks, and its rapprochement to the Hamas-Hezbollah axis. Under the sanctions, all assets of the three branches and of Takkoush held by American individuals and entities were frozen. American citizens and institutions were prohibited from conducting business with them, effectively cutting them off from the international financial system. The designations also allow for criminal proceedings for membership or support of the branches and for preventing operatives from entering the United States (State Department website, January 13, 2026).



Right: Takkoush with former Hamas leader Isma'il Haniyeh (Telegram channel of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, July 5, 2024). Left: Al-Fajr Forces' operatives (Lebanon Debate, April 2, 2025)

- ▶ Shortly before the federal administration took official action against the Muslim Brotherhood, independent steps were taken by Republican governors. In November 2025,

⁵ See the August 2024 ITIC report, [The Organizations Assisting Hezbollah in Combat Against Israel](#)

Texas Governor Greg Abbott designated the movement a terrorist organization (Texas governor's website, November 18, 2025), and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis did the same about a month later (Florida governor's website, December 8, 2025). Both governors also banned the activity of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the most important Muslim organization in the United States, headquartered in Washington with branches in various states, on the grounds that it had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and was involved in fundraising for Hamas. However, the organization petitioned the courts against the decisions, arguing that they were unconstitutional since governors lack authority to advance take such measures against an American organization and the decision had not been made in accordance with due process (al-Jazeera, December 9, 2025; Florida Phoenix, December 16, 2025).

Responses

- ▶ The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood in London rejected the American measure, calling it a move lacking factual basis and the result of pressure exerted on the administration by Israel and the UAE (Muslim Brotherhood website, January 13, 2026).
- ▶ Suhaib Abdel Maqoud, a Muslim Brotherhood spokesperson in Turkey, claimed the movement had no connection to the branches designated by the United States and called it a reflection of anti-Islamic American positions. He said the movement would use all the legal and political tools at its disposal to confront the measure (Arabi 21, January 15, 2026).
- ▶ Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Lebanon called it an American political and administrative decision not based on any Lebanese or international judicial ruling and without legal impact in Lebanon. The movement further claimed the decision served "the interests of the Israeli occupation," calling itself a licensed political and social part Lebanon, operating openly and within the framework of the law, and rejecting any form of terrorism and violence. The movement also expressed readiness to conduct a "responsible and open" dialogue to "clarify the facts" (Telegram channel of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, January 13, 2026).
- ▶ While in Egypt and Jordan the announcement was welcomed, the Lebanese government did not respond. However, the military-terrorist wing of al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya is one of the armed bodies required to disarm as part of the implementation of the state's monopoly on weapons (Foundation for Defense of Democracies, January 15, 2026).

Factors Influencing the Change in the Administration's Position

- ▶ The American administration designation sets a precedent in action against the Muslim Brotherhood movement after years of internal American debate. In the past, the federal government designated organizations and movements affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood due to terrorist activity, the most prominent cases being Hamas in 1997 and the armed organization HASM (Arms of Egypt movement, Harakat Sawa'd Misr) in Egypt in 2018. However, no direct action was taken against official branches of the movement because of opposition from elements within the administration and from research institutes and civil society organizations.
- ▶ In addition, since 2014, several attempts were made in the Senate and the House of Representatives for bills to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization, but the proposals did not pass (al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 6, 2021). The most recent bill, submitted in both chambers of Congress in July 2025, stated Hamas was a branch of the

Muslim Brotherhood and cited the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, in which more than 50 American citizens were murdered or abducted. It further stated that Muslim Brotherhood branches sought to undermine United States allies and partners across the Middle East, including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and were outlawed by governments in those countries (Congress website, July 15, 2025).

- ▶ The decentralized nature of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and the difficulty of conclusively proving its involvement in terrorism because of its extensive use of associations and subsidiary charities to advance its activities, prevented targeted moves against the movement as a whole or against official branches. However, the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre and the pro-Palestinian and pro-Hamas demonstrations on campuses and in city centers, during which calls were heard for a global intifada and antisemitic slogans were chanted, led to a change in the administration's position toward the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly since the beginning of the current administration in January 2025.⁶
- ▶ Meanwhile, the movement's vision was reexamined. It had been formulated during the time of its founder, Hassan al-Banna, and called for spreading Islam throughout the world and establishing international Islamic hegemony. In November 2025, the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) published a 265-page report entitled "The Muslim Brotherhood's Strategic Entryism Into The United States: A Systemic Analysis,"⁷ which laid out the movement's doctrine and showed how the movement implemented its long-term strategy to realize its ideological vision through the "conquest" of American society from within, and proposed ways to confront the challenge. The report focused primarily on two movement documents:
 - ◆ "The Hundred-Year Strategic Plan for Expanding Islamic Influence in Western Society," a 1982 document discovered during a police raid on the home of a Muslim Brotherhood activist in Switzerland in 2001. The document presented the movement as a multinational body rather than a collection of national organizations and exposed a long-term, multi-generational plan designed to gradually expand influence within Western societies through the cultural, institutional and ideological integration of Islamic actors and ideas.
 - ◆ "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America," an internal document from 1991 written by Mohamed Akram, secretary of the Muslim Brotherhood's Shura Council in North America, and presented as evidence during the trial the Holy Land Foundation, which was accused of financing Hamas. The document stated that "the brothers must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying Western civilization from within." However, according to the document, it is not jihad in the military sense, but using the non-violent means of influencing religious, educational, social, economic, political, legal and media institutions.
- ▶ The report also presented the activity of various pro-Palestinian organizations across the United States since October 7, 2023, and the extensive network of pro-Palestinian organizations and various Islamic organizations which in practice promoted the Muslim

⁶ See the December 2023 ITIC report, [In the streets and social networks: the organizations that support Hamas and lead the anti-Israel demonstrations in the United States](#).

⁷ The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy", [The Muslim Brotherhood's Strategic Entryism into the United States: A Systemic Analysis](#) 19, "November 2025.

Brotherhood's vision of conquering and "preparing hearts." According to the report, it is part of an organized strategy and a preparatory step toward acquiring political influence in the West.

Qatar and Turkey's Links to the Muslim Brotherhood

- ▶ One of the main reasons for the reluctance of American administrations to take action against the Muslim Brotherhood and for the current administration's compromise designation of only three movement branches, which are already in confrontation with authorities in their respective countries, has been the lack of desire to trigger a diplomatic crisis with Qatar and Turkey, both close Middle East allies. For years they have been known as Muslim Brotherhood supporters, and since the fall of Muslim Brotherhood rule in Egypt in 2013, have served as the primary patron states of the movement in general and of Hamas in particular. Both also expressed displeasure with a 2019 attempt by American administration to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization (BBC, May 1, 2019).

Qatar

- ▶ The presence of senior Muslim Brotherhood figures in Qatar, to which the movement's leadership fled from Egypt following the rise of President al-Sisi, and the institutional support from authorities in Doha for the movement's activity and dissemination of its destabilizing agenda across the Middle East, were among the central reasons for the deep crisis that erupted between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and Qatar in 2017, and lasted until early 2021. Qatar was required to sever its ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, cease all financial support, extradite to Egypt senior movement figures wanted in Cairo for involvement in terrorism, and shut down the al-Jazeera media channel operating from its territory (BBC, June 5, 2017; al-Jazeera, June 12, 2017). Subsequently, recordings revealed after the fall of Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi exposed conversations with senior Qatari officials, during which Qatar's former prime minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim, admitted that al-Jazeera was in practice under the control of the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Arabiya, June 23, 2020).
- ▶ In addition, for years Qatar served as a place of refuge for the senior Egyptian cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who preached destabilization of the Egyptian regime and publicly supported Hamas' terrorist activity, including suicide bombing attacks against Israel. Since al-Qaradawi's death in 2022, the International Union of Muslim Scholars, a juristic body he founded in 2004, has continued to operate from Doha, publicly promoting an Islamist agenda and considered by many researchers to be the ideological authority for the Muslim Brotherhood. During the crisis with Qatar, Arab states designated the Union as a terrorist organization (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 23, 2017).⁸
- ▶ At the same time, Qatar is also the primary patron of Hamas, whose leadership has been based there since it was expelled from Syria in 2011. The ties between Qatar and the

⁸ See the October 2018 ITIC report, [Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi and his impact on the dissemination of radical Islam](#)

movement's leadership, defined as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, were particularly obvious during the Gaza Strip War. For example, Hamas documents brought back by the IDF from the Gaza Strip exposed the direct connection between Hamas and senior al-Jazeera figures.⁹ In addition, an Israeli Air Force strike against the guest compound where senior Hamas figures were staying in Doha in September 2025 was a clear signal that Israel opposed the haven provided by Qatar for the movement's leadership.¹⁰



The Emir of Qatar with Isma'il Haniyeh (al-Jazeera, December 17, 2019)

Turkey

- ▶ Since its rise to power in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Turkey's president, has promoted a conservative Islamist agenda inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, although officially, the party is not defined as an Islamic party since Turkey's secular constitution prohibits establishing parties on a religious basis.¹¹
- ▶ The Erdoğan administration provided political and diplomatic backing to protests against Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in 2011, supported the election of Muslim Brotherhood member Mohamed Morsi as president in 2012, and strongly condemned the military coup by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi that ended Muslim Brotherhood rule in July 2013 (Hürriyet, July 17, 2017).
- ▶ The open confrontation between Turkey and Egypt under Abdel Fattah al-Sisi continued until 2021, and in recent years Ankara has sought to renew its relations with Cairo as part of its efforts to position itself as a regional power, as reflected in the exchange of ambassadors in 2023 after a rupture that lasted about a decade (al-Jazeera, July 4, 2023). Nevertheless, Turkey regularly hosts prominent Muslim Brotherhood figures wanted in Egypt, most notably Mahmoud Hussein, who heads one of the main factions of the global Muslim Brotherhood operating from Istanbul (al-Arabiya, February 19, 2024).
- ▶ Like Qatar, Turkey has established itself as a supporter of Hamas. It regularly hosts senior members of Hamas' external leadership involved in directing terrorist attacks in Israel and allows the operation of significant financial infrastructures serving Hamas' leadership.¹² In

⁹ See the October 2025 ITIC report, [Documentary Evidence of Hamas-Al Jazeera Relations and Cooperation](#)

¹⁰ See the September 2025 ITIC report, [Israel Attacks the Hamas Leadership in Doha](#)

¹¹ See the July 2014 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace report, The Seesaw Friendship between Turkey's AKP and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

¹² See the January 2025 ITIC report, [Turkey as a Center for Hamas Activity](#)

addition, the NGO IHH, close to the Turkish government, is linked to Hamas and was involved in flotillas that attempted to reach the Gaza Strip, most notably the violent Mavi Marmara flotilla in 2010, and raises funds for Hamas. Since the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip in October 2025, the IHH has been involved in reconstruction activities under the Turkish flag.¹³



The Turkish foreign minister (right) with Khalil al-Hayya, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, January 27, 2026)

¹³ See the October 2025 ITIC report, [The Turkish IHH, which led the Mavi Marmara flotilla, operates in the Gaza Strip and is involved in its reconstruction](#)