



December 9, 2014

Senior Hamas Operatives Based in Turkey Continue Directing Terrorist Networks in Judea and Samaria



Palestinians hold Hamas flags, Turkish flags and a picture of Turkish President Erdogan at a march in the Gaza Strip held to celebrate his victory in the Turkish elections (Safa.ps, March 31, 2014).

Overview

1. In August and September 2014 the Israeli security forces exposed two Hamas military-terrorist networks operating in Judea and Samaria. They recruited squads to carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli targets, including showcase attacks in Jerusalem (attacks on the Teddy [Soccer] Stadium and the light railway). Most of the operatives were recruited while studying in **Jordan** and received training outside Judea and Samaria. During the investigation more than 30 terrorist operatives were detained and large quantities of weapons were seized (See Appendix B).
2. **The networks were directed by Saleh Muhammad Suleiman al-Arouri, a senior Hamas operative based in Turkey. Some of the operatives underwent training in Turkey, and were instructed in methods of carrying out attacks against targets in Israel, Judea and Samaria and abroad (Shabak.gov.il, August 19, 2014).**

3. **It was not the first time Hamas operatives in Turkey had a central role in directing anti-Israeli terrorism in Judea and Samaria.** For the past several years Turkey has provided Hamas with political, media and financial support. As part of its support, **it allows a group of Hamas terrorists to operate freely within its territory, using Turkey as a base from which to direct Hamas military-terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria. Hamas activity in Turkey is headed by Saleh al-Arouri,¹** who cofounded Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria and today is head of the Judea and Samaria region in Hamas headquarters abroad (For a profile of Saleh al-Arouri, see Appendix A).

Turkey: A Base for Directing Anti-Israeli Terrorism

4. The exposure of the Hamas terrorist network in Judea and Samaria was another illustration of the fact that Hamas terrorist operatives in Turkey direct anti-Israeli terrorism in Judea and Samaria.² Eleven of the terrorist operatives released in the Gilad Shalit exchange deal in October 2011 were **deported to Turkey, ten of them Hamas operatives.** According to the Turkish media, once they arrived in Turkey they were supposed to be subject to the supervision of Turkish intelligence and not permitted to circulate unaccompanied. However, Turkey did not require them to remain in the country or forbid them to go to another country if they so desired (Hürriyet.com.tr, October 20, 2011). In effect, the exposure of terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria has proved that Hamas operatives based in Turkey conduct their terrorist activities freely.

5. The terrorist network exposed in August-September 2014 was **directed from Turkey by senior Hamas terrorist operative Saleh Muhammad Suleiman al-Arouri.** Some of the network's operatives **underwent training in Turkey,** particularly in aspects of orchestrating military-terrorist attacks in Israel, Judea and Samaria and abroad. Once their training ended they were integrated into various missions,

¹ For further information about directing Hamas terrorism from Turkey, see the August 20, 2014 bulletin "[Saleh al-Arouri, Turkey-based senior Hamas operative who handles military-terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria, admitted that Hamas was behind the abduction and murder of the three Jewish youths from Gush Etzion.](#)"

² According to reports in the Israeli media, at the end of 2013 Hamas reestablished the headquarters of its military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria. It is directed by a cadre of terrorists released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal who live in the Gaza Strip. The terrorists, who served long prison sentences for murdering Israelis, are led by Saleh al-Arouri, who is based in Turkey and directs the activities of the terrorists operating in the Gaza Strip. Operatives in the Gaza Strip transmit instructions and funds on an ongoing basis and on a large scale to terrorist squads in Judea and Samaria (Amos Harel for Haaretz.co.il, December 20, 2013).

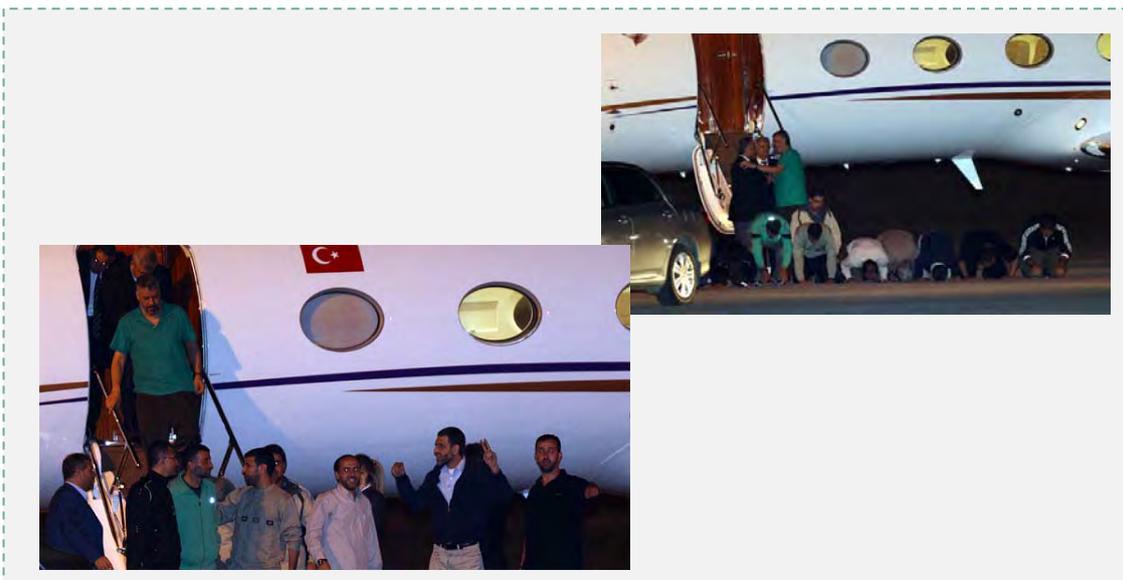
according to decisions made by senior Hamas operatives in Turkey. Instructions for activities on the ground in Judea and Samaria were also received from handlers in Turkey and Jordan, who were responsible for carrying out the attacks (Shabak.gov.il, November 27, 2014).

6. In addition to Saleh al-Arouri, two other senior Hamas figures operating from Turkey are notable:

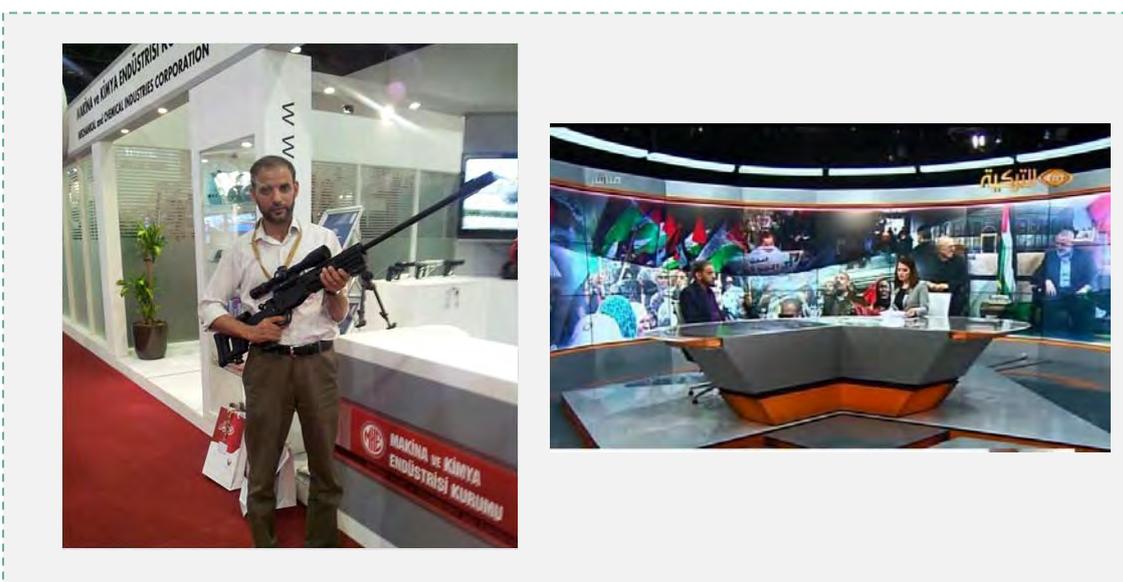
1) **Musa al-Akari, the brother of Ibrahim al-Akari, carried out the vehicular attack at the light railway station in Jerusalem on November 5, 2014.** He belonged to the terrorist squad that abducted and murdered Israeli Border Policeman Nissim Toledano on December 13, 1992. He was captured and sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment, released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal and deported to Turkey.

2) **Hussam Badran (Abu Imad),** a Hamas terrorist also released in the Gilad Shalit exchange deal, often visits Turkey. In 2004 he was sentenced to 17 years in prison for involvement in a suicide bombing attack during the second intifada. Upon release (October 2011) he was deported from Israel. He relocated in Doha, Qatar, but also spends time in Turkey. In December 2013 he was appointed Hamas' official external spokesman (Wafa.ps, December 25, 2013). In effect, his role of also directing Hamas' terrorist network in the Hebron region (March-February 2013) was exposed.³

³ At the end of February-beginning of March 2013 approximately 20 Hamas operatives from the Hebron region were detained. They belonged to networks intending to carry out terrorist attacks, especially to abduct Israelis to be used as bargaining chips in the release of imprisoned terrorist operatives. The operatives detained had maintained contacts with Hamas sources outside Judea and Samaria to receive support, instructions and funding. Most of the contacts were made with Hussam Badran (Abu Imad).



Palestinians terrorists released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal land in Turkey
(Zaman.com.tr, October 19, 2011)



Left: Senior Hamas operative Hussam Badran, released in the Gilad Shalit exchange deal, who directed a Hamas terrorist network in the Hebron region, photographed in Turkey holding what is apparently a long-range sniper rifle (Hamas forum, October 19, 2012). Right: Hussam Badran interviewed by the Turkish TV TRT channel (Facebook page of Hussam Badran, June 7, 2014).

Central Role of Saleh al-Arouri in Recruiting Terrorist Squads in Judea and Samaria

7. The recent exposure of Hamas operatives handled from Turkey was not the first of its kind. In the past other terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria were directed from Turkey. In every exposure, **Saleh al-Arouri's involvement was noted**. For example, between May and August 2014 the Israeli security forces detained several dozen Hamas operatives in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem who were suspected of setting

up a military-terrorist network planning to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel. **The network was handled by Hamas headquarters in Turkey**, especially the recruiting of operatives and acquisition of weapons. The network was headed by **Riyad Nasser**, who lived in Dir Qaddis (Ramallah region), who had been imprisoned in Israel in the past (Shabak.gov.il, August 19, 2014).

8. Investigation revealed that **Riyad Nasser had been recruited by Turkey-based Saleh al-Arouri** before he was deported from Israel. Al-Arouri instructed Riyad Nasser to set up an extensive Hamas network in Judea and Samaria to destabilize the area and even incite a third intifada. To that end a number of local squads were formed and handled directly by Riyad al-Nasser. They were based in Nablus, Bethlehem, the Yatir region, Jerusalem and Tulkarm. Experts in engineering and chemistry were recruited to the network (Shabak.gov.il, August 19, 2014).



Left: One of the locations where the weapons were hidden. Right: Some of the weapons found in the possession of the Hamas terrorist network exposed in Judea and Samaria (Shabak.gov.il, August 18, 2014).

9. Another example of Saleh al-Arouri's involvement was revealed at the beginning of 2013 when two Hamas operatives were detained. They had tried to smuggle funds into Judea and Samaria via the Allenby Bridge. One was found to be carrying €10,000 and \$900 hidden in cigarette cartons. During interrogation they revealed that they were supposed to receive **additional funds from Saleh al-Arouri** (Shabak.gov.il April, 2014). **The money was to be used to finance Hamas' terrorist activities in Judea and Samaria**

Responses to the Exposure of Hamas' Terrorist-Directing Network in Turkey

Israel

10. According to reports in the Israeli media, Israel appealed to NATO and the American administration with a demand that action be taken against Turkey for allowing Hamas to establish its headquarters in Istanbul, from where it directed terrorism against Israel (Ynetnews.co.il, November 28, 2014). During a recent visit to the United States, **Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon delivered a similar message**. Meeting with American Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, he said that Hamas was being supported by Turkey, a NATO member, and that it was playing "a cynical game." He added that it was unthinkable that Hamas have two headquarters, one in the Gaza Strip and another in Istanbul (Israelhayom.com, November 26, 2014).

Turkey

11. Diplomatic sources in Turkey denied Israel's accusation, claiming that Turkey did not allow any organization to direct terrorist activities from its territory. The Turkish sources claimed that Israel's accusations were intended to defame Turkey and make it possible for Israel to sabotage the contacts for the rehabilitation of the diplomatic relations between the two countries (Maannews.net, November 28, 2014).

Hamas

12. **Hamas issued a statement claiming that there was no connection between Saleh al-Arouri, who lived in Turkey, and the "resistance"** [i.e., terrorist attacks] against Israel. The statement claimed that Saleh al-Arouri was a senior member of Hamas' political leadership and Israel's baseless accusations against him were meant to embarrass Turkey because of its humanity to the Palestinian people. In addition, according to the statement, Israel was trying to draw attention away from its "crimes," to present itself as a "victim" and to turn the world against Turkey (Alresala.net, November 30, 2014).

13. **Saleh al-Arouri** himself denied any and all involvement in directing terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria. In response to the detainment of 94 Palestinians suspected of membership in a Hamas network, he claimed it was "false information" whose objective was "to whitewash Israel's intelligence failure." He claimed that "the weapon of resistance" [i.e., terrorist attacks] was directed only against Israel and

those who had been detained were "resistance fighters." He added that there was no network in Judea and Samaria with 94 operatives, because Hamas squads operated in small, separate squads (Al-Aqsa TV, August 19, 2014).

14. A senior Hamas figure interviewed by the WND website who did not identify himself, refused to respond to the exposure of the network. However, **he confirmed that Saleh al-Arouri did use Turkey as a base for Hamas operatives** (Aharon Klein for WND.com, December 2, 2014)

Appendix A

Profile of Saleh al-Arouri



Saleh Muhammad Suleiman al-Arouri (Imemc.org, June 20, 2014)

1. **Saleh al-Arouri** was born in the village of Aroura (in the Ramallah region) in 1966. In the 1990s he was a cofounder of the Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria. He was detained by Israel in 1992 and sentenced to five years in prison for membership in a terrorist organization. He later served additional sentences and was released on March 30, 2010 in an agreement signed with him and expelled from Israel. He went to Jordan and from there to Syria.
2. Released from prison in Israel and having moved to Syria, Saleh al-Arouri resumed his terrorist activities. Arriving in Syria, he was appointed to Hamas' political bureau and received the prisoners' affairs portfolio. In that capacity, he was involved in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal.
3. After the Syrian civil war broke out and the Hamas leadership left Damascus **Saleh al-Arouri settled in Istanbul, where he founded a substitute Hamas political office.** Since his arrival in Turkey his office has gained power and status as Hamas' legation in Turkey, mainly because of Turkish President Erdogan's sympathetic stance for Hamas (Shlomi Eldar for Al-monitor.com, December 1, 2014). However, **in reality Hamas' "political office" also deals with establishing terrorist squads in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem and directing terrorist attacks.** (Note: While its headquarters were based in Damascus, Hamas also claimed it dealt only with political and information activities, while in reality it also directed terrorism).

4. On August 20, 2014, Saleh al-Arouri said in an announcement to the participants of the Fourth Conference of the World Union of Islamic Sages (held in Turkey) that **Hamas' military-terrorist wing was behind the abduction and murder of the three Jewish youths in Gush Etzion** (June 12, 2014). He read a speech, saying that he was speaking on behalf of Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal (calling him the "head of this resistance"). He was apparently recorded without his knowledge and the speech was uploaded to YouTube and received much feedback. **It was the first time Hamas admitted its involvement in the abduction and murder of the youths.**

5. According to the article in Al-Monitor, al-Arouri has a talent for raising funds from various Islamic foundations in Turkey and throughout the world, to finance activities of his office and of Hamas in general. He has created an independent power base that operates almost completely separate from Hamas' main leadership. Hamas' Turkish branch makes its own decisions without involving the Hamas leadership and without taking into account the ramifications of its actions for the movement as a whole.⁴

⁴ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ru/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html#>

Appendix B

The Terrorist Networks Directed by Saleh al-Arouri Exposed in August and September 2014

1. Information from the Israel Security Agency about the terrorist networks exposed (November 27, 2014):

1) **Recruiting operatives** – Most of the operatives recruited are Palestinians studying at the universities in Jordan. The students were approached on the basis of personal acquaintance. Those found suitable, both personally and ideologically, were recruited and became the responsibility of operatives in headquarters who arranged for their training

2) **Military training – Military training:** The recruits' training was carried out in coordination with and under the supervision of Hamas military-terrorist operatives at locations in the Gaza Strip and abroad, including Jordan, Turkey and Syria. To reach the Gaza Strip the recruits went to the Sinai Peninsula and were smuggled in through the tunnels. In the Gaza Strip Hamas military-terrorist operatives trained them in using explosives, operating weapons, terrain analysis and navigation. They also learned about securing information. In **Turkey** they were briefed on planning military activity, including how to attack targets in Israeli, Judea and Samaria and abroad. In **Jordan** they were trained in the use of weapons, in sabotage and covert activity, and were given security briefings. **After training they were assigned various missions by senior Hamas figures in Turkey and Jordan.**

3) **Military activity** – After completing their training they were sent back to their homes in Judea and Samaria. When they had settled they were given various missions, such as attacking Israeli targets, coordinating and transporting weapons and funds, training local squads, and locating sites suitable for creating home laboratories and operational houses

4) **Objectives of the terrorist attacks** – The recruits were instructed to carry out a number of terrorist attacks, **the most prominent of which were attacks on the Teddy [soccer] Stadium and the light railway, both in Jerusalem.** They were also instructed to carry out **shooting attacks and to place IEDs** along the roads in Judea and Samaria, **prepare car bombs, infiltrate Jewish towns and villages, and abduct Israelis in Judea and Samaria and abroad.** In effect, on

August 31, 2014, one of the squads placed **IEDs at the Rehalim and Jat junctions in Samaria.**



Weapons found in the possession of the terrorist networks exposed in Judea and Samaria in August and September 2014 (Shabak.gov.il, November 27, 2014).

2. The most important terrorist operatives caught were the following:

1) **Manaf Muhammad Abd al-Rahman Ajbara** – Born in 1986, resident of Jordan. Recruited to Hamas terrorist activity while studying engineering. Received military training. Instructed to establish a network in Judea and Samaria and carry out attacks on Israel. Helped prepare the IED used in the attack at the Rehalim junction in Samaria on August 31, 2014.

2) **Rajaa'i Ahmed Mustafa Amouri** – Born in 1984, from Tulkarm. Imprisoned in Israel five times for Hamas terrorist activity. Recruited by a Hamas terrorist operative from the Gaza Strip at the beginning of 2014. Rented a safe house in Ramallah where weapons and materials to manufacture IEDs were stored. When detained, he handed over several weapons in his possession.

3) **Mahmoud Wael Mahmoud Milham** – Born in 1984, resident of Anabta/Tulkarm. Was imprisoned in the past for Hamas terrorist activity. Helped rent the safe house in Ramallah.

4) **Abdallah Muhammad Yussuf Zeitawi** – Born in 1989, resident of Jordan. Underwent three series of military training courses in the Gaza Strip in 2012-2013. In 2014 was instructed to enter Judea and Samaria and to settle there.

5) **Musab Khaled Ibrahim Dweib** – Born in 1991, resident of Zaatra/Bethlehem. Studied in Jordan between 2010 and 2014. Instructed by Hamas handler in

Jordan to support terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria by transferring weapons and funds to another operative.

6) **Adnan Taysir Kamel Samarra** – Born in 1984. Resident of Safarin/Tulkarm. Was imprisoned four times in the past for Hamas terrorist activity. Planned to recruit a squad to carry out terrorist attacks.



Some of the terrorists in networks exposed in Judea and Samaria in August and September 2014 (Shabak.gov.il, November 27, 2014).