



April 30, 2015

## Iranian Support for Palestinian Terrorism: Funds Transferred to Gazan Shaheeds' Families by Palestinian Islamic Jihad-Affiliated Al-Ansar Charity Association



Left: Al-Ansar charity association announces time and place of the distribution of funds to terrorist shaheeds' families through the post office bank in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Al-Ansar charity association, April 5, 2015). Right: Notice from the PIJ-affiliated Al-Ansar charity association in the Gaza Strip about the distribution of \$2 million to 5000 families of shaheeds, funds transferred by the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs [i.e., shaheeds] Foundation (Facebook page of the Al-Ansar charity association, April 12, 2015)

### Overview

1. The Al-Ansar charity association operates in the Gaza Strip and is affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). It was founded during the second intifada (2001) and serves the Iranians as a pipeline for funds to finance terrorism in the Gaza Strip and as a way to increase Iran's influence over the Gazan population. Al-Ansar supports the families of terrorists who were killed ("shaheeds"), families whose houses were destroyed, and families of terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israel. In the past, it also supported the families of shaheeds in Judea and Samaria, with the authorization and sponsorship of Mahmoud Abbas. It is uncertain if it continues to do so today, and if it does, how the funds are delivered (See Appendices A and B).

2. The **PIJ**, the second most important Palestinian terrorist organization in the Gaza Strip, **is Iran's preferred Palestinian terrorist organization. Iran supports the PIJ both financially and militarily** (providing **weapons**, training, technological knowledge, etc.). Iran transfers large sums of money, up to several million dollars a year, to the Al-Ansar charity association through the **Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation** (established in Iran by the Ayatollah Khomeini to aid and support the families of Iranians killed in the Iran-Iraq War). The Iranian Martyrs Foundation has two branches in Lebanon, a Lebanese branch that supports Hezbollah and a Palestinian branch that supports Hamas and the PIJ (See Appendix B for information about the Iranian Martyr's Foundation and its Palestinian branch). The funds for the Palestinians are probably transferred from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip by bank transfer but it is not clear which banks are involved.

3. Since the days of the second intifada, the radical Islamist "charitable societies" operating in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria have served as **pipelines for Iran to transfer funds to the Palestinian terrorist organizations. The money finances the terrorist organizations' social network** (mosques, educational institutions, support for the families of shaheeds), **especially those of Hamas and the PIJ**. Past experience has shown that the funds earmarked for the social network can easily be diverted to the military-terrorist wings of the various terrorist organizations. Thus the Iranian Islamic regime provided religious legitimacy for the money transferred to support Palestinian terrorism (according to the Ayatollah Khomeini, Muslim charity funds could be given to support the Palestinians).

4. **Al-Ansar**, which receives funds from the Iranian Martyrs Foundation, **was outlawed in Israel in 2003**. It is headed by a PIJ activist named **Nafez Othman Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj (Abu Suheib)**. **His brother Omar al-A'raj was a senior PIJ military-terrorist operative**, killed in 1996 during a Palestinian Authority (PA) attempt to detain him in the Gaza Strip. (Omar al-A'raj founded the PIJ's military-terrorist network and was in charge of manufacturing IEDs for a series of deadly attacks carried out in Israel). In 2007 the Iranian Martyrs Foundation and its branches in Lebanon were **designated as sponsors of terrorism by the United States Department of the Treasury because they provided Hezbollah, Hamas and the PIJ with financial support** (See below).

## Transfer of Funds to the Gaza Strip for Families of Shaheeds

5. On April 12, 2015, the **Al-Ansar charity association in the Gaza Strip announced that \$2 million would be distributed among 5,000 families of Gazan shaheeds**

who had died between the beginning of the second intifada (2000) and June 31, 2014, that is, before the outbreak of Operation Protective Edge (Alansar.ps, April 12, 2015). On April 5, 2015, Al-Ansar said in a statement that **the financial support was funded by the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation** (Facebook page of Al-Ansar, April 5, 2015).

6. On January 18, 2015, Al-Ansar in the Gaza Strip posted a notice on its Facebook page to Gazans **whose family members had been killed in Operation Protective Edge** and who had not yet registered with the society. They were requested to go to the Al-Ansar offices with a death certificate, a picture of the deceased, medical reports, and similar relevant documents, so that the transfer of funds could be arranged (Facebook page of Al-Ansar, February 11, 2005). In ITIC assessment, based on an average payment of \$400 per family, the Iranian Martyrs Foundation can be expected to transfer **an additional \$900,000 for the families of Gazans killed in Operation Protective Edge** (for approximately 2,200 families) once registration and bureaucratic procedures have been completed. **Payment will mainly be made through branches of the post office in the Gaza Strip.**

الشهداء المبروح	الشهداء الأخرى
صورة توثيق عن الوفاة	صورة توثيق عن الوفاة
صورة التقرير الطبي	صورة التقرير الطبي
صورة هوية الشهيد	صورة هوية الشهيد
صورة هوية الزوجة	صورة هوية الزوجة
صورة بطاقة الزواج	صورة بطاقة الزواج
	صورة بطاقة الشهيد عند +
	صورة بطاقة الشهيد عند -
	صورة شهادة الميلاد لكل طفل
	صورة بطاقة لكل طفل عند -

**Appeal to the families whose relatives died in Operation Protective Edge to register at the offices of the Al-Ansar charity association (Facebook page of Al-Ansar, February 11, 2015).**

## Appendices

7. Three appendices follow:

- 1) **Appendix A** – Profile of the Al-Ansar charity association
- 2) **Appendix B – Examples** of funds transferred by Al-Ansar charity association
- 3) **Appendix C** – Profile of the **Iranian** Martyrs Foundation

## Appendix A

### Profile of the Al-Ansar Charity Association

1. **The Al-Ansar charity association is an Islamic society affiliated with the PIJ** which was founded in 2001 during the second intifada. Its offices are in Gaza City. It is a kind of **executive arm of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation and its Lebanon-based Palestinian branch.**

2. **Al-Ansar provides financial support for the families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip.** In the past it also provided support for families in Judea and Samaria whose relatives had been killed since the second intifada (2000). It continues supporting the families of terrorist shaheeds. It recently appealed to families whose relatives were killed in Operation Protective Edge to present the relevant documents to its offices to be able to receive support. Al-Ansar also provides financial support to **the families of terrorists imprisoned in Israel and to families whose houses were destroyed in IDF actions.** However, as opposed to other charitable societies affiliated with the terrorist organizations, **Al-Ansar does not have a network of social institutions such as schools or kindergartens, etc. in the Gaza Strip.**

3. Families entitled to aid bring the relevant documents to Al-Ansar's offices, which **receives funds from the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation, probably by bank transfer.** The society then pays the family **through the branches of the post office bank in the Gaza Strip.**

4. On November 17, 2003, two years after its founding, **Israel outlawed the Al-Ansar charity association,** and its activities were renewed only in 2005 with Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip. In October 2005 a ceremony was held in the Gaza Strip for **the distribution of \$1 million to the families of shaheeds, families whose houses had been destroyed and families with relatives in Israeli prisons.** The ceremony was sponsored by **Mahmoud Abbas,** who was represented by **Hisham Abd al-Rizq,** at that time minister for prisoners' affairs, and was attended by members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. **Nafez Othman al-A'raj,** the PIJ-affiliated activist who heads Al-Ansar, gave a speech in which he said the association had returned to operations after years of inactivity caused by "Israeli aggression" against its offices, including the confiscation of its funds and the closing of its accounts. Al-Ansar secretary **Nasser al-Sheikh** said that **the Iranian Martyrs Foundation was sponsoring the families of shaheeds who died defending the land of Palestine** (Israeli Channel 7, November 1, 2005).

5. Al-Ansar's important functionaries:

- 1) **Chairman** – Nafez Othman al-A'raj (Abu Suheib)
- 2) **Deputy Chairman** – Nasser Kamal al-Sheikh Ali
- 3) **Secretary** – Husam Najam
- 4) **Treasurer** – Walid Ahmed Abu Murad
- 5) **Board member** – Said Hassan Abu lyada
- 6) **Board member** – Ta'mer Jihad al-Saba
- 7) **Board member** – Saher Jalal Harb

6. On January 26, 2015, Al-Ansar opened its new building in Gaza City **after its former offices had been attacked and destroyed by the Israeli Air Force during Operation Protective Edge. Its construction was financed by the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation** (Facebook page of Al-Ansar, January 18, 2015; YouTube, January 26, 2015).



**Al-Ansar's new offices, paid for by the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation (YouTube January 26, 2015).**

7. Al-Ansar has a website, Facebook page and Twitter account:

- 1) **Official website** – <http://www.alansar.ps>
- 2) **Facebook page** – <https://www.facebook.com/Alansar.Charity.Association>
- 3) **Twitter account** – [https://twitter.com/Alansar\\_Charity](https://twitter.com/Alansar_Charity)



From left to right: Al-Ansar's Twitter account, Facebook page and official website

## Al-Ansar Chairman Hafez Uthman al-A'raj



Left: Nafez al-A'raj at the construction site of Al-Ansar's new offices (YouTube, January 26, 2015).  
Right: Nafez al-A'raj, Al-Ansar chairman (Al-Ansar's Facebook page, February 11, 2015)

8. **Nafez Othman Abd al-Rahman al-A'raj (Abu Suheib)** is the chairman of Al-Ansar. He was born in Gaza in 1962, is married and father of five. **He joined the PIJ as a young man. His brother Omar al-A'raj was a senior operative in the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing.** Omar al-A'raj established the organization's military-terrorist infrastructure and was considered "the engineer of the jihad." He manufactured IEDs used for terrorist attacks in Israel and the Gaza Strip (Beit Lid, Kfar Darom and Netzarim). He was killed in the Gaza Strip in 1996 during a PA security force attempt to detain him.

## Appendix B

### Examples of Funds Transferred by Al-Ansar

<i>Date</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Recipients</i>	<i>Financing Source</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>February 2015</b>	\$41,770	120 orphans in Judea and Samaria	Les Opprimés, Belgium <sup>1</sup>	Donation made in honor of the birthday of the prophet Muhammad (YouTube February 18, 2015)
<b>September 2014</b>	\$1.9 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip killed between the beginning of the second intifada and June 30, 2014.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	(Paltoday.ps, September 29, 2014)
<b>April 2013</b>	\$1 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip killed in the second intifada.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial aid for 5,000 families, \$200 per family (Al-Alam TV, April 23, 2013)
<b>October 2013</b>		Marriage ceremony for 162 couples from shaheed families	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	
<b>October 2012</b>	\$1.8 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip killed in the second intifada.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 6,614 families (Alansar.ps, October 11, 2012)
<b>August 2012</b>	\$98,000 Gaza Strip \$41,000	Children of shaheeds killed in the second	The Palestinian branch of the	The funds were intended for Judea and

<sup>1</sup> This transfer of funds was exceptional because most of the money received by Al-Ansar comes from the Iranian Martyrs Foundation or its Palestinian branch in Lebanon. The center of Les Opprimés is in Brussels, Belgium. According to its website it deals mainly with projects for children. The site gives information about its activities in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip as well as in Morocco and other locations. The name Opprimés, "the oppressed," may indicate a link with Iran or Hezbollah (formerly called "the organization of the oppressed on the earth") but there is no outstanding evidence.

	Judea and Samaria	intifada.	Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Samaria and transferred through an agreement between Al-Ansar and the Orphans' Foundation for Financial Management and Development, directly subordinate to the Islamic religious (sharia) courts in the PA.
<b>July 2012</b>	\$1.65 million to families of shaheeds in Judea and Samaria, \$1.77 million to families in the Gaza Strip	Families of shaheeds in Judea and Samaria killed in the second intifada.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	In the Gaza Strip the allotment was \$300 for a single man and \$600 for a married man (Alansar.ps, July 23, 2012)
<b>December 2011</b>	\$2 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 5,000 families (Alquds.com, December 13, 2011).
<b>August 2010</b>	\$2 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 5,000 families (Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation, August 3, 2010)
<b>April 2009</b>	\$2.3 million	Families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 5,600 families, 3,500 in the Gaza Strip and 2,100 in Judea and

				Samaria (Insan online, April 30, 2009)
<b>January 2009</b>	\$8,000 per family	Families of shaheeds killed in Operation Pillar of Defense.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	(Press TV, July 20, 2009)
<b>April 2008</b>	\$1 million	Families of shaheeds in Judea and Samaria.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 2,145 families (Felesteen.ps, April 3, 2008)
<b>April 2008</b>	\$1,000 per person	Families of prisoners, in honor of Palestinian Prisoners' Day.	The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 1,000 prisoners (Pal Media, July 20, 2008)
<b>November 2008</b>	\$2.3 million		The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation	Financial support for 3,500 families of Gazan shaheeds (Paltimes.net, November 30, 2008).

## Distribution of Funds by Al-Ansar



Sign announcing the distribution of funds by the Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation through the Al-Ansar charity association in the Gaza Strip to 5,000 families of shaheeds (Alam TV, Iran, April 23, 2013)



Distribution of funds by Al-Ansar in Gaza to the families of Gazan shaheeds. A tent was set up to distribute the money. In the background are signs from the families of the shaheeds thanking the Iranian Martyrs Foundation (Alansar.ps, July 23, 2012)



**Al-Ansar in the Gaza Strip distributes funds from the Iranian to 5,000 families of shaheeds (Palestinian Martyrs Foundation, August 3, 2010)**



**Mass marriage ceremony in the Gaza Strip. The podium is decorated with the Palestinian and Iranian flags. The sign reads, "Palestine and its shaheeds thank the [Iranian] Islamic Republic and its people" (Paltoday.ps, October 25, 2013)**

## Appendix C

### Profile of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation<sup>2</sup>



The logo of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation is also used by its Lebanese branch (which supports Hezbollah) and the Palestinian Martyrs Foundation (Facebook page of the Martyrs Foundation in Lebanon, April 7, 2015)

1. The Iranian Martyrs Foundation was established in Iran in the Iraq-Iran War in 1980 to help the families of the dead and wounded. It has branches throughout the world which support the Iranian policy of exporting the Islamic revolution.
2. The **Martyrs Foundation** is one of the Iranian foundations (*Bonyad-ha* in Farsi) in existence since the days of the Shah. After the Islamic Revolution the various foundations controlled by the Shah were nationalized and used to promote the objectives of the new regime. As opposed to NGOs, most of the Iranian foundations are funded by the regime, but they are exempt from taxation and governmental oversight. Over the years they have become unofficial economic institutions which are wealthy and influential, and also have ties to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.
3. Such foundations, of which there are more than 100 in Iran, manage a number of businesses whose profits are supposed to be used for charitable purposes. According to the Ayatollah Khomeini, their financial resources can be used to help the Palestinians, legitimizing the transfer of funds to the Palestinian terrorist organizations

<sup>2</sup> The Iranian institution which supports the shaheeds killed in war and the wounded is called the Martyrs [shaheeds] Foundation in Farsi. In Arabic it is called the Martyrs [shaheeds] Institution or the Iranian Martyrs Institution but we have used the translation of the original Farsi word and called it "foundation" and not "institution." The Palestinian branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation is called the Palestinian Martyr's Institution, but for the sake of uniformity we have translated it as the Palestinian Martyrs Foundation. The Lebanese branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation is called the Lebanese Martyrs Institution, but again, for the sake of uniformity, we have called in the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation.

(especially the PIJ and Hamas). Today the funds are also used to finance terrorism and promote Iran's propaganda and subversive activities abroad. The complex structure of the foundations, which includes dozens and hundreds of small companies, makes it very difficult to monitor them (Americanthinker.com, January 5, 2012).

4. On July 24, 2007, the American Department of the Treasury stated that the United States had designated the Iranian Martyrs Foundation, including its branch in the United States, as illegal under Executive Order 13224.<sup>3</sup> Stuart A. Levey, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, said at the time that "We will continue to target those who form the financial backbone of Hizballah, Hamas, PIJ and other terrorist groups that are attempting to destabilize Lebanon and target innocent civilians" (Website of the American Department of the Treasury, July 24, 2007).

## The Palestinian Martyrs Foundation

5. The Palestinian Martyrs Foundation is a branch of the Iranian Martyrs Foundation. It was established in 1993 to aid the Palestinian people. Most of its activity involves the families of Palestinian shaheeds. **It supports 7,500 families of Palestinian terrorist shaheeds** in the Palestinian territories (i.e., the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria) and beyond. **Its offices are located in Lebanon**, from where it is in contact with various entities in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria.



The Facebook page and website of the Palestinian Martyrs Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Executive Order 13224 is directed against terrorist organizations and their support groups. It freezes their assets, institutional and personal, in the United States, and prohibits American citizens from transferring funds to them.

6. **The Palestinian Martyrs Foundation operates in Lebanon alongside the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation**, whose establishment was ordered by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1982 when the Lebanese war broke out. Its objective of the Lebanese foundation was to support the families of Hezbollah shaheeds in Lebanon. The foundation's directorate is located in Beirut and operates three branches, one in Beirut, one in south Lebanon and one in the Beqa'a Valley (Website of the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation). It was legally registered as an association called The Charitable and Welfare Association, the Martyrs Foundation, in 1989, and also operates the Al-Rassoul Al-Aazam hospital. The new hospital building was officially opened in 2008 at a ceremony attended by the Lebanese president at the time, Michel Suleiman (Moqawama.org).



The official website of the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation. One of its objectives, as stated on its homepage, is "to bring to the fore the ideology of the shaheeds of the Islamic resistance [i.e., Hezbollah] and to strengthen its presence within society" (Website of the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation)

7. The American Department of the Treasury regards the Lebanese Martyrs Foundation and the Palestinian Martyrs Foundation (which operates in Lebanon) as the same as the Iranian Martyrs Foundation. On July 24, 2007 the Department stated the Iranian Martyrs Foundation was an organization that **"channels financial support from Iran to several terrorist organizations in the Levant, including Hizballah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). To this end, the Martyrs Foundation established branches in Lebanon staffed by leaders and members of these same terrorist groups. Martyrs Foundation branches in Lebanon has [sic] also provided financial support to the families of killed or imprisoned Hizballah and**

**PIJ members, including suicide bombers in the Palestinian territories"** (ITIC emphasis).

8. The statement continued, "**In addition to fundraising responsibilities senior Martyrs Foundation officials were directly involved in Hizballah operations against Israel during the July-August 2006 conflict.** In addition, a Lebanese-based leader of the Martyrs Foundation **has directed and financed terrorist cells in the Gaza Strip that worked with Hizballah and PIJ**" (ITIC emphasis) (Website of the American Department of the Treasury, July 24, 2007).