



March 5, 2017

Muhammad al-Jamassi, senior engineer in UNRWA's engineering department in the Gaza Strip, was also identified as a newly elected member of Hamas' political bureau.



Another Hamas member elected to the new Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip: Muhammad al-Jamassi, an engineer who heads UNRWA's engineering department for the refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip (Left: website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, May 20, 2010; Right: Khabar Press, January 21, 2017).

Overview

1. In the recent **elections for Hamas' political bureau**, the movement's highest institution in the Gaza Strip, **15 members were chosen**. Yahya al-Sinwar, affiliated with Hamas' military wing, was chosen as chairman. **The new political bureau has many members affiliated with Hamas' military wing and is dominated by members who hold extremist positions.**¹
2. **Two of the new members are employed by UNRWA in senior positions**. One, **Dr. Suhail Ahmed Hassan al-Hindi**, is chairman of the UNRWA staff union in the Gaza Strip and the principal of a boys' elementary school (a number of days after the

¹ For further information, see the February 22, 2017 bulletin, "Elections to the Hamas Political Bureau in the Gaza Strip: Overview and Significance."

results of the elections were published, UNRWA announced his suspension²). Another UNRWA employee elected to Hamas' political bureau was **Muhammad Daoud Ismail al-Jamassi (Abu Obeida), an engineer, who is head of UNRWA's engineering department for the refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip.**

3. The election of Suhail al-Hindi and Muhammad al-Jamassi to the new Hamas political bureau indicates their seniority in Hamas and the importance Hamas gives to activists who hold senior positions in UNRWA. **Hamas exploits its extensive support among UNRWA employees to strengthen its control of the Gazan population and promote its military wing.** In ITIC assessment, since Muhammad al-Jamassi is responsible for renovation and construction in refugee camps, Hamas may use his access to contributions and materials to promote its own interests (as it uses Dr. Suhail al-Hindi and other teachers and principals who are Hamas activists to indoctrinate school children with its radical Islamist ideology and to maintain a paramilitary presence in the schools).

Muhammad Daoud Ismail al-Jamassi

4. **Muhammad Daoud Ismail al-Jamassi (Abu Obeida)** is an engineer from a respected Gaza clan whose members have held key positions in the Gaza Strip. He lives in the Sabra neighborhood in the southern part of Gaza City (where Sheikh Ahmed Yassin also lived). During the past decade he held a series of positions in Hamas (see below) and at the same time held an important post in UNRWA.

5. **Muhammad al-Jamassi is chairman of the board of directors in the UNRWA engineering department for the refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip.** His position makes him **responsible for infrastructure projects in the refugee camps.** He recently attended a meeting of UNRWA engineers and specialists, representatives of the local popular council for refugee affairs, and representatives of local inhabitants, in the al-Bureij refugee camp. The meeting, held on February 21, 2017, **dealt with an American project for renovating and rebuilding the houses of Gazans destroyed in Operation Protective Edge** (Khabar Press and Dunia al-Watan, February 21, 2017).

6. In June 2016 he received an MA degree from the Academy for Administration and Policy in Gaza. The title of his thesis was "American-Israeli relations and their influence

² For further information, see the February 27, 2017 bulletin, "UNRWA announced the suspension of Dr. Suhail al-Hindi, chairman of the UNRWA staff union in the Gaza Strip, after his election to Hamas' political bureau. In 2011 he was also suspended by UNRWA for his affiliation with Hamas, but remained in his position."

on Israel's national security, 2009-2013." The Academy for Administration and Policy, which is affiliated with al-Aqsa University (a Hamas stronghold), held an event at which the thesis was presented.



Invitation to the presentation of Muhammad Daoud Ismail al-Jamassi's thesis in the auditorium of al-Aqsa University in Gaza City (the Academy for Administration and Policy in Gaza, May 30, 2016).

Other Members of the al-Jamassi Clan

7. Muhammad al-Jamassi comes from a prominent clan. **Several of its members have held high positions in the educational, legal and military systems in the Gaza Strip. One of his nephews was an operative in Hamas' military-terrorist wing, killed while carrying out a suicide bombing attack against an Israeli navy patrol boat.**

8. Some of the members of the al-Jamassi family:

- a. **Dr. Alaa al-Din Jamassi**, Muhammad al-Jamassi's brother, teaches in the engineering department of the Islamic University in Gaza City (website of the Islamic University in Gaza, March 2, 2017).



Dr. Alaa al-Din Jamassi, Muhammad al-Jamassi's brother (wwb.ps, March 2, 2017).

b. **Sheikh Yassin al-Jamassi**, also Muhammad al-Jamassi's brother, was a senior Sharia judge in the Gaza Strip. He died in 2011 (website of the high Sharia court in the Gaza Strip, May 26, 2011).

c. **Mahmoud Yassin Daoud al-Jamassi**, Muhammad al-Jamassi's nephew, was an operative in Hamas' military-terrorist wing. According to the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, he was killed on January 17, 2003, **while using a fishing boat to approach an Israeli patrol boat for a suicide bombing attack**³ (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, March 2, 2017).

³ On January 17, 2003, Mahmoud al-Jamassi swam towards an Israeli navy patrol boat dragging a barrel of explosives and blew himself up near the boat. There were no Israeli casualties. During the year before the attack he practiced swimming and diving without underwater equipment in the area of the Shati refugee camp.



Muhammad al-Jamassi's nephew Muhammad Yassin al-Jamassi, who was an operative in Hamas military wing. He died while carrying out a suicide bombing attack near an Israeli patrol boat on January 17, 2003 (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, March 2, 2017).

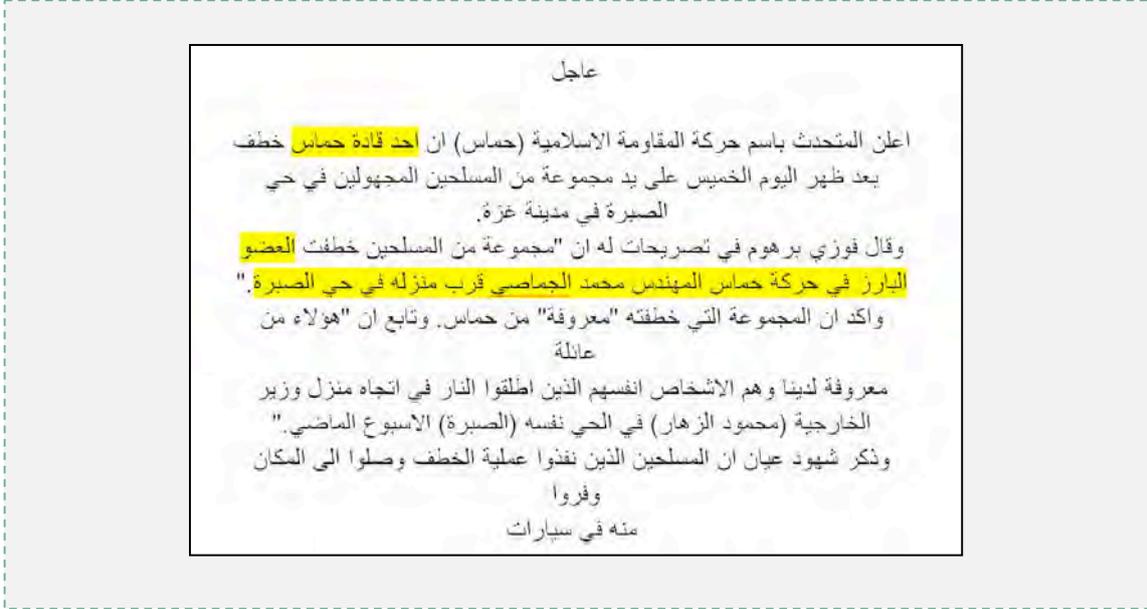
d. **Ismail Daoud al-Jamassi (Abu Daoud)**, another of Muhammad al-Jamassi's brothers, who died in 2013, headed the education administration of the de facto Hamas administration in the northern Gaza Strip.

Muhammad al-Jamassi's Activities in Hamas

9. Before his election to Hamas' new political bureau, **Muhammad al-Jamassi held various positions in Hamas**, and in charitable societies affiliated with Hamas, and was in close contact with senior members of the movement. In 2007 a Hamas spokesman called him "a senior activist." His election to the new political bureau indicates the strengthening of his position in Hamas alongside his senior position in UNRWA. As opposed to Dr. Suhail al-Hindi, so far he has not denied his election to Hamas' new political bureau.

10. **In January 2007 Muhammad al-Jamassi was abducted by armed men near his home in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum issued a statement reporting the abduction of prominent Hamas activist, the engineer Muhammad al-Jamassi.** He claimed the identity of the abductors was known and that they belonged to a well-know Gazan clan. He also said that the previous week the same armed men had fired shots at the house of Mahmoud al-Zahar, foreign minister in the de facto Hamas administration at the time (Paldf, January 4, 2007). Hamas blamed Fatah for al-Jamassi's abduction (alresala.net, January 4, 2007). In 2010 al-Jamassi was again abducted from his home by armed

men (Arab48, October 31, 2010). In all probability, the abductions were the result of violent conflicts between clans in the Gaza Strip because of political rivalry between Hamas and Fatah.



Statement issued to the media by Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum reporting that "a group of armed men abducted Muhammad al-Jamassi, an engineer and prominent member of the Hamas movement, near his home in the Sabra neighborhood [of Gaza City]" (Paldf, January 4, 2007).

11. Insofar as is known to the ITIC, in 2010 **al-Jamassi worked for Hamas' public relations bureau** (his exact role was unclear). In February 2010, as part of his job, he joined a delegation of members of Hamas Palestinian Legislative Council who visited the deputy minister of religious endowments to congratulate him on receiving a PhD degree. Al-Jamassi gave a speech in which he praised the progress of knowledge among senior Hamas figures, saying that his doctoral thesis was the first written on the subject (website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, February 21, 2010).



Muhammad al-Jamassi (third from left) at a visit to the home of Hassan al-Sifi, deputy minister of religious endowments in the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, on the occasion of his being awarded a PhD degree. The delegation presented him with a plaque from Hamas (website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, February 21, 2010).

12. In May 2010 Muhammad al-Jamassi joined members of the Palestinian Legislative Council in the southern Gaza Strip who paid visits to a number of clans. At one visit al-Jamassi praised the Hamas administration and compared its achievements to the situation in the West Bank (website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, May 17, 2010).



Left: Muhammad al-Jamassi (second from right) with a delegation of Palestinian Legislative Council members at the Siam clan in Gaza (website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, May 20, 2010). Right: Muhammad al-Jamassi (third from right) with a delegation of Palestinian Legislative Council members at the Kishko clan (website of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, May 17, 2010).

Muhammad al-Jamassi, Chairman of the Ghaith Association

13. **Muhammad al-Jamassi served as chairman of the Hamas-affiliated Ghaith Association for Relief and Development** [Note: ITIC information about his role is updated to June 2016]. The association operates in the Gaza Strip. It was established in 2013 with the avowed intention of helping the needy. Its offices are situated in the Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City. It is funded by donations from Qatar and by the al-Mubadara al-Ammaniya charitable society in Jordan (Facebook page of the **Ghaith Association** for Relief and Development in Gaza).

14. **One of the Ghaith Association's activities was to participate in rebuilding the al-Salam mosque in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City (the same neighborhood Muhammad al-Jamassi lives in);** the mosque was destroyed in Operation Protective Edge. The mosque's website, **which has clear indications of its affiliation with Hamas**, posted pictures of Hamas **military-terrorist operatives who worshipped at the mosque and were killed in Operation Cast Lead**. It also posted pictures of **Dr. Walid Awieda**, a Hamas operative who preaches in the mosque. Dr. Awieda is the director-general of Hamas' ministry of religious endowments in the Gaza Strip and chairman of the Hamas-affiliated al-Mujama' al-Islami charitable society (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza).

15. **There is an extensive network of Hamas-affiliated charitable societies in the Gaza Strip, used by the movement to support the local population and increase its own influence.** Beyond the humanitarian aid the societies provide, they disseminate Hamas' radical Islamist ideology through **indoctrination in mosques affiliated with the movement.** (The mosques are also used to recruit operatives to Hamas' military wing and to glorify shaheeds). In all probability, Muhammad al-Jamassi's position as chairman of the Ghaith Association made him more important and helped him get elected to Hamas' new political bureau.



Picture posted to the Ghaith Association Facebook page for its participation in building the al-Salam mosque. A donor from Qatar also contributed to the mosque's construction (Facebook page of the Ghaith Association in Gaza, January 29, 2016).



Death notices for two Hamas terrorist operatives killed in the Gaza Strip in Operation Cast Lead, who used to pray at the al-Salam mosque (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, January 3, 2017).



Left: A shaheed from Hamas' military-terrorist wing, killed in February 2008. The picture was posted by the Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque on the anniversary of his death (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, February 28, 2017). Right: A Hamas operative reads a memorial notice for a Hamas operative killed in the Gaza Strip in Operation Cast Lead, who used to pray at the al-Salam mosque (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, January 15, 2017).



Left: Children in a religious instruction class in the al-Salam mosque in the Sabra neighborhood of Gaza City (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, December 8, 2016). Right: Hanging a Hamas flag on the al-Salam mosque as an activity for the 29th anniversary of the founding of Hamas. The Arabic on the Facebook page reads, "[Worshippers who come to pray] at the al-Salam mosque decorate the area around the mosque to mark the 29th anniversary of the founding of Hamas" (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, November 27, 2016). In other pictures, young men from the mosque are seen standing in the main streets of Gaza City holding Hamas flags (Facebook page of the al-Salam mosque in Gaza, December 8 and 10, 2016).