



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)

Hamas launches “Al-Aqsa,” an experimental TV channel intended to improve its propaganda and indoctrination capabilities

Overview

- Hamas places great importance on its war to capture the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people and other target audiences in the Middle East and all over the globe. For that reason, Hamas invests large resources, both human and financial, to exploit its mass media network (consisting of newspapers, radio and the Internet). ¹ It uses the media to indoctrinate and to disseminate its propaganda, which preaches terrorism against Israel and hatred for Israel and the West . Its entire communications infrastructure is directed by the organization's leadership in Damascus and operated mostly from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.
- Until now, the Hamas propaganda arsenal lacked a television station . Currently, at the height of its pre-Palestinian Legislative Council election campaign, the movement is making an effort to fill the void by launching an experimental (non-satellite) station called “ Al-Aqsa ,” while considering the possibility of setting up a satellite station.
- The Hamas TV station was no doubt modeled on Al-Manar TV , the main weapon in Hezbollah's media arsenal. The use by Hamas of a television station, especially if its programs are transmitted by satellite, is liable, in our assessment, to considerably improve its ability to spread its terrorism and hate messages to the Palestinian public, and in the future, globally to Arab-Muslim communities .

The establishment of the Al-Aqsa TV channel

- On January 7, 2006, Hamas launched its experimental TV channel, “Al-Aqsa” (also the name of its radio station). A senior Hamas operative stated that it would aspire to the same standards as Al-Manar TV and like Al-Manar, to disseminate Hamas's messages to the Palestinian people and the world at large (AP from Gaza, January 9).
- The station is land-based and broadcasts from the Gaza Strip with the frequency UHF62. Jamal Nasser, a senior Hamas operative in charge of the station's broadcasting schedule, refused to reveal the station's exact location, citing “security reasons.” Nevertheless the Palestinian News Agency reported that the station is located in one of the mosques in Jabaliya in the northern Gaza Strip. ²Currently, broadcasting is aimed at the Gaza Strip , and in the future reception may be possible in a number of places in the West Bank .
- To operate the station a staff of photographers, technicians, show hosts and commentators was assembled (most of whom are apparently Hamas members or supporters). Some of the staff received professional training abroad, chiefly in Egypt and at Qatar-based Al-Jazeera TV . Al-Aqsa TV intends to employ women once a women's department has been established. The plan is for experimental programs to be broadcast for a period of between one and three months. At first there will be only a limited number of broadcasts and they will include news, programs about social issues, health and Islam. Later, the station will adopt a continuous, permanent broadcast schedule. Al-Aqsa TV was launched at the height of the campaign for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections , and it has been reported that Hamas's election platform will be broadcast, as will information about the elections themselves (BBC in Arabic, January 10).

- Hamas plans eventually to launch a satellite station which will be able to reach target audiences all over the globe . It might broadcast from a communications center located in Dubai (Al-Hayat, January 9). Expenses will be covered by advertising, contributions from NGOs and supporting communications institutions and by means of fees charged for the production of songs. ³
- Hamas's radio and TV stations operate under the aegis of a company called Al-Ribat Communications and Artistic Production . Chairman of the board of directors is Ahmad Muhammad Fathi Hamad , a senior Hamas operative in the Gaza Strip (See below). The company began operations a few years ago publishing the weekly newspaper Al-Rissalah, and since December 2003 has been operating the radio station Sawt Al-Aqsa . ⁴ In addition, the company plans to publish a daily newspaper and to broadcast the news in English on Radio Al-Aqsa (Agence France-Presse, January 13).

- Fathi Ahmad Muhammad Hamad , head of Al-Ribat Communications and Artistic Productions , which operates Al-Aqsa TV, is a resident of Beit Lahiya, a senior Hamas operative and a Hamas candidate for the Palestinian Legislative council. He has been involved in terrorist operations and during the 1990s was imprisoned by both the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority (PA). His public statements have shown him to be an extremist who supports terrorism and aspires to destroy the State of Israel. For example, in a speech given during a Hamas parade after Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip and broadcast by Radio Al-Aqsa (August 26, 2005), he said: "...we of Hamas emphasize by means of the Izzedine al-Qassam Battalions that we will continue the jihad until Palestine has been liberated [sic], from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea. Nothing will stop us , [for] we used the Qassams to liberate Gaza . When the rockets undermine the Jewish entity no one will be able to stand in our way ..."



Fathi Hamad: we will continue the jihad until Palestine has been liberated [sic]...

nothing will be able to stand in our way..." Similar messages are expected to be broadcast by Al-Aqsa TV.

- Ahmad Sabah , Director of the Palestinian Ministry of Information, stated that the new Hamas television station (classified as private) had not received a broadcasting license from the PA, and claimed that it was broadcasting Hamas propaganda (Voice of Palestine Radio, January 9). Jamal Nasser , in charge of public relations for Hamas and temporarily in charge of Al-Aqsa TV, answered that the movement intended to present the documents necessary for obtaining a broadcasting license (Ma'a News Agency, January 14).

¹ For further information see our Special Bulletin "[Marketing terrorism by Internet](#)"

² According to the Palestinian New Agency, January 18, 2006, quoting the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Al-Aqsa TV began its experimental broadcasting from Al-Bashir mosque in the Tel al-Za'atar neighborhood in Jabaliya.

³ It is reasonable to assume that contributions will not cover all of the station's operating expenses and that Hamas will make up the difference.

⁴ In May 2004 the Israeli air force attacked the station but it recommenced its broadcasts about three weeks later. Khaled Mashal, the Hamas leader, said of Al-Aqsa TV that it was "a blessed child conceived in the womb of Radio Sawt Al-Aqsa..." and would "transmit pure information, information in support of the resistance [i.e., terrorist attacks against Israel]... and take part with it on the road to jihad" (Radio Al-Aqsa, January 10).