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

## **Osama bin Laden's new tape condemns the "economic boycott" of the Hamas government as part of a general Zionist- West Crusade against Islam.**

**While the Hamas spokesman expressed reservations about bin Laden's comments, Mahmoud al-Zahar publicly identified with the global jihad's struggle. That reflected the movement's dilemma of having to navigate between adherence to radical Islamic ideology and attempts to obscure it to cope with the exigencies of the Palestinian arena.**

**Bin Laden condemns the international  
boycott of the Hamas government...**



**Bin Laden's new audiotape  
condemned the West's freezing of  
financial aid to the Palestinia  
n Authority (Al-Jazeera TV, April 23).**

**...and Mahmoud al-Zahar  
expresses identification with the  
global jihad's struggle**



**Mahmoud Al-Zahar, foreign  
minister for the Hamas government,  
during a visit to Syria (Syrian TV,  
April 20).**

✿ On April 23, Al-Jazeera TV broadcast a new audiotape, purportedly from Osama bin Laden, in which he called for Muslims to continue their struggle against the West. The Western countries' attitude toward Hamas, he said, was just one of the measures being taken against Islam in places such as Sudan, Chechnya and Somalia, as was the republication of the Danish cartoons lampooning Muhammad in Western newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

✿ He called the freezing of Western financial aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) more proof that “the Crusaders were [still] waging war against Islam” and that the Hamas government's isolation was the result of a Western-Zionist Crusade against Muslims. He also followed up criticism expressed by his deputy, Iman al-Zawahiri, of Hamas' taking part in the Palestinian Legislative Council election, which he called the product of a pagan culture.<sup>2</sup>

✿ It should be noted that two days before the tape was issued, **Dr. Mahmoud al-Zahar**, the Hamas government's foreign minister and known for his extremist views, **expressed his identification with the [global jihad] struggles taking place in Afghanistan and Iraq, linking it to the Palestinians' struggle [i.e., violence and terrorism directed against Israel]**. Speaking at a rally at Al-Yarmukh refugee camp (near Damascus), he said there was no reason to fear the “blockade” imposed on the Hamas government by the West. It was not, he said, international, but rather the act of a group of “criminal states” which “**kill in Tora Bora [Afghanistan], kill in Iraq and kill in Palestine**” [i.e., the United States, Israel and other Western countries]. He also said that “there was [also] a group of countries whose consciences had fallen asleep, or which had were making mistakes,” adding: “We will patiently awaken their consciences.” Eventually, he claimed, “whoever besieges us will, with the help of Allah, be himself besieged” (Al-Jazeera TV, April 21).

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<sup>1</sup> After more than a year of media silence, it was the second bin Laden audiotape (the first broadcast on January 19) calling upon Muslims to continue their struggle against the West.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that on March 4, al-Zawahiri posted an audiotape on the Internet warning Hamas against participating in a secular administration which he claimed was opposed to Islamic law.



The rally at Al-Yarmukh refugee camp (Al-Jazeera TV, April 20)

✿ Mahmoud al-Zahar’s comments reiterated **Hamas’ ideological identification with and the inspiration it draws from radical Islami and the global jihad.** Previous examples can be found in Hamas’ identification with the ideas of **Dr. ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam**, bin Laden’s ideologue, whose name has been adopted by global jihad elements operating in the Middle East, and with anti-Russian Chechen terrorism.<sup>3</sup>



**“Love for the jihad [holy war] took over my life, my soul, my feelings, by heart and my emotions. If preparation [for jihad] is terrorism, then we are terrorists...” (Dr. ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam, quoted on a small poster found in the offices of a Hamas-affiliated Charitable Society in Tulkarm).**

<sup>3</sup> For further information see our Special Bulletins “Hamas support for the Chechen separatists and their terrorist tactics did not prevent it from immediately accepting Russian president Vladimir Putin’s invitation to visit Moscow,” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hamas\\_moscow\\_e.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_moscow_e.pdf) and “The influence of the legacy of global jihad on Hamas: glorification of the image and Islamic-political doctrines of Dr. ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam, a Palestinian from Silat al-Harithiya (in the Jenin district),” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/ENGLISH/AUTHORITY-HAMAS/PDF/NOV10\\_04.PDF](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/ENGLISH/AUTHORITY-HAMAS/PDF/NOV10_04.PDF).

✿ It would appear that bin Laden and Iman Al-Zawahiri's public identification with Hamas **has caused the movement a certain amount of uneasiness**. Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman, responded by saying that Hamas' ideology was completely different from bin Laden's, adding, however, that the "international boycott" imposed on the Palestinian people was liable to create tensions in the Arab/Muslim world (AP, April 23). On April 24, the Palestinian daily newspaper Al-Quds quoted Sami Abu Zuhri as saying that bin Laden's comments reflect his own point of view which is different from that of Hamas. He said that Hamas integrated jihad and political activities, and that unique conditions were prevalent in the Palestinian arena which had compelled Hamas to participate in the government.

✿ Mahmoud al-Zahar's **identification** with the global jihad struggle, as opposed to Sami Abu Zuhri's **reservations** regarding bin Laden's comments, clearly reflects Hamas' **dilemma**, which has become sharper since the Palestinian Legislative Council elections: on the one hand, Hamas **identifies ideologically with radical Islam, with the global jihad and with the "struggle" against the United States and the West**. For that reason, Hamas leaders continually reiterate their unwillingness to surrender to Western pressure to abandon their principles, which include the support of terrorism and the negation of the right of the State of Israel to exist. On the other, they have to deal with the **exigencies of the reality** facing the Hamas government, central to which is the financial crisis caused by the freezing of the generous financial aid previously supplied by the United States and Europe. That dilemma has caused Hamas to **try to square the circle**, primarily through the use of double-talk<sup>4</sup> and the deliberate playing down of the movement's radical-Islamic, jihadist ideological principles. **All that is done to try to find pragmatic solutions to the urgent problems facing Hamas in the Palestinian arena without making fundamental changes in its basic radical positions.**

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<sup>4</sup> For further information see our Special Bulletin "Discrepancies between statements made by Hamas to Palestinian and Arab media and those made to Western media," at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/hamas\\_140406e.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_140406e.pdf).