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

**The uncovering of an operative infrastructure belonging to Hamas (in Judea) thwarted plans to abduct Israelis and use them as bargaining chips in negotiations for the release of prisoners. The infrastructure was funded and directed by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.<sup>1</sup>**

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1. In recent months, the Israeli security forces have uncovered a squad consisting of Hamas operatives in the Judea region. **Instructed by senior operatives from the Gaza Strip**, the squad members were planning to abduct a settler or a soldier in the Jerusalem area and **use him as a bargaining chip** in the negotiations for the release of Hamas detainees held in Israeli prisons.

2. The squad was headed by **Fares Awad Abd al-Fattah Qawasmeh**, born in the Hebron region in 1967. Qawasmeh, who was held prisoner in Israel and released in May 2006, formed during his arrest connections with Hamas operatives from the Gaza Strip. They provided him with guidance and instructions on recruiting squad members and planning the abduction.

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<sup>1</sup> According to a report by the Israel Security Agency.



**Fares Awad Abd al-Fattah Qawasmeh**

3. Upon his release from prison, Qawasmeh recruited **Hamza Ibrahim Moussa Zahran**, a Hamas operative from the village of Bidu (near Ramallah), who was entrusted with the task of acquiring arms and ammunition and recruiting additional squad members. Also recruited was **Iyad Faisal Diab Mansour**, also from the village of Bidu.



**Hamza Ibrahim Moussa Zahran**



**Iyad Faisal Diab Mansour**

4. **The arrested squad members were far into planning the terrorist attack.** They received financial assistance from the Gaza Strip (large amounts of money were found in the possession of the squad members) and planned to recruit additional members (including a driver from Jerusalem to help execute the abduction).

5. This is not the first discovery of a West Bank-based squad **financed and directed by operatives from Gaza**. It appears that following the disengagement (August 2005), it has become difficult for Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israel (other than firing Qassam rockets), **and they are concentrating their efforts on guiding and financing terrorist squads in the West Bank.**