



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center  
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage  
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

August 28, 2008

**Financing terrorism: The Al-Aqsa Foundation, based in Umm al-Fahm and belonging to the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, was closed down due to its cooperation with Hamas's civilian infrastructure in Jerusalem. The foundation's activity was also financed by the Union of Good, part of Hamas's fundraising system.**



**Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, the leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, protesting on the media about the shutdown of the Al-Aqsa Foundation (Saudi newspaper Al-Khaleej, August 25)**

## Overview

1. On August 24, 2008, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) and the Israeli police forces closed down a building which belonged to the **Al-Aqsa Foundation**, based in the city of Umm al-Fahm in Israel. The shutdown came after Israel's Defense Minister issued an order stating that the Al-Aqsa Foundation was an "unlawful organization". Documents, computers, and other equipment were seized in the building. At the same time, some bank accounts belonging to the Islamic Movement, of which the Al-Aqsa Foundation is part, were frozen.

2. According to the ISA report, Al-Aqsa al-Mubarak Ltd. (hereinafter: **Al-Aqsa Foundation**) was founded in 2000 by Sheikh Ra'ed Salah (the leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, whose leaders were charged with affiliation to a terrorist organization in 2003). That foundation is one of the major organs of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, controlling most of its projects. The Al-Aqsa Foundation serves, inter alia, as the Islamic Movement's supreme authority on everything pertaining to its intensive Al-Aqsa Mosque campaign, which uses the (false) slogan that the mosque is in danger (ynet, August 24).

3. According to the ISA report, there has been more and more information indicating that the **Al-Aqsa Foundation cooperates with the Hamas headquarters in Jerusalem** and with other Hamas institutions that are considered "unlawful organizations" in Israel. Some of that activity is sponsored by the Union of Good (see below). The Al-Aqsa Foundation serves as the executive wing of Hamas's *da'wah* (civilian infrastructure) headquarters in Jerusalem. As part of that cooperation, Al-Aqsa Foundation activists transferred monetary and logistical assistance to support Hamas's organizational activities in Jerusalem. Attorney Zahi Nujidat, the Islamic Movement spokesman, criticized the activity of the Israeli security forces and denied any connection between his movement and Hamas (ynet, Galey Tzahal, August 24).

4. **Union of Good** is an umbrella organization of radical Islamic funds from across the globe, **which is part of Hamas's fundraising system**. It was outlawed in 2002 by Israel's Defense Minister. Recently, Defense Minister Ehud Barak has outlawed 36 Islamic funds from across the globe, all belonging to the Union of Good.<sup>1</sup> According to the ISA report, the Union of Good has transferred significant amounts of money for the joint activity of Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Foundation in Jerusalem. Those sums were transferred without proper records, using money changers, smugglers, and bank transfers.

---

<sup>1</sup> See our Information Bulletin: ["The war on financing terrorism: Defense Minister Ehud Barak signed an order outlawing 36 global "Union of Good" Islamic funds which raise money for Hamas institutions in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories. The money supports Hamas in building a political alternative to the PA and maintain a terrorism-supporting system"](#) (July 8, 2008).

5. Hamas's *da'wah* infrastructure in Jerusalem, whose activists collaborated with the Al-Aqsa Foundation, is part of Hamas's widespread civilian infrastructure in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip. It includes dozens of charitable associations, educational institutions, mosques, women's and workers' unions, sports groups, and financial institutions. The *da'wah* institutions are one of Hamas's most important power sources, entrenching its hold over the Palestinian population at the expense of the Palestinian Authority.

6. Since Abu Mazen's coming to power, and even more so after the Hamas military takeover of the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Authority increased its activity against Hamas's *da'wah* infrastructure in Judea and Samaria. This includes shutting down mosques, disbanding their boards and appointing new administrations associated with Fatah and the Palestinian Authority (an activity which continues even now). Israel, which also outlawed Hamas's *da'wah* institutions, conducts intensive activities against them, both because they are an inseparable part of Hamas and because they support terrorism.