



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

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The Internet and terrorism: Hamas recently launched a new website called AqsaTube, an addition to its extensive Internet presence. Hamas makes intensive use of its website network to wage the battle for the hearts and minds of its various target audiences in the Palestinian Authority and worldwide.

Find the differences



Left: The YouTube logo. Right: The logo of Hamas's new site, AqsaTube, inspired by YouTube.

Overview

1. Hamas recently launched a new Internet site called "**AqsaTube**." It is a file-sharing site enabling users to upload videos. Its format and design are similar to the American YouTube's. Its name and logo are also similar to YouTube's, and without a doubt were inspired by them.
2. The Hamas site, however, is devoted entirely to propaganda and incitement. Its contents, like those of other Hamas websites, are a reflection of its ideology and strategy. They include

videos inciting against Israel, glorifying terrorism (the “resistance”) and preaching the doctrines of radical Islam. There is also a link to **Hamas’s satellite channel, Al-Aqsa TV**, which increases the number of its viewers and enables it to bypass restrictions on its broadcasts.

Using the support of a French company and selling advertising space for Google

3. AqsaTube’s IP address is 91.121.164.164, and it is listed under the name of **Abu Nasser Skandar from Dubai**, and its Internet service provider is the **French firm, OVH**, whose contact person is **Octave Klaba**. OVH provides its clients with Internet services and technical support for sites around the world. According to its own site, it has 350,000 clients. It operates not only in France but in Britain, Germany and Poland.¹

4. AqsaTube also sells advertising space to commercial companies **through Google’s AdSense advertisement serving program**,² which automatically displays ads according to page content. **Some of the ads are for Israeli companies (in our assessment without their knowledge).**



The YouTube homepage



The AqsaTube homepage

¹ The data relating to the site were taken from the Whois site, and OVH from its own website.

² Using Google’s AdSense program, companies can present their online text and picture advertisements according to site contents. The system automatically scans a site’s contents and shows ads relevant to the target audience. The site is paid when the ad is clicked (information from Google advertising material). **That enables Hamas to exploit Google’s technology to make money from advertisements.**

Summary

5. The new AqsaTube website is another example of how Hamas, like other terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda, have learned to exploit the information revolution to wage the battle for hearts and minds. It joins a long series of websites (in our assessment more than 20), in eight languages, managed and directed by Hamas.

6. The new site stresses **visual material** as a means of reaching wide audiences in the Arab-Muslim countries and even in the West. That is done in **full recognition of the importance and impact of visual information** and of YouTube's phenomenal success. Using visual material helps Hamas disseminate its ideology and send its political messages to its target audiences in the PA, the Arab-Muslim world, and worldwide. In addition, Hamas also makes **direct use of YouTube** by uploading videos glorifying terrorists and terrorism.



Examples of propaganda and incitement videos on YouTube. They include commemoration of shaheeds, songs and the glorification of operatives from the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military-terrorist wing.

Appendix

The contents of AqsaTube videos

1. The overwhelming majority of AqsaTube videos come from **Hamas**, but it is possible to find those of **other Palestinian terrorist organizations**. The videos are divided into subheadings: the Hamas movement, Fatah, the children of Al-Aqsa (i.e., children motivated by Hamas ideology), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and others.

2. The main themes of the videos are the following:

i) **Glorifying terrorism and fostering a death cult among children**: One video shows Palestinian children wearing military uniforms on a background of children's drawings of rockets, expressing their support for the "resistance" against Israel (i.e., terrorism). A song is played whose words include "death is fame and victory."³

ii) **Glorifying the shaheeds (i.e., terrorists who died for the sake of Allah)**: There are videos in which the wills of shaheeds are read and others with songs praising them. There are a number of videos glorifying **Yehia Ayash**, who was responsible for the murder of dozens of Israeli civilians in suicide bombing attacks in the 1990s. The videos are part of the attempt to turn Yehia Ayash and other terrorists into role models.

iii) **The military-terrorist activities of Hamas operatives**: The site features videos of Hamas's military-terrorist activities and glorifies the organization's operatives. There is also a 38-minute video explaining and demonstrating how to use electrical equipment to detonate explosives.⁴ Hamas and other terrorist organizations also use the Internet for operative purposes, including disseminating information about weapons and the modus operandi of terrorist attacks.

³ <http://www.aqsatube.com/play.php?vid=895>

⁴ <http://www.aqsatube.com/play.php?vid=1033>



From a video explaining how to use electricity with explosives.

iv) **Videos relating to Al-Qaeda and other global jihad organizations:** The site has videos of Ayman al-Zawahiri attacking the Palestinian Authority leadership headed by Abu Mazen and calling upon Hamas to take tougher positions. There are also videos in which Sheikh Omar Abd al-Rahman, a global jihad leader, expresses his radical opinions, and videos of “Hamas al-Iraq,” a terrorist organization operating in Iraq and close to Al-Qaeda.

v) **Encouraging conversion to Islam:** There are also videos encouraging people to convert to Islam. Taken from American channels, they feature Americans talking about their conversion to Islam and how happy they are with their choice.

3. The site has many videos produced by the **information office of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**, Hamas’s military-terrorist wing, documenting terrorist attacks and training. They include masked operatives firing rockets and training with weapons. One of them is devoted to one of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades special units, and is accompanied by a song encouraging suicide attacks: “Oh suicide bombers’ unit, oh heroes of the [terrorist] attacks...Our great hope is death for the sake of Allah”

(<http://www.aqsatube.com/play.php?vid=157>).



An AqsaTube video of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training exercises.