



**Intelligence and Terrorism
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**Society and politics in the Gaza Strip: the *da'wah*,
 Hamas's civilian infrastructure, is an important
 support of its political control. The *da'wah's*
 extensive activities during the last Muslim holy
 month of Ramadan demonstrated that it has
 become Hamas's instrument for cementing its rule
 in the Gaza Strip.**

Overview

1. In Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip Hamas has established an **extensive infrastructure of civilian institutions** (the *da'wah*) which center around its charitable societies. The *da'wah* supports the local population in matters of social welfare, health, education and religious services, among others. At the same time, those institutions support terrorism by helping Hamas terrorist operatives and their families (including the families of dead, detained, wanted and wounded terrorists). The *da'wah* also deals with preaching and incitement to terrorism and hatred for Israel and the Jews by running an independent educational system and mosques to brainwash Palestinians with its radical Islamic ideology.

2. In the Gaza Strip Hamas has established a extensive *da'wah* for strengthening its political and ideology influence within the local population. The *da'wah* is primarily supported by Hamas's charitable societies, the most prominent of which are Al-Salah, Al-Mujamma' al-Islami and Al-Falah. They have welfare, medical, educational and religious institutions whose operation is enormously expensive. Their activities are exploited to entrench Hamas's political power and to raise the population's religious awareness.¹

¹ Recently Hamas *da'wah* activists in the Gaza Strip have begun distributing money and coupons in the mosques. In that way they encourage the population to go to prayers in Hamas-controlled mosques. The same is true of charitable societies and mosques affiliated with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.



Left: Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (right) and Abd Aziz Rantisi, two Hamas leaders who died in Israeli targeted killings, represented as founders of Al-Mujamma' al-Islami (Al-Mujamma' al-Islami website, October 28, 2008). Right: Graduation ceremonies at Al-Mujamma' al-Islami's center for Qur'an memorization. In the background are posters of Ahmed Yassin and masked terrorists (Al-Mujamma' al-Islami website).

3. In recently years, donations from foreign funds and foundations have fallen off, harming *da'wah* financial sources. However, despite the decrease in income and the claims that the economic situation in the Gaza Strip is dire, since the Hamas takeover **there has been no significant change in the extent of the various charitable societies' activities**. That could easily be seen during the last Muslim holy month of Ramadan (September 2008), and at the Eid al-Fitr holiday which ends the month: The charitable societies kept up their intensive – and very expensive – activities, with no difference from previous years. They distributed food packages, clothing and presents, gave money to the needy and financed mass fast-breaking feasts in the mosques.



Left: Al-Falah Charitable Society distributing funds in Gaza City during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan. Right: Breaking the Ramadan fast, a mass feast in one of the Gaza Strip mosques.

4. The charitable societies' activities during Ramadan were carried out **in close collaboration with the Hamas administration**, turning the *da'wah* into a kind of **official institution**. Some of the activity was sponsored, as expected, by donations from abroad,

and some, in our assessment, by the Hamas administration, which used cash smuggled into the Gaza Strip through the tunnel network under the Gaza-Egypt border. The *da'wah*, which in recent years has established itself as an alternative to the Palestinian Authority (and continues to do the same in Judea and Samaria) **has become a de facto arm of the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip. Deployed throughout the civilian population, and with its own bureaucracy, it has created a social safety net, increasing popular political support for the Hamas administration.**

5. The *da'wah's* established activities in the Gaza Strip are in sharp contrast to those in Judea and Samaria, where **it is a stronghold of opposition to the PA government.** For that reason, Hamas's charitable societies, mosques, educational and financial institutions are in the Palestinian security services' crosshairs in Judea and Samaria (and recently, in Hebron in particular). Their objective is to strike at Hamas's power base within the population and prevent a replay in Judea and Samaria of the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip.

6. An examination of the websites belonging to the large charitable societies operating in the Gaza Strip reveals that they continue receiving donations from Islamic funds and foundations around the globe, including those which are members of the **Union of Good.**² The money collected helps Hamas, through its *da'wah* institutions, solidify its administration in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the money transferred to Hamas institutions in Judea and Samaria supports the Hamas opposition in its fierce campaign against the PA.



A Hamas reception for Ramadan Tanbura, head of the Al-Falah Charitable Society, on his return from an eight-month fund-raising trip to the Gulf States. Senior Hamas figures also participated.

² The **Union of Good** is an umbrella organization for more than 50 Islamic funds and foundations. For further information see our July 8, 2008 Bulletin entitled "The war on financing terrorism" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/financing_0708e.pdf.

The *Da'wah* in the Gaza Strip under Hamas Rule

7. After Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June, 2007, the *da'wah's* role did not end and its influence and status did not decline. The opposite was true: under Hamas rule the *da'wah* became one of its **main props**, helping it to provide a considerable proportion of the social welfare services to the Gazan population which the Hamas administration found it difficult to supply.

8. Under Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip the *da'wah* institutions **continue developing their independent educational networks**, even as Hamas tries to increase its influence over the national education system of the PA. The *da'wah* educational institutions brainwash the younger generation with Hamas's radical Islamic ideology and the tenets of the "resistance" (i.e., anti-Israeli terrorism) and hatred for Israel and the West. Encouraged by the Hamas administration, indoctrination is begun in the kindergartens and continues in elementary school and beyond. The *da'wah* also runs **summer camps** for children and adolescents where not only are they brainwashed with Hamas ideology, but where they also receive semi-military training. This past summer many of the camps were funded by the Union of Good, 36 of whose institutions have been outlawed by Israel. In July 2008 the Union of Good website reported it had sponsored more than 100 summer camps in the Gaza Strip.³



Pictures from Hamas *da'wah* summer camps, 2008. Left: At a Dar al-Qur'an camp girls memorize the Qur'an. Center: Ismail Haniya visiting a camp in Khan Yunis. Right: The Ismail Abu Shanab group, named after a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip was killed by Israel in August 2003. The group belongs to a summer camp run by Hamas's Islamic Society.⁴

³ For further information see our August 24, 2008 Bulletin entitled "Summer camps in the Gaza Strip run by Hamas and other terrorist organizations inculcate youngsters with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of terrorism" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e004.pdf.

⁴ The Islamic Society (Al-Jamiya al-Islamiyya) is an important Hamas institution in the Gaza Strip. It is headed by sheikh Dr. Ahmed Bakher, acting head of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the intended president of the PA when Mahmoud Abbas's term of office ends. The society deals with indoctrinating youngsters and runs a broad network of kindergartens. Its offices were closed by the PA at the beginning of 2002 but it continues to operate its institutions, relying on donations from Islamic funds abroad.

**Encouraging Children to Join Hamas and its Military-Terrorist
Wing When They Grow Up
(Israel Channel 10 TV report appearing in Haaretz, July 29, 2008)**



Children asked "What's your army?" answer [the Izz al-Din] "al-Qassam" [Brigades]¹ (Hamas's military-terrorist wing).



Children asked "What's your movement?" answer "Hamas."



A child at a Hamas summer camp is asked what he wants to be when he grows up: "I want to be a military man, a hold warrior, to liberate this land, because it is ours and does not belong to anyone else."

9. The kind of "education" provided by Hamas is could be seen at the 29th kindergarten graduation ceremonies of the Al-Mujamma' al-Islami Charitable Society, one of Hamas's large charitable societies.⁵ A ceremony was held on May 31, 2007, and broadcast by Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV, in which children wearing uniforms marched – some of them with their faces masked – carrying plastic rifles and swords. They simulated fighting, jumped, crawled and brandished their swords. The background music consisted of songs of praise for Hamas, according to which "a Hamas fighter does not fear death." One of the children shouted "What

⁵ **Al-Mujamma' al-Islami** was founded in 1973 by sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who founded Hamas itself at the end of the 1980s. The society deals with "educational" and social welfare activities, and with preaching radical Islam, and supported Hamas when it was founded. Today it provides religious, "cultural," health and educational services. It also runs kindergartens, attended by about 800 children, and schools with hundreds of pupils.

is your path?" and the others answered "Jihad!" "What is your ambition?" and they answered, " Hamas!" "What is your army?" "Al-Qassam!" [the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades]. Similar pictures were issued from kindergarten ceremonies in 2001.⁶



Graduation ceremonies at Hamas-affiliated Al-Mujamma' al-Islami Society kindergartens (Al-Aqsa TV, May 31, 2007).

10. Moreover, the *da'wah's* charitable societies enabled the Hamas administration to sabotage the strike called by the medical workers and the health workers' union which began in the Gaza Strip on August 30, 2008. In response to the strike the charitable societies' large clinics and medical centers (which provide a relatively high level of medical services) increased their activities, claiming the strike was politically motivated, and received encouragement from the PA in Ramallah.

11. The Hamas administration provides funds to support the *da'wah's* extensive activities (in our assessment, using money smuggled in through the tunnels). The *da'wah* also receives donations from abroad. Thus Hamas's institutions continue functioning without interruption and sometimes even broaden their scope (for example, the Al-Falah Society), despite the difficult economic situation in the Gaza Strip and the decline in the sources of donations from Islamic foundations abroad.

⁶ For further information on the 2007 kindergarten graduation ceremonies, see our June 6, 2007 Bulletin entitled "Inculcating kindergarten children with radical Islamic ideology and the culture of anti-Israel terrorism" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/kindergarten_gaza060607.pdf.



Left: Donations from the Jordanian The Charitable Committee of Islamic Help to the Palestinian. It is one of 36 Union of Good societies outlawed by Israel as part of Hamas's system of collecting funds (AI-Salah website, October 29, 2008). Right: Medical project funded by the Union of Good (AI-Mujamma' al-Islami Society website, October 28, 2008).



Left: Contributions from Interpal, Hamas's designated fund in Britain, one of the Union of Good's most important organizations (AI-Salah website, October 29, 2008). Right: Items donated by the French CBSP, outlawed by Israel as a terrorist organization because of its contributions to Hamas's *da'wah* (AI-Salah website, October 29, 2008).⁷

Da'wah Activity in the Gaza Strip during Ramadan

12. Ramadan is a period of intensive *da'wah* activity and special projects whose costs are high. Conspicuous during Ramadan in the Gaza Strip this year was the distribution of aid to the population which collaborated with the Hamas administration.

13. Some examples are the following:

- i) **September 8** – The **AI-Falah** Charitable Society distributed about \$50,000 to orphans and the needy.

⁷ During IDF activity in Judea and Samaria many documents were seized showing the financial support CBSP provides for local Hamas *da'wah* organizations.

ii) **September 13** – Hamas's **Support Association for Economic Aid** gave money to 2,000 Gaza Strip university students.⁸

iii) **September 20** – Members of Hamas's **Change and Reform faction** in the Palestinian parliament distributed 100 food packages in the Al-Shati and Sheikh Radwan refugee camps.

iv) **September 23** – The **Al-Shaheed Institute** began its distributions of \$50 and clothing to 500 needing Gaza Strip families.

v) **September 28** – The **Nour al-Ma'rifa** Society distributed money and humanitarian aid to 1,200 needy families.

vi) **September 28** – The **Al-Rahma Charitable Society** distributed baskets of food and money to 960 needy Gazans.

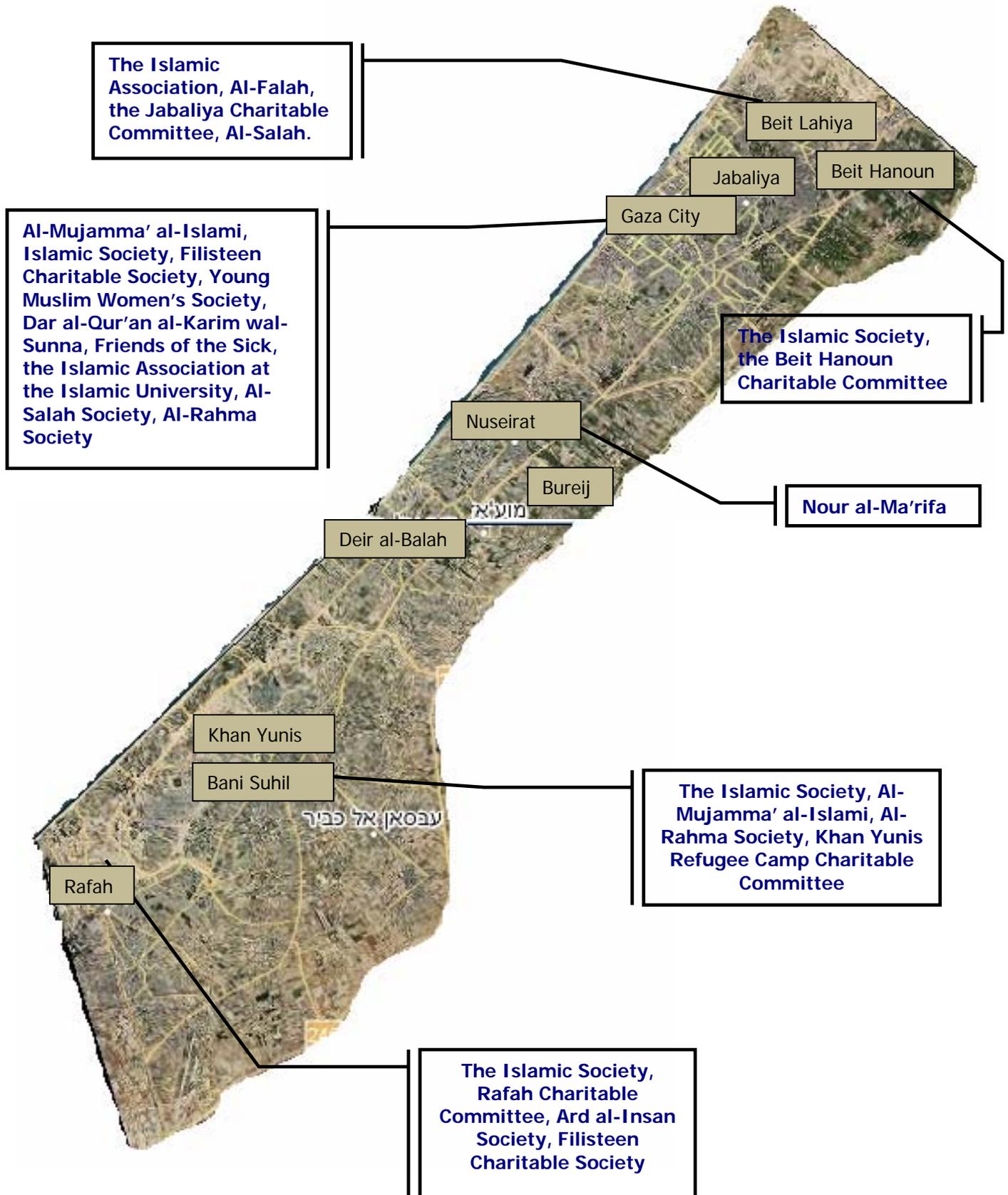
14. The extent of the aid – and by implication, its expense – was shown by a report issued by the **Al-Mujamma' al-Islami** charitable society (October 6, 2008) of the assistance it provided during Ramadan: The society distributed 1,000 baskets of food, 300 sacks of flour, 400 meals and 5,000 pitas. It provided hundreds of mass fast-breaking meals, handed out coupons worth 100-200 shekels to 1,700 Gazans and gave out cash: 150 families received \$150, 500 families received between 100-200 shekels, 600 families received 100 shekels for clothing and 2,000 orphans received a sum total of half a million dollars. According to the Al-Mujamma' al-Islami report, the most generous contributors were the **Union of Good**, the Qatari Sheikh Eid bin Muhammad al-Thani Charitable Organization, The World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY), The Charity Support Group in the Emirates and the [Egyptian] Union of Arab Doctors, etc.

15. For the names of other *da'wah* organizations which were particularly active during Ramadan and their deployment, see the map below.

⁸ The name of the organization might be Hamas's Emergency Support Committee. It recently began helping victims of the floods in the northern Gaza Strip alongside the activity of the Hamas administration.

Appendix I

Da'wah Charitable Societies in the Gaza Strip Active during Ramadan



Appendix II

The Hamas *da'wah* in the PA-administered territories

16. Hamas's **extensive *da'wah*** centers around the charitable societies. The *da'wah* has two main objectives:

i) **To support the civilian population** by providing educational, welfare, health, religious and other services, exploiting the PA's weaknesses and helplessness. It thus aims to win popular support for its political stance and its terrorist campaign against Israel, especially from its Muslim base.

ii) **To support Hamas terrorism** in the following ways:

1) **Supporting Hamas's terrorist operatives** and their families (suicide bombers, the imprisoned and detained, the wanted and wounded) by providing direct aid (i.e., money) and indirect aid (health, welfare, educational, religious and other services).

2) "Education," i.e., the **indoctrination of radical Islamic ideology and incitement to acts of terrorism against and hatred for Israel** (and the West). The *da'wah* institutions of Hamas run their own educational system, have acquired influence over **mosques** in the PA, and use a variety of media to disseminate their propaganda and Islamic indoctrination within Palestinian society (posters, brochures, flyers, etc.).

3) **Support for Hamas's ongoing activities in the PA-administered territories**, including financing Hamas political activity; operating media and propaganda services; channeling donations from abroad (the Arab-Muslim and Western countries) into the Hamas coffers; providing financial services, sometimes including the leaking of funds to Hamas's military-terrorist networks.

4) **Support for Hamas activists** in the PA-administered territories (including terrorist operatives, by creating jobs for them and sometimes also for their families) within the framework of the many charitable societies and institutions which make up the *da'wah*. That gives Hamas a **legal cover** for its activities (even in the eyes of the PA, to which some of its *da'wah* institutions are legally subordinate).

17. The PA is well aware of the extent and political implications of Hamas's civilian infrastructure. It comprises charitable societies and committees, kindergartens and schools, hospitals and clinics, mosques, women's and worker's groups, sports teams and financial institutions. They all reinforce Hamas's hold on the population at the PA's expense, and help

create a Hamas entity which is designed to become an Islamic alternative to the PA, **which is in fact what happened in the Gaza Strip when Hamas took it over on June 13, 2007.**

18. In the past the PA tried a number of times to supervise and oversee the *da'wah*. However, in the long run the steps it took were ineffective because the PA was afraid of a direct confrontation with Hamas, and the enthusiastic beginnings petered out after a short time. This past year the Salam Fayyad government made a notable effort to place the *da'wah* institutions in Judea and Samaria under PA jurisdiction and weaken Hamas's hold. The effort is still being made as part of the PA's security activities currently taking place in Hebron.

19. Financing the *da'wah* demands enormous financial resources. **The funds are raised abroad by Islamic charitable societies, among them designated funds and foundations operating in the Arab world and in the West.** The money is theoretically transferred to the Palestinian population for social welfare, educational, religious and humanitarian purposes. **In reality**, it goes to **strengthen Hamas's institutions** supporting its program to become a radical Islamic alternative to the PA. For that reason, in recent years Western countries have taken legal steps against them and in some instances have managed to close them (for example the Holy Land Foundation in the United States, whose case is still sub judice, and the Al-Aqsa Foundation in German). However, the transfer of funds from abroad to Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip **continues**, especially those working under the umbrella of the Union of Good.