



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
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**Iran and Hamas declare digital war against Israel:
Hamas recently participated in a digital
communications exhibition in Tehran and was
involved in establishing a group calling itself “The
Digital Intifada.” Its objective was to develop
websites to fight Israel and encourage the criminal
activity of hacking Israeli websites.**



The Hamas booth at the digital communications exhibition in Tehran (Palestine-info website, November 3).



Poster from the website of the Iranian news agency Fars, October 29, 2008. The poster tries to justify the criminal competition of hacking into Israeli and pro-Israeli websites announced at the exhibition by claiming that it is the response to attacks on Shi'ite Islamic websites.

Overview

1. Both Iran and Hamas make extensive use of the Internet to wage their battle for hearts and minds. Between October 22 and 31 the second annual National Exhibition and Festival of Digital Media was held in Tehran. **Hamas and Hezbollah** participated, each with its own booth.
2. During the exhibition a group calling itself the **Digital Intifada** was organized with Hamas involvement. Its objective was to develop websites to battle against Israel ("the Zionist entity") and to attack Israeli Internet sites, both government and non-government. The organization offered a prize of \$2,000 to anyone who succeeded in hacking into an Israeli site "hostile to the Palestinian people" during the exhibition. Such activity, which took place at an exhibition sponsored by Iran, was **criminal**.



The Hamas booth at the exhibition. Right: Prominent is a poster in Farsi issued by the Hamas administration's ministry of endowments to enlist Islamic support for the Jerusalem cause (Palestine-info website, November 3).

The Exhibition

3. Between October 22 and 31, 2008, the second annual National Exhibition and Festival of Digital Media was held in **Tehran**. The **Hamas movement** had its own booth, which displayed its Internet sites. According to a report from a Hamas website, Hamas's main Palestinian site, Palestine-info, which can be accessed in Arabic, Farsi, Russian, English, French, Urdu and Malay was featured. Also featured were Hamas's Filastin al-'An, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Al-Aqsa TV, PALDF Forum and Sabiroon websites, among others. At the booth it was possible to receive propaganda bulletins, scarves and hats (Palestine-info website, November 2).



Advertising Hamas websites: Palestine-info, Sabiroon, Paltimes, Al-Aqsa TV.



Propaganda material distributed in the Hamas booth at the exhibition. Left: A copy of Hamas's paper *Filastin al-Muslima*, which is published in London. There also flyers with pictures of Ahmed Yassin and Abd Aziz Rantisi (Palestine-info website, November 3).

4. Hamas erected a **hall** in its booth for discussions with **Abu Osama Abd al-Muati**, the Hamas representative in Tehran, and attended by **Abu Srur**, responsible for propaganda dispensed from the Hamas bureau in Tehran, and experts and political commentators. **The discussions revolved around topics linked to the battle for hearts and minds, with an emphasis on the interface between the Internet and terrorism.** Some of the issues discussed were "the role of digital media in the support of the resistance (i.e., the terrorist organizations)," "Hamas and digital media," "the role of digital media in supporting Al-Aqsa mosque," "the siege [sic] of the Gaza Strip and the responsibility of the Muslim community of believers," and "selling land – fact or fiction?" Visitors to the booth included the **Iranian minister of culture and guidance** and his aides, head of Pakistan's Islamic Jumaa' in Lahore,¹ the man in charge of culture at the Iranian shaheed fund,² members of the Iranian media and senior Iranian politicians (Palestine-info website, November 2).

¹ *Jamiyat i-Islami* ("the Islamic group," Urdu for the Arabic *Al-Jumaa' al-Islamiyyah*) is the most prominent and veteran Islamic political party in Pakistan. It was established in August 1941 in Lahore by Mulana (Arabic for "our master," an honorary title given to a respected Sunni religious leader in Asia and Africa) Abu al-A'ala al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), one of the first and most important radical ideologues of the 20th century. The party's worldview is close to those of the Muslim Brotherhood, but more radical. Its founder was the first Islamic political theoretician who rejected the values of modern civilization (the new *al-Jahilia*) – with the exception of science and technology – claiming they were incompatible with the values of Islam. His ideology was later developed by the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, who said that instead of the modern Arab and Muslim states, an Islamic state should be established whose only sovereignty (*Hakimiyya*) was in the hands of Allah. Since 1978 Qazi Hussein Ahmed has been the leader (Amir, the accepted term for the person heading a radical Islamic/terrorist organization) of the party.

² An Iranian institution dealing with the families of shaheeds, with branches in Lebanon which support Hezbollah.



The Hamas hall at the exhibition (Palestine-info website, November 3).

Digital War is Declared

5. A ceremony was held at the Hamas booth to inaugurate an organization called the **Digital Intifada**.³ The ceremony was covered by the Arab and Iranian media and attended by Abu Osama Abd al-Muati, Hamas's representative in Tehran, Abu Hassan Zuaytar, director of Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV in Tehran, members of Hamas and Hezbollah propaganda teams and representatives of Iranian groups acting in the Palestinian arena (Palestine-info website, October 31).

6. The director of Al-Manar TV in Tehran said in a speech that **"the information [sic] war is a continuation of conventional warfare."** He said that young Iranians, Palestinians and Lebanese had established "an effective trench in the field of digital communications capable of withstanding a general Zionist attack." The so-called **Digital Intifada** group announced its **objectives**: producing computer games about fighting Zionism, coordinating between the forums supporting the Palestinian cause, opening a digital library about the "occupation of Palestine" and establishing **battalions of digital resistance fighters to battle the "Zionist entity."** The organization thanked **the Hamas bureau in Tehran** for cooperating with its founding committee and for the support it gave to inaugurating the "digital project" (Palestine-info website, November 2).

7. The Digital Intifada ended by noting that "if the children in Gaza are not secure, no governmental or non-governmental Israeli [Internet] site will be secure." On October 27, Shahr Hussein, Tehran correspondent for the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Jarida, reported that Abu Srur, in charge of propaganda for Hamas's information bureau in Tehran, said **Hamas was offering a prize of \$2,000 to anyone who could hack into a website hostile to the Palestinian people.** He added that the Palestinian association of Internet activists would also give \$2,000 to anyone who hacked into "Zionist websites" during the exhibition, such as the Shas⁴ site, the Temple Mount Faithful⁵ site, and the **American Internet Haganah (which specializes in monitoring global jihad websites).**

³ *Al-intifada al-raqamiyyah*

⁴ **Shas** is religious Israeli political party, part of the ruling coalition government.

⁵ **The Temple Mount Faithful** is an Israeli organization whose goal is to build the Third Temple.

Abu Srur called on hackers to contact the Hamas booth to receive the information necessary for entering the competition.⁶



Abu Osama Abd al-Muati, Hamas representative in Iran, interviewed by the Iranian media (Palestine-info website, November 30).

8. The objective of the hacker competition, according to Abu Srur, head of propaganda for the Hamas bureau of information, was “to prevent the spread of terrorist Zionist opinions.” He said that the Zionist organizations were determined to influence world public opinion, especially in the Muslim countries, through websites in various languages, to “minimize the Palestinian problem” (IKNA, Iran, October 31). According to the Palestinian Ma’an News Agency, **“hacking into Zionist websites has become a necessity which cannot be avoided”** (Ma’an News Agency quoting the Islamic Republic News Agency, October 31).

⁶ On October 28 the Iranian news agency **Fars** reported that **Hamas** was organizing a competition to hack into the “extremist Zionist” websites on the Internet. Abu Srur, head of propaganda for Hamas in Iran, was interviewed about the competition by Fars.