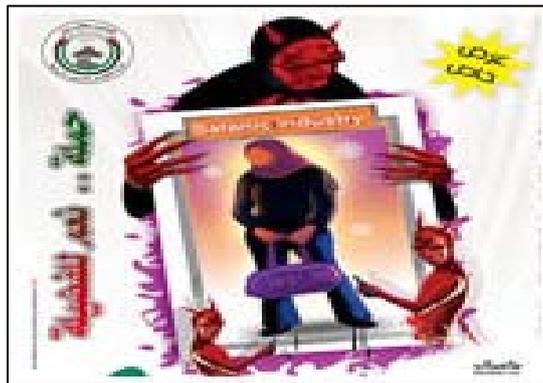




Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

July 28, 2009

The Islamization process promoted by Hamas in the Gaza Strip and its social and political implications on the local, the Middle Eastern, and the international scenes



Poster produced by the Hamas administration's Religious Endowment Ministry to encourage the Islamic code of conduct campaign on the streets and beaches of the Gaza Strip. The campaign is titled "Yes to modest behavior". The poster shows a modestly dressed woman wearing a veil (*hijab*) surrounded by menacing images of demons (Masajidna, the Hamas Religious Endowment Ministry website, June 19, 2009).



Veiled female police officers in the Gaza women's police forcing local women to wear veils and to dress modestly in public.

Overview

1. Ever since it took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007, **Hamas has been promoting a process of gradual Islamization**, designed to further its vision of establishing a Palestinian state based on Islamic religious law (*shari'ah*). While that process is related to similar trends taking place in the Arab and Muslim world, the Gaza Strip has several unique social and political characteristics making it a **fertile ground** for Hamas to promote its political and religious views. This study explores the main expressions of the Islamization process in the Gaza Strip, focusing on the period since Hamas's takeover, and attempts to assess its implications in several aspects: the internal Palestinian political aspect, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the regional and international aspect.

2. The vision of establishing a radical Islamic Palestinian state is expressed quite clearly **in the Hamas charter (1988)**. That fundamental document, whose principles are adhered to by Hamas to this day, asserts that **the land of Palestine is an Islamic endowment** which must be liberated from the Jews through jihad (holy war) and **an Islamic Palestinian state should be established there**. According to the charter, Hamas considers Islam to be a **way of life** rather than a religion in the modern Western sense, which separates religion from state. That makes Hamas distinctly different from the PLO and its secular ideology, a fact that is mentioned in the Hamas charter (clauses 27 and 36).¹

3. After the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, it was given an opportunity **to put its radical Islamic vision and ideology into practice**, establishing an Islamic Hamas-ruled political entity in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, however, **Hamas is forced to maneuver between its vision and its governmental needs**, which forces it to display pragmatism in its routine conduct. As a result of that, in the two years that have passed since the takeover Hamas has been implementing a process of Islamization in the Gaza Strip; it does so **gradually**, however, to keep from alienating the Gaza Strip population and not to draw criticism from its internal and external opponents.

4. More than just the fundamental goal of implementing radical Islamic ideology, the Islamization of the Gaza Strip, **as far as Hamas is concerned, also has clearly political goals**. Specifically, Hamas views that process as a **means to tighten its control over the Gaza Strip and promote its interests as a de facto government**. Through the Islamization process, Hamas attempts to subdue local sources of opposition to its power, mostly from Fatah, the traditional clan-based power sources, and even radical Islamic

¹ See our March 21, 2006 Information Bulletin: ["The Hamas Charter \(1988\): Overtly anti-Semitic and anti-West, radical Islamic in outlook, it stresses Hamas' ideological commitment to destroy the State of Israel through a long-term holy war \(jihad\)."](#)

opposition which identifies with the ideas spread by Al-Qaeda and poses an ideological challenge to Hamas on the activist radical Islamic scene. As a de facto government, Hamas is obliged to take into consideration the existence of internal sources of opposition to the measures designed to publicly enforce the Islamic code of conduct. In addition to the internal Palestinian criticism from Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, Hamas must also consider the **outside criticism** drawn by the Islamization process, mostly from **Egypt** (which is well aware of the negative repercussions of having a radical "Islamic emirate" established along its border).

5. As a result of the need to maneuver between the aforementioned constraints and considerations, Hamas's policy over the last two years has been characterized by **enforcing a gradual process of Islamization on the Gaza Strip population**. While the process is **measured and calculated**, it is carried out **persistently, systematically, with tremendous determination** (accompanied by a great deal of self confidence), and **invasively** (pertaining to all areas of life). Above all that, the final goal envisioned by Hamas is the establishment of an **Islamic entity in Gaza**, not immediately but rather in a gradual process, turning the Gaza Strip into a **stronghold of radical Islam as viewed by Hamas** (and not by Al-Qaeda). It should be noted that the Islamization process of the Gaza Strip is **taking root in a fertile ground**, both **socially** (the extreme poverty and unemployment, the crowded conditions and frustration suffered by the Gaza Strip residents, some two thirds of them defined by UNRWA as refugees) and **politically** (Hamas's tight grip on the Gaza Strip and its weakening of secular natured sources of opposition, mainly Fatah).

6. The Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 did not mark the start of the Islamization process there—it had been gradually taking place in previous decades. The process gained momentum during the first intifada (the Palestinian terror campaign 1987-1993) and was accelerated during the second intifada, since late 2000. In those years, the process was reflected in the extensive construction of mosques (most of them under the political control of Hamas); the embracement of Islamic dress and appearance codes (various types of veils for women and beards for men); the formation of a widespread infrastructure of radical Islamic organizations involved in social assistance and education, making good use of the governmental vacuum in the Gaza Strip; the education of children and teenagers in the spirit of radical Islam, both in Palestinian Authority educational institutions (now under the control of Hamas) and in non-formal educational institutions (such as summer camps, culture institutions, sports clubs).

7. **As part of a deliberate policy espoused by Hamas**, the Islamization process **continued and was even accelerated** in the two years that have passed since the Hamas

takeover of the Gaza Strip. Enforced by the Hamas de facto administration, the process **encompasses all the areas of life** of Gaza Strip citizens: **law and legislation** (passing radical Islamic laws and regulations); **the establishment of economic institutions of Islamic character** (a bank, an insurance company); **the enforcement of an Islamic code of conduct on the daily lives of the population by the Hamas internal security apparatuses** (wearing veils, banning mixed gender social gatherings, gender segregation on beaches, banning alcohol, and so forth); **the significant increase in the number of mosques** (most of them controlled by Hamas) **in the Gaza Strip**; **the deepening of formal and informal Islamic education** (in educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities, in summer camps); the accentuation of the Islamic character of the media (mainly Al-Aqsa TV). Operatives in Hamas's military-terrorist infrastructure, as well as operatives belonging to other terrorist organizations and networks, are **indoctrinated with radical Islam**, increasing their motivation to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israel.

8. The Islamization process in the Gaza Strip supports several pre-existing trends and fundamental processes which already take place on the Palestinian scene:

a. **Deepening the split between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria:** the **immediate** results of the Islamization process can already be seen and felt in the daily lives of the population. However, its deeper impacts on society **will be seen over the long term** in future generations, as a result of the radical Islamic indoctrination undergone by youngsters living in the Gaza Strip. The process **helps deepen the political, social, and even economic split between the radical Islamic entity in the Gaza Strip** and the Palestinian Authority-administered territories in Judea and Samaria. The Islamization process leads to the emergence of a new social reality in the Gaza Strip, posing **substantial difficulties** to any possible future attempt by the Palestinian Authority to regain political and security control of the Gaza Strip, even if the national dialogue between Fatah and Hamas does eventually result in some kind of arrangement. In the future, Hamas may attempt to duplicate the process in Judea and Samaria, even though, for now, the Palestinian Authority's intensive counter-activities have been successful in containing the threat posed to its rule by Hamas and the radical Islamic ideology it represents.

b. **Threats on the Middle Eastern scene (mostly against Egypt) and on the international scene:** the establishment of the Hamas-ruled radical Islamic political entity in the Gaza Strip is a phenomenon which poses a potential threat to pro-Western pragmatic Arab countries, mainly **Egypt**. As it develops, the Islamic entity in the Gaza Strip may become a **role model** for terrorist organizations and Islamic organizations

not only in the Middle East but also elsewhere. The Hamas-controlled entity in the Gaza Strip **may engage in acts of subversion** by joining forces with **radical Islamic elements which oppose the Egyptian government**, mainly the Muslim Brotherhood, the movement out of which Hamas branched off. Evidence of that was seen in the exposure of a Hezbollah network in Egypt, which was involved with Hamas in the Gaza Strip and possibly also with radical Islamic elements belonging to Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. At the same time, the Hamas-controlled entity in the Gaza Strip is a fertile ground for **Iranian influence**, given their **joint interests**, mainly the violent struggle against Israel. This is reflected in the arms, ammunition, and funds provided by Iran to Hamas,² even though Hamas (being of **Sunni** radical Islamic character) is not willing to fully submit to the dictates of the Shi'ite Islamic regime in Tehran (unlike Hezbollah).

9. The present study breaks down the Islamization of the Gaza Strip into the following categories, focusing on the two years that have passed since the Hamas takeover:

a. **The social sphere:**

1. Outward manifestations of the Islamization process
2. The significant increase in the number of mosques and its implications
3. Enforcing radical Islamic codes in the daily lives of the population
4. Islamic indoctrination in summer camps for children and youth

b. **The governmental sphere:**

1. Laws and regulations of Islamic character
2. The Islamization of education
3. Islamic commerce institutions
4. The Islamization of Hamas's media
5. The re-education of prisoners through the study of Quran

c. **The military-terrorist sphere:**

1. Radical Islamic indoctrination of operatives belonging to Hamas and to other terrorist organizations and networks
2. The establishment of jihadist radical Islamic networks which challenge Hamas

² For details see our January 12, 2009 Information Bulletin: ["Iranian Support of Hamas"](#).

Manifestations of the Gaza Strip Islamization process

The social sphere

Outward manifestations of the Islamization process

1. One of the most noteworthy outward manifestations of the Gaza Strip Islamization process is the increasing number of Gaza Strip residents growing beards or wearing veils (referring to men and women, respectively). Since Hamas's takeover of the Gaza Strip, the number of men growing beards in the spirit of radical Islam has increased due to various reasons. Gaza Strip residents interviewed by various media said that they grew beards owing to **religious considerations**; some of them, however, admitted that they did so because they were **afraid** of Hamas, whose members frequently detain **secular looking** people for questioning. It is our impression, however, that many men on the streets of Gaza City still do not grow beards, while wearing veils has already become extremely common with Gaza Strip women.



Women wearing veils on the streets of Gaza City (Ma'an News Agency, July 1, 2007). A news item recently broadcasted by Israeli Channel 2's Suleiman al-Shafi showed women wearing veils on the main street and on the beach of Gaza City (Channel 2, July 26).

2. The significant increase in **women wearing veils** in public in recent years stems from a combination of religious Islamic considerations as well as social pressure and fear of **the Hamas administration's enforcement apparatuses (and sometimes harassment by radical Islamic elements ideologically affiliated with Al-Qaeda)**. A female student from the Gaza Strip's Al-Azhar University interviewed shortly after the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip said that nobody had stopped her on the streets of Gaza to ask why she wore Western clothing, and nobody ordered her to wear a headdress. She did express her **concern**, however, that Hamas, being a religious Islamic movement, may soon start to enforce Islamic religious law. In retrospect, the concern was well-founded: mounting evidence from the past two years suggests that traditional Islamic clothing is being imposed

on women not only through social pressure but also through **legislation and enforcement** by the Hamas de facto administration (see below).

3. Wearing veils by Gaza Strip women also has **political implications**. Not only does it identify them as being female and willing to wear veils of their own accord, it is also the result of a policy of enforcement accompanied by pressure and sanctions by the Hamas administration. Similar phenomena can be found in such countries as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Taliban-influenced areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The significant increase in the number of mosques and its implications

4. The number of mosques in the Gaza Strip has been on the rise for the past several decades. It went from 77 in 1967 to about 150 in 1987, on the eve of the establishment of Hamas. The number of mosques reached about 200 in 1989, increased to about 240 in 1992, and to about 460 in the year 2000. By late 2007 there were already 774 mosques in the Gaza Strip, **and now (July 2009) their number is approaching 1,000**. The mosques are used by Hamas as an important means of disseminating radical Islamic ideology among the population and also as an instrument for advancing its political influence.

5. In an interview granted by the Hamas administration Interior Minister **Fathi Hamad** to an Algerian newspaper, he was asked about assistance extended by Al-Qaeda to Hamas. In his reply, Hamad boasted that Hamas had no need of assistance from Al-Qaeda: "In Gaza we have **900-1,000 mosques fully controlled by Hamas**. We have an organization **that has reached every single home**, and the people are all with Hamas. The movement has taken part in wars, campaigns, and incursions, and has carried out very big operations that cannot be matched by any other organization. Therefore, it is inconceivable that Al-Qaeda should parachute to the Gaza Strip to carry out its operations. **We need neither Al-Qaeda** nor any other organization..." (interview granted to Mustafa Farahat for **El-Shorouq el-Yawmi**, June 28, 2009).

6. That extensive network of mosques is indeed mostly controlled by the **Hamas movement**. This is owing to numerous ideological, social, and political reasons, most notably: the popularity of Hamas's radical Islamic ideology with the Gaza Strip population, which only increased following Israel's disengagement and Operation Cast Lead, perceived as successes for Hamas; its extensive social activity among the population through the charitable societies it controls; the difficulty of nationalist, secular oriented Fatah to conduct widespread activities in mosques; the Palestinian Authority's lack of effective control over the mosques and Hamas's political control of the Gaza Strip and suppression of its opponents

since June 2007. Combined, the aforementioned reasons made it possible for Hamas to tighten its grip of the mosques and to remove some clerics who are considered its political opponents, including representatives of other terrorist organizations or competing Islamic organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda.

7. The popular Arab newspaper Al-Hayat has published an article on the “mosque war” waged between Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Hamas’s rival terrorist organization. That “war” reached its peak in the period of time following Operation Cast Lead. According to the article, Hamas realized its ambitions of taking over additional mosques and adding them to the long list of mosques it had built itself or those that the Hamas administration Religious Endowment Ministry took over after June 2007. The newspaper quotes PIJ sources as saying that Hamas had taken over some of their mosques and it exerted pressure on their supporters, including by violent confrontations in some of the mosques. The article goes on to say that the PIJ only has 70 mosques, of which 11 were taken over by Hamas. Also according to the article, Taleb Abu Sha’ar, the Hamas de facto government’s minister of religious endowment, admitted that his ministry controlled 750 mosques, but denied that Hamas had attempted to take over PIJ mosques (Al-Hayat, July 11).

8. It should be noted that **the mosques controlled by Hamas (and other terrorist organizations) are used not only for religious purposes but also fulfill important social, military, and political functions.** Mosques are used for a variety of military purposes such as recruiting operatives for terrorist operations and storing arms and ammunition; they are also places where terrorist operatives gather and meet each other before launching attacks, training facilities, as well as rocket and mortar launch sites. Such uses of mosques were clearly demonstrated in Operation Cast Lead and in other operations conducted by the IDF in the Gaza Strip.³

³ See our March 1, 2009 Information Bulletin: [“The use of mosques for military and political purposes by Hamas and other terrorist organizations and Islamic groups: according to international laws governing of armed conflict, mosques used for military purposes lose the special protection afforded houses of worship and may become legitimate targets for attack”.](#)



Weapons found in mosques during Operation Cast Lead. Top left: The pulpit in the Al-Atatra mosque in the northern Gaza Strip. Top right: Kalashnikov assault rifle, vest and binoculars found hidden under the pulpit on February 14, 2009. Bottom: Store of rockets found by the IDF in a mosque in the Zeitun neighborhood in Gaza City.

Enforcing radical Islamic codes in the daily lives of the population

9. The enforcement of radical Islamic social codes in the daily lives of the population is carried out mostly by **Hamas's internal security and governmental apparatuses, mainly the Religious Endowment Ministry**. The Hamas police, which now includes the infamous Executive Force, act as a moral police,⁴ employing enforcement measures designed to emphasize the Islamic character of Gaza Strip residents. Furthermore, in August 2007 the Hamas administration founded a **women's police** unit consisting of about 100 female police officers. The policewomen's uniform includes long dresses and veils approved by the Hamas Interior Ministry. The policewomen's duties include arresting and searching women, as well as imposing modest dress codes on women in public, which includes wearing a veil. Some of the policewomen also serve as wardens in the Gaza City prison, working as Islam teachers and encouraging women to return to the fold of Islam.

⁴ Such police exists in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan (in places where Islamic religious law, the Shari'ah, is strictly applied). That police acts in accordance with the Islamic principle of "doing good and preventing evil", referring to Islamic behavior in public. For details, see: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/islamization_e.htm



Wardens in the Gaza City prison⁵



Members of the Gaza City women's police¹



The Hamas police: threatening and harassing Gaza Strip residents (Misr al-Hurra, October 20, 2007)

10. Since the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, increasing evidence suggests that the police take strong action to impose radical Islamic codes on the population. There are numerous examples: raids by plainclothes policemen on Gaza Strip beaches to prevent immodest appearance; forcing women to wear veils; forcing women to be accompanied by a male member of their family in public; harassing couples who, according to Hamas, violate the laws of modesty; confiscating alcoholic beverages, including those coming in through Erez crossing, because they are forbidden in Islam; disrupting social events (including weddings) where "songs which stir the passions" are played (it was reported that at least two popular singers were arrested **on charges of singing immoral songs**).

⁵ November 16, 2007, <http://www.al-khayma.com/investigations/hamasspolice.htm>



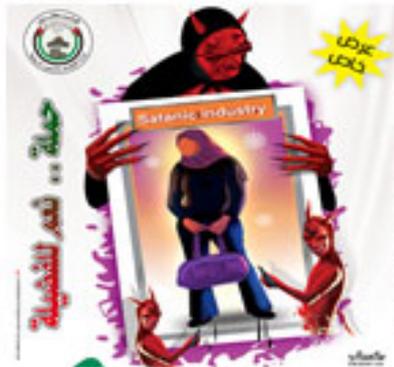
Veiled women wearing traditional Islamic clothes on the beaches of Gaza⁶



The Executive Force crashes a wedding held in Beit Hanoun (Palestinian TV, August 10, 2007)

11. In the summer of 2009, Hamas has launched an extensive campaign to enforce the Islamic behavior code, which also involves a media propaganda effort. Directed by the Hamas **Religious Endowment Ministry** and titled “**Yes to modest behavior, no to obscenity**”, the campaign takes place on the beaches and streets of the Gaza Strip. According to **Abdallah Abu Jarbu**, the assistant deputy minister of religious endowment in the Hamas de facto administration, the campaign aims to “combat immoral phenomena in Palestinian society” and was launched following a workshop held by the Religious Endowment Ministry, the Interior Ministry, and the police (source: the Hamas administration Religious Endowment Ministry).

⁶ May 25, 2009, <http://mydailyclarity.com/2009/05/the-smallest-surf-club-on-earth>



A poster produced by the Religious Endowment Ministry as part of the “Yes to modest behavior” campaign. The poster shows a modestly dressed woman with hijab surrounded by images of demons who represent temptation and obscenity.

12. As part of the campaign, women are banned from going to the beaches wearing immodest clothes; mixed-gender social events and celebrations are forbidden, as are mixed-gender trips; coffee shops (Internet cafés) are closed down; and chewing gum is prohibited as it “arouses the passion of the youth”.⁷ The campaign also included a preaching and “education” week, some of the activities which took place in it were: sermons in all the major mosques; hanging posters with the campaign logo in public places and in educational institutions; cooperation with Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV and Radio al-Quran al-Karim in broadcasting shows presented by clerics and called “Guardians of modest behavior”; distributing recordings of sermons from mosques to drivers.

13. Additional expressions of the campaign included:

a. The Hamas police inspected women’s clothes stores and provided their owners with printed information on such “offenses” as using immodestly dressed mannequins and hanging nude photographs.

b. The Palestinian journalist Asma al-Ghul said that she was detained by Hamas policemen on the Gaza beach. She was accused of wearing non-Islamic clothes, sitting together with men without being accompanied by her family members, and laughing aloud. She said that the internal security servicemen asked her for her passport, confiscated her laptop computer, and requested that she come to a police station for investigation (Pal Press, July 4; Al-Arabiyya, July 3). In response, police spokesman Islam al-Shahwan said that the Religious Endowment Ministry had asked the police to deploy plainclothes policemen on the beaches in order “to maintain domestic peace”

⁷ Radical Islamists are opposed to chewing gum, perceiving it as a morally wrong expression of Western culture. Abdallah Azzam, Osama Bin Laden’s Palestinian ideologue who is also viewed as a role model by Hamas, commented on that in one of the tapes he released. He said that those young Muslim people who are considered serious and respectable are those who grow beards, wear Muslim (as opposed to Western) clothing, and avoid chewing gum. In the conservative Palestinian Muslim society, chewing gum in public is considered impolite.

and to make sure that teenagers do not harass girls. He said that if any woman wanted to wear revealing clothes, she had to go to specifically designated places instead of appearing in public in such clothes (Al-Arabiyya.net).

14. Hamas's daily **Felesteen** (June 24), which takes part in the media propaganda effort that accompanies the campaign, cited positive comments supposedly made by citizens regarding the campaign. One citizen noted that the campaign would "purge the society of all obscenities and acts which contradict the laws of the Islamic religion". He even called to establish a unit whose purpose would be to impose "moral behavior on the citizen" and to punish all those who violate religious dictates. Another interviewee, a Hamas administration employee, called to stop "the phenomenon of moral depravity" in public places, universities, hotels, and hospitals, provided it was done "rationally and gradually". Another article in Felesteen (July 8) lashed out against Fatah for portraying the campaign as an act of oppression and violation of civil rights.

15. More expressions of Islamization in daily life:

a. Changing names of streets and sites in Gaza by the municipality to names which carry Islamic meanings.

b. Closing the Gaza Strip's major markets on Fridays, the Islamic rest day (including the markets of the neighborhoods of Shati, Shajaiyya, and Khan Younes). This is meant, among other things, to encourage residents to come to Friday prayers.

c. Religion and religious law departments have been established in the local municipalities of the Gaza Strip. Their purpose is to make sure that local commerce activity complies with religious law and that the contents of the Friday sermons are uniform, and to coordinate *da'wah* (charity and preaching activity) with local societies.

Islamic indoctrination in summer camps for children and youth

16. The summer camps organized annually in the Gaza Strip are an important means used by Hamas to indoctrinate children and youth. It was reported that in 2009 there has been an increase in the number of summer camps, and that Hamas made efforts to strengthen the inculcation of Islamic themes in the participants. Hamas encourages summer camps for memorizing chapters from the Quran, organized by the Religious Endowment Ministry.

17. **Taleb Abu Sha'ar**, the religious endowment minister in the Hamas de facto government, said that 6,000 students from across the Gaza Strip signed up for the second

Quran memorization camp organized by his ministry.⁸ **Muhammad al-Dalu'**, a Hamas administration official in Gaza, said: **"We teach the children to love Jerusalem and Palestine, and also the principles of their religion"** (that is, Islam as viewed by Hamas). **Hani Muqbel**, the head of summer camps in the Jebaliya refugee camp, said that the summer camps were attended by 1,990 children and teenagers divided into 24 groups, combining leisure activities with religious themes (Ma'an, July 8, 2009). **Ismail Haniyah's administration** donated one percent of its employees' salaries to support Quran memorization camps, and Ismail Haniyah announced that the top seven summer camp participants would be rewarded with a pilgrimage to Mecca.



One of Hamas's Quran memorization camps in the town of Beit Hanoun, northern Gaza Strip (Al-Quds, June 15, 2009)

18. In addition to summer camps organized by the Hamas de facto administration, the Islamic charitable societies, which are mostly affiliated with Hamas, organize their own annual summer camps. For example, in 2009 the **Quran and Sunnah Society** organized extensive summer camps. **Abd al-Rahman al-Jamal**, the leader of the society, said in an interview that his goal was to have at least 10,000 summer camp participants **memorize the entire Quran** during the summer holidays. That Hamas-affiliated society promotes the radical interpretation of the Quran in its institutions, in the spirit of radical Islam espoused by Hamas.⁹

19. UNRWA, which also organizes an extensive network of summer camps, is considered as an opponent by Hamas. **Younes al-Astal**, a senior Hamas figure in the Gaza Strip and member of the Palestinian legislative council, has recently lashed out against UNRWA, claiming it was **corrupting the younger generation** by means of the summer camps that it organizes. He claims that the UNRWA camps provide dancing lessons and allow co-

⁸ Ma'an, June 13, 2009; <http://www.weaselzipper.net/blog/2009/06/gaza-kids-flock-to-hamas-koran-summer-camps.html>, June 17, 2009.

⁹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-06/22/content_11578033.htm, June 22, 2009.

education, which he perceives as being immoral.¹⁰ He went on to say that UNRWA acted even more offensively in the past, when it sent Palestinian teenagers abroad together with Jewish teenagers (he apparently referred to an activity aimed to promote reconciliation between the two peoples, which was not to Al-Astal's liking). Web surfers on the Hamas forum claimed (July 8, 2009) that UNRWA had surrendered to the pressure exerted by Hamas with regard to the issue of summer camps. They said that UNRWA instructed its camp directors **to enforce complete gender segregation between boys and girls and between male and female instructors**. It was also decided that male instructors would only instruct the boys and female instructors would only instruct the girls. The surfers on the Hamas message board expressed their satisfaction and congratulated **Mustafa Sawaf**, the editor-in-chief of Hamas's daily Felesteen.

The governmental sphere

20. "Allah is the purpose [of Hamas], the Prophet [Muhammad] its role model, **Quran its constitution**, holy war [jihad] its path, death for Allah its highest aspiration" (Hamas's motto, paragraph 8 in the Hamas charter, which borrows from the Muslim Brotherhood slogan).

Laws and regulations of Islamic character

21. Hamas, which controls the Palestinian Authority's Legislative Council, attempts to promote legislation of Islamic character, even if its practical implementation faces difficulties because of Abu Mazen's objections. In a meeting held in Khan Younes by the Hamas faction in the Legislative Council ("Change and Reform"), council member **Younes al-Astal** boasted of the council's achievements. He noted that the council passed laws to govern the lives of the Palestinian people, adding that **the implementation of Islamic religious law in laws and regulations would be gradual** (the website of Hamas in Khan Younes, June 28; Filastin al-Aan in Khan Younes, June 29, 2009).

22. The Hamas administration has **reformulated the penal code** to reflect Islamic religious law. This was done in November 2008 by the "Counseling and Legislation Office" in Haniyah's de facto administration. The new penal code is designed to replace the Palestinian Authority penal code, which is based on laws existing since the British mandate as well as on Egyptian and Israeli laws. The bill, which was leaked to the popular Arab newspaper Al-Hayat (December 24, 2008), includes such punishments as beating for crimes forbidden in Islamic

¹⁰ Gender segregation is an important aspect in the worldview of **Sayyid Qutb**, one of the main ideologues of radical Islam and an important figure in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, out of which Hamas was formed. This can be traced back to Sayyid Qutb's stay in the US (1948-1950), where he was appalled by mixed-gender dancing.

law (gambling, selling and drinking alcohol, etc). The bill proposes more serious forms of punishment, such as cutting off hands and stoning, for more serious offenses.

23. The bill was approved on second reading by Legislative Council members residing in Gaza. According to the Palestinian Authority legal procedure, every bill has to be approved for the third time by Abu Mazen, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority. Since Abu Mazen is not a legitimate president as far as Hamas is concerned, and because as it stands he is not likely to approve those laws, the Legislative Council, under the influence of Hamas, may approve the bill unilaterally.¹¹ For the time being it appears that the law is applied only in part, most likely owing to protests from human rights watchdogs in Gaza against the bill and also out of concern over reactions throughout the international community. Raising this issue, however, can be seen as part of the Islamization process, **seeing as it paves the way for the continuation of that process in the legislative sphere.**

24. At the same time, the Hamas administration acts through other channels, formal and informal alike, to strengthen the religious Islamic legal system in the Gaza Strip. For example:

a. The Supreme Council of shari'ah law on behalf of Hamas, headed by Hassan al-Juju, held a graduation ceremony for 27 lawyers who had completed their training in Islamic religious law (shari'ah). Several shari'ah judges were also sworn in (Felesteen, June 30, 2009).

b. The Supreme Council of shari'ah law also issued a directive requiring lawyers to wear traditional Islamic articles of clothing during court appearances, including headdress for women attorneys (Ma'an News Agency, July 26). The decision was severely criticized by legal bodies and human rights organizations.

c. Through the Clerics Association and the Interior Ministry, Hamas operates local inter-tribal reconciliation committees, which operate under Islamic law and are controlled by Hamas. Those reconciliation committees serve as alternatives to the traditional tribal reconciliation committees, bypassing the civil judicial system and thus contributing to the implementation of Islamic religious law (and Hamas's influence) in the Gaza Strip.

25. Hamas has recently approved a bill against those who use the Internet or cellular telephones **for purposes of sex and espionage**. According to the people who drafted the bill, being an amendment to the Palestinian Authority's penal code, it is

¹¹ The Hamas administration has recently launched a new website named Diwan al-Fatwa wal-Tashri'. It contains the complete texts of the legal bills and administrative orders ever since Hamas seized power. In Hamas's view, that step may provide a formal seal of approval to the laws it is trying to promote, including laws of Islamic character.

meant to “**safeguard Palestinian society**”. The amendment addresses the use of modern electronic devices for purposes that threaten “the wellbeing of the society”. The new bill includes penalties for **misusing the Internet, cellular telephones, or other communications devices for espionage or for spreading “profanity”** (Palestine-Info, May 27, 2009). The amendment is meant to tighten Hamas’s grip of the various means of communication and at the same time can be seen as yet another step in the enforcement of the Islamic code on the population.

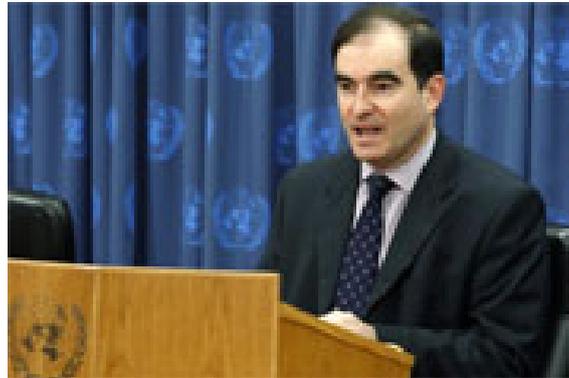
Islamization of education

26. “[...] It is unavoidable that we provide the [next] generations of Muslims in our region with **Islamic education**, based on observing religious practices and consciously studying the book of Allah [Quran] and Prophet Muhammad’s law [Sunnah]. We must also [...] work out the curricula in a correct manner [that is compatible with] the thoughts and beliefs of the Muslim [student] ...” (paragraph 16 in the Hamas charter, dealing with the education of future generations).

27. Hamas’s formal and informal education institutions in the Gaza Strip educate the younger generation of Palestinians towards the values of radical Islam, according to the political interpretation of Hamas, instilling them with messages of incitement and hatred against Israel and the Jewish people and against the West and Western values. Hamas seeks to gain **exclusive control** over education (as well as other areas of life) and is strongly opposed to any integration of Western values into the Palestinian education system. A clear example of that could be witnessed on April 16, 2009, when Hamas’s daily *Felsteen* published an editorial by editor-in-chief Mustafa Sawaf, lashing out against John Ging, the UNRWA chief in the Gaza Strip. Among other accusations, Sawaf said that Ging corrupted the morals of the Palestinian people by educating towards Western values in the agency’s schools and by operating mixed-gender education institutions.

28. Following is an excerpt from the article, illustrating the reasons behind Hamas’s displeasure: “Of [particular] note is that **this man [John Ging] wants to corrupt the values of this institution. By promoting that corruption, he is acting to defile a conservative, clean society.** One testimony of that is **his hasty efforts to spread the culture of mixed-gender [education] in schools.** His most dangerous philosophy pertains to mixed-gender summer camps... as well as parties, music, and leisure [which he promotes] in an occupied, embattled society, as part of the so-called “Family Day”. On that day, the agency employees are required to bring their families and throw mixed-gender

debauchery parties, which is not compatible with the values of a Muslim, Oriental, conservative society which lives in an atmosphere of war and destruction.”¹²



John Ging, the UNRWA chief in the Gaza Strip (UNRWA website, April 23). Ging is accused by Hamas of “acting to defile a conservative, clean society”.

29. The Hamas members of the Legislative Council and officials in its Religious Endowment Ministry have recently held a discussion on the “consequences of appointing women teachers in UNRWA’s schools for boys”. The Hamas administration’s Religious Endowment Ministry officials claimed that appointing women teachers in boys’ classes had negative effects, mostly on their scholarly achievements (Ma’an, May 3, 2009). In addition, the Hamas administration’s Popular Committee for Refugees’ Affairs held a conference during which UNRWA was criticized for its intention to turn its schools into mixed-gender education institutions. The committee ruled that it was contrary to the spirit of Islam and called on the UNRWA director general to meet in order to resolve the issue. It can therefore be assumed that during the next school year **Hamas will exert even more pressure on UNRWA** to emphasize the radical Islamic character of its educational institutions.

30. In order to tighten its grip on the education system in the Gaza Strip, the Hamas administration laid off teachers, school principals, and inspectors affiliated with Fatah, appointing Hamas-supporting teachers in their stead. Those Palestinian Authority employees who were laid off criticized the Palestinian Authority minister of education for continuing her work with Hamas’s Education Ministry in the Gaza Strip in spite of the changes it made (Al-Ahed website, April 8, 2009). At the same time, the Palestinian media reported even more measures taken by Hamas to extend the Islamization of the education system:

- a. The Gaza Strip schools under the control of the Hamas administration **have increased the number of school hours devoted to Islamic studies**. For example, Palestinian media reported that Hamas’s Education Ministry opened a new

¹² For details, see our April 27, 2009 Information Bulletin: [“Hamas lashes out against the UNRWA chief in the Gaza Strip”](#).

elementary school in Beit Lahiya (Al-Nahda) whose curriculum was to include studying and memorizing the Quran (Ma'an, May 17, 2009).

b. Hamas's efforts to introduce religious themes into the education system are also directed at the **academic institutions** of the Gaza Strip. The Hamas administration's Education Ministry has decided to grant the Palestine Polytechnic University a license to award academic degrees in exchange for the management's promise to incorporate Islamic law studies in the university's curriculum.

c. The Gaza Strip is abuzz with rumors that Hamas intends to require schoolgirls to wear Islamic clothes to school starting from the next school year. In the wake of the rumors, Ziyad Thabet, deputy minister of education in the Hamas administration, announced that his ministry had not issued new guidelines about school uniforms for the next school year. He added that should there be any changes on that subject, his ministry would officially publish the new instructions.

Islamic commerce institutions

31. The time period following Operation Cast Lead saw the establishment of a banking institution called **National Islamic Bank**, which started to operate officially in the Gaza Strip in March 2009. The bank's chairman of the board said that the bank would carry out its activities in accordance with the Islamic views of funding projects and providing services. Gaza Mayor Rafiq Makki stressed how important it was to have an Islamic bank which would serve "the Palestinian national interests" (AFP, April 21, 2009). **As soon as the bank opened, the Hamas administration called upon its employees to transfer their accounts to the Islamic bank.** In late April 2009, the bank took over the role of the post office as the institution responsible for paying the administration employees' salaries (Felesteen, April 14). In the political, economic, and internal Palestinian sphere, the establishment of the bank is also meant to provide an answer to the inability of the Hamas administration to work with Palestinian Authority banks (and with foreign banks), thus strengthening the Hamas administration's economic control of the Gaza Strip.



The National Islamic Bank in Gaza (<http://almoslim.net/node/111188> (May 6, 2009))

32. Also established was a company called **Al-Multazem Insurance and Investments** (April 21, 2009), whose activity is guided by the shari'ah. The company is monitored by the Shari'ah Control Committee, headed by Abdallah Abu Jarbu', Hamas's deputy minister of religious endowment. Another member of the committee is Alaa al-Din al-Rifati, the director of the National Islamic Bank.

The Islamization of Hamas's media

33. Since Operation Cast Lead, there has been a significant increase in the number of religion shows broadcasted daily on Al-Aqsa TV, the most important media outlet of the Hamas administration. It is our assessment that there has been a 150 percent increase in the number of daily religion shows broadcasted during that time compared to the situation before the operation.

34. The new lineup includes "Pages of Glory", a show which presents stories and traditions from Muslim history preaching "resistance"; "Islam's Worldview", a show about the Islamic approach to various daily issues; as well as shows presented by women for the female target audience. Those shows emphasize their presenters' modesty; only women wearing a veil which covers their entire head (*niqab*) are shown. When Al-Aqsa TV uses footage taken from Israeli or other foreign TV channels, women's faces are either blurred out or not shown altogether.



Women wearing veils which cover their entire faces with the exception of their eyes (niqab) on Al-Aqsa TV

35. The same is true for Israeli anchorwomen shown on Al-Aqsa TV:¹³



Channel 10's anchorwoman (Micky Haimovich blurred out on Al-Aqsa TV as she is not wearing a veil



Yonit Levi, anchorwoman for Israeli TV's Channel 2, blurred out on Al-Aqsa TV as she is not wearing a veil (June 1, 2009)

36. Hamas's daily **Felesteen**, its mouthpiece in the Gaza Strip, has a section dedicated to Islamic religious rulings (*fatwa*) providing answers to common issues of concern to Gaza Strip residents. The clerics whose rulings are published have advanced degrees in Islamic law (most have PhD degrees and the majority are lecturers in the Islamic University of Gaza, which is closely affiliated with Hamas). Following are several examples of rulings published in that section in the last several months:

- a. A father must not prevent his son from taking part in jihad, provided the latter is old enough. A father who does so is considered a sinner.
- b. According to religious law, demonstrations and processions are allowed as long as the cause is a worthy one (it is obviously Hamas that decides whether it is or isn't).

¹³ <http://www.mako.co.il/news-world/arab/Article-5e7b9c5ba42a121004.htm>, June 2, 2009.

- c. The criteria for giving charity must be made more liberal (this is a response to the increase in the number of people in need of charity as a result of the damage caused in Operation Cast Lead and a reflection of the difficult economic situation).
- d. Relaxing the regulations for building mosques (in response to the destruction of mosques used by terrorist organizations in Operation Cast Lead).
- e. No business must be done with banks that do not follow Islamic religious law, in which interest is forbidden (thus encouraging locals to join the new Islamic bank established in the Gaza Strip).
- f. It is permissible to stand up while the Palestinian national anthem is playing and to show respect to Palestinian national symbols, but over-glorification and cult of those symbols must be avoided: "...the love of the homeland is part of our faith and our religion, as long as the homeland or the national anthem are not made into idol worshipping..."
- g. Using the Internet and Internet cafés as long as it is not abused (referring to watching banned websites). Working in Internet cafés is legal as long as it is not used for watching banned websites (note: Internet cafés in the Gaza Strip have often been the **target of harassment** by radical Islamic groups affiliated with global jihad).

37. The management of PALDF, Hamas's most important online forum, has recently published a new terms and conditions document which says that the general spirit prevailing on the forum will be "the spirit of Islam" and that there must not be any offenses against Islamic religious law.

38. Hamas has also launched **designated media** for spreading the messages of radical Islam. Launched on March 15, 2009 was a radio station called **Holy Quran (Al-Quran al-Karim)**, directed by Sheikh Haydar al-Bahouri. The radio station has its own website, which is still under construction. Hamas also intends to launch a TV station with a similar name, which would focus on religious themes. Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas chief of administration, has personally taken part in disseminating Islamic messages on the radio station.



Ismail Haniyah reading chapters from the Quran in the Al-Quran al-Karim radio studios, July 6, 2009¹⁴

The re-education of prisoners through the study of Quran

39. Islamic indoctrination has been particularly prominent in the Hamas administration's prisons, where inmates are held for criminal offenses and for political opposition to Hamas. The wardens of those prisons reinforce the Islamic consciousness of the prisoners in exchange for shortening their prison terms. For that purpose, the first Quran memorization center was opened in Gaza's main prison; the center was established by the Hamas administration Interior Ministry and the Religious Endowment Ministry. At the opening ceremony, the wardens stated that prisoners who would successfully memorize the Quran would be granted early releases.



The Hamas women's police in a prison (Al-Sharq al-Awsat, January 19, 2008)



Prisoners memorizing the Quran in the Al-Saraya prison in Gaza (Al-Qassam forum, August 2007)

¹⁴ <http://www.israj.net/vb/t3517>, July 8, 2009.

The military-terrorist sphere

Radical Islamic indoctrination of operatives belonging to Hamas and to other terrorist organizations and networks

40. During their training and their routine activities, Hamas's military and security operatives undergo radical Islamic indoctrination in order to accentuate their radical Islamic identity. This is particularly evident in the **Hamas police force**, in charge of enforcing the Islamic religious code on the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. For example, on June 17, 2009, the Hamas Interior Ministry, working with the Religious Endowment Ministry, started formulating the "**Muslim Policeman's Guide**", whose purpose is to create a system of rules and laws in the spirit of Islam for the policemen's work in the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Interior Ministry's website, June 17, 2009). Hamas's committee for political guidance gave policemen lectures on morality and presented to them the principles of religion during internal security operations in order to improve their religious awareness (Filastin al-Aan, June 1, 2009). The Hamas police force has also founded a religious-themed band which performs religious songs on official occasions.

41. Hamas's military operatives, men and women alike, are also subjected to heavy doses of radical Islamic indoctrination. One example can be found in a CD seized by the IDF during Operation Cast Lead. The CD contains a recruitment video to attract members to the Abdallah Azzam Academy. Azzam is a Palestinian from the village of Silat al-Hartiyya, near Jenin, who was one of the founding fathers of the Al-Qaeda organization in Afghanistan and who also became Osama Bin Laden's ideologue.¹⁵ Abdallah Azzam's ideological legacy is reflected in turning jihad (holy war) into a personal duty (actual and concrete) for every Muslim. That principle appears in the Hamas charter (paragraph 15).

42. Hamas, a Palestinian movement with a radical Islamic ideology, has turned Dr. Abdallah Azzam and his philosophy into a role model, considering him to be a man of the book and of the sword, that is, a man involved both in developing the idea of Islamic jihad and in actually fighting. Posters produced by Hamas and distributed in Judea and Samaria feature his photographs as one of the movement's revered heroes (see below). Such figures also include **Sheikh Yassin** (the founder of Hamas), **Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam** (killed by the British while leading an armed rebellion against the British and the Jews in 1935), and **Hassan al-**

¹⁵ For details, see our June 4, 2009 Information Bulletin: ["During Operation Cast Lead a promotional film was seized about a military academy established by Hamas named after Dr. Abdallah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's ideologue. Hamas turned him into a role model, although in practice the movement restricts the activities of the global jihad networks in the Gaza Strip"](#).

Banna (the founder of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, a radical movement of which Hamas is the Palestinian offshoot).



The poster at the entrance of the Abdallah Azzam Academy reads: "Welcome to the Shahid Dr. Abdallah Azzam Academy". The bottom line reads: "A Muslim's greatest glory is in jihad for the sake of Allah" (a quote by Abdallah Azzam)



Sa'id Siyam, former interior minister in the Hamas de facto government (killed by the IDF in Operation Cast Lead) visiting the Abdallah Azzam Academy (Hamas forum, June 6, 2007)

43. The ideological message inculcated by Hamas in the Abdallah Azzam Academy students is that **they are fighting both for the Palestinian homeland and for Allah and Islam** (a combination which also appears on the Hamas charter). A religious justification for holy war, drawn from Abdallah Azzam's legacy, can also be found in a military instruction booklet published in 2008 by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades ("Principles of Military Studies..."). The last page of the booklet features quotes from Abdallah Azzam's last will, where he calls for jihad against "tyrants, infidels, and oppressors" (not only the Palestinian context was intended, but rather **global jihad**).



The last page of the booklet: a quote from the last will of Abdallah Azzam, calling for jihad against "tyrants, infidels, and oppressors"



The cover page of "Principles of Military Studies..." (2008)



Women operatives belonging to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in traditional clothing reflecting the spirit of radical Islam (Al-Jazeera, January 31, 2008)¹⁶

The establishment of jihadist radical Islamic organizations which challenge Hamas

44. The Islamization process in the Gaza Strip encourages the radicalization of the Gaza Strip, reflected in the appearance of numerous local networks of **Salafi¹⁷ jihadist** character which sympathize with the ideology of global jihad, politically criticize Hamas and its policy, **and challenge it on the radical Islamic scene** (a complete analysis of the extent and implications of that phenomenon exceeds the scope of the present document). Over the past year, the challenge posed to Hamas by that phenomenon was reflected in an increase in the number of operatives seceding from Hamas (and sometimes from other terrorist organizations as well) to embrace the Salafi jihadist ideology.

45. Referred to by Gaza Strip residents as *jaljalat*,¹⁸ those networks oppose the way of Hamas, believing it to be too influenced by pragmatic governmental considerations. They oppose Hamas's integration into the Palestinian political system and deny the restrained fire policy adopted by Hamas in the wake of Operation Cast Lead due to its clear interest in promoting the civilian and military restoration processes in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, those networks occasionally attempt to defy Hamas's policy by perpetrating terrorist attacks against

¹⁶ See the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center bulletin on Palestinian women terrorists: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/hamas_e005.htm

¹⁷ See our June 14, 2009 Information Bulletin: "Internet and terrorism: a local terrorist network in the Gaza Strip affiliated with Al-Qaeda and global jihad was behind the failed attempt to perpetrate a showcase terrorist attack at the Nahal Oz fuel terminal (June 8). The network's website is serviced by several companies, including one based in the US".

¹⁸ The Arabic term *jaljala* (pl. *jaljalat*) refers to sound, voice, ring, or echoing noise in various levels of intensity and in various contexts. One of the possible interpretations is a loud sound (or thunder) heralding the actual or symbolic coming of a war (trumpets, battle cries, drums of war). In the context of the Gaza Strip, the term should be viewed as an expression of leaving one organization (in this case, Hamas) to form another which will soon demonstrate its actions for everybody to see. When asked about the origin of the name, a *jaljalat* operative named Mahmoud Muhammad Taleb said that the jihadist networks in the Gaza Strip are called so by the civilians because of one publication they issued in memory of a shahid, which began with a poem called "*Jaljalat*", calling for jihad. "Our official name is not *jaljalat*," he added, "and we are calling for a large-scale operation that would constitute a pledge of allegiance to Sheikh Osama Bin Laden and [other] sheikhs abroad, and then shall we declare our name" (interview with Al-Ayyam reporter Hassan Jabr, July 17, 2009).

Israel, against international organizations which spread Western values in the Gaza Strip, and against Western personalities visiting the Gaza Strip.

46. One example of that can be found in a failed attempt to perpetrate a showcase terrorist attack near the Nahal Oz fuel terminal (June 8, 2009) by a network called **Jund Ansar Allah**,¹⁹ which claims to be affiliated with the ideology of Al-Qaeda and global jihad. Another example is a failed attack perpetrated by those networks on former US President Jimmy Carter during his visit to the Gaza Strip, and probably also on Britain's former Prime Minister Tony Blair. A *jalalat* operative admitted in an interview that three of the network's members were held in the Hamas prison on charges of attempted assassination of Jimmy Carter and Tony Blair during their visits to the Gaza Strip (Al-Ayyam, July 11).



The homepage of Jund Ansar Allah, a jihadist Islamic network affiliated with Al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the failed attempt to perpetrate a showcase terrorist attack at the Nahal Oz fuel terminal (June 8)



The network's logo resembles that of global jihad organizations, including such themes as the Earth, the green colour of Islam, a Kalashnikov rifle, swords, and the Muslim shahada ("There is no God but Allah", written on the black flag, and "Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah", written on the bottom). The logo is a clear expression of global jihad based on an authentic Islamic jihadist message from Prophet Muhammad's time.

¹⁹ For details, see our June 14, 2009 Information Bulletin: ["Internet and terrorism: a local terrorist network in the Gaza Strip affiliated with Al-Qaeda and global jihad was behind the failed attempt to perpetrate a showcase terrorist attack at the Nahal Oz fuel terminal \(June 8\). The network's website is serviced by several companies, including one based in the US"](#).