



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

December 15, 2009

The 22nd Anniversary of the Founding of Hamas



The main rally in the Katiba al-Khadraa square in Gaza City celebrating the 22nd anniversary of the founding of Hamas.

Events in the Gaza Strip

1. Last week Hamas celebrated its 22nd anniversary. Hamas promoted various events, among them rallies, marches and ceremonies. Speakers at the rallies and ceremonies stressed the Hamas movement's achievements, which had stood it in good stead in the face of many challenges over the years, and its adherence to the path of the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism].
2. The main rally was held in the Katiba al-Khadraa square in Gaza City on December 14, and was attended by several hundred thousand Palestinians. It turned into an impressive show of strength for Hamas, which had transported many Gazans to the rally from throughout the Strip, including students, who were given the day off as a holiday.



Women participate in the rally
(Al-Aqsa TV, December 14, 2009).



Passengers way Hamas flags in vehicles on
their way to the main rally in Gaza City
(Al-Aqsa TV, December 14, 2009).

3. **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration, was the keynote speaker. His main themes were the following (Al-Aqsa Radio, December 14, 2009):

i) Palestine is the land **“from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river,”** and would never be relinquished. He told the crowd that “today you are celebrating the anniversary of the foundation of Hamas, the Islamic resistance movement, **the jihad arm of the Muslim Brotherhood on the soil of Palestine.**”

ii) Haniya described the tests Hamas had undergone since its inception and its achievements. He noted that **“Hamas restored respect for the resistance and jihad plan [i.e., terrorism]...Hamas will not retreat from resistance and jihad until it has achieved our people’s freedom, return and independence...”**

iii) **Hamas is not satisfied with merely the “liberation” of the Gaza Strip,** and it does not intend to establish an independent entity there. Hamas **“lifts its eyes to Palestine, all Palestine,”** and the liberation of the Gaza Strip is only one step on the path to the **“complete liberation of all Palestine.”**

iv) Haniya accused Mahmoud Abbas’ government (“the other side”) of carrying out the dictates of “foreign elements,” such as the United States, which vetoed the internal Palestinian reconciliation. He called on Egypt to **renew** its efforts to **complete the dialogue,** taking Hamas’ position into consideration.

v) Ismail Haniya called for a positive response to the initiative of Khaled Mashaal, head of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, to convene a broad Palestinian gathering to **formulate a “national salvation program” which would include the establishment of a national unity government, the construction of a source of authority for the Palestinian people, the agreement “at this stage” for the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and “adherence to the right of return.”**



Hamas' smile campaign aimed at the West does not prevent it from continuing its anti-American incitement by holding the traditional ceremony of burning a coffin draped with the American flag (Safa News Agency, December 14, 2009).



Ismail Haniya, head of the de facto Hamas administration, speaks at the main rally (Al-Aqsa TV, December 14, 2009).

4. The issue of the **nature of the “resistance”** [i.e., terrorism] was an important part of the “national salvation program” according to both Ismail Haniya and senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar**. Speaking **apologetically**, they answered the criticism leveled at Hamas in recent months for maintaining a policy of restrained terrorism, which they said originated from purely pragmatic considerations (i.e., administrative needs and Hamas’ desire to rebuild the military and civilian infrastructures damaged in Operation Cast Lead). For example:

i) **Ismail Haniya**, speaking at the rally in Gaza City, emphasized the so-called “reasonable resistance,”¹ carried out with discretion. That “resistance,” he said, was based on the “right” of the Palestinian people to resist the “occupation,” with increased coordination, so that it would defend the resistance itself and its modus operandi.

ii) **Mahmoud al-Zahar** said that “the resistance is a comprehensive concept, not limited to the military conflict. Quite the opposite, the rise of Hamas to power gave protection to the operatives of the resistance [who were active during the] previous

¹ In the original Arabic, *al-muqawamah al-rashida*. The term means “reasonable resistance.” The root R.SH.D appears in the Qur’an in the context of “intelligence and discretion.”

regime [led by the Palestinian Authority and Fatah], and gave support to anyone who wanted [to carry out] the resistance” (Filastin Al-Yawm, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad website, December 14, 2009).



Mahmoud al-Zahar attends the rally (Safa News Agency, December 14, 2009).

Judea and Samaria: Hamas Is Prevented from Holding Events for its Anniversary

5. Following intensive preventive activity by the Palestinian security forces, Hamas' anniversary passed without special note in Judea and Samaria. Hamas' websites² reported that the Palestinian Authority security forces **detained 150 Hamas activists** and ordered **almost 1,000** to come in for questioning. Hamas' websites gave the names of those detained and called it an “unprecedented” security operation. **Mahmoud al-Rahmi**, secretary of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said in a telephone interview that during the two previous days 150 detainees had been listed and thousands of Hamas activists and supporters had been ordered to commit themselves in writing not to participate in Hamas activities³ (Al-Aqsa TV, December 14, 2009).

6. A “source in Ramallah” told the Israeli newspaper *Jerusalem Post* that the decision to prevent Hamas' celebrations was made by the Palestinian Authority leadership. The source said that similar decisions had been made for the past four years (*Jerusalem Post*, December 12, 2009).

² Hamas' website in Judea and Samaria is **Imama**, and was quoted by Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 14, 2009).

³ On the other hand, Wafa News Agency reported that in the northern Gaza Strip the Hamas security forces detained 26 Fatah activists (Wafa News Agency, December 14, 2009).

Appendix

Pictures from the Hamas Celebrations

The Events Took Place on December 11, 2009, in the
Center of Gaza City
(Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 11, 2009)



Masked operatives carry a coffin draped with the Israeli flag.



Operatives of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades suicide bomber unit march in formation.



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative carries a rocket over the head of a child.



The ship symbolizes the return of the Palestinians to Palestine. The inscriptions on the sails read "The Qur'an is our law, jihad is our path, Allah is our goal, the prophet [Muhammad] is our model" [based on the slogan of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, of which Hamas is the Palestinian branch].



Hamis operatives hold IEDs and Qassam rockets.



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives pray during the event.



Child decorated with Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades banner and headband.



Child carrying a weapon and wearing military equipment and a Hamas headband.



Masked Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative marches laden with weapons and surrounded by children.