



**Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center**

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**Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV has circumvented the French media regulator's ban by signing an agreement with Kuwaiti satellite operator GulfSat. However, that company also uses satellites owned by Eutelsat, which was instructed by the French government to take Al-Aqsa TV off the air for spreading incitement.<sup>1</sup>**



Al-Aqsa TV is back on the air

## **Hamas circumvents France's ban on Al-Aqsa TV**

**1. On June 7, 2010, the French government instructed its broadcasting authority to terminate the transmissions of Al-Aqsa TV, a channel operated by Hamas and broadcast on satellites owned by Eutelsat, a French telecommunications company based in Paris. The instruction was given after France received a warning from the European**

<sup>1</sup> Follow-up to our July 11, 2010 Information Bulletin: ["The French government is banning Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV for inciting hatred and encouraging terrorism. Hamas denounced the French government's decision, saying that the shutdown of its channel was an assault on the freedom of speech"](#).

**Commission that the channel repeatedly violated European laws by showing programs full of incitement for hatred or violence** mostly against Israel and Judaism (AFP, June 7).

**2.Hamas activists took immediate action in an attempt to lift the ban.** Al-Aqsa TV directors approached legal professionals and lawyers for legal assistance on that issue. However, the efforts mounted by Hamas reached a dead end, **since the channel had to introduce considerable changes in its programming for the ban to be lifted.** Accordingly, on June 24, Noorsat, a company which leases satellite-broadcast capacity for channels targeting audiences in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, announced the termination of Al-Aqsa TV transmissions (Al-Aqsa TV, June 25, 2010).

3.According to Al-Aqsa TV deputy director Muhammad Thuraya, immediately after the termination was announced, **Al-Aqsa TV officials managed to reach an agreement with a new intermediary telecommunications company, Kuwait's Gulsat.** Thuraya further added that the **channel is interested in expanding its coverage to include South American countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, and Cuba.** In addition, he promised that the channel will become available in such countries as **Kurdistan, Turkestan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, eastern China, and Russia** (Al-Aqsa TV, June 25, 2010).

## Details on Gulsat Communications



The logo of Gulsat Communications

**4.Gulsat Communications is a company established in 1995 with cooperation from Kuwait's Ministry of Telecommunications and the US-based Hughes Network Systems. It is a subsidiary of United Networks, which is part of KIPCO Group, a leading investment company in the region.** The company provides planning, integration, and installation of advanced solutions in satellite technologies to various sectors in the Middle

East. One of the services offered by the company is satellite transmission of TV broadcasts. According to the company, the satellites it uses cover two thirds of the globe. The company's business is not limited to the Middle East—it also works with countries in Africa, the Far East, Europe, US, and South America.

**5. Gulfsat broadcasts Al-Aqsa TV on the Atlantic Bird satellite. It covers North Africa, the Middle East, south and central Europe, the southern part of Russia and Central Asian republics, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and parts of India. The Atlantic Bird satellite is also owned by Eutelsat, the same company which, having received the French government's instruction, forced Noorsat not to provide services to Al-Aqsa TV.**

6. We believe that the implication is that Al-Aqsa TV, despite changing its intermediary company due to pressure from the French government, has found a creative solution allowing it to **use the services of the French company that announced it would terminate its transmissions.** What is more, it appears that, with the new satellite, the channel will be able to **expand its inciting and hateful programming to cover areas in Asia it could not reach before, such as the Islamic republics in East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.** However, the channel broadcasts are still full of vicious anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic and anti-Western propaganda.