



The Meir Amit Intelligence
and Terrorism Information Center

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A Hamas operative who was given seven life sentences for participating in preparations for the Café Hillel bombing in Jerusalem and released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap recently visited South Africa. His aim was to disseminate propaganda ahead of the GMJ and participate in the so-called Israeli Apartheid Week.

Details

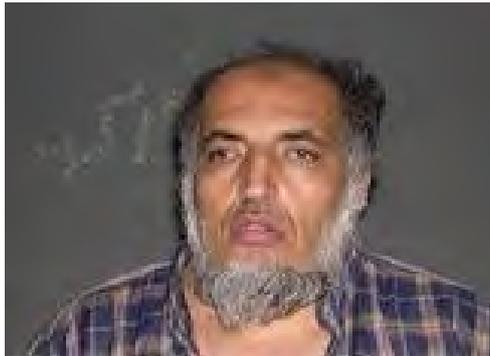
1. **Hamas operative Dr. Abdul Aziz Umar, who was given seven life sentences for taking part in the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem and released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap, was recently sent to South Africa.** The purpose of his visit was to use his life story to promote the propaganda campaign for the Global March to Jerusalem (GMJ) and the so-called Israeli Apartheid Week held in South Africa. **Hamas is involved in the organization and propaganda preparation for the marches** (two major Hamas activists in Britain, Muhammad Sawalha and Zaher al-Birawi, are taking part in the preparations).

2. As part of his propaganda activity in South Africa, Abdul Aziz Umar issued an urgent call to **"liberate" Jerusalem and the entire territory of "Palestine"**. He also used his stay in South Africa **to promote the Palestinian campaign** for the liberation of terrorists held in Israeli jails, portraying them as "political prisoners". In interviews given to the media, **Abdul Aziz Umar presented himself as an intellectual persecuted by Israel for his opinions**, and did not mention his own involvement in the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem for which he had been given seven life sentences.

3. Abdul Aziz Umar came to Africa as the guest of two major South African organizations known for their anti-Israeli activity in the delegitimization campaign: **Al-Quds Foundation of South Africa and the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)**.¹ Both are anti-Israeli Islamic organizations operating in South Africa. One of them (MJC) belongs to the Union of Good, outlawed in the United States and in Israel. In May-June 2011, the leaders of these organizations sent a convoy to the Gaza Strip in coordination with Hamas and the IHH (see Appendix III for details).

A profile of Abdul Aziz Umar and his involvement in the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack

4. **Abdul Aziz Muhammad Mussa Umar**, born 1960, father of eight, is a resident of the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Shoefat. He became blind at the age of twenty. He has a bachelor's degree from Bir Zeit University in Ramallah, and a PhD in English literature from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Dr. Abdul Aziz Muhammad Mussa Umar

5. To the best of our information, already in the 1990s Abdul Aziz Umar assisted terrorists who carried out attacks as part of Hamas' terrorist campaign, intended to derail the Oslo Accords. **In 2003**, during the second intifada, Abdul Aziz Umar was one of the operatives in the East Jerusalem Hamas network that dispatched a suicide bomber squad to carry out the **suicide bombing attack at Café Hillel in Jerusalem** (September 9, 2003). **Abdul Aziz Umar took part in preparations for the attack**: he had put **his father's house in Anata refugee camp at the disposal of the perpetrators, who used it to equip the suicide bomber with an explosive belt** (see Appendix I for details on how the suicide bomber was prepared for the terrorist attack, as they appeared in the judgment and verdict against Abdul Aziz Umar).

¹ vocfm.co.za

6. **The terrorist attack at Café Hillel was carried out on September 9, 2003 by the Hamas infrastructure in East Jerusalem, and orchestrated by the Hamas headquarters in Ramallah.** The perpetrator of the attack was Ramez Fahmi Izz al-Din Abu Salim, a suicide bomber from the village of Rantis, who blew himself up at the entrance of the café. **Seven people were killed and nearly 70 were wounded in the attack** (see Appendix II for details on the victims).



The scene of the attack (Filastin al-Muslimah, October 2003)

7. Abdul Aziz Umar **was convicted on seven counts of murder.** On January 19, 2006 he was given **seven life sentences**, as well as 30 years in prison for his part in the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack (see Appendix I for details). In October 2011 **he was released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap** with many other terrorists involved in lethal terrorist attacks. After his release **he was deported to the Gaza Strip**, where he still resides (it is probably from the Gaza Strip that he was sent by Hamas on his publicity mission in South Africa).

Dr. Abdul Aziz Umar's publicity work in South Africa

8. **Dr. Abdul Aziz Umar arrived in Cape Town on March 5, 2012.** During his stay there he engaged in anti-Israeli propaganda which included lectures in various forums (at local mosques) and media interviews. One such interview was given to **Voice of the Cape Radio**.



Dr. Abdul Aziz Muhammad Mussa Umar interviewed in Cape Town (Voice of the Cape, March 5, 2012)

9. During his visit to South Africa, **Abdul Aziz Umar was portrayed as a “Palestinian political prisoner”, an intellectual and academician, who was victim to Israeli torture and persecution.** To lend more credence to his false message, he gave a misleading story about the grounds for his arrest in an interview to Voice of the Cape (March 5, 2012). **He did not mention his involvement in the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack,** preferring instead to **portray himself as an innocent victim arrested by Israel for spreading his ideas and academic work.** The following is his version of the reason why he was arrested, as it was described in the Voice of the Cape interview on March 5, 2012:

“Some months after my imprisonment, I was convicted and given four life sentences² and another 30 years. **The charge was that I was spreading ‘new and strange ideas’ in my intellectual and academic works.**” But despite these challenges, Umar did not abandon his search for knowledge. He dedicated himself to teaching prisoners the English and Arabic languages, in addition to conducting different symposia and seminars while incarcerated.

Appendix I

Excerpts from Abdul Aziz Umar's indictment and judgment

1. The indictment against Abdul Aziz Umar charged him with murder, attempted murder, and aiding and abetting an enemy in times of war.

2. **The following are the main points of the revised indictment submitted to the Jerusalem District Court on December 29, 2005:**

- a. In 2003 Ahmed Obeid, the head of an Izz al-Din al-Qassam squad, Hamas' military wing, was looking for targets for a terrorist attack. He chose Café Hillel in Jerusalem as an appropriate site for a terrorist attack since it was a crowded place.
- b. Several months later Ahmed Obeid approached his handler and asked him for an explosive belt. After getting it, he first hid the belt in the village of Za'im, but once he realized that the hiding place was not ideal, **he asked Abdul Aziz Umar whether he had an apartment where the suicide bomber could be prepared for the terrorist attack.**
- c. Abdul Aziz Umar, who was aware that Ahmed Obeid was a Hamas operative, **offered his father's empty apartment in the Ras Hamis neighborhood in Anata refugee camp.**
- d. In the morning of March 9, 2003 **Ahmed Obeid delivered the explosive belt to the apartment put at his disposal by Abdul Aziz Umar.** In the evening, Ahmed arrived at the apartment with the suicide bomber, **and Abdul Aziz Umar let them in.** Ahmed Obeid put the explosive belt on the suicide bomber **while Abdul Aziz Umar was standing guard at the apartment entrance to keep people from coming in.**
- e. Once the preparation of the explosive belt was complete, Ahmed and the suicide bomber headed out in the direction of Café Hillel, where the terrorist activated the

² Abdul Aziz Umar was given seven life sentences and another 30 years in prison. The verdict stated that four of the life sentences would run consecutively, and the other sentences would be concurrent (see Appendix I).

explosive belt. **Seven people were killed and 64 were injured as a result of the explosion at the café.**

3. **Abdul Aziz Umar's** sentence was given by the Jerusalem District Court on January 19, 2006. **He was given seven life sentences for seven counts of murder.** In addition, he was sentenced to **30 years of imprisonment for 64 counts of attempted murder and one count of aiding and abetting an enemy in times of war.** The verdict ruled that **four of the life sentences would be consecutive** and that the other sentences would be concurrent.

Appendix II

Victims of the Café Hillel suicide bombing attack



Nava Appelbaum, 20, daughter of David Ya'kov Halevi Appelbaum, from Jerusalem. Survived by her mother, five brothers and sisters. Died one day before her wedding.



David Ya'akov Halevi Appelbaum, 50, from Jerusalem. Head of the emergency room and trauma services at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center. Survived by his wife, six children and sister.



David Shimon Avizadris, 51, from Mevaseret Zion. Survived by his wife and children, mother, brothers and sisters.



Alon Mizrahi, 22, from Jerusalem. Survived by his parents, three brothers and three sisters.



Shafik Karam, 27, from Jerusalem. Survived by his parents, brother and two sisters.



Yehiel Emil Tubol, 51, from Jerusalem. Survived by his four children and nine brothers and sisters.

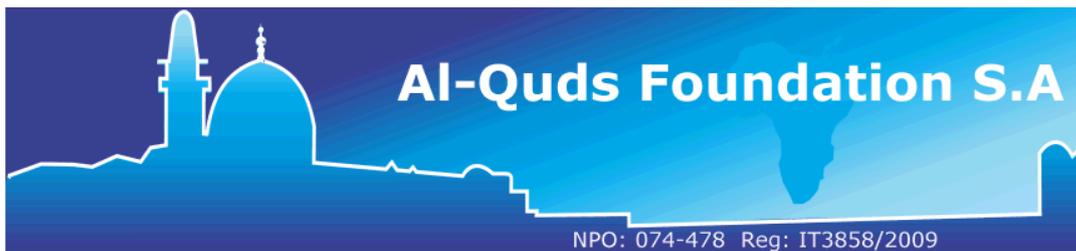


Gila Moshe, 40, from Jerusalem. Survived by her husband and two children, parents, brother and sister.

Appendix III

The two anti-Israeli organizations associated with Hamas operative Abdul Aziz Umar's visit to South Africa

The Al-Quds Foundation



Al-Quds Foundation logo

1. **The Al-Quds Foundation was established in South Africa about six years ago.** Its director is **Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks**. It is a branch of the **Al-Quds International Institute**, an independent civilian organization of Arab Muslims founded ten years ago.

2. **Its main objective**, according to its website, is **to protect Jerusalem by preserving its Arab identity and its Muslim and Christian holy places**. Every year the Institute carries out various projects designed to achieve its objective, such as organizing conferences, symposiums, research forums, courses about the city and Palestine, distributing pamphlets and flyers with information about the so-called "challenges" facing Jerusalem, past, present and future.

3. **The Al-Quds International Institute is headed by a board of directors of 150 Arabs and Muslims from various countries. Its central body is the legislative council, which dictates policy and makes decisions. A smaller board of trustees** is elected by the board of directors and is responsible for promoting the Institute's objectives and coordinating the activities it organizes. **The chairman of the international board of trustees is Dr. Qutbi al-Mahdi**. The secretariat general manages the organization's daily activities and has various departments, including manpower, contributions, communications, research and public relations.

4. **On March 6-7, 2011**, the Al-Quds International Institute held its eighth annual conference in **Khartoum, with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir in attendance**. Delegates from 28 countries participated, as did representatives from NGOs. **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas**

political bureau, also attended, as did senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar and a Hezbollah representative (Alquds-online.org website). **Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi** may also have attended.

The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC)

5.The MJC is a well-established Muslim organization in South Africa, having been founded by 62 individuals in Cape Town in 1945. **Its president is Maulana Ihsaan Hendricks**. He was preceded as president by Sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels, a former member of the Union of Good board of trustees.

6.The MJC's official objectives are to train Muslim clerics, to defend the Muslim way of life and to preserve Muslim identity and Muslims' rights as a minority. It also promotes Islamic values, especially those related to marriage, the family, children, women and youths. Some of its members have served as ministers and members of the South African Parliament. The organization's main office is located in Cape Town. **The MJC is a member of the Union of Good, and Sheikh Ebrahim Gabriels has been a member of its board of trustees.**

The South African aid convoy (2011)

7.In May-June 2011 these two organizations, **working with Hamas and the IHH**, sent an aid convoy to the Gaza Strip. The stated objective of the convoy was to provide humanitarian assistance to the residents of the Gaza Strip and convey the message of Islam. **However, in reality, the organizers' objectives were to defame Israel, contribute to the campaign to isolate it, create awareness for the Palestinian cause in South Africa and other African countries, and to demonstrate support for the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip.**³

³ For details, see our May 1, 2011 Information Bulletin: "An aid convoy to the Gaza Strip is being organized in South Africa by two anti-Israeli Islamic organizations. It is expected to leave at the end of June and cross the African continent. The organizers were in contact with Hamas and IHH, apparently coordinating the convoy with them." See also our June



Anti-Israeli banner on the Muslim Judicial Council website

Appendix IV

The Global March to Jerusalem (GMJ) and the Israeli Apartheid Week in South Africa

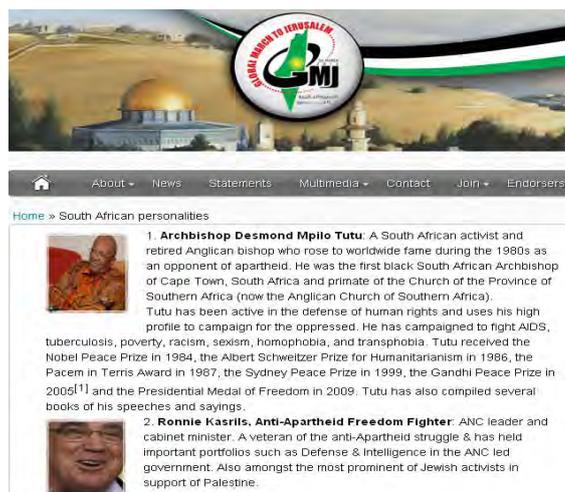
Overview

1. Intensive anti-Israeli activity led by Islamic organizations and anti-Israeli activists, some affiliated with Hamas, is conducted in South Africa as part of the global campaign to delegitimize Israel. Such activity takes place as part of the **Israeli Apartheid Week** (in March) and the March 30 events, referred to as the **Global March to Jerusalem (GMJ)**.

2. The BDS spokesman in South Africa portrayed the Israeli Apartheid Week events as a success. **It is our impression that the Israeli Apartheid Week events in South Africa did not gain international resonance and did not gain much interest.** Similarly, **so far there has not been much interest** in registration for the march to Jerusalem.

The Global March to Jerusalem (GMJ)

3. The official GMJ website lists two South African activists as the organizers of the march: **Bishop Desmond Tutu and Ronnie Kasrils**, South Africa's former intelligence minister and one of the leaders of the ANC party. The coordinator of the march from South Africa is **Sheikh Ihsaan Hendricks**, who in the past organized the convoy from South Africa.



The two South African activists who appear on the GMJ official website

4. The Al-Quds Foundation opened a Facebook page for South African participants in the march. For now it appears that **interest in it remains very low**.

5. **In Cape Town**, the authorities gave their permission to conduct a **local march on March 30** as part of the Global March to Jerusalem. Ihsaan Hendricks, one of its main organizers, announced that the march will start at a local mosque. According to Hendricks, the Al-Quds Foundation will work with the mosque committee to make sure that all necessary arrangements will have been made to accommodate all participants. The Christian community was also called to join the march (www.vocfm.co.za).



Left: Ihsaan Hendricks and Isma'il Haniyah. Right: Ihsaan Hendricks and Qaradawi (CIF watch project, <http://gm2j.co>).

The Israeli Apartheid Week

6. **The Israeli Apartheid Week events, being part of the delegitimization campaign against the State of Israel, were held in 13 cities in South Africa during the week of March 5-11.** The events included university seminars, lectures, screenings of documentaries, exhibitions, and many other activities (occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com, March 6, 2012).

7. Many international, local, and Palestinian activists took part in the events across South Africa. The Muslim Judicial Council and the Al-Quds Foundation had Abdul Aziz Umar as their guest during the week (occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com, March 6, 2012).



Israeli Apartheid Week events in South Africa (from the Al-Quds Foundation Facebook page)

8. The event also received support from such South African bodies as the **Council of Churches**, which called on its members to remember Israel as the only country that supported the apartheid while the rest of the world was imposing economic sanctions and boycotts to change South Africa (sacsis.org.za, March 5, 2012).

9. **In Port Elisabeth**, the Israeli Apartheid Week events began on Sunday, March 4 with a march and a movie screening, attended by the mayor, the former leader of the Laborers Union, and Ronnie Kasrils, the former intelligence minister. They were supposed to give speeches during the march (sacsis.org.za, March 5, 2012).

10. According to Muhammad Desai, the BDS spokesman in South Africa, the Israeli Apartheid Week was an impressive success because of the large number of people that took part in the activities. In Port Elisabeth, for example, 300-400 people attended a lecture given by South Africa's former intelligence minister (www.cilbroadcasting.com, March 8, 2012).