



Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center

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Profile of the Hamas movement



The emblem of Hamas – the Islamic Resistance Movement



Posters distributed by Hamas prior to the Legislative Council elections, demonstrating its determination to continue the strategy of armed confrontation with Israel (“the resistance”). The poster on the right shows a masked gunman with a rifle, with rifle bullets arranged in the form of a 6—Hamas’ list number in the elections. At the upper part of the poster is a bold caption saying, “The resistance [i.e., the terrorist-operative activity] is the symbol of the [Islamic] nation’s honor and the secret of its glory and victory”. The poster on the left features a caption saying, “One hand builds and the other resists”; in the background is the Temple Mount with the Al-Aqsa Mosque at its center (Source: the Hamas website, January 24).

Overview

❖ On January 25, 2006, the Hamas movement won a landslide victory in the elections for the Palestinian Authority's Legislative Council. According to the official results published by the Palestinian Authority's Elections Committee, Hamas won **74** out of the **132** council seats. **The Fatah movement**, Hamas' rival and the leader of the Palestinian national movement since its very beginning, suffered a **defeat** winning only **45** seats.

❖ Hamas' victory in the elections is without a doubt an **earth-shattering event** on the internal Palestinian scene, whose shockwaves are expected to wash over **Arab countries and reach throughout the Muslim world**. It is the first time that the Middle East has seen the rise to power of a **radical Islamic movement with a terrorist-operative wing** in democratic elections, reflecting the wishes and desires of many Palestinians who have grown tired of the Palestinian Authority's and Fatah's corruption and inefficiency. Accordingly, Hamas' conduct **on the internal Palestinian scene and its policy towards Israel** are going to have **far-reaching consequences**, extending beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



A photograph expressing the message of the continuation of the violent confrontation: a child carrying a rifle during a victory procession held by the movement's supporters (Source: Hamas' website, January 26)

✚ **This document includes the following chapters:**

- The background for the establishment of the Hamas movement, and its worldview.
- Characteristics of Hamas' platform, published before the Legislative Council elections.
- Characteristics of the Hamas leadership.
- Hamas' operative-terrorist activity
 - ✓ Hamas and suicide bombing terrorism
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- The claim on the alleged separation between the political-information wing and the operative wing
- Hamas' activity outside the Palestinian Authority administered territories
- Appendix: list of prominent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas since the movement's establishment

The background for the establishment of the Hamas movement, and its worldview

❖ The Hamas¹ movement was established in the Gaza Strip in late 1987, with the outbreak of the first violent confrontation, based on the social and religious foundation laid by the **Muslim Brotherhood** (mosques, kindergartens, education institutions, clinics, and so forth). The establishment of the movement reflected a decision made by the Palestinian Islamists, under the leadership of **Ahmed Yassin**, the founder of Hamas, not to content themselves with only the *da'wah*.² The decision taken was to **supplement the Muslim Brotherhood's radical Islamic ideology with Palestinian nationalist overtones, by defining the elimination of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic Palestinian state in its stead as a primary objective, and embracing a strategy of violent activity as a primary means towards the accomplishment of this objective.**

¹ **Hamas**, in classical Arabic, means might, heroism, fighting spirit. In classical Arabic poetry, *hamasa* were battle songs meant to inspire the soldiers' fighting spirit. In modern times, the meaning of the term has grown to include general enthusiasm (see the *Lisan al-Arab* dictionary and the *Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary of Modern Arabic*, by David Ayalon and Pessah Shinar). Hamas is also the acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement—*Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah*.

² That is, changing the Palestinian society by propaganda, preaching, education, and religious-political indoctrination (in like manner to the Muslim Brotherhood).



A poster which appeared on Hamas’s Internet site. It illustrates the connection between the Muslim Brotherhood and the importance of the battle for hearts and minds. Hassan al-Bana, Muslim Brotherhood founder, appears at the top with Ahmad Yassin (right) and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Rantisi (left). Below is movement’s slogan: “*Da’wah* [religious-political indoctrination], *Fikrah* [thought, idea, attitude], *shahadah* [death as a martyr for the sake of Allah].”

☞ Hamas’ worldview, as reflected in its covenant (1988), states that the Palestinian problem is of a **religious rather than a national-territorial nature**, and at its heart is the conflict between **Islam and the “infidel” Jews**. Accordingly, it **may not be resolved by means of political compromises based on the principle of “two states for two peoples”** (which Hamas opposes), but rather by means of **jihād (holy war)** to the liberation of the entire Palestine and the elimination of the State of Israel. This worldview sees the **land of Palestine -- “from the river to the sea” – as an Islamic religious endowment (waqf)** that may not be relinquished, even partially, and stresses the **key significance of Jerusalem**.

☞ **Based on this radical Islamic worldview, Hamas opposed** the agreements reached between the Palestinian Authority/PLO and Israel, including the Oslo Accords. **This is also the reason Hamas refused to acknowledge the political legitimacy of the**

Palestinian Authority, avoided joining it and rejected the Palestinian Authority's demand to disarm. Moreover, Hamas embraced its own **independent policy of terrorism** against Israel, sought to **undermine the Oslo Accords** and used violence to extort concessions from Israel.

❏ In the 1990s, Hamas created the **murderous suicide bombing terrorism, perfecting** it and making it into the main “strategic” weapon in the current confrontation. **The first Palestinian suicide bombing attack**, in Mehola, was perpetrated by a Hamas suicide bomber on April 16, 1993. **In the 1990s**, Hamas waged a murderous campaign of suicide bombing terrorism in Israeli cities as a means to undermine the Oslo Accords. **Since the beginning of the current conflict** (September 2000) until the lull agreement (March 2005), Hamas was the **leading perpetrator of suicide bombing attacks** (some 40 percent of all attacks) and the most prominent perpetrator of deadly suicide bombing attacks (such as the attack at Tel-Aviv's Dolphinarium and the Park Hotel in Netanya—see Appendix).

❏ However, as may be seen in statements made by the movement's senior figures after the Legislative Council elections, Hamas **does not rule out** conditional ceasefires of temporary nature (*hudna*) or lulls in the fighting, aiming to reduce the magnitude of the confrontation with Israel (*tahdi'a*), if necessitated by Palestinian interests and those of the movement itself. Indeed, unlike the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas took part in the **lull agreement**, and in 2005 embraced a **restrained policy of terrorist attacks**, reflected in diminishing its involvement in suicide bombing terrorism (surrendering the lead to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad).

Characteristics of Hamas' platform, published before the Legislative Council elections

❏ On the eve of the Legislative Council elections (January 2006), the Hamas movement published its platform, a central part in its elections campaign. The platform reflected the movement's **radical Islamic fundamental positions and terminology**, as

published in its 1988 covenant, with only minor differences. In the platform, Hamas did not cover up or obscure its commitment to its own fundamental principles, foremost among which is the movement's commitment to the principles of radical Islam, jihad (holy war), and the elimination of the State of Israel.

❏ In its election campaign, Hamas continued to stress its fundamental principles alongside emphasizing social and civilian objectives. Its platform emphasized the movement's striving towards reforms and changes in a series of issues (war against corruption, war against unemployment, women's status, political rights, and so forth) under the title of "Change and Reform", the name of Hamas' elections list. There is no doubt that the call for reforms **struck a chord** with the Palestinian people, who have had enough of the corruption associated with the Palestinian Authority leadership and Fatah, and who were captivated by Hamas' clean, responsible, non-corrupt image.

❏ What follows are the main points of the platform:³

- **Fundamental principles:** the Palestinian people are part of the Arab/Islamic nation. Islam is the source of political, economic, social, and legal authority. **Historic Palestine is an inseparable part of the Arab/Islamic land, and the Palestinians have an unchallenged right to it.** The Palestinian people have a right to self-determination, a right to Jerusalem and the holy places, and a right to establish a sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital. **The (so-called) right of return** belongs to all the Palestinian refugees. **The Palestinian people have a right to resist the (Israeli) occupation by all means available, including armed struggle (i.e., by violence and terrorist activities).**

- **Interior policy:** the Hamas movement calls for a **governmental and legal reform**, while protecting individual and group rights. The platform calls to **fight corruption** through transparency and monitoring of budget management, protect the civilian society institutions, provide financial assistance to underprivileged

³ According to the Hamas website (January 11, 2005).

sectors of society, form social solidarity, and ensure economic rights to prisoners. In education, the platform calls to implement a compulsory education law and states that **Islam (as interpreted by Hamas) is the basis of education**. The platform also calls for improvements in women's status.

● **Foreign policy:** the platform calls to embrace a strategy that stresses **tightening the bonds with the Arab/Muslim world**, while maintaining the relations with the international community. **The platform is opposed to normalizing relations with Israel, calls for an “economic disengagement from Israel”, and calls for support of the “resistance”** (i.e., terrorist activity).

■ After the elections, spokesmen on behalf of Hamas issued statements reflecting its **interest to adapt the (unchanged) fundamental concepts to the new reality**. Thus, for example, **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a Hamas senior in the Gaza Strip, announced (January 29) that his movement would be willing to consider a long-term ceasefire (*hudna*), in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the borders of 1967 and the implementation of the “right of return”. In a press conference held on January 28, **Khaled Mash'al**, Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, stated that the agreements with Israel would be upheld since they were a **reality impossible to ignore**.



Hamas’ charm offensive to western audiences:⁴ Following Hamas’ victory in the elections, Political Bureau Chairman Khaled Mash’al announces that the agreements with Israel are a reality impossible to ignore (Source: the Hamas website)

Characteristics of the Hamas leadership

❖ The Hamas movement was formed in the **Gaza Strip**, where the movement’s seat of power was situated. However, over the years, following the IDF’s killing of some of its leaders and the deportation of others, **the Hamas leadership split into two centers**. The first is the **“external” leadership, based in Damascus** after its expulsion from Jordan in 1999 (with representations in Arab and Muslim countries, primarily Iran, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia); the second is the **“internal” leadership**, based in the Palestinian Authority administered territories, with most of its power concentrated in the Gaza Strip, the seat of the more senior Hamas figures.

❖ The “external” leadership, influenced and assisted by **Syria and Iran**, is **still the movement’s highest authority**, even though the influence of the “internal” leadership is expected to increase in the wake of the election results. Traditionally, **the “external”**

⁴ In parallel, Hamas persists in its extremist rhetoric to the Palestinian and Arab Muslim world.

leadership espoused stricter, more radical positions than the “internal” leadership, this owing to its separation from the constraints of the Palestinian people and its proximity to **Iran and Syria**.

❏ **The “external” leadership** is made up of a combination of Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood members who had studied abroad (mainly in Persian Gulf countries) and joined Hamas after its establishment, and **“internal” members deported from the Palestinian Authority administered territories**. After the death of Hamas founder and leader **Ahmed Yassin** (who died in a targeted killing on March 22, 2004), **the focus of the leadership shifted from the “inside” to the “outside”**. Presently, the movement’s leader is **Chairman of the Political Bureau, Khaled Mash’al, based in Damascus** and occupying the position since 1996. His deputy, also based in Damascus, is **Moussa Muhammad Abu Marzouq**, for whom the US issued an arrest warrant (August 20, 2004) for assisting and financing terrorism.



Chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau, Khaled Mash’al (left); Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah (right). These are the two players who will continue to exert their influence, from Syria and Lebanon, on Hamas’ conduct in the Palestinian Authority administered territories.

✚ The lead figures of Hamas’ “internal” leadership operate in the **Gaza Strip**. Some of Hamas’ leaders are also based in the West Bank, in Israeli prisons, but the extent of their seniority and influence is lesser. Below are profiles of some of Hamas’ most prominent leaders both “outside” and “inside”.⁵

● **Khaled Abd al-Rahim Isma’il Mash’al (Abd al-Qader):**

- ✓ Head of the Hamas Political Bureau and the **movement’s leader**. Born in 1956 in the village of Silwad, near Ramallah. In 1967, he moved to Kuwait where he resided until 1990 and studied physics in the university. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1981 and Hamas in 1987. In 1990, he moved to Jordan and in 1996 was appointed the head of the Hamas Political Bureau in Jordan.
- ✓ On September 25, 1997, Israel made a failed attempt on his life by injecting him poison on the street in Amman. In November 1999, he was deported from Jordan and moved to Damascus, from where he operates the Hamas movement in the Palestinian Authority administered territories, **with Syria’s and Iran’s influence and assistance**, to this day.

● **Isma’il Abd al-Salam Ahmed Haniyya (Abu al-Abd):**

- ✓ Considered to be one of the movement’s least extremist leaders. Headed the Hamas list in the Legislative Council elections and is to head the new Palestinian government (unless Hamas chooses to replace him with a “dummy candidate” on its behalf).
- ✓ Born in 1963 in the Al-Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip to a family descended from the village of Al-Jora, near Ashkelon



⁵ Among other sources, the profiles of the various Hamas seniors were compiled from biographic details as published in the movement’s publication, **Filastin al-Muslimah** (April 28, 2005).

(Ahmed Yassin's birthplace). Graduate of the Arabic Education College in the **Islamic University of Gaza** (a focus of Hamas' activity). Formerly an activist for the Islamic Bloc (Hamas' student wing) and chairman of the students' council.

✓ In 1989, he was arrested by the Israeli security forces and spent three years in the Ketziot prison. He was released in May 1992 and, in December of that year, was deported to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon, alongside the other Hamas deportees. After his return to Gaza, about a year after his deportation, he was appointed the dean of the Islamic University. In 1997, upon Ahmed Yassin's release from prison, he became his office chief until Yassin's death in a targeted killing in 2004.

• **Mahmoud Khaled Za'but al-Zahar (Abu Khaled):**

✓ One of Hamas' founders, considered to be extremist in his views towards Israel and the Palestinian Authority, even though after the Legislative Council elections he attempted to obscure his positions and present an ostensibly pragmatic image.



✓ Born in 1945, he grew up in Isma'iliya, where he resided until the age of 13. He studied medicine in the Ein Shams University in Cairo and worked as a physician in the Gaza Strip until 1982. He was fired due to his anti-Israeli rhetoric. Since 1985, he is a lecturer in the Islamic University of Gaza, from which several Hamas seniors originated.

✓ He was arrested by Israel and was among those deported to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon (1992). After the killing of Ahmed Yassin, he was declared Rantisi's deputy. His son died in a targeted killing aimed against him (September 10, 2003).

● **Muhammad Diyab Ibrahim Def:**

✓ A senior operative of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' terrorist-operative wing. Born in Khan Yunis in 1965. His family originates from Kawkaba (east of Ashkelon). Formerly a student in the Islamic University of Gaza. Considered to be the student of Yahya "the Engineer" Ayyash. After Ayyash's killing in 1996, he was made commander of the movement's terrorist-operative wing.



✓ **Muhammad Def stood behind a series of murderous terrorist attacks that took place in Israeli cities in February-March 1996.** Among those were two suicide bombing attacks on bus no. 18 in Jerusalem and abductions of soldiers (Nachshon Wachsmann, Aryeh Frankental, and Shahar Simani). He survived several targeted killing attempts. In one of them, on December 26, 2002, he was severely injured. In the wake of the attempts to kill him, he went underground. Today, he is still actively involved in managing Hamas' operative infrastructure.

✓ After the disengagement, Muhammad Def appeared in public within the context of Hamas' campaign to portray the disengagement as its own achievement. In his address, he repeated most of the known motifs of Hamas' campaign, calling for the "liberation" of Jerusalem, the West Bank, Acre, Safed, Nazareth, Ashkelon, and "every stretch of Palestine". The Gaza Strip, according to Def, was "liberated" only through jihad (holy war), and the next phase is going to be "crushing the occupation" in the West Bank and Jerusalem through the armed struggle ("blood for blood, destruction for destruction," Hamas' website, August 27, 2005).



Muhammad Def in his appearance after the disengagement: a call for the elimination of the State of Israel by terrorism

● **Sa'id Muhammad Siyam (Abu Mus'ab):** a senior member of the movement's leadership and one of its more pragmatic figures. Born in 1959 in Gaza, resident of Sheikh Radwan, father of six. He was one of those deported to Marj al-Zuhur (1992). Works as a teacher and a preacher. Participated in many of the movement's important forums, was its representative in the monitoring committee of the National and Islamic Forces. Served as the movement's spokesman between December 2001 and April 2002, and was responsible for the establishment of the Radio al-Aqsa station (April 2003), broadcasting from the Gaza Strip.



● **Muhammad Mahmoud Hassan Abu Tir (SheiAbu Mus'ab):** born in 1951 in the East Jerusalem village of Umm Tuba. He joined Fatah in the early 1970s, in the wake of which he was held prisoner in Israel. During his stay in prison, he became religious and became an activist of the Muslim Brotherhood, and then of Hamas. Detained in Israel on several occasions. He was released in 2005 after serving seven years in prison. During the latest election



campaign in East Jerusalem, in which he granted interviews to Israeli media, he was detained for several days and later released.

• **Sheikh Hamed Suleiman Jaber al-Bitawi** considered to be one of Hamas' most veteran, senior activists in the Nablus region. Born in 1944 in the village of Beita (near Nablus). He is among the founders and leaders of radical Islamism in the West Bank and among Israeli Arabs. Head of Al-Tadamun ("Solidarity") charitable association controlled by Hamas in Nablus. He also serves as Chairman of the Palestinian Islamic Scholars Association, which issued a religious ruling (*fatwa*) praising suicide bombing attacks. He is also one of the Palestinian representatives in the Union of Good's board of trustees. In 1992, he was deported by Israel to Lebanon (Marj al-Zuhur) alongside other Hamas activists.



Sheikh al-Bitawi, armed with a gun, at a gathering in Nablus. To his right is Jamal Mansour, a Hamas senior in Nablus who died in a targeted killing in July 2001 (Photo: the Hamas website)

Hamas' terrorist-operative activity

Hamas and suicide bombing terrorism

❏ Hamas has a terrorist-operative infrastructure (**the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**) in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and a logistical support infrastructure abroad. Furthermore, Hamas established a **militia** called the **Popular Army**, deployed in population centers in the Gaza Strip and engaged in defense and security tasks. **Hamas’ operatives stood behind the perpetration of most suicide bombing attacks inside Israeli territory since the beginning of the current confrontation.** Hamas’ operative infrastructures are guided from abroad as well as by the **Hamas** leadership in the **Gaza Strip.**

❏ Throughout the course of the current confrontation, Hamas perfected and extended the use of suicide bombing terrorism as its main “strategic weapon” in the terrorist campaign against Israel. Out of 147 suicide bombing attacks perpetrated in the five years of the current confrontation, 58 were perpetrated by Hamas (i.e., some 40 percent of the total number of suicide bombing attacks). In its terrorist attacks, Hamas was responsible for most of Israel’s fatalities during the confrontation (482 out of 1,084 fatalities, some 44 percent of the total number of killed during the confrontation). Since the lull agreement (March 2005), Hamas perpetrated a single suicide bombing attack (in Beersheba), within the context of the restrained policy of terrorist attacks it embraced (see below).

❏ Prominent among the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas was the suicide bombing at the **Park Hotel in Netanya** on Passover Eve (March 27, 2002). That terrorist attack, in which 30 people were killed, triggered Operation Defensive Shield (April 2002), in which the IDF took control of population centers in the West Bank, thus beginning a new chapter in the current confrontation. Other noteworthy deadly terrorist attacks perpetrated by the organization include the suicide bombing attack on **bus no. 2 in Jerusalem** (August 19, 2003, 23 killed), and a suicide bombing attack at a **nightclub near Tel-Aviv’s Dolphinarium** (June 1, 2001, 21 killed).⁶

⁶ See Appendix for a list of prominent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas in the 1990s and in the course of the current confrontation.

Hamas' operative activity during 2005

❏ As a result of the **lull agreement (March 2005)**, the **Hamas movement embraced a more restrained policy of terrorist attacks** than in the earlier years of the confrontation. Hamas' self-imposed restraint was also a result of the need to consider the moods prevailing among the Palestinian public, against the backdrop of its participation in the municipal elections (where it achieved significant accomplishments) and the **Legislative Council elections, where it won by a landslide.**

❏ However, even during the lull, **Hamas did not stop perpetrating terrorist attacks.** In this context, in 2005, a Hamas cell from Mount Hebron perpetrated a **series of shooting attacks in Judea** (Beit Hagai and the Gush Etzion junction), leading to the deaths of seven civilians. Another prominent terrorist attack perpetrated by Hamas during the lull was the **abduction and murder of Sasson Nuriel**, a resident of Pisgat Ze'ev, perpetrated by Hamas operatives in Ramallah (September 21). In that case, the Hamas movement **publicly claimed responsibility** for the terrorist attack, **viewing abduction terrorist attacks as being "legitimate"** even during the lull (for the promotion of the release of terrorists held prisoner in Israel).



Abduction and murder by Hamas: Sasson Nuriel bound by his captors
(Source: the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website)

❖ **In the sphere of suicide bombings, Hamas embraced a restrained policy. The Hamas movement, which in previous years was the leader in suicide bombing attacks, perpetrated “only” two suicide bombing attacks in 2005.** The first was perpetrated before the lull agreement at **IDF’s Orkhan outpost in the Gaza Strip** (January 2005), **while the second was perpetrated at the Beersheba central bus station** (August). The attack in Beersheba, in which some 40 civilians were injured, was perpetrated by the Hamas infrastructure in Al-Thahiriya (Mount Hebron); however, **Hamas avoided publicly claiming responsibility** for the attack to maintain its alleged public commitment to the lull.

❖ **In the course of the lull in the fighting as well as after the disengagement, the Hamas movement took a central part in firing rockets and mortar shells on West Negev towns.** Hamas’ self-imposed restraint in these (still ongoing) terrorist attacks began following **harsh public criticism directed at Hamas in the wake of a technical malfunction that led to the explosion of a truck carrying Qassam rockets, during a Hamas “victory procession” in Jebaliya (September 23).** As a result of the explosion, 19 Palestinians were killed and some 80 were injured. The Palestinian Authority publicly blamed Hamas for the explosion. The Hamas movement issued a **false announcement** laying the blame at Israel’s door and even “retaliated” by firing dozens of rockets on Sderot and other West Negev towns. This resulted, as mentioned, in harsh public criticism, and impelled Hamas to change its fire policy from the Gaza Strip.

❖ **During the lull, the Hamas movement extended behind-the-scenes assistance to other terrorist organizations to perpetrate “quality” terrorist attacks.** Thus, for example, the Hamas movement helped Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades prepare the explosive stockings meant to be used by would-be female suicide bomber Wafaa Bass, whose plan to perpetrate a suicide bombing attack in an Israeli hospital was thwarted when she was detained at the Erez crossing (June 2005). **Hamas also assisted the Popular Resistance Committees, a terrorist organization based in the Gaza Strip operating as some sort of Hamas’ operative wing.** Hamas’ assistance was also used to “settle scores” on the interior Palestinian scene: a prime example was the

assassination of Moussa Arafat (September 7) by Popular Resistance Committees operatives, with the assistance and, possibly, guidance of Hamas.



Moussa Arafat: a political murder planned and organized by the Popular Resistance Committees with the assistance (and, possibly, guidance) of Hamas (Al-Alam, October 13, 2005)

Hamas’ civilian infrastructure

☞ Alongside its terrorist-operative infrastructure, Hamas also formed an **extensive civilian infrastructure** (*da’wah*) in the Palestinian Authority administered territories. Said infrastructure extends assistance to the Palestinian population in matters of welfare, religion, and education, while also serving as a **supportive apparatus for the terrorist-operative activity**.

☞ This is reflected in **transferring funds to support families of shahids** (“martyrs”), **prisoners, and wanted operatives** (with some of the funds trickling down to the terrorist-operative system as well); **providing jobs and employment** to Hamas seniors in “charity committees” and other Hamas-associated institutions; **providing assistance to mosques** affiliated with Hamas and entrenching the movement’s influence in **universities** (that have served as pools for the recruitment of Hamas operatives, including suicide bombers) and other **education institutions**.

❏ Hamas places special importance on the **sphere of education: it holds extensive “educational” activity in the Palestinian Authority administered territories** (kindergartens, schools, summer camps, clubs), **rivaling, in fact, that of the Palestinian Authority.** In this alternative education system, the students are indoctrinated with **radical Islamic messages and subjected to harsh incitement**, laying the foundation for hatred against Israel and the perpetration of terrorist attacks against it. In Hamas’ *da’wah* infrastructure, the public, and the young generation in particular, is educated to violence and hatred, giving rise to a **new generation** of young Hamas members **taught to continue down the path of terrorism in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**

❏ Hamas has at its disposal **large amounts of money** (estimated at dozens of millions of dollars a year), having their source primarily in **Iran** and Islamic foundations and institutions in **Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf countries**, as well as Islamic foundations in **Western Europe** (and other secondary sources of funding). This allows the Hamas movement to invest moneys in welfare and make itself popular with the Palestinian public, which was reflected in its landslide victory in the Legislative Council elections.

Hamas as an alternative to the Palestinian Authority and Fatah

❏ Since the very beginning, the Hamas movement presented itself as an opposition and an alternative to the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, first and foremost on the **ideological level**, as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. It embraced an **Islamic worldview, contrary to the secular worldview espoused by Fatah founders and senior figures in the Palestinian national movement.** The difference in worldviews was also reflected in the **relations with Israel**, categorical opposition to the Oslo Accords, to the recognition of Israel and its right to exist, and to political agreements with it. In order to realize the jihad strategy, Hamas embraced an

independent policy of terrorist attacks, even if such was detrimental to the interests of the Palestinian Authority, and **adamantly refused to disarm its members**.

❏ The Palestinian Authority, on its part, did not exert actual efforts to force Hamas to stop terrorist attacks, disarm, and curb its takeover of important institutions in Palestinian society (“charity associations”, education institutions, and mosques, ostensibly controlled by the Palestinian Authority). In the late 1990s and in the beginning of the current confrontation, there were several attempts by Yasser Arafat to impose his rule on Hamas; however, they were **short-lived and ineffective**.

❏ Abu Mazen, Arafat’s successor, issued numerous statements on “one authority, one rule, and one weapon”. **However, he took no measures to impose his political views and agenda on Hamas**. The Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria, rather than serving as leverage for strengthening the Palestinian Authority, was well used by Hamas to gain popularity by portraying the disengagement as a triumphant result of its path and for intensive activity to deepen its control of the Gaza Strip, making it into “Hamastan”.

The claim on the alleged separation between the political-information wing and the operative wing

❏ One of the claims intended to grant an immunity of sorts to Hamas leaders (who might now find themselves in key positions in the Palestinian Authority leadership) is the claim on the **alleged existence of separate Hamas wings**: the operative wing and the political-propaganda wing. It may be assumed that when Hamas perpetrates terrorist attacks after its victory in the Legislative Council elections, it will once again attempt to make use of that claim. This, in order to provide immunity of sorts to its leaders, who will be in positions of power (with greater exposure) so as to not turn the Palestinian Authority into a target of punitive and retaliatory activities by Israel.

❏ This claim is fundamentally untrue, since on many occasions it is difficult to draw a clear line between two supposedly separate wings in Hamas. The movement’s so-called political leaders have been involved in guiding and coordinating Hamas’ policy, including its various aspects:

● **Determining and guiding the movement’s policy of terrorist attacks and approving strategic terrorist attacks:** both on the level of the kinds of terrorist attacks the movement needs to perpetrate (suicide bombing attacks, Qassam rocket and mortar fire) and on the level of instructing the operative wing members who turn to them to receive instructions on this issue.



Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi, Ahmed Yassin’s successor as leader of Hamas, who also died in a targeted killing by Israel (the back cover of the 2004 edition of the Hamas covenant, published in Qalqilya). Al-Rantisi, described as a figure dealing with policy and propaganda, carries a rifle, with masked gunmen in the background. Beneath Al-Rantisi’s photograph is the following caption: “Oh Lord, take our blood until you are satisfied”, whose meaning is the encouragement of self-sacrifice for Allah (i.e., terrorist attacks).

● **Direct guidance of leaders of operative groupings:** in the course of the confrontation, some of Hamas’ leaders have taken part in terrorist-operative activity. A noteworthy example of that was **Abbas Bin Muhammad al-Sayyid (now serving cumulative prison terms in Israel), the Hamas leader in Tulkarm, who initiated, planned, and coordinated the Park Hotel terrorist attack along with other acts of terrorism, killing dozens of Israeli civilians and injuring hundreds.**

• Abbas al-Sayyid, a graduate of Yarmuk University in Jordan and medical equipment engineer by trade, **portrays by his character and activity both the terrorist and the political wing of Hamas: on one hand**, Al-Sayyid headed the Hamas operative infrastructure in Tulkarm and was involved in covert activity of initiating and coordinating terrorist attacks against civilians, involved in the **very details** of operative activity aimed towards the realization of those attacks. **On the other hand**, he held close contacts with Hamas' senior political and operative cadres, and was involved in a **variety of activities of political, propaganda, and organizational character**: representing Hamas at conventions, giving political speeches quoted on the media, purchasing arms and ammunition, recruiting operatives, organizing demonstrations and mourning processions, engaging in propaganda activities, and even providing legal assistance (through his aide) to Hamas detainees.



Abbas al-Sayyid, a Hamas leader in Tulkarm wearing two caps: the political-propaganda cap and the terrorist-operative cap. He planned the suicide bombing attack at the Park Hotel in Netanya and is currently serving a lifetime sentence in Israel

• **Creating an extensive infrastructure for the battle for hearts and minds**, encouraging terrorism, mainly suicide bombing terrorism. This, through intensive

involvement of the Hamas leadership in propaganda and education, using a well-oiled religious-education system that indoctrinates generations of Palestinians (from infancy to university) to deny the existence of Israel, educating them to a holy war against Israel and the Jews.

● **Extensive fundraising activities in Arab countries and Western Europe:**

Hamas seniors have been involved in recruiting funds from **Iran** and Islamic foundations in **Saudi Arabia**, **Persian Gulf** countries, and **European** countries. Some of the funds were used to establish the terrorist-supportive apparatus, and sometimes also trickled down to operative elements. Those funds served the Hamas movement, which on more than one occasion triggered harsh reactions on the part of the Palestinian Authority, as reflected in the Legislative Council election campaign.⁷

● **Coordination with terrorist organizations and state sponsors of terrorism:**

Hamas' senior activists abroad and in the Palestinian Authority administered territories hold close contacts with **Iran and Syria**, members of the "Axis of Evil", as well as with terrorist organizations such as **Hezbollah**. They are also engaged in fundraising in Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf countries and Europe for terrorist purposes. Within this context, they are responsible for securing the political, operative, and economic backing from countries that support Hamas. The Hamas leadership in Damascus, even though its activity is portrayed as propaganda, is also involved in transmitting operative instructions for terrorist-operative activity against Israel.

⁷ During a television debate between Saeb Erekat and Mahmoud al-Zahar (as part of the campaign), Saeb Erekat asked whether the Palestinian people did not have a right to receive a list of all the funds that had been transferred to the charity associations (Al-Arabiyyah Television, January 25, 2006).

Hamas' activity outside the Palestinian Authority administered territories



Right: Khaled Mash'al meets with the Iranian president during his visit to Syria (January 19-20, 2006) (Source: Al-Manar Television); left: Khaled Mash'al meets with Khamenei during his visit to Iran (December 12-13, 2005) (Photo: Mehr Agency, December 13)

❏ **Syria** serves as the main arena for Hamas' activity politically, propaganda-wise, and operatively. Senior members of the movement's leadership **reside in Syria, from where they conduct their activity**. Those are primarily members of **Hamas' Political Bureau**, headed by **Khaled Mash'al**, alongside **members of the operative headquarters** headed by **Imad al-Alami**.



The meeting of Syrian President Bashar Assad with a Hamas delegation headed by Khaled Mash'al in the wake of the victory in the elections (January 29). The photograph on the upper right shows Assad with Hamas leader Khaled Mash'al; the photograph on the bottom shows Imad al-Alami (middle), responsible for terrorist-operative activity, in a rare public appearance (Source: Syrian Television).

❖ The Syrian regime, supporting the Palestinian terrorist organizations, **allows the movement's leadership and the operative headquarters to conduct their various activities from Syrian territory. This includes** formulating and designing the movement's operative policy; operative guidance, reflected in guiding terrorist activity; training terrorist operatives; funding terrorist groups in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, and purchasing arms and ammunition.

❖ On several occasions in the past, driven by American pressure, Syria acted towards lowering the visibility of such activity, even though it claimed it

was political-propaganda in nature. **In practice, there has been no change in the pattern of action employed by Hamas (and other terrorist organizations) in Syria,** and they continue to act from Syrian territory undisturbed.

❖ In addition, Hamas conducts activities in a number of other countries, primarily **Iran, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia**, which provide support and assistance with **funds** and operative training. Saudi Arabia is also the originator of **radical Islamic ideological materials** spread by Hamas in schools and universities in the Palestinian Authority administered territories. As a result of the close relationship between Hamas and Iran, Khaled Mash'al holds regular meetings with the Iranian senior leadership. Within this context, he visited Iran (December 12-13, 2005); furthermore, Khaled Mash'al met with Ahmadinejad during a two-day visit held by the Iranian president to Damascus (January 19-20, 2006).

❖ It should be emphasized that the Hamas movement **also operates in European countries through its affiliated figures and foundations**. Such activity is reflected in the **field of propaganda** (Filastin al-Muslimah, a Hamas publication distributed from the **UK**) and in **raising funds** through Islamic foundations, raising funds in Europe and transferring them to Hamas-affiliated “charity associations” in the Palestinian Authority administered territories.

Appendix

List of prominent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas since its establishment⁸

1. **The abduction and murder of IDF soldiers Avi Sasportas** (February 16, 1989), **Ilan Saadon** (May 3, 1989), and **Nissim Toledano** (December 13, 1992).
2. **The abduction of IDF soldier Nachshon Wachsman** (October 9-14, 1994); Nachshon Wachsman and **Nir Poraz** were killed.
3. **Suicide bombing attack on bus no. 5 in Tel-Aviv** (October 19, 1994), 22 killed.
4. **Two suicide bombing attacks on bus no. 18 in Jerusalem** (February 25, 1995; March 3, 1996), 47 killed.
5. **Suicide bombing attack at Tel-Aviv's Dolphinarium** (June 1, 2001), 21 killed.
6. **Suicide bombing attack at the Jerusalem Sbarro restaurant** (August 9, 2001), 15 killed.
7. **Suicide bombing attack at the Park Hotel in Netanya, on Passover Eve** (March 27, 2002), 30 killed. The suicide bombing attack triggered Operation Defensive Shield.
8. **Suicide bombing attack at a billiard parlor in Rishon Letzion** (May 7, 2002), 15 killed.

⁸ For details on other suicide bombing attacks, see "Suicide terrorism during the current Israeli-Palestinian confrontation (September 2000 – December 2005)", Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (January 1, 2006).

9. **Suicide bombing attack on bus no. 32 in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo** (June 18, 2002), 19 killed.
10. **Suicide bombing attack on bus no. 2 in Jerusalem** (August 19, 2003), 23 killed. The suicide bombing attack brought about the end of the temporary ceasefire (*hudna*).
11. **Suicide bombing attack at Café Hillel in Jerusalem** (September 9, 2003), 7 killed.
12. **Suicide bombing attack at a bus stop in Tzrifin** (September 9, 2003), 9 killed.
13. **Suicide bombing attack by two suicide bombers who blew themselves up on two adjacent buses in Beersheba** (August 31, 2004), 16 killed.
14. **Suicide bombing attack at the Beersheba central bus station** (August 1, 2005), some 40 wounded.
15. **The abduction and murder of Israeli civilian Sasson Nuriel** (September 25, 2005).