



**New designations recently published by the US Department of State and Department of the Treasury reveal Turkey's central role as a hub from which Hamas handles its financial matters, including funding terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria**

September 19, 2019

## Overview

- ▶ New designations published by **the US Department of the Treasury** on September 10, 2019, **consist of new names of companies and individuals**. The US designations **include figures responsible for the transfer of Hamas's funds to the Gaza Strip and to terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria (as well as basic information on them)**.
- ▶ The American designations also include the name of a **senior operative in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force (IRGC-QF), who is based in Lebanon and is engaged in the transfer of funds to Hamas**. In addition, a list of terrorists published by **the US Department of State** includes new names of 12 terrorist operatives, including three senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives residing in the Gaza Strip.<sup>1</sup>

**In the designations published by the US Department of the Treasury, Turkey occupies a prominent place as a hub in which and from which terrorist organizations, including Hamas, run their financial activities.** According to the American report, **Hamas operatives and facilitators in Turkey are engaged in fundraising and money transfer to Hamas's military wing in the Gaza Strip, funding terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria, and operating currency exchange and wire transfer companies in Turkey, which launder terror funds.** The information published by the US Department of the Treasury clearly indicates that **the main source for the transfer of financial support to Hamas through Turkey (and sometimes Lebanon) is Iran.** The transfer of the funds to Hamas **is carried out by the IRGC-QF. Hamas operatives and facilitators as well as currency exchange companies based in Turkey** are involved in the transfer process. **It should be recalled that money transfers from Turkey to Hamas's terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria have been exposed time and again by the Israeli Security Agency (see Appendix B).**

<sup>1</sup> For details, see the ITIC's Information Bulletin from September 18, 2019, "The US President signed an executive order designed to significantly improve the United States' capabilities to fight against terrorism by imposing effective sanctions on terrorist organizations and operatives and anyone supporting terrorism or related to it" (Hebrew).

## Hamas operatives and companies handled by Hamas in Turkey

► On September 10, 2019, the US Department of the Treasury announced the imposition of sanctions on 15 terrorist operatives and companies of currency exchange and wire transfer supporting the terrorist organizations. Alongside operatives and companies involved in the transfer of funds to ISIS, the list also includes **operatives and companies** based in Turkey, engaging in the transfer of funds to Hamas.

► Following is basic information on Hamas operatives in Turkey and companies engaged in the transfer of funds to Hamas, as appeared in the announcement of the US Department of the Treasury (website of the Department of the Treasury, September 10, 2019):

### ◆ **Zaher Jabarin:**<sup>2</sup>

- According to the American report, Turkey-based Jabarin is **the head of Hamas's Finance Office. In this capacity, he manages Hamas's yearly budget amounting to tens of millions of dollars** and is in charge of all Hamas's income from various elements around the world. He also seeks to obtain additional sources of funding for Hamas. **In his capacity as head of Hamas's Finance Department, Jabarin focused on developing a financial network in Turkey that would allow Hamas to raise, invest, and launder money prior to transferring it (to the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria).**
- **Jabarin has served as the primary point of contact between Hamas and the IRGC-QF.** Since 2017, his relations with them were enhanced based on Hamas's operatives' efforts to increase funding from Iran.

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<sup>2</sup> Zaher Jabarin was also involved in handling terrorist operatives in Judea and Samaria on behalf of Hamas (see Appendix B).



Zaher Jabarin, leading Hamas figure in Turkey, who was released in the Shalit prisoner exchange deal (Sarahah News, Jordan, May 8, 2018)

◆ **Ismail Tash: Deputy CEO of Redin Exchange (see below) and in charge of Redin Exchange's foreign relations. He is also the owner of SMART (see below).** Since at least 2017, Tash has had ongoing contact with Hamas facilitators **for transferring funds from Iran to Hamas. Through Ismail Tash, funds were transferred from the IRGC-QF especially to the Hamas military wing in the Gaza Strip.** In January 2019, Tash served as the primary contact **in many fund transfers carried out from Iran to Hamas** and was highly involved in Hamas facilitators' [financial] activity. (The ITIC's **note: Ismail Tash is the codename of Ismail Salman**).



**Ismail Salman (Ismail Tash)**  
(khalas-Hamas.info, September 19, 2019)

► The list of the US Department of the Treasury also includes names of companies engaged in the transfer of funds to Hamas and some basic information on these companies:

◆ **Redin Exchange:** A company based in Turkey, **serving as a channel for transferring funds to Hamas.** As of mid-2018, Redin Exchange was identified as a key part of the network used to transfer money to Hamas. **With the assistance of this company, tens of millions of dollars were transferred to Hamas.** Throughout 2017, Zaher Jabarin (mentioned above) was involved in the transfer of millions of dollars to Hamas with the assistance of Redin Exchange. **Muhammad Sarur**, who is employed in

the company, was involved in March 2019 in the transfer of \$10 million to Hamas's operational arm the Ez al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.



Right: Offices of Redin Exchange in Istanbul. Left: Business cards of the company (Khalas-Hamas Facebook page, September 12, 2019)

◆ **SMART:** An import/export limited company owned by the abovementioned Ismail Tash. Possibly a front company associated with Redin Exchange. Both SMART and Redin Exchange share the same Istanbul-based address.



Right: Offices of SMART in Istanbul. Left: Business cards of the company (Khalas-Hamas Facebook page, September 12, 2019)

## Transferring funds to Hamas through Lebanon

► In addition to Hamas operatives based in Turkey, the Department of the Treasury's list also includes the name of **Mohammad Sa'id Izadi**. **Izadi, who is based in Lebanon, is a senior operative in the IRGC-Qods Force. He is the chief of the Palestinian Office of the IRGC-QF Lebanon Corps** and engages in the transfer of financial, material and technological support to Hamas.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for example, in late 2016, he required a Hamas political member<sup>4</sup> to get

<sup>3</sup> The name of Mohammad Izadi was mentioned in the past in relation to the direction of a terrorist attack against Israel from Syrian territory. On August 20, 2015, four rockets were fired at Israel from the central Syrian Golan Heights. Two landings were identified in Israel's Upper Galilee and two in the Golan Heights (IDF Spokesperson's Office, August 21, 2015). **These were the first**

permission from three senior Hamas leaders to receive money directly from him. The Hamas political member stated that Izadi would be sending him \$1 million in addition to Izadi's regular allocation [of funds from Iran to Hamas]. **The extra \$1 million was indeed transferred to the Hamas political member.**



**Sa'id Izadi, senior Qods Force official based in Lebanon (in the photo, standing behind Qods Force Commander Qassem Soleimani) (Sa'id Izadi's Twitter account)**

## Senior Hamas and PIJ operatives on the list of the US Department of State

► The US Department of State's list includes the names of 12 terrorist operatives designated as "Specially Designated Global Terrorists" (SDGT). Among those 12 operatives, there were three senior operatives residing in the Gaza Strip. Following is basic information on them (according to the statement of the Department of State's spokesperson, September 10, 2019):

- ◆ **Marwan Eissa:** Deputy commander of Hamas's military wing, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.
- ◆ **Mohammad al-Hindi:** Deputy secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

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**rockets fired from Syria to the Galilee in Israel since the Yom Kippur War (October 1973).** According to Israeli security officials quoted on Israeli media, **the rockets were fired by a PIJ squad handled by Iran.** According to the Israeli security sources, the squad was handled by **Sa'id Izadi, the head of the Palestinian Office in the Iranian Qods Force, who also engaged in smuggling the weapons from Syria to Lebanon.** In response to the rocket fire at Israeli territory, **the Israeli Air Force and artillery attacked 14 Syrian regime targets in the central Syrian Golan Heights** (IDF Spokesperson's Office, August 21, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> According to The Independent's Arabic website, Sa'id Izadi is a Qods Force officer residing in Lebanon. **He is the official in charge of relations with Hamas and the PIJ in Gaza and is in regular contact with the organizations' leaderships, including in Lebanon** (The Independent website in Arabic, March 1, 2019).

◆ **Baha Abu al-Ata:** Member of the PIJ Supreme Military Council, commander of the northern battalion of the PIJ Quds Brigades in the Gaza Strip.<sup>5</sup>

► For PIJ and Hamas's reactions to the American statement, see Appendix A.

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<sup>5</sup> On April 28, 2019, a rocket was launched from the Gaza Strip at Israel. It landed in the sea, several kilometers from the Israeli shore. According to the IDF Spokesperson's Office, this was a directed launch carried out by the PIJ from the northern Gaza Strip in order to sabotage the lull attempts. According to the IDF Spokesperson's Office, **the operative leading the attempts to undermine the lull is Baha Abu al-Ata, the PIJ commander of the northern Gaza Strip, under the instructions of PIJ leader Ziad Nakhleh** (IDF spokesperson's Office, April 30, 2019).

# Appendix A

## PIJ and Hamas's public reaction on the inclusion of their operatives in the US sanctions

### Overview

**The Palestinian Islamic Jihad**, a terrorist organization closely affiliated with Iran, strongly condemned the inclusion of its senior operatives in the American designations. The main message in its reaction is that the American statement is meaningless and that the Palestinian “resistance” (i.e., terrorism) is legitimate. **Hamas** refrained from a direct response but the Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March, sponsored by Hamas, held a press conference on September 13, 2019 (a Friday, the day of the return marches) in which it condemned the American government. Condemnations of the American statement were also posted on Palestinian social media.

### PIJ reactions

► **Mohammad al-Hindi**, member of the PIJ’s political bureau, whose name appears in the **American statement**, said that he had expected such decision. According to him, **the decision reflects the extent of the American administration’s dependence on Israel and the “Zionist lobby.” He said that the decision would not affect the continuation of “resistance” against Israel.** He added that the decision was worthless, especially since “the resistance” and its senior figures are wanted, whether they are included on American lists or not (PalToday, September 12, 2019).

► **Yusuf al-Hassainah**, member of the PIJ’s political bureau, said that the American decision was a continuation of the US demonization of the “Palestinian resistance” (i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations). He called on the peoples of the region and for free men around the world to stand up against the “aggressive American policy.” He pointed out that the “Palestinian and Lebanese resistance,” which the United States is trying to smear as a terrorist organization, is a legitimate resistance which does not expect “indulgence”<sup>6</sup> from anyone. Such accusations, he said, would not discourage the “resistance” but enhance its

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<sup>6</sup> In the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, an **indulgence** (Latin: *indulgentia*) is a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins (the English Wikipedia).



adherence to its positions until “the occupation [of Palestine] is defeated and the rights are restored” (PalToday, September 13, 2019).

## Responses on social media



Post published on social media as part of a campaign launched on September 12, 2019, under the hashtag “#All of us are behind the commander Abu Salim” to support the senior Al-Quds Brigades commander whose name was included in the American statement (Facebook page of Hamza Arkan, September 12, 2019).



Another post published on social media as part of the “#All of us are behind the commander Abu Salim” campaign. The post shows Baha Abu al-Ata (left) and Mohammad al-Hindi (right), whose names were included in the American sanctions, with a text that reads, “Your accusation of us in terrorism is an honor for us” (Mask al-Khitam Facebook page, September 12, 2019)

## The Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March

►The Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March held (September 13, 2019) a press conference in which it condemned the inclusion of Mohammad al-Hindi, Baha Abu al-Ata and Marwan Eissa in the US sanctions. The Supreme National Authority stressed that it held the US administration responsible for the consequences of its decision (PalToday YouTube channel, September 13, 2019).





**The Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March officially condemning the inclusion of Mohammad al-Hindi, Baha Abu al-Ata and Marwan Eissa in the American sanctions (PalToday YouTube channel, September 13, 2019)**

## Appendix B

### Hamas's operational and financial activity carried out from Turkey

#### Overview

**Turkey allows overt political and media activity of Hamas from its territory**, based on its basic solidarity with Hamas (which originates from the common ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood). At the same time, Turkey **turns a blind eye to Hamas's covert operational and financial activity being carried out from its territory** (which has recently been demonstrated in the American sanctions) **and regularly denies its existence**. Back in 2014, it was reported that following a visit to Turkey by Khaled Mash'al, then head of Hamas's political bureau, the United States asked high-ranking Turkish figures to stop Hamas's activity in Turkey. **The Turkish authorities reportedly refused, on the pretext that they did not consider Hamas a terrorist organization** (Middle East Monitor, December 31, 2014).

► Hamas's operational need to use the territory of Arab/Muslim countries as local headquarters for handling terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria arose after the removal of Hamas's headquarters from Damascus following the civil war in Syria. This need increased after Operation Protective Edge, in view of Hamas's efforts to encourage terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria, which continue to this very day. **One of the prominent countries from which Hamas is operating is Turkey**. Up to a year ago, Hamas's senior leader **Saleh al-Arouri, who in the meantime moved to Lebanon**, was residing in Turkey. Other Hamas operatives are also based in Turkey. **They were "reinforced" upon the arrival of new operatives released by Israel in the Shalit prisoner exchange**.

► **Saleh al-Arouri**, born in the village of Al-Aroura in the Ramallah area, **was one of the founders of Hamas's military wing in Judea and Samaria in the 1990s**. He served several prison terms in Israeli jails, was released after 18 years and was deported from Israel. He moved to Syria, was elected member of the Hamas's political bureau, and moved to Turkey after the Hamas leadership was expelled from Damascus. In 2015, he was designated as a terrorist by the United States **but Turkish authorities still continued to turn a blind eye to his military activity**. In November 2018, the US Department of State offered a reward of up to \$5 million to anyone who would bring information that would lead to his arrest. **However, the latest American designations clearly demonstrate that Turkey continues to be used**

as a hub for Hamas's operational and financial activity, even after the departure of Saleh al-Arouri.



Right: Reward offered by the US Department of State to anyone who brings information on Saleh al-Arouri (US Department of State website, November 14, 2018). Left: Saleh Mohammad Suleiman al-Arouri (<http://www.imemc.org>, June 20, 2014)

## Zaher Ali Moussa Jabarin's activity in Turkey

**Zaher Jabarin, based in Turkey, is the head of Hamas's Finance Office and manages Hamas's yearly budget.** His activity in raising and transferring funds was extensively described in the latest report of the US Department of the Treasury. Jabarin is a member of Hamas's political bureau and is involved in its political activity. In the ITIC's assessment, after the departure of Saleh al-Arouri, **Jabarin became Hamas's most prominent figure in Turkey**, combining engagement in terror funds with political and operational activities (Zaher Jabarin's "fingerprint" was exposed in a case of recruiting terrorist operatives in Judea and Samaria, see below).



Zaher Jabarin being interviewed to Hamas's Al-Quds Channel (YouTube, August 29, 2019)

► **Zaher Ali Moussa Jabarin, AKA Abu Islam**, was born in 1968 in Salfit, in the Nablus area. He studied at the Faculty of Islamic Religious Law at An-Najah University in Nablus. He was one of the senior figures and founders of Hamas’s military wing in Judea and Samaria. He recruited operatives for Hamas’s ranks and directed Hamas’s terrorist squads. During the first intifada, he was wounded in confrontation with the IDF forces and was imprisoned by Israel for ten months.

► **Jabarin was in charge of a Hamas squad which abducted and murdered Israeli Border policeman Nissim Toledano in 1992.** He recruited and trained former Hamas senior operative (“the Engineer”) Yahya Ayyash. **In 1993, he was detained by Israel due to his involvement in terrorism, sentenced to life imprisonment, and was released as part of the Shalit prisoner exchange deal.**

► In an interview with Hamas’s Al-Quds Channel, which seems to have been made a short while after his release from Israeli prison, Jabarin talked about his military record in Hamas and his involvement in terrorist attacks. **He mentioned his relations with Saleh al-Arouri, which started back in the 1990s when Arouri used to bring to him Hamas operatives wanted by Israel so he would hide them** (YouTube, August 29, 2019).

► In addition to his operational and financial activity in Turkey, Jabarin also serves as **member of Hamas’s political bureau.** In February 2018, he arrived in Cairo along with other members of Hamas’s political bureau to meet with representatives of the Egyptian General Intelligence (Hamas website, February 22, 2018). However, **his name is not mentioned as member of Hamas’s political bureau on Hamas’s official website** (in the ITIC’s assessment, in order not to embarrass the Turks). In the photo of the Hamas leadership in Cairo, Jabarin is standing near Saleh al-Arouri, deputy director of Hamas’s political bureau and Hamas’s former prominent figure in Turkey (possibly an indication of being close to him).



**Zaher Jabarin, member of Hamas’s political bureau, standing (first on the left) near Saleh al-Arouri in a photo of Hamas’s leadership in Cairo (Hamas’s website, February 22, 2018)**

## Several examples of terrorist networks being handled from Turkey, exposed by Israeli Security Agency (ISA)

► **In May-August 2014**, Israeli security forces uncovered an extensive Hamas's military network which operated in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria. The network, which received instructions from Hamas's headquarters in Turkey, **intended to carry out a coup in the Palestinian Authority and take control over Judea and Samaria**. It planned to do so by **disrupting the security stability and perpetrating a series of deadly terrorist attacks in Israel**. When the network was uncovered, Hamas funds in the sum of over NIS 600,000 were seized. The network was headed by an operative named Riad Nasser (from the Ramallah area), who was recruited by Saleh al-Arouri, who was based in Turkey at that time (ISA, August 18, 2018).

► **In September 2014**, the ISA uncovered an extensive Hamas military network which operated in Judea and Samaria. Its operatives had planted IEDs in Samaria. **They were handled by Hamas's headquarters in Turkey**. Hamas's military operatives who were trained abroad (in various countries, including Turkey) participated in this activity. At the end of the training, the operatives were integrated into the various types of activity **as decided by Hamas's senior operatives in Turkey (who also decided what their operational missions would be)**. One of the networks, which was directed by Saleh al-Arouri, **brought over NIS 1 million to Judea and Samaria and purchased weapons for carrying out terrorist attacks** (ISA, November 26, 2014).

► **In August 2016**, an indictment was filed against Sayf al-Din Abd al-Nabi, 39, from Jerusalem. According to the indictment, Abd al-Nabi had been acquainted for years with Zakariya Najib, a Hamas operative who was formerly sentenced to imprisonment and was released. **The two met in Turkey during a business trip**. Zakariya Najib asked Abd al-Nabi to transfer funds to Israel. The funds were intended for families of shahids and for operatives incarcerated in Israeli prisons. The two met several times during Abd al-Nabi's business trips to Turkey. Abd al-Nabi received **sums totaling \$25,000** from Najib, **which he then smuggled to Israel** (from an indictment filed with the Jerusalem District Court, September 7, 2016).

► **In February 2017**, the ISA detained in the Qalqilya areas a Hamas operative who was a resident of Turkish Cyprus. In 2015, he was recruited to the Hamas's ranks and in January 2017, he met with Hamas operatives in Istanbul. He was instructed to return to Judea and Samaria and recruit operatives. His interrogation demonstrated the operation of the Hamas

headquarters abroad, including on Turkish soil, under the direction of head of the West Bank Office Saleh al-Arouri (ISA, April 4, 2019).

► **In February 2018**, the Israeli security forces detained **two people suspected of recruitment for activity in the ranks of Hamas from Turkish territory**. Their interrogation revealed that **the two men had been recruited in Turkey by Zaher Jabarin, who was responsible for Hamas's budget, under the instruction of Saleh al-Arouri**. The interrogation of one of the detainees revealed that **Turkey was contributing to Hamas's military buildup, inter alia, by SADAT, a company established on the order of Adnan Pasha, an advisor closely affiliated with the Turkish administration**. It was revealed in the interrogation that **Hamas was in direct contact with the Turkish authorities** through Jihad Yagmour, an operative who was involved in the abduction of IDF soldier Nachshon Wachsman and was released as part of the Shalit prisoner exchange deal. The interrogation revealed that **Hamas was engaged in extensive laundering activity in Turkey on the order of Zaher Jabarin, with Turkish authorities turning a blind eye to the source of the funds**. The interrogation further revealed that **Hamas operatives owned a company named IMES, used to disguise money laundering activity in the scope of millions of US dollars, which were transferred to the Gaza Strip and various countries** (ISA website, February 14, 2018).

► **In April 2018, the ISA thwarted terrorist attacks in Israel** supposed to take place under the instruction of Hamas operatives from the Gaza Strip. **Two of the squad operatives met in 2017 with Hamas members in Turkey, where one of the Gaza Strip operatives received thousands of dollars**. Another Hamas operative from the Gaza Strip received hundreds of thousands of euros from his handlers in Turkey for Hamas's military-terrorist network and hid the money in Judea and Samaria (Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies, policy paper by Omer Dostri, "Hamas activities in Turkey against Israel," August 3, 2018).