



**New Hamas Fundraising Campaign:
Hamas' military wing began a new fundraising campaign
about a month after the United States thwarted digital
coin campaigns of Hamas, al-Qaeda and ISIS**

September 24, 2020

Overview

On September 13, 2020, al-Jazeera TV broadcast an investigative report in its program "**More Than Meets the Eye.**" The program dealt with the military buildup of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, and its improved fighting capabilities. After the broadcast, and in the wake of the normalization of Israel's relations with the UAE and Bahrain, **a campaign was launched on the social networks (in Arabic) called "#support_the_resistance."** Hamas' military wing exploited the hashtag and **used it for its own call to solicit donations to fund@alqassam.ps** (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, September 17, 2020).



The military wing call for donations. Pictures from program broadcast by al-Jazeera. The caption in Arabic reads, "Support the resistance" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, September 18, 2020).

► Hamas' military wing used the campaign to issue a global call for donations, including the use of **digital currency** (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, September 17, 2020). Hamas also gave religious legitimacy to the donations with a video on its website featuring a Muslim cleric talking about **the importance of financial support for jihad**. He stressed that it was allowed to support the military wing with virtual currency such as bitcoin or through bank transfers, even if it meant dealing with banks that charge interest (which is forbidden in Islam).

► **The campaign was launched with a new Internet address about a month after the American Justice Department announced it had thwarted the funding of terrorist organizations with digital currency** (August 13, 2020). The American announcement called its action the "largest-ever seizure of terrorist organizations' cryptocurrency accounts" (See **Appendix B**). As part of thwarting the funding, money was seized and the website of Hamas' military wing was blocked. **However, America's success did not prevent Hamas' military wing from launching a new campaign to solicit funds a month later with a new website.**

Hamas Military Wing's News Fundraising Campaign

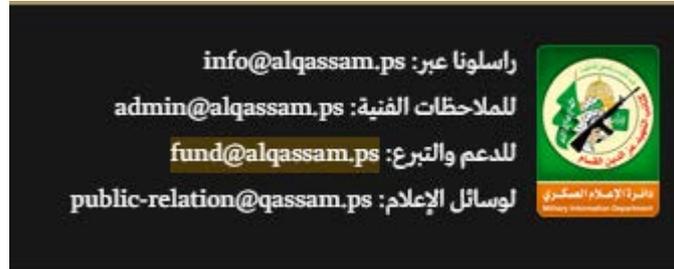
► On September 13, 2020, al-Jazeera TV broadcast a program of its investigative series, "More Than Meets the Eye," about the military buildup of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, and its improved fighting capabilities. After the broadcast, and after the Israel-Bahrain normalization agreement was signed, Abdallah al-Sharif, an Egyptian YouTuber who opposes the Egyptian regime and has hundreds of thousands of social network followers, issued a video based on the TV show.

► **The airing of video led to the launching of a campaign with the hashtag (in Arabic) "#support_the_resistance."** Within hours **more than half a million people used the hashtag to condemn the normalization of relations** and support the Palestinians and the "resistance," and to ask for donations to the "resistance's" military wing (Palinfo, al-Alam TV, September 18, 2020).



An example of the tweets. The Arabic reads, "#support_the_resistance with your money, and if you can't then with your voice, and if you can't, then with your heart, because the lowest of the low conspired against [the resistance] and against the purest [Palestinian] cause defended by [the resistance]" (Twitter account of Mohammed El Talmas, who represents himself as a journalist on the Safa website, September 17, 2020).

► **Hamas' military wing exploited the campaign's hashtag for its own call for donations from the public at large.** A number of users responded to the call and reposted the email address for support and contributions issued on the military wing's website, fund@alqassam.ps. For example,



A user who posted the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' address for sending contributions.



Diana Esmail quoted the Qur'an, Verse 41, Surah 9 (Repentance) "Mobilize, light or heavy, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the cause of God. That is better for you, if you only knew." She then wrote, "#support_the_resistance by contacting fund@alqassam.ps and #al-Qassam_Brigades" (Twitter account of Diana1Diana7744, September 18, 2020).



Mutasem Khalel tweeted the same text several times, writing, "It is enough that we are proud that we did not stand idly by, #support_the_resistance, fund@alqassam.ps" (Twitter account of Mutasem Khalel, September 17, 2020).

► In addition to the campaign, Hamas' military wing issued a video of **Sheikh Muhammad al-Hasan ibn al-Dedew al-Shanqiti**,¹ a Muslim cleric from Mauritania who is a member of the board of trustees of the Union of Muslim of Scholars. In the video he talked about the importance of financial support for jihad. He said the Islamic resistance in Palestine, or more exactly, in the Gaza Strip, **needed money to develop its weapons**. He stressed that it was permissible to use digital currencies like bitcoin or bank transfers, even banks that charge interest (which is forbidden in Islam) (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, September 18, 2020).



Muhammad al-Hasan ibn al-Dedew al-Shanqiti, from the video (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, September 18, 2020).

¹ Sheikh Muhammad al-Hasan ibn al-Dedew al-Shanqiti has expressed positions in support of Hamas and the "resistance." He visited the Gaza Strip in December 2012 as part of an aid convoy from Mauritania and spoke at Hamas' main rally marking the anniversary of the organization's establishment. <https://dedewnet.com/index.php/news/812-08122012.html>

Appendix A

Previous Hamas military wing fundraising campaigns

This is not the first time Hamas' military wing has called on the general public to contribute to its military buildup. Since early 2019 there have been a number of such campaigns, most likely held to overcome Hamas' financial hardship. The military wing has increased its requests for **bitcoin donations**. Using bitcoin makes it possible to exploit the Internet for encrypted, anonymous financial transactions without necessitating the services of an intermediary like a bank.

- ▶ The use of virtual currency for donations to Hamas was first identified on **January 29, 2019**. Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military wing, used his Telegram account to call on supporters of the "resistance" and the Palestinian cause to donate bitcoins to Hamas.² **In February 2019** Hamas' military wing used its website to appeal to the general public to donate bitcoins. A number of days later the site issued the address of the virtual wallet for depositing the funds. An examination of the address of the virtual wallet indicated it had been opened on **January 31, 2019** and bitcoin transactions had been registered.³
- ▶ **At the beginning of June 2019** another call was made by Hamas' military wing for bitcoin donations, which were meant to support the jihad Hamas was waging against Israel ("the enemy of the Arab-Muslim nation"). A spokesman for the military wing said they would send hundreds of millions of SMSs in eight languages to the smartphones of millions of Arabs and Muslims to accelerate donations. The announcement had links to donation sites in several languages.⁴
- ▶ **In December 2019 and January 2020** Hamas' military wing issued another call for bitcoin donations through a link on its website to <http://fund.alqassam.net/mid> (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, December 5, 14 and 26, 2019; January 12, 2020).
- ▶ **In May 2020**, during the Muslim religious month of Ramadan, the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades asked for financial support through the fund.alqassam.net/mid address. Anyone

² The Arab media reported that it was the first time Hamas' military wing asked for bitcoin donations (aljazeera.net, January 30, 2019).

³ For further information, see the February 3, 2020 bulletin, "Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees called on their supporters to donate money using the virtual currency bitcoin."

⁴ For further information, see the June 6, 2020 bulletin, "Hamas once again calls on its supporters to donate to its military wing in bitcoin."

with questions could contact fund@alqassam.ps (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram account, May 10, 2020).

► The <http://fund.alqassam.net/mid> link is prominently located on the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' homepage under the latest news. The link leads to donation pages in Arabic, English, Turkish, French, Malaysian, Indonesian and Russian. Each page has a video to explain to potential donors how to donate bitcoin.



The link to the donation pages (the B in the center of the bottom of the page)

► According to the caption under the explanatory video, because al-Aqsa mosque is an integral part of the [Muslim] faith and a verse in the book of Allah and because Palestine is the direction to which free men turn to pray, the flow of the spirit of their hearts, the just issue of [the Muslim] nation and the focus of the attention of free men around the globe – it is the duty of every free, zealous person to participate in jihad and support the oppressed. Now they can transfer their financial support directly to the resistance by depositing bitcoin in the virtual wallet which will appear after validation.



The caption under the explanatory video



كيف تدعم المقاومة
بعملة البيتكوين

0:00 / 2:19

"The Israeli occupation is fighting the resistance by trying hard to block any support for it, but the resistance's friends around the world are fighting back against such Israeli attempts and seeking all possible ways to support the resistance.

Your generous donation, no matter how little it is, reflects your stand by Palestinian people

We call upon all friends of the Palestinians and supporters of our just cause to financially back the resistance via Bitcoin on the following wallet address".

validate

Please contact us via E-mail
fund@alqassam.ps



alqassam.ps

Donate for
Palestinian resistance
via Bitcoin

The requests for bitcoin in English

Appendix B

American activity to thwart donations to Hamas and other terrorist organizations

In view of the campaigns on the Hamas military wing website (and the campaigns of other terrorist organizations), on **August 13, 2020, the American justice department announced "the dismantling of three terrorist financing cyber-enabled campaigns, involving the al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, al-Qaeda, and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS)."**⁵ The announcement added it was **"the largest ever seizure of terrorist organizations' cryptocurrency accounts."**

- ▶ Regarding the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, the Treasury Department announcement said that **"In the beginning of 2019, the al-Qassam Brigades posted a call on its social media page for bitcoin donations** to fund its campaign of terror. The al-Qassam Brigades then moved this request to its official websites, alqassam.net, alqassam.ps, and qassam.ps.... The al-Qassam Brigades boasted that bitcoin donations were untraceable and would be used for violent causes. Their websites offered video instruction on how to anonymously make donations, in part by using unique bitcoin addresses generated for each individual donor."
- ▶ However, the announcement continued, "such donations were not anonymous. Working together, IRS (Internal Revenue Service), HSI (Homeland Security Investigations), and FBI agents tracked and **seized all 150 cryptocurrency accounts that laundered funds to and from the al-Qassam Brigades' accounts.**"
- ▶ "Simultaneously, law enforcement executed criminal search warrants relating to United States-based subjects who donated to the terrorist campaign. **With judicial authorization, law enforcement seized the infrastructure of the al-Qassam Brigades websites and subsequently covertly operated alqassam.net.** During that covert operation, the website received funds from persons seeking to provide material support to the terrorist organization, however, they instead donated the funds bitcoin wallets controlled by the United States...The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia also unsealed criminal charges for **two Turkish individuals, Mehmet Akti and Hüsamettin Karataş,** who

⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/global-disruption-three-terror-finance-cyber-enabled-campaigns>. ITIC emphases throughout.

acted as related money launderers while operating an unlicensed money transmitting business."

- The blocked fund.alqassam.net/mid page below shows the insignia of the United States law enforcement agencies. However, **the United States' successful activities did not prevent Hamas from launching a new campaign in the middle of September 2020 with a new address.**

