

MEMMO

Dec. 31, 2008

Hamas: A History of Terror

Hamas is an Iranian-backed terrorist organization founded in 1988 with the stated aim of destroying Israel. Hamas has carried out attacks that have killed more than 500 innocent civilians, including two dozen Americans. In June 2007, the terrorist group violently seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority and targeted Israelis with thousands of rockets and mortars. Funded and supported by Tehran in order to disrupt Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, Hamas will be a legitimate partner for negotiations only when it is ready to live in peace with Israel. As President-elect Barack Obama stated last June, “We must isolate Hamas unless and until they renounce terrorism, recognize Israel’s right to exist and abide by past agreements.”

Hamas is an Iranian-backed terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

- The Hamas charter, published in 1988, details the guiding principles of the group, is laced with anti-Semitism and racism, rejects peaceful efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and calls for the destruction of the State of Israel through *jihad*, or holy war. Hamas considers all of Israel to be occupied territory.
- The opening statement of the charter says, “Israel will rise and will remain erect until Islam eliminates it as it had eliminated its predecessors.” (Read more about Hamas’ charter of hate [here](#).)
- Despite Hamas’ involvement in Palestinian electoral politics—which some hoped would moderate its objectives—Hamas has retained its stated goal of destroying Israel. The Hamas political platform calls for continued attacks on Israel: “The Palestinian people [are] entitled to act to restore its rights and end the occupation through all means, including armed resistance.”
- Since 1989, Hamas, which has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, has carried out more than 100 major terrorist attacks, killing more than 500. Hamas attacks have killed more than two dozen U.S. citizens, including five American students, when a suicide bomber blew up a Hebrew University cafeteria in 2002.
- Since 2001, Hamas and other terrorists in Gaza have launched more than 10,000 rockets and mortars at Israel. Hamas continues to hold Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit captive after kidnapping him from within Israel nearly three years ago.



Hamas has carried out dozens of suicide bombings in Israel, targeting Israelis in cafes, malls and hotels.

- During the summer of 2007, Hamas seized full control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in a violent coup, killing scores of its political opponents.

Hamas continues to carry out rocket attacks while rejecting Israel's right to exist.

- In June, Israel tested whether Hamas would move toward peace by accepting Egypt's proposal for a six-month lull in fighting. Instead, Hamas significantly enhanced its arsenal, and ultimately resumed its rocket assaults.
- Throughout the lull Hamas repeatedly violated its terms, launching close to 400 rockets and mortars at Israel, doubling its rocket inventory, expanding the range of its rockets and strengthening its terrorist infrastructure, including a vast expansion of its tunnel system.
- In mid-December, Hamas announced it would not renew the lull and resumed rocket attacks on Israel. Hamas has since launched hundreds of rockets, including longer-range Grad-style Katyusha rockets, striking the city of Ashdod—home to 200,000 people and Israel's largest port—and Beersheba, a city of 185,000 almost 24 miles from Gaza.
- Hamas continues to threaten further attacks on Israel, including suicide bombings. Ayman Taha, a senior Hamas figure in Gaza, said on December 22, "It is our right as an occupied people to defend ourselves from the occupation by all means possible—including suicide attacks." Israel fully withdrew from Gaza in 2005.
- Hamas further continues to reject Israel's right to exist. Top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyah told a Hamas rally on December 21 that Hamas "has come to represent all ... who refuse to recognize the Zionist entity on the land of Palestine, and who reject U.S. domination." Haniyah added: "Hamas has restored the prominence of the resistance, jihad, and steadfastness programs."

Iran has increased its lethal assistance to Hamas, providing enhanced training and sophisticated weaponry.

- Iran has increased its lethal assistance to Hamas, providing advanced training to hundreds of Hamas terrorists at training camps in Iran and Syria. The training includes rocket making, sharp shooting, field combat instruction and advanced explosive education.
- Iran has helped Hamas develop advanced explosive charges made out of raw materials found in Gaza. These types of charges have been used for years by Hizballah and proven extremely deadly to U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Iran has helped Hamas increase the range and lethality of its rockets through importation of advance 122 mm Grad rockets and standard 120 mm mortar bombs made in Iran. Iran has also assisted Hamas in building more stable rockets that can be stored for long periods of time and that can carry larger, more destructive warheads.

- When it designated Iran’s state-owned Bank Saderat as a supporter of terrorism in November, the U.S. Treasury Department said the bank had transferred millions of dollars to Hamas.

- In May, Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei promised to increase aid to Hamas to \$150 million in the second half of 2008.



Hamas forces receive extensive training in Lebanon and Iran by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard.

- Iranian leaders have consistently voiced their support for Hamas and called for Israel’s destruction. In November, Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Iran will “never let you [Hamas] be alone.” In September, Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran will stand behind the Palestinian nation “until the big victory feast which is the collapse of the Zionist regime.”

Hamas must meet the international community’s criteria to become a legitimate partner.

- The international Quartet—the United States, the EU, Russia and the U.N.—clearly defined in 2006 the requirements Hamas must meet to be accepted as a legitimate partner: renounce violence, recognize Israel’s right to exist and accept previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.
- The United States has consistently declared Hamas a terrorist organization and rejected any attempts to engage Hamas prior to its renunciation of violence and acceptance of Israel. President Clinton first designated Hamas a terrorist organization in 1995, a policy President Bush has fully supported and strengthened.
- President-elect Obama has said Hamas must be isolated until it changes its negative behavior. “We must isolate Hamas unless and until they renounce terrorism, recognize Israel’s right to exist and abide by past agreements,” Obama said in June 2008.” There is no room at the negotiating table for terrorist organizations.”