

MEMMO

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Hamas' History of Terror

When Israel intercepted the recent flotilla headed toward Gaza, many of its passengers openly expressed support for Hamas, the Iranian-backed terrorist group ruling Gaza that explicitly seeks Israel's destruction and is blocking international organizations from visiting an Israeli soldier it has held captive for four years. Designated by the United States as a terrorist organization in 1997, Hamas has killed more than 500 innocent civilians, including two dozen Americans. Hamas can be a legitimate partner for negotiations only when it meets three conditions articulated by the international community: it must accept Israel's right to exist, reject violence, and endorse previous Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.

Hamas is building up its stockpile of weapons and strengthening its military capabilities in Gaza.

- Hamas continues to operate a vast network of tunnels under Gaza, which it uses to smuggle weapons from Iran and Syria for attacks against Israeli civilians. It also has repeatedly sought to smuggle weapons through the sea.
- Israel's Shin Bet internal security chief Yuval Diskin on June 16 told a Knesset committee that Hamas and other terrorist groups have 5,000 rockets and now have the capability of striking deep inside Israel. Israeli officials have said Hamas can now hit Tel Aviv.
- Hamas has hit Israel with more than 7,000 rockets and mortars since Israel withdrew all its soldiers and civilians from Gaza in 2005.
- Hamas has increased the range and lethality of its rockets through the importation of advanced 122mm Grad rockets and 120mm 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.
- Hamas continues to threaten further attacks on Israel. "Hamas will keep rejecting the occupation and refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the Zionist entity. Priority will remain building and developing the resistance," Damascus-based Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said earlier this year.
- Meshaal also declared yesterday that his group is seeking to kidnap more Israeli soldiers. Hamas continues to hold captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was kidnapped from inside Israel four years ago last week. The terrorist group has refused frequent requests from the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit him.
- Another senior Hamas leader, Mahmoud al-Zahar, said on June 20, "The solution is resistance!" He also asserted that Palestinians should fire rockets from the West Bank, as well as from Gaza.



Hamas openly calls for suicide bombings, rocket attacks, and other forms of violence against Israel.

Hamas has a long history of extremely violent terrorist behavior.

- The Hamas charter, published in 1988, details the guiding principles of the group. The charter 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 *jihād*, or holy war. Hamas considers all of Israel to be occupied territory.
- Hamas continues to reject Israel's right to exist. Meshaal said in May 2010 that calls to change the group's charter are an "unjust request."
- 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 people. 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.
- During the summer of 2007, Hamas seized full control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority in a violent coup, killing and maiming scores of its political opponents.

Hamas controls Gaza through force, fear and the imposition of strict Islamic law.

- Hamas has abolished various freedoms that Gazans in general and women in particular previously enjoyed. The numerous new restrictions include strict mandates on dress. Modesty squads patrol Gaza to ensure that women wear loose-fitting clothes that reveal only their hands and faces. Similarly, men and women may not dance or hold hands in public.
- Hamas has stolen goods meant for the U.N. and other nongovernmental organizations. In June 2010, in the immediate aftermath of the Gaza flotilla incident, Hamas raided the offices of several NGOs and confiscated equipment, prompting strong condemnations from human rights groups.
- During Israel's Operation Cast Lead—aimed at stopping rocket fire into Israel—Hamas used Palestinian civilians as human shields and mosques as ammunition dumps.
- Hamas uses propaganda aimed at youth to advocate violence against Israel. The U.S. Treasury Department in March 2010 froze the assets of Hamas' Al-Aqsa Television. Treasury said the network indoctrinated children to hate Israel and to carry out suicide attacks. France's broadcast authority recently told a French satellite company to stop carrying the channel.

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 acceptance of the three criteria. President Clinton first designated Hamas a terrorist organization in 1997, and this policy has been fully supported and strengthened by subsequent U.S. administrations.
- The Obama administration has continuously reinforced this principle. Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs P.J. Crowley said on June 7 that U.S. policy on Hamas remains firm: "Hamas has to make a fundamental judgment. There are red lines that the quartet has laid down about renouncing violence, recognizing Israel, and agreeing to existing arrangements. ... There's no change in U.S. position."