

Hamas Terrorist Organization

[Hamas](#) is the Arabic acronym for "The Islamic Resistance Movement" (*Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyya*). It grew out of the ideology and practice of the [Islamic](#) fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood movement, was legally registered in [Israel](#) in 1978 by [Sheikh Ahmed Yassin](#), the movement's spiritual leader, and has since wreaked terror upon the State of Israel in its quest to annihilate the Jewish State. Since 2007, Hamas has controlled the [Gaza Strip](#).

The goal of [Hamas](#) is clear. As stated in the organization's [covenant](#), the Islamic Resistance Movement "strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine." Its [platform](#) states that "there is no solution for the Palestinian question except through [jihad](#) (holy war)." The group warns that any Muslim who leaves "the circle of struggle with [Zionism](#)" is guilty of "high treason." No negotiations or compromises are possible.

[Israel](#) has long feared that if [Hamas](#) was not destroyed, it would establish a terrorist base on its doorstep and since 2007, that fear has been actualized after Hamas violently took control of Gaza and continued in earnest to rain rockets down on Israeli civilian areas in the southern part of the country.

Israel has been widely condemned and criticized for its blockade of the Gaza Strip, setup to disrupt the flow of illegal arms to Hamas, and its multiple incursions into Gaza in order to destroy Hamas terror networks and protect Israeli citizens. These critics of Israel say that Hamas was elected "democratically" by the Palestinians and therefore Israel does not have a legal right to continue to occupy the area or blockade their borders. In an ideal world Israel would not have to blockade Gaza, but the situation is far from ideal. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted, "Palestinians need to understand that the exercise of self-government carries consequences."

Since their election, [Hamas](#) leaders have [reaffirmed](#) their commitment to liberating all of Palestine and said they have no intention of disarming. The Palestinian institutions that had been bound by [agreements](#) to stop the violence, confiscate illegal weapons, end smuggling and cease incitement are now controlled by the very people most responsible for terror, gun running, and the use of the media and schools to demonize Israel and Jews.

Israel has vowed to fight against the threat posed by [Hamas](#) but it has also holds open the possibility of negotiating peace with leaders of the [Palestinian Authority](#), provided they step up to the plate and start dismantling the terrorist infrastructure, accepting all previously contracted agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, and repudiating those parts of the Hamas covenant denying Israel's right to exist.

Apologists for [Palestinian terror](#) sometimes argue that [Hamas](#) shouldn't be labeled a terrorist organization because only some members engage in murder while others perform charitable or political activity. A false distinction is made between the "political" and "military" wings of [Hamas](#). All of the activities of [Hamas](#) are intertwined, and serve the organization's primary objective laid out in its [covenant](#). Hamas's former leader, [Sheikh Ahmad Yassin](#), denied that [Hamas](#) had uncoordinated wings: "We cannot separate the wing from the body. If we do so, the body will not be able to fly. [Hamas](#) is one body." And the "political" leaders of [Hamas](#) freely admit their relationship to the murderers. "The political leadership," former [Hamas](#) spokesman, '[Abd](#)

[al-‘Aziz ar-Rantisi](#) once said, “has freed the hand of the [‘Izz ad-Din al-Qassam] brigades to do whatever they want against the brothers of monkeys and pigs [i.e., Jews].”

While [Hamas](#) does engage in social work, this is closely connected to the “armed struggle.” Various charitable activities are used to recruit young Palestinians for terrorist operations. Hospitals, mosques, sport clubs, libraries, and schools serve not only their expected roles, but also act as covers for hiding weapons, obtaining supplies, and indoctrinating future suicide bombers. In May 2009, the Palestinian Health Ministry reported that Hamas raided 46 ambulances, that had been sent as humanitarian aid from neighboring Arab states, of the medical equipment they contained and then used them as military vehicles to arrest citizens.

The education system is used to incite young Palestinians to become martyrs. “The children of the kindergarten are the *shaheeds* [martyrs] of tomorrow,” read signs in a [Hamas](#)-run school, while placards in classrooms at al-Najah University in the [West Bank](#) and at [Gaza’s](#) Islamic University declare that “Israel has nuclear bombs; we have human bombs.” In August 2008, Hamas replaced hundreds of striking members of the local teachers' union with Hamas loyalists, purging the Gaza public school system of its political rivals.

[Hamas](#) operatives use Islamic charities and social welfare programs to skim and launder funds, and to earn money to live on while they engage in terrorism. Recipients of [Hamas](#) charity also understand there is a quid pro quo. If they are asked to provide assistance, whether it be to hide weapons, provide a safe house for a fugitive, or act as a courier, few are likely to refuse.

The United States government recognizes the connection between the charitable activities of [Hamas](#) and its terrorist campaign, which is why the Treasury Department [designated](#) six senior Hamas political leaders and five charities as terrorist entities. According to Treasury, “the political leadership of Hamas directs its terrorist networks just as they oversee their other activities.”