

## Hamas Charter

### The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement ( Hamas)

18 August 1988

In 1987, the Arabs living in the territories occupied by Israeli in the 6-Day war began a series of riots and violent confrontations now known as the First Intifada, a movement quite independent from PLO leadership. Soon after, Islamic militants founded the Hamas movement.

The Hamas was formed from the Mujama movement, which had been a political party with no military ambitions that was given some encouragement by Israel earlier in the decade, as a means of countering the influence of the PLO, and perhaps because the opposition of the Mujama to an international conference that would adjudicate the problem of Palestine, coincided with the policies of the Begin and Shamir governments.

#### Hamas name

Hamas is an acronym of *Harakat al Mawqawama al Islamiyya* meaning "Islamic Resistance Movement." The word Hamas also means "zeal." The H in Hamas is an Arabic 'Het and it is sounded as a pharyngeal fricative, a sound made deep in the throat like the 'Het in "Shalom 'Haver" made famous by President Bill Clinton. The "a"s in Hamas are pronounced approximately like the "a" in "cat." In Hebrew, the a's are pronounced as "ah."

#### Hamas capsule history

The Hamas has a 'military' wing, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, that engages in terrorist acts and a 'civilian' wing that supposedly confines itself to education and 'good works.' Hamas perpetrated numerous suicide bombings and other terrorist attacks, at first in order to sabotage the Oslo Accords and peace process, and then as part of the Second Intifada. Israel successively assassinated its leaders, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Sheikh Ahmed Rantissi, forcing the leadership underground. However, in January of 2006, candidates representing the Hamas swept to victory in Palestinian elections, overcoming the traditional leadership of the Fateh and PLO. In June of 2006, Hamas affiliates captured an Israeli soldier by tunneling across the border between Gaza and Israel. In February of 2007, Hamas, Fateh and other factions entered a unity government in a deal brokered by Saudi Arabia and Egypt. However, in practice, Hamas ruled Gaza on its own. It formed the Executive Force over the protests of the Fatah and Palestinian Authority. The Executive force was a combination internal police force, political force to be used against Hamas opponents and terrorist group. In June of 2007, Hamas ousted Fatah forces from Gaza in a bloody coup, throwing Fatah members off the roofs of buildings after shooting them in the knees. At least one Fatah member was sliced into steaks that were sent to his family. Since Gaza had been totally evacuated by Israel in the unilateral disengagement of 2005, Hamas currently (2009) rules Gaza as a *de facto* state government. It has used Gaza as a base for launching rocket attacks against Israel. On June 19, 2008, Israel and Hamas concluded a "lull" or Tahdiya agreement that was brokered by Egypt. Hamas, but not Israel, declared that this truce was for a period of six months. Rocket fire from Gaza was reduced but not stopped. Hamas greatly stepped up smuggling of arms through tunnels beneath the Egyptian controlled Rafah crossing. Hamas dismissed the international monitors that were to have controlled the Rafah crossing, and then declared that Gaza is "under siege." Israel retaliated for rocket fire by closing the Israeli crossings periodically. On December 18, 2008, Hamas declared that they would not renew the truce. Thereafter, Hamas and associated organizations directed a rain of rocket and mortar fire at Israeli towns and cities, reaching as far as 45 KM away with Grad rockets that had been smuggled in during the lull period. On December 26, 2008, Israel launched operation Cast Lead, attacking the Hamas in Gaza at first by air and later in a limited ground invasion.

#### Hamas Principles

The principles of the Hamas are stated in their Covenant or Charter, given in full below. Following are highlights.

"Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." (The Martyr, Imam Hassan al-Banna, of blessed memory).

"The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Muslim generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered: it, or any part of it, should not be given up. "

"There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors."

"After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying."

The charter is a rather classical Islamist document, applied to the local issues. It declares that Jihad (in the sense of armed battle) is the only solution. It cites the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a ludicrous anti-Semitic forgery.

The "Zionists" and the freemasons and others are blamed for what Hamas and radical Islamists see as the major calamities of the world, especially the French Revolution.

One of the most ominous aspects of the Charter however, is this Hadith:

Moreover, if the links have been distant from each other and if obstacles, placed by those who are the lackeys of Zionism in the way of the fighters obstructed the continuation of the struggle, the Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to the realisation of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take. The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said:

"The Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Muslims, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews." (related by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The implication is clear: Allah promised that the Jews will be murdered, and the Hamas "aspires to the realisation of Allah's promise, no matter how long that should take."

### **Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood**

Some observers deny the relation between the Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the Charter states:

The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. Muslim Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times. It is characterised by its deep understanding, accurate comprehension and its complete embrace of all Islamic concepts of all aspects of life, culture, creed, politics, economics, education, society, justice and judgement, the spreading of Islam, education, art, information, science of the occult and conversion to Islam.

Moreover, the Charter quotes Hassan Al-Banna, a Nazi sympathizer who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. There is no doubt that the Hamas views itself as a part of the Muslim Brotherhood and an ideological heir of al Banna. The Muslim Brotherhood spawned a number of radical Islamist movements including Al-Qaeda.

### **Current Hamas Positions**

Some analysts insist that the Hamas is becoming more pragmatic in its ideology following assumption of a political role. The evidence for this is view is conflicting, and it is beclouded by the practice of dissemblance that was copied from Al-Banna and Sayyed Qutb. Recent statements by leaders include the following:

- Imam Yousif al-Zahar of Hamas said in his sermon at the *Katib Wilayat* mosque in Gaza that "Jews are a people who cannot be trusted. They have been traitors to all agreements. Go back to history. Their fate is their vanishing."
- Sheik Yunus al-Astal, a Hamas legislator and imam, in a column in the weekly newspaper *Al Risalah* in 2008 discussed a Koranic verse suggesting that "suffering by fire is the Jews' destiny in this world and the next." Astal concluded "Therefore we are sure that the Holocaust is still to come upon the Jews."

- "We will not rest until we destroy the Zionist entity" stated Hamas leader Fathi Hammad in Gaza on Friday January 2nd 2009 -
- In a sermon aired on Hamas' Al-Aqsa television, cleric Yunis Al Astal stated, "Today, Rome is the capital of the Catholics, or the Crusader capital, which has declared its hostility to Islam, and has planted the brothers of apes and pigs in Palestine in order to prevent the reawakening of Islam."

"I believe that our children, or our grandchildren, will inherit our jihad and our sacrifices, and, Allah willing, the commanders of the conquest will come from among them"

He maintained that Rome would become, "an advanced post for the Islamic conquests, which will spread through Europe in its entirety, and then will turn to the two Americas, even Eastern Europe."

Other statements are more moderate in tone, but Hamas has repeatedly refused international community demands to recognize the right of Israel to exist, abrogate its charter and abide by the previous commitments of the Palestinian Authority

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