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Islamist Versus Islamist: Rising Challenge in Gaza

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Islam's diversity is a direct result of centuries of schism and factionalism, and presents a challenge to the original spirit of unity as envisaged by its founder, the Prophet Mohammed. Rivalry within Islam undermines the precedent notion of unity through communal belonging (tawhid and ummah). Yet in the twenty-first century this diversity is ignored, and political Islam is represented as being more of a monolith than a spectrum of ideas and aspirations. Generally, the materialization of new Islamist groups is a challenge to those who hold that unity is all. In the Gaza Strip, specifically, the dominant Islamist actor, Hamas, is facing internal challenges from other Islamist elements. These rival Islamists are also influenced by events across their border in post-revolutionary Egypt where a plethora of new Islamist actors are vying for political space and power. This article deals with Hamas's Islamist rivals, and the effects they have had on Hamas's governance of the Gaza Strip, and political and religious legitimacy within it. It will focus on ideological and violent disputes between the Islamist elements in Gaza, and the means by which Hamas and its security elements have tackled newly emerging rivals.

Keywords al-Qaeda, Hamas, Islamist, Jihadi, Palestinian, Salafi

Introduction

*"It's good for Palestinians to be based on diversity. ... We believe in freedom of thought."*¹

Hamas's Islamist and Islamic competitors are accustomed to grabbing the headlines. Their violent attacks on Israel, and kidnapping and killing of Westerners² alerted global audiences to the new phenomenon of salafi and jihadi-salafi Islam in Gaza. The leaders of such groups publicly laud al-Qaeda and predict that they are opening a new bridgehead in the global jihad in this over-crowded territory, which is home to 1.6 million Palestinians, many of whom are aid-dependent. These Palestinians survive on international handouts because Israel and the West—with the assistance of Egypt, at least under the Mubarak regime—imposed a siege on Gaza after

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Hamas's election victory in January 2006. This effectively closed Israel's borders to Gaza in terms of a regular flow of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, although this has eased slightly in recent times.³ The leaders of the new radical groups live a shadowy life, hiding not only from Israel's counterterrorist units but from Hamas's own formidable security and intelligence forces within the Gaza Strip. "Many of us have been imprisoned by Hamas. Their oppressive measures are still ongoing," remarks one self-declared salafi jihad fighter.⁴

The presence of these groups, and their growing popularity, signifies a gulf between the position of "moderate"⁵ nationalist Islamism claimed by Hamas and the radicalism posed by the newly ascendant cohort of Islamists. Hamas's Islamist opponents are multi-faceted both in terms of ideology and operational reach and threat. They also undermine Hamas's claim and attempt to monopolise power and governance according to their own Islamist agenda. This article will outline the challenge that is presented to Hamas by the new Islamist elements in the Gaza Strip and the ways in which Hamas has responded to the threat.

Context of Hopelessness

In the West, Hamas is characterised as a radical, violent, and terrorist group incapable of transforming itself into a moderate political movement. However, Hamas's leaders repeatedly claim to be the "moderate" face of Islamism, far more palatable than the jihadi ideologues and their armed followers represented by salafi-jihadi insurgents in the Gaza Strip. "When compared to other religious parties," warned Hamas leader Jamal Abu Hashem in January 2007, "[we] are a moderate movement. ... I think U.S. policy should not allow Hamas to go to or in the way of more radical parties in the region."⁶ This distinction between "moderate" and radical Islamism is largely ignored in the West, although it preoccupies Islamists in the Middle East as they formulate localised responses to the Arab Spring and the decline of al-Qaeda.

The emergence of radical Islamists in the Gaza Strip is a localised response to the altered political dynamic of the region, and Islamist claims within it. Their presence reflects the extent to which these opposition elements better appeal to the besieged constituency that is prevalent in Gaza than Hamas, which is now the governing authority. They are a manifestation of the transformation that has taken place in Gaza since the Hamas electoral victory and its takeover and ousting of Fatah in June 2007, the Israeli assault of 2008–2009 codenamed Operation Cast Lead, the siege and the events of the Arab Spring, and Islamist renaissance of 2010–2011 led by the Muslim Brotherhood movement.⁷ This transformation has been one in which the Gaza Strip and constituencies of Islamism within it have been isolated from the West and have, in response, adopted a "Look East" policy which emphasises ideological anti-Westernism, radicalism, and jihadi discourses. The emergence of such groups takes place within a context of hopelessness, socio-economic crisis, and aid-dependency. Regionally, Gazans have watched in awe as their Arab brothers and sisters have toppled hitherto powerful state elites and begun to vote into power Islamist political parties and leaders. Critics who want to see greater democratisation in Gaza have begun to question whether their Hamas rulers are capable of democratic Islamist leadership and representation in terms of their aspirations for conflict resolution and self-determination. Meanwhile hardliners argue that the Hamas leadership has a duty to engage in jihad to overthrow Israel's

pernicious post-1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories, and say it has failed to perform that duty. The latter voices tend to come from Hamas's most vociferous and formidable Islamist critics, who have sought to challenge Hamas's credentials to rule in the name of Islam.

Upstarts

In the late 1970s, the Gaza Strip was the political preserve of Palestinian nationalists who were decidedly secular and leftist in orientation.⁸ Nascent Islamism had been firmly suppressed by Egypt in the late 1950s and mid-1960s when Muslim Brotherhood supporters in Gaza fell under the same repressive measures as their brethren in Cairo. President Gamal Abdel Nasser's forces threw them in jail, and effectively closed down their movements. When, years later, Islamic organisations were licensed by Israel as a foil to the then-dominant secularists of the PLO, they were largely considered a temporary nuisance with no real capacity to present a threat, and with little popular legitimacy.⁹ Dismissed as a "here today gone tomorrow" phenomenon, the Islamic organizations that were founded during this period nevertheless grew, and won popular support because they had a reputation for incorruptibility, and because they proved able at exploiting socio-economic discontent, nationalist aspirations, and other grievances and directing them first at the ruling Israeli authorities, and later at the Palestinian Authority, controlled by Hamas's secular rivals, the Fatah faction of the PLO.¹⁰ In many respects, the emergence of the salafi and jihadi trend in Gaza has been treated by Hamas with the same degree of dismissal as Fatah showed to Hamas a generation earlier. They have both sought to play up (as a foil to their moderate claims) and play down (in terms of security and challenges to their legitimacy) the contentions that al-Qaeda and the salafi jihadis are present, active, supported, and linked to regional terror networks.¹¹ Others also claim that since 2006 Gaza has been a place of opportunity for al-Qaeda and other jihadi-salafi groups. They contend that Palestine (and particularly the Gaza Strip) is a natural location for jihadi ideology and al-Qaeda's agenda.¹²

The Palestinian issue is central¹³ to jihadi ideologues, including Sayyid Qutb, Abduallah Azzam, and Usama Bin Laden.¹⁴ Palestine also figures in the pan-Islamic and transcendent call to jihad that has defined such ideologues, in their writings and in their strategic agendas. Al-Qaeda has attempted to re-define part of its *raison d'être* as a call to arms for the Palestinians, demanding that Israel's occupation be overthrown and that the territory it occupies be restored for perpetuity according to Islamic *waqf*.¹⁵ The slogan of the mujahidin of Afghanistan in the 1980s—that the road to Kabul led through Jerusalem—has been repackaged by al-Qaeda as a call to jihad in Palestine and Iraq, as a duty (*fard ayn*) on Muslims, and as a key component of its anti-Western rhetoric.¹⁶ Hence there is logic to taking the opportunity of physically locating an al-Qaeda presence in Palestine. The increased prominence of salafi-jihadi elements in Gaza that identify with al-Qaeda also raises concern among Israel and its allies about security at Israel's southern border.¹⁷ This combines with strategic and security pressures that make Israel vulnerable on its northern border from a Hizballah-Iranian axis. However, Hamas leaders and activists deny that they are regional allies of al-Qaeda and other salafi-jihadi elements in Iraq, Yemen, the Maghreb, and elsewhere. In fact, Hamas has struggled to put ideological distance between itself and al-Qaeda and other salafi-jihadi elements. In part this can be explained by the political tightrope it has to walk in terms of Islamist solidarity

and populist appeal on the one hand, and countering Israel's propaganda efforts to conflate Hamas and al-Qaeda in terms of existential terrorist threat on the other. Its populist appeal rests on a foundation of Islamism as a growing regional force capable of political transformation, of which Hamas is a part, or even a vanguard element of. But within the category of Islamism also lie terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, with its resort to suicide or martyrdom bombings. This makes it difficult for Hamas to truly establish ideological or tactical distance from al-Qaeda. As Reuters asserts, "however different their individual origins, programs, aims and politics are from each other, militant groups such as Hamas, Hizballah and al-Qaeda are united in their exploitation of suicide attacks to hit their enemies where they are most vulnerable."¹⁸

Jihadi Firebrands and the "Moderates" of Hamas

When Hamas won the Palestinian legislative assembly elections of 2006, there were fears in Israel and Western capitals that its control of the governance functions of the Palestinian Authority would lead to the establishment of greater Islamic power in the region, and an opportunity for al-Qaeda to locate itself in the area.¹⁹ In the wake of 9/11, the Hamas leadership tried to avoid being perceived as part of al-Qaeda's global jihad. Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, declared a day after the attacks, that Hamas was not part of al-Qaeda and had no intention of becoming part of the greater jihad of the salafi-jihadists: "We in Hamas: our battle is on the Palestinian land. We are not ready to move our battle out of the occupied Palestinian territories."²⁰ Sheikh Yassin, together with many other major Islamists leaders, also signed a declaration condemning the 9/11 attacks as "against all human and Islamic norms."²¹ Israel's political leaders, however, underscored the similarities between Hamas and al-Qaeda, as jihadi firebrands, with then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon informing U.S. leaders that Israel faced its own Bin Laden-like threat. Israel also warned against appeasing Islamists: "I call on the Western democracies, and primarily the leader of the free world, the United States: Do not repeat the dreadful mistake of 1938 when enlightened European democracies decided to sacrifice Czechoslovakia for a convenient temporary solution. Do not try to appease the Arabs at our expense. ... Israel will fight terrorism."²² For many in Israel it would only be a matter of time before al-Qaeda was manifest among the Palestinians.²³ Some U.S. politicians and policy-makers also equated Palestinian organizations with al-Qaeda, and they alleged Palestinian linkage to the 9/11 attacks through networks of terror as part of their own calls and policies of support for Israel.²⁴ Others pointed out other motives for the purported linkage: "From what I know Israel has been using the Usama Bin Laden analogy to draw U.S. support and they will probably do so more. But in reality I think the contacts are minimal," commented an Israeli expert on terrorism.²⁵ Few made distinctions between Hamas and al-Qaeda at a time when Hamas was defined by its infamous resort to martyrdom operations against Israeli targets. Ideological differences—such as the differences between Hamas and al-Qaeda about whether to combine politics with violence—were lost on most audiences.

Al-Qaeda and Hamas, however, have recognised the differences between themselves. Hamas, in particular, has ended up the target of al-Qaeda criticisms. Al Qaeda and salafi-jihadis have excoriated the Hamas leadership because of their political strategies and participation in politics, within the localised context of competition for control of the PA and sole leadership of the Palestinian issue. Here,

as Yassin's own words attest, the jihadi struggle is bounded by the localised and territorialized borders of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Hamas had never attacked outside the borders of Israel and the Palestinian territories.²⁶ Hamas, unlike al-Qaeda and the salafi-jihadis, does not advocate the overthrow of *jahilli* regimes. Instead, like their counterparts in the Muslim Brotherhood, they call for change and reform (Hamas's 2006 election slogan) within those societies, and resistance against Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. Hamas's earlier lexicon of jihad²⁷ has evolved and is today offered as resistance as part of a Palestinian national liberation movement. By contrast, al-Qaeda and the salafi-jihadis have adopted a very different approach to jihad, as global and transnational. The Hamas leadership has always promoted a gradualist approach—through policies of Islamization—to societal and political change which in turn allows for tactics and strategies such as *hudna* (ceasefire) and *tahdiya* (calming/lull) as well as participation in democratic processes such as elections. Al-Qaeda and the jihadi-salafis reject such approaches as capitulation to the erroneous policies and approaches of corrupted and *jahilli* (pre-pagan) regimes, which in al-Qaeda's view are condemned as *kufr* and apostate.

In more recent years, al-Qaeda's leaders have publicly denounced Hamas's approach to politics and governance and thus have begun the inexorable categorization of Hamas's governing regime in Gaza—and the wider Hamas movement—as anathema to them and the Islamist ideals that they represent. When Hamas announced in 2005 that it would participate in Palestinian municipal and legislative elections on the “Change and Reform” slate, al-Qaeda's Deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri attacked the decision and became a major critic of the movement. For such jihadis, Hamas's participation would do nothing to liberate “a grain of Palestinian land, but will choke the jihad,” and ultimately lead Hamas to failure in its commitment to usurp Israel through this Islamic duty.²⁸ In this respect, al-Qaeda contested Hamas's legitimacy in the realm of governance and jihad against Israel. When Hamas entered into a national unity government with Fatah in February 2007 (under the terms of the Mecca Agreement), it again drew the ire of al-Qaeda. But this time Hamas's position was explained by Sheikh Hamed Beitawi of the Palestine Scholars Association who said that the movement had not forfeited its principles. “We [all] retain the right to resist the occupation—this is a right enshrined in faith and law.”²⁹ The issue is whether the salafi-jihadi message championed by al-Qaeda has found appeal in the Gaza Strip amongst the very many hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who sit poor and dispossessed by Israel's occupation, and the apparent indifference or double standards of the Western world in terms of promoting a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This has been the real challenge between Hamas and al-Qaeda and its salafi-jihadi opponents in the Gaza Strip: whose Islamist message resonates more strongly? Has al-Qaeda's oratory to the Palestinian people about their issue translated into a growing appeal for the movement on the ground? Has the growing permeability of Gaza's borders since the imposition of Israel's siege (and the burgeoning of illegal tunnels from Egypt) and the ousting of Mubarak made Gaza a destination of choice for foreign jihadis who find a “welcome committee” of local like-minded activists? Or has Gaza remained immune from the transnational global jihadist discourse of the past decade? Have Hamas and its PLO rivals been sufficient in suppressing nascent jihadi-salafism in their midst to prevent such a phenomenon arising? Have the upstarts been defeated?

Meeting the Challenge in Gaza

It is claimed that Hamas, aided by Tehran on the one hand and a popular mandate on the other, had by June 2007 emerged as the single most well-armed and organised group in the Sunni milieu, including its power base the Gaza Strip. As Byman contends, Hamas emerged as a threat to Israel, the peace process, and the Palestinian Authority led by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and President Mahmoud Abbas.³⁰ Hamas had not only succeeded in defeating its enemies in Fatah at the ballot box, but through command of its rapidly expanding armed forces and accompanying security infrastructure.³¹ It presided over a large popular movement and had entered government to control the levers of power within the Palestinian Authority.³² Hamas's reputation for pragmatism and its strategic employment of violence contrasted with the maximalist and perceived limitless violence of al-Qaeda and the jihadi-salafi.

Jihadi-salafism allegedly arose amidst the chaos of internecine strife and bloodshed between Fatah and Hamas, and clans and families in Gaza 2006–2007. While the outcome of the strife was the advent of Hamas rule and the collapse of Fatah control over the Palestinian Authority, the events that preceded it created an environment of intense instability which minor factional elements, groups, families, or others could exploit. Among those engaged in these forms of exploitation were elements attracted to jihadi-salafist ideologies and messages. In part their voice became more prominent because al-Qaeda and other salafi-jihadis openly criticised Hamas not only for participating in the 2006 elections, but for its taking power in Gaza. The assumption of governing powers drew some of the fiercest complaints, because Hamas was perceived as failing to implement a strictly enforced government based on Shari'a. While Israel and its supporters lamented that Gaza under Hamas rule would devolve into an Islamic Emirate or "Hamastan,"³³ others on the salafi-jihadi spectrum believed Hamas was not Islamic enough. The jihadi-salafi also emerged in a highly dangerous and lawless environment where the monopoly of force which the Palestinian Authority had potential to employ was simply not adequately realised.³⁴

The demands came in a changing political environment, where in Gaza the worst nightmares of Israel, its allies, and the Fatah faction of the PLO were being realised. Palestinian voters had turned their back on decades of corrupt and nepotistic Fatah rule, peace negotiations with Israel that failed to deliver peace, and ever-worsening socio-economic conditions under continued Israeli occupation. Many Gazans had already convinced themselves that they were empowered; Israel quit Gaza in the summer of 2005 (and the Islamists claimed victory). Gazan voters also played their part in overturning Fatah control through the ballot box in both municipal and legislative elections, but they elected an opposition group with no experience of governance. As Islamists, Hamas drew the ire of its enemies and the fears of everyone as it was plunged into violent attacks against its Palestinian counterparts.³⁵ From this point the "red lines" which many Palestinian said would never be crossed—in terms of Palestinian on Palestinian violence—were violated. Hamas, like Fatah, was ruthlessly determined to exercise power in Gaza. Hamas, as a governing power, also had to deal with politics—domestic within Gaza and foreign policy principally regarding Israel and resistance—in recent years chiefly through the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israel. When Fatah had been in control of Gaza, Hamas had vociferously berated it for entering into ceasefire agreements with Israel that

involved them actively policing Hamas and other factions and stopping them from launching rockets. After 2007, however, the tables were turned on Hamas as it too announced unilateral “calms” (*tahdiya*) to prevent rocket fire from Gaza to Israel. Hence Hamas control came at a price in terms of populist Islamist messages about resistance and jihad. “We in Gaza live under the gun,” remarked a bearded former Hamas supporter in Shatti refugee camp: “we are under the control of the guns of Israel and Hamas. I am talking to you but if someone hears me saying these things I’ll be arrested... in the past Hamas used to fire the rockets and called the PA collaborators for agreeing to *tahdiya* with Israel... but now Hamas has accepted the *hudna* (ceasefire). Are we to blame them and tell them they are collaborators?”³⁶ Hamas, aware of the accusations, defended themselves. “We are not throwing away our weapons or giving up resistance, stated Hamas legislator Mushir al-Masri: “Hamas has not given up Palestinian rights and the difference between us and Fatah on this is like the one between the earth and the sky... They were deputies of the occupation... Hamas will not cooperate with the occupation.”³⁷ The rhetoric was strong but did not necessarily convince the intended audience. A Gazan farmer attempting to run an agricultural enterprise in an area known for rocket-launching summed it up: “Hamas doesn’t control the situation and now Hamas is only here to preserve the security of Israel, like all the others before them! Hamas has been exposed now... we are seeing their true face.”³⁸

Increasingly, Hamas’s Islamist agenda was also viewed as subject to its own sophistry, while at the same time it has extended a monopoly of control of the Gaza Strip’s Islamic spaces and activities. Mosques, the administration of zakat,³⁹ and *tabligh wa dawa* through extensive links into preaching and education have been placed under Hamas’s governmental monopoly, squeezing the religious space for other Islamist actors.⁴⁰ Dissent focuses on such issues, and on the transformation which Hamas has undergone since it was elected to power in 2006. Dissenters within the salafi and jihadi fold focus on this power dynamic and its consequences, either by denouncing the political—“we believe Hamas is not going in the right direction of mixing politics with religion”—or its localised rather than global jihad agenda in resisting Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands—“to us what they call violence is resistance. We will act in any direction that spites the Israeli occupation.”⁴¹ The breakdown of Hamas’s principal Islamist opponents in Gaza are: the coastal strip’s long-standing traditional salafis, the newly emergent salafi-jihadis, some of whom claim allegiance to al-Qaeda, Palestinian Islamic Jihad whose leader in exile is Ramadan Shallah, and elements of Hizbt Tahrir.

Fundamentalist: Traditional Salafists

“Will the sons of Jihad Salafi who accused Hamas of apostasy apologise now?”⁴²

Since the late 1970s, Islamic fundamentalist-inspired groups have been based in the Gaza Strip, including what are commonly referred to as the traditional salafists. The main locales for such elements have been Rafah and Khan Younis. They have a presence which casts a powerful Islamic influence over society. They are also accused of attacking shops and businesses engaged in practices considered “un-Islamic.” In this respect they can be considered to be an indigenous manifestation

of contemporary Islamism in the Palestinian territories rather than an al-Qaeda-like import. Salafi groups are, as the quote above highlights, perceived as hostile to Hamas. Some Hamas leaders consider them supporters of the opposition Fatah faction because of their fealty to the established governing power. The traditional salafists have always sought to address themselves to the Palestinian issue. "We began calling for a salafi curriculum ... sermons, lessons and direct contact with the people ... we do not refer to ourselves as a party or a movement," claims leading salafi cleric Sheikh Yassin al-Astal.⁴³ Traditional salafi elements in Gaza, in common with traditional salafis in the region such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia, always eschewed political participation, maintaining a powerful profile in society through its preaching and propagation activity, including those encouraging virtue and prohibiting vice.⁴⁴

By 2007, however, some traditional salafi elements came to prominence as a result of a number of incidents and issues attributed to them. Such incidents included threats and subsequent attack on an UNRWA school in Rafah during a graduation ceremony because, it was alleged, it allowed the "mixing of the sexes." On May 6, 2007 a salafi group held a demonstration at the school, and later there was a shooting incident. The gun and homemade bomb attack on the UNRWA school began with a protest by the salafis, who said that the event was un-Islamic. One protester's sign said the U.N. "is turning schools into nightclubs." Protesters also accused an UNRWA official in Gaza, who was in the school, of leading a movement to weaken people's Islamic faith. The group of protesters tried to enter the school and Palestinian security officers fired in the air to keep them away. In the ensuing chaos, at least one homemade bomb was thrown into the school. A gun battle followed.⁴⁵ Palestinians claimed that the attack in Rafah appeared to be carried out by the same salafi elements behind a string of bombings of Internet cafes and pool halls in Gaza. There were also fears at the time that such elements had perpetrated attacks on men and women accused by the group of so-called "moral crimes." The alleged perpetrators are also referred to as the "Mujahidin of Rafah" and have been accused of mounting attacks on the Rafah crossing in order to provoke some form of Israeli incursion.⁴⁶

Salafi leaders outlined the following views, which illustrate some of the apparent contradictions between the thought and practice of Palestinian salafi elements, including their views on leadership, authority, and confrontation. "Salafi follow the ways of Prophet Mohammad and Salafi have all the respect for the ruler. They are realistic: Israel is a reality and Palestinians are incapable of waging a war," said one leader.⁴⁷ Salafi elements revere authority in a traditional *Sunni* fashion—to the extent that they will tolerate authoritarianism to avoid civil war or chaos. This is why some Hamas leaders dismiss them as "Fatah supporters." Some salafi leaders concur with such a view: "We consider Abu Mazen our leader, and of Palestinian society. We will never rise against him. We don't have Hamas members in our group like the jihadi salafists. We are transparent and known to the whole community as *dawa*."⁴⁸ As one leader asserts, "salafi are implementing the call of the Prophets. President Abbas is a Muslim and a respected leader as long as he has not demonstrated any heretical behaviour." Returning Palestinian society to the "straight path of Islam" is the key framework from which the salafi operate: "a ruler is the one in charge of changing the situation of the people. The Palestinian President is the one responsible for his people and for his nation ..."⁴⁹

By late 2007, some traditional salafi leaders barely concealed their antipathy toward Hamas for its takeover of the Gaza Strip from Fatah. "The coup in Gaza

has nothing to do with religious beliefs. Killing people in the name of God is a crime. Hamas is a political party with a military wing that lacks comprehensive understanding... It took Islam as a cover for its actions... It is a political party that has achieved only on the social level... It should have never gotten to the [Palestinian] Authority because it is not ready for such a role... It should recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people... True Islam bans inter-fighting (*fitna*)... and the Salafi criticize the criminal acts of Hamas in Gaza.”⁵⁰ Here the traditional salafi began to echo al-Qaeda in its “principled” opposition to the Hamas takeover. Moreover, the spiritual leaders of the traditional salafi elements stated that they disdained violence or armed attacks unless permitted for the following three reasons: “In Islam... you are allowed to kill in three cases: 1. In punishment for crimes committed by citizens and in this case only the ruler can carry out this punishment, 2. to punish those individuals who commit adultery, 3. to punish a Muslim who converts from Islam to another belief. No civilian should take the responsibility of punishing others. Hence Hamas in [our] view has committed crimes through its coup in Gaza.”⁵¹

Leaders said they opposed inter-factional fighting to avoid chaos. “What happened in Gaza is a crime because people were killed in the name of God.”⁵² Traditional salafists also warned that the political path pursued by Hamas would dilute its Islamist credentials: “the goal was to get the Islamists to follow secular Fatah’s approval of the international resolutions on Palestine. All those resolutions recognized the Israeli entity in Palestine, and so the Palestinian state is limited to the part that has been occupied in 1967. All the Palestinian factions accepted that proposal except for Islamic Jihad and the PFLP, who refused it partially.”⁵³ Hence for traditional salafi leaders and followers, Hamas had crossed the Rubicon in accepting—through political participation—a non-Islamist solution to the conflict with Israel.

From 2007 onwards, the traditional salafi of Gaza grew in appeal and support, but their armed elements remained clandestine for fear of reprisals from Israel and Hamas. The leadership of traditional salafi eschew any relations with al-Qaeda. “The Takfiris and the Jihadis are a minority in the Salafi,” stated one leader. Moreover, the leadership of the traditional salafis acknowledged that they sent their “*shebab*” (young men) to “the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in order to distance them from the Takfiri trend. These trips and courses in religious belief are funded by rich scholars from among the Salafi Movement in Saudi Arabia.”⁵⁴ Indeed, historically, the traditional salafi leadership and its followers in the Gaza Strip have followed Saudi-inspired wahabbi salafi principles, and have likewise echoed the Saudi regime’s repudiation of al-Qaeda.

Some traditional salafi clearly remain opposed to Hamas, which, they claim, ignores the spiritual aspects of society. Fatah is not seen by such leaders as a threat in the way that Hamas is. It is dismissed as “neither ideological in nature nor spiritual. They have Communists and Christians under their umbrella.” However, Sheikh Sa’ad Sharaf, a leader in the Sufi trend in the West Bank, contended that salafi were supporting Fatah against Hamas because “they want to spread their thought in order to dominate mosques... they use Fatah to reach their religious goals. The relationship [between] Fatah and salafi are only to serve mutual interests. Fatah does not have any religious dimension... just a national one... hence it serves Fatah to have the Salafi talk religion in their name.”⁵⁵ To what extent these words are prophesy is difficult to measure. Firstly such statements demonstrate further the

innate rivalry between the various elements (armed and unarmed) of the Palestinian Islamic movement and potential for confrontation and conflict. Furthermore, one might argue that Fatah's policy of encouraging the salafi as a religious foil to Hamas was potentially dangerous. Many in the Sufi movement support the PA as a foil to Hamas and the salafi. They claim that "Hamas has banned Sufis from talking in the name of religion. ... On the other hand, Sufism wants to work for Fatah, which does not have any religious dimension in order to combat Hamas whose thoughts coincide with the salafi thought."⁵⁶ The traditional salafi remain a potential threat to Hamas's governance of Gaza with respect to the "Islamization" of Palestinian society—they are prepared to use force of arms to ensure compliance from the local community and this is a challenge to Hamas's much-vaunted law and order agenda. Hence the traditional salafists continue to promote Islamization based on fundamentalist strictures regarding piety and the organization of society. They maintain a grassroots presence, concentrated in particular areas throughout the Gaza Strip, which remains an inherent challenge to Hamas and its own Islamization agenda.

Jaljalat and the Jihadi Phenomenon

The jihadi phenomenon in Gaza is not new. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, as Islamic resurgence transformed the Middle East, in Gaza, as in other locations there arose ideologues and nascent groups tied to the jihadi agenda inspired by radical thinkers.⁵⁷ These groups distinguished themselves from Hamas for a variety of reasons including ideological. The vanguardist and oppositional nature of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) brought it into tension and occasional conflict with Hamas—particularly with respect to resistance against Israel versus the promotion of populist Islamization agendas. Hence the Islamist spectrum in the Gaza Strip has always contained a radical element that has contrasted with the reformist and conservative ideas and approaches of Hamas and religious elements within the Fatah organization.

The innovation of the salafi-jihadi newcomers perhaps lies with respect to their embrace of global jihadism and its application to the Palestinian context. To a certain extent this inverts the jihadi thinking of PIJ, and yet unifies ranks in terms of opposing Hamas's stance in government. The context in which these groups have arisen reflects this ongoing power struggle within the Palestinian milieu, and incorporates the debilitating state of divide which emerged between Fatah and Hamas after January 2006. The new salafi-jihadis emerged, cell-like and small in number, armed and connected to powerful local clan and family networks amidst the power and lawlessness of Gaza during this period.

They include groups such as *Jund Ansar Allah* (Soldiers of God's Compassion), *Jaysh al-Islam* (Army of Islam), *Jaysh Tawheed wa Jihad* (Army of Unity and Jihad), the Doghmush family groups, "*Jund Allah* (God's Soldiers) Popular Resistance Committee [elements] and *Jaysh Arafat as-Sunnah* and *Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah*."⁵⁸ Both Hamas and Israel refer to the groups collectively as *Jaljalat* (Rolling Thunder). They are also commonly referred to in Gaza as the "young zealots." The most prominent of these groups is *Jund Ansar Allah* (Soldiers of God's Compassion); *Jaysh al-Islam* (Army of Islam); and *Jaysh Tawheed wa Jihad* (Army of Unity and Jihad). The groups are amorphous and dynamic and can disappear as quickly as they rise up.

Such groups are allegedly responsible for the organization of attacks against Israel including rocket attacks, attempted kidnappings and assassinations,

hostage-taking of foreigners, including journalists, NGO workers, and activists. Internally they have organised strikes and raids and attacks on local businesses and individuals in Gaza whom they consider to be engaged in immoral or apostate activities such as Internet cafe owners, video shops, cafes where men and women formerly used to socialise, pharmacists where sex-enhancing drugs such as Viagra are alleged to be for sale, and males working in women's hair salons. As one Internet cafe owner recounted, "The *Jaysh al-Islam* attacked my shop and trashed the place... according to the Government [Hammas] they know these elements but I am afraid to file a complaint... this is a totalitarian society we live in and Hammas won't dare stop those guys who declare they act in the name of Islam."⁵⁹ The groups, as the Internet cafe owner highlights, represent a threat to the Hammas government and its monopoly of force within Gaza and in deciding how to pursue the resistance against Israel. Unlike Fatah and the leftist PLO faction which Hammas could outbid in terms of Islamic symbolism, the new groups claim to be the fundamentalist and true Islamist alternative: "We deal with a pure and undiluted Islam," states one salafi-jihadi leader.⁶⁰ The ideology that these groups claim to represent has challenged the legitimacy of Hammas in terms of the wider Islamist project, its orientation and strategies for achieving common goals.

Jund Ansar Allah has emerged as a prominent challenger to Hammas's legitimacy claims. They echo al-Qaeda's Zawahiri in critiquing Hammas for its ceasefire agreements with Israel and its "policing" to prevent other factions from launching attacks on Israel. The group has launched its own attacks against Israeli and Palestinian targets. Propaganda on its websites and through the local distribution of communiqués in Gaza has focussed on berating the Hammas government and its local security forces for constraining and restricting its activities and failing to implement Shari'a law.⁶¹ The challenge to Hammas came to a head in August 2009 in the southern city of Rafah, where the group's leader, Abdel-Latif Mousa, and his followers made a unilateral declaration of Islamic Statehood. As Mousa preached to the congregation in the somewhat appositely named Ibn Taymiyyah mosque in Rafah, Hammas dispatched security forces to put down the putsch against them. Hammas's forces killed Mousa and 11 others, and organised an arrest campaign to eradicate the group. Despite the claims that the group "essentially ceased to exist" in the wake of 2009, *Jund Ansar Allah's* new leader in December 2011 insisted that the group was operational, saying: "To us ideology and blood are one and the same thing. Our leader Abdel Latif Mousa, who was killed in Rafah by Hammas, continues to be our guide and leader. We are still present and active."⁶²

Jaysh al-Islam—Army of Islam, formerly aligned to Hammas, is believed to be one of the groups which kidnapped the BBC journalist Alan Johnston and Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. It lies under the Jaljalat umbrella in terms of both embracing an al-Qaeda-like jihadi approach as well as opposing Hammas. They first came to public attention in Gaza in May 2006. Their global jihadi-salafi approach was apparent when they declared in a widely distributed communiqué that:

We are not waging jihad for the sake of [recovering] a plot of land, illusory frontiers or nationalism.... Our jihad is much loftier.... This religion will not be able to triumph through a generation made rotten by [earthly] pleasures or broken by the security services of tyrannical governments.... Our jihad is based on a solid foundation and aims to end occupation and tyranny as a prelude to the establishment of an Islamic caliphate...⁶³

Israeli intelligence sources at the time asserted that the group was part of, or linked to, al-Qaeda. In Gaza, many other local security and intelligence sources asserted that the group was not linked to al-Qaeda but was a “front for elements using the label of Islam to conduct their business.”⁶⁴ It was a poorly concealed secret that certain elements of the Doghmush family were prominent within the Army of Islam.⁶⁵

In 2007, the Army of Islam kidnapped the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston. On June 25, 2007 a video was released by Army of Islam showing Johnston with an explosive belt around his waist, with a demand for the release of Muslim prisoner and global jihadist leader Abu Qatada from British custody. On July 4, 2007, after Hamas arrested several members of Army of Islam including its spokesman, Alan Johnston was handed over to Hamas and released. The Army of Islam, however, is perceived as still representing a threat to Israel and may have sought, in the wake of its fall-out with Hamas, to strengthen ties with external radical Islamist elements such as al-Qaeda affiliates. Hamas, however, are unlikely to truly tolerate the manifestation of such a group for much longer. It has already succeeded in forging further disarmament deals which go some way to dissipating the group and the family behind it. Yet by the winter of 2011 the group was still functioning, some of its operatives had been killed by Israel, and it was believed to be behind rocket launches to Israel’s southern cities. Egyptian officials blamed the group for suicide bomb attacks against churches in Alexandria and in May 2011 the U.S. government designated it a foreign terrorist organization.⁶⁶

Many analysts are agreed that the salafi-jihadi elements represented by Jaljalat do not represent a significant threat to Hamas’s monopoly of force as the governing power in Gaza. The ideological challenge it does pose, however, reflects the changes within Islamism in the Middle East since the outbreak of the Arab Spring and the declining fortunes of al-Qaeda and Western responses. As more and more elements of the Muslim Brotherhood accede to power and governance, they will face the same challenges that Hamas does from its internal Islamist critiques. In Gaza this internal critique is emphasised with respect to Israel’s continued siege of Gaza and official international isolationism. It is ameliorated in part by the “opening” up of Gaza to Egypt in the wake of Mubarak’s ousting. But it has also made Gaza and the Hamas authorities vulnerable to salafi-jihadi ambitions and access externally as well as internally. There is an attraction to the message of the salafi-jihadis among Gaza’s young population, disaffected Hamas members who reside on the radical end of the Islamist spectrum, as well as isolated or marginalised former militants from other Palestinian factions. As demonstrated, the salafi-jihadis can also count on powerful family and clan networks and particular geographic districts of the Gaza Strip where Hamas’s reach is weaker than it would like.

The Phantom of Global Jihad

“Al-Qaeda is coming whether Hamas like it or not!”

Hamas, as this article has demonstrated, has historically demonstrated an intrinsic interest in preventing any manifestation of al-Qaeda in the Gaza Strip or attempts to conflate its programme with those of salafi-jihadis engaged in a global war on apostate regimes in the region and the West. To do this it must repress manifestations of radical Islamism in its midst. Thus even though al-Qaeda has not succeeded in

gaining a foothold in Gazas, the vigilance of Hamas extends to the policing of those local Islamist elements that embrace the agenda, goals, or aspirations of the al-Qaeda network. Jihadi-salafi, aware of Hamas's fear, draws on such sources as a form of developing a challenge and threat to Hamas's power. Leaders of the salafi-jihadi groups acknowledge the influence of important jihadi ideologues including traditionalists such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman Zawahiri, and Abu Mohammed al-Maqqisi. "Each knows the import and urgency of the jihad and its message for the followers of Islam," claims one salafi-jihadi.⁶⁷ Indeed the Army of Islam, while holding Alan Johnston along with demanding the release of Abu Qatada from British custody, also called for the release of al-Maqqisi from a Jordanian prison. Maqqisi appears with other well-known salafi-jihadi scholars to urge support for their brothers in Gaza on their websites and propaganda.⁶⁸ Hamas's secular Palestinian national opponents in Fatah, including Palestinian President Abbas, also accuse them of failing to prevent al-Qaeda infiltration into the Gaza Strip. In the proceeding war of words following their ousting from Gaza Fatah leaders regularly accuse Hamas of allowing al-Qaeda into Gaza or of supporting it. "What did they do when Bin Laden was killed?" asked a Fatah Executive Committee member. "Haniyeh went on TV and said 'We condemn the murder of this Arab and Muslim Holy warrior.'"⁶⁹ Fears of al-Qaeda infiltration have increased since the collapse of Mubarak's regime in Egypt and the deterioration of security coordination between Israel and Egypt in the Sinai. Hamas continues to deny all speculation of an al-Qaeda presence and attacks on Israel launched from Gaza under its control.⁷⁰

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Gaza's Islamist environment is proliferating. The successes of fellow Muslim Brother and Salafi Islamists in neighbouring Egypt is an encouragement both to Hamas and its local traditional salafi and jihadi-salafi rivals. Their successes are not merely about the dividend of participating in elections and achieving power but the wider Islamist milieu which has emerged in the wake of the Arab Spring. This is better news for Hamas and its links to the Muslim Brotherhood than the jihadi salafists of Gaza who have seen declining currency of the message of al-Qaeda. Such circumstances may embolden Hamas to engage in further repressive policies against its Islamists opponents. Its leaders, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, are not presently inclined into pacts or power-sharing arrangements with salafi, jihadis, or a combination of the two. Traditional salafists are described by Hamas leaders such as Yahya Mousa as "Fatah supporters" and dismissed for any potential to challenge the Islamist hegemony of power the Hamas has become in Gaza.⁷¹ Salafi-jihadists are similarly regarded and dismissed as weak in numbers and too diffuse to present a serious challenge. Such charges are strongly refuted: "Jaysh al Ummah Tawhid wa Jihad, the Doghmush groups, Popular Resistance Committees groups are all our allies. Others like Jaysh Arafat as-Sunnah and Jaysh Ansar as-Sunnah cooperate with us as well, "states one jihadi leader in Gaza. "Numbers are not important because we are respected and felt in this religious atmosphere that is tainted with poverty and siege."⁷² Hamas deputy Prime Minister Dr Awad contends further that dealing with the salafists is a very different challenge than dealing with other Islamists: "they are organizationally weak—they are just capitalising on the immediate reality and will not necessarily endure..."⁷³ Other jihadists, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, are still regarded as nothing other

than an excuse for some Hamas leaders to demonstrate the movement's tolerance and ability to absorb the much smaller group through merger: "they [Palestinian Islamic Jihad] are living in the field of thoughts," asserts Mahmoud Zahar.⁷⁴ Such comments point to the frustration which the jihadis, salafi, and jihadi-salafi express and represent in terms of Gaza's wider population. They are critical, where many others fear to be because of repression, of Hamas's style of governing, and its strategic position in terms of issues such as the negotiation with Israel of the prisoner release in return for Gilad Shalit, the pursuit of National Reconciliation with Fatah to end the State of Divide, and the ceasefire with Israel concluded during Operation Cast Lead in January 2009. While Hamas may believe it has been successful simply by enduring in power and governing Gaza since 2007, its Islamist critics see the movement as a capitulator, of renegotiating the principle of resistance through sophistry that betrays the Palestinian cause and leaves Gaza's population under siege from Israel and boycott by most Western states.

They, like Hamas, interpret a lot from the events that have shaken the wider region since December 2010. They see opportunity, should they wish to take it, in a salafi political path (as Salafists in Egypt have done). Hence traditional salafis in Gaza may be encouraged to become more politically engaged, but Hamas may find it then faces the same type of conundrums that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is facing in terms of alliance building and power-sharing. At present salafi-jihadi leaders are content to approve of events in Egypt rather than propose the same route for themselves. "We were very pleased when the salafi won in Egypt... But I don't think that we want to engage in elections ourselves. We don't believe in elections as they are destructive for Hamas and we don't recognise Fatah. We will not engage. We will always continue our resistance and we do not recognise the hudna," asserts one rising star of a Gaza-based group.⁷⁵ Their grievances against the Hamas authorities—the governing power—remain, particularly with respect to what they see as their right to pursue armed resistance (jihad) against Israel and the imprisonment by Hamas of some of their leaders. They complain of having to act and live like "wanted men" in a society purportedly of Muslim hue and pretension. Their discontent, when tied to grievances about poverty, and lack of political progress in the conflict with Israel, finds growing support—not only among defectors from Hamas's armed wing of the Izz-a-din al-Qassam Brigades but among the many young Gazans who chafe at Hamas's institutionalization and the opportunities for clientalism that have arisen. Hamas's hegemonic Islamist claims are being challenged internally and encouraged as its counterparts in Egypt in the Muslim Brotherhood find themselves in a similar predicament following the opening of the political process to a diverse array of political forces including a multiplicity of Islamists. The challenge for Hamas, like other political actors, is how to manage the "other" Islamists who are unwilling to serve under them.

The traditional salafi, jihadis, and salafi-jihadis represent pocket-like constituencies in the Gaza Strip but their Islamist claims, like those of their Hamas rivals, address wider concerns which deal with the Palestinian predicament and conflict with Israel. These concerns lie with the direction of resistance (which Hamas has altered), the issue of a continuing jihad, recognition of Israel, Palestinian internal reconciliation issues, democracy and elections, Islamism in the wake of the Arab Spring, and the changed power-balances in the wider Middle East region. In this respect, the fundamental potency of the Islamist opponents of Hamas lies in the overlap between their specific ideological perspective and the conditions under which ordinary Gazans live. It is within the ideology of global jihadism that a constructed

sense of Palestinian empowerment can be generated at a time when other Palestinian political perspectives point to emasculation. The ideas find tangible expression in attacks on Israel and threats against the Hamas government for its poor performance in transforming the political system to the dictates of Islam. The challenge, at present, is albeit limited. Much to their chagrin, Hamas has continued to contain and repress their Islamist opponents: “many of us have been imprisoned by Hamas. Their oppressive measures are ongoing,” states one Jaljalat jihadi leader in Gaza.⁷⁶ Yet it is unlikely that this Islamist opposition will wither away and in the current regional climate of resurgent Islamism including the salafi and salafi-jihadi variety, the political criticism they lay at Hamas’s door cannot be ignored.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Yahya Mousa, Change and Reform PLC member, author interview, Gaza City, December 8, 2011.
2. Kidnappings including IDF soldier Gilad Shalit who was released in a prisoner exchange negotiated by Hamas and Israel with Egyptian mediation in October 2011, British journalist Alan Johnston who was kidnapped in March 2007, and the murder of Italian activist Vittorio Arrigoni in April 2011.
3. United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), *Easing the Blockade: Assessing the Humanitarian Impact on the Population of the Gaza Strip*, March 2011, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_special_easing_the_blockade_2011_03_english.pdf.
4. Anonymous, salafi jihad leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 9, 2011.
5. Dr Mahmoud Zahar, Hamas founder and leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 8, 2011.
6. Dr Jamal Abu Hashem, Hamas founder and leader, author interview, Gaza City, January 23, 2007.
7. The *Ikhwan al-Muslimeen* (Muslim Brotherhood) was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna. Hamas considers itself a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.
8. Ziad Abu Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).
9. Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: IB Tauris, 1996).
10. Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010).
11. *Ibid.*, 268–269.
12. See: Are Hovdenak, *al-Qaeda—A Challenge for Hamas?* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute Oslo, January 2009); and Dore Gold, “Ties Between al Qaeda and Hamas in Mideast are Long and Frequent/It Shouldn’t Be Any Surprise That the Two Groups Share Ideology,” *Sfgate.com*, March 5, 2006, http://articles.sfgate.com/2006-03-05/opinion/17286102_1_hamas-posters-qaeda-new-hamas-government.
13. Christina Hellmich, “Al-Qaeda—Terrorists, Hypocrites, Fundamentalists? The View from Within,” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 44.
14. Palestine, it is contended, and the issue of Israel’s occupation had preoccupied jihadi thinkers and by extension al-Qaeda. See: Brynjar Lia, “Al Qaida’s Appeal: Understanding its Unique Selling Points,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 2, no. 8 (May 2008), <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/44/html>.

15. Barak Mendelsohn, "Al-Qaeda's Palestinian Problem," *Survival* 51, no. 4 (2009): 71–86.
16. Osama bin Laden called for jihad against Israel in an audio message posted on the Internet January 14, 2009. In the message, which is entitled "A Call for Jihad to Stop the Aggression on Gaza," bin Laden called on the "Muslim nation" to defeat the "Zionist entity" and assured the Palestinians that al-Qaeda's "fate is tied to yours in fighting the crusader-Zionist coalition, in fighting until victory or martyrdom." He also stated that "the duty is to urge people to jihad and to enlist the youth into jihad brigades." See <http://www.annah.com/read/2009/01/18/3100-bin-laden-call-for-jihad-to-stop-aggression-against-gaza.html>.
17. Yoram Schweitzer, "The Terrorism Threat Against Israel from al-Qaeda and Global Jihad," *Military and Strategic Affairs* 2, no. 1 (June 2010): 21–28.
18. Christopher Reuter, *My Life Is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 18.
19. See: Gideon Alon, "MI Chief: W. Bank, Gaza Could Soon Become Fatahstan and Hamastan," *Haaretz*, December 19, 2005, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/mi-chief-w-bank-gaza-could-become-fatahstan-hamastan-1.177003>.
20. Stephen Farrell, "Palestinian Militants Deny Suspicions of Involvement; Terror in America," *The Times*, September 12, 2011.
21. Quintan Wiktorowicz and John Kaltner, "Killing in the Name of Islam: Al-Qaeda's Justifications of September 11," *Middle East Policy* 10, no. 2 (2003): 76–77. "The undersigned, leaders of Islamic movements, are horrified by the events of Tuesday 11 September 2001 in the United States, which resulted in massive killing, destruction and attack on innocent lives. We express our deepest sympathies and sorrow. We condemn, in the strongest terms, the incidents, which are against all human and Islamic norms. This is grounded in the Noble Laws of Islam, which forbid all forms of attacks on innocents. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran: 'No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another' (Surah al-Isra 17:15). Signatories included the general guide of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, the amir of the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan and Ahmad Yassin, the founder of Hamas."
22. Phil Reeves, "Sharon Appeals to America not to 'Appease' Arabs," *The Independent*, October 5, 2001.
23. Bruce Riedel, "Al-Qaeda Strikes Back," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 3 (2007): 24–27.
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25. Ehud Sprinzak quoted in Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas* (see note 10 above), 90.
26. See: Khaled Amayreh, "Hamas and al-Qaida: The Prospects for Radicalization in the Occupied Territories," *Conflicts Forum*, 2007, <http://conflictsforum.org/briefings/Hamas-and-al-Qaeda-monograph.pdf>.
27. Beverley Milton-Edwards, "The Concept of Jihad and the Palestinian Islamic Movement: A Comparison of Ideas and Techniques," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 19, no. 1 (1992): 48–53.
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29. Sheikh Hamed Beitawi, Head of Palestine Scholars Association, Nablus, author interview, May 4, 2007.
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31. Beverley Milton-Edwards, "Order Without Law? An Anatomy of Hamas Security: The Executive Force (Tanfithiya)," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 5 (November 2008): 663–676.
32. Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
33. Michael Moran, "'Hamastan' Takes Shape on the Gaza Strip," *Council on Foreign Relations Analysis Brief*, June 17, 2007, <http://www.cfr.org/israel/hamastan-takes-shape-gaza-strip/p13584>.

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35. See: David Rose, "Gaza Bombshell," *Vanity Fair*, April 2008, <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804>.
36. Mohammad, Shatti Refugee Camp resident, author interview, Gaza City, July 16, 2008.
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38. Mr Abu Ali, farmer, author interview, Beit Lahiya, July 17, 2008.
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41. Anonymous Jaljalat leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 9, 2011.
42. Hamas statement issued June 14, 2007 to author.
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48. Sheikh Mohammed, Gaza City, author interview, December 8, 2011.
49. Sheikh Mohammed, Gaza City, author interview, May 15, 2007.
50. Sheikh Hassan, Rafah, author interview, July 25, 2007.
51. Anonymous traditional salafi leader "Abu Bilal," Gaza City, author interview, July 26, 2007.
52. Anonymous traditional salafi leader "Abu Bilal," Gaza City, author interview, July 26, 2007.
53. Anonymous salafi leader, Gaza City, author interview, July 26, 2007.
54. Anonymous salafi leader, Gaza City, author interview, July 26, 2007.
55. Sheikh Sa'ad Sharaf, author interview, Nablus, May 4, 2007.
56. Sheikh Sa'ad Sharaf, author interview, Nablus, May 4, 2007.
57. See: Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: IB Tauris, 1996); and Joel Brachman, *Global Jihadism, Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009).
58. Anonymous Jaljalat leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 9, 2011.
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66. See: <http://news.sky.com/home/world-news/article/15908607> and <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/05/163838.htm>.

67. "Abu Hafs," salafi-jihad leader, author interview, Gaza City, July 15, 2008.

68. See: Minbar of Tawhed and Jihad, <http://www.tawhed.net/n.php> and Joas Wage-makers, "The Umma over Palestine: Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's Palestinian identity," paper presented at *BRISMES Annual Conference*, LSE, London, March 28, 2012.

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70. See: Palestinian Ministry of Interior Announcement, Gaza City, December 12, 2011, <http://www.almoltaqa.ps/english/showthread.php?t=21549>.

71. Yahya Mousa, Change and Reform PLC member, author interview, Gaza City, December 8, 2011.

72. "Abu Hafs," salafi-jihad leader, author interview, Gaza City, July 15, 2008.

73. Dr Mohammad Awad, Hamas Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Planning, author interview, Gaza City, December 8, 2011.

74. Dr Mahmoud Zahar, Hamas founder, author interview, Gaza City, December 8, 2011.

75. Anonymous Jaljalat leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 9, 2011.

76. Anonymous Jaljalat leader, author interview, Gaza City, December 9, 2011.