



## The Union of Good – Analysis and Mapping of Terror Funds Network

### Background

Hamas is an Islamic movement established in the Gaza Strip in December 1987 by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. The movement adheres to the Muslim Brotherhood's principles, but unlike the latter, Hamas sees Palestine a top priority (before striving to impose Islam over the Muslim world — a Muslim Brotherhood main stream belief); it supports Jihad (a holy war) as a way to achieve its goals, and believes that every Muslim is duty bound to execute Jihad.

Hamas has formed a social-infrastructure network based on charity funds from the Territories and abroad as part of the Islamic Zakkat (=charity) decree. Some of these funds are used to support terror when reaching terror activists, suicide bombers, and prisoners and their families. In addition, **since its establishment, Hamas has been striving to gradually integrate Territories-based Islamic charity societies** established by the Muslim Brotherhood as part of its network (since the early 70s). Hamas has also been striving **to take over Waqf-affiliated charity societies** (Waqf is the system of religious endowment in Islam) and **private societies, turning them into Hamas-affiliated bodies.**

Besides taking over Territories-based charity societies, Hamas has also annexed Muslim Brotherhood charity funds which operated in the U.S. such as the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) and Europe since the early 90s. They cooperated to **transfer millions of dollars to Territories-based societies every year.** Some of the funds that operated in Europe before the Second Intifadah were: Interpal in Britain, the CBSP in France, branches of the Al Aqsa Fund in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden. As the Second Intifadah



broke out (late 2000), there was an increasing need to coordinate all of Hamas-supporting funding activities abroad which lead to the establishment of the Union of Good.

### The Union of Good

The Union of Good or the Charity Coalition, in Arabic Itilaf Al Khayr (hereinafter: the Coalition) was established in May 2001 due to the Second Intifadah. At first, the body operated as a fund raising project named the 101 Days Project. Later on, it became the umbrella organization for Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Islamic charity funds.

In fact, the establishment of the Coalition whose head office is located in Saudi Arabia, created an economic octopus which amalgamates Islamic charity societies and funds operating in the West and Arab countries. Following are some of the prominent societies and funds that form the Coalition:

- Middle East and Africa – the Saudi Arabian WAMY and the Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People, the Palestinian People's Support Committee (Al Manasra) in Jordan, and IHH Turkey.
- Europe – Interpal in Britain, CBSP in France, Al Aqsa Fund and its European branches, Sanabil Al Aqsa in Sweden, Al Aqsa Fund in Denmark, Al Aqsa Fund and Al Israa Foundation in the Netherlands, ASP and SHS Funds in Switzerland, ABSPP in Italy, PHV and PVO in Austria, Al Aqsa Fund in Belgium and many more.
- U.S.A – the HLF (until its designation in 2001).

In addition, a Lebanese branch governed by Hamas is operating under



the Coalition's auspices and Iranian support. De facto, the Coalition is a powerful economic body which gathers and coordinates donations from its affiliated bodies and transfers them to Territories-based Hamas charity societies. Coalition seniors work vis à vis regional coordinators who are usually the heads of prominent Hamas-governed Gaza Strip and West Bank-based charity societies.

The funds are being transferred to support families of **Shahids and security prisoners**, and educational institutions in which a systematic incitement against Israel is being conducted, with emphasis on **encouraging acts of terror against Israel and Israeli citizens**.

Coalition seniors:

- Chairman – Sheikh Yousef Moustafa Al Qaradhawi is from Egypt (has been living in Qatar in recent years) and a prominent Muslim Brotherhood activist. His Islamic rulings (Fatwas) **gave the green light to execute terror attacks** while defining them as martyrdom. He also **authorized the killing of Israeli citizens** and preached for an Arab unity that will aspire to Jihad against Israel.

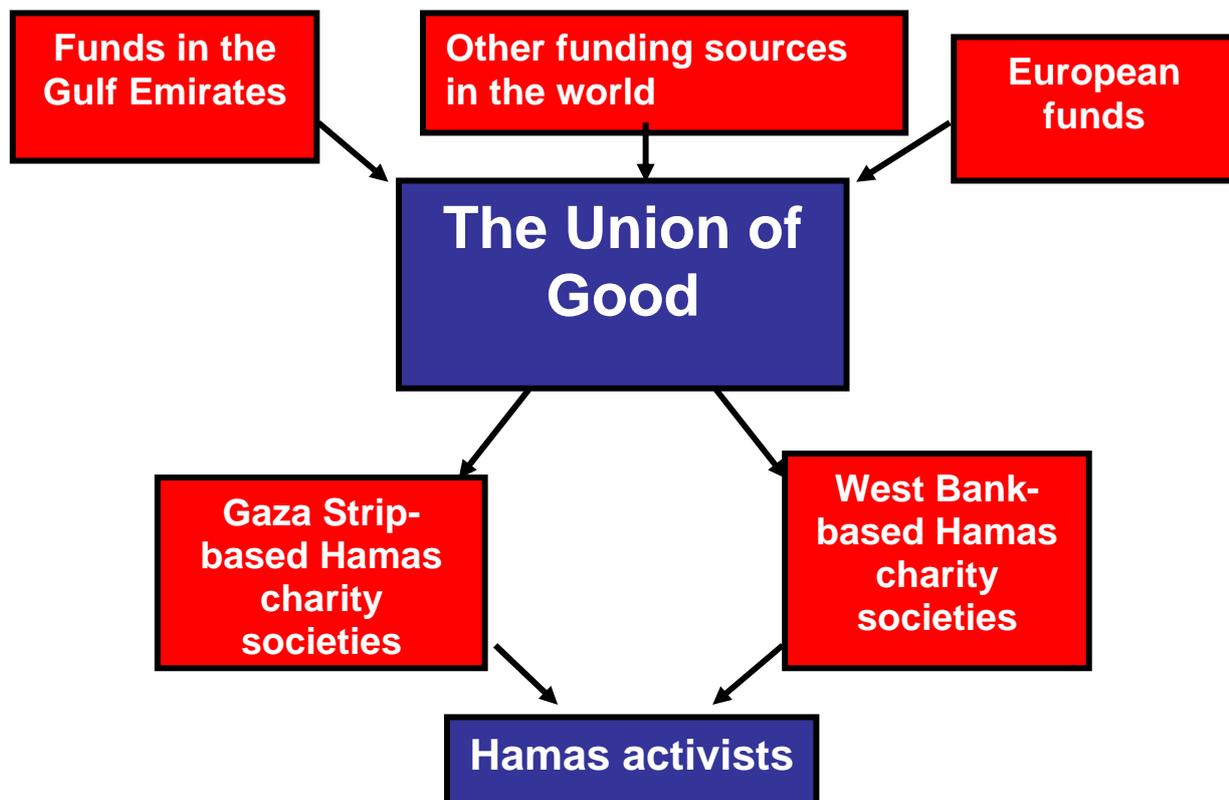


Al Qaradhawi, right, and Khaled Mashal giving a speech in a gathering in 2007



- Until recently (April 2009), Dr. Isam Yousef Salah Moustafa was the Coalition's executive manager. He is a senior Hamas activist who also served as Interpal's vice-chairman. Moustafa is one of the 101 Days Project founders that led to the establishment of the Coalition.
- The Coalition's board of directors includes dozens of prominent members from the Muslim Brotherhood and prominent Hamas activists from the Territories.
- Since its establishment, the Coalition had been responsible for collecting tens of millions of dollars every year for Hamas institutions in the Territories. In 2001-2009, the money collected amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars.

The route of terror funds from the Coalition to Hamas activists & their usage



The Coalition's member funds assist Territories-based Hamas-affiliated charity societies that number dozens of prominent societies operating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; these are ruled by Hamas activists, hire Hamas activists, and in fact **constitute an integral part of Hamas**.

The societies perform various religious, educational, welfare and other activities aiming to introduce the Palestinians to Hamas ideology. At the same time, these societies take advantage of their dominance over religious and educational institutions to **incite against Israel and encourage acts of terror against Israel and its citizens**.



A ceremony organized by the Islamic Charity Society in Beit Oula / Hebron region showing school children armed and dressed in uniform.

As for the welfare domain, charity societies support Hamas-affiliated prisoners and detainees who committed acts of terror as well as families of suicide bombers who died committing terror attacks against Israel or fighting against IDF forces in the Territories. This is the way charity societies help Hamas to promote its goals, such as to destroy the state of Israel and replace it with an Islamic state.



It is important to emphasize that there is a clear and proven link between Hamas military activists and charity societies, even though it only seems that the funds are being transferred for humanitarian purposes. Some of those activists are known Hamas military activists — interrogees who were part of those charity societies. They disclosed that except charity purposes, the Coalition funds are also being used for Hamas' organizational activity. Some of those detainees were Mouhamad Kasarawi and Mouhamad Farah from Al-ram Charity Society who were convicted in the Jerusalem District Court for their activity.

There are also Hamas activists who engaged in terrorism while serving as members in charity societies. For example: Gamal Tawil from Ramallah, a former Al Islah Chairman in Ramallah and a Hamas senior in that area. Tawil was arrested in 2002 and convicted in the military court due to interrogees confessions indicating he received tens of thousands of dollars from Abd Al Khalek Natsha (at the time, head of Hebron-based Hamas and Chairman of the Islamic Charity Society in Hebron) for military activity as well as Hamas Dawa activity.

In addition, some of the charity society members are prominent Hamas leaders in the Territories. Some are even PLC members elected in the 2006 PA elections.

### Milestones in Thwarting Terror Funds - Timeline

1997

- Designation of prominent Hamas funds abroad (Interpal, CBSP, and HLF) by the Israeli government and Israeli Defense Minister.

2001

- Designation of HLF in the U.S. by U.S. President for its support of Hamas.



→ 2002

- • Designation of the Union of Good as an illegal organization by the Israeli Defense Minister for its support of Hamas.

→ 2003

- • August 22: U.S. president instructs to freeze assets of 4 charity funds abroad, including Interpal, and prohibits contacts with them.

- • Closing of Al Aqsa branch in the Netherlands by local authorities.

- • Designation of Hamas as a terror organization by the E.U. (prior to that only Hamas military wing was regarded as a terror organization).

→ 2004

- • The German Administrative Court approved the designation of Al Aqsa Fund in Germany.
- • German authorities prohibit any kind of activity by the Palestinian Orphan Care Society which replaced the Al Aqsa Fund.

→ 2005

- • December 12: after 3 years of investigation, Danish Attorney General recommends to put Al Aqsa Fund seniors on trial for suspicion of delivering funds to Hamas-related or Hamas bodies.
- • At the same time, the Fund's assets were frozen in Denmark.

→ 2008

- • May 26: Israeli Defense Minister signs an order which designates 36 funds, members of the Union of Good, from all over the world, for their affiliation to or support of Hamas.
- • November 12: the U.S Department of Treasury designates the Union of Good.

→ 2009

- • February 27: The Charity Commission in Britain (a commission in charge on the proper activity of NPOs in Britain) published a



The Union of Good – Analysis and Mapping of Terror Funds Network

report on Interpal's activity in Britain. Following the investigation, Interpal was instructed to immediately disengage from the Union of Good and all of Interpal's employees were prohibited from assuming a role in the Union of Good.

- • April 4: A public declaration of disengagement from the Union of Good following the Charity Commission's report was issued by Issam Yousef (a senior Hamas activist, a founder of the Union of Good, and the Coalition Director of Operations) and 7 British charity funds including Interpal.
- • May 27: The Federal Courthouse in Dallas, U.S.A. convicts American-Palestinian citizens for directing the funding activity in HLF for terrorist purposes. The jury convicted the defendants in all 108 charges resulting in heavy sentences: 2 of the fund's seniors were sentenced to 65 years in jail, and the rest of the defendants were sentenced to 15-20 years.
- • In 2009, following the designation of the Union of Good in Israel and the U.S., several funds declared their disengagement from the Coalition in fear of enforcement measures by banks and authorities in different countries.

### Summary

The Union of Good is a well organized and coordinated global network with an eye to raise for and transfer terror funds to Islamic charity societies in the Territories. It only appears as though these are charity funds intended to assist the needed, but de facto, **these funds are destined for Territories-based charity societies governed by Hamas, that make their way to families of terrorists, security prisoners and detainees who committed acts of terror against Israel.** The money is also used for Hamas' organizational needs, such as propaganda offices and educational institutions in which Hamas' ideology is inserted among Palestinians and incitement against Israel is being conducted.



It should be mentioned that the wide public support Hamas receives is a result of its "economic power" exploited to promote its goals. Funds intended for social purposes end up in the hands of terrorists since the social supportive system and other systems, such as Hamas' organizational-political system and the military wing, are intertwined.

Throughout the last years many attempts had been made to change the approach to global war against terror funds. As the world has come to realize the threat posed by terror funds, cooperation between European states and the U.S. had increased to fight against Hamas-affiliated funds and bodies, including the Union of Good which is regarded as Hamas' financial linchpin. The abovementioned measures are significant in thwarting terror funds and achieving international cooperation to designate the organizations in different countries.