

A CUFI PRIMER:

Hamas - The Islamic Resistance Movement

What is Hamas

Hamas is the acronym of al-Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya—the name of the Islamic Resistance Movement, a Palestinian Sunni-Islamist terror organization that is legally banned by the United States, Canada, the EU and Israel. The second wealthiest terrorist organization in the world and the de facto rulers of the Gaza Strip, it poses a direct and immediate threat to the safety and security of Israeli civilians.



A Covenant of Terror

Founded in 1987 as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood by Palestinian cleric Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, its covenant states that “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.” Since its founding, Hamas has made every effort to fulfill this objective by murdering over 500 Israeli civilians. With suicide bombings, stabbings, terror tunnels and now relentless rocket attacks, Hamas has spared no expense or effort to develop methods to murder Israeli civilians while neglecting the needs and well-being of the Gazans who have been under Hamas’ de-facto rule since 2007.

“Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”

- Preamble to the Hamas Charter

The Missile Threat to Israeli Civilians

Since 2001, more than 17,000 rockets have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. Thanks to Iron Dome and Israeli warning systems, these rockets have not caused the high rate of casualties Hamas intended. But even with the Iron Dome missile defense system, the everyday threat from missile attacks is a brutal reality in Israel.

The rockets have caused extensive property damage in southern Israel, and the constant fear produced by Red Alert sirens has created nearly an entire generation of Israeli children living with PTSD in that region. While Hamas has not succeeded in killing many Israelis with their rockets, this persistent threat has disrupted and damaged the daily lives and the economy of Israeli communities within range of rockets from Gaza.

In a major escalation of violence by Hamas, in November 2018 Hamas fired over 400 rockets at Israeli territory in the space of 25 hours – the largest and densest barrage of rocket fire Israel has experienced from Hamas to-date. Most recent Israeli Defense Force estimates show that Hamas has a minimum of 12,000 rockets stockpiled, which equates to 1.5 rockets for every square mile of Israeli territory. The maximum warning most Israelis will receive for an incoming missile strike is between 30-45 seconds, and therefore these missile attacks present an immediate and direct threat to the people of Israel.

