



The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM) Herzliya,  
ISRAEL

[www.e-prism.org](http://www.e-prism.org)

**Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center  
THE PROJECT FOR THE RESEARCH OF ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS  
(PRISM)**

**PRISM SPECIAL DISPATCHES**

Volume 2 (2004), Number 4 (23 August 2004)

Director and Editor: Reuven Paz.

The Project for the Study of Islamist Movements is part of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center. Site: <http://www.e-prism.org> Email: [reupaz@netvision.net.il](mailto:reupaz@netvision.net.il). All material copyright Reuven Paz unless otherwise stated. Credit if quoting; ask permission to reprint. GLORIA is part of the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya

\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*

**Abstract:** This is a series of special dispatches that translate and analyze articles, reports, religious decrees, and other documents, written in Arabic by Islamist scholars, clerics, activists, or intellectuals, on major issues of interest.

**Hamas' Solidarity with Muqtada al-Sadr:  
Does the Movement Fall under the Control of Hizballah and  
Iran?**

**By Reuven Paz**

(PRISM Series of Special Dispatches on Global Jihad, No. 4/2)

**Introduction**

In 12 August 2004, Hamas published through its official web site a statement in support for the Anti-American struggle in Najaf, and for solidarity with the Iraqi people.<sup>1</sup> A week later, in 19 August 2004, the movement published another statement with specific support for the Shi'i rebel leader Muqtada al-Sadr and his fight in Najaf.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/hamas/statements/2004/12\\_8\\_04.htm](http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/hamas/statements/2004/12_8_04.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/hamas/statements/2004/19\\_8\\_04.htm](http://www.palestine-info.info/arabic/hamas/statements/2004/19_8_04.htm)



The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM) Herzliya,  
ISRAEL

[www.e-prism.org](http://www.e-prism.org)

The two statements were quite unique in the sphere of the rare involvement of Hamas in non-Palestinian issues, not to mention the public support for the minority Shi'i leader, Muqtada Al-Sadr.

### **Solidarity with Shi'ite Najaf**

The first public statement of Hamas dated 12 August 2004, focused on the condemnation of “the barbarian American aggression against Iraq” in general, and Najaf, in particular, and the general solidarity with the Iraqi people. The second one dated 19 August 2004, was much more specific, and looks like “someone” put pressures on Hamas to correct its position, and issue a specific statement with solidarity with Muqtada Al-Sadr, rather than just “the Iraqi people.” The statement is as follows:

A senior source in Hamas stated the following:

Hamas follows with big concern the escalation of the American aggression against the heroic city of Najaf, and against the shrine of the Imam `Ali bin Abi Taleb (may Allah honor his face). While Hamas is condemning this aggression against the Iraqi people and its sacred places, it declares its solidarity with Sayyed Muqtada al-Sadr and his brothers, who confront the American aggression. Hamas calls all the Iraqis, Shi'is and Sunnis, Arabs and Kurds, to strengthen their solidarity and national unity in face of this barbarian aggression, which targets them all. Hamas also calls the Arab and Islamic nation to express their rage and condemnation to the targeting of a brother Arab country, which was and will be one of the centers of civilization of this nation.

The solidarity of the Sunni Hamas movement, supposedly an integral part of the Muslim Brotherhood, with the Shi'ah is unique, not to mention that Al-Sadr does not represent the mainstream of the Iraqi Shi'is, and is not a senior cleric. The statement looks as if it was meant to appease certain foreign element. Furthermore, in former statement from 30 May 2004, Hamas condemned the Salafi-Jihadi terrorist operations in Riyadh by elements of Al-Qaeda.,<sup>3</sup> Hamas posted itself in a unique position in the Sunni Arab world, in its solidarity with one of the highlights of the Shi'I struggle in Iraq.

### **Conclusion**

The most interesting question that the two statements raise is who is behind it, and who was pushing Hamas towards it. In the case of the Jihadi terrorism on

---

<sup>3</sup> See PRISM Special Dispatch no. 3-2 “Hamas Vs. Al-Qaeda.” See on-line in: [http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM\\_Special\\_dispatch\\_no\\_3-2.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM_Special_dispatch_no_3-2.pdf)



The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM) Herzliya,  
ISRAEL

[www.e-prism.org](http://www.e-prism.org)

Saudi soil, we could estimate that it was Saudi Arabia, through its growing connections with the Muslim Brotherhood in general, and the past dominance of Saudi finance for Hamas. Yet, Saudi Arabia is not supporting the Shi`ah in Iraq, and its Wahhabi clerics are not concerned with any damage that might occur to `Ali's shrine in Najaf.

It seems that the solidarity with Muqtada al-Sadr could be only the result of the growing connection of Hamas with Hizballah and Iran. In the past year these ties, both in the operational and political levels, were constantly growing. The killing of the two most senior Hamas leaders in the Territories—Ahmad Yasin and Abd al-Aziz Rantisi—by Israel, violated the balance between the “internal” and “external” leaderships of the movement, and turned Khaled Mish'al into the most senior authority in the political and financial leadership. Mish'al has further strengthened Hamas' relationship with Hasan Nasrallah, and met him quite often in the past year.

In the past year Hamas seemed also as losing its nature as an integral part of the Muslim Brotherhood. Khaled Mish'al has already hinted to this development in his long and unique interview to the London-based paper Al-Hayat, in December 2003. In response to a question about the relationship between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, he said:

There are various organizations in Arab countries called Muslim Brotherhood. We have contacts with some of these movements as well as with other ones in the Arab and Islamic world. These contacts bear the nature of cooperation and coordination, but are not organizational. We are a Palestinian movement occupied with the Palestinian issues, and yet, we are open to our Arab and Islamic nation and its various elements, including the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>4</sup>

Such a declaration was contradictory to Hamas covenant from August 1988, which is still valid. It was the first time that a Hamas leader made such a distinction between the movement and the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet, no denial was made, even though Sheikh Yasin was still alive at the time.

During the past year it seemed also that the total support of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood for Hamas has weakened under the possible pressure of

---

<sup>4</sup> Al-Hayat (London), interview with Khaled Mish'al by Ghassan Sherbel, part VI, 9 December 2003.



The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM) Herzliya,  
ISRAEL

[www.e-prism.org](http://www.e-prism.org)

the Jordanian government. The mother Brotherhood movement in Egypt has never been influential over Hamas, and is too weak in the Islamic arena in general. The road is open, therefore, to the further process of the Palestinian nationalization of Hamas and the growth of the national element instead of the Islamic one. Hizballah is focusing in the Palestinian arena on the political and operational dimensions, rather than the Islamic ones, the same as it does in Lebanon. Hence, its growing influence on Hamas is not pushing the movement towards being more Islamic, but the other way.

Such statements will probably add to the harsh criticism over Hamas in the Islamist writings and Internet forums of Al-Qaeda and the Sunni supporters of global Jihad, whose anti-Shi`ah views are widely stated there. Just recently, another harsh criticism of Hamas was published in an unsigned article on the main ideological web site of Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, the central Islamist trend of Jihad in Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The article, titled “Hamas... nothing but enthusiasm”<sup>5</sup> [the meaning of Hamas in Arabic] looks like a severe affidavit against the Palestinian Islamic movement in every possible field. Among other accusations, the author claims that some of Hamas elements “converted into Shi`ism as was published several years ago in Al-Mujtama` magazine, while Hamas did not respond to it.” One of the author’s conclusions is that “Hamas lacks clear ideological path” and this is one of its main obstacles.

It seems that Hamas under an old-new leadership, is falling more and more under the direct control of Hizballah, and indirect influence of the Iranian financial support. The Iranian/Lebanese/Shi`I influence is not unique to Hamas only. The alliance that has been developed during the present Intifada between Hamas and the Iranian-biased Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and mainly with the armed wing of Fatah, Shuhada al-Aqsa Brigades, paved the way to increasing Iranian influence in the Palestinian arena, inside and outside of Palestine. The support for Muqtada al-Sadr, is just a symptom of this influence, but it is significant in an Islamic movement, which used to be ideological for many years.

---

<sup>5</sup> See on-line in: <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=2790>