



Arrest of Hamas Terrorist Cells in Europe: Hamas May Carry Out Attacks Abroad

Aviv Oreg and Ronald Sandee

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Overview¹

- ▶ Over the years, Hamas established a network across Europe, operating charitable societies and institutions to raise money for its civilian and military facilities in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria, even though Hamas was put on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations as early as 2003. Hamas representatives in Europe carried out extensive propaganda activity, including early attempts to establish political parties.
- ▶ Only after the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, and the pro-Hamas demonstrations throughout Europe, did European countries institute serious measures against Hamas, including outlawing the movement and shutting down its financial sources.
- ▶ In October 2025, three Hamas terrorist operatives were arrested in Germany on suspicion of preparing to attack Israeli and Jewish targets in the near or immediate future. In December 2023, four Hamas operatives were arrested in Germany and the Netherlands, suspected of being responsible for maintaining hidden weapons caches in Europe under the supervision of the movement's military wing branch in Lebanon.
- ▶ **In ITIC assessment, the arrests indicate that for the first time, Hamas was planning to attack Israeli and Jewish targets on European soil. The arrest of the movement's operatives, some of whom were known to authorities as fundraisers, indicates Hamas' desire to exploit its fundraising and propaganda networks in Europe, especially in Germany and Austria, to carry out attacks, despite the efforts of European authorities to take action against the movement following the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. Hamas is liable to use people who participated in the pro-Hamas demonstrations in Europe in the past two years to attack Israeli and Jewish targets. Meanwhile, Hamas operatives are also liable to exploit the pro-Hamas demonstrations to**

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

establish parties which will seek to enter the political arena and increase Hamas and its supporters' efforts to influence public opinion and decision-makers in Europe.

Arrest of a Hamas Cell in Germany (2025)

► On October 1, 2025, authorities in Germany arrested three people suspected of belonging to Hamas. According to the German prosecution, since the summer of 2025 the suspects had been engaged in preparations, including acquiring a significant quantity of arms and ammunition, to attack Israeli and Jewish targets in Berlin. It was also reported that weapons were found in their possession, including Kalashnikov assault rifles and pistols (German Federal Prosecutor's Office, October 1, 2025; Reuters, October 2, 2025).

► According to reports, two of the suspects, identified as Abd al-G. and Ahmed I., are Syrian immigrants with German citizenship, while the third detainee, identified as Wael F. M., is known as a dangerous terrorist operative who arrived in Germany from Lebanon in the summer of 2025 and was under close surveillance since his arrival in the country (*Bild*, October 4, 2025).

► The Israeli prime minister issued a statement on behalf of the Mossad, according to which the arrest of the cell in Germany had been made possible through the close cooperation between the Israeli intelligence organization and the German security services. It was further stated that the arrest was carried out as part of an extensive surveillance operation conducted by the Mossad against Hamas elements on the European continent, including Austria. Hamas terrorist networks were exposed in several countries, and the local security services dealt with their weapons caches (office of the Israeli prime minister, October 1, 2025).

► Following the Mossad announcement, Austria's minister of the interior, Gerhard Karner, confirmed that the Directorate for State Security and Intelligence (DSN) was investigating Hamas and had gathered evidence. However, no further details were released as the investigations are ongoing (ORF, October 3, 2025).

► Hamas claimed there was no connection between the detainees and the movement. It claimed the accusations were meant to attack Hamas and muddy "the sympathy" of the German people toward the Palestinians and their "legitimate struggle against the Zionist occupation." Hamas further claimed that its policy "has been and remains confined to the struggle against the Zionist occupation to Palestine" (Hamas Telegram channel, October 1, 2025).

Exposure of a Hamas Network Which Stockpiled Weapons (2023)

On December 14, 2023, security forces in Germany arrested three Lebanese-born Hamas operatives who had lived in Europe for years. They were Abdelhamid al-Ali, born in 1978 in al-Wast, Lebanon, who lived in Catania, Italy; Muhammad Ibrahim Ali Ibrahim Bassiouny, born in 1990 in Sidon, Lebanon, who lived in Berlin and was an Egyptian citizen; and Ibrahim el-Rassatmi, born in 1987 in Sidon, Lebanon, who had lived in Berlin since 2012. Meanwhile, authorities in the Netherlands arrested Nazih Rustom, born in 1967 in the Palestinian refugee camp al-Rashidiya, Lebanon, who lived in Rotterdam and was a Dutch citizen, and who was extradited to Germany in February 2024. According to reports in Germany, the detainees had a USB device containing intelligence information, including photographs of the Israeli embassy in Berlin, the former Tempelhof airport complex in Berlin, and the American Ramstein Air Base (TAZ, March 5, 2025).²



Right: Ibrahim el-Rassatmi (Facebook page of Jericho Restaurant, Berlin, August 2, 2020).

Left: Nazih Rustom (profile photo from Nazih Rustom's X account)

The indictment against the four for membership in a foreign terrorist organization was filed in November 2024, and the trial opened on February 25, 2025. According to the indictment, Bassiouny, al-Ali, el-Rassatmi and Rustom joined Hamas, had key positions in the movement and maintained direct contact with senior commanders in the Lebanese branch of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing. It was also alleged that the four were instructed to carry out various activities to promote the operations of the military wing on

² <https://taz.de/Hamas-Prozess-in-Berlin/!6070375/>

European soil, including by establishing hidden caches for concealing weapons and attacking Israeli and American targets in Europe.³

► Reportedly, the case surprised German intelligence services, which until then had regarded Hamas activity on the continent as focused on advocacy and fundraising. All four key detainees in the case were known to security services in Europe as Hamas operatives and were defined as movement "fundraisers."

► Additional defendants in the case, standing trial separately, include a Hamas operative identified as al-Mahmoud, who lives in Helsinki, Finland; Anna Barbara Grossman, a German citizen who served as an assistant to el-Rassatmi; and Rash Rash, an operative who went on missions with Rustom.⁴

Hamas Network Activity in Bulgaria

► In the spring of 2019, el-Rassatmi was instructed by senior commanders in Hamas' military wing in Lebanon to set up a weapons cache near the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, which he did two weeks later. The cache contained various types of weapons, including three Kalashnikov rifles, a Makarov pistol with a silencer, three Tokarev pistols, large quantities of ammunition, and over one hundred magazines for the weapons.

► In the period before the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, el-Rassatmi was instructed by the deputy commander of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon, Khalil Hamed al-Kharaz (Abu Khaled), who was in charge of Hamas activity abroad, to go to the Bulgarian cache and check it and the condition of the weapons.



Khalil Hamed al-Kharaz (Palestine Online, November 22, 2023)

³ *Berliner Morgenpost*, March 5, 2025 <https://www.morgenpost.de/berlin/article408487298/berliner-hamas-prozess-ermittler-spricht-von-grosser-sorge-vor-anschlaegen.html>

⁴ According to the German indictment of al-Ali, Bassiouny, Rassatmi and Rustom.

► El-Rassatmi went to Bulgaria together with Anna Barbara Grossman on August 13, 2023, located the cache, photographed the weapons and sent the pictures to al-Kharaz via WhatsApp. At al-Kharaz's instruction, dissatisfied with the condition of the weapons, el-Rassatmi and Grossman returned three days later to Plovdiv. While Grossman waited in town, el-Rassatmi went to the cache site again, inspected it and photographed the weapons. Upon completing their mission, el-Rassatmi and Grossman flew back to Berlin on August 17, 2023.



Some of the weapons found in the cache in Bulgaria⁵

Network Activity in Denmark

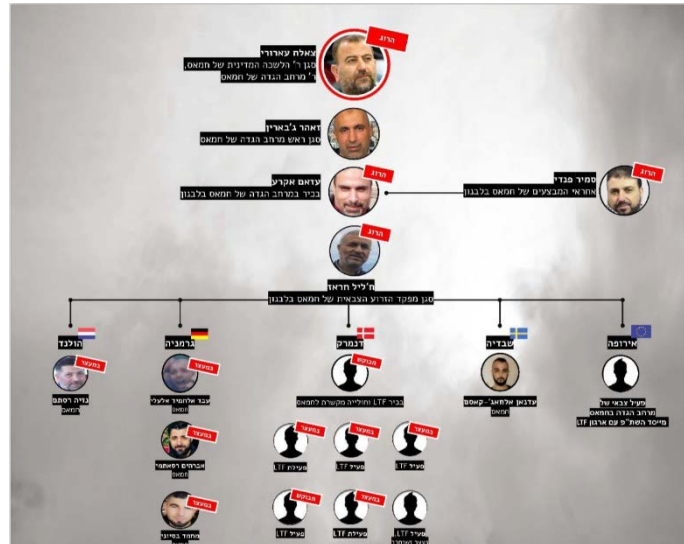
► Another Hamas cache had been situated in Denmark even before the establishment of the Bulgarian cache. It was set up by a Hamas operative named Dibaje, although his true identity is unclear. An investigation found that a man of Palestinian origin named Muhammed Dibaje, who had gone to Denmark from Lebanon in 1989, had been involved in criminal activity and spent much of his life in prison.⁶ It is possible that Dibaje was part of a criminal organization called Loyal To Familia (LTF), which operated in Denmark until it was outlawed in 2021, with members acting as Hamas proxies operated by al-Kharaz. After the organization was outlawed, many of its operatives fled Denmark and now live in Lebanon.⁷ On December 14, 2023, as the arrests were being conducted in Germany and the Netherlands, six additional suspects were arrested in Denmark with Mossad assistance, including two women and members of the LTF, and another suspect was later extradited from Lebanon. They were

⁵ <https://www.daserste.de/information/politik-weltgeschehen/report-mainz/sendung/2024/04-23-pm-hamas-100.html>

⁶ <https://fagbladet3f.dk/nu-skaerer-mohamed-kun-i-boeffe/>

⁷ Itamar Eichner, "The Mossad and Shin Bet Reveal: These Are the Hamas Operatives Who Planned Attacks in Europe," Ynet, January 13, 2024.

charged with terrorism offenses, some accused of purchasing UAVs for carrying out Hamas attacks in Denmark or another country.⁸



**The Hamas terrorist network in Europe, as described by the Mossad
(office of the Israeli prime minister, January 13, 2024)**

► On June 17, 2019, el-Rassatmi met in Lebanon with senior figures in Hamas' military wing to report on the creation of the Bulgarian weapons cache, including its location. He was instructed to clear the cache Dibaje had created in Denmark and transfer the weapons to a new cache in Germany. Following the instructions and using a USB device containing the coordinates of the cache, el-Rassatmi went by bus to Denmark in August 2019, located the cache in a rural house in the town of Ørbæk on the island of Funen, found several weapons, including at least one pistol, hid them in his backpack, and returned to Germany by bus to avoid inspection of his belongings.⁹ Note: There is no indication that the cache was used in the period preceding the October 7, 2023 attack.

Network Activity in Poland

⁸ Mossad announcement, January 13, 2024; LTF'ere ,unge kvinder og skikkelse fra det svenske bandemiljø: Her er de sigtede i terrrorsagen" , (DR, 21 December 2023 . <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/ltfere-unge-kvinder-og-skikkelse-fra-det-svenske-bandemiljoe-her-er-de-sigtete-i> ;Danish Security and Intelligence Service, 19 May 2025 .<https://pet.dk/en/about-pet/news-list/man-imprisoned-in-terrorism-case-with-links-to-hamas-and-criminal-gangs/2025/05/19>

⁹ "Die geheimen Europa-Pläne der Hamas," *Die Welt*, April 15, 2025. <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/plus255922292/Terrorismus-Die-geheimen-Europa-Plaene-der-Hamas.html>.

▶ Another Hamas weapons cache was created near the city of Jeleniów, Poland, near the Czech border. Between June 9, 2023, and December 14, 2023, Hamas, through its operatives spread across the continent, made four failed attempts to locate the cache.

▶ On June 23, 2023, Nazih Rustom and co-defendant Rash Rash arrived in Berlin from Beirut after receiving instructions to locate the Polish cache. Three days later, following directions, they drove from Berlin to Poland in a rented car and tried to locate the cache in a forest near the city of Jelenia Góra. They stayed in the area for about two days but failed to find the cache and returned to Berlin on the evening of June 28, 2023. The next day, Rustom flew to Istanbul¹⁰ to report their failure in person to the leadership of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

▶ On July 24, 2023, under al-Kharaz's direction, al-Mahmoud flew from Helsinki to Berlin to continue the search. He joined el-Rassatmi, and together with an assistant called a "witness," they crossed the German–Polish border and stayed at a hotel in the Polish border city of Słubice, while the assistant returned to her home in Frankfurt an der Oder. The next day, the assistant rejoined el-Rassatmi and al-Mahmoud in Słubice, and the three drove in a rented car to search the area around the Polish town of Szklarska Poręba. Although they were in contact throughout the day with Khalil al-Kharaz in Beirut, who instructed them during the search, they failed to locate the cache and returned to Berlin in the evening. The next day, el-Rassatmi and al-Mahmoud reported on their mission to al-Kharaz by phone call.

▶ On October 4, 2023, while in Lebanon, Nazih Rustom received encrypted coordinates about the location of the cache in Poland near a road junction in the Jeleniów area, and informed Mohamed Bassiouny he would arrive in Berlin the following day. Bassiouny took Rustom from the Berlin airport to the home of another assistant called a "witness." Near midnight, Bassiouny picked up Rustom from the witness' house in his car and the two crossed the Polish border. They conducted a thorough search lasting about five hours (01:38–06:33) at the new location in the forest near the road junction in the Jeleniów area, but without success. Rustom and Bassiouny returned to Berlin in the morning and immediately reported to al-Kharaz that they had failed.

▶ On October 7, 2023, Bassiouny and Rustom again went to Poland and searched in the area again, this time in daylight, and again without success, returning to Berlin in the evening.

¹⁰ Although that is what appears in the original indictment, it was probably a clerical error and in fact Rustom went to Beirut, not Istanbul, to report to the leadership of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in Lebanon, and not in Turkey.

The following day Rustom flew from Berlin to Beirut to discuss the two failures to locate the cache, with senior members of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

► In another attempt to locate the cache in Poland, Abdelhamid al-Ali left Beirut on October 13, 2023, according to al-Kharaz's instructions, arriving in Berlin, where he was picked up by the assistant ("the witness") and taken to an apartment in the city. The next day al-Ali met with Bassiouny, and the two went to a restaurant owned by Ibrahim el-Rassatmi, who supplied them with digging and navigation equipment. Before dawn on October 15, al-Ali and Bassiouny left in Bassiouny's car for Poland and searched the same location again. After failing to locate the cache, they continued searching in the area of Szklarska Poręba but again without success, and returned to Berlin. Over the next two days, al-Ali briefed senior Hamas figure Amer al-Arid (Abu Hashem) on the search results. Al-Ali returned to Beirut on October 18. On October 24, 2023, while in Lebanon, and having received instructions from al-Kharaz, Rustom transferred the cache data and his search documentation to a man named "Ziyad the teacher" in Lebanon.

► On November 20, 2023, al-Ali again left Beirut for Berlin to try to locate the cache site in Poland. However, the mission was cut short when, a day later, Khalil al-Kharaz was killed in an Israeli strike in Lebanon. In the evening, al-Ali returned to Lebanon and attended al-Kharaz's funeral, where he was a pall-bearer and personally placed al-Kharaz's body in his grave.¹¹



**Right: Abdelhamid al-Ali at al-Kharaz's funeral (X account of Ahmed Farhat, November 24, 2023).
Left: Al-Ali placing al-Kharaz's body in his grave (Facebook page of Bassam Rustom, November 26, 2023)**

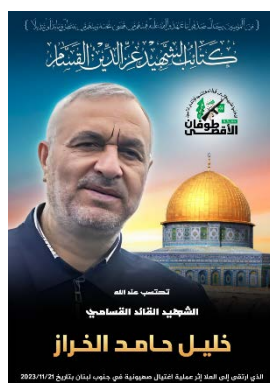
► On December 12, 2023, al-Ali returned from Beirut to Berlin intending to resume the search for the weapons in Poland. The next day, al-Ali contacted Assad al-Kharaz, Khalil al-Kharaz's son, to say they had to postpone the search because of the weather. He asked him to

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/bassam.alhebeaboimad/videos/725915986066853>

tell Hamas senior figure "Amer."¹² Two days later, al-Ali and the three other members of the network were arrested.

Khalil al-Kharaz

► The indictment revealed the central role of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' command in Lebanon in managing, coordinating, and operating the combat-supporting network abroad. Prominent among the operatives was Khalil Hamed al-Kharaz, aka Abu Khaled, deputy commander of the military wing in Lebanon. He was also involved in constructing and operating the cache network in Europe and the defendants in the case called him Hamas' "head of the foreign attack unit." After al-Kharaz had been eliminated, the Izz al-Din Brigades issued a statement claiming that "commander" Abu Khaled had been present in all the fields of jihad for decades, had supported and assisted the "resistance"¹³ at home and abroad, and had left his jihadist mark in the field.¹⁴ There is intelligence indicating that Assad al-Kharaz, al-Kharaz's son, continues his father's activity and is the contact person for the network operatives in Europe.



Mourning notice of Hamas' military wing for al-Kharaz's death
(Telegram channel of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, November 22, 2023)

► Until the weapons cache affair, there had been almost no particular information about Khalil al-Kharaz's covert activities. The previous important case occurred in 2016, when a

¹² In all probability Azzam Hasni al-Aqra, aka Abu Abdallah and Abu Amer, a commander in Hamas' military wing from the town of Qabalan in the Nablus district, a released prisoner and one of the Hamas operatives expelled to Marj al-Zuhur in Lebanon in December 1992. Al-Aqra, who held the Hamas military portfolio abroad, was killed in the Israeli strike that eliminated Hamas deputy political bureau head Saleh al-'Arouri during a meeting with senior Hamas military officials in Beirut on January 2, 2024. For further information, see the January 2024 ITIC report, [Reactions to the killing of Saleh al-'Arouri](#).

¹³ The terrorist organizations seeking to destroy the State of Israel.

¹⁴ Al-Buss refugee camp website, November 22, 2023. https://www.albuss.net/2023/11/blog-post_361.html

British citizen named Fayeze Sharay was sent by al-Kharaz to Israel to transfer funds and equipment to Hamas terrorist operatives in Judea and Samaria. Sharay was arrested in Israel and during questioning he revealed that al-Kharaz had an extensive network of assistants, Palestinians with European passports, who carried out various activities for Hamas under his direction. He testified that al-Kharaz told him about "a Dutch citizen of Palestinian origin" who went to Judea and Samaria where he carried out "various activities" for Hamas. He also said al-Kharaz told him about his intentions to expand Hamas' networks and activities in Europe by recruiting operatives with European citizenship.¹⁵

► The strike which eliminated al-Kharaz in November 2023 also killed two Turkish citizens, Sayfullah Bilal Ozturk and Yakup Erdal, who were Salafi-jihadists from Turkey. Ozturk had fought in the Syrian Civil War, apparently in the ranks of ISIS, and Erdal was active in the Turkish organization Tevhid Selam, the main branch of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Qods Force in Turkey.¹⁶ That the two were with al-Kharaz in Lebanon means they might have belonged to the special foreign operations branch Hamas planned to establish in Turkey and may have come to meet al-Kharaz in Lebanon in preparation.¹⁷



Mourning notice distributed in Istanbul Salafi circles for Ozturk and Erdal¹⁸

Nazih Rustom¹⁹

¹⁵ Omri Sadan and Avi Issacharoff, "The line of terrorism connecting London to Nablus: Hamas' Covert Activity in Europe," Walla!, November 18, 2016. <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3014335>

¹⁶ <https://nordicmonitor.com/2023/11/irans-quds-force-nurtured-turkish-jihadist-killed-by-israeli-drone-in-lebanon-confidential-documents-reveal/>

¹⁷ In a Hamas document brought back from the Gaza Strip by IDF forces, a plan was presented for Hamas to establish a security branch in Turkey which would coordinate operations abroad against Israel, including assassinations of military personnel and attacks on Israeli [vessels](#). For further information, see the February 2025 ITIC report, "Turkey as a Center for Hamas Activity."

¹⁸ <https://www.haksozhaber.net/beyazitta-gazze-sehitlerimiz-icin-giyabi-cenaze-namazi-169422h.htm>

¹⁹ The profile of Nazih Rustom is based primarily on his social media accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000834130742> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100078715875473> ;

► During questioning Fayez Sharay did not provide details about the Dutch citizen, however, it is extremely likely that he referred to Nazih Rustom, one of the defendants in the weapons cache case, especially since al-Kharaz and Rustom belong to the same family, some of whose members were involved in terrorist activity of the Fatah movement's Yusuf al-Najjar Battalion in the early 1980s along the Israel-Lebanon border.²⁰



Fatah's Yusuf al-Najjar Battalions squad before its departure for Operation Hanita, December 1980. Rustom Abdallah Rustom kneels in the front row²¹

► Nazih Rustom was born in the al-Rashidiya Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon in July 1967. He arrived in the Netherlands in 1994, where he received Dutch citizenship and a passport. During the first decade of the 21st century, Rustom was appointed to the board of directors of two foundations which shared Hamas' ideology, both controlled by Amin Abou Rashed, a senior Hamas operative in the Netherlands who is on trial for funding Hamas. Between September 2005 and March 2009 Rustom was the secretary of the ISRAA Foundation (Stichting Internationale Steun Rechtstreeks Aan Armen), one of four organizations that succeeded the al-Aqsa Foundation. Rustom was also the treasurer of the PPMS Foundation (Stichting Palestijns Platform voor Mensenrechten en Solidariteit – Palestinian Platform for Human Rights and Solidarity), another successor to the al-Aqsa Foundation.

► After leaving the two funds, Rustom established his own charity called Bab al-Janna (Gates of Paradise), registered on October 1, 2012, in the Dutch companies register. The

<https://www.facebook.com/stbabaljanna/> ; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nazih-rustom-43b351138/> ; <https://www.linkedin.com/company/stichting-bab-al-jana/>

²⁰ One of the brothers, Rustom Rustom, was killed while trying to infiltrate Kibbutz Hanita, located on the Lebanon-Israel border, in December 1980, in an event they refer to as "Operation Hanita." Another family member, Abd al-Aziz Rustom, was killed in an exchange of fire with IDF forces on the Lebanese coast near Tyre three months later (Bassam Rustom's Facebook page).

<https://www.facebook.com/bassam.alhebeaboimad>

²¹ Facebook page of Bassem Rustom, December 25, 2014.

mission of Bab al-Janna was described as "raising funds to alleviate the financial needs of the poor, the disabled and orphans around the world."

► An investigation of Rustom's social media accounts reveals that he is connected to the Muslim Brotherhood network in Europe as well as to the network of pro-Gaza, pro-Hamas support organizations in Europe, particularly in the Netherlands and Germany.

Appendix A: Hamas Networks in Germany

The Palestinian Community in Germany

► According to unofficial estimates, due to German privacy laws, the Palestinian immigrant community in the country numbered 80,000 in 2001 and has since grown to about 100,000 today, making it the largest among European countries. Most Palestinian immigrants in Germany live in major cities, mainly in Berlin, where it is estimated that 45,000 Palestinian immigrants reside, half of all Muslim immigrants in the city. Most came to Germany from Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war in the late 1970s and make up about 75% of the Palestinian community in Berlin.²² Others were students who went to school mainly in East Germany and remained in the country after completing their studies.²³

The Hamas Leadership in Germany

► Over the years, German intelligence and law enforcement authorities and media outlets have identified two Hamas operatives as leading the movement's activity:

◆ German intelligence services said Walid Abu Shawarib was Hamas' point of contact (POC) in Berlin until 2014.²⁴ According to an investigative report in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* in 1997, "In Palestinian circles in Berlin, Abu Shawarib, born October 9, 1963, ... is considered the head of Hamas in Berlin... and the leadership of the movement in Berlin is in practice integrated into the network of organizations created by Hamas in the Palestinian diaspora."²⁵

◆ Majed Khalil Mousa al-Zeer, according to documents from the ministry of the interior and security services published at the end of 2023, is Hamas' official

²² Shahd Wari, *Palestinian Berlin. Perceptions and Use of Public Space* (LIT Verlag, Zurich 2017) pp.67, 73-77

²³ Interactive encyclopedia of the Palestine question – palquest | Palestinians in Germany

²⁴ Europol Information Exchange, AWF99-008 Terrorism Islamic, 10 September 2007.

²⁵ Uwe Klussmann, 'Krieger in Berlin', *Der Spiegel*, no 43/1997, 19 October 1997.

<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/krieger-in-berlin-a-9305a4b4-0002-0001-0000-000008805098?context=issue>

representative in Germany.²⁶ Al-Zeer, a British citizen who moved to Germany in 2014, previously headed the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), a Palestinian propaganda organization based in Britain considered an important Hamas arm in Europe.²⁷ Al-Zeer heads the European Palestinian Council for Political Relations (EUPAC), which works to promote the "Palestinian cause" in Europe, including through contacts with political figures and civilian organizations.²⁸ Al-Zeer was also previously documented with former Hamas political bureau head Isma'il Haniyeh and claimed that the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre had been "self-defense." Until May 2024, al-Zeer lived in Berlin,²⁹ but is now thought to have recently relocated to Istanbul, Turkey.³⁰ On October 7, 2024, the United States Treasury Department added al-Zeer to the sanctions list, calling him Hamas' senior representative in Germany and saying he played a central role in fundraising for Hamas in Europe.³¹



Majed al-Zeer (Quds Press, October 11, 2025)

▶ Since 2003, when the European Union outlawed Hamas and all its branches,³² the movement has not conducted overt activity in EU countries, including Germany. However, over

²⁶ Rasmus Buchsteiner, Tobias Großkemper, Hubert Gude, Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt, Roman Lehberger und Sven Röbel, 'Arrests Suggest Terrorist Organization Is Operating in Europe', 15 December 2023. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/hamas-in-germany-arrests-suggest-terrorist-organization-is-operating-in-europe-a-ba8a9a89-b5bc-49a1-9247-3cbac9519a58>

²⁷ For further information, see the December 2023 ITIC report, [The organizations leading the pro-Hamas demonstrations in Britain since the outbreak of Operation Iron Swords](#)

²⁸ For further information, see the March 2024 ITIC report, [Support for Hamas in Belgium and the Netherlands since the Outbreak of the Swords of Iron War](#)

²⁹ EUPAC, 'Démission/nomination d'administrateur, assemblée générale extraordinaire du 07/10/2024, Déposé/Reçu le 16 Oct. 2024 au greffe du tribunal de l'entreprise francophone à Bruxelles.

³⁰ Ulrich Kraetzer, Uwe Muller and Lennart Pfahler, 'Der unscheinbare Hamas-Führer von nebenan', *Welt am Sonntag*, nr. 50, 15 December 2024, p. 8.

³¹ U.S. Department of Treasury, 'Treasury Targets Significant International Hamas Fundraising Network', 7 October 2024. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2632>

³² Hamas's military wing was outlawed in the European Union in December 2001, and two years later the entire movement was added to the list of terrorist organizations. The decision was annulled in 2014, but

the years German security, intelligence and enforcement agencies have identified the organization's activities and operatives and have taken measures against them. According to data from Germany's domestic intelligence agency (BfV), the number of Hamas operatives and supporters in the country increased by 50% from 2008 to 2023.³³

Year	Number of Hamas Operatives
2008–2015	300
2016–2018	320
2019	380
2020–2023	450

► Divided by areas of activity, the domestic intelligence agency's report shows that in 2023, 150 Hamas operatives were identified in Berlin, an increase of 50% over the previous year.³⁴ In North Rhine–Westphalia, about 175 Hamas operatives were identified,³⁵ in Brandenburg, about 30 operatives.³⁶

Hamas Activity in Germany

► The city of Aachen in Germany was once the home of the main branch of the al-Aqsa Foundation, one of the central bodies in Hamas' fundraising system in Western countries, until the German ministry of the interior banned its activity in August 2002. The al-Aqsa Foundation was very active in fundraising campaigns for foundations, charities and institutions which were part of Hamas' "civil" (*dawah*) structure and under the authority and supervision of the movement's political leadership in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria.³⁷ On July 31, 2002, German Federal Interior Minister Otto Schily banned the foundation's activity. Searches were

the Court of Justice of the European Union returned Hamas to the list of terrorist organizations in 2017. For further information, see the November 2023 ITIC report <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/international-activity-against-hamas-since-the-outbreak-of-operation-iron-swords/>

³³ Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, Verfassungsschutzbericht ,2023 p. 247

³⁴ Verfassungsschutz Berlin, Bericht ,2023 p26 .

³⁵ Verfassungsschutzbericht des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen über das Jahr ,2023 p. 240

³⁶ The numbers for Brandenburg include operatives of Hamas and other "Islamic organizations." Verfassungsschutzbericht des Landes Brandenburg ,2023 p. 169.

³⁷ For further information, see the November 2024 ITIC report, [Hamas and Hezbollah Activities in Europe: Germany as a Test Case](#)

conducted in the offices and homes of the foundation's board members, and its accounts and assets in Aachen and Cologne worth €300,000 euros.³⁸

► In July 2003, a German court granted the al-Aqsa Foundation temporary permission to operate, but in December 2004, the Federal Administrative Court of Germany upheld the federal government's position, ordered the cessation of the foundation's activity, and approved its dissolution. The court ruled that the foundation assisted in promoting Hamas' terrorist operations against Israel and that it was impossible to separate Hamas' social activity from its operational activity.³⁹ The foundation's founder, Mahmoud Amr, was deported from Germany in 2004 and resettled in Belgium, where he became active in the local branch of the al-Aqsa Foundation, which changed its name to Bayt al-Aqsa (Aqsahum).⁴⁰

► Despite the closure of the al-Aqsa Foundation, other organizations and associations continued to operate in Germany to raise funds for Hamas under the guise of charities, most of which were later shut down by the authorities, such as Bremer Hilfswerk e.V., established in February 2003 as the "successor" to the al-Aqsa Foundation, but dissolved two years later after the ministry of the interior took action against it for collecting and transferring funds to Hamas.⁴¹

► Investigations in Germany also found that the charity Ansaar International e.V., founded on September 20, 2012, and registered on February 7, 2013, under the name Ansaar Düsseldorf e.V., had direct ties to Hamas, including to the Islamic Society of Jabalia (ISJ), which was part of Hamas' *dawah*. According to the German ministry of the interior, under the law, even support for the organization in Jabalia was prohibited because every euro aided Hamas as a whole, even if it did not reach the military wing.⁴² On May 5, 2021, the German ministry of the interior banned the association's activity and that of eight affiliated charities, because the association "is directed against the concept of international understanding and the constitutional order" and "promotes goals and activities that violate criminal law." In addition,

³⁸ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/extremismus-schily-verbietet-spendenverein-der-hamas-174163.html>

³⁹ For further information, see the December 2004 ITIC report, https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/pdf/PDF%202/DEC3_04_1934581202.pdf

⁴⁰ https://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/tsv_pdf/2021/10/27/21128356.pdf

⁴¹ Freie Hansestadt Bremen, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2005, pp. 71-72

⁴² Jörg Diehl, Katrin Eiger, Roman Lehberger, Sven Röbel, Fidelius Schmid, Hannes Schrader and Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt, Wir müssen höllisch aufpassen, Der Spiegel Nr. 20, 15 May 2021, pp. 30-31 ; Vereinsregister des Amtsgericht Düsseldorf, Ansaar Düsseldorf e.V., VR 10830.

the donations collected by the association supported terrorist organizations, including Hamas, and it promoted a Salafi ideology and spread extremist Islamic views.⁴³

► One of the largest associations was the Palestinian Community in Germany (Palästinensische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e.V. – PGD), a Palestinian-German solidarity organization established in 2009 and active until the end of November 2023. In addition to fundraising and advocacy, the association sponsored demonstrations and conferences for "Palestine," and the German security service stated that its annual events were "Hamas' most important propaganda event in Europe" (t-online, October 13, 2023). Throughout its years of activity, the association was suspected of supporting Hamas and acting on its behalf, the regional branches of Germany's domestic intelligence service in Berlin,⁴⁴ Hamburg⁴⁵ and North Rhine–Westphalia⁴⁶ suspected most of its members as belonging to Hamas.

German Authorities' Activity against Hamas

► Germany is one of the leading European Union countries dealing with Hamas activity within its territory. Since 2001, when the movement's military wing was added to the list of terrorist organizations, the state authorities have worked to shut down organizations and institutions connected to Hamas, confiscate their assets and close their bank accounts, while simultaneously conducting investigations and arrests of suspects involved in Hamas-supporting activity.

► Hamas' attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, provided an opportunity for the federal authorities in Germany to increase the restrictions placed on Hamas. On October 13, 2023, Chancellor Olaf Scholz banned Hamas activity in Germany and banned the German branch of the Samidoun organization, whose members distributed sweets to the public after the attack.⁴⁷ Scholz emphasized that anyone who supported terrorist organizations like Hamas was committing a criminal offense (DW News, November 2, 2023).

⁴³ <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/pressemitteilungen/DE/2021/05/verbotsverfahren-ansaar.html>

⁴⁴

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/inneres/verfassungsschutz/publikationen/verfassungsschutzberichte/verfassungsschutzbericht-2016.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/dokument/51192/demonstration-der-pal%C3%A4stinensischen-gemeinschaft-in-deutschland-pgd-.pdf>

⁴⁶ http://www.mik.nrw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Redakteure/Verfassungsschutz/Dokumente/VS-Berichte/Islamismus/2015/Hamas.pdf

⁴⁷ Samidoun, established in 2012, is an NGO affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It represents itself as supporting the release of Palestinian prisoners. It is active in

► On November 2, 2023, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser declared Hamas a terrorist organization and ordered the dissolution of Samidoun. The ruling meant a ban on the activity of both organizations, a ban on gatherings, and a ban on the public display of symbols associated with Hamas, including the movement's flags of all its branches and units and headbands with inscriptions such as "al-Qassam Brigades" or "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." Another prominent ban was on the use of the slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," which became popular in pro-Palestinian demonstrations around the world with the start of the war (website of the German government newspaper, November 2, 2023). Immediately after the interior minister's announcement, German federal police raided 15 sites suspected of being connected to Hamas and PFLP in several German states (*Bild*, November 23, 2023).

► The absolute ban on Hamas and the complete prohibition of any aspect of its activity provided the German government and law enforcement authorities with additional tools to take action and open investigations against the movement's activity. According to a report by the ministry of the interior of North Rhine–Westphalia from April 2024, several Hamas-supporting associations operating in Germany had disbanded, apparently the result of searches carried out by the authorities following the ban on Hamas activity. The report noted that the disbanding of the associations was a serious defeat for Hamas supporters, who lost their main tools for building networks and spreading propaganda. According to the report, there would likely be no short-term alternative for fundraising, organization or propaganda (website of the North Rhine–Westphalia ministry of the interior, April 2024).

Appendix B: Hamas Networks in Austria

The Palestinian Community in Austria

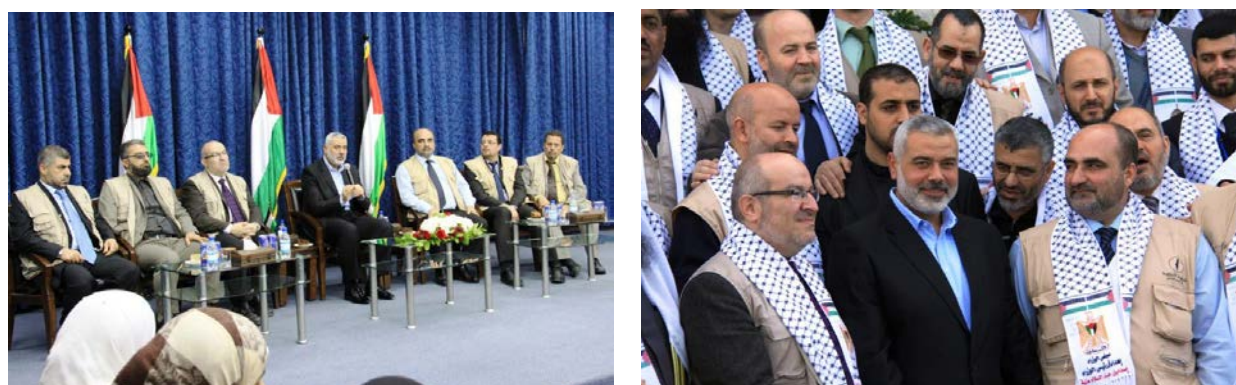
► The Palestinian community in Austria began to develop in the 1950s with the arrival of students, who mainly settled in Vienna and Graz. In the 1970s, the number of Palestinian immigrants increased (most of them coming from Lebanon during the civil war) and they became permanent residents. Another wave occurred between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s with the arrival of Palestinian students from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. However, there are no exact figures for the number of Palestinians currently living in Austria, as many have become citizens and many immigrants arrived from different countries with

Europe, Lebanon, Canada, and the United States, and activists organize demonstrations against Israel and operate within the BDS front.

various travel documents. Unofficial estimates suggest that the Palestinian community numbers a few thousand, about 5,000 of whom lived in Vienna, as of 2015.⁴⁸

Prominent Hamas Operatives in Austria

► Adel Abdallah Doghman: In October 2024, the United States Treasury Department designated Doghman as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), stating that he was responsible for Hamas activity in Austria and was one of Hamas' most prominent representatives in Europe, and close to senior leaders of the movement.⁴⁹ He is one of the most influential pro-Gaza-pro-Hamas figures in Europe and for many years was chairman of the European Palestinians Conference (EPC), organized within the Palestinian Return Centre in London.⁵⁰ In February 2012, Doghman and the then leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Austria, Ayman Aly, headed a delegation of the al-Wafa Campaign to the Gaza Strip, where they were warmly received by Isma'il Haniyeh, then the Hamas leader in Gaza.⁵¹ Doghman's daughter, Isra, is one of the founders of the Austrian political party Lista Gaza, which ran in the 2024 Austrian parliamentary elections but failed to win representation.⁵²



Right: (right to left): Doghman, Haniyeh and Aly. Left: (left to right): Mohamed Abu Ali, aka Abu Ali Qais (Denmark); Amin Abou Rashed (Netherlands); Ayman Aly (Austria); Isma'il Haniyeh; Adel Doghman; Mazen Kahil (France); Mohamed Hanoun (Italy) (Filastin al-'An, February 28, 2012)

⁴⁸ Palestine International Institute, The Palestinian Community in Austria .https://pii-diaspora.org/Resources/2/Research_and_Publications-austria-country-study-updated.pdf ;Scilog, The diversity of Austro-Palestinian encounters, 8 October .2018 <https://scilog.fwf.ac.at/en/magazine/the-diversity-of-austro-palestinian-encounters>

⁴⁹ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2632>

⁵⁰ For further information, see the March 2011 ITIC report, "The Palestinian Return Centre: London-based center for anti-Israeli propaganda, affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, outlawed in Israel. It promotes the demand of the Palestinian refugees to return as a way of destroying Israel. Senior PRC figures send flotillas and convoys to the Gaza Strip and transfer funds to Hamas. (Full version); and the December 2023 report, [The organizations leading the pro-Hamas demonstrations in Britain since the outbreak of Operation Iron Swords](#)

⁵¹ To this day, many of the delegation's participants lead the list of prominent Hamas activists and fundraisers in Europe and regularly take part in the annual conference of Palestinian organizations in Europe. <https://paltimeps.ps/post/11582هنية يكرم-قافلة-الوفاء-لفلسطين>

⁵² <https://gaza.vote/kandidatinnen>.

► Harmas Harmas: Harmas is a member of the board of the European Palestinians Conference alongside Amin Abou Rashed (Netherlands), Mazen Kahil (France), and Mohamed Hanoun (Italy), who, according to the United States Treasury Department, are considered Hamas leaders in their countries and are identified as Hamas fundraisers on the continent.⁵³ According to Austria's associations registry, Harmas was born in Kuwait, but he claimed on his personal social media account that he had been born in Bethlehem.⁵⁴



Harmas Harmas (center) at a workshop against the so-called Deal of the Century promoting normalization between Israel and Arab states (European Palestinian Media Centre, June 16, 2019)

► Mustafa Ayash: Mustafa Ayash was born in the Gaza Strip and holds Austrian citizenship. He is the founder of the online Gaza Now on Telegram, which he manages from the city of Linz in Austria and which currently has about two million followers. Ayash's accounts were reportedly reviewed and some were shut down, including a WhatsApp channel followed by more than 300,000 people and multiple Facebook pages with over eight million followers.⁵⁵ On March 27, 2024, the United States Treasury Department designated Ayash and Gaza Now as international terrorist entities for having financially, materially or technically assisted Hamas, and also flagged crypto accounts linked to the site. The statement noted that after the October 7, 2023, attack, Gaza Now began fundraising for Hamas.⁵⁶ The UK also imposed sanctions on Ayash. The British Treasury stated that there was evidentiary basis for the suspicion that Ayash was involved in terrorist activity by promoting and encouraging Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) through Gaza Now and by providing financial services for terrorism via

⁵³ <https://alawdah.eu/en/1909> ; <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2632>

⁵⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063934765983>

⁵⁵ <https://www.krone.at/3315150>

⁵⁶ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2213>

services to Gaza Now.⁵⁷ Austrian police raided Ayash's home and confiscated computers and other electronic equipment.⁵⁸ In a post, Ayash placed full responsibility for his security on the Austrian authorities, accused Israel of being behind his inclusion on the American sanctions list, and denied any connection to the individuals and organizations mentioned in the allegations.⁵⁹ On July 31, 2024, following Israel's targeted killing of Hamas political bureau head Isma'il Haniyeh in Tehran, Ayash posted photos of Haniyeh with his father, Mu'een Mahmoud Mustafa Ayash, who was killed in an Israeli attack in the Gaza Strip in November 2023.⁶⁰ On September 20, 2025, Ayash was arrested at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam over Gaza Now's links to Hamas. The Dutch authorities requested his extradition to Austria, but Ayash appealed and is awaiting a court decision.⁶¹



Right: Mustafa Ayash (Ayash's X account, September 15, 2022). Center and left: Ayash's father with Isma'il Haniyeh (Ayash's X account, July 31, 2025)

Hamas Activity in Austria

▶ Over the years, Hamas and its supporters have conducted extensive activity in Austria to raise money and transfer donations to funds, foundations, charities and associations operating in the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria, some of which are linked to Hamas and operate on its behalf. Adel Doghman played a key role in establishing and managing most of the organizations:

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-sanctions-on-persons-linked-to-hamas-supporting-media-network> ;https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67f64e43563cc9c84bacc3bd/Counter-Terrorism_Domestic_.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000213862/hausdurchsuchung-in-linz-wegen-verdachts-auf-terrorismusfinanzierung>

⁵⁹ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000213862/hausdurchsuchung-in-linz-wegen-verdachts-auf-terrorismusfinanzierung>

⁶⁰ <https://x.com/mostafaayyach/status/1818545321095708956>

⁶¹ <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-868151> ;<https://nltimes.nl/2025/10/21/palestinian-journalist-challenges-extradition-austria-hamas-allegations>

◆ The Palestinian Association in Austria (PVO): The charity was founded on November 30, 1993, managed by Adel Doghman,⁶² and belonged to the Union of Good, an umbrella organization of dozens of funds and foundations which were central to Hamas' fundraising system and supported the movement's civilian (*dawah*) activities in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip.⁶³ On August 21, 2003, the United States Treasury Department designated five European "charity funds," including the PVO, as supporting Hamas and belonging to its continental recruitment and support network, and included them on the blacklist prohibiting American citizens and entities from maintaining ties with them. According to the Treasury Department, the fund was controlled by "Hamas' leader in Austria," the money it collected was meant to assist Hamas members and was transferred through charity funds in Lebanon, Judea and Samaria, and the Gaza Strip or in other areas of the Middle East to ensure that the transfers could not be traced and reached their intended destinations.⁶⁴

◆ The Palestinian Humanitarian Association–Austria (PHVÖ): The fund was established about two months before the United States designated the PVO as supporting Hamas, and once the American sanctions went into effect, it replaced the PVO as Hamas' main fundraiser in Austria.⁶⁵ Between 2000 and 2006,, PHVÖ raised €383,065, which it transferred to "charity" organizations affiliated with Hamas in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, as well as in Jordan and Lebanon.⁶⁶ Among the entities listed as recipients of the Austrian fund's money were al-Tadamun in Nablus, which coordinated distribution of funds in northern Samaria (Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm and Qalqilya) on behalf of the Union of Good; the Islamic Charity Society in Hebron, responsible for distribution

⁶² ZVR-Zahl 286291550 ;<https://opinionnotes.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/pvoe-286291550.pdf>

⁶³ For further information, see the September 2005 ITIC report, The Union of Good: an umbrella organization comprised of more than 50 Islamic charitable funds and foundations worldwide. It in fact channels "charity" money and provides other items for Hamas-affiliated institutions in the Palestinian Authority-administered territories, contributing to sustaining the supportsystem infrastructure of Palestinian terrorism through the so-called financial jihad. See also the July 2008 report, The war on financing terrorism: "Defense Minister Ehud Barak signed an order outlawing 36 global Union of Good Islamic funds which raise money for Hamas institutions in the Palestinian Authorityadministered territories. The money supports Hamas in building a political alternative to the PA and maintain a terrorism-supporting system.

⁶⁴ <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/js672>

⁶⁵ ZVR-Zahl 469736460 ;<https://opinionnotes.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/zvr-469736460.pdf>

⁶⁶ <https://opinionnotes.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/phv-spenden.pdf>

in Hebron, Bethlehem, refugee camps, and surrounding villages;⁶⁷ and the Islamic al-Salah Society in the Gaza Strip, which, according to a classified report by the German intelligence service (BND) from November 28, 2002, is an Islamic charity directly affiliated with Hamas.⁶⁸

◆ Rahma Austria: Rahma Austria is an NGO founded in 2006 on the basis of PHVÖ to fund humanitarian projects.⁶⁹ In 2014, the organization led a fundraising campaign to purchase an ambulance for a hospital in the Gaza Strip. The Austrian campaign participants were considered Hamas supporters, including the Austrian branch of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the Coordination Forum for Support of Palestine (Koordinationsforum zur Unterstützung Palästinas), the Palestinian–Austrian Society (Palästinensisch–Österreichische Gesellschaft), and Dar al-Janub – Association for Anti-Racist and Peace Initiatives,⁷⁰ of which Hama Hama is a member of the board of directors.⁷¹

◆ Human Help: Human Help is an NGO founded in February 2010 by Hani Abd al-Halim and Osama Atiq, founders of PVO and PHVÖ. The two served as chairman and treasurer until 2013.⁷² Their children currently hold key positions in the organization and are members of the current board of directors.⁷³

⁶⁷ For further information, see the September 2005 ITIC report, "[The Union of Good](#): an umbrella organization comprised of more than 50 Islamic charitable funds and foundations worldwide...."

⁶⁸ https://www.osenlaw.com/sites/default/files/uploaded/Counter-Terrorism/Arab_Bank/hamas_org/PX1275translation.pdf

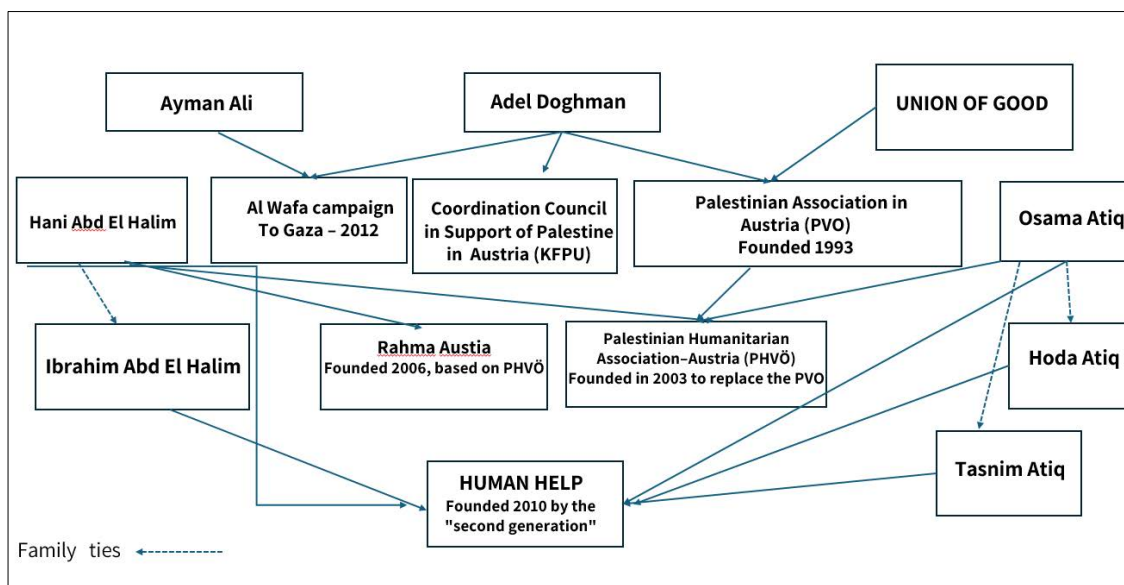
⁶⁹ <https://rahma-austria.at/de/ueber-uns>

⁷⁰ Rahma Austria annual report 2014 ;<https://rahma-austria.at/docs/2014-Jahresbericht-Rahma-Austria.pdf>

⁷¹ <https://citizen.bmi.gv.at/at.gv.bmi.zvnsrv-p/zvrlink/124910972>

⁷² ZVR-Zahl 459463611

⁷³ <https://www.helpaustria.at/impressum/>



Hamas in Austria – Institutions, Persons and Organizational Evolution

► According to the 2023 annual report of the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism, Hamas and its supporters continue to operate in Austria, raising funds and distributing propaganda through various media platforms. The propaganda includes unsettling pictures and videos of the fighting of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, whose objective is to encourage violent activity, mainly against Israeli and Jewish targets.⁷⁴ According to the 2024 report, Hamas operatives in the European Union, including Austria, look for ways to finance the movement's activities in Europe and the Middle East, and financial support for terrorism often comes from donations. Support for Hamas also comes from the dissemination of propaganda and support for the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre, and that there were even isolated cases of activists attempting to reach the Gaza Strip to join Hamas. Regarding the exposure of the Hamas network that managed weapons stockpiles on the continent (the weapons-cache affair), the report noted that it was still unclear whether the weapons were intended for use in attacks against Jewish institutions.⁷⁵

► The 2023 report further stated that after the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre on October 7, 2023, there was a significant increase in antisemitic incidents which had "Islamic

⁷⁴ AUSTRIA ,Annual Report 2023, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (DSN), p. 80 .

https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/files/VSb/180_2024_VSB_2023_V20240531.pdf

⁷⁵ AUSTRIA ,Annual Report 2023, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (DSN), pp. 84-85

https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/files/VSb/180_2024_VSB_2023_V20240531.pdf

motivation" in Europe in general and Austria in particular. According to the report, emotional, one-sided disinformation campaigns launched on various media platforms inside and outside Austria led to a sharp increase in public support for Hamas alongside antisemitic slogans during pro-Palestinian demonstrations. It was also noted that between October and December 2023, twenty-two jihadist/Islamist-motivated incidents were reported across the country.⁷⁶ The 2024 report stated that after October 2023 there was an increase in antisemitic incidents originating from the broad spectrum of Muslim residents of Austria, and that similar trends could not be ruled out in 2025. It also said that the war in the Gaza Strip was exploited by various groups, including Islamist ones, to spread antisemitism, with preachers in Austria among those delivering antisemitic messages.⁷⁷

► Hamas supporters in Austria also sought to exploit the war in the Gaza Strip to advance their political influence. In 2024, the Lista Gaza political party⁷⁸ was established in response to the "Israeli invasion" of the Gaza Strip following Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack and massacre. The party was based on activists who initiated and participated in the wave of demonstrations in support of the Palestinians and protests against Israel in Austria after the attack. The party focuses on opposing Austria's unequivocal support for Israel and seeks to promote Palestinian interests in Vienna's political arena. Lista Gaza managed to collect the required number of signatures to participate in the election and ran in the September 2024 Austrian parliamentary elections but failed to win a seat. Despite attempts to present a broad political image using candidates with diverse opinions and backgrounds, including Jewish candidates, the Palestinian component stands out in the party, centered on ties with Hamas and its operatives in Austria. The rap artist Isra Doghman, daughter of Adel Doghman, is among the party's founders and leaders, while Omer Batur, a politician of Turkish origin who was its parliamentary candidate, is one of the senior figures in Rahma Austria.⁷⁹

Activity of Austrian Authorities Against Hamas

⁷⁶ AUSTRIA, Annual Report 2023, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (DSN), p. 93.

https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/files/VSb/180_2024_VSB_2023_V20240531.pdf

⁷⁷ AUSTRIA, Annual Report 2024, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism (DSN), pp. 83, 96.

https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/files/VSb/205_2025_VSB_2024_V20250528_Web_BF.pdf

⁷⁸ Also known as "Liste Gaza: Stimmen gegen den Völkermord"

⁷⁹ [New Austrian political party 'List Gaza' fights to speak out against Israeli genocide\] - İLKHA \[Ilke News Agency\]](#)

► Unlike other European countries, particularly Germany and the Netherlands, which acted legally and effectively against entities affiliated with the Union of Good, Austrian judicial authorities did not employ effective legal action against them and their managers despite the clear connections between them and Hamas. Although key activists were arrested ad hoc over the years, mostly because their names appeared in cases and documents in other countries, and searches were conducted in their offices and homes, the arrests were temporary and they were released shortly afterward, with no indictments ever filed against them due to the inability to prove the organizations' ties to Hamas.⁸⁰ Parliamentary inquiries in Austria regarding Hamas and its supporters' activities in the country were met with evasive answers from the Austrian ministry of the interior, such as "no information" or "classified information" that could not be disclosed.⁸¹

► At the end of 2020, Austrian law enforcement authorities launched Operation Luxor against activists considered part of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Syria and others involved in financial support for Hamas, to upset terrorist financing, money laundering, and the establishment of a terrorist or criminal organization. During the operation more than 930 police officers raided over sixty locations, most linked to Muslim Brotherhood branches in Egypt and Syria, across four Austrian states, Styria, Lower Austria, Carinthia and Vienna, to investigate suspected ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Thirty people were detained for questioning, and smartphones, documents, computers and large sums of cash were confiscated, though no weapons or explosives were found. Among the organizations examined as part of the operation were Rahma Austria, Human Help International Hope Association, and the Association of Palestinian Women in Europe.⁸² Senior activists were also detained and questioned, including Adel Doghman, Hani Abd al-Halim, Haras Haras, Iyad Jadallah, Qassem al-Zahra, and Taher Hassan, and measures were taken against their bank accounts.⁸³

► The Austrian prosecutor's office in Graz justified Operation Luxor by saying, "Muslim Brotherhood organizations and activists are aware that direct cooperation or open financial

⁸⁰ https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08VIENNA1766_a.html

⁸¹ https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/J/16533/imfname_1587694.pdf;
https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXVII/AB/16014/imfname_1599080.pdf;
https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXIV/AB/13782/fname_300865.pdf;
https://www.parlament.gv.at/dokument/XXIV/J/14040/fname_289754.pdf

⁸² Fortgesetzter Anordnungsgrund-und Bewilligungsbogen 16St52/19t, January 4, 2021, p2 .

⁸³ Fortgesetzter Anordnungsgrund-und Bewilligungsbogen 16St52/19t, Dezember 29, 2020 ,pp. 3-5 ;
 Fortgesetzter Anordnungsgrund-und Bewilligungsbogen 16St52/19t, Januar 4, 2021, p.7-8 .

support for Hamas could lead to criminal prosecution for aiding a terrorist organization. Therefore, investigations into Hamas' financial support from Europe and Austria usually rely on findings from intelligence and security agencies. Various Islamic 'aid' organizations are repeatedly suspected of providing financial support to Hamas."⁸⁴ Hence, the main justification for launching Operation Luxor was the fact that both the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas were indeed defined by Austrian authorities as terrorist organizations, while disregarding the need to provide legal substantiation and evidence of a direct link between the activists and entities investigated in the operation and those organizations.

► Operation Luxor sparked sharp controversy in Austria due to the legal negligence that characterized the activities of the Austrian prosecution offices and their inability to prove the connections between the organizations and individuals under investigation and Hamas. Islamic organizations and activists in the country launched a media campaign portraying Operation Luxor as another brick in the wall of "Islamophobia" spreading throughout the country.⁸⁵ In the end, all investigation files related to Operation Luxor were closed on the grounds of lack of evidence, and none of those investigated were prosecuted.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Fortgestezter ABB / 16 St 52/19t, 30 October 2020, page 29.

⁸⁵ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/islamophobic-raids-hid-austrian-government-failure-to-prevent-a-terror-attack/>

⁸⁶ <https://www.diepresse.com/6016465/operation-luxor-razzia-laut-olg-graz-rechtswidrig>