

Turkey's Approach to Countering Terrorism

Key Findings

- Turkey maintains open relations with internationally sanctioned extremist groups and harbors internationally sanctioned and wanted extremists affiliated with the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas. Taliban officials maintain a presence in Turkey, while several Brotherhood leaders sought refuge there after the collapse of the Brotherhood government in Egypt. Hamas has operated a bureau in Istanbul since 2012.
- The violent Turkish extremist group Grey Wolves freely operates across the country and maintains ties with members of the Turkish government.
- Turkey has not devoted the appropriate resources to monitoring the financial workings of its non-profit sector, according to the U.S. Department of State. In particular, the NGO Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation faces international accusations of aiding Syrian rebel forces, al-Qaeda, and Hamas.
- Turkish financial institutions, with support of Turkish officials, have aided in skirting U.S. sanctions against Iran.



Ankara, Turkey (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Overview

Longtime U.S. ally Turkey—a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS and NATO—has supported and harbored international terrorist organizations and individuals. The Turkish

government has lent support to the Muslim Brotherhood,¹ Hamas,² and Syrian rebel groups.³ Turkey continues to harbor members of the Muslim Brotherhood who sought refuge in the country after the 2015 fall of the Brotherhood government in Egypt.⁴ In addition, the violent Turkish extremist group Grey Wolves formally operates as a political and cultural organization, but their extremist ideology has also inspired non-members to violent acts.⁵ Breakaway groups, including the Osmanlı Ocakları and the Alperen Hearths, have also carried out attacks on groups demonized by the Grey Wolves, such as Kurds, Armenians, and the opposition Democratic Peoples' Party in Turkey.⁶ The group has also been linked to the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, and their crimes often went unpunished by the Turkish police.⁷

¹ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, "The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey," Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, "Turkey's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood," Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, "Turkey Nurtures Egypt's 'Terrorist' Muslim Brothers," Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; "Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life," Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; "Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July," Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

² Shlomi Eldar, "Turkey's Hamas 'bureau,'" Al-Monitor, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, "Is Turkey Hamas' new headquarters?" Al-Monitor, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshal-kidnapping.html>; Alex Fishman, "Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey," Ynetnews, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4630331,00.html>; Burak Bekdil, "Hamas in Turkey: 'Humanitarian Activity,'" Gatestone Institute, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

³ Chase Winter, "Russia claims Turkish NGOs are 'main supplier' of extremists in Syria," Deutsche Welle, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

⁴ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, "The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey," Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, "Turkey's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood," Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, "Turkey Nurtures Egypt's 'Terrorist' Muslim Brothers," Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; "Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life," Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; "Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July," Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

⁵ "Grey Wolves," Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/grey-wolves>; Yildirim Türker, "Asker Sevag'a ne oldu?," *Radikal*, May 9, 2011, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/yildirim-turker/asker-sevaga-ne-oldu-1048713/>.

⁶ Gareth H. Jenkins, "Taking It to the Streets: Turkey's Rising Social Tensions," Turkey Analyst, September 18, 2015, <https://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/444-taking-it-to-the-streets-turkeys-rising-social-tensions.html>; Fahim Tastekin, "Who Is Behind Violence against the Kurds?," Al-Monitor, October 26, 2015, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/10/turkey-mob-violence-against-kurds-who-is-behind.html> ; <https://twitter.com/Conflicts/status/641325003439501312>.

⁷ Martin A. Lee, "Turkish Dirty War Revealed, but Papal Shooting Still Obscured," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1998, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-apr-12-op-38664-story.html>; "ASALA'ya karşı birlikte çalıştık," NTV, July 16, 2004, archived in the Internet Archive, archived in the Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200628204152/http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/278685.asp>.

According to the U.S. Department of State, Turkey is host to terrorist organizations with links to narcotics trafficking. As such, the U.S. government has declared Turkey “vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist finance risks.”⁸ Further, the Turkish government has allowed terror-linked charities to operate within the country. Most prominently, the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) has been linked to al-Qaeda,⁹ Hamas,¹⁰ Syrian rebel groups,¹¹ and foreign fighters in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Afghanistan.¹²

Direct Funding and Government Support

The Turkish government has provided direct funding and support for various extremist organizations operating within the country. These groups include the Taliban, the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network,¹³ the Muslim Brotherhood,¹⁴ Grey Wolves,¹⁵ and Hamas.¹⁶ The

⁸ “Countries/Jurisdictions of Primary Concern – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2015/vol2/239109.htm>.

⁹ “Turkish anti-terrorist police raid aid agency near Syrian border,” Reuters, January 14, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ngo/turkish-anti-terrorist-police-raid-aid-agency-near-syrian-border-idUSBREA0D0J20140114?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>; Ariel Zirulnick, “Turkey cracks down on charity suspected of arming Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0114/Turkey-cracks-down-on-charity-suspected-of-arming-Al-Qaeda-affiliates-in-Syria>.

¹⁰ Jason Athanasiadis, “Targeted by Israeli raid: Who is the IHH?” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0601/Targeted-by-Israeli-raid-Who-is-the-IHH>; “Cardin, Bipartisan Group of 87 Senators Send Letter to President Obama in Support of Israel’s Right to Self-Defense,” Senator Ben Cardin, June 23, 2010, <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-bipartisan-group-of-87-senators-send-letter-to-president-obama-in-support-of-israels-right-to-self-defense>.

¹¹ Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

¹² Benjamin Weinthal, “German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹³ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, “Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” *Tolo News*, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

¹⁴ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” *Hudson Institute*, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, “Turkey’s relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood,” *Al Arabiya*, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, “Turkey Nurtures Egypt’s ‘Terrorist’ Muslim Brothers,” *Daily Beast*, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; “Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; “Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July,” *Daily News Egypt*, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

¹⁵ Patrick Kiddie, “France Has Banned the ‘Grey Wolves’—but Who Are They?,” *Al Jazeera*, November 24, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/24/france-has-banned-the-grey-wolves-but-who-are-they>.

¹⁶ Shlomi Eldar, “Turkey’s Hamas ‘bureau,’” *Al-Monitor*, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Hamas’ new headquarters?” *Al-Monitor*, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshaal-kidnapping.html>; Alex Fishman, “Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey,” *Ynetnews*, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4630331.00.html>; Burak Bekdil, “Hamas in Turkey: ‘Humanitarian Activity,’” *Gatestone Institute*, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

Turkish government has allowed members of these groups to openly reside in the country, as well as address government officials and functions.



Taliban

The Taliban is an Afghanistan- and Pakistan-based jihadist insurgent group that has carried out numerous deadly terrorist attacks in the region, including the shooting of Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan's Swat Valley in October 2012, the December 2015 assault on Kandahar Air Field which left 50 dead, and the December 2014 massacre at the army-run school in Peshawar that killed 148 people, 132 of whom were schoolchildren. Taliban insurgents and ISIS militants in eastern Afghanistan have cooperated against the Afghan government since mid-2016. The Haqqani network is a militant branch of the Afghan Taliban operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, though it operates independently. Since the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the Haqqani network has been a lethal and sophisticated arm of the Afghan insurgency against the Western-backed government in Kabul. After the Taliban violently seized control of Afghanistan in August 2021, Turkey was one of a handful of countries that maintained its diplomatic presence in the country. Turkey called on other government to establish ties with the Taliban government while making overtures to increasing diplomatic and economic cooperation with the Taliban.¹⁷

Taliban designated by: Canada, EU, France, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Russia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Nations, United States

Haqqani network designated by: United Nations, United States

Turkish Support:

- Beginning in late 2017, members of the Taliban have met with Afghan officials in Turkey for peace talks. In January 2018, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated that the Taliban members meeting in Turkey do not represent the group. Mawlawi Abdul Rauf, leader of the Turkish delegation, said that his group represents all Taliban factions, including the Haqqani network.¹⁸
- In 2012, Turkey sought to host a Taliban office in the country. The Taliban instead opened its office in Qatar.¹⁹

¹⁷ "Turkish ambassador in Kabul meets Taliban's acting deputy premier," *Hurriyet Daily News* (Istanbul), September 30, 2021, <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkish-ambassador-in-kabul-meets-talibans-acting-deputy-premier-168252>; "Taliban want to help Afghans who fled to Turkey to return home, Turkish minister says," Reuters, October 14, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/afghan-foreign-minister-hold-talks-turkey-2021-10-14/>.

¹⁸ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, "Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office," *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; "Turkey Delegation 'Represents All Taliban Factions,'" Tolo News, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

¹⁹ BBC News, June 20, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22957827>.

- The Haqqani network has facilitated the travel of jihadist foreign fighters into and through Turkey since at least 2013, according to the U.S. government.²⁰
- Turkey has called on the international community to engage with Afghanistan’s Taliban government after the terror network seized control in August 2021. Turkish officials have also clarified that recognition and engagement are separate issues. In October 2021, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stated the international community’s goal should be preventing the collapse of the Afghan economy.²¹
- Turkey is the only NATO member with diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. In October 2021, Turkey hosted Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Taliban’s acting foreign minister, for high-level talks. As of November 2022, Turkey has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in a hydroelectric dam in Helmand province.²²
- At the October 2022 “Islamic Scholars Meeting” conference in Turkey’s southeastern province of Diyarbakir, the Taliban’s deputy minister of information and culture, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, emphasized that the Taliban considers the Turkish government to be a “close friend.” At the conference, Mujahid appealed to senior officials from Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, and Libya to officially recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.²³



Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood—founded in Egypt in 1928—is a transnational Islamist organization with branches worldwide. In the 1950s, Brotherhood theologian Sayyid Qutb legitimized the use of violent jihad—and the killing of secular Muslims—in order to implement sharia. Analysts argue that the Brotherhood’s ideology has spawned groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Designated By: Bahrain, Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates

Turkish Support:

- Members of Turkey’s leading Justice and Development Party (AKP)—including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan—have provided various forms of support to the Brotherhood, including granting asylum to wanted Brotherhood members and equipping

²⁰ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, “Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” *Tolo News*, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

²¹ Agence France-Presse, “Turkey says ready to help but not recognise Taliban,” *New Indian Express* (Chennai), October 14, 2021, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2021/oct/14/turkey-says-ready-to-help-but-not-recognise-taliban-2371688.html>.

²² Ezel Sahinkaya, “Turkey’s Engagement With Afghanistan Has Grown Since Taliban Takeover,” *Voice of America*, August 12, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-s-engagement-with-afghanistan-has-grown-since-taliban-takeover-/6699437.html>.

²³ Levent Kenez, “Turkish government is a close friend, says Taliban leader at a controversial pro-Hizbullah meeting,” *Nordic Monitor*, October 18, 2022, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/10/turkish-government-is-a-close-friend-says-taliban-leader-at-a-controversial-pro-hizbullah-meeting/>.

them with satellite television and radio stations. Despite being charged in absentia by the Egyptian government, some Brotherhood fugitives have been allowed to openly congregate in Turkey and organize against the Egyptian government.²⁴

- Turkey allows a handful of pro-Brotherhood media stations to operate within the country. Stations such as Rabia TV, al-Sharq, and al-Watan (formerly Misr Alaam)—run by exiled Egyptian Brotherhood members such as former Secretary-General Mahmoud Hussein and Brotherhood politician Basim al-Khafagy—often broadcast pro-Islamist messaging including glorified accounts of Brotherhood clashes with the Egyptian government and threats directed at Western-owned companies in Egypt to leave the country.²⁵ In February 2015, these channels broadcasted threats against Egypt.²⁶ This followed a January 29, 2015, broadcast on Rabia TV warning foreign nationals to leave Egypt or face violence.²⁷ In March 2021, the Turkish government requested the Brotherhood channels decrease their criticism of Egypt as Turkey sought to repair its relationship with the country. The Brotherhood did not comment on the request.²⁸
- Despite restoring diplomatic contacts with Egypt in March 2021, Turkey remains opposed to Egypt’s designation of the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization.²⁹
- Ali al-Qaradaghi, secretary-general of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), a Qatari-based Muslim Brotherhood-linked organization, appeared at the

²⁴ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, “Turkey’s relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood,” Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, “Turkey Nurtures Egypt’s ‘Terrorist’ Muslim Brothers,” Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; “Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life,” Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; “Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July,” Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

²⁵ “Muslim Brotherhood Operatives in Turkey Call For Killing Egyptian Officials, Threaten Egypt; Turkish MP: Turkey Shelters ‘Many MB and Hamas Members,’” MEMRI, February 6, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/reports/muslim-brotherhood-operatives-turkey-call-killing-egyptian-officials-threaten-egypt-turkish>; Mostafa Hashem, “The Great Brotherhood Divide,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 02, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=62942>; Mary Atkinson, “Egypt asks France to shut down pro-Brotherhood satellite channel,” Middle East Eye, May 13, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-asks-france-shut-down-pro-brotherhood-satellite-channel-208107289>; Fehim Tastekin, “Turkey accused of escalating violence in Egypt,” Al Monitor, February 6, 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/turkey-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-escalating-violence.html>.

²⁶ “Muslim Brotherhood Operatives in Turkey Call For Killing Egyptian Officials, Threaten Egypt; Turkish MP: Turkey Shelters ‘Many MB And Hamas Members,’” MEMRI, February 6, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/reports/muslim-brotherhood-operatives-turkey-call-killing-egyptian-officials-threaten-egypt-turkish>.

²⁷ “ON MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD TV FROM TURKEY: THREATS OF TERROR ATTACKS AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONALS, INTERESTS OF EGYPT,” MEMRI, January 29, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/tv/muslim-brotherhood-tv-turkey-threats-terror-attacks-against-foreign-nationals-interests-egypt>.

²⁸ Suzan Fraser and Samy Magdy, “Turkey asks Brotherhood TVs to dim criticism of Egypt,” Associated Press, March 19, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-television-istanbul-egypt-cairo-d0324373f40449cbf488a0ac58c44605>.

²⁹ “Turkey says it still opposes Egypt labeling Muslim Brotherhood ‘terrorists,’” Reuters, April 20, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/turkey-says-it-remains-against-egypt-labeling-muslim-brotherhood-terrorists-2021-04-20/>.

October 2022 “Islamic Scholars Meeting” conference in Turkey’s southeastern province of Diyarbakir. The conference also hosted Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, and other officials from Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, and Libya.³⁰ The IUMS was previously led by the late Yusuf al-Qaradawi—an Islamist theologian and the unofficial chief ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood—and Qaradaghi has defended Qaradawi from accusations of supporting terrorism, though both have been vocal advocates for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.³¹



Hamas

The ruling terror party of the Gaza Strip, Hamas openly seeks the destruction of Israel. The group uses suicide bombings, rocket and mortar attacks, shootings, and kidnappings in pursuit of its stated objectives.

Designated By: Australia, Canada, Egypt, EU, Israel, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States

Turkish Support:

- In 2012, Hamas’s leadership fled Syria after the outbreak of that country’s civil war. Hamas military leader Saleh Arouri first relocated to Turkey, where he was suspected of building a Hamas bureau in Istanbul. Arouri directed and financed Hamas military cells in the West Bank and Jordan, according to the U.S. Treasury, which accuses Arouri of facilitating the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars to Hamas’s militant activities.³²
- Prior to Khaled Meshaal’s May 2017 retirement as Hamas’s political bureau chief, the Turkish government regularly engaged with Meshaal.³³ Meshaal reportedly met with Iranian officials and Turkish officials in the country.³⁴ In December 2014, he made a

³⁰ Levent Kenez, “Turkish government is a close friend, says Taliban leader at a controversial pro-Hizbullah meeting,” *Nordic Monitor*, October 18, 2022, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2022/10/turkish-government-is-a-close-friend-says-taliban-leader-at-a-controversial-pro-hizbullah-meeting/>.

³¹ Hassan Obeid, “Qaradaghi: We support action against Houthis,” *Al-Monitor*, April 19, 2015, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/04/palestine-international-union-of-muslim-scholars-alqaradaghi.html>.

³² Smadar Perry and Itamar Eichner, “Hamas leader expelled from Turkey,” *YNet*, December 22, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4742831,00.html>; “Treasury Sanctions Major Hamas Leaders, Financial Facilitators and a Front Company,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 10, 2015, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0159.aspx>.

³³ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

³⁴ Harriet Sherwood, “Hamas and Iran Rebuild Ties Three Years after Falling out over Syria,” *Guardian* (London), January 9, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/09/hamas-iran-rebuild-ties-falling-out-syria>; Pinar Tremblay, “Meshaal’s visit to Turkey catches media off guard,” *Al-Monitor*, December 28, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/turkey-gaza-top-hamas-officials-unannounced-visit.html>.

surprise appearance at the ruling Justice and Development Party's annual congress.³⁵ Meshaal stepped down as Hamas's political bureau chief in May 2017.³⁶

- Turkish authorities have reportedly overseen Hamas military training exercises in the country. Hamas operatives in Turkey have actively recruited Palestinians living in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and other Arab countries. The recruits are sent to the bureau in Istanbul, where they reportedly receive security clearances and begin training outside of the city, allegedly with the knowledge of Turkish officials. In addition, many of the weapons used by Hamas operatives in the West Bank were reportedly supplied by the group's Istanbul bureau.³⁷ In December 2015, the Turkish government expelled Aroui, reportedly at Israel's request, as part of a reconciliation agreement between the two countries.³⁸
- Following the June 2016 reconciliation deal between Turkey and Israel, former Hamas official Ahmed Youssef told media that Turkey's willingness to discuss the agreement with Hamas demonstrated that "Hamas-Turkish ties are at their best."³⁹ Further, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu pledged that his government would continue to meet with Hamas leaders.⁴⁰
- In August 2017, Israel's Shin Bet security agency uncovered a Hamas money-laundering ring that transferred funds from Turkey to the West Bank. Turkey-based Hamas operative Haron Nasser al-Din allegedly transferred approximately \$200,000 to the West Bank between 2016 and 2017.⁴¹
- In February 2017, Israeli authorities arrested Muhammad Murtaja, coordinator of the Gaza branch of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), as he was allegedly attempting to travel to Turkey at the behest of Hamas members there. According to the indictment against him, Murtaja was part of a Hamas plot to appropriate

³⁵ "Hamas leader Mashaal endorses Turkish leaders in surprise speech," Hurriyet Daily News, December 27, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hamas-leader-mashaal-endorses-turkish-leaders-in-surprise-speech-76166>.

³⁶ Khalid Meshal's speech during the inauguration of the new head of Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniya (an excerpt)," Hamas website, May 6, 2017, [http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-\(an-excerpt\)](http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-(an-excerpt)).

³⁷ Shlomi Eldar, "Turkey's Hamas 'bureau,'" Al-Monitor, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, "Is Turkey Hamas' new headquarters?" Al-Monitor, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshal-kidnapping.html>; Alex Fishman, "Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey," Ynetnews, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4630331,00.html>; Burak Bekdil, "Hamas in Turkey: 'Humanitarian Activity,'" Gatestone Institute, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

³⁸ Smadar Perry and Itamar Eichner, "Hamas leader expelled from Turkey," YNet, December 22, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4742831,00.html>.

³⁹ Reuters, "Did Turkey abandon Hamas in Israel deal?" Al-Monitor, July 1, 2016, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/originals/2016/07/hamas-reaction-turkish-israeli-agreement-restore-ties.html>.

⁴⁰ "Turkey will continue to meet with Hamas, Turkish foreign minister says," Reuters, June 22, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-turkey-hamas/turkey-will-continue-to-meet-with-hamas-turkish-foreign-minister-says-idUSKCN0Z811K>.

⁴¹ Judah Ari Gross, "Israel breaks up alleged Hamas Turkey-Hebron money laundering ring," Times of Israel, August 3, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-breaks-up-alleged-hamas-turkey-hebron-money-laundering-ring/>.

funds from TIKA. TIKA allegedly transferred funds to Hamas between 2012 and 2016 through official staff trips. In 2018, Murtaja was sentenced to nine years in prison.⁴²

- The Turkish government condemned the U.S. government's January 2017 sanction-designation of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy called Hamas "an important reality of Palestinian political life."⁴³
- A Hamas official in Istanbul, Zacharia Najib, reportedly ordered failed assassination attempts on Israeli government officials in February 2019. Najib provided weapons, training, and funding to a Hamas member in Jerusalem who was arrested before he could carry out the plot. A Turkish diplomat at the time called Hamas a legitimate political party and denied it had any links to terrorism.⁴⁴
- In August 2020, Turkey reportedly began granting citizenship to a dozen high-ranking Hamas members in the country. According to the *Telegraph*, those receiving citizenship are "the most senior Hamas operatives outside of Gaza. [They] are actively raising funds and directing operatives to carry out attacks in the present day." The Turkish government refused comment and called the accusations baseless.⁴⁵
- According to an October 2020 *Times* article, intelligence services discovered that Hamas set up a headquarters in Istanbul to carry out cyberwarfare and counter-intelligence operations targeting their enemies. According to the western intelligence sources, the unit—which is directed by senior official Samakh Saraj of Hamas's military leadership in Gaza—was set up in 2018 and is separate from Hamas' official offices. Media sources noted that Saraj mainly reports to senior official Yahya Sinwar. However, the Turkish government reportedly was not made aware that the unit set up operations in Istanbul.⁴⁶
- On January 26, 2021, Israeli authorities seized more than \$120,000 and goods worth hundreds of thousands of shekels that Hamas was allegedly transferring from Turkey to the West Bank. According to the Israeli Defense Ministry, Hamas used West Bank-based company Sense Sanitary Company and Turkish company Tikno Plus Ic Ve Dis to transfer the money and goods to the West Bank. The companies are jointly owned by Hamas operatives Abdallah Fuqaha in Turkey and Ayman al-Massri in the West Bank.⁴⁷

⁴² Avi Issacharoff, "Arrest of Gaza manager exposes Hamas's Turkish connection," *Times of Israel*, March 21, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arrest-exposes-hamas-turkish-connection/>; Ami Rojkes Dombe, "Report: Turkish government agency providing funds to Hamas," *Israel Defense* (Kfar Saba), February 10, 2021, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/48273>.

⁴³ Agence France-Presse, "Turkey criticizes US terror designation for Hamas chief," *Hurriyet Daily News* (Istanbul), February 2, 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-criticizes-us-terror-designation-for-hamas-chief-126690>.

⁴⁴ Raf Sanchez, "Exclusive: Hamas plots attacks on Israel from Turkey as Erdogan turns blind eye," *Telegraph* (London), December 17, 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/12/17/hamas-plots-attacks-israel-turkey-erdogan-turns-blind-eye/>.

⁴⁵ Tuvan Gumrukcu, "Turkey gave Hamas members passports, Israel says," *Reuters*, August 26, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-israel-hamas/turkey-gave-hamas-members-passports-israel-says-idUSKBN25M1XW>; Cody Levine, "Turkey gave citizenship to Hamas members planning terror attacks – report," *Jerusalem Post*, August 15, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/turkey-gave-citizenship-to-hamas-members-planning-terror-attacks-report-638731>.

⁴⁶ Anshel Pfeffer, "Hamas uses secret cyberwar base in Turkey to target enemies," *The Times*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hamas-running-secret-cyberwar-hq-in-turkey-29mz50xs>.

⁴⁷ Judah Ari Gross, "Israel seizes money, goods it says Hamas was sending from Turkey to West Bank," *Times of Israel*, February 15, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-seizes-money-goods-it-says-hamas-was-sending-from-turkey-to-west-bank/>; Ami Rojkes Dombe, "Once again, funds illegally transferred from Turkey to Hamas in Gaza," *Israel Defense* (Kfar Saba), February 15, 2021, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/48341>.

- As Israel demanded Turkey end its support as part of reconciliation efforts between the two countries, a senior Turkish official told Al-Monitor in December 2021 that ending Hamas’s operations in Turkey “is not even an option open for negotiation for us.”⁴⁸
- In May 2022, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned Turkey-based investment company Trend GYO for being owned, controlled, or directed by, directly or indirectly, Hamas. According to OFAC, as of 2018 Hamas elements held about 75 percent of Trend GYO’s issued capital. The Treasury Department further charged that Hamas intended to privately issue more than \$15 million of Trend GYO’s shares to senior officials in the investment portfolio. OFAC also designated Turkey-based Hisham Younis Yahia Qafisheh, who aided the transfer of funds on behalf of various companies linked to Hamas’s investment portfolio and served as the deputy chairman of the board of Trend GYO.⁴⁹
- In October 2022, senior members of Hamas met with a delegation of Taliban leaders in Turkey. According to a Hamas statement, Taliban spokesman Zabihulla Mujahid met with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and other Hamas representatives where they discussed “several regional issues” and the need to further bilateral relations “alongside the cause of Palestine.”⁵⁰
- In November 2022, Turkey declined a request by Israel to deport Hamas members as Minister of the Interior Mevlut Cavusoglu told a Turkish news outlet that Turkey does “not see Hamas as a terrorist organization.”⁵¹



Grey Wolves

Also known as Ülkü Ocakları (Idealist Hearths) in Turkish, Grey Wolves is an international fascist, Turkish nationalist, and pan-Turkic organization and movement⁵² that formally operates as a political and cultural organization in Turkey. Its extremist ideology has also inspired non-members to violent acts.⁵³

Designated By: Austria, France, Kazakhstan

⁴⁸ Pinar Tremblay, “Turkey not yet ready to give up on Muslim Brotherhood,” Al-Monitor, December 12, 2021, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/12/turkey-not-yet-ready-give-muslim-brotherhood>.

⁴⁹ “Treasury Targets Covert Hamas Investment Network and Finance Official,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, May 24, 2022, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0798>.

⁵⁰ Joe Truzman and Bill Roggio, “

Taliban meets with Hamas during high-level talks in Turkey,” Long War Journal, November 10, 2022, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/11/taliban-meets-with-hamas-during-high-level-talks-in-turkey.php>.

⁵¹ Kristina Jovanovski, “Turkey refuses Israel’s request to deport Hamas terrorists,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 13, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-722299>.

⁵² “Grey Wolves,” Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/grey-wolves>.

⁵³ “Grey Wolves,” Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/grey-wolves>; Yildirim Türker, “Asker Sevag’a ne oldu?,” *Radikal*, May 9, 2011, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/yildirim-turker/asker-sevaga-ne-oldu-1048713/>.

Turkish Support:

- Turkish politician Alparslan Türkeş formed the Wolves in 1966, just three years after he founded the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), a participant in Turkey’s current (as of July 2021) governing coalition.⁵⁴
- The Wolves functioned as the MHP’s armed branch in the 1970s, carrying out attacks and assassinations on leftists, journalists, and dissidents.⁵⁵ The group is still tied to the MHP, and Grey Wolves members view the political party’s current chairman, Devlet Bahçeli, as the leader of the organization.⁵⁶ The Wolves continue to act at times as the street movement or paramilitary organization of the party.⁵⁷
- The Wolves have chapters and sympathetic movements spread across cities and universities in Turkey, as well as provincial unions, such as the Istanbul Union.⁵⁸
- The Wolves have also been linked to Turkey’s security and intelligence forces (MIT). The group was most directly linked to state security forces at the height of its violent acts in the late 1970s, when the organization received weapons from the Counter-Guerrilla Organization.⁵⁹
- A 1998 report from the Turkish parliament cited the connection of a former senior member of the Wolves—Abdullah Çatlı—to “organized crime, heroin smuggling, and political assassinations carried out in collaboration with the Turkish security forces.”⁶⁰ Çatlı was employed by the Turkish secret police on multiple occasions and became involved in “anti-Kurdish” operations.⁶¹ He served the deputy leader of the Grey Wolves in Turkey in 1978 but later went undercover when he was linked to the murder of seven trade unionists.⁶² Çatlı also aided Mehmet Ali Ağca, who went on to shoot Pope John Paul II, in his escape from Turkish prison. Çatlı was killed in a car accident in November 1996.⁶³

⁵⁴ “Turkish Politicians Commemorate MHP Founder Alparslan Türkeş,” *Daily Sabah*, April 4, 2021,

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/turkish-politicians-commemorate-mhp-founder-alarslan-turkes/news>.

⁵⁵ Meral Ugur Cinar, “When Defense Becomes Offense: The Role of Threat Narratives in the Turkish Civil War of the 1970s,” *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (March 2014): 3,

http://repository.bilkent.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/11693/49456/When_defense_becomes_offense_the_role_of_threat_narratives_in_the_Turkish_Civil_War_of_the_1970s.pdf;jsessionid=1832A6B5686874A4E33EDF3AAC813490?sequence=1.

⁵⁶ “MHP’li Kılavuz, Ülkü Ocakları Genel Başkanlığının sona erdiğini açıkladı,” *Hürriyet* (Istanbul), January 2, 2019, [https://www.Hurriyet\(Istanbul\).com.tr/gundem/mhpli-kilavuz-ulku-ocaklari-genel-baskanliginin-sona-erdigini-acikladi-41070109](https://www.Hurriyet(Istanbul).com.tr/gundem/mhpli-kilavuz-ulku-ocaklari-genel-baskanliginin-sona-erdigini-acikladi-41070109).

⁵⁷ Patrick Keddie, “France Has Banned the ‘Grey Wolves’—but Who Are They?,” *Al Jazeera*, November 24, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/24/france-has-banned-the-grey-wolves-but-who-are-they>.

⁵⁸ “Hakkımızda,” Ülkü Ocakları website, accessed July 12, 2021, <https://www.ulkuocaklari.org.tr/pages/i/hakkimizda>.

⁵⁹ Martin A. Lee, “Turkish Dirty War Revealed, but Papal Shooting Still Obscured,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1998, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-apr-12-op-38664-story.html>.

⁶⁰ Patrick Keddie, “France Has Banned the ‘Grey Wolves’—but Who Are They?,” *Al Jazeera*, November 24, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/24/france-has-banned-the-grey-wolves-but-who-are-they>.

⁶¹ Martin A. Lee, “Turkish Dirty War Revealed, but Papal Shooting Still Obscured,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1998, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-apr-12-op-38664-story.html>.

⁶² Martin A. Lee, “Turkish Dirty War Revealed, but Papal Shooting Still Obscured,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1998, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-apr-12-op-38664-story.html>.

⁶³ Patrick Keddie, “France Has Banned the ‘Grey Wolves’—but Who Are They?,” *Al Jazeera*, November 24, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/24/france-has-banned-the-grey-wolves-but-who-are-they>.

- In June 2022, Grey Wolves members located in Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina reportedly sent threats via phone calls, text messages, and social media targeting Balkan journalists. The journalists were sent threatening messages after they reported on the Grey Wolves branch and their activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶⁴

Harboring Terrorist Leaders and Financiers

Leaders

Turkey harbors internationally designated and wanted extremist leaders.



[Amr Darrag](#)

Senior Muslim Brotherhood Member

- Founding member of the Egyptian Brotherhood's outlawed Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) on whose platform Mohammed Morsi ran for president.⁶⁵
- Served as Egypt's former minister of planning and international cooperation during the last two months of Morsi's presidency.⁶⁶
- Claims he was warmly received in Turkey in September 2014.⁶⁷
- Heads the Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies in the Istanbul suburb of Yenibosna.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ "Turkish extremist group threatens BIRN journalists," Mapping Media Freedom, <https://www.mapmf.org/alert/25104>.

⁶⁵ Nancy Messieh, "Profiling Egypt's New Ministers," Atlantic Council, May 7, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/profiling-egypts-new-ministers>.

⁶⁶ Nancy Messieh, "Profiling Egypt's New Ministers," Atlantic Council, May 7, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/profiling-egypts-new-ministers>; Robert Fisk, "Amr Darrag: Ex-Muslim Brotherhood minister in exile still believes Egypt's military regime can be replaced with 'moderate' Islamic rule," *Independent* (London), May 5, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/amr-darrag-exmuslim-brotherhood-minister-in-exile-still-believes-egypts-military-regime-can-be-replaced-with-moderate-islamic-rule-10227129.html>.

⁶⁷ Onur Ant and Ghaith Shennib, "Saudis Are After the Muslim Brotherhood, and Turkey's in the Way," Bloomberg News, July 3, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/saudis-are-after-the-muslim-brotherhood-and-turkey-s-in-the-way>.

⁶⁸ "Muslim Brotherhood leaders heading to Turkey," *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), September 17, 2014, http://www.todayzaman.com/anasayfa_muslim-brotherhood-leaders-heading-to-turkey_359015.html; Onur Ant and Ghaith Shennib, "Saudis Are After the Muslim Brotherhood, and Turkey's in the Way," Bloomberg, July 3, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/saudis-are-after-the-muslim-brotherhood-and-turkey-s-in-the-way>.

- Retired from political positions in the Brotherhood in 2016 but remains a member and supporter of the group.⁶⁹



Mahmoud Hussein

Former Secretary-General of the Muslim Brotherhood, former Member of the Shura Council

- Served as the group’s secretary-general from 2010 until 2020, though the position was contested by members of the Brotherhood’s revolutionary youth.⁷⁰
- Served several prison terms in Egypt for involvement in the Muslim Brotherhood.⁷¹
- Reportedly moved to Turkey in September 2014.⁷²
- Hussein was ousted from his leadership role in the Brotherhood in September 2020 over accusations of embezzling funds.⁷³
- Following the November 4, 2022, death of acting supreme guide Ibrahim Mounir, the Brotherhood’s Shura Council named Hussein as the new acting guide.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ “Arabi 21 Talks with Amr Darrag After His Announcement of His Retirement from Public Work,” Arabi21 (Cairo), December 26, 2016, <https://arabi21.com/story/973163/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A21-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85>.

⁷⁰ “Dr Mahmoud Hussein appointed Secretary General for the MB in Egypt,” Ikhwanweb: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Official English web site, January 21, 2010, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=22710>; Samuel Tadros, “The Brotherhood Divided,” Hudson Institute, August 20, 2015, <http://www.hudson.org/research/11530-the-brotherhood-divided>; “Muslim Brotherhood suffers internal rifts, dismiss Secretary General Mahmoud Hussein,” Egypt Today, September 16, 2020, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/91998/Muslim-Brotherhood-suffers-internal-rifts-dismiss-Secretary-General-Mahmoud-Hussein>.

⁷¹ Eric Trager, Katie Kiraly, Cooper Klose, and Elliot Calhoun, “Who’s Who in Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2012, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/whos-who-in-the-muslim-brotherhood#MahmoudHussein>.

⁷² Gianluca Mezzofiore, “Turkey to Welcome Seven Muslim Brotherhood Exiles from Qatar,” International Business Times, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/turkey-welcome-seven-muslim-brotherhood-exiles-qatar-1465700>.

⁷³ “Muslim Brotherhood suffers internal rifts, dismiss Secretary General Mahmoud Hussein,” Egypt Today, September 16, 2020, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/91998/Muslim-Brotherhood-suffers-internal-rifts-dismiss-Secretary-General-Mahmoud-Hussein>.

⁷⁴ “Acting leader of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood dies at 85 – statement,” Reuters, November 4, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/acting-leader-egypts-muslim-brotherhood-dies-85-statement-2022-11-04/>; Ikhwanweb, Twitter post, November 16, 2022, 9:50 a.m.,



[Talaat Fahmi](#)

Former Spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood

- Appointed spokesman in December 2015.⁷⁵
- Reportedly based in Turkey since 2015.⁷⁶
- Dismissed as the group’s spokesman in October 2021.⁷⁷



[Ahmed Abdel Rahman](#)

Head of the Egyptian Brotherhood’s Office for Egyptians Abroad

- Rahman is a longtime member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. As head of the Office for Egyptians Abroad, Rahman manages the affairs of exiled Brotherhood members, as well as the activities of younger leaders on the ground in Egypt.⁷⁸

<https://twitter.com/Ikhwanweb/status/1592892835082149888>; Ikhwanweb, Twitter post, November 16, 2022, 9:51 a.m., <https://twitter.com/Ikhwanweb/status/1592893075382304769>.

⁷⁵ “Mohamed Montasser New Muslim Brotherhood Spokesman,” Ikhwanweb: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Official English web site, January 25, 2015, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=31980>; Khaled Dawoud, “The Brotherhood in the Shadow of the January 25, Anniversary,” The Atlantic Council, January 14, 2016, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/component/content/article?id=28104:the-brotherhood-in-the-shadow-of-the-january-25-anniversary>.

⁷⁶ Mamoon Alabassi, “Rift widens in Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood after spokesman’s sacking,” Middle East Eye, December 17, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypts-muslim-brotherhood-split-after-row-over-spokesperson-sacking-966712164>.

⁷⁷ “Muslim Brotherhood renews confidence in deputy head Mounir,” Middle East Monitor, October 14, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20211014-muslim-brotherhood-renews-confidence-in-deputy-head-mounir/>.

⁷⁸ Georges Fahmi, “The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 14, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/13/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-60678>.

- Rahman is reportedly based in Istanbul.⁷⁹ In April 2015, a group of exiled, Istanbul-based Brotherhood members announced the establishment of the Office for Egyptians Abroad under Rahman’s leadership.⁸⁰



[Gula Khan Hamidi](#)

Haqqani Network Member

- In January 2018, the U.S. government sanction-designated Hamidi for assisting in or providing financial, material, or technological support to the Haqqani network. The government accused Hamidi of facilitating the travel of Haqqani members from Pakistan to Turkey.⁸¹
- Allegedly facilitated the travel of foreign fighters through Turkey. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Hamidi “facilitated the movement of two groups of foreign fighters to Turkey from Pakistan” in 2013 and also “coordinated the travel of al Qaeda and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan associates to Turkey” in October 2014.⁸²
- Allegedly operates in Istanbul, Turkey, as well as Afghanistan.⁸³



[Abdul Rauf](#)

Purported Leader of the Taliban Delegation in Turkey

⁷⁹ “Sibling Rivalry,” *Economist*, June 16, 2016, <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21700673-egypts-main-islamist-movement-tearing-itself-apart-sibling-rivalry>.

⁸⁰ Georges Fahmi, “The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 14, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/13/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-60678>.

⁸¹ “Treasury Sanctions Taliban and Haqqani Network Financiers and Facilitators,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0265>.

⁸² “Treasury Sanctions Taliban and Haqqani Network Financiers and Facilitators,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0265>.

⁸³ “Counter Terrorism Designation,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20180125.aspx>.

- Represented the Taliban in Turkey-based negotiations with the Afghan government since late 2017. Rauf has said that his group represents all Taliban factions—including the Haqqani Network—except “individuals who are not willing to opt for intra-Afghan peace talks and who want to talk through Americans.”⁸⁴
- Rauf previously served as a governor for the Taliban regime from 1996 to 2001.⁸⁵



[Ismail Haniyeh](#)

Chief of Hamas’s Political Bureau

- Based in Qatar, Haniyeh has been a regular visitor to Turkey. He has praised Turkey for its “critical” role providing political support for Hamas and the Palestinian cause.
- In August 2020, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hosted Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders. The United States condemned Turkey’s “continued outreach” to Hamas, while the Turkish government rejected the criticism and called on the United States to adopt a more “balanced policy.”⁸⁶



[Zaher Jabarin](#)

Hamas financial manager, recruiter, senior military commander

⁸⁴ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, “Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” Tolo News, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

⁸⁵ Siyar Sirat, “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” TOLONews, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

⁸⁶ “U.S. slams Turkey's Erdogan for hosting Hamas,” Reuters, August 25, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-hamas/u-s-slams-turkeys-erdogan-for-hosting-hamas-idUSKBN25L29N>.

- A convicted Hamas terrorist who was released from an Israeli prison in 2011 as part of a prisoner exchange deal for captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Following his release, Jabarin resettled in Turkey and rejoined Hamas as a senior leader.⁸⁷ The United States sanctioned Jabarin in September 2019.⁸⁸
- Recruited individuals to facilitate money laundering operations for Hamas in Turkey.⁸⁹ Two of these individuals, Turkish national Cemil Tekeli and Arab-Israeli citizen Durgham Jabarin (no relation), were arrested in Israel in January 2018.⁹⁰ Zaher Jabarin allegedly recruited Tekeli to help Hamas members set up businesses, acquire visas, and obtain commercial property in Turkey.⁹¹
- Jabarin continues to travel freely. In February 2021, he joined a Hamas political delegation in Russia to meet with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and Presidential Special Envoy for the Middle East and Africa Mikhail Bogdanov.⁹²



[Saleh al-Arouri](#)

Hamas leader in the West Bank

⁸⁷ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money,” Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>.

⁸⁸ “Treasury Targets Wide Range of Terrorists and Their Supporters Using Enhanced Counterterrorism Sanctions Authorities,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 10, 2019, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm772>.

⁸⁹ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money,” Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>; Yoav Zitun, “Turkish law lecturer aided Hamas, deported from Israel,” Ynet News, February 12, 2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5109465,00.html>.

⁹⁰ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money,” Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>; Yoav Zitun, “Turkish law lecturer aided Hamas, deported from Israel,” Ynet News, February 12, 2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5109465,00.html>; Anna Ahronheim, “Arab-Israeli, Turkish citizen arrested for aiding Hamas,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 12, 2018, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Arab-Israeli-Turkish-citizen-arrested-for-aiding-Hamas-542411>.

⁹¹ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money,” Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>.

⁹² “Senior Hamas leaders meet Russia official in Moscow,” Middle East Monitor, February 6, 2021, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20210206-senior-hamas-leaders-meet-russia-official-in-moscow/>.

- Arouri has facilitated money and weapons transfers for Hamas since the 1980s and helped found the West Bank branch of Hamas’s military wing.⁹³ Hamas elected Arouri as deputy leader of its political bureau in October 2017.⁹⁴
- Arouri allegedly coordinated the June 2014 kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank, which sparked that summer’s conflict between Israel and Hamas.⁹⁵
- Arouri reportedly created and ran Hamas’s bureau in Turkey until his expulsion from the country in 2015.⁹⁶ He remains based in Lebanon but has been seen attending Hamas events in Turkey.⁹⁷
- In 2021, Hamas elected Arouri to serve as its leader in the West Bank during secretive internal elections. The appointment is for four years.⁹⁸
- Israeli forces broke up a Hamas cell in the West Bank on November 22, 2021. Israel’s Shin Bet security service accused Arouri and Turkey-based Hamas operative Zacharia Najib—released during the 2011 Gilad Shalit prisoner swap—of directing the cell from Turkey.⁹⁹

⁹³ Ali Waked, “Hamas: Prisoner release unrelated to Shalit deal,” YNet, March 18, 2010, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-3864782.00.html>; Matthew Levitt, “Hamas’ Not-So-Secret Weapon,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 9, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2014-07-09/hamas-not-so-secret-weapon>.

⁹⁴ Nidal al-Mughrabi and Dan Williams, “Hamas picks new deputy chief whom Israel blames for helping spark Gaza war,” Reuters, October 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-israel-hamas/hamas-picks-new-deputy-chief-whom-israel-blames-for-helping-spark-gaza-war-idUSKBN1CA1NM>.

⁹⁵ “In First, Hamas Official Takes Credit for Kidnap and Murder of Israeli Teens,” *Jerusalem Post*, August 20, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/In-first-Hamas-official-takes-credit-for-kidnap-and-murder-of-Israeli-teens-371703>.

⁹⁶ Elhanan Miller, “Hamas official denies directing attacks from Turkey,” *Times of Israel*, December 22, 2014, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-official-denies-directing-attacks-from-turkey/>; Smadar Perry and Itamar Eichner, “Hamas leader expelled from Turkey,” YNet, December 22, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4742831.00.html>.

⁹⁷ “Senior Hamas official threatens ‘regional war’ if Israel resumes targeted killings,” *Times of Israel*, August 27, 2023, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/senior-hamas-official-threatens-regional-war-if-israel-resumes-targeted-killings/>; Tuvan Gumrukcu, “Israel’s envoy to Turkey says too early to talk mediation, calls for end of Hamas presence,” Reuters, October 8, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-envoy-turkey-says-too-early-talk-mediation-calls-end-hamas-presence-2023-10-08/>.

⁹⁸ Reuters and *Jerusalem Post* staff, “Haniyeh reelected to lead Hamas in internal elections – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, August 1, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/haniyeh-reelected-to-lead-hamas-in-internal-elections-report-675521>.

⁹⁹ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet: Forces thwart major Hamas terror plans, nab more than 50 cell members,” *Times of Israel*, November 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-forces-thwart-major-hamas-terror-plans-nab-dozens-of-members/>; “After Jerusalem killing and 50 terror arrests, Lapid urges Turkey to shut down Hamas,” *Times of Israel*, November 23, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-jerusalem-killing-and-50-terror-arrests-lapid-urges-turkey-to-shut-down-hamas/>.



Zacharia Najib
 Hamas member

- Participated in the 1994 kidnapping and killing of Israeli soldier Nachshon Wachsmann.¹⁰⁰
- Released in the 2011 prisoner exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.¹⁰¹
- Allegedly involved in a failed Hamas plot to assassinate Israelis abroad in 2019.¹⁰²
- Accused of leading a Hamas cell in Turkey with Saleh al-Arouri in November 2021. According to Israel's Shin Bet, Arouri and Najib recruited operatives from Palestinian cities and towns across the West Bank for planned attacks on Israel. The Shin Bet accused Najib of running the cell from Turkey with Arouri.¹⁰³



Samakh Saraj
 Director of Hamas's cyberwarfare and counter-intelligence unit in Istanbul

¹⁰⁰ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet: Forces thwart major Hamas terror plans, nab more than 50 cell members," Times of Israel, November 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-forces-thwart-major-hamas-terror-plans-nab-dozens-of-members/>.

¹⁰¹ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet: Forces thwart major Hamas terror plans, nab more than 50 cell members," Times of Israel, November 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-forces-thwart-major-hamas-terror-plans-nab-dozens-of-members/>.

¹⁰² Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet: Forces thwart major Hamas terror plans, nab more than 50 cell members," Times of Israel, November 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-forces-thwart-major-hamas-terror-plans-nab-dozens-of-members/>.

¹⁰³ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet: Forces thwart major Hamas terror plans, nab more than 50 cell members," Times of Israel, November 22, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-forces-thwart-major-hamas-terror-plans-nab-dozens-of-members/>.

- Although based in Gaza, senior military leader Saraj directs Hamas’s cyberwarfare and counterintelligence unit in Istanbul. The unit was established in 2018 outside of the knowledge of the Turkish government.¹⁰⁴

Government Support

The Turkish government has allowed terror-linked charities to operate within the country. The German, Israeli, and Russian governments have accused Turkish NGOs of providing material support to extremist groups.¹⁰⁵ Further, the United States has indicted Turkish financial institutions and citizens for evading U.S. sanctions on Iran.



Turkiye Halk Bankasi A.S.

Turkiye Halk Bankasi A.S., a.k.a. Halkbank, is a Turkish state-owned bank whose majority shareholder is the government of Turkey. In October 2019, the United States charged the bank with fraud, money laundering, and sanctions offenses related to the bank’s participation in a multibillion-dollar scheme to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran. According to then-Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, Halkbank “allegedly conspired to undermine the United States Iran sanctions regime by illegally giving Iran access to billions of dollars’ worth of funds, all while deceiving U.S. regulators about the scheme.”¹⁰⁶ Defendant-turned-government-witness Reza Zarrab testified that he paid over \$50 million in bribes to Turkey’s finance minister as part of the scheme.¹⁰⁷ Halkbank has pled not guilty to the charges. In October 2020, a U.S. federal judge dismissed a Halkbank claim that the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act protected it against prosecution.¹⁰⁸ As of June 2021, the Turkish government was reportedly working with U.S. prosecutors to have the case dismissed.¹⁰⁹ In February 2021, a group of 876 victims of Iran-sponsored terrorism filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. court against Halkbank, alleging the bank helped

¹⁰⁴ Anshel Pfeffer, “ Hamas uses secret cyberwar base in Turkey to target enemies,” *The Times*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hamas-running-secret-cyberwar-hq-in-turkey-29mz50sxs>.

¹⁰⁵ Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>; Benjamin Weinthal, “German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹⁰⁶ “Turkish Bank Charged in Manhattan Federal Court for Its Participation in a Multibillion-Dollar Iranian Sanctions Evasion Scheme,” U.S. Department of Justice, October 15, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/turkish-bank-charged-manhattan-federal-court-its-participation-multibillion-dollar-iranian>.

¹⁰⁷ Larry Neumeister, “US court upholds Turkish banker’s conviction in Iran case,” *Associated Press*, July 20, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/d99a19d3086aa4732cdb441ccf9e985e>.

¹⁰⁸ Jonathan Stempel, “Turkey’s Halkbank must face U.S. indictment over Iran sanctions violations, judge rules,” *Reuters*, October 1, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-halkbank/turkeys-halkbank-must-face-u-s-indictment-over-iran-sanctions-violations-judge-rules-idUSKBN26M7O9>.

¹⁰⁹ “Halkbank working with U.S. judiciary for ‘common ground’ to drop fraud case,” *Ahval*, June 30, 2021, <https://ahvalnews.com/halkbank/halkbank-working-us-judiciary-common-ground-drop-fraud-case>.

Iran avoid the financial consequences of its support for terrorism. A Manhattan federal court dismissed the case, arguing it could be settled in a Turkish court.¹¹⁰

As part of the Halkbank investigation, U.S. authorities have charged Zarrab and eight other Turkish citizens for exporting gold in exchange for Iranian oil, in violation of U.S. sanctions, and using a series of front companies, false documentation, and bribes to make illegal transactions through U.S. banks.¹¹¹ In October 2017, Zarrab signed a plea deal with federal prosecutors to act as a government witness. U.S. authorities arrested Zarrab in March 2016 when he arrived in the United States for a family trip to Disney World with \$100,000 in cash.¹¹² In March 2017, U.S. authorities arrested Mehmet Hakan Atilla, the former deputy general manager of Halkbank, on charges of conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions law, defraud the United States, and commit money laundering and bank fraud, as well as a charge of bank fraud.¹¹³ Atilla was convicted in January 2018.¹¹⁴ Turkish authorities initially investigated the scheme in 2013, but dropped the case after pressure from Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who argued the investigation was part of a coup attempt against the government.¹¹⁵ Erdoğan condemned Atilla's conviction as "scandalous," but the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan concluded in July 2020 Atilla had received a fair trial.¹¹⁶ Atilla was sentenced to 32 months in prison but released in July 2019 and deported to Turkey. Despite his conviction, Atilla was named the head of Turkey's stock exchange in October 2019.¹¹⁷

Links to Terrorism

- Halkbank is at the center of a conspiracy to export gold in exchange for Iranian oil, in violation of U.S. sanctions.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ "U.S. court dismisses case against Turkey's Halkbank by victims of Iran-linked attacks," Reuters, February 17, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-us-halkbank-idUSKBN2AH0FG>.

¹¹¹ Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

¹¹² Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

¹¹³ "Turkish Banker Arrested For Conspiring To Evade U.S. Sanctions Against Iran And Other Offenses," U.S. Department of Justice, March 28, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/turkish-banker-arrested-conspiring-evade-us-sanctions-against-iran-and-other-offenses>.

¹¹⁴ Nina Agrawal, "Banker in Iran sanctions trial found guilty," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-iran-sanctions-zarrab-20180103-story.html>.

¹¹⁵ Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

¹¹⁶ Larry Neumeister, "US court upholds Turkish banker's conviction in Iran case," Associated Press, July 20, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/d99a19d3086aa4732cdb441ccf9e985e>.

¹¹⁷ "Turkish Banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla Sentenced To 32 Months For Conspiring To Violate U.S. Sanctions Against Iran And Other Offenses," U.S. Department of Justice, May 16, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/turkish-banker-mehmet-hakan-atilla-sentenced-32-months-conspiring-violate-us-sanctions>; Ayla Jean Yackley, "Turkey picks former jailed banker to head Istanbul stock exchange," *Financial Times*, October 21, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/31e25da8-f442-11e9-a79c-bc9acae3b654>.

¹¹⁸ "Turkish Bank Charged in Manhattan Federal Court for Its Participation in a Multibillion-Dollar Iranian Sanctions Evasion Scheme," U.S. Department of Justice, October 15, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/turkish-bank-charged-manhattan-federal-court-its-participation-multibillion-dollar-iranian>.



Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation

The Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (“İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı,” or IHH) is a Turkey-based international charity established in 1992 to aid Bosnian Muslims. IHH is active in more than 100 countries.¹¹⁹ The charity stands accused of ties to al-Qaeda, Hamas, and foreign fighters in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.¹²⁰

Links to Terrorism

- A January 2020 U.S. lawsuit filed by American photojournalist Matthew Schrier under the Anti-Terrorism Act against Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) alleged that IHH and QIB formed a partnership to support Syrian jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham and the jihadist umbrella group Syrian Islamic Front.¹²¹
- In April 2016, the Russian government accused Turkish NGOs Besar Foundation, the Iyilikder Foundation, and the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) of providing weapons and material support to Syrian rebel groups. Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin accused the three groups of being fronts for Turkey’s MIT intelligence agency to provide support to rebel forces in the Syrian civil war.¹²²
- In January 2014, Turkish police raided the IHH’s offices in the Turkish city of Kilis as part of a series of raids in six cities against individuals suspected of al-Qaeda links, according to the government. IHH denied the allegations.¹²³ Also that month, Turkish security forces stopped an IHH truck at the Syrian-Turkish border that was carrying weapons and ammunition into Syria. The drivers reportedly claimed they were

¹¹⁹ “Profile: Free Gaza Movement,” BBC News, June 1, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10202678>; “Factbox: Turkish charity group behind Gaza-bound convoy,” Reuters, May 31, 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-israel-turkey-group-fact/factbox-turkish-charity-group-behind-gaza-bound-convoy-idUSTRE64U4SO20100601>.

¹²⁰ Benjamin Weinthal, “German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹²¹ “US lawsuit against Qatar Islamic Bank reveals Turkish charity IHH’s links to terrorist groups,” *Nordic Monitor*, September 18, 2020, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2020/09/lawsuit-against-qatari-institutions-filed-by-american-photojournalist-in-the-us-reveals-ihhs-links-to-terrorist-groups/>.

¹²² Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

¹²³ “Turkish anti-terrorist police raid aid agency near Syrian border,” *Reuters*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ngo/turkish-anti-terrorist-police-raid-aid-agency-near-syrian-border-idUSBREA0D0J20140114?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>; Ariel Zirulnick, “Turkey cracks down on charity suspected of arming Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0114/Turkey-cracks-down-on-charity-suspected-of-arming-Al-Qaeda-affiliates-in-Syria>.

transporting aid on behalf of the IHH. The IHH and Turkish Interior Minister Efkan Ala denied the accusations.¹²⁴

- Syrian rebels have linked the IHH to the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2012, Syrian rebels from the Free Syrian Army told the United Kingdom's *Times* that a ship carrying supplies from Libya had been designated for the FSA. But upon arrival, the rebels discovered that the ship had been registered to the IHH. An FSA member accused the Brotherhood of using its ties in Turkey and "seizing control of this ship and the cargo. This is what they do. They buy influence with their money and guns."¹²⁵
- Germany outlawed the IHH's German branch in 2010 because the Turkish group "fights against Israel's right to exist," according to then-Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere. IHH challenged the ruling, but a German federal administrative court upheld the decision in April 2012 because it found the IHH had made financial contributions to Hamas.¹²⁶
- Israel banned the IHH in 2008 as part of a larger ban of international charities belonging to the umbrella of the Hamas-linked Union of Good charity.¹²⁷ On May 31, 2010, the IHH organized an aid flotilla to the Gaza Strip, which sought to break an Israeli naval blockade of Gaza. Israeli forces boarded the lead ship, the Mavi Marmara, resulting in the deaths of nine activists who violently resisted.¹²⁸ In June 2010, a bipartisan group of 87 U.S. senators called for the U.S. government to investigate designating the IHH as a foreign terror group.¹²⁹
- During the 1990s, IHH allegedly contributed money to foreign fighters in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.¹³⁰ Retired French investigating judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere investigated the IHH in the 1990s as head of the French judiciary's counterterrorism unit. IHH "were basically helping Al Qaeda when (Usama) bin Laden started to want to target U.S. soil," Bruguiere told the Associated Press. Members of the so-called Fateh Kamel network worked at IHH as a cover while plotting Los Angeles International Airport on behalf of al-Qaeda. "It was too systematic and too widespread for the NGO (non-governmental organization) not to know," according to Bruguiere. IHH denied any links to terrorism.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Agence France-Presse, "Police raid Turkish charity in 'smear campaign,'" *Daily Star* (Beirut), January 14, 2014, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jan-14/243984-turkish-police-raid-charity-over-sending-arms-to-syria.ashx#ixzz2qNJzeuw%20>.

¹²⁵ Sheera Frenkel, "Brotherhood 'buying influence with arms,'" *The Times* (London), September 14, 2012, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brotherhood-buying-influence-with-arms-lt9nc0qnkh3?shareToken=e9edb8204748ab74fc98c901f6757207>.

¹²⁶ Benjamin Weinthal, "German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹²⁷ "Defense Minister signs order banning Hamas-affiliated charitable organizations," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 7, 2008, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2008/pages/defense%20minister%20signs%20order%20banning%20hamas-affiliated%20charitable%20organizations%207-jul-2008.aspx>.

¹²⁸ Jason Athanasiadis, "Targeted by Israeli raid: Who is the IHH?" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0601/Targeted-by-Israeli-raid-Who-is-the-IHH>.

¹²⁹ "Cardin, Bipartisan Group of 87 Senators Send Letter to President Obama in Support of Israel's Right to Self-Defense," Senator Ben Cardin, June 23, 2010, <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-bipartisan-group-of-87-senators-send-letter-to-president-obama-in-support-of-israels-right-to-self-defense>.

¹³⁰ Benjamin Weinthal, "German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹³¹ Associated Press, "Turkish Charity Behind Gaza Flotilla Had 'Ties to Terrorism and Jihad,'" Fox News, June 2, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/06/02/french-judge-says-turkish-charity-gaza-flotilla-terror-ties.html>.

Snapshot of Turkish Counterterrorism Legislation and Initiatives

Definition of Terrorism: Following the March 13, 2016, bombing in central Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan demanded that the definition of “terrorist” be expanded to include those who support terrorism. According to Erdoğan, such individuals might include activists, lawmakers, or journalists.¹³² He said: “Their titles as an MP, an academic, an author, a journalist do not change the fact that they are actually terrorists. An act of terror is successful because of these supporters, these accomplices.”¹³³

Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Terrorism Finance (AML/CTF): Turkey is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Within Turkey’s Ministry of Finance is the Financial Intelligence Unit (MASAK), which cooperates with similar international agencies to support FATF and implement its recommendations.¹³⁴ The U.S. Department of State has accused the Turkish government of failing to regularly review its non-profit sector or provide “adequate anti-money laundering/CFT outreach or guidance.”¹³⁵ More than 5,500 foundations and 100,000 associations are licensed through the General Director of Foundations, but there are too few auditors to appropriately monitor compliance with AML/CFT regulations. The State Department further believes that Turkey has focused its CTF efforts primarily on the PKK and the Gullen movement.¹³⁶

Countering Violent Extremism: Turkey has several government programs to counter extremism. One is an outreach program administered by the Turkish National Police (TNP) that seeks to prevent radicalization through early contact with at-risk communities. This program aims to reach vulnerable populations before they are exposed to extremist propaganda and messages. The government’s Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Diyanet, oversees 85,000 mosques in the country while promoting a more moderate version of Islam and weakening radical Islamist messaging. The Diyanet tries to accomplish this aim by reinterpreting religious texts and teaching religious education under a more modern framework, and by staffing mosques with Diyanet officials.¹³⁷

Policy Prescriptions

¹³² “Ankara bombing: Erdogan seeks to widen terrorism definition,” BBC News, March 14, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35807987>.

¹³³ “Definition of ‘terrorists’ should be broadened to include ‘accomplices,’ says Erdoğan,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 15, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/definition-of-terrorists-should-be-broadened-to-include-accomplices-says-erdogan-96461>.

¹³⁴ “Turkey’s Contributions to International Community’s Efforts to Fight Terrorism,” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed February 7, 2018, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-s-contributions-to-international-community-s-efforts-to-fight-terrorism.en.mfa>; “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

¹³⁵ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

¹³⁶ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

¹³⁷ “Country Report on Terrorism 2014 – Turkey,” U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Turkey, June 1, 2015, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/country-report-terrorism-2014-turkey/>.

In order to better combat terrorism and terrorist financing, Turkey will need to fully enforce its own counterterrorism policies and increase the resources devoted to monitoring and countering terrorism financing, in particular within the non-profit sector.

Specifically, the United States must incentivize Ankara to:

- Arrest or expel all wanted and internationally designated individuals inside its borders, including the individuals outlined by CEP's TURKEY-HARBORS campaign
- Expel or arrest all members of the Taliban, Haqqani network, Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas delegations currently residing or operating inside Turkey
- Halt all direct support—financial, material, and strategic—to internationally designated terrorist organizations
- Allocate appropriate resources to government oversight of the financial and non-profit sectors to prevent abuse by criminal and extremist elements
- Investigate and close non-government organizations, financial institutions, and charities with ties to international extremist movements