

# The Deradicalization of Islamists by Islamists: Hamas's Kid Glove Approach to Salafi Jihadists in the Gaza Strip, 2010-2014

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By 2009, below the surface of public denial, the growing Salafi jihadist presence in Gaza aroused much concern within Hamas and was closely monitored, even though the Hamas government's official response was a firm refusal to acknowledge the slightest concern. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh rejected allegations in the international media of any global jihadi presence in Gaza, insisting, "There are no extremist organisations or groups on Gazan soil."<sup>1</sup> However, in conversations in more informal settings, Hamas leaders admitted that their internal concerns over the issue were growing.<sup>2</sup>

In 2010, the Hamas government communicated these concerns to the external wing of the movement. According to a letter sent from the Gaza leadership to the Hamas politburo in Damascus, the extensive efforts at reconciliation until then were seen as failures, and a harsher approach was suggested, with the goal of eliminating the extremist groups entirely.<sup>3</sup> Another letter, sent by Ahmed Jaabari, at the time the commander-in-chief of the Qassam Brigades, to the head of the politburo, Khaled Mashal, warned him of the potentially deteriorating situation in Gaza.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the 2009 proclamation of an Islamic caliphate in Rafah and other incidents, there were some ominous signs of a more broadly based violent radicalization underway in Gaza. For instance, for three

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consecutive years, the UNRWA summer camps for children were vandalized by unknown attackers. These mixed-gender camps were disliked by the Salafis, who advocated strict gender separation. The police officers who came to investigate the attacks were reported to have arrived late on the scene and showed a tepid interest in resolving the cases. These recurring attacks, together with the slow reaction of Hamas's police forces, revealed a certain mutual empathy between the radicals and the police. Some observers even argued that the Hamas government deliberately allowed the Salafi jihadists to carry out their attacks as a way of fulfilling the more extreme sections of the movement's Islamization agenda. This symbiosis, whether deliberate or accidental, nevertheless showed that Salafi jihadist ideals were not restricted to an extreme segment of society, but were shared by civil servants and some ordinary Gazans. The increased support for the Salafis among broader sectors of society was likewise more visible in the streets of Gaza's southern towns. In Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis, and Rafah, men wearing the *shalwar qamis* (Asian-inspired dress worn by the Afghan mujahidin)<sup>5</sup> became part of everyday life on the streets.

Hamas's fear of the emerging challenge posed by the Salafi jihadist groups was seen, for instance, in the way the government accelerated the introduction of Islamic values in Gaza. In 2009, the Ministry of the Interior announced new rules concerning women's dress codes, behavior, and gender separation.<sup>6</sup> However, some of the new rules – for instance, the obligatory hijab for female university students on campus and for female lawyers in the courts, and a ban on women smoking shisha in public places – proved quite unpopular with Gazans. Following protests, the Hamas government quickly retracted these new rules and reformulated them as “recommendations.”<sup>7</sup> This soon became a recurrent pattern. When its Islamizing measures were met with opposition, the government would blame the institutions concerned (for instance, schools), claiming that the new rules had originated from them and did not come directly from the ministries.<sup>8</sup>

On the one hand, coping with the Salafi jihadists through a policy of appeasement was an impossible balancing act. Satisfying Salafi jihadist demands for the Islamization of the public sphere and retaining the support of large segments of Gazan society were incompatible demands. On the other hand, the alternative of head-on confrontation, as occurred during the 2009 incidents in Rafah, did not appeal to ordinary Gazans. While some Gazans supported using force against the Salafi jihadists, many argued that

“it is forbidden to kill a Muslim. It doesn’t matter if he is a Salafi jihadist or not; it’s *haram* to use violence against any brother.”<sup>9</sup>

As Hamas was striving for improved control over the internal security situation, and at the same time seeking to enhance its popular support, it nevertheless looked as though either approach – appeasement or confrontation – would result in further alienating one or both of the parties concerned.

### Fact-finding and a Novel Approach

There was a need for fresh thinking on the part of the government, and by this point it was apparent to Hamas that many of the local Salafi jihadists came from the established political factions, and even from within Hamas’s own ranks.<sup>10</sup> The government responded by appointing a fact-finding commission consisting of respected religious scholars and psychologists from within as well as outside its own movement.<sup>11</sup> Its mission was to investigate the roots of the Salafi jihadist phenomenon in Gaza and determine how it could be dealt with more successfully. The commission’s final report described the present member base of Hamas, profiled the kind of recruits it should be seeking, and recommended constructive ways of addressing radicalization when it occurred.<sup>12</sup> The report became the basis for a new approach to the Salafi jihadists.

As statements by police and security officials revealed, the objective of the new approach was “to embrace, not alienate.”<sup>13</sup> It was based on relatively progressive heart-and-mind principles, which in several respects resembled measures for dealing with violent radicalization that had previously been adopted in other Muslim-majority entities, notably the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia. As opposed to its earlier vacillation between appeasement and confrontation, the Hamas government now adopted a more comprehensive approach to the problem. The old policies were not thrown away, but the new approach sought to combine the two existing tactics with an additional component. The strategic goal was no longer to eliminate the Salafi jihadists, nor to sweep the problem under the rug. Through innovative means such as monitoring, respectful treatment, dialogue, and religious debate, the Hamas government opted for containment of the Salafi jihadist problem and possibly even the rehabilitation of the individuals involved.

The commission’s report concluded that the local Gaza presence of Salafi jihadists was not primarily due to radicalization among the existing

Salafi community. Rather, the problem lay within the political factions themselves.<sup>14</sup> The majority of Salafi jihadists were found to be young and current (or former) members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Fatah seeking alternative ways of channeling their despair and lack of hope in the future.

In late 2009, with the goal of containing these individuals and hopefully bringing some of them back into the fold, Hamas began conducting audits of its cadres in all areas of the movement, religious as well as military. One cornerstone of this new approach was the new power given by the government to its Ministry of Religious Endowments over Gaza's Islamic infrastructure.<sup>15</sup> The activities of mosques, religious charities, and other Islamic associations were thoroughly scrutinized.<sup>16</sup> Employees were audited and mosques under Salafi influence were either shut down or had their imams replaced by people trained by and loyal to Hamas.

This auditing process was relatively aggressive. Little distinction was made between Salafi and Salafi jihadist congregations. Peaceful Salafi associations such as Dar al-Kitab wal-Sunna felt that their work was made difficult as a result of the government's imposition of new restrictions and the withdrawal of some of its licenses to carry out *dawa* activities.<sup>17</sup> One of their mosques in Jabaliya was stormed and closed by the government (but later reopened). Hizb ut-Tahrir in Gaza, which had a stronger political profile than the other Salafi associations, was dealt with in an even harsher manner.<sup>18</sup>

Financial inducements were used as an effective instrument to control the mosques. By offering the board overseeing the congregation more money if it accepted a certain cleric as its imam, the Hamas government felt that it could influence its agenda, as well as the message and tone of the imam's sermons.<sup>19</sup> While this approach was not completely new, it now became broadly applied to all of Gaza's Islamic associations. A congregation's financial situation was crucial as it directly affected the number of employees it had and the amount of *dawa* activity it could carry out.

At the same time, audits were also conducted within the Hamas movement itself. The most thorough review was carried out in the Qassam Brigades, which was noted in the commission's report as one of the major sources for Salafi jihadist recruitment.<sup>20</sup> In 2010, the Qassam Brigades temporarily put all membership applications on hold and began inspecting its existing members, monitoring their loyalty, piety, and any suspicious behavior.<sup>21</sup> Examples of suspicious behavior included using *takfiri* language (denouncing infidels), condemning items and individuals as *haram* (forbidden) or *kuffar*

(infidels), wearing Salafi clothes, and having more than one wife.<sup>22</sup> Fighters who were suspected of Salafi jihadist sympathies had their memberships frozen and were further investigated by the *amn al-haraka*, the movement's own unit for internal security.<sup>23</sup> As the revocation of membership meant being banned from participation in any of Hamas's activities, it was tantamount to exclusion from social life at large.

As part of the new approach, religious re-education was offered to those Qassam fighters who were excluded in this way. Following this process, if they were deemed ready to be re-accepted as members, they were offered re-employment.<sup>24</sup> In the past, when fighters had been dismissed, they were usually left humiliated to face their families and friends on their own. Among Gazans, suspension from the Qassam Brigades was commonly understood to mean that the individuals concerned had failed to follow the Brigades' Islamic principles. It was therefore especially shameful for those affected, and it is not surprising that this group had for the past few years been a major source of recruitment for the Salafi jihadist groups.

These ex-Qassam fighters were particularly vulnerable and receptive to the recruitment attempts of new groups, as they were strongly motivated to prove themselves to society, both to demonstrate their religious credentials and to show their willingness to continue to fight the occupation.<sup>25</sup> For those members who succeeded in passing Hamas's audit, obligatory courses in Islamic morals and ethics were also on the table. These courses were part of the "vaccination" component of the new approach, aimed at strengthening members' religious knowledge. For both the excluded and remaining fighters, the rigorous audit process was followed up by Islamic re-education.

The harsh albeit educative and rehabilitative approach taken toward its own rank and file was mirrored in the way in which the Hamas government handled those individuals who were already active in the Salafi jihadist groups. By initially seizing their arms and arresting their leaders, Hamas sought to remove the elements necessary for the Salafi jihadists to continue their militant activities. They were then forbidden to appear in the media or to give interviews. Moreover, the Salafi jihadists were also forbidden from taking part in armed resistance activities against Israel, and at times were confined to their homes – in effect, house arrest.<sup>26</sup>

However, there was an additional, softer, element to the government's handling of these dissidents as well. Unless they had been arrested for involvement in a particular incident, their detention periods were shortened

to less than a week at a time and they were given special treatment in jail.<sup>27</sup> Human rights abuses were relatively rare and these detainees were held in a separate detention center with higher standards than the Strip's ordinary prison facilities.<sup>28</sup> While repression remained one of the means by which the Hamas government continued to handle the Salafi jihadists, the adoption of a novel approach based on containment and attempted rehabilitation was also an important part of the response.

### Disengagement, Deradicalization, and Rehabilitation

In discussions about the Salafi problem, senior leaders in Hamas would often reiterate that even the Salafis were Muslims and they were all part of the same community.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the Hamas government frequently expressed its view that Salafist jihadism was not merely a criminal activity, but rather a question of "illness" and poor mental health in need of a "cure." According to Minister of Health Basem Naim: "You can arrest all the addicts. But this will not solve the problem. You have to convince people not to take drugs. You have to prevent the recruitment of more addicts."<sup>30</sup>

Based on this perception and the conclusions of its fact-finding commission, the Ministry of the Interior assigned its Political and Moral Guidance Commission to draft a comprehensive package of measures for curing the Salafi "addicts" – Hamas's own version of a prison-based deradicalization program.<sup>31</sup> The new program was not merely a local product designed in Gaza and carried out in isolation from the movement's politburo in exile. On the contrary, politburo members shared local concerns about the threat posed by the Salafi jihadist phenomenon. Hamas leader Izzat al-Rishaq, for instance, concerned about the situation, explained what was being done: "We try to treat their way of thinking, to convince them to leave the al-Qaida thoughts, by discussion and arguments. Maybe we will succeed, maybe we will fail. I think that if the situation continues as it is today I'm afraid we cannot persuade anybody that our way of political participation will lead to any result."<sup>32</sup>

In parallel, the Hamas administration began construction of five new detention centers for Gaza's 1,200 security detainees, which included the Salafi jihadists.<sup>33</sup> The basic process of detention for all security prisoners consisted of two phases. The first phase involved a period of detention with the security forces for information gathering purposes, followed by transfer to a detention center. During the second phase, the detainee was usually bound to stand trial. However, the Salafi jihadist prisoners were arrested

and released on a more fluid and regular basis, commonly without standing trial. Where present, human rights abuses associated with interrogation generally took place during the first phase with the security forces, rather than in the detention centers.<sup>34</sup>

As part of Hamas's novel approach, the interrogation methods used on the Salafi jihadists were less harsh than those applied to other detainees. For example, the security forces would only hold a Salafi jihadist (without blood on his hands) in detention for a few days, while others regularly remained in detention for months at a time.<sup>35</sup> While common criminals suffered torture, such as having their nails pulled out and the bottoms of their feet beaten, Salafi jihadist prisoners were beaten with sacks over their heads.<sup>36</sup> When a detainee had completed his period of interrogation by the security forces in the central al-Ansar facility (or sometimes in smaller field offices), he was passed on to one of the detention centers.<sup>37</sup>

All Salafi jihadist detainees, whether or not they agreed to participate in the deradicalization program, were held together in one detention facility apart from other detainees.<sup>38</sup> Although failing to measure up to any comparable standards, this facility was a converted apartment bloc where the former apartments had been remodeled into cells and redesigned to meet the needs of detention.<sup>39</sup> In contrast to most other prison-based deradicalization programs, for instance in Saudi Arabia, the Gazan Salafi jihadists were not inducted into the program on a voluntary basis: counseling sessions were an obligatory part of detention. Refusal to participate in the sessions was punished with solitary confinement.<sup>40</sup> In addition, Saudi Arabia only offered its program to detainees without blood on their hands, who were sympathizers and who could more readily be seen as accessories misled by radical rhetoric.<sup>41</sup>

### **Hamas's Program Curriculum**

In contrast, Hamas's deradicalization program included all detainees and was delivered in three main curricular blocs. Two blocs were taught inside prison while the third one was delivered following the detainees' release. The first bloc of the program consisted of a series of religious counseling sessions. As in the Saudi equivalent, these sessions were led by senior Islamic scholars, highly respected in the community and across the political spectrum. This approach differed from the kind of deradicalization education carried out in some other Islamic countries. In Indonesia, for instance, it was stressed that counseling had to be conducted by former



Salafi jihadists who were already reformed, as “radicals will only listen to other radicals.”<sup>42</sup> According to the head of the corrections division at the Indonesian Ministry of Justice, Muhammed Sueb, a Salafi jihadist was most likely to change his ideas when confronted by a peer. Any other religious scholar would be viewed with suspicion.<sup>43</sup>

The Hamas government, however, chose the Saudi approach, and the scholars it selected were either affiliated with the movement, such as Shaykh Sulayman al-Daya, or Salafi and affiliated with the *Dawa salafiyya* (the non-violent Salafi movement), such as Salma Dias and Omar Hams.<sup>44</sup> Some of them had lengthy service records with the Qassam Brigades. The most prominent scholars were used by the Hamas government for sensitive and religiously based mediation work with the detainees.

All the religious scholars involved in the program accepted the Muslim Brotherhood’s understanding of Islam, that is, the view that Islam must be re-interpreted in the light of the contemporary and local context in which believers find themselves. However, as a group they were religiously conservative and even sympathetic toward the Salafi position. As analyst Nathan Thrall observed, “The imams that work with Hamas and go to the prisons look exactly like Salafi jihadists themselves, in their look, their dress, even their Saudi perfume that lacks alcohol. They share many of [the ideological Salafi] beliefs but are not anti-Hamas. They are part of the movement but not playing the same game as the Salafi jihadists. [These] imams’ political views are in line with Hamas, but in their personal lives they are closer to the Salafis.”<sup>45</sup>

The religious scholars engaged with the detainees through lectures, one-on-one sessions, and group seminars. The sessions began with the scholars listening to the experiences and views of the detainees. They then moved on to a traditional form of religious dialogue, with the goal of re-educating the subjects to accept Hamas’s interpretation of Islam.<sup>46</sup>

The second part of the program was political and involved lectures and group sessions with Hamas leaders from the movement’s political echelon. They addressed the relationship between Islam and politics, explaining to the detainees why the movement had chosen to participate in parliamentary politics and how this choice fit in with Islam. In particular, they addressed the issue of Islamizing Gazan society, a process that Salafi jihadists criticized as proceeding too slowly. The Hamas leaders explained the need for gradualism in Islamizing society, assuring their audience that their ultimate goal was also a society based on *sharia* rules, but to be



achieved at a slower pace.<sup>47</sup> This political element was a local adaptation that differed considerably from other existing deradicalization programs.

The third and final part of the program sought to engage the Salafi jihadists after their release from detention. Upon release, they had to sign pledges not to violate truces agreed between Hamas and Israel or to engage in any activities that compromised Gaza's internal security.<sup>48</sup> The former prisoners received regular home visits by security officers who continued to monitor them. In addition, at regular intervals they were brought in for a few days of detention and questioning and then released again.<sup>49</sup> Some were under house arrest when at home, while others were allowed to move around Gaza freely. The religious counseling they received was followed up on a regular basis; home tutoring was carried out by the same religious scholars who had sat with the detainees in their cells. These individual sessions were also supplemented by additional group counseling.<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, released militants were offered inducements to renounce violence. According to Ansar al-Sunna leader Muhammad Talib, for instance, Hamas had offered him money and a new job in the government service. Those Salafi jihadists who were former members of the Qassam Brigades were usually offered a higher rank if they agreed to return to military service.<sup>51</sup> While the Hamas program used measures such as re-employment and financial inducements, it put less emphasis on supporting the detainee's family and seeking their assistance to prevent him from relapsing into violent behavior. However, upon question, Hamas's Ministry of the Interior maintained that it did offer families practical assistance, particularly with resolving intra- and inter-family conflicts while their relative was in detention.<sup>52</sup>

### **Hamas's Kid Glove Approach: Proof of Flexibility**

Hamas's perception of the Salafi jihadist groups was twofold. On the one hand, it saw them as a military threat to its rule and position in power. On the other hand, Hamas appeared to have a special kinship with the Salafi jihadists that was manifested on the religious level. Although their activities in Gaza were seen as a threat to internal security, the Salafi jihadists were not dismissed as mere criminals but rather seen as misguided Muslim brothers in need of religious re-education. This also included the view that they could be "turned" if only taught the "right" interpretation of Islam.

Hamas's novel approach included giving up its former objective of eliminating the Salafi jihadist groups entirely and opting for containment

instead. Hamas sought to appeal to the common ideological and religious base in Islam that it shared with the Salafi jihadists. While they were still treated harshly when arrested and interrogated, detained militants were treated more as patients – their cells were more comfortable than those of other detainees and they generally endured shorter periods of detention. Hamas's most progressive measure was its introduction of the prison-based deradicalization program. By this, Hamas displayed pragmatism in devising measures that went far beyond the obvious and traditional. This gentler rehabilitation approach was reminiscent of the ways in which several Western countries were likewise addressing the problem of violent radicalization.

Hamas's deradicalization program carried some of the hallmarks of similar programs in other countries – where they were commonly considered to be an expression of democracy. However, while treating the Salafi jihadists as patients might have looked democratic at first glance, these “democratic” practices were implemented in combination with repressive methods that lacked any concern for human rights. Hamas's softer measures were not driven by any increased respect for the individual per se but by its own immediate need to find effective methods to handle this emerging threat. Nonetheless, this proof of Hamas's ability to alter its tactics, from coercive to persuasive, should nevertheless be read as a display of the Islamist group's far-reaching flexibility and pragmatism.

In terms of its actual effectiveness, Hamas's deradicalization program never yielded the results that the government had hoped for. One of the reasons for its failure was Hamas's over-confidence in which types of individuals it believed it would be able to deradicalize. Best practices from other prison-based programs had shown that usually only lower level sympathizers and helpers responded positively to deradicalization attempts, with leading members much less so. Hamas's program, however, took on Salafi jihadists of every stamp, and thus the prospects of success were bleak from the outset. In addition, given the deep radicalization beyond Hamas's own ideology that had taken root in parts of Gazan society, most of the radicalized individuals who were enrolled in the program had already passed the critical point of no return.

When asking the Gazan Salafi jihadists themselves what they thought about the level of success of Hamas's deradicalization efforts, they dismissed this program as no more than devious attempts at indoctrination, failing to set up any real dialogue. According to “Abu Muaz,” a leader of the Salafi

jihadist group Tawhid wal-Jihad: “ Hamas tries to brainwash us jihadis in prison. But we don’t listen just because they come to talk to us on the inside. Maybe if you came to my house or met with me in the mosque we could talk. But I can’t listen to you while you are holding me by force. Concerning the pledge we needed to sign about refraining from any further armed activities, I just signed because I wanted to get out of prison. I was not convinced by any of that.”<sup>53</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Ismail Haniyeh, quoted in C. Jacob, “ Hamas’s Gaza – Four Years Later,” *Memri* (2011), p. 6.
- 2 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 2, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 3 Yezid Sayigh, “ We Serve the People: Hamas Policing in Gaza,” Crown Paper No. 5, Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, 2011, p. 18.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 An outfit consisting of tunic and trousers typically worn by the Afghan mujahidin.
- 6 Sayigh, “ We Serve the People,” p. 5.
- 7 Are Hovdenak, ed., “ The Public Services under Hamas in Gaza: Islamic Revolution or Crisis Management,” PRIO Report (2010), p. 53.
- 8 Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 223.
- 9 Author’s discussion with a group of students, Gaza City, April 12, 2011.
- 10 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 2, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 11 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 11, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 12 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 10, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 13 Confirmed by interviews with Fathi Hamed and Muhammad Lafi.
- 14 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 10, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 15 Hazem Balousha, “ How Hamas Uses Mosques to Garner Support,” *al-Monitor*, July 25, 2013.
- 16 Benedetta Berti, “ Internal Challenge: The Political and Ideological Impact of Violent Salafist Groups in Gaza,” *Strategic Assessment* 14, no. 2 (2011): 79.
- 17 Farez al-Ghoul’s interview with Naim al-Laham, Khan Younis, May 2010.
- 18 Sayigh, “ We Serve the People,” p. 15.
- 19 Author’s interview with Gazan imam, Gaza City, April 2011.
- 20 Author’s interview with Hamas leader no. 7, Gaza Strip, September 2011.
- 21 Author’s interview with Israeli security operative, Jerusalem, September 22, 2011.
- 22 Author’s interview with Qassam fighter, Gaza Strip, September 2011.
- 23 The number of suspended Qassam fighters is estimated to have been 30-50 individuals.
- 24 Author’s interview with Qassam fighter, Gaza Strip, September 2011.

- 25 Author's interview with Fares Akram, Gaza City, September 6, 2011.
- 26 Author's interview with Salafi jihadist fighter, Rafah, September 2011.
- 27 Author's interview with humanitarian aid official, Jerusalem, September 2011.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Author's interview with Hamas leader no. 10, Gaza Strip, April 2011.
- 30 Basem Naim quoted in ICG, "Radical Islam in Gaza," *Middle East Report* No. 104 (2011), p. 21.
- 31 The respondents used different terms to describe Hamas's deradicalization measures. While some called it a "program," many instead referred to it in terms of "treatment" or "re-education."
- 32 Izzat al-Rishiq quoted in Are Hovdenak, "Al-Qaida – A Challenge for Hamas?" FFI Report No. 92 (2009), p. 32.
- 33 Author's interview with humanitarian aid official, Jerusalem, September 2011.
- 34 See also "Gaza's Prisons for Collaborators," *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 30, 2010.
- 35 ICG, "Radical Islam in Gaza," p. 20.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Author's interview with humanitarian aid official, Jerusalem, September 2011.
- 38 Farez al-Ghoul's interview with "Abu Muaz," Gaza City, February 24, 2010.
- 39 Author's interview with humanitarian aid official, Jerusalem, September 2011.
- 40 Farez al-Ghoul's interview with "Abu Suhaib," Rafah, February 21, 2010.
- 41 Christopher Boucek, "Counter-radicalisation and Extremism Disengagement," *Terrorism Monitor* 5 (2011): 370.
- 42 Author's interview with Sidney Jones, Jakarta, February 1, 2009.
- 43 Magnus Ranstorp's interview with Muhammed Sueb, Jakarta, February 1, 2009.
- 44 Author's interview with Gazan imam, Gaza City, April 2011.
- 45 Author's interview with Nathan Thrall, Jerusalem, September 14, 2011.
- 46 Luay Ammar, "Tens of Detainees Released," *Filistein al-Muslima* 27, p. 49.
- 47 Author's interview with Fares Akram, Gaza City, September 6, 2011.
- 48 Farez al-Ghoul's interview with "Abu Muaz," Gaza City, February 24, 2010.
- 49 Author's interview with Hazem Balousha, Gaza City, September 6, 2011.
- 50 Author's interview with Nathan Thrall, Jerusalem, September 14, 2011.
- 51 Author's interview with Hasan Jaber, Gaza City, September 7, 2011.
- 52 Announcement by the Ministry of the Interior at [www.moi.gov.ps](http://www.moi.gov.ps).
- 53 Farez al-Ghoul's interview with "Abu Muaz," Gaza City, February 24, 2010.