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TRAVELLING THROUGH TIME

Essays in honour of Kaj Öhrnberg

Edited by

Sylvia Akar, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila
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FROM TERRORISTS TO CELEBRITIES: DEPORTATION AS A POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PALESTINIAN ISLAMIC HAMAS

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INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian Islamist organization Hamas was established at the turn of 1988, shortly after the first Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) began in 1987. Founded as a resistance arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, Hamas's nationalistic goal is to establish an Islamic Palestinian state. From Hamas's viewpoint, the territory of this state includes the area within its "historic borders from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Jordan". In spite of its religious principles and rhetoric, Hamas is also a very pragmatic organization, whose ideological goals and practice are constantly contested internally. In addition to its ultimate goal, Hamas also has more pragmatic short-term agendas. It accepts Palestinian, Arab or Islamic sovereignty over only part of the historical territory of Palestine alongside a sovereign Israeli state. However, this does not mean recognition of the state of Israel. It could be argued that, as a pragmatic organization, Hamas would settle for the state of Palestine in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, if a majority of Palestinians supported such a solution.

Hamas is a sociopolitical organization whose main activities in the 1990s included social work, local politics, and armed struggle against its enemy, Israel. From 1987 to 1994, Hamas used violence in order to resist Israel, to reduce the power of Fatah (the most prominent faction of the PLO)[1] and later to sabotage the peace process between Israel and the PLO. The late spring and summer of 1992 were full of factional fighting between Hamas and Fatah.[2]

1 Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, the Palestine Liberation Organization, is an umbrella organization for different Palestinian national groups.
2 Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre 1992.

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From 1987 to 1994, Hamas's strategy was influenced by several political events. The first was naturally the beginning of the first *intifada* in 1987 and the formation of Hamas. The second was Israel's massive arrest campaigns of Hamas members and leaders in 1989. These arrests were made because Hamas started to use violence openly against Israeli targets. This led to the change of Hamas's organization: key leaders were located outside the Palestinian territories.[3] The third key event was the peace process at the beginning of the 1990s. In October 1991, peace talks in Madrid included Israel, Syria, Jordan, and a group of Palestinians as a part of the Jordanian delegation. The Palestinian Islamist movement, with Hamas as its dominant group, was strongly against the negotiations and rejected any political agreement whose results would threaten Palestinian rights.[4] Furthermore, Hamas did not recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.[5] It based its argument on its support among Palestinians: even though the nationalistic organizations belonging to the PLO had the support of the majority, between 1991 and 1993 Hamas had the backing of 30 to 45 percent of the Palestinian population.[6]

The fourth key political event – comprising the focus of this article – was Israel's deportation of 415 Palestinians to South Lebanon in December 1992. The deportation continued until the end of December 1993, when international pressure forced Israel to permit the return of the exiles. The importance to Hamas of this deportation becomes clear when one talks to its members or people affiliated with the organization.[7] During 1992–1994, there were changes in the strategy, cooperation partners, and structure of Hamas. The deportation played a role in these changes. In fact, this article's aim is to answer the questions why and how the deportation to South Lebanon from 1992 to 1993 was important to Hamas. This period is examined through the political opportunities that Hamas enjoyed.

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3 Tamimi 2007: 59–61.

4 The attitude of Hamas toward the peace process went through different stages. To see these in the context of the 1990s, see *Hamas Charter*, Articles 11 and 13; Hamas's Official Statement, dated 20 Oct. 1991, in Jarbawi 1994: 138; al-Hamad & al-Barghouthi 1997: 40.

5 The PLO justified its claim to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by being a political umbrella for many parties, factions, and ideological tendencies.

6 See, for example, Hroub 2000: 216–217; Beyer & Fishman 1993; Piscatori 2008: vii.

7 Author's interviews with members of Hamas and people affiliated with Hamas or Hizbullah (Palestinian territories 2007, Lebanon 2012).

DEPORTATION

Hamas killed six members of Israel's security forces in the first weeks of December 1992. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered a massive retaliatory operation in order to crack down on Hamas. Over 1,600 men believed to be Islamist militants were arrested. When a kidnapped Israeli border policeman was found dead, the Israeli government made the drastic decision to deportee 415 Palestinians. Even before the decision, however, there were already pressures in the Israeli political arena to deport large numbers of Palestinians suspected of belonging to Hamas or the Islamic Jihad.[8] Accordingly, it was not a sudden decision. The official justification of the deportation decision was for the sake of security: to put a stop to the violence against the security forces and to make sure that the attacks did not spread to the civilian population.[9] At the same time, the Israeli officials thought that the key "for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle lies in defusing Hamas's power" and strengthening the PLO's power.[10]

The government's decision was carried out without delay on the 16th of December. Before the orders to deport were even signed, the deportation had already begun in the Palestinian territories.[11] Palestinians were taken from their homes on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as from Israeli jails. They sat on coaches for fourteen to eighteen hours,[12] blindfolded and with their hands tied, until the Israeli High Court hearing was over and the deportation was ratified as a two-year expulsion.[13] Palestinians were left in a no-man's land, an area between Lebanese and Israeli-controlled territories, on a hilltop called Marj al-Zahur in South Lebanon.

The Palestinians found themselves in a limbo situation: while Israel forced them to cross the border of its security zone in South Lebanon, the Lebanese

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8 B'Tselem 1993.

9 B'Tselem 1993. See the reasons behind the decisions of deportations (e.g. the effect of public pressure, political punishment, etc.) in B'Tselem 1993: 15–20.

10 Beyer & Fishman 1993.

11 B'Tselem 1993: 36, 42.

12 For the testimony of Kamal Ahmad Hassan Subeihat, who sat for almost 36 hours in a bus, see B'Tselem 1993: 42.

13 For a discussion about the right to appeal the deportation orders before the implementation, see Allison 1994: 413–414. The decision of Israel's Highest Court in January 1993 was that the expelled persons should individually appeal the deportation orders to the advisory committees. Earlier the military commanders in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip had issued temporary expulsion orders, which the deportees could appeal through their relatives and attorneys. See Allison 1994: 417–423. For a discussion of human rights, international law, and Israeli law on deportation, see B'Tselem 1993.

army did not allow them to proceed north from the border area. The deportees and Lebanon argued that the welfare of deportees was Israel's responsibility. In reply, Israel stated that the deportees were not her responsibility, as they were on Lebanon's soil.[14] Israelis blocked off Zumriya Pass, which was at the northernmost point of the security zone, and mined the road leading up to it. At the same time, the Lebanese army established a roadblock, effectively trapping the deportees in a no-man's land. If the Lebanese army had allowed Palestinians to move north, it might have allowed the deportation problem to fade away, as deportees would have gone to stay with relatives or friends inside Lebanon or Syria. This might have encouraged Israel to continue deportations.[15] Had this happened ten years before, the Lebanese army probably would have been unable to stop deportees, with the country and its army weakened by the political situation at that time.

In 1949, the international community, including Israel, agreed on the treatment of civilians in a situation of war and occupation.[16] Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive." Accordingly, the international community now reacted quickly through the United Nations. The UN's Security Council issued Resolution 799 on 18 December,[17] which condemned the deportation as an act against the Fourth Geneva Convention, stressed "the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon", and demanded the immediate return of the deportees to the occupied territories.[18] The Israeli government's view was that exiling Hamas terrorists from Israeli soil did not comprise a deportation, as understood in Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. According to the Israeli government, Article 49 refers to permanent displacement, while Israel sought only to expel them temporarily for two years.[19] Two UN special envoys held several meetings with the political leadership in Israel at the end of

14 Cabinet Decision, Embassy of Israel (25 Dec. 1992), in Allison 1994: 418.

15 Saleh (Lebanese) 2012. See Tamimi 2007: 68; Allison 1994: 418. According to B'Tselem (1993), between 1967–1987 more than 1,000 Palestinians were deported, and since the eruption of the first *intifada* in 1987 until the December 1992 deportation, 66 Palestinians were deported from Israel.

16 Israel had ratified the Convention, but its explanation on the issue of deportations was that the Fourth Geneva Convention is not applicable in the Palestinian territories.

17 The United Nations' Security Council 1992.

18 For a discussion about the UN's double standard toward Israel, see Allison 1994: 419, n. 139.

19 See Allison 1994: 417, n. 130 for criticism toward the semantics of temporary deportation. Also see B'Tselem 1993: 21–24, 61–62.

December and throughout January, but they did not lead to any change in the situation of the deportees.

Due to the disagreement between Lebanon and Israel about who was responsible for the deportees' welfare, the Israeli government refused to permit a Red Cross convoy to pass through the security zone between Israel and Lebanon. For a few days, "representatives of the Red Cross and UNRWA were allowed to bring food, tents, mattresses, heaters, medical, and other equipment to the area, and camp was set up. Afterwards, Lebanese authorities decided to prohibit Red Cross and UNRWA representatives from further provision of food and equipment from Lebanese territory. The authorities even returned a number of deportees who had been hospitalized in Lebanon to the tent encampment."[20] The deportees received supplies from the residents of nearby villages, as well as from different Lebanese political organizations.[21]

The deportees found a friendly – and, to some extent, helpful – environment in South Lebanon.[22] Dr. Mohsen Saleh, Director of Al-Zaytouna Center for Studies and Consultations in Beirut, explained "how Hamas managed things". It helped that the deportees and Hamas were "open to the [Lebanese] society" and "they had the policy not to go to internal [Lebanese] affairs like what happened with Fatah" in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s. This helped deportees to sell their case and get support from the different Lebanese communities and sects, as well as from the Syrians who had a very strong influence in Lebanon at that time.[23]

The situation immediately received enormous attention from the international press, not least because of its implications for the peace negotiations. This irritated the Israeli government, which blamed the Lebanese government for using deportees for propaganda purposes and allowing the media to interview and photograph the deportees while at the same time refusing to give them food and water.[24] Journalists from the Arab countries, the United States, and different European nations rushed to the scene. Over 400 men and boys in cold winter weather collecting firewood in order to make a fire did not look good on a humanitarian level.

The Israeli government continued to argue that the deportation was a security matter and that for the sake of the peace process they would fight against terror.[25] A pronouncedly negative image of Israeli's deportation policy came within a few

20 B'Tselem 1993: 31.
21 B'Tselem 1993; Saleh (Palestinian) 2012. Dr. Saleh is well informed on Hamas issues.
22 Saleh (Lebanese) 2012; Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.
23 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.
24 Allison 1994: 418.
25 Allison 1994: 415.

weeks, however, when security authorities admitted that 16 persons had been mistakenly deported. By the end of January 1993, there were 396 deportees living in the camp. Of the original 415 deportees, 14 who had been mistakenly deported were returned, two whose deportation was recognized as an error refused to return, and five were returned for medical reasons. Most of the deportees were sent to Israeli detention centres. Bassem Suyuri, a mistakenly deported minor (aged 16), was returned home.[26]

The general feeling of Palestinians inside and outside the Palestinian territories was one of outrage. The situation created political pressure for the PLO leader Yasir Arafat to change his attitude, at least temporarily, toward the rival group Hamas. In public, he had not taken a strong stance against Hamas, probably due to the fear of losing support from the Palestinian society. In private, however, he is said to have been very concerned about Hamas.[27] Nevertheless, the deportation led to a meeting of Hamas and PLO leaders at PLO headquarters in Tunis. As a result of their mutual strategy,[28] the PLO suspended the peace talks for months.

In order to preserve the peace process, Israel started to negotiate, especially with the United States, about the return of the deportees.[29] After many negotiations, the deportees accepted the Israeli proposal on 15 August 1993. Following its terms, 181 deportees returned in early September and the rest on 14 December. Most of the deportees were returned home, but some were sent back to prison or detention centres.[30] The process between the PLO and the state of Israel to reach an agreement concerning the establishment of a transitional Palestinian self-governing authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho began in secret in Oslo at the end of August 1993 without American involvement. One of the reasons for the PLO's decision to join the process in Oslo was the growing support of Hamas among Palestinians.[31]

DEPORTEES

The deportees were mostly members or supporters of Hamas, while a lesser number belonged to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. About the deportees' background, the Israeli authorities stated that those involved were "people, some of

26 B'Tselem 1993: 38–40; Allison 1994: 418–419.
27 Chesnoff 1993.
28 Chesnoff 1993; Masland 1993: 44.
29 Allison 1994: 424 n. 166; B'Tselem 1993: 32.
30 Tamimi 2007: 69–70.
31 Jarbawi 1994: 139.

whom took part in the organization [Hamas or the Islamic Jihad] and support of acts of violence or in the guidance, incitement, or preaching of such acts. The others assisted the activities of the said organizations in the sphere of economic or organizational infrastructure, the mobilisation of personnel, the raising and distribution of funds and also in the wording of proclamations and organising the dissemination thereof."[32]

After the return of the mistakenly deported, the deportees altogether numbered 396 men. The majority (238) were from the West Bank while there were 158 from the Gaza Strip. Most came from cities, a quarter from the refugee camps and almost none from villages. The ages of the men and boys ranged between 16 and 67. The biggest age group (200 men) was between 21 and 30, and there were 136 between 31 and 40. Most of the deportees (268 altogether) had families and children. Most of them (286) also had a security record.[33] In addition, Israel "deported" at least one of its informers, Walid Radi Ibrahim Hamdiyya, the head of Hamas's al-Da'wa wing, who worked as a collaborator with Israeli intelligence.[34]

Many deportees were leaders or leading intellectuals of the Islamist movement. They were seen as the crème de la crème by their own constituency.[35] They were well educated; almost half of the deportees had university degrees or similar diplomas. Nearly a quarter of the deportees were faculty, staff or students at Palestinian universities. At the same time, while only 8 percent were clergy, some deportees who did not belong to the clergy worked in the "religious sector" (for example, as officers of the religious endowment Waqf, or in mosques). There were also businessmen, doctors, and engineers.[36] This level of education and professional background reflects the social background of Hamas: at that time and during the formation of the organization, Hamas's base of members and active supporters included businessmen, engineers, doctors, and academics, as well as students and personnel from the mosques. This professional division also depicts the activity of Hamas during that time. In the early 1990s, Hamas's work focused mainly on the university sector and – much like its predecessor, the Muslim Brotherhood – the social sector. The background of the deportees also clearly shows how universities and mosques were very important mobilisa-

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32 Argument of the Minister of Defence, no. 49, cited in Allison 1994: 417. About the decision of whom to deport, see B'Tselem 1993.

33 B'Tselem 1993: 111–112; Robinson 1997: 159.

34 Chehab 2007: 82–83.

35 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.

36 Robinson 1997: 159. According to B'Tselem (1993: 111–112), the deportees' professions were: 65 students (41 from the Gaza Strip), 56 day labourers, 47 self-employed, 39 clerks, 37 teachers, 33 imams (30 from the West Bank), 29 craftsmen, 18 unemployed, 13 medical doctors, 10 drivers, 8 lecturers, 8 engineers, 7 farmers, 3 journalists, and 1 attorney.

tion and recruitment places for Hamas. At the time of the deportation, Hamas was a political organization with a strong religious and social orientation. Later in the 1990s, until 2000 at least, the political identity of the organization became more pronounced than its religious identity.[37]

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR HAMAS

The year in the Marj al-Zahur camp was an interesting time for the development of the Palestinian Islamic movement – especially for its leading organization, Hamas. The deportation turned out to be a significant political opportunity for Hamas to meet and network with people, get media attention, and tap different resources. In political process theory, political opportunities are important for mobilisation, but equally important are grassroots organizational infrastructures.[38] Both of these aspects were present during this period: the deportation mobilised people and different organizations and groups, both inside and outside the Palestinian territories, and at the same time the organizational infrastructure became stronger, especially in the armed action sector. This became critical when Hamas started its public suicide campaign in 1994; Hamas needed a good grassroots infrastructure to use this tactic, as well as to mobilize people for Hamas's socio-political actions when it was being strongly attacked by Israel.

Resources for an organization to build and maintain itself are critical for social movements, not grievances.[39] Resource mobilization theorists see that "social movement organizations are more likely to be founded, survive, grow, and achieve their objectives in resource-rich environments, and to struggle in resource-poor environments".[40] However, if one ignores collective identity and the cultural perspective, which often are linked to grievances, it is difficult to find answers to sufficiently explain such questions as how strategic choices are made or what cultural impacts movements have.[41] As the article discusses below, I argue that because of the deportation of Hamas members and leaders, Hamas enjoyed a resource-rich environment in 1993 and 1994 while the collective Islamic identity and resistance identity also got stronger. This would have an effect on the organization in the difficult times to come. The resources received during this year in South Lebanon, with its wide social-work network in the Palestinian territories,

37 al-Shaer 2007; Muslih 2007.
38 McAdam 1982.
39 McCarthy & Zald 1977.
40 Armstrong & Bartley 2007.
41 Polletta & Jasper 2001: 284.

helped Hamas to survive in 1994–1998. During that time, Palestinians generally favoured the peace process, which created a challenge for Hamas (as it was in opposition). The Hamas suicide campaign in 1994–1996 led to more difficulties as Israel fiercely struck at Hamas and killed several important leaders. In the end, the Palestinian Authority and Israel both attacked Hamas strongly, but it was still relatively resource-rich and in a position to enjoy support while simultaneously strengthening the collective Islamic identity and its social norms. This helped Hamas follow its objectives.

INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The deportation received huge international media coverage. Not only did it provide a possibility to tell the world about the situation of Palestinians in the area, but it also allowed Hamas as an organization to gain publicity and prestige. According to Mohsen Saleh, Hamas used this opportunity well. In its argumentation, it did not concentrate on struggle, resistance, war, armed action or violence – the type of discourse that one might have assumed. Instead, it mainly stressed Palestinian suffering on the whole and the state of affairs in the camp, a topic much more accessible to the minds and hearts of the international community.[42] As Saleh adds, "It was a turning point to Hamas [from the point of public relations] before that, it was so difficult for Hamas to introduce itself to the [international] media."[43] It was the first time that Hamas felt that the world was interested in it.[44] 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi and Mahmud al-Zahhar, both senior leaders of Hamas, were often featured in the interviews of newspaper and TV journalists. Suddenly terrorists had become celebrities and heroes.[45]

Furthermore, different governments and international organizations were interested in the deportation and Hamas's role in it. Different Islamic organizations and Muslim Brotherhood branches, such as that of Egypt, came to support deportees and give them aid.[46] The relationship between Iran and Hamas also developed in the beginning of the 1990s, and Hamas opened its office in Tehran in October in 1992.[47] Naturally, the deportation of Hamas leadership to the strongholds of Iran's close ally Hizbullah made ties even tighter. During that time, as Syria's influence in Lebanon was strong, the deportation also created a closer rela-

42 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.
43 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012; Tamimi 2007: 69.
44 Tamimi 2007; Beyer & Fishman 1993.
45 *Time* 1993.
46 Caridi 2010: 113.
47 Ibrahim 1992.

tionship between Syria and Hamas. An example of this can be seen in the decision of one deportee, the Hamas leader ʻIzz al-Din al-Sheikh Khalil, not to return to Gaza when Israel allowed deportees to return but instead to relocate in Damascus. There he became one of the senior commanders in Hamas's Syria office.[48]

LEBANESE OPPORTUNITY

The Lebanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaʻ Islamiyya, was a major supporter of Hamas during the year of deportation. Sharing the same ideological foundations of the Sunni school of Islam, Jamaʻ Islamiyya was very active toward the deportees and facilitated money, shelter, logistical assistance, and help with public relations.[49]

In addition to Jamaʻ Islamiyya, the Lebanese Shiʻi organizations Amal and Hizbullah helped to create working connections with Hamas during this time. According to the representative of the Hizbullah-affiliated Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation, cooperation with Amal (the rival organization of Hizbullah) generally involved meetings and speeches.[50] However, Hamas also established strong and functional cooperation with Hizbullah. At the minimum, Saleh points out, "it is natural to find at least consultation between the two organizations, whether in terms of the situation in Gaza or in the [Palestinian refugee] camps or in terms of resistance and how would they coordinate in order to keep sensitive issues like Shiʻi and Sunni [differences] not hindering[51] or not constituting difficulties in their ways to fight Israel."[52] This level of cooperation to resist Israel not only included an exchange of ideas and thoughts, but Hamas's leadership also followed Hizbullah's activities and created a good relationship. The relationship provided later financial, spiritual, and military support.[53] Hizbullah's combat training of Hamas members was very important for the capability of Hamas's armed actions.[54] Indeed, Hamas was "inundated" with offers to train its deportees. Such military training included different combat techniques,

48 Chehab 2007: 147–148.
49 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012; Saleh (Lebanese) 2012.
50 Saleh (Lebanese) 2012.
51 According to Chehab (2007: 146), Israel has tried to create a schism between Sunnis and Shiʻas. In order to avoid this division, Hizbullah has emphasized the role of Jerusalem to all Muslims. Introducing this theme into its rhetoric, Hizbullah has forged a common Islamist identity. Khalili 2007.
52 Saleh (Lebanese) 2012.
53 Khalili 2007.
54 Maʻlawi 1994, in Khalili 2007: 290.

such as the manufacture of explosives from old landmines and chemicals.[55] At the same time, Iran and Syria were supporters of both Hizbullah and Hamas. This strengthened the groups' mutual relationship.[56] Iran was said to provide not only financial aid, but also arms and military training in South Lebanon through its Revolutionary Guards.[57]

PALESTINIAN OPPORTUNITY IN LEBANON

In Marj al-Zahur, Palestinians from the Palestinian territories and outside had an opportunity to meet. In fact, as a political opportunity the deportation created an open environment for sharing and discussing opposing opinions (mostly Islamist) toward the peace process with Israel and the PLO's role in it. From the perspective of social movement theories, this time in Marj al-Zahur served as a place to build solidarity as well as a "free space" where people could promote counter-hegemonic ideas and identities in opposition to those in power in Palestine.[58]

There were deportees from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who had never met before due to Israeli travel restrictions. At the same time, other Palestinians living outside the territories (for example, in the Palestinian refugee camps) were able to come and meet relatives and likeminded people. People networked and shared their thoughts and ideas. So even though the year was hard for the deportees on an individual and psychological level, it gave a great political opportunity to the Palestinian Islamist groups, especially Hamas. Mohsen Saleh, Director of Al-Zaytouna Center for Studies and Consultations, described it like a continuous conference for a one year, "This camp gave a very good chance for Hamas supporters or Hamas members outside Palestine to come and join and to sit with them and to exchange experience."[59] During that year, the Hamas leadership outside the Palestinian territories could also meet the Hamas internal leadership more freely. Hamas members and supporters shared information about people who wanted to work or worked already for Hamas. The organization had a chance to reorganize, for example, the leadership of Hamas in the area and debate its political strategy.[60]

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55 Tamimi 2007: 69. Azzam Tamimi refers to his interview with Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzuq in 2004 in Syria.
56 Chehab 2007: 146.
57 Ibrahim 1992.
58 Evans & Boyte 1986.
59 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.
60 Tamimi 2007: 69; Caridi 2010: 113.

The relationship of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad was not so good before the deportation. During the time in South Lebanon and with Iran as a common partner, however, both groups created closer and more functional connections. In the camp they planned and worked together on deportation and resistance issues.[61]

A good example of sharing information, resources, and action by networking and cooperation among Palestinians outside the territory was the new connection between Hamas and the Palestinian leftist group Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC). According to Fadl Chororo, the head of PFLP-GC's communications and a member of the political bureau, the first high-level meeting of leaders of his group and Hamas took place in Marj al-Zahour directly after the deportees arrived. Attending the meeting were senior Hamas leaders, such as the deportees' spokesperson al-Rantisi, PFLP-GC's Ahmed Jibril (the Secretary-General), Talal Naji (the second-in-command), and Fadl Chororo. The PFLP-GC had not worked much in the territories in the 1990s, and now this contact with Hamas opened up the possibility for both groups to cooperate. The two organizations agreed to found a committee to coordinate their activities in the West Bank and Gaza.[62]

From the perspective of Hamas, the PFLP-GC must have been seen as a good facilitator: the PFLP-GC was acting in Lebanon and Syria, close to Hizbullah's resources, and it had a strategic partnership with Hizbullah.[63] In this way, the leftist group served as a military ally, which could bring new technical combat information and training if needed, as well as a partner in getting arms into the Palestinian territories. And in terms of bringing new combat information to Hamas, the PFLP-GC had conducted attacks against Israeli targets already in the 1970s and 1980s in which it was expected that the attackers would die.[64]

A good example of cooperation in the procurement of arms came to light with the Israeli capture of a "fishing boat" in Santorini in 2001. The boat, on its way to Gaza, was loaded with weapons. When Israel learned that there were 25 Hizbullah members involved in the operation, it suspected that the arms came from Iran and that the Damascus-based leader of the PFLP-GC, Ahmed Jibril, was strongly involved in the smuggling attempt.[65]

For Hamas, the time in South Lebanon not only meant sharing information and networking around different actions. It was also used for identity building.

61 Robinson 1997: 218, n. 78.
62 Chehab 2007: 169.
63 Khalili 2007: 291.
64 Khalili 2007.
65 Chehab 2007: 168–170.

By linking the resistance with Hizbullah, PFLP-GC and other groups resisting Israel, Hamas connected a large group of people behind the resistance identity. Furthermore, this resistance identity was activated among those secular Palestinians who were against the deportation but supported the peace talks. The combination of resistance identity with old feelings of being mistreated and the history of martyrs was done by Hamas in a way that framed the deportation in terms of the *Nakba*, when Israel deported large numbers of Palestinians in 1948 during the formation of its new state.[66] During the time spent in Marj al-Zahur, Islamic identity was emphasized by Palestinian Muslims, but also other Muslims who met the deportees; the common Islamic identity of the deportees was strengthened. At the same time in the Palestinian territories, the martyrdom culture promoted especially by Hamas was also getting stronger.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

At home, the deportation created obvious political opportunities for two of Hamas's constituencies: women had to take more responsibility at home, in the Hamas organization and in society in general; and the younger generation sought to fill the vacuum left by the deportees.

The role of women as active participants in the whole of society had been growing from the time of the first *intifada*. At first, women began participating in street actions.[67] By the beginning of the 1990s, women started playing a stronger role within Hamas as well: because many Hamas men were absent, either because of the deportation or because they were in Israeli jails, women needed to be more active outside of the home than before. This situation intensified during the time of deportation to Marj al-Zahur. With so many male members and leaders deported, the organization became weak.[68] Hamas changed from a military and male-dominated organization to "a more popular political movement".[69] This had a great impact on mobilisation and recruitment (for example, in Hamas's social and university networks). According to a Nablus municipal council member, Hamas member Khulud al-Masri, the return of the deportees led to the rebuilding of institutions in general and Hamas's social institutions and social-work sector in particular. The organization started to concen-

66 Caridi 2010: 112.
67 Hiltermann 1990: 35.
68 al-Masri 2007.
69 Jad 2005: 176–178.

trate on the social sector, not only on the resistance.[70] Furthermore, it was during this time that Hamas strengthened its social services and grassroots infrastructure, and it started to participate more actively in different elections under the label of the Islamic Block. Elections for student unions at colleges, institutes of higher learning, and universities were a top priority for Hamas. Indeed, women became a strategic concern: it was essential for Hamas to recruit female students at universities in order to succeed in university elections.[71]

Social movement organizations often transform cultural representations and social norms. This also affects the formation and change of collective identities.[72] Narrative change, and in this case specifically the narrative of martyrdom culture, is an example of this. From the beginning of the first *intifada*, old slogans, ancient battles, and martyrs were taken into use. Martyrdom became part of Palestinian popular culture.[73] Hamas "brought the old national ethos, which fused struggle, sacrifice, and suffering invested with sacredness and inviolability, back into the very core of Palestinian national identity".[74] In fact, already in 1992, Hamas was easily able to maintain and develop the martyrdom culture and narrative connected to Islam through its grassroots work, especially in mosques and through its socioeconomic network.[75] Later this narrative would help the Palestinians' acceptance of Hamas's suicide attack campaign,[76] and that was actually the purpose of using this narrative: especially in long conflicts, such as the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, the purpose of martyrdom culture is to raise the morale of the society and the organization as well as to sustain the society's belief in the legitimacy of the struggle.[77]

The feeling of being treated inhumanly again by Israel became more painful to Palestinians when the men were deported to South Lebanon. In this kind of situation, such grievances as the occupation and deportation had an effect on collective and shared identities. Muslim, Palestinian, and resistance identities were strengthened and martyrdom culture found fertile ground in Palestinian society, inside and outside the territories. At the same time, the young Hamas members left in the territories were eager to assume more responsibility in the organization. While Hamas's external leadership defined strategy and policies,

70 al-Masri 2007.
71 al-Masri 2007.
72 Polletta & Jasper 2001: 284.
73 Oliver & Steinberg 2005; Pedahzur 2005: 162.
74 Jad 2005: 176.
75 Saarnivaara 2008.
76 Pape 2003: 347.
77 Ricolfi 2006: 99; Bloom 2004.

the younger generation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip carried them out after receiving training and financial resources from outside the territories.[78]

Specifically during this time, Hamas's organization was facing changes. Its military functions had been split since the beginning into different areas and units. By 1992, Hamas's military unit – the 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigade – was formed to function as a coordinated and united actor.[79] A segment of the younger generation was eager to concentrate on developing this side of Hamas's organization and actions.

With its history of political violence and especially suicide attacks, such as its suicide campaign against foreign troops in the 1980s, Hizbullah provided a strong example. In Hamas's eyes, Hizbullah had attained its objectives: France and the United States withdrew from Lebanon in 1984 and Israel partially withdrew in 1985. This success impressed Hamas's leadership.[80] Admittedly, violence against civilians was nothing new in the region. The PLO and its organizations had targeted civilians in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.[81]

The deportation itself or the new resources and connections that Hamas found when its leaders were deported did not lead to the use of suicide attacks as a tactic. The decision process was lengthy, and Hamas had a long internal debate about it.[82] Hamas's armed action strategy and targets officially changed in 1994: the first suicide attack in which civilians were officially targets, according to Hamas, was committed in April 1994.[83] The launch of this campaign was triggered by a massacre in Hebron in February 1994, in which a Jewish settler shot 29 Palestinians in the middle of prayer. The decision to use suicide terrorism against civilians reflected a major change in Hamas's policy. Therefore, the decision clearly came from the political branch outside of the territories, which was

78 Levitt 2006.

79 Some researchers date the formulation of the group as early as 1990 (Robinson 1997: 159) or 1991 (Mishal & Sela 2000: 64). On the background of the group, see Tamimi 2007: 63.

80 Pape 2003: 355.

81 Hroub 2000: 247–248. According to Ricolfi (2006: 81), Palestinian organizations carried out acts in the 1970s that could be classified as suicide attacks.

82 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.

83 Hamas identifies civilians as "so-called civilians", as it thinks that those people who move to or live in the occupation area live in a combat zone due to their own decision. See Saleh (Palestinian) 2012. From 1992 on, Hamas gradually defined all civilians as a part of the occupying army and settlement project. This legitimated their killing.

Several researchers categorized Israeli settlers as civilians. This led to different interpretations when Hamas focused its attacks on civilians. In order to understand Hamas's strategy, this article adheres to the threefold categorization used by Hamas between 1989 and 1993: "legitimate military targets" (such as Israeli soldiers and police), Israeli settlers, and civilians. Hamas's official statement on the issue, "An Important Statement Issued by the Political Bureau of Hamas", is quoted in Hroub 2000: 302–305.

formulating general strategy and policies. The actual execution of the policies was left to the military branch.[84] Hamas obviously planned this suicide tactic and strategy change well before adopting it. There was a clear leaning toward undertaking a suicide campaign and pressure to use terror against Israeli civilians already before 1994. During the years 1992–1994, Hamas had planned several operations that could have qualified as suicide attacks against civilians, had the plans succeeded.[85]

The first Hamas attack that can be classified as a suicide attack already took place in April 1993,[86] a year before the official suicide campaign started. What began in 1994 was a short-term campaign intended to compete with Fatah and sabotage the peace process between Israel and the PLO.[87]

The organizational decision to start the suicide campaign was made in the beginning of the 1990s in a context in which Hamas's influence and support within Palestinian society, already quite high, had grown. Hamas first increased its influence in the society through its social and political work, as well as developed the common cultural narrative of martyrdom. During the deportation to Marj al-Zahur, the leaders of the PLO and Hamas estimated support for Hamas to be as high as 40 to 45 percent.[88] These factors made it easier to approve the suicide campaign as a means of achieving its strategic goals.[89] Mohsen Saleh, the representative of the Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation, answered the question of the dynamics between Palestinian society and Hamas's socio-political work and armed action:

> They [Hamas] want to rebuild the mentality and the society that would be enabled to confront difficulties such as occupation, bombardments and also economic and social problems. So you can't work on just one front. That's why if you find Hamas doing some social work, medical work, financial aids even, employments, doing even trade or produce anything that would help people [...] it is a strategy to rebuild the mentality and the relationship between

84 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Rantisi, the former Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip who was killed by Israel on 17 April 2004, stated: "The military wing plans operations, while the political wing sets a framework for policy and nothing else. So, for example, if we [the political wing] agreed in negotiations to halt operations, we would see that immediately because we have indirect connections with the military wing, and all the time they respect our declarations." (al-Rantisi et al. 2002)

85 Oliver & Steinberg 2005; Rodan 1993: 15.

86 Katz 2002: 76.

87 Rodan 1993: 15. In addition to this view of sabotage, there are several other opinions on the aim of Hamas's suicide campaign (for example, retaliation, the aim to coerce Israel into fulfilling its part of the Oslo Accords). The view of competition between Hamas and Fatah is also stressed by several researchers (Bloom 2005; Pedahzur 2005).

88 Beyer & Fishman 1993.

89 Saarnivaara 2008.

> the new leadership and the people. And your supporters, who would support you if you bring them something new, you bring something that they need and none of the past powers brought them [...] so that's why when you plan for struggling you have to plan also for your people to continue to struggle. So if you can't meet at least the lower demands of the needs of the people then your future is exposed to all kinds of dangerous things. But if you were able to do such a thing, you are becoming more stronger [*sic*] in your social base, you are becoming protected by your people as well. Then you can continue your struggle against occupation and against all kinds of attacks.[90]

CONCLUSIONS

The Israeli government's justification for the deportation was twofold. Firstly and officially, the goal was to stop the killings of Israeli security forces and make sure that attacks did not spread to the civilian population. Secondly, the Israeli officials thought that in order to continue the peace process with Palestinians, it was critical to defuse Hamas's power. The result of the deportation was very different from its goals.

If we look at the results of the deportation from the perspective of Israeli security and in terms of the general environment of violence, the outcome seems detrimental. According to the Israeli non-governmental organization B'Tselem (The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), seven members of the Israeli security forces and 13 Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians between the four-month period of 17 December 1992 and 17 April 1993. The four-month period prior to the deportation resulted in nine security force personnel and six civilians killed by Palestinians. During this time, there were 46 Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces and none by civilians. But during the first four-month period of the deportation, starting on 17 December 1992, there were 71 Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces and five by Israeli civilians. Clearly, the use of deportation as a security measure did not work, as the mutual killing increased.[91]

When we look the result of the deportation from the point of view of Hamas, contrary to Israel's intention it was getting organizationally stronger during and because of the deportation. It gained resources from different cooperation partners as well as power and prestige, especially through international media coverage. According to Mohsen Saleh, Director of Al-Zaytouna Center for Studies and Consultations in Beirut, "Instead of ending Hamas inside Palestine,

90 Saleh (Lebanese) 2012.
91 B'Tselem 1993; *United Nations Chronicle* 1993.

what happened was that the cream of the cream were collected there. Then they managed to reorganize themselves and they had almost 24 hours full time to discuss, to organize, to think about their issues and also to talk to the media from all over the world."[92] As a result, the PLO and Arab countries had to put the peace process on hold until the issue was settled.

Furthermore, Hamas started to target Israeli civilians as a systematic strategy to weaken Israeli society and the PLO. Even though the deportation did not trigger the first attempted suicide attacks, the time spent in Marj al-Zahur did help Hamas to start using the tactic as part of its resistance instruments and to begin the campaign in 1994. This was due to all of the new connections, resources, help in infrastructure, training, the effect on the martyrdom culture and identities among the Palestinians, and time for strategy planning within Hamas leadership. Also, at the least, Marj al-Zahur provided a good opportunity to solidify the key leaders of Hamas around this future tactic. In fact, it is also possible that Hamas's leadership, while planning the organization's strategy, also planned the coming suicide campaign.

As one member of Hamas said, "The Israelis have done us a big favour. We are the winners in all of this."[93] Hamas came home strengthened and as an internationally known group that played a significant part in Palestinian politics – internally and internationally.

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92 Saleh (Palestinian) 2012.
93 Beyer & Fishman 1993.

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