

The softening of Hamas

Moderation through political participation

18th November 2011

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Introduction

The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) – the basic document of Hamas – was formulated on the 18th August 1988. Nevertheless, Hamas was not founded on a single day – the foundation was a process, which started at the beginning of the First Intifada in December 1987. In 1973, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, spiritual leader and founder of Hamas, established the *al-Mujamma' al-Islami*¹ to coordinate the Muslim Brotherhood's political activities in the Gaza Strip.² When the First Intifada broke out, a young generation of Muslim Brothers was willing to participate, but leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were reluctant to involve the movement and feared a bad reputation for it, should the Intifada fail.³ This younger generation gathered around Yassin and the activities of the group were labelled under the name Hamas.⁴ Finally, Hamas became a spin-off of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁵

Hamas is based on two ideological pillars: a political and a religious one. The movement follows a pan-Palestinian nationalistic policy⁶ and on the religious dimension, Hamas propagates an Islamic fundamentalist ideology⁷. Unlike the Muslim Brothers, Hamas is more focused on a local level. Its strategic goals are to free Palestine from the "Zionist invaders"⁸, to obliterate Israel and to establish an Islamic state in Palestine.⁹ Hamas defines the struggle for Palestine as a religious obligation and interconnects the political and religious pillars with each

¹ Translated: the Islamic Centre.

² Council on Foreign Relations "Hamas - Backgrounder," accessed 19.10.2011, <http://goo.gl/CPSHH>.

³ Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no. 4 (1993): 11.

⁴ Hamas means "zeal" and it is an acronym for *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya* (Islamic Resistance Movement).

⁵ "The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine. [...]"; Hamas, "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement," (Lillian Goldman Law Library, 18.08.1988), article 2. This is an English translation from the Arabic text, which is widely used in journal articles about Hamas, even when the author is from the Arabic region.

⁶ *Ibid.*, article 11.

⁷ "[...] The Movement's programme is Islam. From it, it draws its ideas, ways of thinking and understanding of the universe, life and man. It resorts to it for judgement in all its conduct, and it is inspired by it for guidance of its steps"; *ibid.*, article 1.

⁸ "The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders"; *ibid.*, article 7.

⁹ "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it"; *ibid.*, Preamble.

other.¹⁰ The anti-Zionistic approach of the Covenant is not only mixed with an anti-Semitic attitude¹¹, but supports the idea of killing Jews.¹² The belief in a Jewish world conspiracy based on the fictional "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is a part of the anti-Semitic rhetorics.¹³ Hamas refuses any peace negotiations because "the land of Palestine is an [impartible] Islamic *Waqf* [(religious endowment)] [sic] consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day".¹⁴ Therefore, Hamas rejects the Camp David Accords as well.¹⁵ Despite its political activities from the beginning of its existence, Hamas boycotted the parliamentary elections in 1996 and the presidential one in 2005, but participated in the municipal elections in 2004/2005 and in the parliamentary elections in 2006, listed under the name "Change and Reform". In 2006, the movement won 74 of total 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council.¹⁶

The violent history and a possible moderation of Hamas combined with an increased political participation can be explained with the theory of "Social Mobilisation"¹⁷. According to this theory, social groups tend to use violence in

¹⁰ "Nationalism [...] is part of the religious creed. Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Moslem land. Resisting and quelling the enemy become the individual duty of every Moslem, male or female"; *ibid.*, article 12.

¹¹ For example: "Israel, Judaism and Jews challenge Islam and the Moslem people"; *ibid.*, article 28.

¹² "The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him. Only the Gharkad tree, (evidently a certain kind of tree) would not do that because it is one of the trees of the Jews"; *ibid.*, article 7.

¹³ "Today it is Palestine, tomorrow it will be one country or another. The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying"; *ibid.*, article 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, article 11.

¹⁵ "Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement."; *ibid.*, article 13. "World Zionism, together with imperialistic powers, try through a studied plan and an intelligent strategy to remove one Arab state after another from the circle of struggle against Zionism, in order to have it finally face the Palestinian people only. Egypt was, to a great extent, removed from the circle of the struggle, through the treacherous Camp David Agreement. They are trying to draw other Arab countries into similar agreements and to bring them outside the circle of struggle. [...] Leaving the circle of struggle with Zionism is high treason, and cursed be he who does that."; *ibid.*, article 32.

¹⁶ Fatah gained 45 of the 132 seats; Central Election Commission, "The second 2006 PLC elections - The final distribution of PLC seats," accessed 30.10.2011, <http://goo.gl/diosq>. The turnout was 77%; Tim Youngs, "The Palestinian Parliamentary Election and the rise of Hamas," ed. International Affairs & Defence Section (House of Commons Library, 15.03.2006), 9.

¹⁷ Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 3 (September 1961).

case of refused political participation.¹⁸ In case social-economical factors lead to radicalisation of social groups, these groups will not have the chance to change their situation without political involvement. Political participation is a key factor to avoid violence in a long-term – social groups turn to violence, when they do not see another way.¹⁹ With the opportunity to form political parties, compete in elections and participate in legislative, executive and judicial processes, there is a chance that social groups renounce violence in a long-term.²⁰ According to this thesis, Hamas might soften its course after the takeover of political responsibility. The participation of Hamas in the elections can be interpreted as a sign of moderation.

The aim of this work is to analyse whether Hamas attitude has become more moderate after 2006, when it increased its involvement in the political process of the Palestine National Authority (PNA). The declining importance of the Covenant for Hamas policy and the decreasing number of attacks against Israel could be an indicator of moderation.

1 Obstructing the peace process

With the end of the First Intifada and the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993, the situation changed for all parties in Palestine. Hamas rejected the Oslo Accords based on the Covenant, which says that the territory of Palestine is impartible, and tried to obstruct the peace process between the

¹⁸ Examples: Not the only, but one of the factors, which led to the foundation of Hezbollah in Lebanon; there was a limited possibility of the Shiite population to participate in the Lebanon political system; cf.: Patrick Truffer, "Ein islamischer Januskopf - Die Hisbollah als machtpolitischer Faktor im Nahen Osten" (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ), 31.03.2008), 8-9. In December 1991, after cancellation of elections in Algeria, which promised the Islamic party a success, supporters of the Islamic Salvation Front took up weapons. This finally led to a 10 years enduring civil war; Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims rebel: repression and resistance in the Islamic world* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003). 1. "A quantitative examination of the development of IRA violence in a community mobilized for peaceful protest shows that state repression, not economic deprivation, was the major determinant of this violence"; Robert W. White, "From Peaceful Protest to Guerrilla War: Micromobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army," *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 6 (1989): 1277. Cf.: Ulrich Schneckener, "Transnationale Terroristen als Profiteure fragiler Staatlichkeit," *SWP-Studie*, S 18 (May 2004): 13.

¹⁹ Hafez is going further: "The key to explaining [group's] militancy is not economic stagnation or excessive secularisation, but the lack of meaningful access to state institutions"; Hafez, *Why Muslims rebel: repression and resistance in the Islamic world*: 18.

²⁰ Ibid., 28-31. Although, "[...] political inclusion is not a guarantee against violence, [...] political inclusion of Islamists is the most propitious approach for promoting the long-term moderation of Islamism [...] if it is part of a broader strategy of political institutionalization"; ibid., 65, 207-08.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel with a series of assassinations. The movement could not ignore the fact, that the induced peace process was supported by the predominant part of the Palestinians. Yasser Arafat, later Chairman of the PLO, tried to constrain Hamas with repression and with a better participation in the autonomic structure. In October 1995, leaders of Hamas decided to constitute a political party and participate in the parliamentary elections. Finally, after controversial internal discussions, in December 1995, they refused this idea. Ostensibly, Hamas argued that the parliamentary elections were the consequence of the Oslo Accords, which they reject, but the decision was more based on the fear to face a political defeat. This explains its passive boycott of the elections – in the background, Hamas encouraged Islamists and own members to run as independent candidates and called on its followers to vote for them. Quietly supported by the movement, seven candidates were elected.²¹ This limited political engagement did not hinder Hamas to conduct several suicide attacks on Israel territory, highly intensive between 1996 and 1998.²² During this period, the movement was not seeking a real political participation. Instead, its leaders were more concerned about losing the grass-root support by unpopular decisions, such as an active boycott with a prohibition to vote for its members, who would likely violate it. The attacks decreased between October 1998 and September 1999, due to the pressure from Israel and the PNA, coordinated by the CIA.²³ Finally, in September 2000 the Second Intifada started as a consequence of the failed Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David in July 2000 and Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. The suicide attacks against Israel peaked again in 2001, but its number declined steadily afterwards. In spite of that, Hamas started to fire rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory, which led to Israel's operation "Cast Lead" in the end of 2008.²⁴

²¹ The turnout in the parliamentary elections was 79,7%; Lamis Adoni, "The Palestinian Elections: Moving toward Democracy or One-Party Rule?," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 6. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: vision, violence, and coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). 131-36.; Ferhad Ibrahim, *Der Friedensprozess im Nahen Osten - eine Revision* (Münster: Lit, 1997). 148-62.

²² See Annexe A.

²³ Ely Karmon, "Hamas' Terrorism Strategy: Operational limitations and political constraints," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (March 2000): 67-68.

²⁴ For the peak of the attacks in 2001, see Annexe A (focused on attacks by Hamas) and Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of

2 The need of legitimacy

Hamas comprises a political, a social and a military wing (the *'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam* Brigades), which are not really separated from each other.²⁵ Nevertheless, being a part of a political and social organisation, with its religious, educational and welfare institutions, Hamas is involved in the daily life of ordinary people. The Hamas leaders are well aware of people's opinion, which is as important as the religious ideology kept in the Covenant.²⁶ When they recognised the PNA 1994, which was taken as a product of the Oslo Accords, Hamas leaders followed the public interest. Shortly after the September 11 attacks, in the light of Palestinians outrage against Islamic terror, Hamas suspended its suicide attacks until 1st October 2001.²⁷ Both examples show that Hamas is bound in its actions on the legitimacy of the Palestinians and with its increased political participation this dependency has become even stronger.

There are three main factors, which drove Hamas to the decision to participate in the municipal elections in 2004/2005 and in the parliamentary elections in 2006:

- In the course of the Second Intifada, the popularity shifted from Fatah to Hamas. In people's opinion, Fatah failed with its approach to the peace process and could not change anything on the ground. On the other hand, Hamas has an extensive social service network on which the Palestinians depend.²⁸ Further more, the population recognised Fatah's internal chaos, corruption and the dysfunction of the institutions of the government, which

Principles (Sept 1993)," accessed 30.10.2011, <http://goo.gl/aT3xp>. (focused on attacks by different groups). The attacks might have been declined after 2001 because of Israel's targeted assassination campaign on top Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip; Jim Zanotti, "Hamas: Background and Issues for Congress," ed. Congressional Research Service (Washington, 02.12.2010), 43. For the increase of rocket attacks and mortar shellfire, see Annexe B.

²⁵ Probably, the political echelon is above the other two branches: "[The *Al-Qassam* Brigades] are a small army subject to political decisions, like any [other] army in the world. [...] The political apparatus does not tell us, 'Do such and such' and 'Carry out this or that operation'; the political apparatus is sovereign over the military apparatus, and a decision of the political [echelon] takes precedence over the decision of the military [echelon], without intervening in military operations"; Salah Sh'hadeh, commander of the *'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam* Brigades in Middle East Media Research Institute, "A May 2002 Interview with the Hamas Commander of the *Al-Qassam* Brigades," accessed 12.11.2011, <http://goo.gl/CQro3>.

²⁶ "The voice of the masses, in [Hamas] view, is the expression of God's will"; Menachem Klein, "Hamas in Power," *Middle East Journal* 61, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 444.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 444-45.

²⁸ "Hamas - Backgrounder".

consisted mainly of Fatah members and supporters. Every time when the Israel Defence Forces would dismantle Fatah's and PNA's infrastructure, Fatah stayed helpless and humiliated. This gave Hamas a major support and unlike the parliamentary elections in 1996, a certainty for a good outcome.

- Mahmoud Abbas stated that the Intifada had to stop.²⁹ According to Hamas scenario, after successful elections, Fatah would be pressured by Israel and the USA to suppress any attacks from Palestinian side against Israel. Without a participation in a new government, this could challenge Hamas course of action. For that reason, it was important for Hamas to have influence on the PNA.
- As long as Hamas has been listed as Special Designated Terrorist in the USA since 1995 and is on the EU's blacklist of terrorist organisations since 2003³⁰, its leaders took into consideration that a broad democratic support from the population could lead to more international legitimacy. Invitations as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (for example from Turkey and Russia) and additional financial support from some Arab states after the successful elections proved Hamas expectation to be at least partially right.³¹

It is evident that Hamas have changed their position toward the PNA and its elections due to the pragmatic approach of the movement. Hamas does not remain in ideological dreams, which retain in the Covenant.³² In spite of the fact that the Covenant has not been revoked yet, it is not cited in any of the movement's political texts and its platform for the elections is quite different.³³

The Hamas leaders realised that with the legislative participation, new political

²⁹ Aaron D. Pina, "Palestinian Elections," ed. Congressional Research Service (Washington: The Library of Congress, 09.02.2006), 2.

³⁰ Zanotti, "Hamas: Background and Issues for Congress," 43-44. Anton La Guardia, "Hamas is added to EU's blacklist of terror," *The Telegraph*, 12.09.2003.

³¹ See Annexe C. Cf.: Chris McGreal and Nick Paton Walsh, "Moscow invitation to Hamas angers Israel," *The Guardian*, 11.02.2006; Aaron D. Pina, "Fatah and Hamas: the new Palestinian factional reality," ed. Congressional Research Service (Washington: The Library of Congress, 03.03.2006), 3.

³² "The Covenant is not the Koran, which is unchangeable. I believe that one day it will be changed or replaced according to the views of the Hamas, in order to realize the national interests of the Palestinians"; Muaman Bseiso, a columnist for the Hamas weekly *Al-Risala* cited in Pina, "Palestinian Elections," 15.

³³ For details see Klein, "Hamas in Power," 449-53.

idiom and terminology was required in their elections manifesto.³⁴ It was a logical consequence of a careful and conscious adjustment of their political program for years. After the elections, Hamas officials sounded more moderated in the international press. For example, Khaled Meshaal, head of the political bureau of Hamas, clarified that the conflict with Israel is a political one and not based on a certain belief or culture.³⁵ Hamas officials stated that they could accept the fact that Israel exists, but they refuse to recognise Israel as a legitimate state.³⁶ The most far-reaching offer made by Hamas was the acceptance of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as a capital based on conditions such as: Palestinian refugees get a chance to return, Palestinian agree on a future truce or peace accord with Israel, although Hamas is not obliged to recognise the state of Israel itself.³⁷ This offer is significant and has to be seen in the context of the Islamic jurisprudence, which Hamas as a fundamental Islamic movement is bound with. Denying these principles would exclude Hamas from the group of those who take Islam seriously as a political guidance.³⁸

If the Quartet on the Middle East³⁹ was eager to take the Islamic jurisprudence into consideration, it could probably find a pragmatic way to work with the PNA, which includes ministers from Hamas. Instead of taking an opportunity after the Parliamentary elections to move to a more moderate stance of Hamas in a long-

³⁴ Paul Scham and Osama Abu-Irshaid, "Hamas - Ideological Rigidity and Political Flexibility," *United State Institute of Peace*, Special Report 224 (2009): 12. Cf.: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner, "Addressing U.S., Hamas Says It Grounded Rockets," *The New York Times*, 05.05.2009.

³⁵ "We do not fight you because you belong to a certain faith or culture. Jews have lived in the Muslim world for 13 centuries in peace and harmony; they are in our religion "the people of the book" who have a covenant from God and his messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him), to be respected and protected. Our conflict with you is not religious but political. We have no problem with Jews who have not attacked us – our problem is with those who came to our land, imposed themselves on us by force, destroyed our society and banished our people"; Khaled Meshaal in Walsh, "Moscow invitation to Hamas angers Israel."

³⁶ Cf.: International Crisis Group, "Palestinians, Israel and the Quartet: Pulling Back from the Brink," *Crisis Group Middle East Report*, no. 54 (13.06.2006); "Hamas denies Meshal said group would consider recognizing Israel," *Haaretz*, 10.01.2007.

³⁷ Cf.: International Crisis Group, "Curb Your Enthusiasm: Israel and Palestine after the UN," *Middle East Report*, no. 112 (12.09.2011): 15; Jay Solomon and Julien Barney-Dacey, "Hamas Chief Outlines Terms for Talks on Arab-Israeli Peace " *The Wall Street Journal*, 31.07.2009; Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Hamas would honour referendum on peace with Israel," *Reuters*, 01.12.2010.

³⁸ About the view on Hamas through the lens of the Islamic jurisprudence see: Abu-Irshaid, "Hamas - Ideological Rigidity and Political Flexibility." In the Hama's Islamic reference system, it is forbidden to recognise Israel since it is founded on aggression, injustice and the usurpation of a *waqf*, which no portion of it can be surrendered. This view is supported by dozens of *fatwas* by Muslim scholars who have prohibited the recognition of Israel by any circumstance. *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁹ The Quartet comprises the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia.

term, the Quartet refuses to speak with representatives from Hamas and the subsidies for the PNA are bound to requirements. The Quartet members demand to recognise Israel's right to exist, to renounce violence and to accept previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements. These requirements are justified, but it is very unlikely that Hamas will fulfil all three demands at once. Nevertheless, since early 2006, suicide attacks have largely ceased,⁴⁰ and since the operation "Cast Lead" rocket attacks and mortar shellfire have been significantly reduced. After Israel's operation, Hamas had to choose if it would follow their armed resistance at all costs or effectively govern the Gaza Strip.⁴¹ If Hamas leaders do not want to lose their legitimacy in the population, they have to do their governmental work in a proper way and give the population a perspective – this will not be possible if Hamas attacks provoke a military retaliation by Israel.

At the same time, the need of legitimacy can be a doubled-edged sword. If the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have the impression that they cannot improve their social-economical life through political participation, then more violence may return.⁴² In this case, Hamas most likely would blame Israel for social-economic failures because Israel's blockade of goods to the Gaza Strip since June 2007 harms the already crippled Palestinian economy further.⁴³ With new attacks, Hamas could try to keep their legitimacy as an armed resistance movement among the population. If Hamas does not succeed, it is very likely that people in the Gaza Strip turn to other radical groups like the Palestinian

⁴⁰ Two occurrences and four deaths according to Jim Zanotti, "The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations," ed. Congressional Research Service (Washington, 30.08.2011), 15.

⁴¹ The controversial "Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center", directed by the former Israeli Military Intelligence officer, Dr. Reuven Ehrlich argues that Hamas stopped these attacks to rehabilitate itself and to upgrade their military capability. Cf.: Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Terrorism from the Gaza Strip since Operation Cast Lead - Data, Type and Trends," (17.03.2011). According to the centre, Hamas possesses currently about "thousands of rockets of various ranges, including hundreds of rockets with a range of 40 km [...] [and some] with a range of 75 km which can reach Tel-Aviv". Ibid., 42. The centre mentions as well that Hamas actively prevents other groups from firing rockets and mortars from the territory of the Gaza Strip. Ibid. For more information about the "Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center" see Yossi Melman, "The terrorist kills, and the bank pays," *Haaretz*, 14.02.2007.

⁴² "There are concerns that if the status quo holds, the massive unemployment and dispiriting living conditions that have persisted and at points worsened since Israel's withdrawal in 2005 could contribute to further radicalization of the population, decreasing prospects for peace with Israel and for Palestinian unity and increasing the potential for future violence"; Zanotti, "The Palestinians: Background and U.S. Relations," 14.

⁴³ Cf.: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs occupied Palestinian territory, "Easing the Blockade," *Special Focus* (March 2011).

Islamic Jihad or the *al-Aqsa* Martyrs' Brigades. For all involved parties, the choice between moderation and radicalisation is based on a cost-benefit calculation.⁴⁴ On 18th March 2011, Hamas fired more than 30 mortars at Israel and on 7th of April an anti-tank weapon, fired from the Gaza Strip, hit an Israel school bus. These could be reactions on the allegations from hardliners that Hamas lost its way as a resistance movement.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Hamas has gained more political responsibility due to the participation and winning the parliamentary elections in 2006, but the question whether it has become more moderate cannot be answered cogently. The decision to participate in the legislative elections is a sign of moderation because the involvement in the PNA would possibly require Hamas to deal with Israel and to engage in political compromises. In the past, the movement used to obstructed the peace process actively, now it indirectly accepts at least the Oslo Accords and is willing for new talks, but on their conditions. Hamas officials use a pragmatic approach and before the elections, they separated the ideological principals from political reality. The evidences of that are speeches of high-ranking Hamas officials and basic documents like the Hamas elections manifesto. Nevertheless, Hamas did not revoke its Covenant. Its ideological fundament given by an aggressively formulated Covenant does not mean, that Hamas is not able to act reasonably in their political work. In fact, PLO had the same problem with its Palestinian National Covenant, which in several paragraphs calls for the destruction of Israel, but the organisation gave the priority to the political reality. Despite the assurance of Yasser Arafat, PLO's Covenant was never changed or revoked.

⁴⁴ Hafez, *Why Muslims rebel: repression and resistance in the Islamic world*: 21.

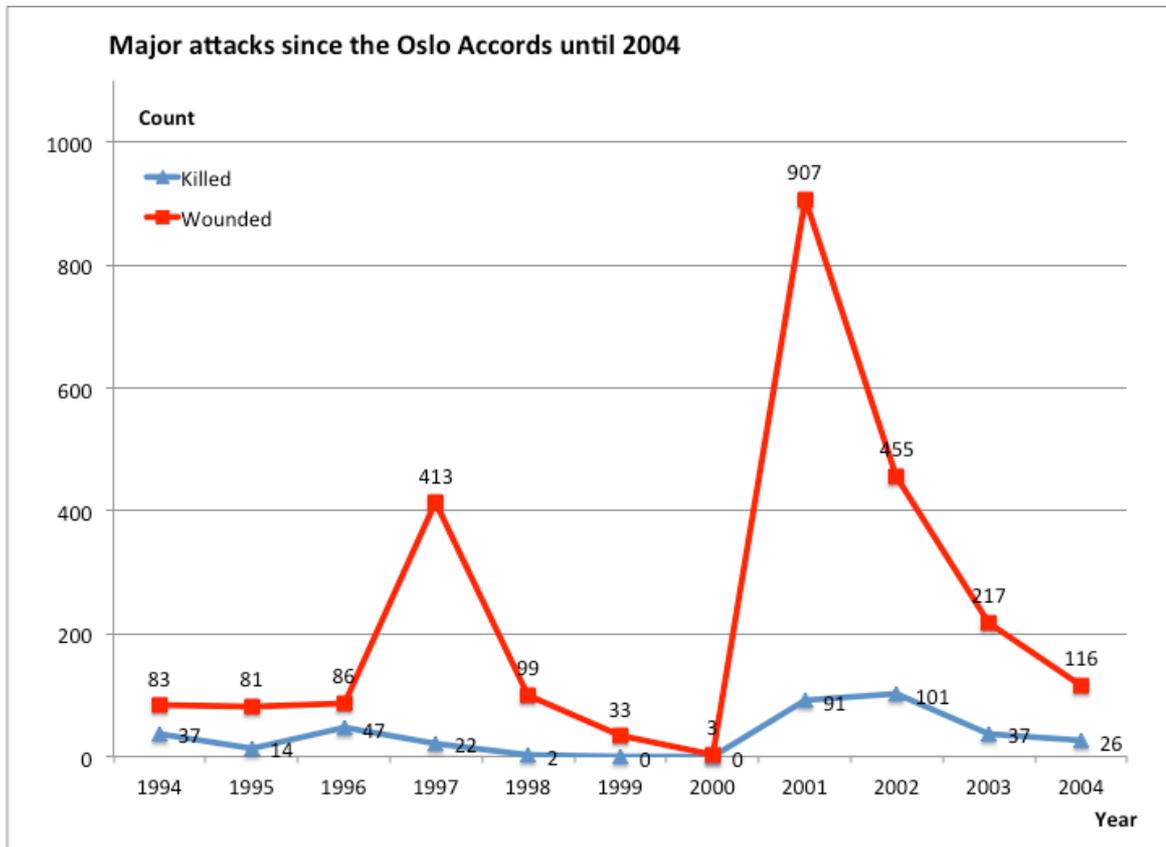
⁴⁵ Daniel Byman, "Israel's Pessimistic View of the Arab Spring," *The Washington Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (Summer 2011): 131-32. Cf.: Yoram Cohen, "Jihadist Groups in Gaza: A Developing Threat," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, accessed 07.11.2011, <http://goo.gl/7PsbF>. "Since Operation Cast Lead, Hamas has been pursuing a restrained policy of terrorist attacks. [...] However, the tension between Hamas' ideology and strategy on one hand and its day-to-day pragmatic considerations on the other has caused controversy and criticism of the restraint policy, both within Hamas and among the other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip"; "Terrorism from the Gaza Strip since Operation Cast Lead - Data, Type and Trends," 28.

It is a challenge to judge if a change of attitude is really a moderation in the case of the largely ceased suicide attacks since early 2006 and the significantly reduced rocket attacks and mortar shellfire since operation "Cast Lead". If Hamas does not want to lose its legitimacy in the population, it has to avoid actions, which would provoke a military retaliation by Israel, and it has to improve the life conditions of the population with political means. On the other hand, it is not possible to confute the interpretation of these reduced attacks and say that Hamas stopped them after the operation "Cast Lead" only to rehabilitate itself and to upgrade its military capability.

The biggest argument against a possible moderation of Hamas attitude is the fact, that Hamas is not willing to renounce violent means to reach its goals. This can be explained with the following reasons: after the elections, Israel and the Quartet on the Middle East did not give Hamas a chance to prove its political capacity and to improve the live of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip. Israel's blockade of goods to the Gaza Strip is standing on the way of improvements of Palestinians daily life. If anything, this blockade could give some security for Israel in the short-term, but such measures could be highly counterproductive in the long-term. Social groups especially turn to violence, if they do not see another option to change their situation, and it is important to offer real political alternatives to improve the people life conditions. With their increased political involvement, Hamas leaders did not see any change for the Palestinians, but they will only renounce violence, sure to reach their goals with political means.

Annexe A: Major attacks since the Oslo Accords until 2004⁴⁶

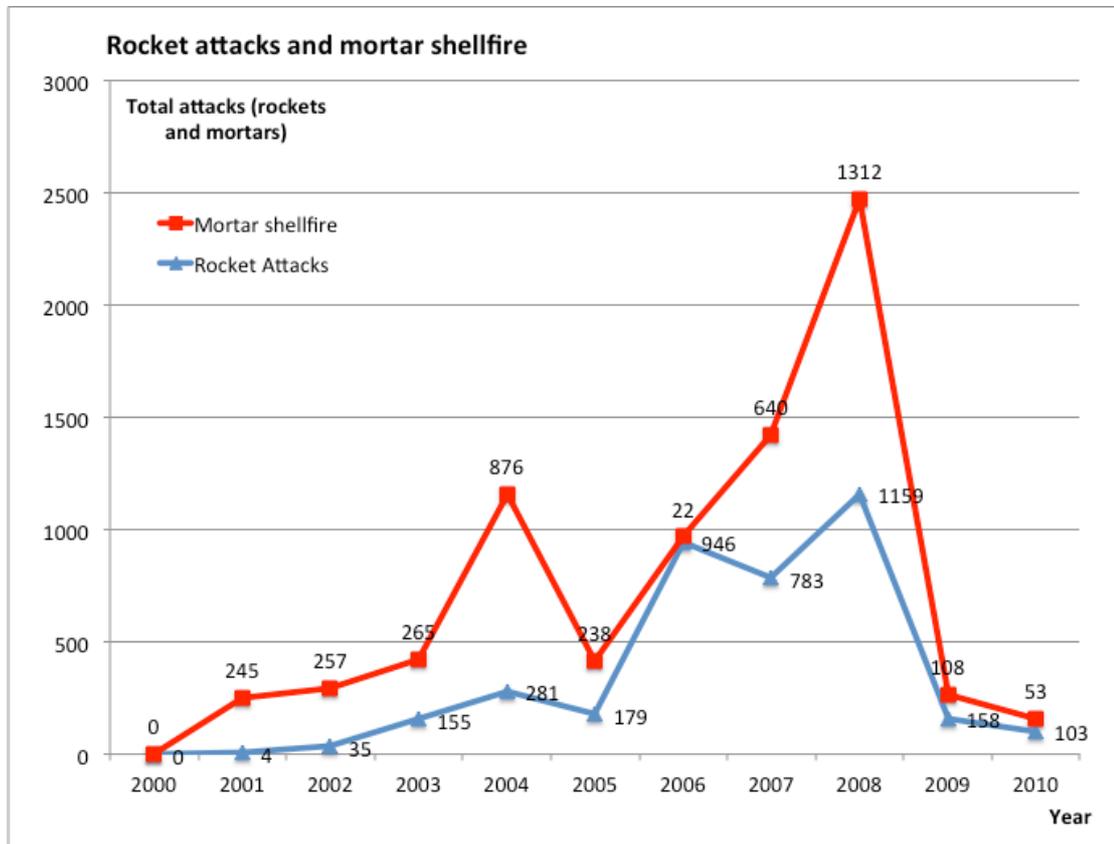
Table 1: Major attacks by Hamas since the Oslo Accords until 2004. Because it covers only the major attacks, the Table 1 gives only a qualitative impression of their intensity.



⁴⁶ Data source: American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, "Major Palestinian Terror Attacks Since Oslo," accessed 30.10.2011, <http://goo.gl/zPu2l>.

Annexe B: Rocket attacks and mortar shellfire until 2010⁴⁷

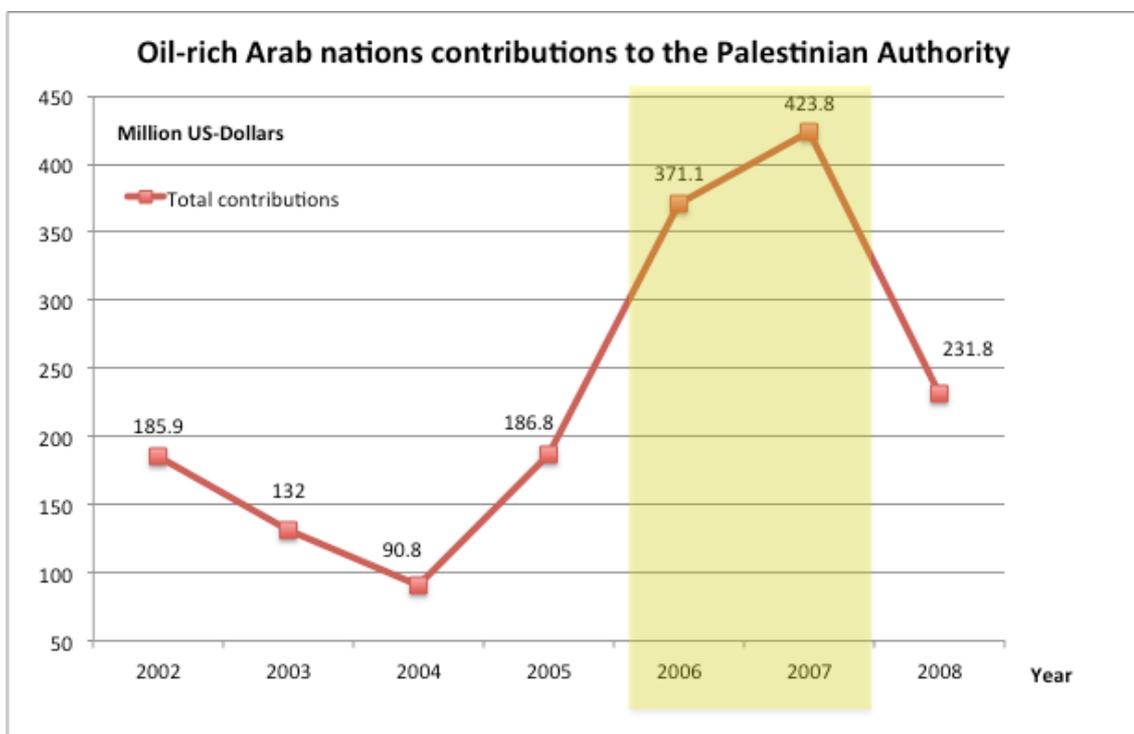
Table 2: The Rocket attacks and mortar shellfire started in 2000. Both kinds of attacks (y-axis) are listed in Table 2 below.



⁴⁷ Data source: "Terrorism from the Gaza Strip since Operation Cast Lead - Data, Type and Trends."

Annexe C: Oil-rich Arab nations contributions to the PNA⁴⁸

Table 3: Contribution from Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to the PNA. Especially Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia increased their contributions when Hamas was in control of the PNA from January 2006 to June 2007 (highlighted in yellow). After the split in the PNA between Hamas and Fatah, the take over the PNA in the Gaza Strip by Hamas, respectively the take over the PNA in the West Bank by Fatah and the forming of the "new PNA" by Fatah in June 2007, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia reduced their contribution to the PNA.⁴⁹



⁴⁸ Data source: Palestinian Authority Ministry of Finance, US Government cited in Karen Yourish and Larry Nista, "Falling Short," (The Washington Post, 27.07.2008).

⁴⁹ Libya and Oman reduced their contributions in the beginning of 2007.

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