

IN DEPTH BACKGROUND ON THE CHICAGO CONNECTION TO INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION FOR PALESTINE (IAP)

Last Address: 10661 South Roberts Rd, Suite 202,
Palos Hills, IL 60465

Chairman: Sabri Samirah¹; *President:* Rafeeq Jaber

1. 12/8/04: Based on its material support for the terrorist group, a Chicago federal court finds IAP (and HLF, QLI and Muhammad Salah) liable for \$156 million for Hamas' 1992 murder of 17 year-old David Boim at a bus stop near Jerusalem. First successful lawsuit brought against U.S. supporters of terrorism.²
2. 7/7/04: IAP officials Bayan and Basman Elashi, owners of InfoCom, are convicted of export violations for selling regulated computer technology to Syria and Libya while both were on the U.S. terror list. IAP, whose website was hosted by InfoCom, was subpoenaed in conjunction with FBI's 9/6/01 InfoCom raid.³
3. Two IAP employees were deported since 9/11, and FBI arrested a third on immigration violations who also worked for InfoCom.⁴
4. IAP describes itself as "the largest national grassroots organization serving the American Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Communities."⁵ As early as 1996, and based on such IAP activities as translating and circulating the Hamas charter, The Dallas Morning News reported that "public records, materials and interviews...show a pattern of personal, financial and philosophical ties" between Hamas and IAP.⁶
5. Many describe IAP as HLF's "sister organization." In 1989 it circulated a Hamas solicitation for HLF. Hamas leader Abu Marzook was one of two IAP donors to give \$490,000.⁷
6. FBI describes a 1993 meeting establishing fundraising and political relationships as "significant since it represented a meeting in the U.S. among senior leaders of Hamas, HLF and IAP."⁸
7. IAP convention speakers urged "American Muslims to stop paying taxes" and to "boycott American goods."⁹ IAP calls suicide terrorists "martyrs/freedom fighters."¹⁰
8. 8/30/01: IAP's website editorial declared "the United States is the true evil empire in the world today..." and on 8/22/01 circulated statements urging, "Arabs and Muslims to attack American interests...attack anything and everything American."¹¹

UNITED MUSLIM AMERICANS ASSOCIATION (UMAA)

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Palos Hills, IL 60465

President: Sabri Samirah; *Secretary General:* Rafeeq Jaber

1. IAP leaders founded UMAA in 1998 as its political action arm. The groups shared leaders, offices and ideology, often cosponsoring programs and issuing joint statements.¹² UMAA hosted candidate forums and voter registration drives, endorsed candidates, and lobbied elected officials.¹³ Filed its dissolution with State of Illinois in 2004.¹⁴
2. 1/18/03: UMAA President Sabri Samirah barred for security reasons from returning to U.S. after visiting relatives in his native Jordan. On 6/7/04, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal.¹⁵
3. Disseminated ex- KKK leader David Duke's anti-Semitic essay on the "causes" of 9/11¹⁶ and UMAA attributed the post-9/11 backlash against Muslims to a "Jewish hate campaign...spearhead[ed] by the Zionist dominated media."¹⁷
4. On 9/11 anniversary said "Muslims can use the disaster politically to exert more influence on the decision making process of [U.S]."¹⁸
5. Following 9/11 and deadly wave of terrorism in Israel, declared - with IAP - that the "worst form of terrorism" is not suicide hijackings or bombings but "occupation."¹⁹
6. Blaming "political motivations" and "a smear campaign orchestrated by proIsrael groups, held a rally "in solidarity with HLF" after U.S. government froze their assets."²⁰
7. Joined significant Illinois interfaith coalition.²¹
8. Selected by Illinois GOP to greet First Lady Bush during 4/01 trip²² and its D.C. rep attended October 2001 White House meeting.²³
9. Shared leadership, offices and activities with IAP.

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www.juf.org

HOLY LAND FOUNDATION (HLF)

Richardson, TX and Bridgeview, IL

- 12/8/04: A Chicago federal court finds HLF (and IAP, QLI and Muhammad Salah) liable for \$156 million for Hamas' murder of 17 year-old David Boim at a bus stop near Jerusalem. First successful suit brought against U.S. supporters of terrorism.²⁴
- 7/27/04: A Dallas grand jury indicts HLF and 7 of its leaders for aiding Hamas from 1995 to 2001. Five of the 7 are in custody; two remain fugitives from justice.²⁵
- 7/7/04: Ghassan Elashi, HLF co-founder and chair (and an IAP official), and his four brothers, all owner-operators of InfoCom, are found guilty of export violations for selling regulated computer technology to Syria and Libya while both were on the U.S. terror list. InfoCom, whose assets were frozen 9/5/01, hosted HLF's website.²⁶
- 12/4/01: Based on FBI report that "a majority of HLF funds are used to support Hamas...[and that] key HLF decision makers are active Hamas members," U.S. freezes HLF assets.²⁷ 3/01/04: U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear HLF's appeal on the frozen assets.²⁸ 11/14/03: U.S. revokes HLF's tax-exempt status.²⁹ HLF was outlawed in Israel in 1997.³⁰
- According to U.S. Govt., both HLF and InfoCom received significant seed money (\$210,000 in 1992 to HLF) from Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook, a designated terrorist deported by the U.S. in 1997.³¹
- HLF collaborated with BIF on fundraising and BIF's Executive Director listed HLF's office as his residence.³²
- Many employee matching gift programs and individual philanthropic funds managed by financial services firms had channeled donations to HLF.³³
- HLF fundraising materials promised that they transfer funds to families of "martyrs,"³⁴ a practice that experts say serves as both incentive and reward for terrorism.
- According to HLF's attorney, as early as 2000, the I.N.S. wanted to strip HLF's right to sponsor "religious worker" immigrant visas³⁵ and the State Dept. sought to revoke HLF's eligibility to subcontract for international aid projects.³⁶

GLOBAL RELIEF FOUNDATION (GRF)

Bridgeview, IL

- 12/4/01: US freezes GRF assets for alleged financial support of Al Qaeda.³⁷ 9/11 Commission found "significant evidence" that GRF was fundraising for "international jihad."³⁸
- 11/10/03: U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear GRF's appeal.³⁹
- 10/22/02: GRF added to United Nations list of entities associated with Al Qaeda and Taliban operatives.⁴⁰
- 11/14/03: U.S. revokes GRF's tax-exempt status.⁴¹ GRF fundraising letters encouraged "martyrdom through JIHAD."⁴²
- 6/2000: After being questioned by F.B.I., GRF's co-founder Hazem Ragab flees the U.S.⁴³ He is listed as a co-conspirator in the 9/11 attacks in a lawsuit brought by the victims' families.⁴⁴
- Rabih Haddad, GRF's other co-founder "has been directly linked with and observed at multiple overseas locations that housed and supported terrorist organizations" associated with Al Qaeda. Haddad refused to testify without immunity before a grand jury.⁴⁵ Haddad and his family were deported to Lebanon 7/15/03.⁴⁶
- According to U.S., GRF "has ties to and received substantial funding from Mohammed Zouaydi, a suspected financier of Al Qaeda. . . who transferred more than \$200,000 to the head of GRF's Belgium office. Zouaydi was arrested in Spain in 4/02."⁴⁷
- 7/24/03: Alaa Al-Saadawi, charged with being a key GRF fundraiser, was convicted of plotting to smuggle about \$650,000 out of the U.S. Al-Saadawi admitted giving \$100,000 to a GRF member in a bathroom stall at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, saying he "was recruited by the presiding officers of GRF to travel around the U.S. giving speeches and raising money on their behalf."⁴⁸
- 2/19/03: Federal judge dismisses GRF lawsuit accusing ABC News and 5 newspapers of defamation for reporting (Fall '01) that the U.S. was investigating its links to terrorism.⁴⁹
- 10/4/01: GRF attorney blamed government and media scrutiny on "Zionist forces."⁵⁰

BENEVOLENCE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (BIF)

Palos Hills, IL.

- 12/4/01: BIF's assets frozen for alleged financial support of Al Qaeda.⁵¹
- 11/14/03: BIF's tax-exempt status revoked by U.S. Treasury Dept.⁵²
- 10/09/02: A federal grand jury indicts BIF executive director, Enaam Arnaout, for conspiracy and racketeering, alleging BIF was a financial front for bin Laden's terrorist activities.⁵³ Indictment asserts "members of the conspiracy encouraged donors to use or establish corporate matching programs, through which donors' employers would match in whole or in part donations made to the BIF Enterprise by individual employees."⁵⁴
- 02/10/03: Arnout pleads guilty to racketeering and conspiracy, admitting BIF defrauded donors that all donations were for humanitarian purposes when many were diverted to Bosnian and Chechnya "jihad fighters." Though still asserted by U.S., he did not plead guilty to aiding al Qaeda.⁵⁵
- 8/18/03: Arnaout sentenced to 11 years in Federal prison.⁵⁶
- According to court filings, BIF's 1994 president (Mohamed Loay Bayazid) was an Al Qaeda operative who tried helping bin Laden develop nuclear weapons.⁵⁷
- BIF's Bosnian director (Munib Zahiragic) was convicted 06/30/03 of "disclosing official secrets," allowing an alleged Al Qaeda operative to elude capture.⁵⁸
- BIF is a defendant in a lawsuit filed by families of 9/11 victims⁵⁹ and repeatedly glorified "martyred Muslims in pursuit of Jihad."⁶⁰
- BIF collaborated with HLF on fundraising projects and Arnaout listed HLF's office as his residence.⁶¹

QURANIC LITERACY INSTITUTE (QLI)

Oak Lawn, IL

- 12/8/04: A Chicago federal court finds QLI (and HLF, IAP and Muhammad Salah) liable for \$156 million for Hamas' murder of David Boim at a bus stop near Jerusalem. First successful lawsuit brought against U.S. supporters of terrorism.⁶²
- 8/19/04: QLI employee Muhammad Salah and Mousa Abu Marzook indicted for 15-year racketeering scheme to finance Hamas. Charges revealed that Salah, after serving 5 years in an Israeli prison (1993-98) returned to IL and allegedly dispatched a recruit to scout terrorist targets in Israel. Salah is now free on \$1.34 million bond in property posted by friends and family. Salah is confined to his home with electronic monitoring and is only allowed to leave for pre-approved attorney visits, court dates and to pray at his mosque. Marzook, head of Hamas' political wing, is reported to have fled Syria for Lebanon.⁶³
- 6/10/98: U.S. imposes \$1.4 million civil forfeiture against QLI and Salah for funneling money to Hamas. Claiming to be a \$36,000-a-year QLI computer analyst, Salah confessed to an Israeli court to forwarding over \$100,000 to Hamas. U.S. asserts the job "likely was a cover for his position as a high level Hamas military operative."⁶⁴
- 6/04/03: When ABC TV News reports that though he is on the U.S. list of terrorists, Salah is working as a computer instructor at the City Colleges of Chicago and as a substitute teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, he is fired from both for failing to disclose his Israeli conviction on his job application.⁶⁵
- 10/12/01: U.S. freezes Yasin al-Qadi's assets while placing him on the Suspected Terrorist list of individuals and groups connected to Al Qaeda. An F.B.I. affidavit shows al-Qadi, a Saudi financier, provided \$820,000 for QLI's 1991 purchase of property in Woodbridge, IL. Proceeds from that real estate development were used by Hamas to purchase weapons used in a 1992 terror attack.⁶⁶

FOOTNOTES (Last Updated: 3/3/05)

- www.iap.org/contactus.htm, 10/01, last indication of chairmanship.
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- "Business Accused of Aiding Libya," WFAA.com, 9/7/01.
- "Area Group Linked to Hamas, U.S. Says," Chicago Tribune, 12/16/01.
- "Islamic Association for Palestine Annual Fundraiser Dinner," www.iap.org, 4/13/01.
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- "Muslims Urged to 'Liberate the Holy Land,'" Chicago Sun-Times, 11/25/00.
- "Zionist Oppression Pushes Palestinians to Martyrdom Operations," www.iap.org, 9/6/01.
- "Time to be Serious," www.iap.org, 8/30/01; "Palestinians Call on Fellow Arabs and Muslims to Attack American Interests," www.iap.org, 4/22/01.
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- "Muslim Support for Candidate Forum in Chicago," www.theumaa.org, 3/18/02.
- cdsprod.ilsos.net/corp.html, 2004.
- "Muslim Leader's Appeal is Denied," Chicago Tribune, 6/8/04.
- "Open Letter From David Duke," www.theumaa.org, 10/22/01.
- "Zionist Dominated Media Incites Muslims," www.theumaa.org, 9/13/01.
- "Muslim Voters to Swing 2002 Major Elections," www.theumaa.org, 9/11/02.
- "Occupation is the Worst Form of Terrorism," www.theumaa.org, 12/2/01.
- "Muslims and Arabs Rally in Solidarity with HLF," www.theumaa.org, 12/6/01
- "Coalition Lobbying State for Social Service Hike," Chicago Tribune, 5/15/01.
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- "Elashi Brothers Convicted in Export Case," Dallas Morning News, 7/7/04.
- "Islamic Charity's Assets Frozen," Chicago Tribune, 12/5/01.
- "Supreme Court will not Hear Holy Land Foundation Appeal," Dallas Morning News, 3/1/04.
- "3 Muslim Charities Lose Tax-Exempt Status," Daily Southtown, 11/15/03.
- "Islamic Charity's Assets Frozen," Chicago Tribune, 12/5/01.
- "US Pulls the Plug on Muslim Websites," The Guardian, 9/10/01; "Bush to Freeze Assets of Charity for Palestinians," Wall Street Journal, 12/4/01.
- Benevolence International Foundation Newsletter, www.benevolence.org, 12/00 and Lexus search.
- "Big Charity Blocks Money to Several Islamic Groups," New York Times, 12/7/01.
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- "The Holy Land Foundation For Relief and Development," www.adl.org, 12/5/01.
- "Islamic Charity's Assets Frozen," Chicago Tribune, 12/5/01.
- "Warrants for Two Islamic Charities," New York Times, 12/15/01.
- "Light Shed on Haddad Arrest," www.mlive.com, 9/5/04.
- "Court to Hear Guantamo Detainees Case," Chicago Tribune, 3/11/03.
- "Islamic Charity Added to Sanctions List of Al-Qaida Operatives," www.un.org, 10/23/02.
- "3 Muslim Charities Lose Tax-Exempt Status," Daily Southtown, 11/15/03.
- "Funding linked to suspected al-Qaida financier," Associated Press, 10/01/02.
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- "Bosnian tied to Chicago-area charity found guilty," Chicago Tribune, 7/2/03.
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In Perspective

Monitoring and exposing the Chicago Connection to International Terrorism has been a signature JCRC activity for a decade. This priority project however is not conducted within a vacuum - we are sensitive to broader societal dynamics involved with these issues. Hence, JCRC public lectures on this topic always begin with following points:

1. Though the organizations in this report all describe themselves as Muslim and/or Arab, the vast majority of Arab and Muslim Americans and their organizations are not connected to or supportive of international terrorism.
2. U.S. law enforcement asserts that even in the cases of the four Chicago-area organizations whose assets have been frozen for alleged support of international terrorism, donors were deceived as to the ultimate uses of their charitable donations. Indeed, one of the charges that Enaam Arnaout, the jailed executive director of Benevolence International Foundation, pled guilty to was defrauding donors into believing that all contributions were to be used for humanitarian purposes when in fact many were being diverted to “jihad fighters” in Chechnya and Bosnia.
3. Ideally there would be non-Jewish, nongovernmental organizations monitoring and exposing the Chicago Connection to Terrorism. JCRC realizes that, as a Jewish organization, what we say, even when it is what is widely publicized in the mainstream media, is prone to be heard by many through a “filter” that absorbs the information in the context of a perceived public relations debate about the Middle East conflict between American Jews and Arabs/Muslims.
4. Nonetheless, that concern does not deter JCRC from speaking out even while waiting for other voices to be raised on this urgent issue of the Chicago Connection to International Terrorism. JCRC launched its Terrorism Awareness Project in the early 1990’s shortly after the first Chicago connections to international terrorism were revealed (the arrest of Mohammad Salah in Israel for supporting Hamas). That timeframe also coincided with the first World Trade Center bombing, prompting JCRC in 1996 to draft and successfully advocate for passage of the nation’s first state antiterrorism legislation, sponsor an academic conference on terrorism, and other activities.
5. As always, JCRC fights bigotry as if there is no terrorism, and fights terrorism as if there is no bigotry. Unfortunately there are occasionally those who will respond to acts of terror by committing hate crimes against innocent individuals or groups perceived as “associated” with terrorists. While unequivocally denouncing such instances and working in many ways to prevent hate crimes and to aggressively punish their perpetrators, JCRC cannot allow the despicable reality of hate crimes from preventing us to aggressively combating terrorism and exposing its local connections, regardless of the demographics of those involved.

Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago

The umbrella body for 47 Jewish organizations in Metropolitan Chicago and the community relations arm of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

For more information on the Chicago Connection to International Terrorism and copies of this document and periodic newsletters, visit: www.juf.org/jcrc/terrorism.asp