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‘The enemy teaches us how to operate’: Palestinian Hamas use of open source intelligence (OSINT) in its intelligence warfare against Israel (1987–2012)

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ABSTRACT

This article explores a new aspect of Hamas’s exploitation of the media: open source intelligence (OSINT). Based mostly on primary sources from within Hamas, the article describes how, through OSINT, Hamas has obtained valuable information for its operations and has successfully learned about various military and civilian aspects of Israel and the Israel Defense Forces in a readily available, simple, and inexpensive manner. The article goes on to analyze the pitfalls for Hamas of relying exclusively on OSINT within its strategic assessment efforts. This analysis sheds new light on the academic literature regarding intelligence of violent non-state actors and asymmetric warfare.

Introduction

All political and military organizations need intelligence to inform their activities. Theoretical and historical research tends to focus on intelligence operations by states rather than by non-state actors.¹ This is true, even if somewhat less so, with respect to research on the counterintelligence designed to maintain a terrorist organization’s clandestine nature.² Non-state actor intelligence should be analyzed taking into account that these actors are, inherently, the weaker player in asymmetric warfare against a state. As such, they seek to generate achievements that will provide the greatest possible impact using the most efficient means possible, given their relative poverty of resources compared to the state-enemy.³ While some papers seeking to shed light on this topic have been written during the last decade, it remains a substantial lacuna in academic discourse.⁴

One of the main areas in which Hamas has been active since its inception in December 1987 is the media. Hamas has utilized this tool to communicate both with Palestinian society and world public opinion. Initially, Hamas used quite primitive methods, such as local publications and leaflets.⁵ Gradually, Hamas’s media efforts expanded and became more technologically sophisticated, as it began to operate TV and radio channels as well as several internet websites, and even produced videoclips as part of its propaganda campaign against Israel.⁶ However, Hamas’s media use was not limited to disseminating its own ideas and narrative; rather, it also served as a means to learn about the Israeli enemy. From the very beginning, Hamas collected information for its needs. Naturally, intelligence activities developed in parallel with organizational evolution, becoming more organized, in-depth, expansive, and sophisticated, as they were conducted by institutionalized intelligence apparatuses.⁷

Research on Hamas’s intelligence is very limited. A recent article analyzing the analysis process of Violent Non-State Actors (VSNA), describes, briefly, Hamas’s strategic assessment

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prior to its 2014 conflict with Israel, as a test case for the article's main theory. However, that article does not even mention OSINT as one of Hamas intelligence capabilities and its significant impact on the organization's analysis of Israel.⁸ Another research focuses on Hamas's operations of doubling sources and their development throughout the years, analyzing its unique contribution for a non-state actor struggling a state.⁹ Thus, by exploring Hamas' OSINT activity for the first time, the current research significantly contributes to the understanding of Hamas's methods of intelligence collection as well as the organization's analysis of Israel.

Research that ties OSINT to VNSAs in general, and terrorist organizations in particular, tends to focus on this matter from one direction: how state intelligence agencies use this discipline to gather information in an age when many actors in conflicts are not states. Two exceptions are an article that examines the way the Loyalist 'supergrass' trials in Northern Ireland became a valuable source of OSINT (mainly for assassinations)¹⁰ and a brief reference to the contribution of OSINT to North Vietnamese intelligence during the Second Indochina War, mainly through providing it with useful military, economic and political information.¹¹

OSINT, like all other disciplines, must adjust itself to the reality of asymmetric warfare in order to fulfill its mission effectively in a new era. Despite this, OSINT faces a unique challenge in this new era. Mass communication has shifted from a small number of media outlets that broadcast to the masses, 'one to many', to a reality where there are many, diverse media outlets, 'many to many'. In this age, the consumer of information sometimes also becomes the one who produces the information or at least delivers it. This plethora of media requires states, and the organizations within them charged with counterterrorism, to have the capacity to monitor a large number of media channels with a very wide scope of information. Nonetheless, OSINT, and particularly the gathering and analysis of information about Jihad groups, could make it possible to fill in highly-important pieces of information about the strategy of those terrorist organizations, as well as their operational planning and their tactical *modus operandi*.¹²

While the research literature about OSINT deals, almost exclusively, with OSINT operated by states that have diverse, well-established intelligence agencies, VNSAs also engage extensively in this activity. As we shall demonstrate below, Hamas exploited the relative openness of the Israeli press over the past few decades in order to collect information that is valuable for its own needs. This activity was particularly fruitful for Hamas in light of the evolution of freedom of the press in Israel over the past few decades. In 1989, Israel's Supreme Court significantly limited the Military Censor's authority to prohibit the publication of information. It determined that censorship should be executed only in cases where there is 'a near certainty of real danger' to national security and public order.¹³ This limitation reflected a cultural change in Israeli society, attributing greater weight to the value of freedom of speech. Additionally, the development of new media such as the internet, social networks, and smartphones since the 1990s, made the ability to black out sensitive information more complex. Simultaneously, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) decided to strengthen its bonds with the Israeli press and to adopt an 'open to the press' policy.¹⁴

Eventually, these relations nearly spun out of control. In 2006, during the Second Lebanon War (Harb Tamuz), the IDF's approach was to be as open as possible to the press, allowing the Israeli media to publish extensive information, including sensitive military and defense details. Except for leaks and information conveyed through prohibited connections between senior officers and journalists, much of the information came directly from the IDF, within the aforementioned 'open to the press' approach. In the words of the IDF's Chief of the General Staff at the time, Lieutenant General Dan Halutz: 'The IDF must refrain from taking steps against the media, in light of the fact that Israel is a democratic state, which accords the highest importance to freedom of the press and information'.¹⁵ The Winograd Commission, which investigated the war, criticized some aspects of the IDF's 'open to the press' policy. However, the Commission did not recommend canceling the policy, but rather tightening its security aspects.¹⁶

When Hamas was a single decentralized organization, its intelligence capabilities were rather limited. It relied mainly on local observation, some HUMINT, and OSINT, all of which were concerned

mostly with the tactical aspects of its activities, and were quite limited absent an orderly intelligence body.¹⁷ Interestingly, in the 1990s, one Hamas operative defined this absence as a factor limiting the organization's operations.¹⁸

Starting in the mid-2000s, after Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip (summer of 2005) and even more so after Hamas seized control of the area in the middle of 2007, the organization's intelligence activities became more institutionalized. The MID (Military Intelligence Department), which runs a central headquarters and operates field-level intelligence activities, focused its efforts mostly on observing the border with Israel,¹⁹ running HUMINT within Israel proper,²⁰ and listening in on IDF tactical communications²¹; it also gradually started collecting intelligence even in the cyber dimension.²² All this helped Hamas attain tactical and operational intelligence, but did not benefit the organization in terms of its strategic assessments, for which the major source was and remains OSINT, as will be demonstrated below.

Following this, the present article seeks to answer the following question: How has Hamas used OSINT as part of its intelligence warfare against Israel, and what does it teach us about OSINT's role for VNSAs' intelligence warfare against their state adversaries? Thus, the research aims to describe and analyze Hamas's OSINT activity, which has involved collecting a variety of important information from open Israeli sources. It will discuss the phenomenon's development throughout the organization's long struggle against Israel, its contributions to the organization and its inherent risks.

The research is based mainly on three primary sources from within Hamas. One, which has yet to receive serious attention from scholars in the field,²³ is the literature that organization members have written in the 1990s and 2000s, in which they describe, *inter alia*, how they gained valuable information from the Israeli media and use it for the organization's activities. The second, which is published in this article for the first time,²⁴ is original data produced by Hamas for its members in the form of documented reports and videoclips.²⁵ This OSINT data was collected by Hamas from the Israeli media during 2004–2012. The third is information broadcasted by Hamas through its mass media channels.

Other sources used in this article include evidence of Israeli seniors of the defense sector regarding Israel's understanding of Hamas OSINT activity, and the way Israel used it for deception. In addition, the secondary literature on Hamas and regarding intelligence issues was used. In light of all this, the article provides a comprehensive picture of the topic, with illustrations and examples. Through this discussion of Hamas, this article contributes to the research literature on VNSA intelligence.

In this context, it bears mentioning that while Hamas (as well as Hizballah) is now considered a unique type of non-state actor (some would call it a 'semi-state actor', as it is an elected entity that controls a given territory and conducts nearly independent domestic and foreign policies), this study contributes to a greater understanding of OSINT among VNSAs for two reasons. One is that the study deals in part with the period predating the mid-2000s. Then, Hamas was a VNSA with the more common characteristics of an organization operating in a decentralized and not fully established way, without being the elected entity controlling a given territory, and working to realize its ideology through violence expressed in terrorist attacks. The other is that OSINT is not a resource-intensive activity that requires its operative to possess technological capabilities or state infrastructures. Thus, if an organization such as Hamas, which developed over time, still makes extensive use of OSINT, even after having becoming institutionalized and controlling the government, including depending on OSINT in some of the intelligence components as demonstrated below, then a weaker organization faces at least the same, if not greater potential benefit and risk from OSINT.

Hamas's OSINT activity from the organization's establishment until the institutionalization of its military wing in Gaza in the mid 2000's

Even in the organization's earliest days, its operatives used OSINT for a range of purposes. In the 1990s, the news agency Quds Press served as a kind of database for Hamas operatives. A search

conducted by members of the Shin Bet and the Civil Administration at the Hebron Press Office in 1993 found a multitude of archival material, clippings from the Israeli press, details of events 'on the ground', and reports by the Israeli organization B'Tselem.²⁶

Open source information was also collected among Hamas operatives abroad. The front organization for Hamas activity in the United States from its establishment and throughout the 1990s was called 'The Islamic Center for Research and Studies'. It was located first in Illinois and later moved to Virginia. The Center collected information and drafted propaganda materials that served as the basis for decision-making by Hamas leadership in the United States. This Center systematically collected open source information. Translation offices in the West Bank and Gaza translated the Israeli press, and each afternoon the materials were transmitted from East Jerusalem to the United States so that they would reach their destination as quickly as possible. Naturally, the Center also collected information from the Arabic and international press. The research center of the Islamic University of Gaza also collected information about the territories, some of which it sent to Hamas headquarters abroad. An additional source of information was the Quds Press agency and its branches, which were actually OSINT centers. The information was transmitted by telephone or fax to the main branch in London and from there to the United States or Jordan as needed.²⁷

Open source media aided the organization in efforts to learn and analyze the discourse on the Israeli side. In November 1992, after the maiden attempt by the Hamas cell under the leadership of Yahiya 'Aiyash to perpetrate a car bomb terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, one of the members of the cell learned, with the help of open source media, about the outcome of the attack. It became apparent to him that the operation had indeed failed since the car bomb was identified and stopped; however, he also learned how dangerous this type of operation was considered in Israel, since, according to him, the Israel Police dubbed it 'the most dangerous since the establishment of the state'.²⁸

In a book written by Hamas operative Jamil Wadi for Hamas operatives, published following his death in 1993, he explains that his research method relies, *i.e.*, upon reports from open source Israeli media, including television and radio broadcasts, in order to see how events are perceived in Israel and which steps Israel has adopted against operations. For example, he cites the impact these operations have on Israeli civilians and the difficulty security forces have dealing with them, in light of reports from the newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*. Following the attempted kidnapping of soldier Alon Karavani in Gaza in September 1992, members of the cell learned from the Israeli press that the event led to the formulation of new IDF procedures with respect to travel (mandating travel in pairs or larger groups) on routes in the West Bank, and Gaza, and later even within the Green Line.²⁹

After the January 1993 Hamas attack in the Israeli settlement Ganei Tal in the Gaza Strip, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed in a well-organized Hamas ambush, Hamas operatives collected extensive information from the Israeli media in order to see Israeli reactions to and insights from the attack. For example, Hamas operatives translated Israeli commentator Alex Fishman's description in of the attack in the newspaper *Hadashot* as innovative within the operating characteristics of Palestinian terrorist organizations, since they had infiltrated an Israeli settlement and Hamas had succeeded in surpassing the security arrangements through advance planning. Fishman's opinion was cited that the attack serves as evidence that deportation of the organization's operatives to Marj al-Zuhur in 1992 did not significantly harm the organization's military capabilities, as well as a similar opinion by a reporter from the *Jerusalem Post*. Information was also collected and translated from the newspaper *'Al HaMishmar*. This newspaper cited sources termed 'close to the Israeli leadership', according to whom there had been a drop in al-Qassam Brigades activity since the deportation, but the attack had made clear the need for additional, harsh steps against the organization. As background, it is worth noting that for Hamas, it was important to receive feedback about the correlation drawn in Israel between the attack and the Supreme Court decision that retroactively approved the deportation of the organization's operatives, since that was one of the objectives of the attack's timing.³⁰

This activity continued during the Second Intifada. During May – July 2002, members of the Silwan Cell perpetrated a number of terrorist acts within Israeli territory against high-quality targets.

In May, an explosive device was placed on a fuel container that was making its way to the Pi-Glilot Terminal, where it was detonated by members of the cell. About a month later, cell members placed an explosive device on railway tracks in the Lod area, and about a month after that, explosives were placed on railway tracks in the Rehovot area. Following the fuel container attack, cell members followed open source media reports; they discovered, to their surprise, that the truck attack they had planned possessed far greater potential than the mere explosion of the truck – it had the potential to blow up the entire Pi-Glilot Terminal, which would have caused far greater damage, destroying entire neighborhoods and killing and wounding thousands of residents in the area. In addition, they were brought up to date on Israeli projections about the state of affairs following the operation, increased security, and the execution of security drills at the site in the presence of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Nonetheless, cell members did not implement this operational format again, since their connection with the cell's strategic leader, Ibrahim Hamid, was severed, and the cell members would not take responsibility for a strategic decision of this kind themselves. In this context, the exact words of the cell's head, Muhammad 'Arman in his recommendation to Hamas members following the events are worth citing:

Any person acting within the resistance to the occupation bears an obligation to follow the enemy's media and to know what it thinks in order to formulate the most suitable plan. In addition, following the media supplies jihadists with free information they have not even considered, and therefore the architects of resistance operations have an obligation to master the Hebrew language and to follow all Israeli news reports and analyses. This is an extremely important point, which no one can ignore at all.³¹

As mentioned above, Silwan cell members also initiated an attack that included placing an explosive device on the railroad tracks. After the first attempt, on 21 June 2002, which wounded five, they followed open source media broadcasts in Israel. It is evident from their reports that they learned from an interview with a police commander that the reason for the relatively minor damage was the use of an explosive device with just 5 kg of explosive material and that if the device had been three times larger, that is, had contained 15 kg of explosive material, the damage would have been much more significant. This insight learned by Hamas members is described in the organization's literature under the heading 'the Enemy Teaches Us How to Operate', emphasizing the obligation for every operative to know Hebrew and follow open source media, which hands out 'free gifts' to Hamas of valuable information it would not receive otherwise.³²

More organized activity of information gathering from open source Israeli media can be identified from publications by the organization in 2004, issued by the media office of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. From an OSINT collection of statements by figures in Israel following Operation Days of Repentance (an IDF military operation in the Gaza Strip conducted in September – October 2004), it is clear that there was systematic collection from a variety of media information sources in Israel. For example, in the OSINT collection there is a description, based on an article in *Maariv*, of Israeli concerns about entering into battle in built areas within the Jabalia Refugee Camp for fear of casualties, with respect to Operation Days of Repentance. An IDF officer is quoted from the newspaper *BaMachane*, attributing to Hamas a stubborn tenacity in the face of the Israeli operation. In addition, criticism from the newspaper *Haaretz* appears regarding Israel's failed operations, which did not lead to cessation of Hamas rocket fire, yet caused the deaths of innocent victims on the Palestinian side, as well as international criticism of Israel. Information was also taken from the newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*, according to which IDF officers sought to conduct a 'quiet withdrawal' in order to complete the operation without international pressure.

With respect to Hamas operation during this period, in which an explosive tunnel running beneath the IDF base in Rafah was detonated (13 December 2004), the publication cites Amos Harel's analysis in *Haaretz* regarding the IDF's difficulty in coping with threats such as exploding tunnels, as well as the attack's importance in positioning Hamas as the entity which had pushed Israel out of Gaza through military force (in anticipation of the disengagement from Gaza, which was planned for the summer of 2005). Finally, based on the media, criticism is cited by members of

Knesset in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. This criticism touched both upon the situation in Gaza in general and the ever-increasing military power of Hamas and its successful operations, which presented a challenge to which the IDF does not have a full response (for example, the launching of mortar shells which the IDF does not have the capacity to intercept).³³

In early 2005, the collection of information from open source media continued, as is reflected in the translation of an article from *Haaretz* about Israeli opinions and fears of internal civil war in light of the evacuation of Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip.³⁴ The internal state of affairs in Israel ahead of the disengagement from Gaza continued to serve as a central topic of interest for Hamas members as they consumed Israeli media. In a weekly Hamas news collection on Israeli affairs, there were reports on an Israeli soldier who committed suicide because his unit received an order to participate in the planned evacuation of Gush Katif, on the secret evacuation of the residents of Eilei Sinai due to continued fire on their settlement, and on a visit by Prime Minister Sharon and Minister of Defense Mofaz to the city of Sderot in order to support residents so that they would not desert the city.³⁵

Use of open source material after the institutionalization of the Hamas military wing

Around 2006, following the institutionalization of the Hamas military wing and the foundation of the Military Intelligence Department (MID), Hamas's OSINT became more organized and far more extensive. Senior organization officials and organization members, many of whom had learned Hebrew over the years due to contact with Israeli entities and in Israeli prisons, continued to consume Israeli media independently. Thus, according to a representative of Ahmad al-Ja'bari, head of the Hamas military wing until his assassination in 2012, al-Jabari would regularly follow Israeli media and could comprehend the content of the reports even without needing translation.³⁶ However, the lion's share of intelligence activity in this area was transferred to apparatuses charged with this activity within the organization.

The Al-Qassam Brigades MID published, apparently starting in 2007, a weekly report entitled 'Israeli Affairs' (*Shu'un Isra'iliyyah*). The section of the report describing its purpose stated that it contained 'monitoring of news and analysis of events on the Zionist front and detailed collection of news of a defense and political nature'. The report's objective was to formulate 'an understanding and familiarity with developments and events in order to attain a background and infrastructure upon which to rely'.³⁷ It should be noted that the back cover of the report included a notice marked 'important', indicating that the materials should be destroyed after use – evidence that Hamas regarded it as intelligence for all intents and purposes.

I present below the content of a sample issue of the report, issue 36, dated 18 February 2010, to aid in understanding the characteristics of Hamas's OSINT. This issue is based on articles from the previous week. On the cover appear headlines from news items, one as a 'main headline' and the rest as 'secondary headlines'. On the first page, there is a detailed description of the main headline, which concerns details provided by former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert about the behind-the-scenes decision-making in Operation Cast Lead, based, *i.a.*, on an article published in the newspaper *Maariv*. This description presents the great significance of the number of civilian casualties on the Palestinian side for senior Israeli officials in deciding on the scope and depth of the operation.³⁸ On the following pages, the report is divided into four sections: 'Defense Issues', 'Military Issues', 'Related News', meaning news connected to Hamas and its areas of interest in Israel, and a final section containing short new items about internal Israeli affairs in Israel. At the end, there is an overall estimation of the state of affairs in light of the week's news, analysis, and conclusions.

In the 'Defense Issues' section, an article appears about the German mediator in the talks between Israel and Hamas about IDF soldier Gilad Shalit, who was still in captivity at the time, on the occasion of his appointment to a senior position in the German intelligence community. The article includes a discussion of offers made by Israel to Hamas with respect to a prisoner exchange deal and is based on publications in *Yedioth Ahronoth* and Channel 2 on Israeli television. The section on 'Military Affairs' contains, *i.a.*, an article about the construction of the active defense system Iron Fist, and

about the IDF's 'Tiger' armed troop vehicles and the unit which was expected to be equipped with this type of vehicle, based on an article in the newspaper *BaMachane*, distributed by the IDF. In the 'Related News' section, for example, there is a detailed report, based on an article in *Maariv*, on a public opinion poll, according to which 50 per cent of Religious Zionists in Israel support soldiers' disobeying or protesting orders. In the final section, short news flashes appear about politics in Israel, Israeli-Russian relations, and developments in the Israeli political system, as well as socio-economic issues such as Jewish-Arab relations, poverty in Israel, and crime.³⁹

At the end of the report is a general analysis of the weekly state of affairs according to OSINT. Based on the analysis, voices emanating from Israel, from the leadership, press reports, and analysis, are directed towards one main issue: Iran, and specifically halting its plans to develop nuclear weapons and sophisticated weaponry. Even Israel's threats and declarations to Hamas and Hezbollah are connected to this issue, since according to the authors of the report, Israel views them as acting under Iranian sponsorship.⁴⁰

Another example of organized OSINT is a broadcast produced by Hamas's MID that began in 2007, or perhaps even earlier, named 'In the Margins of Events'. It is impossible to determine whether this broadcast was produced on a daily or weekly basis. In the broadcast, selected segments from Israeli media on topics of Hamas interest were reviewed with Arabic translation. A short description of the segment's topic preceded each segment. For example, a broadcast dated 7 April 2008, which was about 17 minutes long, opened with information that, according to the MID, indicated that the IDF believed that the next battle in Gaza would feature substantial subterranean combat and was therefore training for such combat. Next, the broadcast showed a segment on this topic from Channel 10 in which IDF training was documented. The next segment addressed the development of anti-aircraft capabilities against Hezbollah aircraft. Here, too, the segment was from Channel 10 and presented IDF soldiers in training drills with this weaponry. The next segment was coverage of an interview of Khalid Mash'al on the British network Sky that was presented on Israeli Channel 2, with emphasis on Mash'al's statement that Gilad Shalit was still alive and his statement with respect to the firing of Hamas rockets on Israeli kindergartens, according to which Hamas does not aim at kindergartens; rather, he claimed, the event is a statistical deviation due to the primitive weaponry possessed by Hamas. Mash'al invited America and the West to equip the organization with more advanced, precise weapons. The last segment touched on the Knesset's decision to grant benefits to Israeli reserve soldiers with a Channel 10 report on the topic.⁴¹

In order to analyze Israel's stance and modus operandi in the context of the negotiations to free kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, who was captured on the Gaza border in June 2006, Hamas made use of experts to monitor declarations on this matter by senior Israeli officials in the political and military leadership. One expert, named Abu Anas, a senior Hamas official in the area of OSINT, presented an analysis to senior Hamas officials, following Benjamin Netanyahu's rise to power in 2009, according to which Israel is stalling in the negotiations and has reached an impasse because Netanyahu seeks a diplomatic, not a military, solution to the issue. This and other analyses constituted the basis for determining Hamas policy in its contacts with Israel.⁴² It is worth noting that from the time of its inauguration (31 March 2009), the Netanyahu Government did indeed refrain from conducting any wide-scale military operations against Hamas until Gilad Shalit was released in October 2011, even though there were upsurges in violence at the time. Similar escalations after Shalit's release did result in the Israeli Government's initiating a wide-scale military operation in November 2012 (Pillar of Defense). In light of the above, it might be said that Hamas's analysis and estimation regarding Israeli policy in this context were faithful to reality.

The MID produced weekly video broadcasts which included the main information collected from open source media. For example, the November 2011 OSINT broadcast entitled 'al-Mashhad al-Isra'ili', no. 184, was about 29 minutes long. The first segment in the first part, based on Israeli television broadcasts, was about the formalization of relations between Israel and South Sudan, including Israel's desire to use airports in the state. In this context, there was a detailed description of a strategic decision by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to deepen Israel's relations with states in the

Horn of Africa. The second segment was actually an Arabic-language transcription of a segment from Israel's Channel 10 about the ever-increasing percentage of youths postponing IDF conscription, which was projected, according to estimations at the time, to reach almost 60 per cent in 2020. This matter constituted a problem for the IDF since many of those postponing service are religious youth, many from the West Bank, who account for a significant percentage of those recruited into combat positions. The third segment was about increasing violence among Israeli Arabs and the incompetence of the public security forces in dealing with this phenomenon, based on a report from Israel's Channel 10. The fourth segment was about Israeli media coverage of the International Atomic Energy Agency decision to refrain from imposing sanctions on Iran in light of its continued nuclear activity. The segment included coverage of disagreements between Israeli civil servants and politicians about the correct policy regarding the Iranian nuclear program.⁴³

The second part of the broadcast cited an article from the newspaper *Israel Hayom* about growing Israeli concerns regarding the Muslim Brotherhood's power in Egypt. Another segment was about the tense relations between then-Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Mossad Director Tamir Pardo and attempts by Prime Minister Netanyahu to bridge the gaps between them. The third segment was about the physicians' strike in Israel and the government's efforts to solve the crisis, while at the same time the Prime Minister threatened strikers that a continuation of the strike could harm doctors, for example by importing doctors from India. An additional segment concerned a decision by the United States to supply antitank missiles to Gulf states, and the final segment concerned a steep increase in electricity prices in Israel due to problems in the flow of gas from Egypt. The broadcast ended with political cartoons from the Israeli media about Israeli concerns related to the continuation of the events of the 'Arab Spring' and fears that Iran will develop long-range missiles, as well as two additional cartoons ridiculing Prime Minister Netanyahu's attempt to find replacements for Israeli doctors on strike.⁴⁴

It would appear that beginning in 2013, responsibility for the production of the broadcast was transferred from the MID to the Hamas military wing's Information Office, yet beyond changes in the graphic design of the broadcast, the content clearly remained the same. In fact, it can be estimated that collection continued to be conducted by the MID, and only production of the broadcast itself was transferred to the Information Office (which was known for its advanced capabilities in the production of visual media). For the purposes of brevity, several more broadcasts will be summarized briefly below, and anecdotes cited. For example, the broadcast from the beginning of July 2013 included the descriptions of a large-scale drill by the Golani Brigade which included handling combat in urban areas based on lessons learned, *i.e.*, from combat in Bint Jbeil during the Second Lebanon War (2006), of a comprehensive brigade-wide Golani drill conducted in the Golan Heights, and of a new aircraft that Israel had purchased from the United States and its capabilities. In addition, the broadcast covered a report from Israeli media about the Shayetet 13 unit and its past operations, including during the Second Intifada, as well as information about Iron Dome deployment in the north.⁴⁵

It is evident that Israeli open source materials served as a major source of information for Hamas in a variety of areas. Through OSINT, Hamas members learned information about weaponry, IDF units, the deployment of forces, drills and training, the Israeli state of mind, aspects of Israeli society, and more. Hamas obtained this information with great ease, without the organization needing to make any great effort; it was weighed among other factors within the organization's estimations, alongside collection from other sources and analysis. As will be demonstrated below, alongside the many advantages and the information obtained by Hamas through OSINT, reliance on this source also had disadvantages.

Strategic estimation ahead of large Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip

Immediately after Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in the summer of 2005, and to an even greater degree after the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, a dialogue commenced in

the Gaza Strip in general and within Hamas in particular regarding the possibility that Israel might again conduct a wide-scale military operation in the Gaza Strip. In March 2007, for example, a program was broadcast on the network which was devoted to the question of whether Israel would 'invade' the Gaza Strip. In the program, civilians went on air to discuss the matter from several points of view. They presented a variety of considerations – military, social, political, and others – that might impact an Israeli decision regarding a wide-scale operation.⁴⁶

In May 2007, an extensive program was broadcast about preparations by various organizations in the Gaza Strip, among them the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, the Popular Resistance Committees, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, and of course the Hamas military wing, for a wide-scale Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip. Operatives from the organizations presented their predictions regarding the real possibility that such an operation might take place in the near future, as well as the preparations and training they were undergoing ahead of such an operation. In the film, a Hamas spokesman states that the organization takes such a possibility seriously in light of the Israeli Government's desire to win points in domestic public opinion, to prove the existence of Hamas tunnels to the Arab world, as well as the desire by senior Israeli officials to rehabilitate their status, both senior political figures (particularly then-Prime Minister Olmert, in light of the criminal proceedings against him) and senior military figures (in light of their failure in the Second Lebanon War and the disengagement from the Gaza Strip).⁴⁷

On 14 September 2007, training was conducted in the Northern Gaza Strip with senior Hamas official Nizar Rayan, as part of Hamas's preparations to complete its defense plan against IDF forces, should they enter the Gaza Strip. Fireteams designated to confront IDF's infantry from the Hamas military wing participated in the training.⁴⁸ By the end of 2007, the Hamas military wing was already busy preparing for a wide-scale Israeli operation. Its operatives trained for such an occurrence, using, *i.e.*, explosives, anti-tank missiles, and light weapons, some of which were looted from the Fatah warehouses when Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007.⁴⁹

The wide-scale military operation for which Hamas had prepared did indeed take place: On Saturday, 27 December 2008, Operation Cast Lead began. The operation opened with simultaneous aerial attacks by dozens of Israel Air Force aircraft on diverse Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. The operation was preceded by tension that began with a break in the agreed lull in fighting, the *tahdiya*, between the sides on 4 November 2008, when the IDF conducted an operation to uncover and neutralize a Hamas explosive tunnel in the vicinity of the al-Burj Refugee Camp in the central Gaza Strip. Due to the operation, in which a number of Hamas members were killed, violent exchanges commenced between the sides, until the Israeli side reached a decision to begin a wide-scale operation.⁵⁰

Despite advance preparation for the possibility of a wide-scale Israeli operation and despite the period of tension, there is overwhelming evidence that Hamas was surprised. At the time of the attack, senior Hamas officials, including Isma'il Haniyeh, were in their offices (despite the procedure according to which command centers and offices were to be evacuated when there was fear of an Israeli attack). The Saraiya Complex, where the Hamas government ministries are located, was occupied. The clearest testimony to the organization's surprise is a police officers' end-of-course ceremony held at the time of the attack at a site in the heart of Gaza City. The police formation was attacked, and 89 Hamas members were killed, including police commander Tawfiq Jabr. Clearly, if Hamas had been expecting a wide-scale attack, the police formation would not have been held, certainly not in the open air in the middle of the day.⁵¹

In order to identify the source of Hamas's error in predicting Israel's steps, it is important to present a complete picture of the organization's information and considerations. On the Thursday prior to the attack, Egypt's Assistant Minister of Defense, Ahmad Abdel Haleq, phoned senior Hamas official Mahmoud al-Zaher and warned him that Israel was planning to hit Hamas hard, based on messages he had received in a meeting held between Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and President Mubarak. He expressed his estimation that Israel's intentions were serious. Another senior Hamas official, Musa Abu Marzouk, received a similar message. However, Hamas also received more

reassuring messages. Journalist and researcher Shlomi Eldar testifies that the week before the operation broke out, he traveled on a ship from Limassol, Cyprus to the Gaza Strip. In the Strip, he met with Abed Haniyah, Isma'il's son, who tried to learn from him whether the posturing heard from the Israeli side about the possibility that Israel might enter into a wide-scale military operation was serious. Adler replied that according to what he had seen in the Israeli media, Minister of Defense Barak intended to try to lower tensions rather than to increase military activity.⁵²

Additional points, emphasized by figures such as Khaled Mashal and Ahmed al-Jabari, entered into Hamas's considerations as to why they did not expect Israel to commence a wide-scale ground campaign. Firstly, they believed that the upcoming elections in Israel would serve as a restraining factor, preventing the government from conducting a wide-scale operation. In addition, the fact that captured soldier Gilad Shalit was still in Hamas captivity was, according to them, a determining factor in their estimation that Israel would not conduct a wide-scale operation which would endanger Shalit's safety. The fact that in 2007–2008 there were a number of events after which calls for war were heard in Israel that nonetheless did not develop into wide-scale operations also constituted proof supporting the claim that the reaction this time would be no different.⁵³ Other reasons claimed as causes for the Hamas failure to predict the wide-scale attack were the negative Israeli experience from the Second Lebanon War; expectations of a lack of international support for the operation, which would cause Israel to hesitate before entering into an operation; and fears attributed to Israel about entering a wide-scale operation in light of dangers that it would deteriorate into conflict on multiple fronts, due to the possibility of an upsurge in violence in Lebanon and the West Bank.⁵⁴

Israel made sure to help Hamas maintain its prediction that no wide-scale operation was expected at the time. According to Yoav Galant, Commander of the Southern Command at the time of Operation Cast Lead, one of the Command's guiding assumptions was that Hamas was lacking in the area of strategic intelligence since it relied solely on analysis of OSINT in this context. This was in contrast to operational intelligence, in which Hamas operated observation posts and continuously studied confrontations with the IDF, which occurred frequently during 2007–2008, and from which the organization understood the IDF's capabilities and operational patterns, thereby increasing its ability to confront the IDF. According to Galant, this situation led Hamas to fail to identify the intention to commence a wide-scale operation in advance, since media reports in Israel during the period prior to the operation were replete with messages that terrorism could not be tamed through military means, and that the rocket fire was inevitable. This led Hamas to the conclusion that a wide-scale Israeli operation was not likely.⁵⁵

Deceptive actions by the Israeli political leadership also contributed: In a statement released at the end of the cabinet meeting held on Wednesday, three days before the beginning of the operation, there was just one line about the Gaza Strip among a list of topics mentioned in the statement, the most prominent of which was making multiple Islamic organizations illegal. Furthermore, on Thursday the Minister of Defense's Office announced the opening of the crossings from Israel to the Strip and a permit to bring aid into the area. In addition, the Prime Minister's Office announced that the next Sunday there would be further discussions regarding a decision about an expected operation in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, some of the regular IDF soldiers along the Strip's border were released for the Saturday on which the operation began, in order to give the impression of 'business as usual'.⁵⁶

Israel's robust understanding of Hamas's reliance on OSINT is demonstrated by the following decision. The ground operation was originally planned for the Thursday following the air attack, was postponed until Friday due to unsuitable weather. However, a report by the then-Channel 2 military correspondent that the ground operation was expected to begin on Friday led to its postponement until Saturday. These Israeli military decisions were based on the assumption that that news report had been heard by Hamas and would affect their expectations because it relied mainly on OSINT in its strategic assessment of Israel's decision-making about beginning an operation or turning it into a ground operation.⁵⁷

It can be said that Hamas's failure to predict the start of Operation Cast Lead stemmed from a combination of two elements: its limited collection of strategic intelligence due to the lack of high-quality sources about decision-making in Israel alongside Israel's attempts to limit information, deceive, and mislead; and a second conceptual element, i.e., mistaken analysis of Israel's system of considerations at the time. The result was catastrophic for the organization and led it to sustain significant damage from the very beginning of the operation.

Several years passed, and in 2012 Hamas was surprised again. Here, too, despite a period of tension between the sides, Hamas clearly did not expect Israel to take this step – otherwise, Ja'bari would of course not have traveled, completely exposed and vulnerable, in the streets of Gaza, making himself susceptible to assassination. In this case, it appears that Hamas had more reasons to predict, at least as a possible scenario, the possibility of an upsurge in violence on the Israeli side. Beyond the experience of deep defeat from Operation Cast Lead, which one might have expected would lead to greater caution, the Shalit deal had already been completed and fears of harm to the captured soldier were no longer a restraining factor for Israel. Furthermore, at that time, the Iron Dome system had already proved itself highly effective in preventing harm to the Israeli civilian population from rockets launched from the Gaza Strip, and the fear of intensive harm to civilians as a restraining consideration for Israel had also been greatly reduced.

On the other hand, at the time the operation began, Israel was at the height of an election campaign following the dissolution of the Knesset in October 2012 and was on its way to elections in January 2013. Here, too, Hamas should have learned from experience, as Operation Cast Lead also began during an elections period. It is possible that the fact that a pro-Hamas Muslim Brotherhood regime headed by Mohamed Morsi had been in power in Egypt since August 2012 led Hamas to think that Israel would refrain from an operation in the geopolitical reality following the fall of Mubarak. Furthermore, Hamas estimated that Israel was not seeking a war at this time due to deception on the Israeli part, which, according to then-Minister of Defense Barak, was both on the open level and by more confidential means. The open steps include the visit by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense to the northern border, at the height of tension and on the morning of al-Ja'bari's assassination, in order to divert attention to the northern front. Add to that statements by Minister Benny Begin, a member of the nine-person forum entrusted with decisions on defense issues, that the government should exercise restraint, and that the right time should be chosen within a complex equation of considerations.⁵⁸ Here too, the deception, much of which was executed in the open source media, was effective and led to a temporary drop in Hamas preparedness and an incorrect estimation of Israel's anticipated actions. Again, Hamas's reliance on OSINT for its strategic assessment was a double-edged sword, giving Israel the opportunity to mislead the organization.

Analysis – the role of OSINT for VNSAs intelligence

An examination of Hamas's OSINT activity against Israel leads to several important conclusions about the role of OSINT in the intelligence efforts of VNSAs vis-a-vis a state enemy:

- Tactical and Operational Intelligence, but not only – Over the years, Hamas has successfully used OSINT to obtain valuable tactical information for carrying out operational activities. This information helped them to optimally plan their operations and afterward helped them discern their results, impact, and how they were viewed in Israel. This allowed them to improve their performance in later operations. This strengthens the claims I made in earlier studies about how VNSAs are successfully carrying out intelligence work that meets their tactical and operational needs. This study shows how OSINT is also used for these purposes.

However, while earlier studies presented this effort as central and nearly exclusive to VNSAs, alongside counterintelligence,⁵⁹ the current research shows how OSINT serves Hamas for

a variety of other intelligence purposes, for example, basic intelligence. One can see clearly how Hamas gathered a great and varied amount of open information for basic intelligence purposes, i.e., general information about Israel, mainly about the IDF – the army's structure, units, weapons at its disposal, etc. Hamas even invests great resources in ensuring that its members acquire this knowledge. This effort was significantly intensified during the organization's more developed stages, i.e., from the mid-2000s.

From this, we see that from the moment a VNSA is no longer at the basic stage of its development (i.e., carrying out micro-tactical ad hoc terror attacks), just like countries, it seeks to achieve a greater understanding of its opponent in the form of basic intelligence. This intelligence allows it to better understand the other side, and to plan activities more effectively, both the terror attacks that it initiates and its preparedness for large-scale combat in which it will be able to deal with the opposing army more effectively.

A broader conclusion regarding the study of VNSAs intelligence may be possible: it could be that not all VNSAs are the same, and a certain distinction needs to be made within this group to better define the characteristics of their intelligence activity. For example, there may be a need to distinguish between different phases in the development of VNSAs from a variety of perspectives: their goals, the weapons at their disposal, their organizational development, the nature of the conflict against the enemy state they are fighting, etc.

- **Warning Assessment** – An analysis of Hamas's OSINT efforts also indicates a preoccupation with strategic aspects, primarily that of warning intelligence. Hamas's Achilles' heel is its almost total reliance on using open information to evaluate Israel on a strategic level and, above all, to warn it of a large-scale attack. This total reliance has prevented Hamas from reaching the correct conclusions, and even provided Israel with an opportunity to carry out deceptive activities.

Earlier studies have already pointed out the difficulties VNSAs have with strategic intelligence and assessment. The main study that analyzed the issue,⁶⁰ which had Hamas as one of its two test cases, attributed this to the characteristics of VNSAs, which as authoritarian groups can't think free and critically like open and democratic countries and are more likely to fall prey to biases. This interesting hypothesis has not been proven empirically; its repercussions have been discussed in two test cases under the assumption that it is true and further research is needed to assess whether it is supported by reliable historical evidence. The current study offers a more concrete and better-supported interpretation of the assessment difficulties faced by VNSAs. A main factor that influences the failure of VNSAs' strategic assessment is their reliance on OSINT for assessing rivals on a strategic level. Naturally, although this conclusion is well-supported in this article by the history of Hamas's intelligence assessments vis-à-vis Israel, it requires additional validation from other test cases.

The above does not necessarily contradict the thesis presented earlier regarding the reasons why VNSAs find it difficult to articulate strategic situation assessments. However, history is replete with erroneous strategic situation assessments made by democratic nations that failed to undertake intelligence assessment processes with the appropriate measure of self-criticism and openness, such as the clear example of Israel's intelligence services on the eve of the Yom Kippur War in 1973.⁶¹ Therefore, there may be nothing unique about a VNSA's intelligence assessment processes that is attributable to its specific characteristics; VNSAs may very well experience the same challenges and failures experienced by all intelligence organizations seeking to undertake such assessments. Nonetheless, the combination of difficulties in critical thinking and in creating openness in intelligence assessment

processes, whether unique to VNSAs or not, together with their limited ability to attain strategic information and their disproportionate reliance on OSINT for doing so, may provide a more complete explanation.

- **Public Opinion and Social Intelligence** – An additional interesting feature arising from the study is the importance Hamas has attributed to gathering information touching on aspects of public opinion in Israel and Israeli society. During the first stages of the organization's development, Hamas was also extremely interested in the atmosphere in Israel and the influence of the organization's terror attacks on public opinion. Later, Hamas used OSINT to study the changes in Israeli public opinion, the fissures in Israeli society, public support, levels of motivation for the IDF, etc.

With regard to asymmetric warfare, the final goal of a VNSA's operations, especially those of a terrorist organization, is not merely military damage, in the form of harming soldiers/civilians or enemy weapon systems. Terror, in its essence, seeks to have an emotional impact, to strike fear in the opponent against which the terror is targeted, to harm its morale, and its faith in the justness of its path and the righteousness of its sacrifice. Through this, it aims to impact the opponent's ability to realize its military strength. One can therefore understand the importance a VNSA like Hamas attributes to these 'soft' attributes in information gathering, which can be almost ideally gained by OSINT.

- **Democracy asymmetry** – The infrastructure that creates the special role OSINT plays for VNSAs can be called Democracy Asymmetry. The phenomenon described in this article testifies to the complexity of asymmetric warfare between states and VNSAs. While the state actor has a clear advantage in 'pure' military power and is the stronger player, it turns out that in other areas it is weaker. In the context of this article, the democratic state player is in an inferior position with regards to protecting its secrets from exposure in open-source media, because of the characteristics of the society, which demand freedom of expression and respect for the public's right to information.

Israel, as a democratic country, thus allows the publication of plenty of information touching on purely military and security matters, such as information about IDF units, IDF training, weapons, the movement of forces, etc. This information is sometimes published at the initiative of the IDF and the security establishment, as part of the army's need to provide information to the Israeli public. This is done, among other reasons, to strengthen the public's feeling of security and to explain how the large security budget is allocated. In addition, a great deal of information regarding security in Israel is published by journalists, based on their own sources, and the Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that the censor is not allowed to prevent its publication unless it is classified and its publication would be almost certain to cause tangible harm to the state's security. Hamas, as a VNSA, can exploit the country's openness and harm state security. This information, it turns out, is especially valuable to a VNSA like Hamas. It can use Israel's open media to its advantage while imposing by force a much more restricted media policy, both within the organization and in the entire Gaza Strip which it controls.

This inferiority translates into an advantage for the non-state actor in terms of the production of cheap, readily available, and high-quality intelligence, and requires great awareness on the part of the state actor about the intelligence aspect of open source media in order to protect information on the one hand and take advantage of opportunities provided by this phenomenon on the other.

- **OSINT is an INT for VNSAs** – The research presented in this article demonstrates how, contrary to widespread conceptions among state intelligence agencies, which view OSINT as a supplementary discipline, at times even inferior and not fully belonging to the field of

'intelligence',⁶² when it comes to VNSAs – OSINT constitutes a substantial, central component in intelligence gathering and assessment. On the tactical level, Hamas received information through OSINT that contributed directly to its activity, no less than information it might have received through other gathering methods. On the operational and strategic levels, due to difficulty in obtaining other reliable sources of information, OSINT serves as the main gathering agent upon which Hamas relies, and it would therefore appear that from the perspective of VNSAs, OSINT can most certainly be considered an INT for all intents and purposes.

Its value for them should be emphasized, especially when dealing with a democratic media that strives to share reliable information about the security forces with the public and takes it as a given that in the process this information will also be shared with the enemy. It is clear that in the case of Hamas as a VNSA, OSINT constitutes the exclusive source for a substantial amount of information gathered by the organization, and its value is perceived as closer to that of classified information. This has sometimes led to it being accorded excessive reliability, which has been exploited by Israel.

In summary, it seems that at the tactical and operational levels, as well as in terms of attaining basic intelligence, OSINT, which is inexpensive and easily available, has been a very important source of information for Hamas. Furthermore, because of the media asymmetry between the sides, Hamas has never disclosed anywhere near the same quantity and quality of information to Israel. Still, given that at the strategic level, the organization has no other significant sources of information, it must rely almost exclusively on information coming from OSINT and on its ability to read it correctly. This form of strategic information cannot be cross-referenced or authenticated; in fact, it can be used by the other side to deceive or misdirect the organization. Consequently, the reliance on OSINT is a central reason for Hamas's failure to correctly assess Israel's plans for it.

Conclusion

This article analyzes Hamas's comprehensive use of OSINT to collect information about Israel throughout the years of conflict between the two sides. Intelligence collected in this manner served Hamas for various purposes: to help execute terrorist attacks, to help the organization prepare for conflict with Israel, and to formulate a strategic picture of Israel and its plans for the Gaza Strip. Hamas took advantage of the relative media openness in Israel as a democratic state, wherein a wide range of security information was open to all and thereby received valuable information in a readily available, simple, and cheap manner.

However, the article also demonstrates the intelligence limitations of Hamas in obtaining valuable strategic information about Israel's decision-making processes. Hamas's reliance on OSINT to estimate the likelihood that Israel would commence a wide-scale operation led to failures in predicting Israeli activity and caused significant harm to the organization. Israel identified this weakness and took advantage of it in order to conduct successful deceptions, enabling a surprise that translated into real achievements in the confrontation with Hamas.

Analysis of VNSA intelligence activity in a particular discipline, as conducted in this article, is one more layer in the developing infrastructure of research about VNSA intelligence. As is increasingly clear, this is a phenomenon with unique characteristics; it requires continued research and development in order to be understood in full and to raise awareness about it in academic, defense-institution, and public discourse.

Notes

1. Gentry, 'Toward a Theory', 465–469. See, for example, Ilardi, 'Al Qaeda's Operational Intelligence', 1072–102; Ilardi, 'IRA operational intelligence', 331–58; Riza, 'Intelligence Agents', 73–93; Flamer, 'Hezbollah and Hamas's', 1–13.

2. See Wege, 'The Hizballah Security Apparatus', 11–17; Wege, 'Hizballah's Counterintelligence Apparatus', 771–85; Mobley, *Terrorism and Counterintelligence*; Ilardi, 'Irish Republican Army Counterintelligence', 1–26; Ilardi, 'Al-Qaeda's Counterintelligence Doctrine', 246–274; Mobley and Ray, 'The Cali Cartel', 246–74; Kilber, 'Terrorist Group Structures', 165–73.
3. Stepanova, *Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict*, 5–23.
4. Strachan-Morris, 'Developing Theory', 980–4.
5. See Hamas's leaflets during the first Intifadha in Mishal and Aharoni, *Speaking Stones*, 201–86.
6. Mozes & Weimann, 'The E-Marketing Strategy', 211–25; Rubinstein-Shemer & Flamer, 'Projective Psychological Warfare', 1–13.
7. For a review and demonstration of the evolution of Hamas's intelligence, see Flamer, "'An Asymmetric Doubling'", 63–77.
8. Bitton, 'Getting the right', 1027–44. This theory will be considered in the discussion below.
9. Flamer, 'An Asymmetric Doubling'.
10. Monaghan, 'Loyalist supergrass trials', 1014–26.
11. Strachan-Morris, 'The Use of Intelligence', 985–98. Additional short, albeit not comprehensive, references may be found in: Ilardi, 'IRA operational intelligence', 340–1; Ilardi, 'The 9/11 Attacks', 176.
12. Amble, 'Jihad Online', 168–184.
13. HCJ 680/88, Schnitzer v. Chief Military Censor.
14. See Former Chief Censor of the State of Israel, Brig. Gen. (Res.) Sima Vaknin-Gil, 'HaTsensura BeYisrael', 117–46.
15. Winograd Commission, *Final Report*, 465.
16. Ibid.
17. The exception is Al-Majd, a general security mechanism operating since Hamas's establishment and in charge of counterintelligence, especially vis-à-vis Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel or of moral offenses.
18. Jabarin, *Hakait al-Dam*, 128.
19. See, for example, an audio documentation of Hamas's communications network from early 2020, the organization's forward observers report on border events in real time in Levy, 'Divuḥim shotfim'.
20. Flamer, *Hezbollah and Hamas*, 1–13.
21. According to an IDF conference documented by Winter, 'Bapada'm Hosfim', p. 10.
22. See, for example, Dostry, 'Hamas' Cyber Activity'.
23. It might be because the research is based on sources in three different languages: Arabic, Hebrew, and English while most studies on Hamas are based on one or two of them. Therefore, it was possible to create a comprehensive analysis of the topic.
24. Because they were not available to other researchers.
25. The author gained access to these products (7 in total) from source within the Israeli state security apparatus. These products are the sources in footnotes 33–35, 37–41, 43–45.
26. Shabi and Shaked, *Hamas*, 284.
27. Shabi and Shaked, *Hamas*, pp. 174–5.
28. Jabarin, *Hakait al-Dam*, 53, 55.
29. Wadi, *Butulat al-Qassamiyyah*, 5–7, 11, 13.
30. Wadi, *Butulat al-Qassamiyyah*, 98–100.
31. 'Arman, *Muhandesu al-Mawt*, 13–14, 21.
32. 'Arman, *Muhandesu al-Mawt*, 15.
33. Al-Maktab al-I'lami li-Kata'ib al-Qassam 'l'tarafat sahayoniyyah bi-al-Fashal', 3. from *Border Defenders*, a weekly publication of Hamas's military wing; it has been issued since December 2004.
34. Al-Maktab al-I'lami li-Kata'ib al-Qassam, 'l'tarafat sahayoniyyah – Haarits', 1.
35. Al-Maktab al-I'lami li-Kata'ib al-Qassam, 'Khabar al-"Usbu"', 2.
36. Sliman al-Shafa'i, *HaShavui – Mabab Mi'Aza*, 45.
37. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'Shu'un Isra'iliyyah', back cover.
38. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'Shu'un Isra'iliyyah', p. 1.
39. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'Shu'un Isra'iliyyah', pp. 3–15.
40. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'Shu'un Isra'iliyyah', p. 16.
41. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'Askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, "'Ala Hamish al-Ahdath".
42. Al-Shafa'i, *HaShavui*, 184–5.
43. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'Askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'al-Mashhad al-Isra'ili 184'.
44. Da'irat al-Istakhbarat al-'Askari fi Kata'ib al-Shahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, 'Al-Mashhad al-Isra'ili 184'.
45. Al-Maktab al-I'lami li-Kata'ib al-Qassam, 'al-Mashhad al-Isra'ili 264'.
46. 'Sedaa' al-Shari', Channel *al-Aqsa*, March 25, 2007.
47. Channel *al-Aqsa*, May 13, 2007.
48. Channel *al-Aqsa*, September 15, 2007.
49. *Fox News*, December 6, 2007.

50. For background on the operation and the events of its first day, see: Terrorist Information Center at the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center, "*Mivtsa 'Oferet Yetsuka*".
51. Eldar, *Lehakhir et HaHamas*, 297.
52. Eldar, *Lehakhir et HaHamas*, 290, 295.
53. Eldar, *Lehakhir et HaHamas*, 296.
54. Cohen and White, 'Hamas in Combat', 5–6.
55. Galant, '*Aluf (Mil) Yoav Galant*', July 7, 2012.
56. Ashkenazi, '*Rav Aluf Gabi Ashkenazi*', July 7, 2012; Ravid, "*Oferet Yetsuka*", December 27, 2008. <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.1369969>.
57. Galant, '*Aluf (Mil) Yoav Galant*'.
58. Testimony by Ashraf Al-'Ajami, former Minister for Prisoner Affairs in the PA, and Ehud Barak, Minister of Defense during the operation, quoted Diner Bar On, *Shamayim BeTseva Adom*; Segal, *Mitalhat LePnai HaShetah*; Golub, '*HaHartaah HaYisraelit*', 22–25.
59. Gentry, 'Toward a Theory'.
60. Bitton, 'Getting the right'.
61. Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep*, 235–52.
62. Pedersen and Jansen, "Seduced by secrecy, 881–98; Olcott, *Open Source*, 247–8; Miller, 'Open Source Intelligence', 702–19.

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