

"Death as Weapon, Survival as Resistance: Martyrdom Ideology and Its Transformation in Hamas  
Discourse (2000–2005 / 2023–present)".

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## Abstract

Death as Weapon, Survival as Resistance: Martyrdom Ideology and Its Transformation in Hamas Discourse (2000–2005 / 2023–present).

Ines Pahaut

This thesis examines the evolution of martyrdom ideology in Hamas's discourse between the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the period of genocidal violence following the Al-Aqsa Flood operation of October 2023. Drawing on a primary corpus of Hamas communiqués, martyr posters and video statements, and applying an integrated theoretical framework combining martyrdom as ideological construct, necropolitics and grievability, the research conducts a systematic diachronic discourse analysis across two historically distinct conjunctures. The central argument is that Hamas's martyrdom ideology possibly underwent a transformation: from individual offensive sacrifice-as-weapon, embodied in the figure of the *istishhādī* (one who seeks martyrdom), to collective defensive endurance-as-resistance, structured around the triad of *sumūd* (steadfastness), *sabr* (patience) and *ribāṭ* (guardianship of sacred territory). This shift reflects both the material impossibility of replicating suicide operations under conditions of siege and the ideological imperative to sustain meaning under mass death. The subject of martyrdom has been democratized, from the exceptional male operative to *al-sha'b* (the people as a whole), while commemorative practice has displaced the spectacular funeral procession as the primary site of martyrdom's reproduction. The thesis contributes to English-language Hamas studies, martyrdom anthropology and necropolitical theory by suggesting, from a limited corpus of material and English-language sources, that martyrdom ideology is not fixed religious doctrine but a historically contingent, adaptive formation responsive to changing conditions of colonial violence.

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This thesis is dedicated to the Palestinian people — the most courageous people of all. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.

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## **Chapter 1 : Introduction**

In 2002, at the height of the Second Intifada, martyr posters bearing the face of a young man who had detonated himself in Tel Aviv plastered Palestinian city walls. The poster rendered him as shahid —holy warrior, national hero—and his individual act of self-annihilation was framed as the ultimate assertion of agency against an occupation that had foreclosed all other possibilities. Two decades later, in the rubble of northern Gaza, a family places photographs beside wildflowers: a nurse, two children who scored high on their exams, an elderly woman who never left her neighbourhood. They, too, are called martyrs. Something has profoundly shifted. As anthropologist Amira Mittermaier (2015) observed, martyrdom is not simply an event but a literary form, a genre retroactively assigned to organize collective grief and political meaning. What that genre is asked to carry has changed between these two moments; yet the word, and the weight it places on the living, persists.

This thesis asks: how has martyrdom ideology been articulated within Hamas from the Second Intifada (2000–2005) to the current war in Gaza (2023–present)? Through a comparative critical discourse analysis of a select set of Hamas official communications and affiliated media, available in English language, this study attempts to trace a possible transformation in the meaning, function, and social location of martyrdom within Palestinian resistance discourse. Based on the English-language public communications of Hamas and secondary academic literature published in English, I suggest that martyrdom appears to have evolved from a strategy of individual offensive sacrifice —the *istishhadi* (one who seeks martyrdom), whose body becomes a weapon to equalize an asymmetric conflict—toward a logic of collective defensive endurance, in which survival, steadfastness (*sumud*), and dying-in-place constitute primary forms of sacrificial resistance. This evolution, as reflected in the materials examined, suggests not merely a tactical adjustment but a deeper ideological shift: from the spectacular singular death that disrupts the enemy's normality, to

mass death that must be continuously documented and named to retain sacrificial significance under conditions where sheer scale threatens to render each death anonymous (Kiadan, 2025).

The conditions framing this potential evolution span four decades of intensifying colonial violence. The First Intifada (1987-1993) established martyrdom as a collective national value, with those killed named shahid (martyr) regardless of political affiliation. The Oslo Accords (1993) displaced this energy into a peace process that delivered neither withdrawal nor sovereignty, fuelling the Second Intifada (2000-2005), Hamas's peak period of suicide operations. During this period, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, deployed martyrdom as muwāzanat al-ru'ub (balance of terror), a calculated strategy meant to introduce reciprocity into a structurally asymmetric conflict. The assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas's founder and spiritual leader, in 2004 paradoxically accelerated Hamas's political institutionalization, culminating in its 2006 legislative victory and governance of Gaza following the 2007 Fatah split. What followed was not normalization but an intensifying siege, punctuated by military operations in 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2021 that progressively dismantled Gaza's infrastructure. The events of October 7, 2023, and the Israeli military response they triggered represent a qualitative rupture. As Omar McDoom (2025) argues, the Israeli campaign constitutes a genocidal effort—evidenced by deliberate humanitarian blockade, systematic destruction of civilian infrastructure, and mass confinement of the population—which has transformed the material conditions under which sacrifice is understood and enacted. The Qassam Brigades have evolved from individual martyrdom operations toward a professionalized asymmetric force (Abu Hatoum & Assali, 2023), while the assassinations of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau, and Yahya Sinwar, Hamas's leader in Gaza, converted the movement's senior leadership itself into martyrs whose deaths demanded institutional continuity rather than symbolic commemoration alone (Ibrahim, 2024).

Studying this evolution matters academically and politically. It contributes to the comparative English-language literature on Islamic resistance movements under shifting material conditions and to anthropological debates on martyrdom as a dynamic cultural form rather than a fixed theological category. Politically, it offers a more precise account of the ideological logic expressed in Hamas's discourse at a moment when that logic is often misread, either as static terrorism or as purely strategic calculation. Given the small scope of this study and its reliance on English-language materials, the findings are necessarily suggestive rather than definitive, intended to frame questions for further inquiry rather than to offer a comprehensive account of Hamas's ideological evolution.

## **Chapter 2 : Literature Review**

### *1. Hamas Studies : Strategy and Transformation*

Political science and international relations scholarship on Hamas has predominantly concentrated on the movement's political evolution and strategic adaptation rather than the ideological content underpinning its resistance practice. Baconi (2017) demonstrates how Hamas's resistance strategy underwent significant transformation during the Second Intifada, arguing that the movement's political engagement represented the continuation of resistance by other means rather than an abandonment of armed struggle. Baconi traces how Hamas strategically deployed *amaliyyāt istishhādiyya* (martyrdom operations, i.e., suicide bombings) to achieve clearly articulated objectives, most notably Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied after 1967. This framework positions Hamas's use of direct violence as calculated and goal-oriented, introducing the concept of *muwazanat al-ru'ub* (balance of terror) to explain how the movement sought to create reciprocity in a fundamentally asymmetric situation.

The transition from resistance movement to political actor has been examined through institutional and resource-based analyses. Bhasin and Hallward (2013) argue that Hamas's 2006 electoral participation reflected a "rational, pragmatic step" (p. 89) consistent with its dual strategy of armed resistance and civilian welfare provision, driven by external funding requirements and the need for public legitimacy. This scholarship emphasizes strategic rationality over ideological motivations, treating Hamas primarily as a political actor responding to structural opportunities.

Recent work has focused on leadership transitions and their strategic implications. Abu Amr (2024) examines how Yahya Sinwar's election as Hamas political bureau leader, following Ismail Haniyeh's assassination by Israeli Mossad agents, underscores the movement's adaptive capacity. Sinwar's military background and close ties to the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades—Hamas's armed wing—signal potential shifts from diplomatic engagement toward armed resistance, positioning leadership

changes as responses to evolving political contexts. This literature demonstrates Hamas's ability to navigate internal and external pressures while overlooking the possibility that ideological reorientation contributed to organizational change.

While this body of scholarship has been invaluable for understanding Hamas's strategic evolution, a gap emerges: the focus remains predominantly on tactics, governance structures and strategic rationality, largely neglecting ideological evolution including the movement's relation to Islam, martyrdom and death. As Baconi acknowledges, Hamas's rhetoric includes terms like *amaliyyāt istishhādiyya*, *jihad* (holy war) and references to *al-masjid al-Aqsa* (the Al-Aqsa mosque), yet these are treated primarily as discursive tools rather than subjects of sustained analysis. The evolution in Hamas's symbolic vocabulary, from *muqawama* (resistance) and martyrdom operations in the early 2000s to *hudna* (ceasefire), *tahdi'ah* (calm) and *dymuqratiyya* (democracy) by 2005, suggests deeper ideological transformations that remain under-examined, particularly given the current genocide in Gaza.

## 2. *Martyrdom in the Anthropology of Palestine*

While political science scholarship on Hamas focuses on strategy and governance, anthropology has long examined the meanings and subjectivities developed through the practice of martyrdom. Pitcher (1998) explores martyrdom within the specific context of Israeli military occupation, analyzing how ritual, narrative and symbolic dimensions constitute a discourse of sacrifice and national liberation. Pitcher argues that under occupation, the Palestinian body becomes "the locus of displacement" (p. 13), collectivized and encoded with social meaning where individual identity remains secondary to collective survival. This framework positions martyrdom as a vehicle of transformation, directing occupation's trauma away from individual incapacity toward the collective affirmation of Palestinian identity.

Allen (2006, 2008) extends this analysis through the examination of commemorative practices during the Second Intifada. Martyr posters and funerals created a public sphere where participants are "hailed as national subjects" (p. 108) while simultaneously generating forums for political debate. Allen notes these practices could dissolve into "criticism, cynicism, and apathy" (p. 109) as martyrs became symbolic capital claimed by competing factions, revealing tensions among different visions of the Palestinian national project.

Abufarha (2008) provides crucial insight into how martyrdom connects Palestinian identity to land itself. The *shaqīq* (poppy) symbolizes the martyrs' blood nourishing the soil, its colour reproducing the Palestinian flag and visually fusing body, land and nation. Abufarha identifies an evolution in martyr figures: from *fidā'ī* (freedom fighter) of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) era (1964–1987), to *shahīd* (passive martyr-victim) of the First Intifada (1987–1993), to *istishhādī* (one who seeks martyrdom) of the Second Intifada (2000–2005). This typology captures the shift from being killed to willing oneself into death for the community, transforming victimhood into agency and sacralizing the land as both witness and recipient of sacrifice.

Religious and nationalist framings of martyrdom reflect complex hybridizations. Islamic jurisprudence scholar Abdel-Khalek (2004) distinguishes *istish'hād* (martyrdom) from suicide, emphasizing *jihad* as religious duty and the martyr as an embodiment of complete Muslim faith. Sociologist Damir-Geilsdorf (2004) traces how secular nationalist organizations like Fatah initially commemorated martyrs regardless of religious orientation, while Islamist organizations revived the term *mujahid* (literally "one who struggles," a Muslim engaged in jihad) and introduced *istishhādī* for suicide bombers. Political scientist Dunning (2015) demonstrates how Hamas portrays itself as the embodiment of Islamic practice, using jihad and *shahāda* (witness/martyrdom) to attract public support while emphasizing *sabr* (patience) as among the highest Islamic values.

### 3. *Theoretical Interventions : Necropolitics, Agency and Grievability*

Critical theoretical frameworks from religious studies, political philosophy and postcolonial theory have profoundly shaped how martyrdom is conceptualized beyond rational-choice or pathological models. Religious studies scholar Asad (2003, 2007) challenges secular assumptions about agency and suffering, arguing that modern thought equates agency with self-empowerment and autonomy while many religious traditions position pain and endurance themselves as forms of agency. In Islamic traditions, pain cultivated through *sabr* and *taqwā* (virtuous fear) forms believers as ethical agents. For religious studies scholar Strenski, suicide bombing constitutes a willed engagement with suffering that reclaims moral authority within communal responsibilities to the *umma* (Muslim community) (as cited in Asad, 2007, p. 43). Crucially, Asad also cautions against romanticizing resistance, noting that scholarly valourization of anti-colonial struggle can obscure the actual violence, coercion and authoritarian structures within resistance movements, a reflexivity particularly relevant for examining Hamas, where celebration of martyrdom coexists with patriarchal governance and suppression of dissent.

Political theorist Mbembe (2003) examines sovereignty's power to dictate who may live and who must die through the concept of necropolitics, within which death collapses futurity into the present. Postcolonial scholar Abraham (2013) applies this framework through Fanon's anti-colonial thought, arguing that Palestinian suicide bombers view their lives as weapons against colonizers. The colonized subject recognizes that living in shame and humiliation is to not live at all, making violent death preferable to the "slow and soul-destroying microphysics of oppression" (p. 110) structuring Israeli occupation.

Critical cultural studies scholar Lloyd (2017) examines whose deaths are recognized as losses worthy of mourning, analyzing 2014 campaigns to name Gaza's dead. Initiatives such as Humanize Palestine sought to "honour the deceased as martyrs by bringing them back to life through their

pictures, stories, art, and poetry" (p. 264), shifting from statistical casualties to persons-as-such. Lloyd traces how representation relates to whose lives matter and warrant protection, analyzing the politics of making Gaza's dead grievable.

Palestinian feminist scholar Ihmoud (2022) challenges the militarized masculine framing of sacrifice within resistance movements, arguing for recognition of diverse forms of sacrifice beyond armed struggle and centring everyday survival and care as resistance equal to spectacular sacrifice. This raises critical questions for examining Hamas: does the movement's discourse remain fixed on individual masculine sacrifice, or do shifting conditions, particularly mass civilian death under genocide, produce openings for alternative conceptualizations of resistance? Ihmoud's work suggests that martyrdom's meanings are contested terrain, making systematic analysis of Hamas's ideological production across historical periods essential

#### *4. Critical Gaps and Contributions*

This review of English-language scholarship reveals a fundamental disjuncture: while political science thoroughly examines Hamas's strategic evolution and anthropological studies richly document martyrdom practices during specific periods, systematic empirical analysis of martyrdom's ideological transformation across historical ruptures remains absent. Strategic studies treat martyrdom discourse as static rhetoric serving tactical objectives, while cultural analyses provide thick description of particular moments without tracing how conceptual frameworks evolve. The trajectory traced across this scholarship, from martyrdom as religious sacrifice (Asad, 2003; Mbembe, 2003) toward understanding deaths as losses in legitimate political struggle (Lloyd, 2017; Ihmoud, 2022), suggests profound ideological transformation that Hamas's own discourse remains unexamined for.

This empirical research addresses these gaps through systematic diachronic comparison of Hamas's martyrdom ideology across two distinct periods: the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the current genocide in Gaza (2023–present). By analyzing Hamas's own discursive production (communiqués, statements, martyrdom videos and symbolic practices), this research traces ideological evolution in the movement's own terms, examining how martyrdom's meaning, function and justification transform not merely tactically but conceptually when the nature of violence shifts from occupation to genocide.

### **Chapter 3 : Theoretical Framework**

This research is positioned at the intersection of three overlapping scholarly debates: studies of resistance movements' strategic adaptation, cultural analysis of martyrdom as social practice, and critical theoretical interventions on violence, agency and recognition under colonial conditions. Yet these debates rarely converge in sustained analysis of how organized resistance movements produce and transform martyrdom ideology across historical ruptures. This framework synthesizes concepts from these literatures to treat martyrdom neither as timeless religious doctrine nor as purely instrumental tactic, but as a historically produced ideological construct shaped by the interplay between movement agency, cultural resources and structural violence. Four key dimensions structure this approach: martyrdom as ideological construct; discourse, symbolism and ritual as productive sites of meaning-making; necropolitics and colonial violence as conditions structuring ideological possibilities; and grievability and recognition politics as frameworks illuminating whose deaths matter.

#### *1. Martyrdom as Ideological Construct*

Martyrdom in the Palestinian context operates through a specific Arabic vocabulary carrying distinct historical and ideological meanings. *Shahāda* refers to witnessing or testimony, one of Islam's foundational pillars, while *shahīd* (plural *shuhadā'*) designates the martyr who bears witness through sacrifice. *Istishhād* denotes the act of seeking martyrdom, and *istishhādī* specifically identifies one who intentionally pursues it through self-sacrifice operations. These terms coexist with *fidā'ī* (one who sacrifices himself), historically associated with secular nationalist guerrilla fighters of the PLO era. As Allen (2002) notes, the term "martyrdom operations" "connotes respect and honour for the bomber, distinguishing the act from suicide" (p. 36)—which Islam forbids. This linguistic distinction performs crucial ideological work, transforming what might be classified as suicide into religiously sanctioned sacrifice.

Yet martyrdom is not doctrinally fixed. Damir-Geilsdorf (2004) observes that "a modern theology of martyrdom is as yet under construction," while Pitcher (1998) notes the concept has undergone important extensions to accommodate contemporary political conditions. Abufarha's typology illustrates this evolution: the *fidāʾī* of the PLO era embodied heroic guerrilla sacrifice; the *shahīd* of the First Intifada represented the suffering victim of moral innocence; the *istishhādī* of the Second Intifada reclaimed active agency through intentional self-sacrifice (p. 360). Each figure reflects distinct historical conditions and ideological needs, revealing martyrdom as dynamic rather than static.

Martyrdom functions simultaneously across multiple registers: legitimation, mobilization and meaning-making. Sociologist and anthropologist Hage (2003) emphasizes that Palestinian suicide bombing must be understood as a "social fact in the Durkheimian sense" (p. 69), a social tendency requiring explanation through specific structural conditions rather than individual psychology. Anthropologist Mittermaier (2015) further notes that martyrdom is a "label assigned retroactively" (p. 588), produced through commemorative practices that transform individual death into collective resource for sustaining national identity and resistance. Treating martyrdom as ideological construct rather than fixed doctrine thus enables this research to trace how Hamas's conceptualization of sacrifice has evolved across different historical conditions.

## *2. Discourse, Symbolism, and Ritual*

Martyrdom is produced and sustained not through abstract doctrine alone but through concrete discursive, symbolic and ritual practices that constitute its meaning. Hamas's deployment of terms like *amaliyyāt istishhādiyya* (martyrdom operations), *muqawama* (resistance), *jihad* and *al-Qassam* creates a semantic field framing violence within religious and nationalist legitimacy. The movement's rhetorical evolution, from emphasizing martyrdom operations and *jihad* in the early

2000s to incorporating *hudna* (ceasefire), *tahdi'ah* (calm) and *dymuqratiyya* (democracy) by 2005, demonstrates how linguistic choices reflect and produce ideological transformations.

Visual representations constitute another crucial dimension. Allen (2006) demonstrates how martyr posters function as the predominant form of martyr memorialization, creating a public sphere where "participants and observers are hailed as national subjects" (p. 108) while generating forums for political debate. Visual anthropology scholars Abu Hatoum and Assali (2023) extend this analysis through examination of Qassam Brigade videos, tracing the evolution from rough real-time footage in early operations to highly polished productions with sophisticated graphics, signalling increasing professionalization of visual martyrdom production. Ritual practices function constitutively rather than merely reflectively: Pitcher (1998) analyzes how funerals, processions and commemorative displays create the martyr as social figure, while Hage (2003) notes that the "culture of glorification of self-sacrifice" became entrenched as repeated bombings reproduced it (p. 79). This focus directs analytical attention to concrete textual and visual materials, Hamas communiqués, statements, martyrdom videos, enabling identification of how performative practices have evolved between the Second Intifada and the present genocide.

### 3. *Necropolitics and Colonial Violence*

Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics provides a framework for understanding how sovereignty operates through the power to dictate who may live and who must die. Under necropolitical regimes, colonial violence structures the very conditions of existence, determining which lives warrant protection. Political theorist Ajl (2024) situates Palestinian resistance within broader anti-imperialist frameworks, critiquing how settler-colonial theory has been deployed to delegitimize Hamas by functioning as a "descriptive category rather than guide for liberation strategy" (p. 623). Postcolonial scholars Alqaisiya and Perugini (2024) extend this through the concept of "epistemicide", the systemic erasure of Palestinian knowledge from academic discourse,

documenting how Western institutions extend Israel's colonial project by silencing Palestinian voices (p. 308).

Hage (2003) introduces the concept of social death to explain how colonial violence forecloses meaningful futurity, shaping martyrdom's ideological possibilities by positioning sacrifice as the only available path to social meaningfulness. Political scientist Ayyash (2010) synthesizes these perspectives, arguing that for Hamas, violent struggle "has itself to be part of the regeneration" (p. 106) of the Islamic nation; martyrdom thus operates as a form of contentious politics, a communicative act of defiance enacted through admitted weakness. Political scientist Awad (2023) demonstrates how this dynamic operates institutionally, the "form and logic of Israeli rule" is determined by "dynamic interplay with Palestinian collective political agency" (p. 401), revealing that colonial violence dialectically produces the conditions within which new ideological formations become necessary. If genocide represents a qualitatively different necropolitical condition than occupation, then Hamas's martyrdom ideology must be examined for how it responds and potentially transforms under these unprecedented structural constraints.

#### *4. Grievability and Anti-Colonial Struggle*

Lloyd's (2017) analysis of campaigns to name Gaza's dead illuminates the distinction between conferral and performative recognition politics. Conferral politics seeks acknowledgment from dominant powers through humanitarian frameworks; performative politics enacts equality without external validation, asserting Palestinian personhood and grievability on its own terms. Lloyd demonstrates how initiatives like Humanize Palestine and Beyond Numbers shifted from humanitarian victimhood frames toward "resistant political subjects asserting own value and humanity," reframing martyrdom from sacrificial offerings appealing to international sympathy toward losses in legitimate political struggle. This analytical distinction enables systematic

examination of Hamas's own discourse: does the movement appeal for international sympathy or assert inherent legitimacy? Does it position martyrs as humanitarian victims or political subjects?

Ihmoud's (2022) Palestinian feminist critique further challenges how martyrdom discourse can reproduce hierarchies within resistance movements, arguing for recognition of diverse sacrifice forms beyond armed struggle and centring everyday survival and care as resistance equal to spectacular sacrifice. Examining whether Hamas's ideology grapples with whose deaths count as martyrdom, what forms of sacrifice are valorized, and how gender and civilian status figure in martyrdom discourse constitutes a central concern of this research.

### *5. Conclusion : Analytical Framework*

These conceptual tools function as an integrated analytical framework rather than discrete theoretical lenses. Martyrdom as ideological construct reveals sacrifice as historically produced, requiring examination across temporal ruptures. Discourse, symbolism and ritual illuminate the mechanisms through which this construct is materially produced through language, images and performative practices. Necropolitics and colonial violence establish the structural conditions that simultaneously constrain and necessitate ideological innovation. Grievability and anti-colonial struggle frameworks expose the political stakes of representation, demonstrating how martyrdom ideology negotiates between seeking recognition and performatively enacting sovereignty. Together, they enable this research to trace whether and how martyrdom's meanings shift when the nature of violence itself changes, from the asymmetric conflict of the Second Intifada to contemporary genocide.

## **Chapter 4 : Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed to trace the evolution of martyrdom ideology within Hamas across two historical periods. As a bibliographic research thesis, this study relies on critical analysis of textual, visual and symbolic materials published in English-language media rather than primary fieldwork or analysis of original Arabic texts. The methodology combines discourse analysis with interpretive examination of commemorative practices, enabling systematic comparison of how martyrdom is conceptualized, justified and represented during the Second Intifada versus the contemporary genocide in Gaza. This chapter proceeds in four sections: research design and questions, data selection and sources, analytical procedures, and methodological considerations. Together, these sections establish a rigorous yet feasible approach for examining ideological transformation within the scope and constraints of master's-level bibliographic research.

### *1. Research Design and Questions*

This research employs a comparative qualitative design to examine the ideological evolution of martyrdom within Hamas across two critical historical junctures: the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the contemporary genocide in Gaza (2023–present). These periods represent fundamentally distinct conditions of violence, asymmetric conflict under occupation versus systematic genocidal destruction, making them analytically productive sites for tracing ideological transformation. The Second Intifada marked Hamas's emergence as a major resistance force deploying martyrdom operations as a central tactic, while the current genocide represents an existential threat requiring ideological adaptation under conditions of mass annihilation.

The study is guided by one primary research question and two subsidiary questions:

Primary Research Question: How has Hamas reconceptualized martyrdom between the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the contemporary Gaza genocide (2023–present)?

Sub-questions: (1) What continuities and ruptures characterize the discursive framing of martyrdom across these two periods? (2) How do shifting conditions of violence explain ideological transformations?

All primary sources analyzed are in English, either originally published in English by Hamas or available through official translations and international media outlets. This linguistic scope centres globally circulating discourses through which Hamas communicates with international audiences and diaspora communities, while acknowledging that it limits access to Arabic-language nuance. The analysis is illustrative rather than exhaustive, focusing on representative materials from pivotal moments that crystallize Hamas's ideological positions during each period.

## *2. Data Selection and Sources*

This study employs purposive sampling to select representative materials capturing Hamas's authoritative articulation of martyrdom ideology at pivotal moments in each period. The sampling strategy prioritizes three criteria: official authorization (statements from recognized Hamas leadership or military organs), temporal significance (materials from critical junctures within each period) and representational value (texts and images that crystallize ideological positioning). The complete data collection worksheets, including source classification, key themes, discursive strategy notes and quoted passages, are provided in Appendix A (Second Intifada corpus) and Appendix B (post-October 7 corpus). In Chapters 5 and 6, individual source citations such as (T1-007) or (T2-003) correspond directly to appendix entries, enabling systematic cross-referencing.

### *Period 1: Second Intifada (2000–2005)*

The corpus comprises 17 sources in total, 7 primary and 10 secondary or contextual, organized across three source types (see Appendix A). Textual primary sources (T1) consist of 8 items: 7 Al Jazeera Arabic news articles published between 2003 and 2005, covering pivotal leadership

moments including the assassinations of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (March 2004), Ismail Abu Shanab (August 2003) and Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi (April 2004), as well as Hamas's transition toward political engagement; and one PhD thesis (Murgia, 2018) providing discourse analysis of Hamas's official Arabic-language statements from the movement's website. Supporting contextual sources (C1) include a Palestinian Centre for Human Rights weekly report (December 2001) and a United Nations Secretary-General report on Jenin (July 2002), used to corroborate material conditions rather than as sources of Hamas ideology. Visual sources (V1) comprise 5 martyr posters (2001–2003) from the Palestine Poster Project: three produced by Hamas, one by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and one by Islamic Jihad.

#### Period 2: Gaza Genocide (2023–present)

The corpus comprises 12 sources in total, 7 primary and 5 secondary or contextual, organized across two source types (see Appendix B). Textual primary sources (T2) consist of 7 items: 5 official Hamas communiqués and statements (2024–2025) published via Al Jazeera, the Palestinian Information Center and Hamas-affiliated channels, covering the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh (July 2024), Yahya Sinwar (October 2024), Abu Obeida/Hudhayfah al-Kahlout (December 2024) and a Hamas statement on the funeral of Hezbollah leaders Nasrallah and Safieddine (February 2025); one Hamas first-anniversary commemoration of Haniyeh's death (July 2025); and one Al Jazeera obituary of Sinwar (October 2024), classified as secondary-supportive for its reproduction of Hamas martyrological framing. Visual sources (V2) comprise 5 items: one Middle East Eye video (December 2024) documenting the Qassam Brigades' announcement of Abu Obeida's death and introduction of his successor; and 4 martyr posters (2024) from the Palestine Poster Project depicting Sinwar, Abu Obeida and resistance iconography circulated across Lebanon and diaspora contexts.

This selective corpus acknowledges that it cannot capture the full complexity of Hamas's ideological production, but focuses analytical attention on materials where the movement's official positions are most clearly articulated, enabling rigorous comparison across periods despite resource constraints.

### *3. Analytical Approach*

This study employs a two-level analytical framework adapted from linguist and discourse analyst van Dijk's (2015) sociocognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis, integrating textual examination with attention to symbolic and performative dimensions.

#### Level 1: Discursive Analysis

The first analytical level focuses on linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in Hamas's textual materials. Coding was conducted using six discursive strategy categories drawn from van Dijk's framework: nomination (how actors, places and events are named); predication (what qualities are assigned to those actors); argumentation (the justificatory logic structuring claims about resistance and sacrifice); intensification (rhetorical amplification through scale, urgency or emotional register); religious framing (invocation of Quranic verses, Islamic concepts and divine authority); and historical references (mobilization of past events to anchor present claims). Each source was also coded for key themes using frequency markers to indicate dominant and secondary thematic patterns.

These categories were deliberately kept general, applicable to Hamas political discourse broadly rather than pre-configured around martyrdom specifically, to preserve space for emergent themes and reduce interpretive bias. Martyrdom's centrality to the corpus emerged from the coding itself rather than being presupposed by the analytical framework.

## Level 2: Symbolic-Performative Analysis

The second level integrates visual sources as complementary evidence, supporting and corroborating patterns identified through textual analysis. Martyr posters from both corpora were analyzed for iconographic content: recurring symbolic elements including weapons, religious texts and figures, Palestinian flags and representations of the body. The video source (V2-001) received fuller treatment, as its documentation of the Qassam Brigades' formal announcement of Abu Obeida's death and the introduction of his successor allowed analysis of how martyrdom is institutionally staged and visually communicated in the current period. Together, visual sources allow the analysis to track whether shifts identified in Hamas's textual discourse are mirrored, reinforced or complicated by changes in its iconographic repertoire.

## Comparative Method

The analytical framework employs systematic comparison across the two temporal periods using identical discursive coding categories applied to all textual sources, enabling the identification of continuities, persistent themes and recurring rhetorical structures, and ruptures—emergent framings, abandoned justifications and transformed ideological emphasis. The comparison is sensitive to contextual asymmetry: the Second Intifada represents asymmetric conflict organized around offensive operations, while the current genocide involves existential threat requiring ideological adaptation toward defensive endurance. These divergent conditions shape the discursive possibilities within which martyrdom ideology evolves, and the comparative framework treats that contextual difference as analytically productive.

## **Chapter 5 : Martyrdom in the Second Intifada (2000-2005)**

### *1. Historical Context : From Oslo Accords to Al-Aqsa Intifada*

The outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000 emerged from the accumulated failures of the Oslo peace process and the deepening material conditions of occupation. Signed in 1993, the Oslo Accords had promised a framework for Palestinian self-determination, yet delivered neither a halt to Israeli settlement expansion nor a meaningful end to military control over Palestinian civilian life. The resulting disillusionment was structural. As Hamas co-founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin articulated in an interview with Al Jazeera: "The peace that reinforces occupation and settlement and the exiling of the Palestinian people, that is not really peace" (T1-007). The immediate trigger was then-Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000, which Yassin's own account identified as the flashpoint igniting the uprising (T1-007).

What followed was a sustained cycle of Israeli military operations and Palestinian armed responses. A single week in December 2001 saw twenty Palestinians killed through incursions, airstrikes and house demolitions across the West Bank and Gaza Strip (C1-001). Operation Defensive Shield in spring 2002 extended this to a near-total reoccupation of West Bank Area A, resulting in hundreds of deaths, thousands of demolished homes and mass displacement (C1-002).

Hamas had opposed Oslo from the outset, and these conditions reinforced its position. As one anonymous member of the Hamas Shura council explained: "People don't follow us necessarily because they are particularly infatuated with our political stances. They follow us because we represent Islam" (T1-003). Competition with other armed factions, notably Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, intensified this dynamic, as each group sought to claim the mantle of resistance through martyrdom operations, at times issuing joint declarations of retaliation (T1-005).

## 2. Discourse Analysis : *Istishhādiyyīn* as Active Agents

The discursive construction of martyrdom in Hamas's Second Intifada communications operated across three interlocking registers: theological, nationalist and strategic. What distinguishes this period is the way these three legitimization logics reinforced each other to construct the *istishhādī* as an agent of moral action rather than a passive victim.

### Theological Legitimation

At the theological level, Hamas drew a consistent distinction between *intiḥār* (suicide), prohibited in Islam, and *istishhād* (martyrdom-seeking), presented as a religious duty. Official Hamas communiqués retrieved from the movement's Arabic website establish this framing: "[Hamas] states clearly that geography will not pose a limit to its acts of *jihad* and resistance, and that its resistance [is made] with all the instruments of *jihad*, especially the martyrdom operations which will continue if God allows it." (T1-010, n.535, 08/03/2003)

This framing was reinforced in Al Jazeera coverage, where Egyptian Islamic scholar Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi declared that "there is no option except *jihad*" following the assassination of Yassin (T1-009), and where Hamas was described as representing "the purity of Islam" and "Islamic dignity and honour" (T1-003). The language of *shahāda* permeated Hamas's self-presentation: leaders killed in Israeli assassinations were systematically commemorated as *shuhadā'*: "May God's mercy be upon the martyr chief Ahmad Yassin and his brothers" (T1-010, n.684, 22/03/2004). Hamas politician Mariam Farhat, who ran for the movement in the 2005 legislative elections after losing three sons to martyrdom operations, articulated the fusion of religious and political logics directly: "The jihadist project completes the political one" (T1-002).

## Nationalist Legitimation

Alongside the religious register ran a nationalist one, grounded in the language of rights, land and return. Yassin's statements drew directly on this framework: "Instead of asking the occupiers to leave our land, they ask us to surrender to the occupier" (T1-007). The right of return, defence of sacred sites and liberation of Jerusalem featured prominently across primary sources (T1-007; T1-009; T1-010). Hamas communiqués explicitly named "national unity," the "right of return," and protection of "sacred sites" as the *tawābit* (national constants) for which leaders including Arafat and Yassin were killed, framing their assassinations as Israel's attempt to eliminate those who refused to compromise on these principles (T1-010, n.962, 11/11/2005).

## Strategic Legitimation

The strategic register was perhaps the most explicitly articulated. Yassin's formulation positioned all Israeli civilians as legitimate targets through a conscription argument: "All the Israeli people are combatants in the field of battle. Those who do not wear a military uniform, male or female, have all been trained for battle" (T1-007). This reframing dissolved the civilian/combatant distinction that would otherwise render martyrdom operations morally indefensible. Hamas co-founder and leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi operationalized this logic at moments of peak violence (T1-005), while Hamas communiqués declared the geographic boundlessness of resistance.

## Key Terminology and Target Audiences

The terminological choice of *'amaliyyāt istishhādiyya* ("martyrdom operations") rather than "suicide bombings" was itself a discursive act, constructing agency and honour where the alternative formulation constructs pathology. For internal Palestinian audiences, this language framed resistance as duty. For the broader Muslim world, Hamas presented itself as the vanguard of Islam. As an anonymous University professor said: "It is difficult to be a truly religious Muslim and

refrain from supporting Islam which Hamas represents" (T1-003). For international audiences, Hamas deployed accusation reversal: "They say Hamas is a terrorist organization, but the truth is that Israel is a terrorist state" (T1-009), pre-empting the terrorism label by redirecting it onto the opposing party.

### 3. *Visual-Symbolic Analysis : Heroic Martyrs*

The five martyr posters collected for this period (V1-001 to V1-005, 2001–2003) materialize the discursive construction of the *istishhādī* in visual form, revealing both a shared iconographic logic and cross-factional variation.

#### Iconographic Elements and Their Distribution

Two dominant visual registers emerge across the corpus. The first is militarized heroism: V1-001 (Hamas, 2002) depicts Qais Idwan Abu Jabal, commander of the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades, surrounded by weapons, bombs and ammunition. The Arabic text announces: "With complete pride and appreciation, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas celebrates [his martyrdom]." V1-002, produced by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in 2001, similarly foregrounds weapons iconography. In both cases, the fighter's body is constituted as a military subject inseparable from the instruments of resistance.

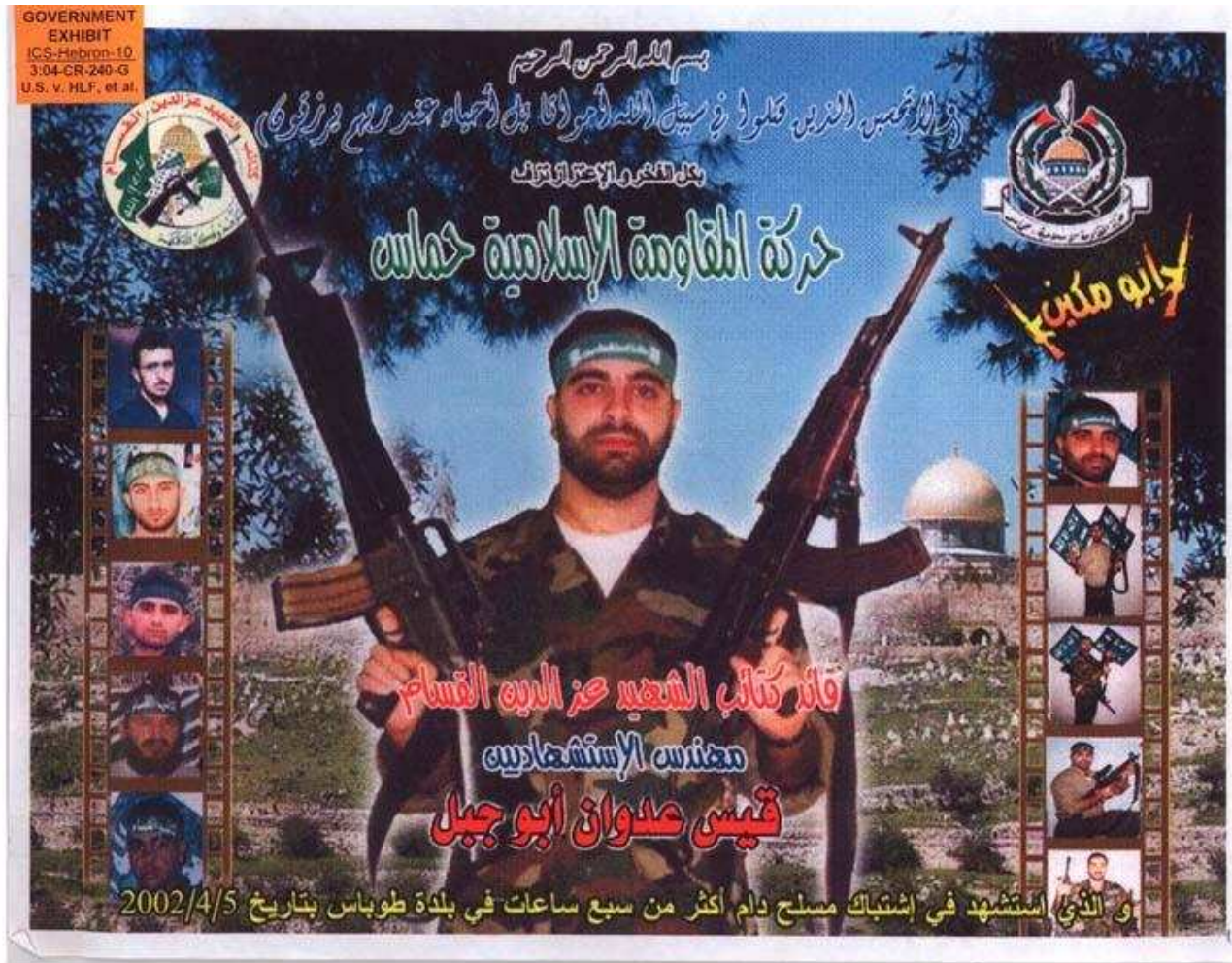


FIGURE 1. MARTYR POSTER FOR QAIS ADWAN ABU JABAL, COMMANDER OF THE IZZ AL-DIN AL-QASSAM BRIGADES. HAMAS, TUBAS, 5 APRIL 2002. SOURCE: V1-001 (SEE APPENDIX C).

The second register emphasizes religious and national symbolism. V1-004 ( Hamas, 2001) places the martyr within an Islamic-national frame—Quranic verses, Palestinian flag colours—and announces his death "with mounting pride and dignity." This formula recurs verbatim across V1-001, V1-004 and V1-005, functioning as a ritualized announcement that transforms death into celebration and defeat into honour. V1-003, produced by Islamic Jihad in 2003, departs from the weapons-heavy aesthetic: its central declaration—"It is *jihad*... either victory or martyrdom"—is accompanied by a tree with deep roots, evoking the land-body fusion identified in the martyrdom iconography literature, positioning sacrifice as organic continuity rather than destruction.

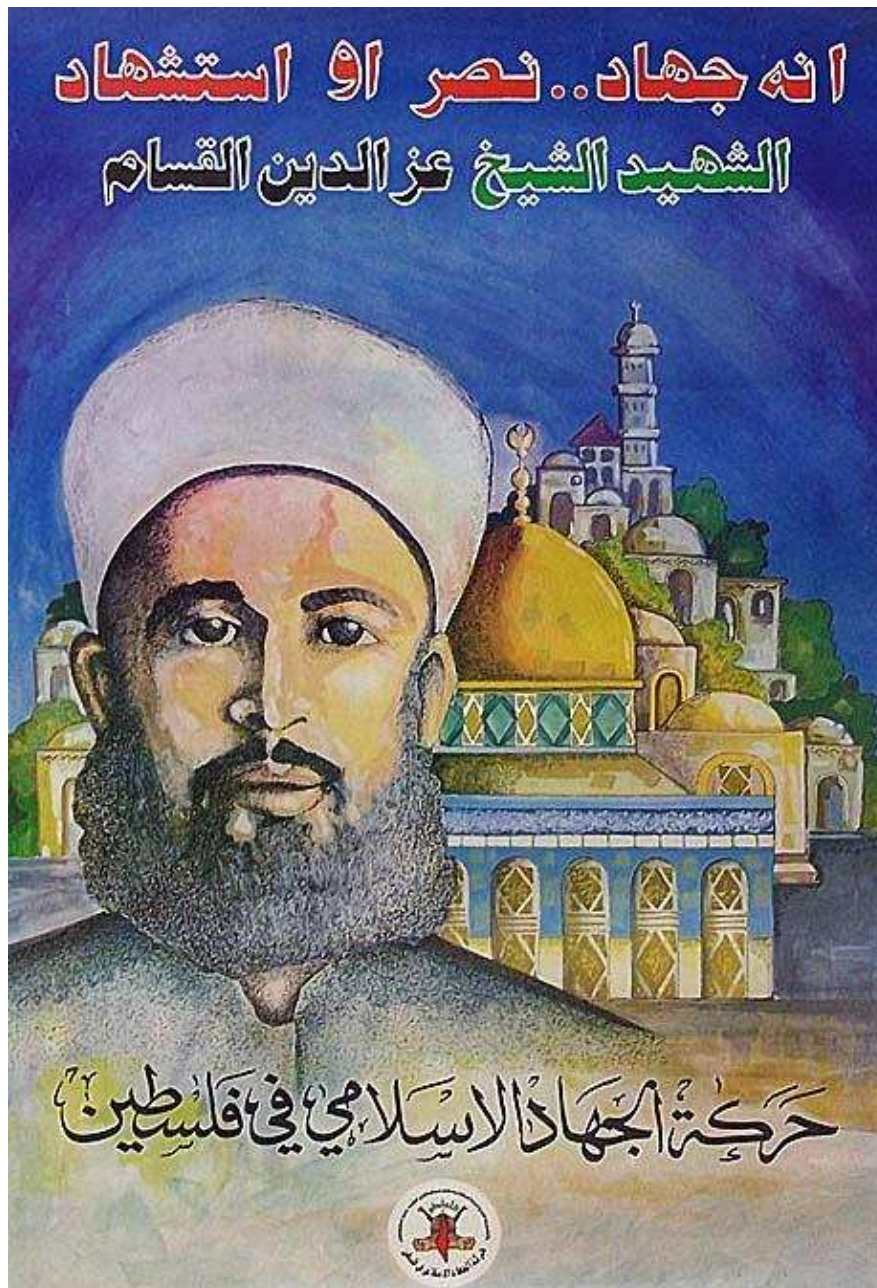


FIGURE 2. POSTER COMMEMORATING SHEIKH IZZ AL-DIN AL-QASSAM. ISLAMIC JIHAD IN PALESTINE, C. 2001–2003. SOURCE: V1-003 (SEE APPENDIX C).

### Masculine Heroism and Agency

All five posters depict male martyrs and emphasize agency and honour over victimhood. V1-005 (Hamas, 2001) describes its subject as "a man of Quran and belief" and a "self-sacrificing son"—language of voluntary offering rather than involuntary death. The clenched fist in V1-005's iconography reinforces the active, resistant subject. Across the corpus, the martyr's body is presented as intact and dignified, consistent with the discursive construction analyzed in Section 2.

## Cross-Factional Comparison

A notable feature of the visual corpus is its cross-factional character: Hamas (V1-001, V1-004, V1-005), Islamic Jihad (V1-003) and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (V1-002) all produce structurally similar posters. The announcement formula, the integration of religious and nationalist symbols and the heroic masculine subject appear across organizational boundaries, suggesting a shared visual grammar of martyrdom within this period. The primary variation—weapons-heavy versus religiously coded aesthetics—represents differentiation within a common symbolic framework.

### *4. Ritual Practice : Funeral as Political Theatre*

The textual sources document martyr funerals as sites of mass political mobilization in which grief was consistently channeled into declarations of continued resistance. Two funerals are documented in sufficient detail to support analysis: that of Hamas political leader Ismail Abu Shanab (August 2003) and that of Yassin (March 2004).

## Mass Mobilization and Symbolic Display

Abu Shanab's funeral drew an estimated 100,000 mourners to the streets of Gaza (T1-005). His body was carried wrapped in the green Hamas flag, and loudspeakers broadcast chants: "Abu Shanab rest in peace. Our armies will go forward. We are the men of the dark night" (T1-005). The ritual space combined grief, military display and political declaration into a single public event. Yassin's assassination produced a similar response: "tens of thousands of Palestinians poured on to the streets in Gaza City" (T1-009). Al Jazeera's coverage of both events frames the funeral procession as simultaneously mourning and renewed commitment—the dead body becoming the occasion for articulating the living's continued resistance.

The funeral as occasion for political speech is documented across multiple sources. At Abu Shanab's funeral, an unnamed Hamas fighter declared: "The road map is being buried, only martyrdom operations will remain" (T1-005). Al-Rantisi announced "open war" following Yassin's killing (T1-009). The joint statement issued by Hamas and Islamic Jihad at Abu Shanab's funeral—"We announce together today that Sharon assassinated the truce" (T1-005)—demonstrates how funerals served as occasions for cross-factional alliance, the martyr's death becoming a collective political resource that transcended organizational boundaries.

#### 5. *Synthesis : Individual Sacrifice for Collective Liberation*

The Second Intifada corpus suggests that martyrdom in Hamas's discourse functioned as an offensive framework grounded in active moral agency. Across textual, visual and ritual dimensions, the *istishhādī* is consistently framed as an agent who chooses sacrifice rather than a victim who suffers it: in Hamas communiqués where the *mujahid* acts "with all the instruments of *jihad*" (T1-010), in martyr posters where fighters are depicted with weapons and clenched fists (V1-001, V1-005) and in funeral speeches where the dead mandate the living's continued struggle (T1-005; T1-009). The three legitimation registers—theological, nationalist and strategic—appear to have operated in concert, with the fusion expressed perhaps most economically by Farhat: "The jihadist project completes the political one" (T1-002). That said, this analysis draws on a limited English-language corpus and cannot claim to represent the full range of Hamas's ideological production during the period.

The corpus also captures what may be early signs of a tension that would accelerate after 2005. Abu Shanab's 2002 statement—"That would be satisfactory for all Palestinian military groups to stop and build our state, to be busy in our own affairs, and have good neighbour relations with Israelis"

(T1-008)—represents a strand of Hamas thinking oriented toward political settlement. By December 2005, Farhat simultaneously invoked her sons' martyrdoms and ran for legislative office (T1-002), embodying the movement's capacity to hold resistance and political participation in tension. These traces suggest that martyrdom ideology was not monolithic even within this period—a point that informs the comparative analysis that follows.

## **Chapter 6 : Martyrdom Under Gaza Genocide (2023-Present)**

### *1. Historical Context : From Al-Aqsa Flood to Genocide*

On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched what it termed *Tūfān al-Aqṣā* (the Al-Aqsa Flood), a large-scale cross-border operation into southern Israel, framed from the outset as an act of defence of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Palestinian holy sites. In subsequent communiqués, Yahya Sinwar was designated Commander of the Al-Aqsa Flood Battle (T2-003), a title fusing political leadership with sacred military command. Israel's military response involved sustained aerial bombardment, a comprehensive ground siege and the systematic destruction of Gaza's civil infrastructure. International bodies and numerous states characterized the scale of destruction, civilian casualties and obstruction of humanitarian aid as constituting genocide under international law. Hamas communiqués adopted this framing: statements described Israeli operations as a "brutal Zionist<sup>1</sup> aggression and genocide war"

(T2-007)<sup>1</sup> and characterized Israeli objectives as "plans seeking to liquidate our national cause and exterminate and displace our people" (T2-004).

At the regional level, the conflict reshaped the axis of resistance. Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah's sustained engagement and subsequent killing in September 2024 drew Hamas into an explicitly transnational mourning and solidarity discourse. The assassination of Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July 2024, followed by Sinwar's death in combat in October 2024 and the killing of *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida in December 2024, meant that Hamas lost its three most prominent public figures within eighteen months. The movement's martyrdom discourse was consequently produced not as a theoretical framework but as an operational response to sustained leadership attrition under genocidal conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> "Zionist" is not capitalized here as it follows Hamas's own orthographic practice of refusing to capitalize the word: a deliberate ideological choice reproduced in this analysis.

## 2. Discourse Analysis : *Sumūd* and the Martyrdom of Endurance

The corpus of Hamas communiqués produced in the post-October 7 period reveals a martyrdom discourse organized around a distinctive triad: *sumūd* (steadfastness), *sabr* (patience) and *ribāt* (guardianship of sacred territory). These terms structure the semantic field within which death is interpreted across all primary sources in this period. Whereas the Second Intifada corpus foregrounded the *istishhādī* as active agent, the post-October 7 discourse consistently frames martyrdom as the condition of a people who endure, remain and refuse displacement — collective endurance rather than chosen individual act. Individual operative sacrifice does not disappear, but it is no longer the dominant register.

### Theological Legitimation

At the theological level, the post-October 7 corpus employs a standardized apparatus of Quranic framing that operates as the discursive premise for all subsequent political claims. The Hamas statement on Haniyeh's killing (T2-002) opens with Surah Al-Imran 3:169 — the canonical Quranic martyrdom verse establishing that those killed in God's path are not dead but alive — before introducing any political content. The Abu Obeida mourning statement (T2-005) opens with Quran 33:23, the covenant verse, foregrounding fidelity to divine promise.

The concept of *ribāt* recurs throughout the Abu Obeida statement, where Gaza is described as the "land of patience, *ribat*, and *jihad*" (T2-005), framing continued presence under bombardment as ongoing religious worship rather than merely political steadfastness. The Sinwar statement reinforces this through the language of divine election: "He was true to Allah, and Allah was true to him, choosing him as a martyr alongside his fellow martyrs" (T2-003) — death framed as conferred rather than suffered.

## Nationalist Legitimation

Alongside the religious register runs a nationalist one grounded in the constants of land, return and Jerusalem. The Sinwar statement names the "complete liberation and return, and the establishment of the Palestinian state on the entire national soil with Al-Quds as its capital" as the goals to which the movement's martyrs committed their lives (T2-003), mirroring the *tawābit* formula of the Second Intifada communiqués. The Haniyeh anniversary statement (T2-006) extends this continuity across time, embedding his martyrdom within a nearly four-decade resistance narrative: "Time has proven that the assassination policy...has only strengthened its adherence to its people's rights, aspirations, constants and national principles" (T2-006).

A further nationalist move without a direct parallel in the Second Intifada corpus is the fusion of leadership martyrdom with civilian suffering. The *Izz al-Din al-Qassam* Brigades' statement on Haniyeh frames his blood as "mingling today with the blood of Gaza's children, women, youth, and elders" (T2-002), constituting *al-sha'b* (the people as a whole) as the collective bearer of the martyr's burden and extending the figure of the *shahīd* beyond the militant.

## Strategic Legitimation

The most distinctive strategic argument of this period is the systematic inversion of assassination as a tactic. Where Second Intifada statements framed martyrdom operations as strategic weapons, the post-October 7 corpus frames the killing of leaders as a strategic miscalculation by the enemy. This argument recurs in near-identical formulation across multiple sources: "the history of the Movement has proven that after the assassination of its leaders, it becomes stronger, more cohesive, more determined" (T2-005); "the zionist occupation's crimes...will never stop our struggle" (T2-007). The consistency of this formulation across commemorations for different leaders suggests a standardized counter-narrative converting each loss into evidence of organizational resilience. The

Hamas statement on rank-and-file fighter Sa'eid al-Jaber, killed in a drone strike on Nur Shams refugee camp (T2-004), extends this logic downward: "The blood of our martyrs will not go in vain, but rather constitutes fuel for the flame of the ongoing and escalated resistance" (T2-004), applying the same discursive apparatus to an individual fighter as to senior leadership.

### 3. *Visual-Symbolic Analysis : The Martyred Leader as icon*

The visual corpus from this period (V2-001 to V2-005, 2024) demonstrates the consolidation of the armed leader-martyr as the dominant iconographic figure, with Abu Obeida and Sinwar as the two central subjects.

#### Iconographic Elements and Their Distribution

Abu Obeida's visual iconography centres on the red *keffiyeh* that covered his face in all public appearances during his lifetime. The poster *God Forbid!* (V2-002), sighted at Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon, deploys Palestinian flag colours alongside the *keffiyeh*. The poster *Adhere to the Truth* (V2-004) reproduces a direct quotation attributed to Abu Obeida, framing him as continuing to speak through the visual medium after death — consistent with the mourning statement's description of his "radiant image" as "firmly rooted in the hearts of our people" (T2-005).

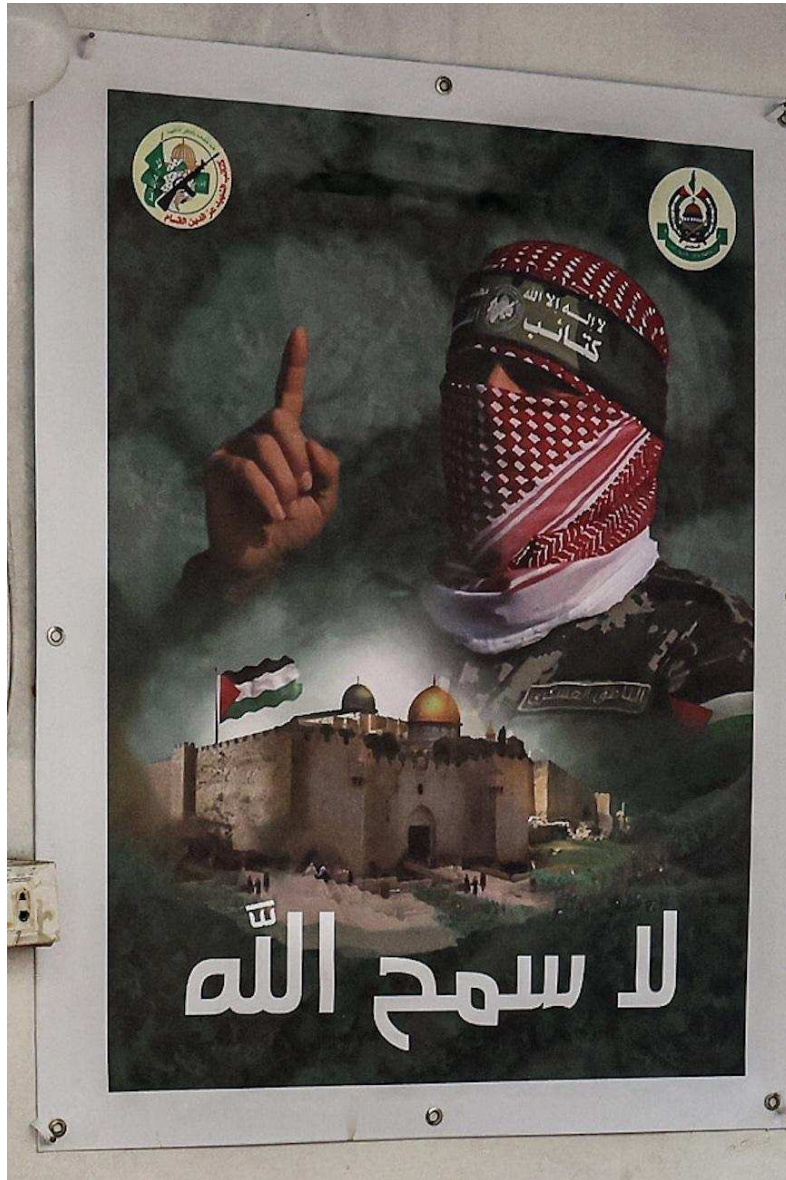


FIGURE 3. "GOD FORBID!" (لا سمح الله), ABU OBEIDA COMMEMORATION POSTER. HAMAS — IZZ AL-DIN AL-QASSAM BRIGADES, 2024. SIGHTED AT BURJ AL-BARAJNEH REFUGEE CAMP, LEBANON. SOURCE: V2-002 (SEE APPENDIX C).

### Militant Iconography and Historical Genealogy

The Sinwar visual material operates in a more explicitly martial and historically referential register. The poster *A Powerful Flood* (V2-003) positions him as the embodiment of the Al-Aqsa Flood operation under the caption "We are bringing a powerful flood." More analytically notable is *If Your Massacres Continue* (V2-005), which deploys imagery of explosive belts alongside a direct

invocation of Yahya Ayyash — known as "the Engineer," Hamas's chief bomb-maker killed by Israel in 1996 — with the caption "Who will bring back the glory of Ayyash?" This draws a visual line between the suicide bombing campaign of the mid-1990s and the present, though whether this signals genuine strategic continuity or a commemorative gesture cannot be determined from the poster alone.

Notably, all visual sources in this corpus were sighted outside Gaza — at Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp or circulated on social media — reflecting a spatial displacement of the visual commemoration tradition toward diaspora and digital space as conditions within Gaza restrict local production and display.

#### *4. Ritual Practice: Institutionalized Mourning and the Liturgy of Martyrdom*

The ritual dimensions of Hamas martyrdom practice in this period are shaped by the near-total disruption of traditional funerary space. With mass casualties occurring under sustained bombardment — including the killing of Abu Obeida alongside his wife and children (T2-005) — the collective funeral procession is largely displaced by the formal communiqué and the video statement as institutional substitutes.

##### *The Standardized Mourning Formula*

The most consistent ritual marker across the primary corpus is a standardized closing prayer appearing in near-identical form across multiple statements — invoking paradise for the martyr "with the prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous" — in the Sinwar (T2-003), Abu Obeida (T2-005) and Nasrallah (T2-007) statements. Its repetition across commemorations for leaders in different organizational contexts, including Hezbollah, suggests the emergence of a

mourning liturgy, though the small corpus size limits how far this inference can be taken. Death is processed through repeatable discursive ritual rather than physical gathering.

### Unmasking as Ritual

The unveiling of Abu Obeida's identity at death constitutes a distinct martyrological ritual specific to this period. His masked appearance — the red *keffiyeh* covering his face in every public broadcast — functioned as both a security measure and an icon in life. His death prompted the formal revelation of his full name: Hudhayfah Samir Abdallah al-Kahlout (V2-001; T2-005). This act of naming honours the *shahīd* by restoring individual identity, creates a permanent historical record and inscribes him into the *silsilat al-shuhadā'* (the chain of martyrs). The mask in life; the name in death.

### Martyrdom as Calendar

The anniversary commemoration of Haniyeh's killing (T2-006), published one year after his death, documents a further development: the institutionalization of martyrdom into a recurring commemorative calendar. Adopting a retrospective register, it traces Haniyeh's trajectory across nearly four decades of struggle, converting a discrete assassination into a recurring collective reference point and an institutionalized occasion for the reaffirmation of *tawābit*.

## 5. *Synthesis : Collective Survival as Sacred Resistance*

The post-October 7 corpus presents a martyrdom discourse that is structurally continuous with, but discursively distinct from, the Second Intifada material. Where Chapter 5 documented the *istishhādī* as the dominant figure, the post-2023 corpus places greater emphasis on *sumūd*: the community's collective bearing of unchosen death as the primary register of resistance. The core inversion

persists across both periods — death does not end resistance but perpetuates it — yet the material conditions and dominant figures through which this logic is expressed differ substantially.

Three shifts are suggested by the corpus, though these should be understood as tendencies within a limited dataset rather than definitive transformations. First, the subject of martyrdom appears to have been democratized: the post-2023 corpus consistently frames *al-sha'b* as the collective bearer of the martyr's burden, fusing leadership martyrdom with civilian suffering in ways largely absent from the Second Intifada material. Second, the basis of organizational legitimacy appears to have shifted from offensive to defensive: where the Second Intifada movement claimed legitimacy through willingness to strike, the post-2023 movement claims it through willingness to absorb losses — "A movement that offers its leaders and members as martyrs in defence of the rights of its people is a noble, genuine movement deeply rooted in its people" (T2-003). Third, the scope of martyrdom discourse has become more explicitly transnational, with the mourning of Nasrallah as a *shahīd* on the path to *Al-Quds* (T2-007) extending the martyrological framework beyond Hamas to a regional resistance axis.

What appears to persist across this transformation is a core theological structure: martyrdom as divine selection, death as elevation rather than termination, blood as the guarantee of liberation — "This precious blood will not be shed in vain but will illuminate the path to liberation" (T2-002). Whether the shifts identified here represent a durable ideological transformation or a conjunctural response to extreme conditions remains an open question the scope of this research cannot resolve, and one taken up in the comparative analysis that follows.

## **Chapter 7 : Comparative Analysis**

The preceding chapters traced Hamas's martyrdom discourse across two historically distinct conjunctures: the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the post-October 7 genocide (2023–present). Chapter 5 documented a discourse organized around the figure of the *istishhādī* — the individual fighter who chooses death as weapon — structured through the simultaneous operation of theological, nationalist and strategic legitimization registers. Chapter 6 identified a shift toward a collective martyrdom of endurance, governed by the triad of *sumūd* (steadfastness), *sabr* (patience) and *ribāʿ* (guardianship of sacred territory). This chapter synthesizes those findings, considers the conditions that may account for the evolution and draws out implications for the theoretical frameworks advanced in Chapter 3.

### *1. Key Transformations*

Five interrelated shifts appear to characterize the evolution of Hamas's martyrdom ideology between the two periods. Bearing in mind the limited scope and English-language constraints of this corpus, they are offered as observed tendencies rather than definitive conclusions.

#### From individual to collective

The most consistent shift concerns the subject of martyrdom. The Second Intifada corpus centred the *istishhādī*: the individual whose sacrifice is singular, volitional and exceptional. The post-October 7 corpus displaces this figure with *al-sha'b* — the people as collective. The Qassam Brigades' framing of Haniyeh's blood "mingling today with the blood of Gaza's children, women, youth and elders" (T2-002) exemplifies this democratization: martyrdom becomes distributed across the entire population rather than concentrated in the exceptional fighter.

#### From offensive to defensive

In the Second Intifada, martyrdom was constructed as an offensive weapon — strikes against the enemy, the conscription argument dissolving the civilian/combatant distinction (T1-007) and Mariam Farhat's formulation that "the jihadist project completes the political one" (T1-002). The post-October 7 corpus inverts this logic: each leadership assassination is converted into evidence of organizational resilience rather than a mandate for retaliation (T2-005). Resistance appears to be enacted through absorption of violence rather than its delivery.

#### From religious reward to social memory

The Second Intifada corpus emphasized theological legitimation of individual acts — divine sanction, the distinction between *intihār* and *istishhād*, martyrdom as proximity to God. The post-October 7 corpus retains this register while adding institutionalized commemoration: the unmasking ritual of Abu Obeida, the anniversary statement for Haniyeh (T2-006) and the standardized mourning liturgy signal a shift toward social memory as a primary site of martyrdom's reproduction.

#### From masculine heroism to inclusive suffering

All five Second Intifada martyr posters depicted male fighters — weapons-bearing, active and intact (V1-001 to V1-005). The post-October 7 discourse consistently frames women, children and civilians as co-bearers of the martyr's burden, naming them explicitly alongside fighters (T2-002; T2-005). The visual corpus migrates to diaspora spaces and digital circulation, reflecting conditions within Gaza that restrict local production.

#### From spectacular violence to everyday endurance

The Second Intifada's martyrdom was spectacular: mass operations, funeral processions of an estimated 100,000 mourners for Abu Shanab (T1-005), public pledges of "open war" (T1-009). The post-October 7 discourse elevates *sumūd* — steady endurance and refusal of displacement — as the

primary form of resistance. Survival itself appears to be sanctified; the spectacular displaced by the durational.

TABLE 1 : KEY TRANSFORMATIONS IN HAMAS'S MARTYRDOM DISCOURSE

| Dimension                    | Second Intifada (2000-2005)                                                                                      | Post October 7 Genocide (2023-Present)                                                                            | Key Sources                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Subject of martyrdom</b>  | Individual istishhādī : the fighter who actively chooses death-as-weapon                                         | Collective al-sha'b : the people as a whole, democratized across fighters and civilians alike                     | T1-007; T2-002; T2-003           |
| <b>Strategic Orientation</b> | Offensive : operations carried out to strike the enemy; martyrdom as an act of aggression                        | Defensive : enduring bombardment without capitulation; survival as the primary form of resistance                 | T1-010; T2-005; T2-003           |
| <b>Primary Function</b>      | Religious reward and tactical weapon: divine sanction for individual sacrifice                                   | Social memory and collective testimony: institutionalized commemoration as martyrdom's principal site             | T1-009; T2-003; T2-005; T2-006   |
| <b>Gender and who counts</b> | Male fighters exclusively: all five martyr posters depict armed men; the istishhādī is masculine and militarized | Women, children, elders and civilians foregrounded; leadership blood 'mingles' with that of the entire population | V1-001 to V1-005; T2-002; T2-005 |
| <b>Form of Sacrifice</b>     | Spectacular violence: large-scale operations, mass funeral processions, public pledges of retaliation            | Everyday endurance: sumūd, sabr, ribāt; presence on the land itself sanctified as ongoing worship                 | T1-005; T1-009; T2-005; T2-007   |

## 2. Explaining the Evolution

These shifts are not easily reducible to a single cause. Four intersecting factors may account for the evolution, though the interaction between them is difficult to disentangle from a bibliographic corpus alone.

### Material factors

The most direct explanation lies in the material impossibility of replicating the Second Intifada's primary martyrdom form. Suicide operations presuppose territorial access that Gaza's besiegement

forecloses. When death is produced en masse by aerial bombardment rather than individual operation, the ideological apparatus must accommodate unchosen death as readily as chosen sacrifice. The treatment of Sa'eid al-Jaber — a rank-and-file fighter killed in a drone strike — with the same discursive apparatus reserved for senior leaders (T2-004) suggests the framework has been adapted to encompass death-as-consequence as a form of martyrdom equivalent to death-as-weapon.

### Strategic and ideological factors

Hamas's 2006 electoral participation and subsequent governance of Gaza may have created organizational incentives to broaden martyrdom's constituency beyond the military operative, as political legitimacy increasingly required popular identification (Bhasin & Hallward, 2013; Baconi, 2017). The explicit mourning of Hezbollah's Nasrallah as *shahīd* (T2-007) signals how regional alliance maintenance shapes discursive production. More fundamentally, the movement must derive legitimacy under conditions of catastrophic loss through willingness to absorb rather than strike. The formulation that "a movement that offers its leaders and members as martyrs in defence of the rights of its people is a noble, genuine movement deeply rooted in its people" (T2-003) captures this discursive pivot: sacrifice legitimates through demonstrated rootedness in the community rather than damage inflicted on the enemy.

### Structural pressures

Awad's (2023) argument that Israeli rule is shaped by Palestinian resistance capacity operates bidirectionally: genocidal violence has equally shaped Hamas's discursive possibilities. The systematic destruction of civil infrastructure and the killing of three senior leaders within eighteen months produced an ideological conjuncture in which *sumūd* may be not merely the most available frame but the most organizationally coherent. Whether the post-October 7 discourse's greater

resonance with feminist and decolonial critiques of exclusively militarized martyrdom — as theorized by Ihmoud (2022) — reflects conscious ideological labour or conjunctural necessity cannot be determined from this corpus.

### 3. *Theoretical Implications*

#### Martyrdom as adaptive ideological construct

Abufarha's (2008) typology traced the evolution of martyr figures across three conjunctures — *fidā'ī*, *shahīd*, *istishhādī* — demonstrating that martyrdom is a historically produced construct whose meanings are revised through specific conditions. The findings here are consistent with this framework, suggesting a further figure emergent in the post-October 7 corpus: the *shahīd* as collective survivor whose continued existence constitutes resistance. This extension is tentative given the corpus's limited scope, but the pattern is sufficiently consistent across sources to warrant the observation. Mittermaier's (2015) insight that martyrdom is "a label assigned retroactively" is further supported by the movement's increasing emphasis on commemorative practice as martyrdom's principal site of reproduction.

#### Necropolitics, grievability and anti-colonial struggle

Mbembe's (2003) necropolitical framework illuminates the shift from targeted occupation violence to mass death under genocide as a qualitative change in the conditions structuring resistance ideology. The post-October 7 discourse's insistence on the sanctification of survival confirms Hage's (2003) insight that martyrdom functions as a counter to social death: *sumūd* becomes the affirmation of future-bearing life against a violence designed to extinguish it. Lloyd's (2017) distinction between conferral and performative recognition politics also finds application here. The resources available in English directed towards international audiences seem to convey a shift in this regard: the Second Intifada corpus operated largely within a conferral logic, justifying

operations before an implied international audience, while the post-October 7 corpus more consistently asserts the worth of Palestinian dead on Palestinian terms — performatively enacting grievability rather than appealing for it.

### Persistent tensions

The evolution documented here challenges reductive framings of Hamas's martyrdom discourse as static ideology. Yet Asad's (2003) caution remains necessary: the same discourse that democratizes martyrdom and foregrounds civilian suffering maintains institutional control over what counts as legitimate sacrifice and whose deaths are narrated as grievable. Tensions persist between the movement's organized production of martyrdom ideology and the agency of those living and dying under bombardment. These tensions do not undermine the analysis but mark its most productive limit — martyrdom ideology as a site of ongoing negotiation between organizational imperatives, structural conditions and the irreducibly human experience of loss.

## **Conclusion**

### *1. Summary of Findings*

This thesis asked how Hamas's martyrdom ideology appeared to evolve between the Second Intifada (2000–2005) and the period of genocidal violence following the Al-Aqsa Flood operation (October 2023–present), and what theoretical frameworks might account for that evolution. The research was animated by a gap in the English-language literature: no systematic diachronic analysis of the movement's ideological production across distinct conditions of violence existed in the English-language scholarship reviewed.

Working from a limited corpus of English-language and translated materials, the analysis identified a number of dominant themes and tendencies across the two periods. In the Second Intifada English-language sources, discourse centred on the *istishhādī* — the individual fighter whose sacrifice was framed as spectacular, offensive and exceptional — legitimated through theological, nationalist and strategic registers. In the post-October 7 English-language corpus, a different emphasis became visible: *sumūd* (steadfastness), *sabr* (patience) and *ribāṭ* (guardianship of sacred territory) structured the semantic field, and the figure of *al-sha'b* — the collective people — appeared more consistently as the bearer of martyrdom's burden. Women, children and civilians were foregrounded alongside fighters in ways less prominent in the Second Intifada materials, and commemorative practice displaced the spectacular funeral as the primary discursive site of martyrdom's reproduction. These observations reflect what is recoverable from the available English-language record; whether they accurately represent the full range of Hamas's ideological production — including in Arabic-language media, internal publications and non-anglophone scholarship — cannot be established from this corpus alone.

## *2. Scholarly Contributions*

Within Hamas studies, this research offers one of the few systematic empirical comparisons of martyrdom discourse across two historically distinct periods, treating ideological content as an object of sustained analysis rather than a backdrop to strategic calculation. Within martyrdom studies, the findings are consistent with Abufarha's (2008) argument that martyr figures are historically produced rather than doctrinally fixed, and they suggest — tentatively, given the corpus's scope — that the post-October 7 conjuncture may be producing new configurations of martyrdom centred on collective endurance. Within necropolitical theory, the analysis indicates how the shift from targeted to mass death alters the discursive possibilities available to a resistance movement. The research does not claim to have resolved these questions but to have opened them empirically.

## *3. Limitations*

The most significant limitation is the English-language constraint. The primary corpus represents Hamas's public-facing discourse as mediated through international and translated outlets; it cannot capture internal deliberative processes, factional tensions, or the full semantic range of Arabic-language ideological production. As Alqaisiya and Perugini (2024) document, the systematic marginalization of Palestinian knowledge from Western academic discourse — what they term epistemicide — is a structural feature of the scholarly field rather than merely an absence in this project. The analysis also cannot account for how Hamas's discourse is received, contested or lived by Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank or diaspora communities. Any claim that martyrdom ideology has shifted must therefore be held tentatively: what can be said is that the dominant representations observable in this English-language corpus shifted between periods.

#### *4. Direction for Future Research*

The most immediate priority is an English-language available Arabic-language analysis of Hamas's discourse, engaging with the movement's own publications and Arabic-language scholarship — work that would reveal whether the tendencies identified here hold beyond the English-language record. A comparative study across the regional resistance axis examining Hezbollah's and the Houthis' parallel martyrological framings would test the generalizability of these findings. A reception study examining how ordinary Palestinians interpret or contest the discourse Hamas produces remains absent from the existing English-language literature. Finally, the gender dimensions of martyrdom's evolution warrant fuller treatment: whether women's sacrifice and care work were always present in Arabic-language martyrdom discourse, or whether the foregrounding of civilian suffering represents a genuine shift in emphasis, is a question this research cannot answer but which feminist and Arabic-language scholarship could.

#### *5. Final Reflection*

This thesis was researched and written in the shadow of an ongoing genocide. To write analytically about martyrdom discourse while the deaths that discourse processes continue to accumulate is not a neutral scholarly act. This research has attempted, within the constraints of a Western academic institution and its English-language literature, to take seriously Hamas's own ideological terms rather than imposing frameworks that misrecognize Palestinian resistance practice. Whether martyrdom ideology has genuinely transformed, or whether the English-language record has simply made different dimensions of it newly visible, is a question that more comprehensive future research must address. It is in that spirit of acknowledged limitation — and continued urgency — that this research is offered.

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## **Appendix A**

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### **Data Collection Worksheet - Second Intifada Corpus (2000-2005)**

This appendix presents the complete data collection worksheet for the primary corpus analyzed in Chapter 5. It includes all 17 sources organized by source ID, covering textual sources (T1), visual sources (V1), and contextual sources (C1). For each source, the worksheet records bibliographic information, key themes, discursive strategy notes, classification, section use, and relevant quotes. Source IDs correspond directly to citations used throughout the analytical chapters.

Total sources: 17 · Primary: 7 · Secondary / Contextual: 10

T1-001 : Article - “The life and death of Shaikh Yasin” - Al Jazeera Article, author not mentioned

Date Published: 2004-03-24

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/3/24/the-life-and-death-of-shaikh-yasin>

Classification: PRIMARY

#### **Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (dominant)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓

#### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination" (never "strike"); "Shaikh"; "occupation forces"; "resistance"

Predication: Yasin: paralyzed/powerful, prophetic; Israel: murderous, miscalculating

Argumentation: 1948 grievance → resistance inevitable → Israeli strategic error

Intensification: Reactive quotes (Al-Zubaidi); eyewitness detail (twisted wheelchair)

Religious framing: Killed leaving mosque; "Shaikh"; Brotherhood lineage — backdrop not foregrounded

Historical references: 1948 Nakba (opening); Oslo failure; First/Second Intifada

**Quotes:**

“Our response to the assassination of Shaikh Yasin will not be like any other. Those who ordered the killing have committed a grave mistake. They will pay very dearly.”

“Yasin was not only a symbol of resistance, but a symbol of Palestinian unity.”

“The resistance shall intensify with the shaikh’s death. Our brigades will retaliate and the response this time will be more painful. We shall not yield until the last drop of our blood.” - Zakariya al-Zubaidi

T1-002 : Article - “Mother of martyrs runs for Hamas”

Date Published: 2005-12-09

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2005/12/9/mother-of-martyrs-runs-for-hamas>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (dominant: explicit in Farhat's own quote)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ (maternal sacrifice as political credential)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (resistance + electoral politics intertwined)

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "Mother of martyrs" / "Umm Nidal" (title, not name); sons = "martyrs" not "attackers/bombers"; "occupied Gaza Strip"; Israel = "the Jewish state" (in Farhat's framing)

Predication: Farhat: iconic, credentialed, trusted, sure vote-winner; sons: fighters not perpetrators; Hamas: serious political challenger, social welfare provider

Argumentation: Jihad and politics as inseparable/complementary ("jihadist project completes the political one"); maternal loss as legitimizing political authority

Intensification: "strong militant credentials"; gun in video; son killed five Israelis aged 17 — reported factually, without condemnation

Religious framing: "martyrs" used uncritically throughout; "jihad" glossed neutrally as "holy struggle"; Farhat's logic of sacred duty unrebutted

Historical references: First Intifada implied; 2002 settlement attack; Oslo-era Fatah dominance as context for Hamas challenge

### **Quotes:**

“The jihadist project completes the political one and the political project cannot be completed without jihad” - Mariam Farhat

T1-003 : Article - “Hamas after Yasin”

**Author:** Khalid Amayreh

Date Published: 2004-03-24

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/3/25/hamas-after-yasin>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (dominant: Hamas's appeal explained as Islamic identity)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (Islam + patriotism fused explicitly)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (Israel's actions framed as direct cause of resistance)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination" (article's own word, lede); "resistance movement"; "separation wall";

Israel = aggressor/provocateur throughout

Predication: Hamas: religiously pure, corruption-free, charitable, patriotic; Yasin: venerable, psychologically towering; al-Rantisi: hawk but admired; Israel: killing/maiming civilians, provoking

Argumentation: Hamas strength = Islamic identity not just politics; resistance framed as structurally inevitable ("little choice") so long as occupation continues; leadership = martyrdom not ambition

Intensification: "profound psychological impact"; "haunting reality"; "killing and maiming of Palestinian civilians"; "daily provocation"

Religious framing: Central throughout — Hamas appeal explained as representing Islam itself; "purity of Islam"; "Islamic dignity and honour"; religiosity as recruitment logic

Historical references: Hamas founding 1987; al-Rantisi's survived assassination (June 2003); separation wall construction

**Quotes:**

“People don’t follow us necessarily because they are particularly infatuated with our political stances. They follow us because we represent Islam,” said a prominent member of the Hamas Shura council to Aljazeera.net.

“It is difficult to be a truly religious Muslim and refrain from supporting Islam which Hamas represents,” added the University professor who asked for anonymity.

T1-004 : Article - " Hamas member assassinated in Syria"

**Author:** News Agencies

Date Published: 2004-09-26

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/9/26/hamas-member-assassinated-in-syria>

**Classification:** SUPPORTING CONTEXT

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (Israel as aggressor, reaching beyond Palestine)

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ ("action and reaction"; reprisal promised)

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (explicit in Hamas statement: "path of jihad and resistance")

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination" (headline + throughout); "Palestinian resistance movement Hamas";

"Zionist occupation forces"; "Zionist entity" (Hamas quotes reproduced without distancing)

Predication: Israel: criminal, reaching into sovereign Syria, glad about killing (Ezra quote); Hamas: defiant, unbreakable, victimized; Khalil: exiled activist not militant

Argumentation: Israeli crimes → Palestinian unity → resistance escalates; Israel "failing" inside Palestine now failing outside too

Intensification: "his body was torn into pieces"; "I am glad" (Ezra); "unify the Palestinian blood inside and outside Palestine"

Religious framing: Minimal in article's own voice; "jihad and resistance" in Hamas statement reproduced directly

Historical references: 1992 mass deportations; Yasin assassination March 2004; al-Rantisi killing April 2004 — pattern of Israeli targeting established

T1-005 : Article - "Thousands vow revenge for Shanab's death"

**Author:** News Agencies

Date Published: 2003-08-22

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/8/22/thousands-vow-revenge-for-shanabs-death>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ (dominant : revenge, ceasefire collapse, streets of Tel Aviv threat)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (assassination, checkpoint, hospital shooting, Jenin incursion)

Paradise/afterlife ✓✓ ("Martyrs' Cemetery"; body in Hamas flag; "martyrdom operations")

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination" (headline + throughout); "Palestinian resistance groups/fighters"; "Israeli rocket attack"; "guerrilla" vs "wanted men" (AJ vs Israeli military language juxtaposed)

Predication: Shanab: political leader, martyr; Sharon: assassinated the truce, responsible for escalation; Palestinians: outraged, defiant, grief-stricken; Israel: aggressor blocking even funeral attendance

Argumentation: Assassination → ceasefire collapse → escalation inevitable; peace process (road map) rendered worthless by Israeli actions

Intensification: "streets of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem will be filled with blood"; 100,000 mourners; "furious procession"; loudspeaker chants; shots fired

Religious framing: "Martyrs' Cemetery"; green Hamas flag on body; "martyrdom operations" as only remaining path — sacralized through burial ritual

Historical references: Road map peace process; ceasefire (hudna) context; Jenin/Nablus as recurring sites of occupation

### **Quotes:**

Hamas fighter (unnamed, at funeral): "The road map is being buried, only martyrdom operations will remain."

Hamas + Islamic Jihad joint statement: "We announce together today that Sharon assassinated the truce and delivered the final blow in killing political leader Ismail Abu Shanab."

Abd al-Aziz al-Rantisi (senior Hamas leader): "The streets of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem will be filled with blood and Sharon will be responsible for it."

Loudspeaker at funeral procession: "Abu Shanab rest in peace. Our armies will go forward. We are the men of the dark night."

T1-006 : Article - "Six Palestinians killed in Gaza", author not mentioned

Date Published: 2003-06-10

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/6/10/six-palestinians-killed-in-gaza>

**Classification:** SUPPORTING CONTEXT

**Key Themes:**

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ (dominant: attack → rockets → airstrike → civilian deaths chain)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (civilian casualties, refugee camp, assassination attempt)

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (explicit in al-Rantisi quote)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination attempt" (article's own word for Israeli strike on al-Rantisi); "Israeli occupation forces"; "Palestinian resistance fighters"; "criminal Zionist" (al-Rantisi quote reproduced)

Predication: Israel: killing civilians, undermining peace; al-Rantisi: defiant, wounded but resolute; civilians: innocent family, five-year-old girl — humanised in detail

Argumentation: Escalation ladder made explicit by article structure: Israeli assassination attempt → rocket salvo → airstrike on refugee camp → civilian deaths; Israel blamed structurally

Intensification: "five-year-old girl and her mother" killed; 35 wounded; hospital bed defiance; even US "deeply troubled"

Religious framing: "jihad" in al-Rantisi quote; "resistance fighters" as standard nomination

Historical references: Road map/Aqaba summit context; pattern of assassination attempts

**Quotes:**

Al-Rantisi (from hospital bed): "We will continue our jihad (holy war) and resistance until we kick out every single criminal Zionist from our land."

T1-007 : Article - "My meeting with Shaikh Yassin", author not mentioned

Date Published: 2004-03-25

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/3/25/my-meeting-with-shaikh-yasin>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (dominant — Western double standard; surrender vs resist framing)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (right of return; Oslo critique; Palestinian sovereignty)

Al-Aqsa/Jerusalem ✓✓ (trigger for Intifada; liberation goal explicitly named)

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (explicit call to Muslims worldwide in closing quote)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "Shaikh"; "frail shaikh"; "the man I met"; "unflinching resistance" (author's own tribute); Israel = "Middle East's military superpower"; "occupiers"

Predication: Yasin: humanized, reasonable, philosophically coherent, morally serious; West: wilfully misunderstanding, complicit with occupation; Israel: blurs civilian/combatant line by design

Argumentation: Oslo failed → resistance inevitable; West misframes conflict → Palestinian violence recast as self-defence; all Israelis combatants (conscription argument) → civilian targeting reframed

Intensification: "epitome of evil" vs "embodiment of unequal struggle" (deliberate contrast); "road to collective suicide"; "legacy of unflinching resistance will inspire thousands"

Religious framing: Al-Aqsa as trigger and liberation goal; closing jihad call to Muslims worldwide; author endorses Yasin's legacy unreservedly

Historical references: Oslo 1993; Sharon's Al-Aqsa visit 2000; al-Aqsa Intifada outbreak; right of return

### **Quotes:**

Direct quotes from Yasin :

"The Palestinian people have two choices; either they surrender or they continue to resist."

"They [the West] consider the stand of the Palestinian people, who defend themselves with stones and all other means, to be unjustified violence against the Israelis. This is an awful misunderstanding of the conflict. The West demands from us that we stop the resistance. Instead of asking the occupiers to leave our land, they ask us to surrender to the occupier."

"The peace that reinforces occupation and settlement and the exiling of the Palestinian people, that is not really peace."

"All the Israeli people are combatants in the field of battle. Those who do not wear a military uniform, male or female, have all been trained for battle. They are soldiers on call who will be called up when the time comes."

"Awaken inside themselves the intention for jihad and prepare for it in order to liberate al-Aqsa and Jerusalem when the time comes."

T1-008 : Article - "Assassinated... A leader of vision"

**Author:** News Agencies

Date Published: 2003-08-21

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2003/8/21/assassinated-a-leader-of-vision>

**Classification:** SUPPORTING CONTEXT

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (assassination kills peace process; Israel violates ceasefire)

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ (ceasefire declared dead; retaliation promised)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (two-state solution; right of return implicit)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "assassination" (headline + throughout); "leader of vision"; "moderate voice"; "armed Islamic resistance group"; Israel = perpetrator of "horrible, unprecedented crime" (Yasin quote)

Predication: Abu Shanab: moderate, visionary, academic, non-military, compromise-seeking, family man; Israel: kills peace partners, violates ceasefire, acts against its own interests

Argumentation: Israel kills its most workable interlocutor → peace process collapses → retaliation inevitable; Abu Shanab's moderation used to maximize Israel's culpability

Intensification: "ignite a region already on the brink"; "poisoned chalice"; "his vision is in severe jeopardy"; "a man of great wisdom"

Religious framing: Minimal — "armed Islamic resistance" in lede only; article foregrounds political/academic identity over religious one

Historical references: First Intifada imprisonment; Saudi peace plan (pre-1967 borders); June 2003 hudna; road map process

### **Quotes:**

Shaikh Ahmad Yasin: "The assassination of a political leader is a violation of all norms and a sabotage of all previous agreements."

Ismail Haniya: " Hamas' retaliation for the operation will take the form of deeds, not words."

Hamas official (unnamed): "His assassination is a big loss to Hamas as a movement, but the only consolation is that Israel will pay a heavy price in blood for killing him."

Hamas official (unnamed): "As late as yesterday, he spoke about the necessity to continue the dialogue with the Palestinian Authority. He was a man of great wisdom, who spared no effort to push towards a Palestinian unity."

Abu Shanab (2002, on Saudi plan) : "That would be satisfactory for all Palestinian military groups to stop and build our state, to be busy in our own affairs, and have good neighbour relations with Israelis."

T1-009 : Article - "Assassination sparks outrage"

**Author:** News Agencies

Date Published: 2004-03-22

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/3/22/assassination-sparks-outrage>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (Israeli state violence as originating cause; 64 Palestinian "martyrs" since March; West Bank/Gaza sealed post-assassination)

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ ("open war" declared; revenge "like an earthquake" promised; even Israeli dissenter Poraz warns cycle of violence now inevitable)

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (al-Qaradawi closes peace process: "no option except Jihad"; killing at dawn prayer sacralises grievance; al-Azhar students mobilised)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (Yasin as "son of Palestine"; assassination framed as attempt to kill Palestinian rights to homeland, holy places, return)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: "Shaikh," "spiritual leader," "son of Palestine," "defender" (Yasin); "murderers," "criminals," "Zionist gangs" (Israel); "resistance movement" ( Hamas — terrorist label appears only to be refuted)

Predication: Yasin = moderate, fearless, beloved; Israel's act = "cowardly," "crazy," "dangerous crime" — across Palestinian, Arab, and Israeli dissenting voices

Argumentation: Key move is accusation reversal — "they say Hamas is a terrorist organisation, but the truth is that Israel is a terrorist state"; Poraz's internal Israeli dissent functions as inadvertent corroboration of Palestinian fears

Intensification: "poured into the streets"; "like an earthquake"; "make the earth tremble"; "open war"

Religious framing: Heavy — mosque/dawn prayer foregrounded throughout; al-Qaradawi and al-Azhar attach institutional Islamic legitimacy to resistance

Historical references: Three years of conflict (Second Intifada); refugee return; "holy places" (1948/1967 implicit)

**Quotes:**

"War is henceforth open with these murderers, these criminals and these terrorists" (al-Rantissi)

"Inside Palestine, there will be no security for the Zionists and Jews" (al-Rantissi)

Revenge "like an earthquake" (al-Qassam Brigades, paraphrased)

T1-010 : PhD Thesis - "Hamas' Statements : A discourse analysis approach"

**Author:** Pamela Murgia

Murgia, P. (2018). Hamas' statements: a discourse analysis approach. Universitat Pompeu Fabra.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10803/664233>

Notes on data sampling and collection :

The corpus has been retrieved by Hamas' official website in Arabic (< <http://hamas.ps/ar/>> (last access: 02/08/2018))

Date Published: 2018-11-08

Date Accessed: 2026-02-24

**URL:** <https://www.tdx.cat/handle/10803/664233#page=1>

Classification: PRIMARY

**Key Themes:**

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (dominant — "acts of jihad and resistance"; "instruments of jihad"; "if God allows it"; mujahideen as actors; martyrdom operations as religious duty)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (Arafat's siege and assassination as Israeli crime; geography of occupation as limit to be overcome)

Reciprocity/balance of terror ✓✓ ("every Zionist place and person will remain a target"; resistance framed as inevitable response to assassination)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ ("national unity"; "right of return"; "sacred sites"; "martyr president" holding firm on Palestinian constants)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ (Arafat and Yasin as martyr-leaders who died for refusing to compromise; steadfastness as credential)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Arafat = "martyr president," "shahid"; Yasin = "martyr chief," "shahid"; Israelis = unnamed perpetrators of siege and assassination; fighters = "mujahideen"

Predication: Arafat/Yasin = killed specifically for their steadfastness and refusal to compromise — death becomes proof of political virtue; Hamas = legitimate resistance movement speaking institutionally ("we, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas")

Argumentation: Assassination caused by victim's own integrity (tawābit/constants) → Israel targets those who won't yield → resistance is the only logical response; geography is explicitly dismissed as a constraint on operations

Intensification: "will not pose a limit"; "will continue"; "every Zionist place and person" — universalising and open-ended threat language

Religious framing: Heavy and consistent — jihad, istishhādiyya (martyrdom operations), mujahideen, "if God allows it"; resistance is divinely sanctioned

Historical references: Arafat's siege/assassination (2004); Yasin assassination (2004); tawābit (Palestinian political constants — 1948/1967 implicit)

### **Quotes:**

First anniversary of Arafat's death :

"Bi-sabbab -is.rar ar-ra-is aš-šahīd ,alā at-tamassuk bi- l-awaḡbit wa-l-wah.da al-wa.taniyya, wa-l-h.ifaḡz. ,alā al-muqaddasaṡ, wa-l--is.raṡr ,alā h.uq al-,awda."

[ n. 962, 11/11/2005 ]

"The murder was perpetrated] because of the determination of the martyr president to maintain stability and national unity, and defend the sacred sites, and on the right to return'

(P.105)

"Rah.mAllaḡhaš-šayhal-qaḡ-idaš-šahīd-Ah.madYaḡsīn wa ihwaḡnihi. ~"

[n. 684, 22/03/2004]

"May God's mercy be upon the martyr chief Ahmad Yassin and his brothers."

(P.164)

"Innana<sup>̄</sup> fi h. arakat al-muqa<sup>̄</sup>wama al--isla<sup>̄</sup>miyya H. ama<sup>̄</sup>s fi dikra<sup>̄</sup> as-sanawiyya li-ig<sup>̄</sup>tiya<sup>̄</sup>l ar-ra<sup>̄</sup>-is Ya<sup>̄</sup>sir ,Arafa<sup>̄</sup>t nu-akid (...) bi--anna sabab h.isa<sup>̄</sup>r ar-ra<sup>̄</sup>-is ,Arafa<sup>̄</sup>t wa ig<sup>̄</sup>tiya<sup>̄</sup>lihi la<sup>̄</sup>h.iqa tumma bi-sabab is.ra<sup>̄</sup>r ar-ra<sup>̄</sup>-is aš-šah<sup>̄</sup>id ,ala at-tamassuk bi-l-tawa<sup>̄</sup>bit bi-l-wah. da al-wa.taniyya. "

[n. 962, 11/11/2005]

"We, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, in the first anniversary of the assassination of the president Yasser Arafat, declare [...] that the reason for the siege on the president Yasser Arafat and his murder followed the determination of the martyr president to hold on stability and national unity."

(P.164')

"Ta,lan bi-ud. u<sup>̄</sup>h. -an al-g<sup>̄</sup>iyug<sup>̄</sup>a<sup>̄</sup>fiyya lan tah. add min naša<sup>̄</sup>.tihaal-g<sup>̄</sup>iha<sup>̄</sup>diyya al-muqa<sup>̄</sup>wim, wa -an muqa<sup>̄</sup>wamatiha bi-ka<sup>̄</sup>fa -a<sup>̄</sup>dwa<sup>̄</sup>tihaal-g<sup>̄</sup>iha<sup>̄</sup>diyya wa ,ala r-asiha al-,amliya<sup>̄</sup>t al-istišha<sup>̄</sup>diyya satatawa<sup>̄</sup>s.albi-idan Alla<sup>̄</sup>h, wa sayaz.ull kull šahs. aw muwaq,s.ahyu<sup>̄</sup>n<sup>̄</sup>i hadfan muba<sup>̄</sup>širan<sup>̄</sup> li-mug<sup>̄</sup>a<sup>̄</sup>hid<sup>̄</sup>mina<sup>̄</sup>."

[n. 535, 08/03/2003]

"[Hamas] states clearly that geography will not pose a limit to its acts of jihad and resistance, and that its resistance [is made] with all the instruments of jihad, especially the martyrdom operations which will continue if God allows it, and every Zionist place and person will remain a target of our mug<sup>̄</sup>ahidun"

(P.167)

V1-001 : Martyr Poster - “The Engineer of Martyrdom”

**Author:** Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)

Date Published: 2002

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/engineer-martyrdom>

**Arabic translation:** “With complete pride and appreciationThe Islamic Resistance Movement  
Hamas celebrates Leader of the Izzeldin el-Qassam Brigades Qais Idwan Abu Jabal“

He was martyred in an armed clash that lasted over seven hours in the village of Tubas on April 5,  
2002

**Iconography :** weapons, bombs, armaments, guns, ammunition

V1-002 : Martyr Poster - “Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades - Partial - 1”

**Author:** Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade

Date Published: 2001

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/al-aqsa-martyrs-brigades-partial-1>

**Iconography :** weapons, bombs, armaments, guns, ammunition

V1-003 : Martyr Poster : “The Martyr Sheikh”

**Author:** Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine

Date Published: 2003

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/martyr-sheikh>

**Arabic translation :** “It is jihad.. either victory or martyrdom. The martyr Sheikh Izz ad Din al-Qassam”

**Iconography :** religious symbols, texts, icons, figures, tree, roots, branches

V1-004 : Martyr Poster - “With Mourning Pride and Dignity”

**Author:** Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)

Date Published: 2001

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/mounting-pride-and-dignity>

**Arabic translation :** “With mounting pride and dignity, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) brings the good news to our steadfast Palestinian people of the martyrdom of our heroic leader Salah Eddin Anwar Eddin Darouza (Abu Nur)”

**Iconography :** Religious symbols, texts, icons, figures, Palestinian flag/ Colours

V1-005 : Martyr Poster - “Kassel Brigade”

**Author:** Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)

Date Published: 2001

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/kassem-brigade>

**Arabic translation :** “With pride and dignity The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) Tul Karem country celebrates Her self-sacrificing son A man of Qura'an and belief The Qassemi hero Mo'ayyad Mahmoud Ayaadah Salah al-Din”

**Iconography :** Clenched fist, hand, arm, fingers, religious symbols, texts, icons, figures

C1-001 : Report on Israeli Human Right Violation - “Weekly Report on Israeli Human Rights Violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (19 December 2001)”

**Author:** Palestine Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)

Date Published: 2001-12-19

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://pchrgaza.org/weekly-report-on-israeli-human-rights-violations-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territories-19-december-2001/>

**Classification:** SUPPORTING CONTEXT

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (dominant and exhaustive — 20 killed, 36 houses demolished, F-16 strikes, curfews, arrests, siege, landmine amputation, ambulance fired upon; violations catalogued with names, ages, bullet locations)

**Notes :** provides factual and legal backdrop for the same period as primary sources; useful for corroborating occupation/oppression theme and civilian casualty framing without itself making political or resistance arguments; cross-reference dates with primary Hamas/Al Jazeera sources from same period (Dec 2001); use to substantiate factual claims about Israeli military operations

C1-002 : Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/10 - “Events in Jenin and other Palestinians cities - SecGe, report under A/RES/ES-10/10.”

**Author:** United Nations

Date Published: 2002-07-30

Date Accessed: 2026-02-25

**URL:** <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-187399/>

**Classification:** SUPPORTING CONTEXT

**Key Themes:**

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (dominant — 497 Palestinians killed Mar-May 2002; 878 homes demolished; 17,000 homeless; 8,500 arrested; curfews affecting 1 million; humanitarian access blocked; ambulances fired upon)

Occupation/impunity ✓✓ (Israel blocks fact-finding team, refuses Geneva Convention applicability, denies humanitarian access — structural impunity foregrounded by Palestinian Authority annex)

**Notes :**

triply useful: (1) UN body provides neutral corroboration of occupation/oppression scale; (2) Palestinian Authority annex articulates the legal-political resistance framework most systematically of any source so far; (3) Jordan eyewitness annex provides civilian suffering testimony. No direct UN quotes; Palestinian Authority annex quotable for legal resistance framing for continuity of occupation documentation; note that Palestinian Authority annex explicitly condemns suicide bombings while asserting right to resist occupation — key distinction for analysis of Hamas framing vs. PA framing.

## **Appendix B**

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### **Data Collection Worksheet - Post-October 7 Genocide Corpus (2023-Present)**

This appendix presents the complete data collection worksheet for the primary corpus analyzed in Chapter 6. It includes all 12 sources organized by source ID, covering textual sources (T2) and visual sources (V2). For each source, the worksheet records bibliographic information, key themes, discursive strategy notes, classification, section use, and relevant quotes. Source IDs correspond directly to citations used throughout the analytical chapters.

Total sources: 12 · Primary: 7 · Secondary / Contextual: 5

T2-001 : Article - “Spirit of Resistance : Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar”

**Author:** Al-Jazeera Staff

Date Published: 2024-10-17

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/17/yahya-sinwar-obituary>

Classification: Secondary/supportive

#### **Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (dominant structuring logic — title foregrounds "spirit of resistance" rather than defeat; the shahid frame is activated immediately upon confirmation of death, constructing death as regenerative rather than terminal)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ (dominant legitimation strategy — Sinwar dies in the open, in combat attire, facing the enemy; the "warrior's death" framing is explicitly extended even to those who opposed his strategies, universalizing the heroic reading across political lines)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (biographical anchor — Sinwar's life is structured as a genealogy of dispossession: refugee camp birth, family expelled in the Nakba, village of al-Majdal razed for Ashkelon; militancy is naturalized as direct product of Israeli state violence)

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Sinwar is never labelled a terrorist. The article's own scare quotes around operation delegitimise Israeli framing from the opening paragraph. The ICC passage — noting Netanyahu and Gallant are the only figures remaining on the charge sheet — quietly inverts the accountability frame onto Israel.

Martyrological construction: Death in the open, not in a hideout is constructed as the constitutive proof of moral courage, inverting the logic of cowardice. The article reproduces this framing without distancing itself from it.

Warrior's death consensus move: Attributing the heroic reading to even Sinwar's critics presents martyrological legitimacy as a collective Palestinian perception rather than Hamas partisanship — rhetorically broadening its authority.

Biographical dispossession sequence: The "Born a refugee" section is placed after the political content, functioning as retrospective justification. The al-Majdal/Ashkelon detail concretizes Palestinian loss with a named, mappable place.

October 7 framing: "Mastermind" appears in scare quotes in the subheading; an analyst is cited suggesting Deif — not Sinwar — was the true operational architect, subtly destabilizing the Israeli narrative without direct assertion.

T2-002 : Article - “Read Hamas statement on the killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Iran” - author not mentioned

Author: n.d.

Date Published: 2024-07-31

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/31/read-hamass-statement-on-the-killing-of-ismail-haniyeh-in-iran>

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (dominant structuring logic — the opening Quranic verse [3:169] immediately frames death-in-God's-path as life, not death; Haniyeh is "brother, leader, martyr, Mujahid"; the Qassam Brigades statement constructs his life as culminating in martyrdom as its highest point, not its termination)

Al-Aqsa/Jerusalem ✓✓ (explicit and load-bearing — Haniyeh's martyrdom is situated within "Al-Aqsa Flood," framed as defence of Al-Aqsa and "the sanctities"; Jerusalem functions as both the trigger and the telos of the entire struggle)

Jihad/religious duty ✓✓ (structurally present throughout — "struggle, victory or martyrdom" as the only outcomes; resistance framed as front-line defence of the entire Islamic nation; God's will invoked as guarantor of eventual victory)

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (Netanyahu as "criminal," "blinded by delusions of grandeur"; Israel as "occupation entity" heading toward "collapse"; the assassination framed as Zionist recklessness and Nazi crime)

Reciprocity/resistance ✓✓ ("the enemy will pay with its own blood"; blood of Haniyeh mingles with blood of Gaza's civilians — martyrdom and popular suffering are fused into a single retributive logic)

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Haniyeh is "brother, leader, martyr, Mujahid," "fighter," "Abu al-Abd" — a cumulative honorific chain. Israel is "the criminal enemy," "the occupation entity," "Nazi." Netanyahu is "criminal Netanyahu, blinded by delusions of grandeur." No neutral register exists for either side.

Predication: Haniyeh is assigned qualities of dedication, sacrifice, and unity — someone who "gave much to the Palestinian cause" and "directed the compass towards Jerusalem." The enemy is assigned cowardice ("treacherous," "cowardly Zionist assassination"), criminality, and self-destructive hubris ("driving the occupation entity toward the abyss").

Argumentation: The core justificatory move is that assassination validates rather than weakens resistance — Haniyeh's blood "will not be shed in vain but will illuminate the path to liberation." A secondary argument positions the resistance as a shield for the entire region, compelling all nations to support it. Israel's killing of leaders across multiple arenas is framed as illegal overreach that accelerates its own collapse.

Intensification: "Nazi crime," "treacherous," "cowardly," "blinded by delusions of grandeur," "driving toward the abyss," "wherever our fighters reach." Scale of address is also maximized — the statement is directed at Palestinians, the Arab and Islamic nation, and "all the free people of the world."

Religious framing: The statement opens with Surah Al-Imran 3:169 — the canonical Quranic martyrdom verse — before any political content, theologically reframing death before Haniyeh is

even named. "To God we belong and to Him we shall return" and "by God's will" close both statements, placing the entire political struggle within divine providence.

Historical references: Implicit rather than explicit — "Al-Aqsa Flood" as the name for October 7 carries its own historical-religious weight; "Zionist" and "occupation entity" invoke the longstanding Hamas refusal to recognize Israel's legitimacy as a historical and ongoing condition.

**Quotes:**

Hamas political statement: "brother, leader, martyr, Mujahid Ismail Haniyeh", "it is a struggle, victory or martyrdom"

Qassam Brigades statement: "His life culminated in martyrdom during the noblest battle, 'Al-Aqsa Flood', fought by our people and the free ones of our nation in defence of Al-Aqsa and the sanctities", "This precious blood will not be shed in vain but will illuminate the path to liberation", "the enemy will pay for its aggression with its own blood in Gaza, the West Bank, and within its borders, wherever our fighters reach by God's will"

T2-003 : Statement - “Hamas Statement : Martyrdom of Yahya Al-Sinwar ’will only strengthen our resistance’ ”

**Author:** Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement

Date Published: 2024-10-18

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.workers.org/2024/10/81461/>

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (dominant structuring logic — Sinwar "gave his soul for the sake of Allah"; martyrdom is framed as the highest rank attainable, a divine selection; the closing litany "peace be upon you, the prisoner, the fighter, the martyr" constructs a cumulative sacred identity)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ (Sinwar "advancing and never retreating, wielding his weapon"; 23 years of imprisonment reframed as triumph over the "Zionist jailer"; death in combat positioned as volitional and honourable)

Al-Aqsa/Jerusalem ✓✓ (explicit and structural — Sinwar named "Commander of Al-Aqsa Flood Battle"; Palestinian state with "Al-Quds as its capital" stated as the movement's non-negotiable goal)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ ("complete liberation and return"; Sinwar "wrote the first line in the war of liberation and the end of the occupation")

Martyrdom lineage/continuity ✓✓ (Sinwar placed in an explicit chain: Yassin, Al-Rantisi, Haniyeh, Al-Arouri — martyrdom constructed as institutional succession, not individual loss)

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Sinwar is "the great national leader," "Mujahid Martyr Brother," "Abu Ibrahim," "Commander of Al-Aqsa Flood Battle," "the humble, devout and pious man." Israel is "the occupation army," "the Zionist jailer," "the invading occupiers who are strangers to this land." No neutral register; every name carries a moral charge.

Predication: Sinwar is assigned qualities of piety, physical courage, strategic vision, and self-sacrifice — "dedicated his life for Palestine," "triumphed over the Zionist jailer," "steadfast." The movement itself is predicated as "noble, genuine, deeply rooted in its people" — martyrdom of leaders is offered as proof of authenticity.

Argumentation: The core move is inversion of loss into strength — martyrdom "will only strengthen Hamas and our resistance." A secondary argument frames Hamas's willingness to sacrifice its own leaders as evidence of legitimacy, distinguishing it from leaderships that preserve themselves at the expense of their people. Hostage release is explicitly conditioned on ceasefire and prisoner exchange, instrumentalizing the captives politically.

Intensification: "noblest and bravest," "heroic epics," "the great flood that shook the depths of the entity," "a living flame in the hearts of our people," "your banner will never fall." The closing litany — "peace be upon you, the prisoner, the fighter, the martyr" — is liturgical in register, elevating the statement toward ritual lamentation.

Religious framing: Divine election is central — "Allah was true to him, choosing him as a martyr." Liberation is guaranteed "by Allah's will." The closing prayer invokes paradise alongside "the prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous." The entire political struggle is embedded within an Islamic soteriological framework.

Historical references: Sinwar's biography is structured as a microcosm of Palestinian resistance history — from the founding generation (Yassin, Al-Rantisi) through the Wafa al-Ahrar prisoner exchange to October 7. The "caravan of martyrs" trope constructs an unbroken lineage connecting present martyrdom to the movement's origins.

### **Quotes:**

"the Mujahid Martyr Brother Yahya Al-Sinwar...Commander of Al-Aqsa Flood Battle"

"He rose as a heroic martyr, advancing and never retreating, wielding his weapon, engaging and confronting the occupation army at the frontlines"

"the martyrdom of Brother Leader Yahya Al-Sinwar...will only strengthen Hamas and our resistance, making us more determined and steadfast"

"A movement that offers its leaders and members as martyrs in defense of the rights of its people is a noble, genuine movement deeply rooted in its people"

"history will record that you wrote the first line in the war of liberation and the end of the occupation"

"it is a jihad of victory or martyrdom"

T2-004 : Article - " Hamas mourns the martyr Sa'eid al-Jaber"

**Author:** Palestinian Information Center

Date Published: 2024-06-30

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://english.palinfo.com/news/2024/06/30/321349/>

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (structuring logic — al-Jaber is designated "martyr" throughout; his death is framed as the culmination of "an honorable path of jihad and resistance")

Occupation/oppression ✓✓ (dominant contextual frame — the strike is embedded within a "comprehensive war" against Palestinians everywhere; settlers and army are engaged in plans to "liquidate the national cause" and "exterminate and displace" the people)

Reciprocity/resistance ✓✓ ("blood of our martyrs will not go in vain but constitutes fuel for the flame of the ongoing and escalated resistance"; factions called to "escalate confrontation")

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Al-Jaber is "the heroic martyr." Israel is the "Zionist extremist government," "fascist occupation army," "fascist enemy." Settlers are named alongside the army as co-perpetrators — a deliberate equivalence.

Predication: Al-Jaber assigned qualities of honour and steadfastness — "honorable path of jihad and resistance." The Israeli government is assigned extremism and fascism; its actions are predicated as part of a deliberate extermination and displacement plan, not military operations.

Argumentation: The strike on a refugee camp home is contextualised as one instance of a systematic policy, not an isolated event. The call to all factions to escalate is justified by collective victimhood — the West Bank offensive affects "our people everywhere," compelling unified response.

Intensification: "comprehensive war," "brutal attacks," "liquidate our national cause," "exterminate and displace," "fuel for the flame." Language is consistently maximalist, framing a single drone strike within a genocidal register.

Religious framing: Minimal here — "martyr" and "martyred" are used consistently but without Quranic citation or extended theological elaboration. The religious register is present but formulaic rather than substantive.

Historical references: Nur Shams refugee camp is named but not historicised; the broader occupation is invoked as ongoing structural context rather than through specific historical reference points.

### **Quotes:**

"The blood of our martyrs will not go in vain, but rather constitutes fuel for the flame of the ongoing and escalated resistance"

"escalate confrontation with the fascist enemy, respond to its aggression, and hold the occupation and its settlers accountable for their crimes"

T2-005 : Communiqué - "Statement of Mourning for Great Leader, Heroic Fighter, Martyr Hudhafyah al-Kahlout (Abu Obeida)"

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2025-12-29

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

URL: <https://abolitionmedia.noblogs.org/26283/>

Classification: Primary

### **Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (dominant structuring logic — Abu Obeida "ascended to Allah as a martyr, advancing and not retreating"; his death alongside his wife and children is framed as a "blessed ending he sought and wished for"; martyrdom is volitional and aspirational, not suffered)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ ("roaring voice that disturbed the sleep of the occupation"; his silence and absence alone "confused the occupation's calculations"; power attributed to his symbolic presence as much as military function)

Al-Aqsa/Jerusalem ✓✓ (explicit and recurring — Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque named as the heart of the struggle; Abu Obeida's legacy is directly anchored to their defence)

Martyrdom as institutional strengthening ✓✓ ("the history of the Movement has proven that after the assassination of its leaders, it becomes stronger, more cohesive, more determined"; assassination is systematically reframed as organisational fuel)

### **Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Abu Obeida is "great leader," "heroic fighter," "martyr," "roaring voice of the nation," "Commander of Military Media." The bombing is "treacherous and cowardly." Gaza is "Gaza of Glory," "land of patience, ribat, and jihad." Israel is consistently "the zionist enemy," "the occupation." Every nomination carries an unambiguous moral valence.

Predication: Abu Obeida is assigned qualities of steadfastness, fearlessness, and inspirational power — his image was "constantly terrifying" to the enemy, his presence "spread the spirit of doubt and defeat" among Israelis. Crucially, his family's death alongside him is predicated not as tragedy but as shared martyrdom — "may Allah have mercy on them all." The movement itself is predicated as historically proven to grow stronger through assassination.

Argumentation: The core argumentative move is the inversion of assassination as strategy — killing leaders is explicitly argued to have the opposite of its intended effect, producing a stronger, more resolved movement. This is supported by an appeal to historical precedent ("the history of the Movement has proven"). A secondary argument frames Abu Obeida's biographical legacy as generationally instructive — his journey "will remain an inspiration for generations."

Intensification: "roaring voice that disturbed the sleep of the occupation," "Gaza of Glory," "most honorable heroic battle in the history of our people's struggle," "more fierce and damaging to the zionist enemy," "heralding the demise of the occupation." The closing poetic line — "if a master among us dies, another arises in his wake" — is the rhetorical peak, functioning as both elegy and threat.

Religious framing: Opens with Quran 33:23 — the covenant verse, foregrounding fidelity to divine promise over death. "Ribat" (guardianship of sacred territory) is invoked repeatedly, giving Gaza a specifically Islamic territorial sanctity. The closing prayer places Abu Obeida in paradise "with the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous" — the same formula as T2-003, suggesting a

standardised liturgical register for senior martyrs. The dual Islamic/Gregorian date is itself a formal marker of institutional religious identity.

Historical references: Al-Aqsa Flood named as the defining historical battle; Abu Obeida's 15 years of being hunted by Israel contextualises his martyrdom within the long arc of the post-Second Intifada period. The invocation of the movement's track record of post-assassination resilience implies but does not name the Yassin/Al-Rantisi precedent — present as structural reference rather than explicit citation.

**Quotes:**

"advancing and not retreating, in a treacherous and cowardly zionist bombing that targeted him and his family"

"a blessed ending that he sought and wished for"

"the history of the Movement has proven that after the assassination of its leaders, it becomes stronger, more cohesive, more determined and resolved, and more fierce and damaging to the zionist enemy"

"your pure spirit will remain alive, pulsing with resistance and jihad...heralding the demise of the occupation and the liberation of the land and the holy sites"

"if a master among us dies, another arises in his wake... a peer to him who suffices in his stead and succeeds him"

"it is a jihad of victory or martyrdom"

T2-006 : Article - "On Haneyya's martyrdom anniversary, Hamas vows to continue defending land and holy sites"

**Author:** The Palestinian Information Center

Date Published: 2025-07-31

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://english.palinfo.com/news/2025/07/31/344483/>

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (structuring logic — the anniversary format ritualises Haniyeh's death, transforming it from a single event into a recurring commemorative occasion; martyrdom is institutionalised as an annual reference point)

Martyrdom as institutional strengthening ✓✓ ("assassination policy has only strengthened its adherence to its people's rights"; explicitly argued as historically proven across the movement's lifespan)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ (commitment to "national constants," independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as capital framed as the non-negotiable continuity that martyrdom upholds)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Haniyeh is "martyr Haneyya," "leader Haneyya." The Israeli policy is "assassination policy" — a systemic label, not a military one. Israel is "the Israeli occupation" throughout, never a state.

Predication: Haniyeh is assigned qualities of active presence across all arenas — "political, national, popular, and resistance" — from 1987 onward. His personal sacrifice is amplified by the detail that he offered "his own sons and grandchildren" as martyrs, predicated as proof of authentic leadership-through-sacrifice rather than leadership-from-safety.

Argumentation: Two distinct moves. First, the empirical claim — assassination has historically strengthened rather than weakened Hamas, presented as time-proven fact. Second, the exemplary sacrifice argument — Haniyeh's martyrdom is framed as a "transformative juncture" rather than a "fleeting incident" precisely because it demonstrates that resistance leaders share the burden of loss with ordinary people, lending the movement moral authority.

Intensification: Relatively restrained compared to T2-002 and T2-005 — the anniversary format produces a more measured, reflective register. "Transformative juncture," "deepened its roots" are the most charged phrases; the absence of dramatic language is itself noteworthy as a discursive choice for a commemorative statement.

Religious framing: Minimal — "martyrdom" and "martyr" are used consistently but without Quranic citation or extended theological elaboration. The religious register is formulaic rather than substantive, notably thinner than the immediate post-death statements.

Historical references: Explicitly longitudinal — Haniyeh's trajectory from the First Intifada (1987) to his death anchors the martyrdom within a nearly four-decade resistance narrative. This is the most historically grounded source in the corpus so far, using chronological depth as legitimation.

### **Quotes:**

"Time has proven that the assassination policy that is pursued by the Israeli occupation against the Movement's leaders and prominent figures has only strengthened its adherence to its people's rights, aspirations, constants and national principles"

"His martyrdom was not a fleeting incident, but a transformative juncture that underscored the reality that resistance leaders are themselves in the midst of the struggle, offering up their sons as martyrs — just as leader Haneyya did with several of his own sons and grandchildren"

T2-007 : Statement - " Hamas Statement Funeral of Martyr Leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyeh Hashem Safieddine"

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2025-02-23

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://x.com/AdityaMandagie/status/1893746528659108026>

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (structuring logic — both Hezbollah leaders are designated "martyr leaders"; Nasrallah's death is framed as a wished-for outcome, attained volitionally "as he always wished"; martyrdom on the path to Al-Quds is the explicit teleological frame)

Al-Aqsa/Jerusalem ✓✓ (explicit and repeated — "great martyrdom on the path to Al-Quds"; Nasrallah's commitment to Palestine and determination to "liberate Al-Quds" named as his defining legacy)

Pan-Islamic solidarity/resistance axis ✓✓ (distinctive feature of this source — Hamas mourns Hezbollah leadership, framing Palestinian and Lebanese resistance as a unified front; the imagined community is explicitly transnational)

Martyrdom as institutional strengthening ✓✓ ("assassinations will never stop our struggle...will only strengthen our resolve" — identical argumentative structure to T2-005 and T2-006)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Nasrallah and Safieddine are "martyr leaders," "great martyrs," "Secretary-Generals of Hezbollah." Israel is "the zionist occupation," "fascist," "zionist usurpers." The language of

usurpation is notable — it carries a specifically territorial and religious charge beyond standard occupation framing.

**Predication:** Nasrallah is assigned qualities of principled commitment, courage, and pan-resistance solidarity — "firm and principled commitment to the Palestinian cause," "defied the occupation's fascist threats." His martyrdom is predicated as the fulfilment of personal wish and conviction, not as victimhood.

**Argumentation:** The core move is consistent with the broader corpus — assassination strengthens rather than weakens resistance. An additional move here is the cross-movement solidarity argument: Hamas mourning Hezbollah leaders frames the resistance as a unified, regionally coherent project whose parts are mutually reinforcing. Killing one node strengthens the whole network.

**Intensification:** "abhorrent occupation," "purify them from the filth of the zionist usurpers," "brutal zionist aggression and genocide war." The "filth/purify" register is the most charged language in this source — it frames liberation in terms of ritual cleansing, not merely political liberation.

**Religious framing:** Opens with the Basmala; closes with the Islamic date (24 Sha'ban 1446 AH). Prayer for the martyrs' souls and for patience to their families follows the standard Islamic ta'ziya formula. "On the path to Al-Quds" gives the martyrdom an explicitly sacred geographical telos.

**Historical references:** Implicit rather than explicit — the framing of Nasrallah's decades-long solidarity with Palestine is gestured at but not historicized in detail. The statement's significance lies more in its cross-movement scope than in historical depth.

**V2-001 :** Video - " Hamas reveals new military spokesman, confirms Abu Obeida's death"

**Author:** Middle East Eye

**Date Published:** 2025-12-29

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** [https://youtube.com/shorts/t1bB7\\_iQqEE?is=OzZcExQQ2lfvXYmm](https://youtube.com/shorts/t1bB7_iQqEE?is=OzZcExQQ2lfvXYmm)

Classification: Primary

**Key Themes:**

Martyrdom/shahada ✓✓ (dominant structuring logic — Abu Obeida is mourned by his real name, the formal Islamic act of unveiling a martyr's identity; death is framed as elevation, not loss)

Agency/heroism ✓✓ (dominant legitimation strategy — "powerful voice," "sincere words," "thunderous voice of the nation"; the icon construct is built entirely around moral and symbolic power, not military rank)

Liberation/nationalism ✓✓ ("pulse of Palestine and Jerusalem, its people and its resistance"; Abu Obeida's person is fused with the Palestinian national cause itself)

**Discursive Strategies & Notes:**

Nomination: Abu Obeida is "the martyr leader," "icon for all the free people around the world," "thunderous voice of the nation," "a man of his word and conviction." The revelation of his real name — Huthaifa Samir Abdallah al-Kahlout — is itself a discursive act: unmasking in death is a martyrological honour, transforming the anonymous fighter into a named shahid with a full identity restored to history.

Predication: Abu Obeida is assigned qualities of power, sincerity, constancy, and inspirational presence — "powerful voice," "sincere words," "source of inspiration." Crucially, his physical appearance (the red keffiyeh, the mask) is predicated as iconicity rather than concealment — anonymity reframed as universal symbol.

Argumentation: The core move is continuity — the video is not merely a eulogy but an institutional act, introducing a successor. The framing argues implicitly that the position, and what it represents, outlives the individual. Martyrdom does not end the role; it consecrates it and passes it on.

Intensification: "millions eagerly awaited his appearance," "thunderous voice of the nation," "loved by millions," "icon for all the free people around the world." The scale of address is maximised — Abu Obeida is constructed as a global rather than merely Palestinian figure.

Religious framing: The gesture of the finger pointing skyward (shahada gesture) is explicitly noted — a standard Islamic marker of martyrdom and divine testimony. The mourning formula ("we mourn him to our nation and our people") follows the conventional Islamic ta'ziya structure. Understated compared to T2-002 and T2-003 but structurally present.

Historical references: None explicit, but the red keffiyeh as icon carries its own visual-historical weight within Palestinian resistance iconography — linking Abu Obeida implicitly to a longer tradition of masked, anonymous resistance figures.

#### **Quotes:**

"the masked man loved by millions...they eagerly awaited his appearance and saw him as a source of inspiration"

"the martyr leader and spokesperson for the al-Qassam Brigades, Abu Obeida. The thunderous voice of the nation"

"the pulse of Palestine and Jerusalem, its people and its resistance"

V2-002 : Martyr Poster - "God Forbid!"

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2024

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/god-forbid-1>

Arabic translation: God forbid! (Figuratively) God will not forgive (Literally)

(Poster depicts image of Abu Obeida, the Hamas spokesperson)

Sighting: Burj al Barajneh refugee camp, Lebanon

Iconography : Palestinian flag, colors, kayyiyeh

V2-003 : Martyr Poster - “A Powerful Flood”

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2024

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/powerful-flood>

Arabic translation: We are bringing a powerful flood (Sinwar represented)

Sighting: Burj al Barajneh refugee camp, Lebanon

Iconography : Palestinian flag, colors

V2-004 : Poster - “Adhere to the Truth”

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2024

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/adhere-truth>

Arabic translation: A group from my nation will continue to adhere to the truth, victorious over their enemy, and they will not be harmed by those who let them down or by the misfortunes that have befallen them. This is the way (Quote from Abu Obaidah)

Iconography: Kaffiyeh, Palestinian flag / Colors

V2-005 : Poster - “If your massacres continues”

Author: Hamas

Date Published: 2024

Date Accessed: 2026-03-14

**URL:** <https://www.palestineposterproject.org/posters/if-your-massacres-continue>

Arabic translation:

(red text) The roof of the bus will fly

(white text) If your massacres continue

Analysis / Interpretation / Press / Source (EXCERPT)

Times of Israel By Gianluca Pacchiani

26 August 2024, 4:02 pm

On August 19, Hamas claimed responsibility for an explosion in Tel Aviv the day before, a suicide bombing carried out as a joint operation with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The terror group vowed to continue such attacks in the future...

Following the claim, Hamas quickly disseminated posters on social media depicting images of blown-up buses in Tel Aviv. The captions, written in Arabic, Hebrew and English, boldly declared, “We are coming.”

The message was clear: Hamas was signaling the start of a new wave of suicide attacks reminiscent of the terror campaign that gripped Israel in the 1990s and peaked during the Second Intifada in the early 2000s.

The posters were carefully designed, featuring terrorists wearing Palestinian keffiyehs and explosive belts, standing beside buses like those that operated in Israel decades ago.

One poster prominently featured Yahya Ayyash, known as “the Engineer,” the mastermind behind a series of deadly bombings in the mid-1990s. Ayyash was killed by Israel in 1996. The Arabic caption underneath his image read: “Who will bring back the glory of Ayyash?”

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/terrorize-israelis-while-eliciting-sympathy-abroad-inside-hamass-propaganda-strategy/>

Iconography: Kaffiyeh, Weapons / Bombs / Armaments / Guns / Ammunition, Torch / Lantern / Light / Flames / Fire

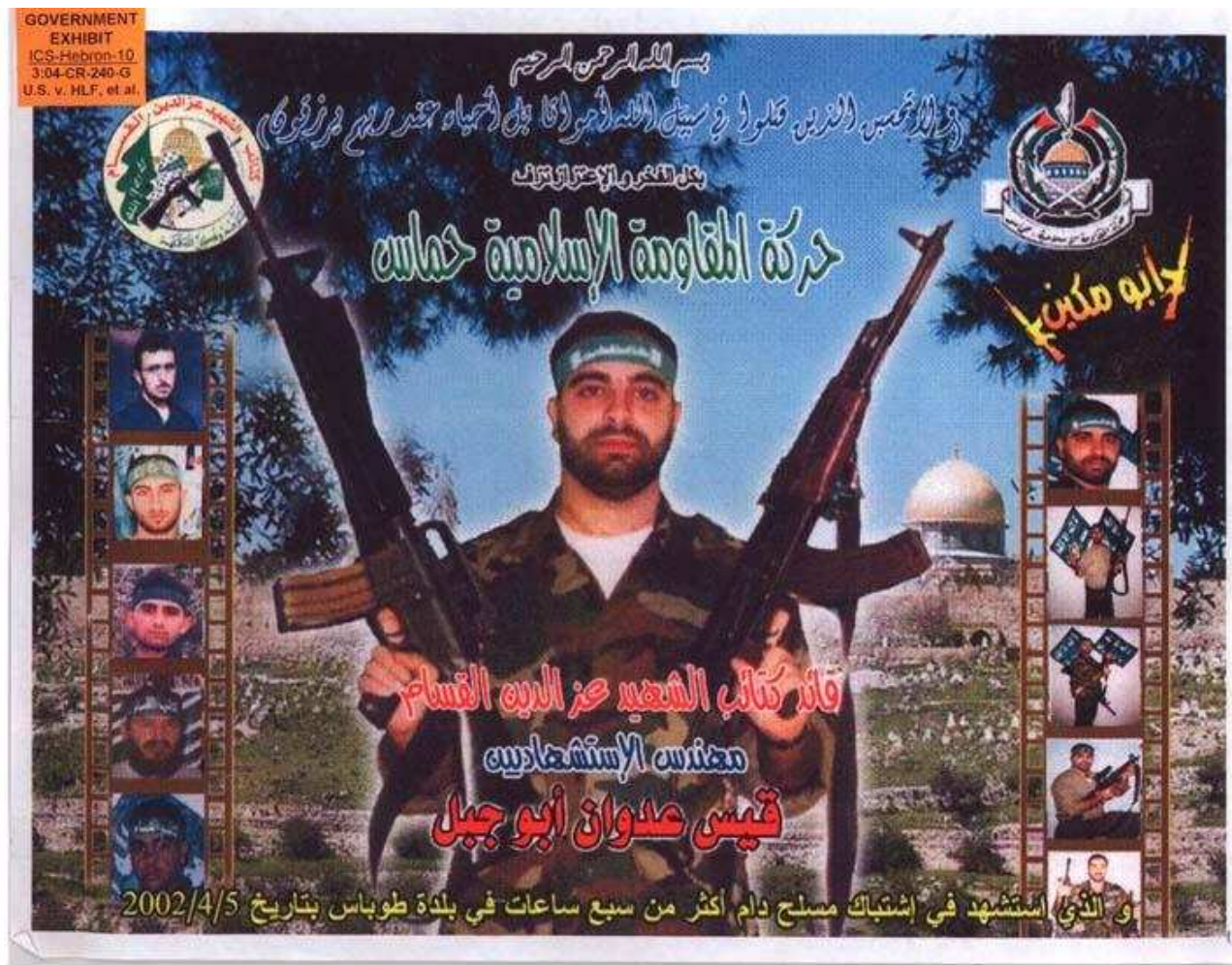
## **Appendix C**

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### **Visual Corpus - Second Intifada martyr posters (2001-2003)**

This appendix reproduces the five martyr posters constituting the visual corpus (V1-001 to V1-005) analyzed in Chapter 5, Section 5.3. Posters are presented in source-ID order with full caption information and analytical notes drawn directly from the Chapter 5 analysis. All posters were collected from publicly accessible archives and are reproduced here for the purposes of academic analysis. Source IDs correspond to citations used throughout the thesis.

Total visual sources: 5 · Period: Second Intifada (2000–2005) · Factions: Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades



**Arabic name / inscription :** قيس عدوان أبو جبل

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

**Date:** 5 April 2002

**Location:** Tubas, West Bank

**Key Arabic text:** "Commander of the Qassam Brigades / Engineer of the martyrdom-seekers" (قائد كتائب الشهيد عز الدين القسام / مهندس الاستشهادية). Announced with "complete pride and appreciation" (بكل الفخر والاعتزاز تتزف).

**Visual analysis:** Weapons-heavy iconography: Abu Jabal is depicted in military dress, holding rifles, surrounded by smaller portraits of fighters. The Dome of the Rock appears in the background.

Exemplifies the militarised heroic register dominant in the Second Intifada corpus; the martyr's body is constituted as a military subject inseparable from instruments of resistance. Labelled a "government exhibit" in U.S. v. HLF — itself an indexical marker of how Hamas martyrdom materials circulated into Western legal and intelligence contexts.

**Analyzed in:** Chapter 5, Section 5.3



**Arabic name / inscription :** محمد مصطفى أحمد

**Producing faction:** Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (Fatah-affiliated)

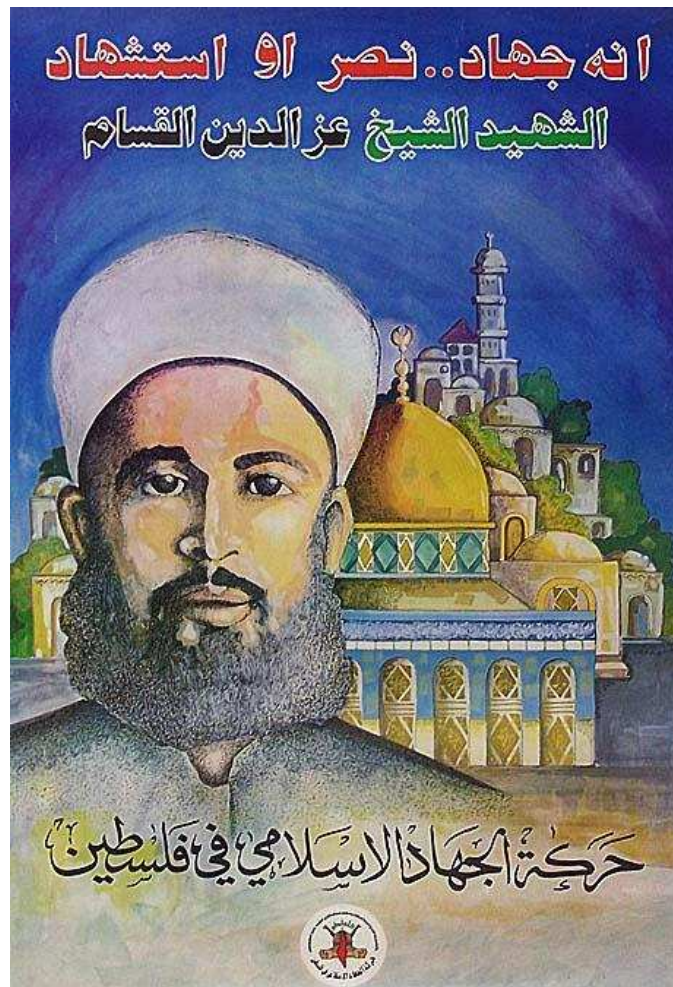
**Date:** 28 February 2002

**Location:** West Bank

**Key Arabic text:** "One of the most prominent leaders of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades / Hero of explosive devices / Son of the village of Burqa al-Sumud" (أحد أبرز قادة كتائب شهداء الأقصى / بطل العبوات الناسفة / ابن قرية صرة الصمود). Announced "with all pride and dignity" (بكل الفخر والاعتزاز تنزف).

**Visual analysis:** Demonstrates cross-factional visual grammar: despite originating from a Fatah-affiliated rather than Hamas source, the poster replicates the same structural elements — announcement formula, weapons display, Palestinian flag colours, Dome of the Rock. The primary variation is in the faction logo (Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades emblem) rather than in the underlying iconographic logic. Confirms that a shared visual grammar of martyrdom operated across organisational boundaries during the Second Intifada.

**Analyzed in:** Chapter 5, Section 5.3



**Arabic name / inscription:** الشهيد الشيخ عز الدين القسام

**Producing faction:** Islamic Jihad in Palestine (حركة الجهاد الإسلامي في فلسطين)

**Date:** c. 2001–2003

**Location:** Gaza / West Bank

**Key Arabic text:** "It is jihad... victory or martyrdom" (إنه جهاد.. نصر أو استشهاد). The central figure is the historical martyr Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, killed by British forces in 1935, after whom Hamas's military wing is named.

**Visual analysis:** Departs from the weapons-heavy aesthetic dominant in V1-001 and V1-002. Al-Qassam is depicted as a religious-national elder rather than an armed operative; the background

shows the Dome of the Rock without military imagery. A tree with deep roots, evoking the land-body fusion identified in martyrdom iconography scholarship, is implicit in the composition. The poster functions as historical genealogy: by commemorating al-Qassam, Islamic Jihad situates contemporary resistance within a lineage extending to the anti-colonial struggle against the British Mandate. Martyrdom here is organic continuity rather than spectacular destruction.

**Analyzed in:** Chapter 5, Section 5.3

V1-004 : Martyr Poster “ With Mourning Pride and Dignity”

**Arabic name / inscription:** صلاح الدين نور الدين دروزة / أبو النور

**Producing faction:** Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)

**Date:** 25 July 2001

**Location:** West Bank

**Key Arabic text:** "With more pride and appreciation, the Islamic Resistance Movement — Hamas — announces to our Palestinian people the heroic martyr leader" (بمزيد من الفخر والاعتزاز تنزف حركة حماس).  
(المقاومة الإسلامية — حماس).

**Visual analysis:** Represents the religious-nationalist register: the Palestinian flag appears alongside the Hamas emblem and a Quranic book. The announcement formula — "with pride and dignity" — recurs verbatim across V1-001, V1-004, and V1-005, functioning as a ritualised declaration that transforms death into collective celebration. Abu al-Nur is described as "the Palestinian mujahid martyr" (الشهيد الفلسطيني المجاهد المربط), foregrounding religious duty over military rank. The Dome of the Rock anchors the poster's visual field, integrating the sacred geography of Jerusalem into the martyrdom frame.

**Analyzed in:** Chapter 5, Section 5.3

V1-005 : Martyr Poster - "Kassel Brigade"



**Arabic name / inscription:** وليد محمود عيدة صلاح الدين

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Tulkarm Governorate / Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

**Date:** c. 2001

**Location:** Tulkarm, West Bank

**Key Arabic text:** "With pride and appreciation, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas / Tulkarm Governorate announces its righteous son / man of Quran and faith / the Qassami hero" (بكل فخر واعتزاز تنزف حركة المقاومة الإسلامية حماس / محافظة طولكرم / ابنها البار / بطل القرآن والعقيدة / القسامي البطال).

**Visual analysis:** The language of voluntary offering — "righteous son" (ابنها البار), self-sacrificing — positions martyrdom as a filial and religious duty rather than a military assignment. The Qassam Brigades sash across the chest integrates factional identity with religious identity; the fighter is described as a "man of Quran and faith" before he is described as a combatant. This poster most clearly expresses the fusion of theological and nationalist legitimation registers identified in the Second Intifada discourse analysis: the martyr is simultaneously a devout Muslim, a son of the community, and a member of the resistance.

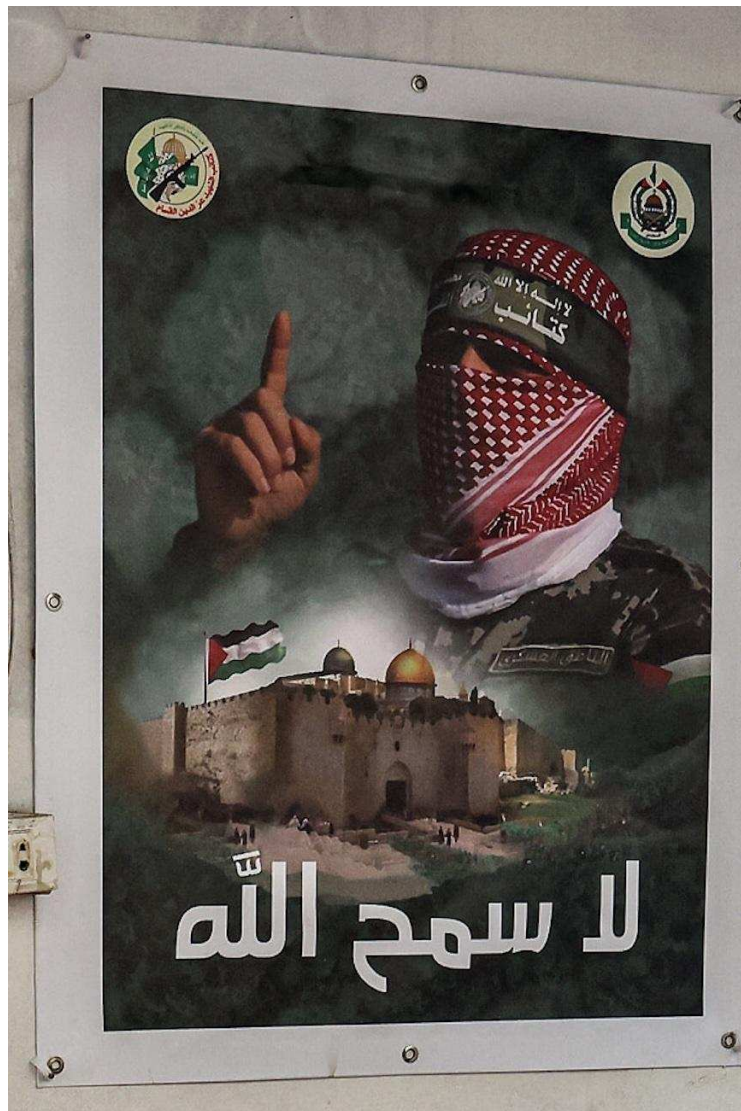
**Analyzed in:** Chapter 5, Section 5.3

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## **Visual Corpus - Post October 7 Period (2023-Present)**

This section presents the four martyr and commemorative posters constituting the post-October 7 visual corpus (V2-002 to V2-005) analysed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3. V2-001 (the Hamas video announcing Abu Obeida's death) is a video source and is not reproduced here; it is referenced in the Appendix B data worksheet. All four posters were sighted either at Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon or circulated on social media, reflecting the spatial displacement of visual commemoration under conditions of genocide. Source IDs correspond to citations used throughout the thesis.

Total visual sources: 4 · Period: Post-October 7 (2023–present) · Faction: Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades



Arabic text / inscription: لا سمح الله (God Forbid)

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

Date: 2024

**Location / circulation:** Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp, Lebanon

**Key Arabic text:** "God Forbid!" (لا سمح الله) — the poster title, functioning as a conditional lamentation anticipating Abu Obeida's death. The masked figure raises his index finger in the Islamic tawhid gesture. Both the Qassam Brigades logo (top left) and Hamas emblem (top right)

appear prominently. The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque occupy the lower half of the composition.

**Visual analysis:** This poster was sighted at Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp in Lebanon, exemplifying the spatial displacement of visual commemoration identified in Chapter 6: production and public display within Gaza having become increasingly impossible under bombardment, the martyr poster migrates to diaspora space. The red keffiyeh covering Abu Obeida's face in all his lifetime broadcasts functions here as an immediately recognisable icon — anonymity transformed into emblem. The tawhid gesture (raised index finger asserting the oneness of God) replaces the weapons iconography dominant in the Second Intifada corpus (V1-001, V1-002), foregrounding religious identity over military function. The Dome of the Rock anchors the poster's sacred geography, maintaining continuity with the Second Intifada visual grammar while shifting the subject from operative to icon.

**Analysed in:** Chapter 6, Section 6.3; analysed in relation to T2-005



**Arabic text / inscription:** آتون بطوفان هادر (We Are Bringing a Powerful Flood)

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

**Date:** 2024

**Location / circulation:** Burj al-Barajneh refugee camp, Lebanon

**Key Arabic text:** "We are bringing a powerful flood" (آتون بطوفان هادر). Sinwar is depicted unmasked, in civilian dress, against the Dome of the Rock and Palestinian flag. Both the Qassam Brigades and Hamas emblems appear in the upper corners, identical in placement to V2-002.

**Visual analysis:** The unmasked face of Sinwar constitutes a deliberate iconographic choice: where Abu Obeida's poster (V2-002) centres anonymity-as-icon, this poster asserts individual identity and recognisability. Sinwar is named "Commander of the Al-Aqsa Flood Battle" in the accompanying communiqué (T2-003); the poster caption situates him as the embodiment of the operation — the flood that bears his name. The civilian dress (suit and open collar) rather than military attire positions him as political leader rather than operative, consistent with the post-October 7 discourse's shift from militarised heroism toward institutionalised leadership martyrdom. Sighted in Lebanon alongside V2-002, the poster confirms the transnational character of the post-October 7 visual corpus, with Palestinian commemoration practices extending across the diaspora through a shared iconographic grammar of Dome, flag, and faction emblem.

**Analysed in:** Chapter 6, Section 6.3; analysed in relation to T2-003



**Arabic text / inscription:** لا تزال طائفة من أمتي على الحق ظاهرين، لعدوهم قاهرين، لا يضرهم من خذلهم ولا ما أصابهم من لأواء ("A group from my nation will continue to adhere to the truth, victorious over their enemy, and they will not be harmed by those who let them down or by the misfortunes that have befallen them")

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

Date: 2024

**Location / circulation:** Palestinian market / shop, West Bank or diaspora (exact location unconfirmed)

**Key Arabic text:** The poster reproduces a Hadith attributed to Abu Obeida, displayed vertically on a shop pillar in a Palestinian commercial space, alongside other resistance imagery including portraits of Hamas leaders and the caption "this is the path... the path of jihad and resistance" (هذا هو الطريق... طريق الجهاد والمقاومة).

**Visual analysis:** The display context is analytically as significant as the visual content: this poster was photographed not in a formal commemorative or political space but in an everyday commercial environment — a Palestinian shop or market. The integration of martyrdom commemoration into quotidian space exemplifies the shift from spectacular public ritual (the mass funeral procession documented in Chapter 5) toward the diffuse, ambient presence of martyrdom in everyday life under genocide. The Hadith text functions not as individual commemoration but as doctrinal affirmation: Abu Obeida is made to continue speaking through the visual medium, his authority surviving his death. The stacking of multiple resistance portraits on the same pillar — creating a visual genealogy of leaders — mirrors the "caravan of martyrs" trope identified in the textual corpus (T2-003), constructing martyrdom as institutional succession rather than individual loss.

**Analysed in:** Chapter 6, Section 6.3; analysed in relation to T2-005



**Arabic text / inscription:** سيطير سقف الباص / إن استمرت مجازركم ("The roof of the bus will fly / If your massacres continue")

**Producing faction:** Hamas — Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

Date: 2024

**Location / circulation:** Circulated on social media

**Key Arabic text:** "The roof of the bus will fly / If your massacres continue" (سَيَطِيرُ سَقْفُ الْباصِ / إن) (استمرت مجازكم). The image depicts a masked fighter carrying explosives alongside an exploding bus, rendered in high-production digital graphic style.

**Visual analysis:** This poster is the most analytically complex in the post-October 7 visual corpus because it appears to contradict the dominant shift toward defensive endurance. It deploys explicitly offensive imagery — the suicide bus bombing, the explosive device, the threat of retaliatory violence — that belongs iconographically to the Second Intifada register. As analyzed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.3), this is consistent with the poster's function as a direct invocation of Yahya Ayyash ('the Engineer', killed 1996) and the explicit visual genealogy it constructs between the 1990s bombing campaign, the Second Intifada operations, and the present period. The caption's conditional framing — 'if your massacres continue' — is significant: offensive violence is not presented as the primary mode of resistance but as a threatened response to Israeli genocidal violence, positioning Hamas in a reactive rather than initiating role. This inversion of the Second Intifada's offensive logic reflects the broader discursive shift identified in the Chapter 6 analysis, even within a poster that superficially resembles Second Intifada aesthetics.

**Analysed in:** Chapter 6, Section 6.3; analyzed in relation to T2-003 and T2-004

