**ABSTRACT**

**“An Asymmetric Doubling”: A Terror Organization Using the Method of Doubling Sources Against a State**

**The Case of Palestinian Hamas against Israeli Intelligence**

Netanel (Nati) Flamer

For decades, Palestinian society has been dealing with the phenomenon of people from its ranks becoming intelligence sources working for Israel (“collaborators”).[[1]](#footnote-1) Since its founding in December 1987, the Palestinian Hamas Movement has had to cope with Israeli intelligence efforts to penetrate its organization and uncover its secrets. Like other armed Palestinian groups in Judah, Samaria and Gaza, Hamas, from its earliest days of operation, made the identification and targeting of collaborators with Israel a top priority.[[2]](#footnote-2) This focus included the establishment of an apparatus, *Almajd*, for gathering information on Palestinians suspected of being collaborators. The Hamas practice was to apply different degrees of torture and abuse, including damaging the property of those suspected of collaborating. Many suspects were kidnapped, interrogated, tortured, and killed, although many of them were not actually collaborators.

In some cases, Hamas chose a different tactic of exploiting collaborators to transform a threat into an opportunity. Hamas turned some collaborators into double agents, using them to advance its goals. This article examines some of the doubling operations carried out by Hamas on Israeli collaborators over the last three decades. Examining these cases will reveal how Hamas’s doubling methods developed over time, concurrently with the movement's evolution. In the 1990s, doubling operations were used to accomplish the short-term goal of killing the collaborators’ coordinators. In the early 2000s, doubling operations became both longer-term, lasting from one to a few months, and more sophisticated, including goals such as providing false information. After Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, the Hamas governmental apparatus gradually imposed better organization on their efforts with collaborators, with their Internal Security Force (ISF) playing an important role. The doubling operations became more organized and sophisticated, being used for propaganda and deterrence purposes as well as other goals.

This research is based on various sources, in both Hebrew and Arabic, including official publications of Hamas together with official Israeli sources, such as judicial proceedings. Some of these materials have not yet received serious attention in the scholarship. Secondary literature and journalistic sources will be used both to provide necessary background and to present an even more complete picture of Hamas doubling activities. Most research on intelligence and counter-intelligence activities of non-state armed organizations, particularly on the specific issue of doubling sources, lacks sufficient academic documentation. Therefore, this article will make a unique contribution by exploring how a terror organization can use doubling of sources as part of its asymmetric war against a state. In addition, it will shed light on an interesting aspect of Hamas’s counter-intelligence activity.

**Biography**

Netanel (Nati) Flamer is a PhD student at the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Bar-Ilan University. He was awarded an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from Tel Aviv University with honors. Over the past four years, he has been working as a teaching assistant at the IDC School of Government, and is currently an adjunct lecturer at Bar-Ilan University. His current research examines the intelligence activities of Hizbullah and Hamas against Israel. His general field of interest is Islamic terror organizations in the Middle East and intelligence issues related to the Lebanese and Palestinian arenas.

1. See Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948.* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2008); Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–196.7* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For an attempt to characterize and categorize this activity in real time, see "Collaborators in the Occupied Territories: Human Rights Abuses and Violations," *B’tselem,* January 1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)