

## The Theoretical Framework of Hamas's Military Action in the Palestinian Intifada 1987-1994

Dr. Nehad M. S, AlShaikh Khaleel

The Islamic University of Gaza IUG, Palestine

**\*Corresponding Author:** Dr. Nehad, the Islamic University of Gaza IUG, Palestine

**Abstract:** The paper consists of four axes. The first focuses on the discussion that took place between the Muslim Brotherhood cadres in Palestine before the establishment of Hamas in 1987. The second deals with the military ideas found in Hamas's earlier publications. The third clarifies the ideas that guided military action during the stage of al-Mujahidun al-Filastiniun organization. The fourth studies the ideas that guided military action in the stage of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades during the Palestinian Intifada. The study adopted the historical research method and focused on the 1987-1994 Intifada. The study concluded that discussion continued among Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood cadres regarding the practice of armed struggle for twenty years before the establishment of the Hamas movement in 1987. The beginnings of Hamas's military action were based on dreamy ideas, but the ideas began to mature after the arrests and then gaining experience from the other Palestinian factions that preceded them in military action. Hamas has endeavoured to target the settlements, the patrols of the Israeli occupation army, in addition to some farms. This was an attempt to raise the cost of the occupation's control of the Palestinian territories, and thus push it to leave.

**Keywords:** Hamas, Palestine, Resistance, Israel.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent decades, Hamas -and its military wing the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades- were recognized by their military efforts which started by shooting against the Israeli occupation soldiers and patrols using light weapons, firing rockets towards Israeli settlements -which are belt on the land of historic Palestine-, conducting martyrdom operations, landing behind enemy lines on land and at sea, and, latterly, flying drones on reconnaissance missions.

This study aims to examine the emerge and development of Hamas's military ideas that shaped its military action carried out during the First Palestinian Intifada 1987-1994.

The study deals with these two questions:

- 1- What are the establishing ideas that led Hamas to conduct military action against the occupation?
- 2- What is the framework of Hamas's military action in the First Intifada?

The study follows the historical method of research, and focuses on eliciting ideas through observing the military performance of Hamas, because there are no theoretical contributions issued by Hamas or any of its iconic figures in the field.

The study is divided into the following axes:

First: The Development of discussions on the priority and importance of military action (before the establishment of Hamas)

Second: The theoretical military ideas found in Hamas's leaflets during the intifada

Third: The Theoretical Framework of Hamas's military action under the name of "al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinin" 1987-1989

Fourth: The Theoretical Framework of Hamas's military action under the name of "al-Qassam Brigades" 1990-1994

### First: The Development of Discussions on the Priority and Importance of Military Action (Before the Establishment of Hamas)

Despite the delay of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood organization in adopting military resistance, its military action preceded its official announcement. Moreover, theorizing about it never happened during the Intifada. Therefore, this study tries to devise a theoretical framework of Hamas's military action in the Palestinian Intifada through studying its behaviour on the ground.

In order to get the full picture, it is essential to examine the discussions that the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood had held after the year 1967 where the idea of establishing military action or delaying it was the centre of it. These discussions -held before establishing 'Hamas'- can be divided into five major stages.

First: the stage of discussions within the leadership of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood inside the occupied land in 1967. Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (founder of Hamas) was among those who were in favor of starting military action immediately after 1967<sup>(1)</sup>; the debate, however, was settled in favor of giving priority to raising a religious generation and build a society that can afford the cost of resistance, delaying military resistance to a later stage<sup>(2)</sup>.

Second: the stage of discussions within the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood students like Fathi Shaqaqi, Abd Al Aziz Awda, and a group of other students who were studying in the Egyptian universities. The Muslim Brotherhood at that point believed that the preparation stage is not done yet. Thus, military resistance stage needed more time to start<sup>(3)</sup>.

Third, the stage of the 1980 meeting of Shura Council of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in Amman. The council has consisted of members from inside Palestine and the diaspora. The council took a decision to start preparing for military action against the occupation. Political, financial and military committees were established to implement this decision, and instructions were given to begin assembling military tools. In 1983, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin began working according to a new vision based on giving priority to military action, so he established a secret committee responsible for preparing for military action, which was the first nucleus of the military wing<sup>(4)</sup>. The Conference in Aman in 1980 represented a qualitative leap in the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood's ideology towards resistance action, as it provided a scope for preparation for "jihad", which Sheikh Ahmed Yassin invested in<sup>(5)</sup>.

However, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood's idea of military action was dreamy at the time. They expected that they would need to collect weapons in large quantities, train people in large numbers, and then launch a non-stop stage of jihad. Their security experience was also weak, which led to the attempt being aborted and many of its members captured, including Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and a significant amount of the collected weapons were also confiscated<sup>(6)</sup>.

Fourth: the stage of military groups that some young members of the Muslim Brotherhood started individually without the consent of the leadership. The most prominent group of them was called "Al-Mughraqa Group" after the name of its founding members' town. It was founded in 1984 by Adnan al-Ghoul when the Islamic movement was at the stage of building and establishing the organization. It all started in 1983 when al-Ghoul went to Ibrahim al-Makadmeh -a leader of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood- and proposed founding military groups to work against the occupation, yet al-Makadmeh refused saying that military action is still early and needed some more time.

However, this group launched a number of operations started in the middle of Ramadan 1985 by setting up an ambush on the eastern line of Gaza City for an Israeli military convoy loaded with soldiers and equipped with supplies and weapons. Then, they fired at the soldiers. The group did not claim responsibility for the operation.

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<sup>(1)</sup>( Al Shaikh Khaleel, N. *An Interview with Sheikh Ahmed Yassin*, Gaza, 2002.

<sup>(2)</sup>Jose, S. Vericat. *The Internal conversation of Hamas: Salafism and Rise of 'Ulama'*, Thesis Presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, Trinity term 2016, P.62.

<sup>(3)</sup>( Al Shaikh Khaleel, N. *Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip (1967-1987)*, Gaza: Centre of Palestinian Historiography and Documentation, 2011, P.61.

<sup>(4)</sup>Hroub, Khaled. *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice*, Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1996, p. 35.

<sup>(5)</sup>(Al Shaikh Khaleel, N. *Muslim Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip (1967-1987)*, Gaza: Centre of Palestinian Historiography and Documentation, 2011, P.348.

<sup>(6)</sup>(Adwan, A. *Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, His Life and Jihad*, Gaza, Palestine, 1992, p. 126.

In the middle of 1986, the Mughraqa Group planted two explosive devices near a position of the Israeli forces on the coast of Nuseirat, so that one of them explodes first, and after the soldiers gather, the second explodes. The group did not claim responsibility for the operation, again<sup>(7)</sup>.

The work of this group suggests that the stage of thinking about the importance and necessity of Islamists' involvement in military action against the occupation has ended, as Islamist young people and those involved in the Muslim Brotherhood began armed action individually, relying on primitive and self-directed efforts, which picked up the pace of the Muslim Brotherhood leadership, and made them move towards the stage of actually engaging in armed action, especially since the work of individual groups met with notable success.

Fifth: the stage of establishing the "al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinion" organization. This came after Sheikh Ahmed Yassin was released from prison in 1985 in the prisoner exchange deal between the occupation and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine– General Command led by Ahmed Jibril, in addition to Sheikh Salah Shehadeh who ended his sentence in the occupation prisons in 1986. Both of them were focused on resuming efforts to launch Military action against the Israeli occupation<sup>(8)</sup>.

This new organization was formed in a better manner, as the leadership of the Palestinian Brotherhood benefited from the military experience of the "PLO" factions that they met in the prison. However, these groups did not start to work until the First Palestinian Intifada, which was sparked by the end of 1987<sup>(9)</sup>.

### Second: The Theoretical Military Ideas Found in Hamas's Leaflets during the Intifada

Hamas began talking about military action late, sporadically in its publications issued during the first intifada. In its first statement issued on December 14, 1987, the movement stated, "The Jews are committing Nazi crimes against our people... Violence only generates violence and murder only generates murder."<sup>(10)</sup>

In its message addressed to Fatah's Fifth General Conference held on August 3, 1989, Hamas stressed that "Jihad is the only way to liberate Palestine ... and it is not permissible at any stage and under any circumstances to marginalize it or turn away from it."<sup>(11)</sup>

Hamas published a leaflet in October 13, 1991, stating that the military action targeting Zionists is an act of retaliation in response to the crimes of the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian cities, villages and camps, in addition to being a tool to express rejection of political settlement solutions such as Madrid Conference of 1991.<sup>(12)</sup>

Hamas condemned what it described as "placing olive branches on the jeeps of the occupation army in Gaza and the West Bank," and affirmed in its statement issued on November 11, 1991 that Palestinians should "let the olive branch fall down, and raise the gun and the banner of jihad. A gun in one hand and the Quran in the other."<sup>(13)</sup>

On May 25, 1992, Hamas issued a statement mourning three of the resistance members: Yasser Al-Hasanat, Marwan Al-Zaigh, and Muhammad Qandil, who were surrounded by the occupation forces in a house in the Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City, but they did not surrendered but confronted the occupation forces until they were martyred, refusing to surrender. Hamas blessed what it described as the heroism of these men, and said that this effort comes in the context of an attempt to sow fear in the hearts of the occupiers and shake the ground beneath their feet<sup>(14)</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>( Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p.40.

<sup>8</sup>(Ramadan, N. *The Contemporary Islamic Discourse in Palestine: Hamas as an Example*, a Master's Thesis, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, 2010, p.143.

<sup>9</sup>( Abu Zuhri, S. *An interview with Ibrahim Al-Maqadma*, Gaza: the Archives of Centre of Palestinian Historiography and Documentation, 2002.

<sup>10</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/39>

<sup>11</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/73>

<sup>12</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/144>

<sup>13</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/112>

<sup>14</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/186>

On July 27, 1992, Hamas issued a statement announcing that it adopts a military attack by groups of al-Qassam Brigades against two Israeli military sites west of the Khan Yunis Camp for Palestinian refugees on July 25, 1992. The statement said that the operation comes within "the framework of the war of attrition waged by the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades against the occupation soldiers and their fragile state."<sup>(15)</sup>

On October 27, 1992, Hamas issued a statement following an operation carried out by al-Qassam Brigades inside Hebron against the Israeli occupation soldiers and settlers. The statement said that the operation comes within the framework of confronting the occupation and the settlers, and to express the rejection of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations on administrative autonomy<sup>(16)</sup>.

Consequently, it is clear that the initial talk of Hamas about military action was emotional and general, and was made in five contexts. The first context was an attempt to expose the crimes of the occupation, and incite the people against the occupation policies. The second context focused on rejecting the political settlement highlighting that the path to liberation is through armed resistance. The third context was a call to avenge the blood of the martyrs and the torments of the prisoners and the wounded and their families, in an attempt to raise the morale of the people on the one hand, and to deter the occupation on the other hand. The fourth context was expressed by Hamas using the word "attrition". Perhaps Hamas, at that stage, meant to exhaust the occupation forces by using the concept of "attrition". The fifth context was Hamas's attempt to "sow terror into the hearts of the occupation soldiers and its settlers", and raise the cost of occupying the Palestinian land.

### Third: The Theoretical Framework of Hamas's Military Action under the Name of "al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinion" 1987-1989

By observing the actions of "al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinion" groups, it becomes clear that their military performance shows two main ideas: to harm to the Israeli economy, and capture Israeli soldiers aiming to achieve prisoner exchange deals. Below is an analysis of these ideas.

**First-** Harming the Israeli economy: A military group led by Hassan al-Maqadma managed to burn Israeli agricultural fields located in the east of the Gaza Strip, especially east of Al-Bureij. The group used pieces of cloth filled with gasoline, which, when thrown, lead to the ignition of fires enormously. These actions took place in 1988 repetitively<sup>(17)</sup>.

**Second-** The operations of capturing Israeli soldiers with the aim of completing prisoner exchange deals: Group 101 -affiliated to al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinion- that was led by Muhammad Sharatha, managed to capture two Israeli soldiers. The task of this group was to carry out special missions, as three others worked alongside Muhammad Sharatha: Abd Rabbo Abu Khousa, Muhammad Nassar, and Mahmoud al-Mabhoh<sup>(18)</sup>.

The performance of Group 101 was advanced to some extent due to the fact that its members are former prisoners, who practised armed work before their first arrest, and during the captivity period, they learned about the experiences of many prisoners so they identified the loopholes that the Israeli intelligence could run through to capture the fighters.

Muhammad Nassar and Mahmoud Al-Mabhoh carried out the first operation on Thursday, February 16, 1989<sup>(19)</sup>. During this operation, Israeli sergeant Avi Sasportas was captured and then Muhammad Nassar shot him and killed him directly. Then Nassar and Al-Mabhoh buried him near the Hadassah crossroads and took his weapon, clothes and identification papers, and handed them to Muhammad Sharatha.<sup>(20)</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/196>

<sup>16</sup>( <http://hamas.ps/ar/post/217>

<sup>17</sup>( Hatem, Z. *A Research View (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades 1982-2000)*, Gaza: Almustaqbal Research Centre, 2011, p. 73.

<sup>18</sup>( Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p.79.

<sup>19</sup>(Al-Sani Y. *Hamas Movement: Establishment and Development*, El-Raya for Research and Studies, 2020, p. 267.

<sup>20</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 91.



The occupation authorities were able to discover the corpse of the soldier three months after the operation, due to the cracking of the ground and the smell of the corpse on May 7, 1989<sup>(21)</sup>.

The second capturing operation took place on May 3 1989, when the two fighters (Al-Mabhough and Nasar) succeeded in capturing another soldier named IlanSaadon in the same first way, but with a slight modification to the plan. The car this time was brought across the border, for use in Gaza<sup>(22)</sup>. Then the body was hidden in KiryatMalakhi near "al-Masmiyya" junction<sup>(23)</sup>.

The Israeli occupation forces arrested Muhammad Sharatha, but the rest of the cell members managed to escape and were able to leave to Egypt, and then to Sudan, with a map of the place where IlanSaadon was buried<sup>(24)</sup>.

The Israeli occupation authorities tried to retrieve the body of the soldier IlanSaadon by entering into negotiations with the prisoner Muhammad Sharatha, who did not know the location of the body. The negotiation process went through several stages but reached a dead end. Eventually, the Palestinian security services, through their investigations with the detainees who were members of Hamas, were able to find the map of the place of Elan Saadon's burial, and they gave it to the Israeli occupation authorities for nothing on May 25, 1996<sup>(25)</sup>.

It seems that the first arrests of the founding leaders of Hamas -Ahmed Yassin and Salah Shehade-made them realise the importance of capturing Israeli soldiers, in order to carry out exchanges in which hundreds of Palestinian prisoners could be released. This happened for two reasons. The first is that the period of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's arrest coincided with the negotiation of a prisoner exchange deal. The second reason is that the Palestinian prisoners with life sentences live in the hope that one of the Palestinian factions will capture one or more soldiers, in order to contribute to the release of the prisoners.

However, Hamas did not realize that it is operating inside the territory occupied in 1967, and since this area is completely under the control of the Israeli occupation, the Israelis will hesitate a lot to reach an exchange deal with military groups inside the occupied territory, for several reasons. First, the occupation authorities believed that it was capable of reaching the military groups sooner or later because they are living under its control. Second, the Israeli occupation feared the success of an exchange deal with a group inside the occupied territories, because this would encourage other groups to repeat it.

### **Fourth: The Theoretical Framework of Hamas's Military Action under the name of "al-Qassam Brigades" 1990-1994**

Al-Qassam Brigades was formed to be a completely separate branch from the movement. As a result of the experience working under the name of al-Mujahidoun al-Falastinion, through discussions in the prisons, they started to believe that whoever wants to engage in military action must prepare himself for either martyrdom or chasing; as for detention, they had to do everything in their power to avoid it. The framework of the military action at this stage will be presented through a set of points as follows:

#### **First: Ambush operations for moving military targets**

Al-Qassam Brigades focused on carrying out military operations by setting up ambushes for vehicles of Israeli soldiers and settlers. An example of this is the operation that Al-Qassam Brigades carried out on January 1, 1992, targeting Doron Shorshan, a rabbi settler from KfarDarom, and one of its security officials. He was immediately killed and they left the place. Al-Qassam used a pistol and a Carlo gun, and a Peugeot 404 was used in this operation<sup>(26)</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup>( Zaida, H. *A Research View (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades 1982-2000)*, Gaza: Almustaqbal Research Centre, 2011, p. 74.

<sup>22</sup>(Zaida, H. *A Research View (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades 1982-2000)*, Gaza: Almustaqbal Research Centre, 2011, p. 75.

<sup>23</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p.92.

<sup>24</sup>(Al-Nasser, Salma&Abulrahman K.*The biographies of the martyrs leaders in the Hamas movement*, Giza: Arab Media Center, 2nd Edition, 2017, p.406.

<sup>25</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 94.

<sup>26</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 104..

Al-Qassam Brigades initially adopted a policy of not declaring its responsibility for the military operations it carried out. However, over time, three factors led them to announce the immediate adoption of the operations. The first factor is the arrest of some of the doers, inasmuch as the matter will be revealed anyway; consequently, the announcement benefits them especially in terms of increasing the popularity of Hamas. The second factor is the repeated announcements by unknown parties to adopt these operations, which deprives Hamas of reaping the political benefits of its military effort. The third factor is the launching of the political settlement process of the Palestinian issue, and the involvement of Fatah movement in it. At that moment, the competition began to mobilize people around one of the two options (the settlement) led by Fatah, or (the resistance) led by Hamas.

Among the ambush operations, there was one carried out by Al-Qassam Brigades fighters in Jabalia Camp on March 20, 1993, when the fighters learned of the presence of an Israeli army patrol roaming the streets of the camp at night. A group of Al-Qassam Brigades, with two M16 rifles and a Kalashnikov assault rifle, set up a military ambush on the road to a patrol of the Israeli occupation army. As soon as the patrol came, the fighters fired at it with heavy bullets, killing three soldiers<sup>(27)</sup>.

On June 27, 1993, Al-Qassam Brigades monitored the movement of an Israeli military patrol on the coastal road between the cities of Khan Yunis and Deir Al-Balah, so it decided to target it and set up a military ambush for it. The fighters, however, got surprised that the jeep's speed was unexpectedly high, so the Israeli jeep managed to escape<sup>(28)</sup>.

On the morning of Friday, December 25, 1993, three Qassam fighters -Awad Salmi, Saad Al-Arbeed, and Munther Al-Dahshan- used a Peugeot (404) car to ambush an Israeli commander's jeep, at a crossroads at the end of Al-Nasr Street in Gaza City. When the Israeli jeep approached the fighters at a distance of no more than four meters, they began firing a barrage of bullets, killing Colonel Meir Menz, and wounding another officer in the Gaza District Command, with the rank of a Major General, who also was the Israeli military commander responsible for the pursuit and killing of EmedAkel, a leader of Al-Qassam Brigades<sup>(29)</sup>.

It is noted from the review of previous operations that the military groups of Al-Qassam Brigades operate in the north and south of the Gaza Strip using similar methods like ambushes. This indicates that the ideas related to military action were developing jointly and that this work is not random although these ideas remain simple and do not stem from coherent theories in military action, but depend on monitoring the field, and trying to seize opportunities whenever a gap appears.

### **Second: Operations Against Stationary Targets**

Al-Qassam Brigades focused on carrying out attacks against sites that belong to the Israeli occupation Forces. Among these operations was the storming of a citrus packaging factory in the Karni area, aka Nahal Oz site, east of Gaza City, on June 25, 1992, after a monitoring process. The objective of the operation was determined: the killing of two Israelis the factory belongs to them, in addition to seizing weapons inside the factory<sup>(30)</sup>.

On October 25, 1992, Emad Akel and Harun Nasereddin attacked an Israeli guard unit near the IbrahimMosque, killing a petty officer and wounding another. The operation showed boldness and meticulous planning from the doers<sup>(31)</sup>.

Through the study of the aforementioned operations, in addition to the operations mentioned later in this research, it is clear that one of the most important ideas that directed this type of operations is the fighters' belief that the variation of the targets they strike will contribute to confusing the occupation authorities' plans, and will make them incapable of anticipating the next target. Thus, it will raise the cost of security procedures. This is one of the pillars of guerrilla wars adopted by the liberation movements.

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<sup>27</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 121.

<sup>28</sup>(Dukhan, A. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestine Question in the Twentieth Century*, Gaza: , p. 299.

<sup>29</sup>(AwadSelmi's Memoirs, without publishing house, without publication date, pp. 2-9.

<sup>30</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 106..

<sup>31</sup>(Dukhan, A. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestine Question in the Twentieth Century*, Gaza: , p. 285.

### **Third: Drive-by Shooting at the Israeli Occupation Patrols**

The drive-by shootings at the occupation patrols were part of the development of the Qassam Brigades' performance. One of these operations is Operation Shuja'iyya, when Qassam monitoring groups reported the presence of an Israeli military patrol consisting of three soldiers, moving routinely on the eastern road of Gaza City where the jeep passes through the main road from Nahal Oz, east of Shuja'iyya, Gaza City.

This operation was carried out on December 7, 1992, and the two fighters who carried out the attack used an M16 rifle and a Kalashnikov rifle. When the Israeli jeep appeared, the fighters' car moved, and after the car passed the jeep, the fighters opened fire on the soldiers, killing the three of them -an officer and two soldiers- and withdrew safely<sup>(32)</sup>.

On October 21, 1992, Emad Akel (an experienced Qassam fighter from Gaza, who had moved to the West Bank), and a group of Qassam fighters in the West Bank attacked an Israeli army "Renault 5" car that was driving on ad-Dhahiriya road towards Hebron; they passed the Israeli car and shot it heavily. The Qassam Brigades claimed responsibility for the operation<sup>(33)</sup>.

The impact of the interaction of battle experience that has accumulated in Gaza with the suitable geographical environment in the West Bank's mountains is clear. Also, the ambushes and drive-by shootings reveal the dynamism of the mind and the accumulation of experience of the Qassam Brigades fighters. The jeeps of the Israeli occupation forces operating in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were open at the beginning of the Palestinian intifada to ease the exit of soldiers from them to chase the stone-throwers. However, with the increasing intensity of stone-throwing, the occupation authorities closed the jeeps and covered the glass with nets, so that the military patrols could carry out their duties in securing groups of civil administration employees and settlers, without the stone-throwers being able to bother them. The Israeli military jeeps became like a fortified castle, moving in the face of stones and Molotov cocktails.

It seems that the fighters noticed this shift and decided to turn these mobile, fortified castles into traps, so they started targeting the jeeps with bullets which can penetrate the glass. Thus, these operations were able to confuse the occupation forces, and the fighters were able to kill soldiers, seize their weapons, and summon journalists to take pictures and document the incident before the occupation authorities could notice the occurrence of such incidents.

### **Fourth: The operations of Storming then Ambushing inside Settlements**

Al-Qassam Brigades managed to monitor the permanent movement of an Israeli patrol inside the Gani Tal settlement in the western Khan Yunis area, so they decided to target it. Because the settlement was surrounded with an electronic wire, the two fighters entered the settlement by digging under the wire with only a shovel. Then, they waited inside a hole surrounded by some bushes, waiting for the moment of execution.

The operation was carried out on January 30, 1993, using an M16 rifle and a Carlo gun. The two fighters shot and killed two soldiers and the patrol officer was wounded. The two fighters managed to seize the gun of one of the soldiers, a Galil gun. The two fighters were able to withdraw from the scene safely, yet this operation damaged the theory of Israeli security, constituting an achievement of the Palestinian resistance, especially after seizing the Galil gun<sup>(34)</sup>.

From the aforementioned information, it appears that Al-Qassam Brigades reached three very important views during their development of military performance. The first is to focus on the intelligence effort that identifies the weaknesses in the behaviour of the Israeli occupation, and then to attack the targets. The second is to employ Palestinian workers, who work inside the settlements, as sources of information about the security of the settlements, thus transforming the Palestinian

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)32(Wadi, J. *Qassami Championships, First Book*, Gaza: The Military College - al-Qassam Brigades, without a year of publication.

)33(Al-Khalidi, K.& Hammad, A. *Jihad of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades in Hebron*, Gaza: Centre of Palestinian Historiography and Documentation, Ed. 14, 2019, p. 28.

)34(Wadi, J. *Qassami Championships, First Book*, Gaza: The Military College - al-Qassam Brigades, without a year of publication p.69.

weaknesses - serving the Israeli occupation economy - into a strength that works to serve the resistance in the field of intelligence effort. The third is to target the settlements and raise the cost of protecting them so that the occupation is forced to reconsider the importance of settlements in relation to its economy and security.

#### **Fifth: Confrontation with the Occupation, no Surrender Policy**

The Israeli occupation almost completely controlled the land occupied in 1967 and was able to arrest anyone suspected of engaging in protests and resistance. This forced resistance activists to take precautions to avoid arrest. These measures included undercover work and the use of balaclava in demonstrations and other activities of resistance. However, the Israeli occupation intelligence managed to reach the activists and arrest them, and after the arrest of the (al-Mujahidoun al-Falastini) groups, Hamas activists working in the military field took a decision not to surrender and to choose to be chased if they were discovered, and to fight to the death if besieged by the Israeli occupation soldiers.

Numbers of the pursued fighters increased in 1992. Due to their lack of weapons, more fighters were arrested<sup>(35)</sup>, and, therefore, some of them decided to leave the country and others moved to the West Bank where more weapons can be found compared with Gaza Strip.

Nevertheless, those who stayed in Gaza Strip kept "fighting to death" like when Uadah Jamil Wadi, who was the commander of Al-Qassam Brigades in the Gaza Strip then, was heading back from a military mission in the area in between Khan Yunis and Deir Al-Balah on 27th Jun 1993 and was encountered by an Israeli checkpoint. When an Israeli officer and a soldier asked him to show his ID, he immediately shot both of them with his pistol and killed them. The rest of the Israeli patrol instantly started shooting at him and killed him<sup>(36)</sup>. This was also repeated with Yasir Namrouti, EmedAkel, and Yasser Al-Hasanat.

#### **Sixth: Kidnapping Soldiers During the Era of Al-Qassam Brigades:**

Al-Qassam Brigades showed a marked interest in kidnapping Israeli soldiers. This was demonstrated by repeated kidnapping attempts. Al-Qassam aimed at obtaining weapons and threatening the personal security of Israeli soldiers, as well as attempting to carry out prisoner exchanges due to which the Palestinian prisoners would be released.

These are some of the most prominent operations. First, the kidnapping of Serdadu Alon Karvani on December 18, 1992, in response to the assassination of al-Qassam commander at the time, Yasir Namrouti. The fighters used in this operation a Carlo rifle, in addition to a pistol. They took a Subaru car, with an Israeli number plate. For camouflage, they wore clothes similar to what Jewish rabbis wear, and one of the fighters was fluent in Hebrew. At the entrance to Al-Bureij camp, there was a centre for the Israeli occupation forces, where a soldier was standing next to, pointing to the car of al-Qassam fighters, to get in to leave and go to his house. The soldier got into the car with his weapons, and then, the fighters headed to one of the yards located behind "Abu Jaba" fuel station on the eastern road to Gaza City. In this area, the fighters stabbed the soldier in the neck, after stripping him of his clothes and personal weapon. Firearms were not used because the yard was close to the roads of the Israeli patrols and cars. The fighters managed to withdraw safely with the soldier's rifle, an M16.

What is striking about this process is that the Israeli soldier was not hidden, and there was no attempt to negotiate a prisoner exchange. Rather, he was left in the yard, and then the occupation forces were able to find him quickly - as if the goal of this operation was limited to quietly killing the soldier and finding his weapon. This may be due to the fighters' realization of the difficulty of hiding the body inside the Gaza Strip, as the area is small, and the ability of the occupation forces to reach anywhere in the Gaza Strip is high<sup>(37)</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup>(Abu Shawish, K. *The Armed Resistance During the 1987-1994 Stone Intifada, a Conceptual Approach*, Ramallah: Seyasat Magazine vol.82, Institute of Public Policies, 2018, P. 56.

<sup>36</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p.101-103.

<sup>37</sup>(Wadi, J. *Qassami Championships, First Book*, Gaza: The Military College - al-Qassam Brigades, without a year of publication p. 13.



Second, al-Qassam, once again, did not seek to negotiate and release prisoners in the operation of kidnapping the two Israeli soldiers, Ehud Rock and Ilan Lev, on October 24, 1993, which was in revenge for the assassination of Jamil Wadi, the commander of al-Qassam Brigades at the time. The group of fighters set off, in a car with an Israeli number plate, disguised as Israeli soldiers, towards the road leading to the settlement of Jeni Tal. They managed to kidnap two Israeli soldiers with their personal equipment, and seized their M-16 weapons, in addition to some of their documents. The fighters had managed to safely withdraw from the scene<sup>(38)</sup>.

Third: The kidnapping operation of Sgt. Nasem Thulidano near his home in the city of Lod, on December 13, 1992. It was carried out by a group of al-Qassam Brigades fighters from Jerusalem. After Thulidano was stripped of his weapons, he was transferred to a safe place in a cave on the outskirts of Jerusalem, awaiting the fulfilment of the demands of Hamas, which two of the group's members handed over to an employee of the International Red Cross in Ramallah<sup>(39)</sup>.

The demands of al-Qassam Brigades were to release Sheikh Ahmed Yassin within a period not exceeding nine o'clock in the evening of the same day, in front of the delegate of the International Red Cross, in the presence of the ambassadors of Egypt, France, Sweden and Turkey, and that the occupation authorities pledge not to re-arrest the sheikh again, and that there will be a live broadcast to the release of the sheikh on Israeli television. The brigades warned against attacking Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, and in return, al-Qassam Brigades pledged to release the soldier in the manner it deems appropriate. Attached to the demands sheet was a photo of the military card of the soldier Nasem Thulidano<sup>(40)</sup>.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin rejected Al-Qassam's demands and carried out a campaign of arrests of nearly two thousand Palestinians suspected of sympathizing with Hamas. With the end of the period, al-Qassam Brigades implemented its threat to kill the soldier Thulidano, and dumped his corpse on the Jerusalem-Jericho road<sup>(41)</sup>. As a result of this operation, the occupation forces carried out punitive measures, which culminated in deporting 415 people to the Marj Al-Zuhour area on December 17, 1992, four days after the operation<sup>(42)</sup>.

It is evident through the repeated and continuous operations of kidnapping Israeli soldiers by Hamas fighters that this idea occupies a central position in the framework of Hamas's military action. This was to achieve a set of goals which were: giving hope to the Palestinian prisoners of high sentences of the possibility of getting released, undermining the personal security of the Israeli soldier, and striking the confidence of the Israeli society in the ability of their army to achieve security for its soldiers or to even protect and secure society.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Finally, the paper concluded with a set of ideas, a framework, from which the military action of Hamas during the first intifada was premised:

First: For two decades, before the leaders of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood announced the launch of Hamas in 1987, they engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about when to start military action. The discussion included the leaders of the group in Gaza and the leadership outside Palestine, in addition to the Palestinian students in Egypt during the 1970s, as well as youth in Gaza during the 1980s. Some of these youths took the initiative in the 1980s, without the approval of their leadership, who were at the same time secretly making arrangements and preparations for the launch of military action.

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<sup>38</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 127.

<sup>39</sup>(Zaida, H. *A Research View (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades 1982-2000)*, Gaza: Almustaqbal Research Centre, 2011, p. 135.

<sup>40</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 128.

<sup>41</sup>(Dukhan, A. *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestine Question in the Twentieth Century*, Gaza: , pp. 286-287.

<sup>42</sup>(Al-Baba, R. *The Efforts of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Palestinian Intifada (1987-1994)*, Gaza: The Islamic University of Gaza, 2010, p. 129.

Second: The initial talk of Hamas about military action was general and emotional. Hamas's discourse tried to expose the occupation crimes, inciting the people against the occupation policies, and focused on rejecting the political settlement, asserting that the path to liberation is through armed strife. It was a call to avenge the blood of the martyrs and the suffering of the prisoners, the wounded and their families, in an attempt to deter or distract the occupation.

Third: Harming the occupation's capabilities was one of the main ideas guiding the military action of Hamas during the first Palestinian intifada.

Fourth: al-Qassam realized the importance of kidnapping Israeli soldiers, in order to carry out prisoner exchange deals in which hundreds of Palestinian prisoners get released, for two reasons. The first is the negotiation of a prisoner exchange deal that occurred during the period of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's imprisonment. The second reason is that the Palestinian prisoners sentenced to life sentences live in the hope that one of the Palestinian factions will capture one soldier or more, in order to contribute to the release of the prisoners.

Fifth: The military groups of al-Qassam Brigades worked in the Gaza Strip in similar ways. One of these methods is setting up ambushes, in addition to refusing to surrender in front of the Israeli occupation soldiers, and fighting until martyrdom. This indicates a shared development of ideas that guide military action, and that this action is not random action, even if these ideas remain simple, and do not stem from integrated theories in military action, but rather depend on monitoring the field and trying to seize opportunities whenever a gap appears in the movement of the soldiers.

Sixth: Al-Qassam Brigades have diversified the targets that the fighters strike in order to confuse the plans of the Israeli occupation authorities, and keep them unable to anticipate the next target, thus raising the cost of security and preventive arrangements and procedures used by the occupation. This is one of the pillars of 'guerrilla wars' on which liberation movements are based.

Seventh: The ambushes, attacks and drive-by shootings reveal the dynamism of the mind, and the accumulation of experience of the al-Qassam fighters, who transformed the military jeeps from fortified fortresses that protect the soldiers while moving into traps of bullets fired by al-Qassam Brigades groups.

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