

## Objectives, Mechanisms and Obstacles of Hamas External Relations

Abdihakim Hanaini, PhD Candidate

Dr. Abdul Rahim Bin Ahmad (supervisor)

National University Malaysia (UKM)  
Email: Abedqatar123@gmail.com

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2016.v7n4p

### Abstract

*The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has been trying to establish relations with countries all over the world since its foundation in 1987. The key principles of these relations were analyzed and discussed earlier in another paper. The current part is allocated to further examine the objectives and mechanisms of Hamas external relations as well as the major obstacles deterring Hamas from achieving its objectives. To get thorough information, this research employed the qualitative approach in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with Hamas prominent political leaders. It also utilized the historical and the descriptive analytical approaches to examine and analyze materials and documents attained from primary resources. It was found that in its external relations, Hamas has set up objectives with Arab and Islamic countries and others with other countries of the world. Among the mechanisms are the establishment of Hamas political bureau; constant official and non-official visits to countries; and correspondence and communication with countries' ambassadors. Hamas has been facing self, local and international obstacles. To conclude, despite these obstacles, Hamas has been working a lot to achieve the objectives of its external relations. To some extent Hamas has achieved some objectives based on the context. Further quantitative and qualitative studies were recommended.*

**Keywords:** Hamas, relations, objectives, mechanisms, obstacles

### 1. Introduction

Hamas considers establishing external relations with all countries of the world – except for the occupation state of Israel – and international organizations as a means to achieve its strategic and secondary goals. Since its inception, Hamas has attempted to build up external relations with several Arab, Islamic and European countries. It has created these relations based on principles, adopted and approved within its leadership and organizational frame. The level of relationship with Hamas differed from one country to another. Certain countries let Hamas open official offices, where Hamas assigned representatives such as Sudan, Yemen, Iran, Syria, and Lebanon. In other countries Hamas was allowed to open only coordinative offices such as Jordan, but this office was closed in 1999; and other countries maintained the relations with Hamas secretly. Furthermore, very few countries kept such relations unannounced through cultural centers administered by Hamas. The movement specified objectives to achieve through these relations, and used certain mechanisms to achieve those goals.

However, it has been observed that the issues surrounding Hamas external relations are controversial among researchers, academicians, and political analysts. Such heated controversy is simply because literature on Hamas' external relations is sparse, or only based on document analysis and media statements given by its leaders. Therefore, this paper further explores Hamas external relations, primarily based on interviews with its prominent leaders and many of Hamas internal documents.

### 2. Research Method

The focus of the current qualitative research is to further understand and explore the objectives, mechanisms and obstacles of Hamas external relations based on both interviews and text analysis. There are reasons for using the qualitative approach as suggested by (Creswell, 2013). Among them are this approach helps researchers to further explore the issue being investigated, and provides a detailed understanding of the issue through learning more from particular respondents. The purposive sampling procedure was used to select the study sample. In the qualitative approach, the purposive sampling procedure is recommended so that the researcher can select the appropriate or

resourceful respondents (Creswell 2013; Paton 2005). The sample consisted of six prominent political leaders including Khalid Mishal (the head of the Hamas political bureau). The semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data from the respondents as recommended by (Creswell 2013; Paton 2005). The interview questions were prepared after studying the research problem. They included three main areas related to Hamas external relations: objectives, mechanisms and obstacles. The developed semi-structured interview was tested and modified accordingly. Before conducting the real interviews, the researcher had obtained the permission from the interviewees to carry out the interviews. The interviews were recorded using electronic devices. In the data analysis, the researcher transcribed the interviews and then coded to elicit the themes according to the research objectives (Creswell 2013). With regard to the documents and materials attained from, mainly, the official archive of Hamas and the private libraries of its leaders were read thoroughly, and then analyzed and organized based on the objective of the study.

### **3. Research Results and Discussion**

Having analyzed the interviews and other related documents and materials, the results were organized under major topics related to Hamas's external relations: objectives, mechanisms, and obstacles.

#### **3.1 Objectives**

Since its inception, Hamas paid enormous attention to its external relations. So, when forming the political section, there were two sections for external relations: one for Arab and Islamic countries and another for countries of the rest of the world. Then, a central office was established specifically for international relations. Having reviewed some unpublished documents that addressed the objectives that Hamas strived to achieve in its external relations, and having met with key leaders of Hamas who built these relations, the researcher found that Hamas used to set specific objectives for each section. We can elaborate that in the followings:

##### **3.1.1 Objectives of Hamas's relations with Arab and Islamic countries**

Hamas believes in the restoration of the Arabic and Islamic worlds to the struggle for recovering the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, and it considered them the strategic depth of Palestine and the Palestinians in their struggle against the occupation. In article 14 of Hamas's charter: "The issue of liberating Palestine is related to three elements: the Palestinian, the Arabian and Islamic elements and each one of these elements has its own role in the struggle against Zionism and has its obligations; and when the issue is handled on this basis, the current circumstances will change and the liberation is just around the corner" (Convention of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.1988).

Having reviewed three unpublished internal documents for Hamas that address its external relations (Document of political and diplomatic relations.), and having met with the leaders of the political bureau of Hamas and a group of members, the researcher was able to summarize the objectives of Hamas's external relations with the Arab and Islamic worlds in three central points:

- a. Governments. Hamas aims to accomplish the following from establishing its relations with Arab and Islamic countries. To politically communicate with active and influential parties for the sake of introducing Hamas's stances, permanent and latest policies, minimizing differences between Hamas's stance and others, and to try to find common grounds with them in order to create a criteria which is largest possible to support its policies and the movements' various stances, the resistance program in particular. It also aims to provide financial, military and political support for these governments and reach into agreements for opening official bureaus for Hamas, or any other mechanism for representing the movement. The movement continuously works with these governments to restore the Palestinian rights in Arab and international arenas especially the right of liberation from occupation and the resettlement of refugees, and establishing the state of Palestine with its full authority, and helping issue the supporting stances and resolutions for these rights.
- b. The people: Hamas aims, through its relations, to open up to Arab and Islamic masses, and to the parties and various powers and organizations of the civil community to strengthen its relations with them and gain their financial and emotional support as well as to widen the Arab and Islamic involvement in sharing the burden of the Palestinian issue.
- c. The Palestinian community: the movement aims, through its external relations, with the Arab and Islamic countries to communicate and open up to the Palestinian community residing in these countries to enhance relations with them and provide services and solve the problems they face in these countries. The researcher

believes that Hamas did not achieve great success in attaining the objectives it set with regard to external relations. Its success was rather relatively weak at the government level as it did not succeed in opening official bureaus except for few countries such as Lebanon, previously in Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and Iran. It did not also receive military support except from Iran and Syria and did not receive financial support except from very few. Political wise, all Arab countries still promote the Arab Peace Initiative with Israel for which Hamas demonstrated rejection. In the mass's dimension, Hamas's success was relatively good, "It still receives support from the people in many Arab and Islamic states, and receive permanent financial support" (K. Meshal, personal communication, April 19, 2015). The researcher believes that there are obstacles that hindered Hamas from achieving its goals which will be explained later.

### 3.1.2 Objectives of Hamas's relations with other countries of the world

After he reviewed the above mentioned documents and met with the key leaders of Hamas, the researcher was able to summarize the objectives of Hamas's relations with Arab and Islamic countries as follows:

- a. Government's dimension: Hamas strives to establish relations with foreign countries in order to build and extend a network of international relations that support it and which would eventually lead to change the international community's perception about Hamas, enhance its acceptability to governments in the world without compromising its principles, confirm at all international levels and in all world forums the illegality of the occupation and its products.
- b. The people's and foreign organizations' dimension: the movement aims to gather and urge the civil community and its political, media, and unions. Motivate various international humanitarian organizations to offer social, economic, medical, and educational aids to the Palestinians and confront the policies of the state of occupation and the pressure groups that work for it to weaken their western support in various and available ways.
- c. The Arab and Islamic communities in foreign countries dimension: Hamas, within its frame of relations with foreign countries, strives to activate the role of communities, symbols, Arab and Islamic political and ideological elites in the international arena for supporting the Palestinian issue and Hamas. It also strives to set coordination among the Arab and Islamic organizations involved in the West in a way that serves the interest of Palestinians and complies with the movement's agenda.

Based on the demonstration of the objectives of Hamas, the researcher concludes that Hamas did not greatly place ample hope on extending its relations with foreign countries because of their tendency to support the occupation. Thus, the objectives that Hamas strived to achieve were few and were focused more towards the relation with the masses and Arab and Islamic organizations. The researcher believes that achieving these objectives was difficult for Hamas despite the little breakthroughs which could be credited to the hurdles and difficulties it faced which the researcher will later demonstrate.

### 3.2 Mechanisms

Once objectives are set and specified, a proper mechanism and means must be used to achieve these objectives. Hamas specified a set of mechanisms and means to build and develop its external relations to achieve the desirable objectives. Some of the mechanisms are as follows:

- a. Officially declaring the name of the political bureau of the movement and its members, its spokesmen, and official representatives in countries where it has official representation. This declaration is easy and facilitates for developing the relations and opening communication channels with those countries. The movement has explicit titles (not secretive names) and key figures with which communication, conducting meetings, and signing agreements and memorandum of understandings are possible.
- b. The role of the official representatives of Hamas in their base countries is critical for building and extending the relations of the movement whether with international organizations, political parties or civil community organizations. They may also build relations with embassies and representatives of other countries such as: the representative of the movement in Lebanon (Ali Barakah) who has his regular and permanent meetings with officials in Lebanon, various political parties and the various civil community authorities. In one of his meetings, the ministry of Media through the national agency of Media stated; "In the meeting between the representative of Hamas (Ali Barakah) with the deputy in the Lebanese Parliament) Bahiyyah al-Hareeri (the deputy presented the situation in Ain al-Hilweh Refugee Camp after the late incident. During the meeting, he

- demonstrated the current situation after the cease of fire and how to maintain its stability" (Nna, 2015)
- c. Sending out memos and official letters to leaders of countries and official conferences, and ministries of foreign affairs to keep them updated about the Palestinian issue that there was no single summit conference of political leaders in the Arab and Islamic worlds except that Hamas sent a letter or memo urging the attendees to support the Palestinian issue and to continue to support their steadfastness to achieve their legitimate rights," an example of such important memos sent by Hamas to presidents, kings, and ministers attending a meeting in Sharm el-Shaikh in Egypt under the banner of (Fighting terrorism) where it explained its stance in resisting the occupation and the legitimacy of the Palestinians according to international conventions." (Hurub, 1996:346). "In times of crisis and at the peak of occupation army's aggression and the settlers, the leader of political bureau communicates with many presidents and political leaders in the Arab and Islamic countries and urge them to put their efforts into ceasing fire of the enemy" (S. Khater, personal communication, March 25, 2015).
  - d. Organizing official visits of the president of the movement and an accompanying delegation or an official delegation of the movement to countries that welcome such visits. In these visits, meetings are held with political leaders of the country whether the president of the country or a minister. In some countries, meetings are held with opposition parties such as "the visit of Hamas's delegation under the leadership of Khaled Mashal to Malaysia on 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2013 where he met with the president and some of his ministers and met with some political opposition parties" (Assabeel, 2015). "Since the inception of Hamas till the time of writing these lines, the official movement's official delegation visited all Arab countries with no exception and met with the president of those countries and the governors and ministers". (O. Hamdan, personal communication, Feb 15, 2015). The leadership of the movement also paid a visit to some Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, Indonesia and other counties such as Russia and South Africa. The delegation representing the parliament of the movement with the leadership of Musheer almasri, member of the Palestinian legislative council, paid a visit Switzerland to participate in the parliamentary conference. During the visit, the head of the delegation announced that: "We visited the Switzerland parliament and requested from the committee of foreign affairs in the Switzerland parliament during the meeting to open up the relations of the delegates of European countries with the representatives of Hamas" (Alalam, 2012). These mere official visits are positive development towards building relations with countries and delegations try their best to explain the suffering of the Palestinians and their permanent rights in liberation and self-determination granted by the United Nations.
  - e. Communicating with foreign embassies through letters and direct meetings with ambassadors in the country where leaders of Hamas reside. Hamas placed careful attention to this mechanism and continued to use it for developing its political relations with the countries.  
During the time in Jordan, Hamas tried its best to communicate with most foreign embassies during the crisis of expulsion of four hundreds of Hamas's leaders and key figures and the Islamic Jihad movement to Lebanon in 1992 to pressurize the government of occupation to take them back to their homes. The official spokesman of Hamas, Ibrahim Ghoushah wrote in his diaries: "I called the American embassy and requested to meet an official and I met with the political counselor in the embassy ... I called the British embassy and the Ambassador welcomed us to his residence, ... and among those whom we visited is the ambassador of Germany in Amman .... We also met the ambassador of Italy and Norway .. and we explained to all of them the agony of the expulsion ... " (Ghoushah Ibrahim, 2008: 206) Mussa Abu Marzuq said: "During our residence in Syria, we used to maintain communication with many foreign embassies in Damascus through letters and visits where we explain to them our stances and opinions and update them about the reality of our people in our occupied land" (M. Abu Marzook, personal communication, March 28, 2015). Mediation through the movement's friends: Hamas benefited from some of its friends either presidents, officials or leaders of political parties in opening newer relations with their countries and other countries such as "The relation of Hamas with Sudan that began through the president of the Islamic movement Shaikh Hasan al-Turabi who put lots of efforts to set the relation between Hamas and the government which was later followed by launching a bureau there".( S. Khater, personal communication, March 25, 2015). Another example is "the relation with Syria which started through the people's front the general leadership, through its general secretary Ahmed Jibreel" (M. Abu Marzook, personal communication, March 28, 2015). After the relation with Syria improved "The Syrian president Bashar Assad mediated the development of relations between Hamas and Russia and helped organize a meeting between the Russian president Medvedev and Khaled Mashal in Damascus. After this meeting, there have been official visits of Hamas's delegations to Russia" (O. Hamdan, personal

communication, Feb 15, 2015).

- f. Working through the people's diplomacy: Hamas utilizes this mechanism as it makes it possible for it to communicate with political parties and movements and civil community organizations for the purpose of forming a public perception that bridges relations at the official level" (Personal communication, Instrument of the international relations bureau). In this mechanism, Hamas uses some activities and tools such as issuing circulars about the Palestinian issue and rights of the Palestinians, conducting courses, lectures, and through participations and other forms of general mass activities.

### 3.3 Obstacles

Hamas invests efforts for developing external relations with various countries and strives to achieve its prescribed objectives by its departments where are competent in relations. But there are some obstacles that hinder it from achieving such objectives. The key obstacles are as follows:

- a. The Muslim Brotherhood roots of Hamas: Since its inception, Hamas did not hide its brotherhood roots and its affiliation to the Muslim Brotherhood movement. It explicitly declared that in its charter and official announcements by its leaders. This Muslim Brotherhood background hindered the development of its relations with several Arab countries due to the history of Muslim Brotherhood with the governing regimes which is full confrontations, prosecutions and executions. The Muslim Brotherhood was banned in most Arab and Islamic countries and prosecuted by security. Hamas had early realized this issue during its efforts to develop external relations with countries and some of its private instruments explicitly stated this issue. In the instrument "The affiliation of the movement to the Muslim Brotherhood is (according to the relation of the country with them)" (Personal communication, Instrument "Diplomatic and political relations). Sami Khater says: "Our brotherhood roots and carrying the brotherhood identity greatly influenced developing our relations with countries as most of these countries have negative relations with the Muslim Brotherhood." (S. Khater, personal communication, March 25, 2015).

The regimes had suspicions about Hamas due to its brotherhood roots and thus, the movement made efforts in order overcome this hurdle or to minimize its effects by focusing its message to countries on two points; Hamas is a resistance movement for national liberation that will not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Khaled Mashal confirms this statement by saying: "Due to the Islamic identity of Hamas and its brotherhood roots, it shares with the Islamic movements in the world common grounds which we adhere to ... however, it is not confined to such limit as it is a national liberation and resistance movement, and due to the specific conflict in Palestine and its Arab and Islamic dimensions .. It opens up to the national, ethnic and Islamic efforts..." (Saleh, et al. 2014: 630). In another meeting with Khaled Mashal: "It is wrong to punish us as Hamas or as Palestinians under the banner or interpretation of (We are a national liberation movement), we have our own battle with the Israeli occupier. Consequently, we should be supported by our nation ... and we shall not interfere in the internal issues of other countries as it is unacceptable for any party of the nation to have its stance about Hamas and the Palestinians negatively influenced due to conflicts with the Muslim Brotherhood in its country" (Alsharq, 2014). "After Hamas won the election of the Palestinian legislative council in Palestine, Arab countries – countries bordering Palestine in particular – dealt with Hamas based on fear of Islamists and its fear that they may succeed in setting a prosperous model that can influence their internal situation in terms of strengthening Muslim Brotherhood." (Saleh et al. 2014: 300).

In attempts by the movement to deal with this obstacle, it managed to overcome this problem in some countries such as Syria and Iraq (During Saddam Hussein's regime), Libya (during Gaddafi). These countries are known for their absolute hostility toward the Muslim Brotherhood, prosecuting and executing its leaders. However, they established relations with Hamas and offered financial support to Hamas. The movement did not succeed in some countries such as Tunisia.

- b. The official representation of Palestinian Liberation Organization: The official Arab recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians came in the Rabat Conference in Morocco in 1974. This recognition expanded internationally two weeks after the resolution on 13/11/1974 as Yaser Arafat was received in the United Nations and the organization was recognized as the only representative of the Palestinians and Palestine and was granted the entitlement of Observer Status in the United Nations (The Arab Summit, 1974). The liberation organization remained as the only representative of the Palestinians till the emergence of Hamas and its leaders began to appear and visit various countries explaining the situation of the Palestinians and its stances as a resistance movement and about the

developments of the situation in the occupied Palestine. Hence, it came up as a real rival to the liberation organization and the competition reached its peak after the liberation movement signed an agreement with Israel the Oslo convention in 1993. Hamas refused that convention and did not recognize it and strived to make it fail.

Hamas never announced the liberation organization as the only representative of the Palestinians; neither did it announce that it was alternative to Hamas. In the movement's charter, the liberation organization was mentioned in general as its states in article 27: "Hamas's stance about the liberation organization is like the stance of a child about his father and a brother about his brother who shares the pain with him and supports him to confront the enemy and wishes him guidance" (Saleh, et al. 2014: 131).

Several meetings were held between leaders from Hamas and the liberation organization to include Hamas in the liberation organization but such meetings did not achieve that purpose. Later, a development took place in the stance of Hamas, liberation organization, and the Islamic Jihad movement in 2005 as – after intensive meetings and discussions in Cairo- the Cairo Convention was signed where Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movement agreed to be within the liberation organization to become the only representative of the Palestinians following improvements and its activation. The final announcement, as it came out on 17/03/2005, stated the following: "All attendees collectively agreed to activate and develop the Palestinian Liberation organization based on consented principles so that it includes all Palestinian troops and sects as the only representative of the Palestinians". (Salih, et al. 2014: 141).

However, since signing the agreement till now, the agreement remained unapplied. This is why the official representation of the liberation organization was and is still a major obstacle in developing Hamas's external relations with other countries. This has been explicitly stated in Hamas's internal documents and the speech by its leaders. In the Political and Diplomatic Relations document and under the title obstacles of relations, it says: "The official Arab recognition of the liberation organization as the only legitimate representative" (Personal communication).

So, this official recognition has been a major challenge in the way to developing Hamas's relations with many countries as the existence of representation or embassy of the liberation organization or the Palestinian regime that handles the Palestinians issues stood in the way to opening official bureaus of Hamas with the justification being to avoid multiple representation of the Palestinians. "The fear of the liberation organization for its legitimacy in representing the Palestinians urged it to demonize Hamas and enticed some Arab and Islamic parties against Hamas with the hope to politically isolate Hamas." (Saleh, et al. 2014: 537). Sami Khater said: "In 2002, a delegation from Hamas under the leadership of Khaled Mashal was in an official visit to Iraq and met with the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, we explained to him the situation of the Palestinians during al-Aqsa Intifada. The president offered financial assistance as a support for this resistance. After this visit, we tried to initiate the relation but the liberation organization office instigated against us and the relation with Iraq came to a halt. After the year 2006 when the movement won the election of the legislative council, we tried to arrange visits to South Africa. The Palestinian ambassador there hindered the visit and the visit was aborted because the only official representation for Palestinians was the liberation organization." (S. Khater, personal communication, March 25, 2015). The researcher believes that the efforts of embassies and Palestinian representations in hindering the relations between Hamas and the countries is legal because these representations are the official body that officially represent the Palestinian authority. Hamas tried to overcome this obstacle, it succeeded in some countries and was able to open an official office such as in Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran while it kept other offices unannounced under cultural titles in coordination with those countries. It also accepted other communication ways with countries that agreed to have relations with Hamas.

- c. Adherence of the movement to armed resistance, and its conviction of terrorism: Hamas refused to recognize Israel and its right to exist over the Palestinian land and did not accept any peace treaties with the liberation organization or with Egypt and Jordan. Hamas announced its political stance which is to uphold to the right of resistance in various forms for the purpose of removing the Israeli occupation and restoring the Palestinians' rights and self-determination. "Hamas's stance regarding the recognition of the legitimacy of occupation is crystal clear and is final, we never compromise it nor do we hide it. In short, we reject the legitimacy of Israel because we reject the legitimacy of occupation and the theft of land. This is a clear and final principle for us". (K. Meshal, personal communication, April 19, 2015). All first line leaders in Hamas whom the researcher met confirmed their adherence to the right of resistance in various forms for eliminating the occupation and considered this resistance as the strategic option of Hamas. Osama Hamdan said: "We will never let go of our weapons or resistance as resisting the oppressing occupation is a right granted by religious and international

laws". (O. Hamdan, personal communication, Feb 15, 2015). Khaled Mashal confirmed that by saying: "The ultimate purpose of resistance is liberation and the way to liberate our land is to resist, be steadfast, confront and sacrifice". (K. Meshal, personal communication, April 19, 2015). The rejection of Hamas of the recognition of Israel, not accepting the peace treaties, and committing to the armed struggle all differ from the stances and attitudes of many countries, with the USA being first in line, Europe, their allies, Russia, and most Arab regimes which presented a major obstacle for Hamas to build its relations. Hamas seemed totally irrelevant and its persistence in adopting armed struggle as a strategic option was one of the key reasons for including it in the list of terrorism that is issued by the United States in 1993, and its classification by the European Union in 2003 as a terrorist organization, and it was the cause of troubled relations with some countries. "The relations between Hamas and Jordan frequently tensed because of Hamas's military activity and its operations in Tel Aviv, ... In April 1995 after some of Hamas's military activities, two leaders namely Musa Abu Marzuq and Imaad al-Alami, were exiled ...". (Hurub, 1996: 186).

In 1996, after Israel assassinated engineer Yahya Ayyash, Hamas carried out four consecutive operations and killed and wounded tens of soldiers and settlers, which led the American president at that time "Bill Clinton" to call for a terrorism combat conference in the Egyptian city of Sharm el-Sheikh. The conference was attended by more than 30 countries, "after this conference, Hamas was terribly caged from the inside and outside. Therefore, many Hamas members were arrested in Jordan and the dominant policy in Jordan became to prevent Hamas even from media activities". (Ghoushah, 2008: 519). Hamas believes that its inclusion in the list of terrorist organizations by Western states is due to their policy of defending the Israeli occupation, "Some Western states still do not deal with Hamas according to the international laws".. But rather based on their commitment toward supporting the Zionist agenda despite its oppression and aggression, or based on the Israeli standard that considers any resisting movement as terrorist organization" (Saleh, et al. 2014: 519).

The foreign decision makers in Hamas confessed that the movement's persistence toward its stance in upholding to resistance hindered its relations with many countries. "There is no doubt that considering Hamas as a terrorist organization had its influence on its external relations starting from the USA and all states that totally comply with the American policy... and there is no doubt that classifying Hamas as a terrorist organization according to the American list of terrorism hindered developing relations with these countries and other similar countries". (Salih, et al. 2014: 545). With regard to solving this problem, the researcher believes that Hamas will not be able to overcome it due to internal reasons of Hamas and other external reasons. Internally, Hamas cannot recognize Israeli's right over the Palestinian land because its belief regarding the legitimacy of Palestine is that it is an Islamic Waqf and any portion of it cannot be compromised as stated in Hamas's charter in article 11. Hamas also cannot give up its resistance as a choice for confronting the occupation because it will cause it to lose the reason for which it was originally found in the first place as an Islamic resistance movement. Externally, it is very difficult under the current regional status of the Arab and Islamic nations which is characterized as weak, destructed and suffers internal conflicts, to see the United States, Europe and their allies to stop defending and supporting Israel in confronting the Palestinians.

- d. The terms of the Quartet after Hamas won the legislative elections: The Quartet is the "supervising committee of the peace process in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The member countries are: the United States, Russia, European Union, and the United Nations. The Quartet was established in Madrid in 2002" (Quartet of the Middle East, [http](http://www.quartet.org), 2015). In 2006, legislative elections were conducted in Palestine for the first time and Hamas participated in these elections and won the elections by majority of the legislative council by 74 seats out of 132 as well as four other candidates who were supported by Hamas, ... this was followed by Hamas forming the 10<sup>th</sup> government in its own, then it formed the 11<sup>th</sup> government within the national union government, till the split came ..." (Saleh, et al. 2014: 384). These elections were monitored by international delegates who monitored closely since its start. They witnessed the transparency and integrity of the elections and the advanced levels of freedom and the ideal behavior in elections". (Saleh, et al. 2014: 387). Hamas was optimistic about the obvious success in these elections and expected a breakthrough regarding its external relations as it has become an important organization after this triumph and it represents the Palestinian parliament which is the governing party. It came to power through legitimacy of parliament and elections and indeed Hamas benefited from winning the elections in building its relations with some countries such as Russia, Turkey, and Malaysia and strengthened its relations with Syria, Iran, Lebanon, and Qatar. The researcher will further write about these developments in the following chapter.

The terms set by the Quartet for Hamas hindered its efforts to build external relations with many countries. After the declaration of the results of the elections in Palestine, representatives from the Quartet held a

meeting in London and came up with a common declaration that was recited by Kofi Anan – Secretary General of the United Nations – that stated: “It is inevitable for the sponsors to relate future supports to the extent of commitment of the Palestinian government to none violence, recognition of the state of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements including the roadmap” (Alriyad, 2006). After this announcement, Hamas’s reply was to assure its rejection and in compliance with such terms: “In a declaration by Hamas’s spokesman Saami Abu Zahri: The Quartet should ask for making an end to the occupation and Israeli aggression and not to ask the prey to recognize the occupation and do nothing about the aggression” (Alriyad, 2006).

Hamas faced a political and financial sanction by the United States and the European Union and their allies and because of this sanction, Hamas could not enjoy its victory in the legislative elections and did not achieve any advancements in its relations with the Western countries. “The terms of the Quartet on our government are oppressive and conflict with the principles of democracy. These terms prevented us from developing political relations. The Western world that promotes democracy refused to respect the results of the elections which is not fair”. (I. Alalmi, personal communication, June 11, 2014). Since Hamas won the elections in 2006 till this day, it could not overcome this hurdle and the terms of the Quartet remained unchanged and Hamas still refuses to recognize the occupation and gives away its weapons. There are no official relations for Hamas with Western countries.

- e. Spontaneous Obstacle. The researcher was able to identify the spontaneous obstacles through the various meetings he held with leaders and staff of the movement and the officials in the political and international section.

Lack of competencies and qualified personnel in the field of international relations as the relations section suffers from lack of academic certificates holders of political sciences and international relations and laws. This has been referred to by the instrument of the international bureau where it recommended that one of the challenges in the work environment is the lack of competent individuals (Personal communication, instrument of the international relations bureau).

Lack of organizations which address international relations that operate under Hamas and which strive to develop these relations and improve them at the internal level in terms of: early attention to young staff and guiding them to study some required disciplines which are important and relevant to relations that can prepare specialized personnel and give training and technical courses to working staff in this field; or at the external level by establishing relations with government and civil community organizations in other countries. The instrument also pointed to the lack of organizations which came under the title: “Lack of competent organizations in the field of international relations” (Personal communication, instrument of the international relations bureau). In meeting that the researcher held with an official from the international relations section (Mohamed Sawalheh), Sawalheh clearly pointed to this issue by saying: “Looking at the number of Zionist lobby’s organizations that exist in Europe and have involvement in the international relations, and the explicit absence of our Palestinian or even Arab organizations, one would completely realize the essence of these organizations to the foreign policies of these countries.” (M. Sawalha, personal communication, March 23, 2015).

Dividing the external relations work into two offices: office of the international relations and the office of political affairs separately which leads to the lack of coordination of relation issues and the lack of this continuous coordination causes conflict of efforts, or may let a chance to go by unnoticed, which requires common endeavors in organizing and developing some relations.

Lack of financial resources allocated for developing external relations. The lack of sufficient budgets for supervising and developing the efforts causes lack of advancement and thus they naturally shrink. The international relations instrument indicated this issue as a hurdle in developing external relations as it stated, under the title, “Obstacle of work”: “Lack of financial resources” (Personal communication, international relations instrument).

#### 4. Conclusions

Having illustrated the above, the researcher concluded that Hamas set objectives for its external relations with other countries which it strived to achieve. Some of the most important ones are attaining financial, military and political support and establishing relations with these countries through opening official or unofficial bureaus and communicating with the Palestinian communities in these countries. Hamas used various mechanisms to achieve such goals. Some of the



important mechanisms are communicating with presidents through official letters or by telephone, organizing official visits by its leaders to other countries and communicating with ambassadors and counselors. However, some obstacles withheld the external relations of Hamas and hindered it from achieving its complete desirable objectives, some of the most remarkable obstacles were: Hamas's affiliation to the Muslim Brotherhood which is prosecuted in many countries, convicting the movement of terrorism due to its military activity and its rejection of the peace treaties with the occupation. Recognition given by other countries to the Palestinian liberation as the only representative of Palestinians is also an obstacle. There are also spontaneous obstacles in Hamas such as lack of competencies, lack of organizations and financial resources. The researcher concluded that the success Hamas attained with official governments of those countries was relatively weak. Regarding the relation with the masses, organizations and parties, the relation attained was good.

## References

- Alalam, parliamentary delegation from Hamas visits Switzerland, [www.alalam.ir/news/9466841](http://www.alalam.ir/news/9466841). Feb3, 2016.
- Al-Hroub, Khaled, *Hamas Al-Fikr Wal Almumaarasah Al-Siyasiyyah*, (Mu'assasat al-dirasaat al-filistiniyyah, Beirut, 1996).
- Alriyadh, Hamas refuses the terms of the Quartet, [www.alriyadh.com/127219](http://www.alriyadh.com/127219). Jan3, 2016.
- Al-sharq, interview with Khaled Mashal by al-sharq newspaper, 11/11/2014. <http://www.al-sharq.com/news>. Jan7, 2016.
- Arab Summit 1974, Rabat <http://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/>. Feb22, 2016.
- Assabeel, Mashal's visit to Malaysia: [www.assabeel.net/item/15461](http://www.assabeel.net/item/15461). March5, 2016.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*: Sage publications.
- Ghoushah, Ibrahim, *Al-Mi'zanah Al-Hamraa'*, (Markaz al-Zaitunah for Studies and Consultations, Beirut, 2008).
- Nna, meeting between Barakah and the deputy Bahiyyah al-Hareeri. [nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/177133](http://nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/177133)). March10, 2016.
- Patton, M. Q. (2005). *Qualitative research*: Wiley Online Library.
- Quartet of the Middle East <http://www.ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/> March7, 2016.
- Saleh, Muhsen, et al, *Harakat Al-Muqawamah Al-Islamiyyah Hamas*, Dirasaat Fi al-Fikr Wa al-Tajrubah, (Markaz al-Zaitunah, Beirut, 2014).

## Personal interviews:

- Dr. Mussa Abu Marzuq, Deputy of the Head of Political Bureau, interview. . Doha, Qatar 2015/3/28. 11:00.
- Imaad Alalami, Member of the political office, interview. Istanbul, Turkey. 2014/6/11. 19:00.
- Khaled Mashal, Head of Political Bureau of Hamas, interview. 19/4/2015, Doha, 22:00.
- Mohamed Sawalheh, Director of the International office, interview. . Doha, Qatar. 23/3/2015. 10:00.
- Osama Hamdan, Former Director of the International Relations office, interview. Doha, Qatar 2015/2/15. 11:30.
- Sami Khater, Member of the Political Bureau, interview. Doha, Qatar 2015/3/25. 22:00.