

Turkey's Lax Approach to Countering Terrorism

Key Findings

- Turkey maintains open relations with internationally sanctioned extremist groups and harbors internationally sanctioned and wanted extremists affiliated with the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas. Taliban officials maintain a presence in Turkey, while several Brotherhood leaders sought refuge there after the collapse of the Brotherhood government in Egypt. Hamas has operated a bureau in Istanbul since 2012.
- Turkey has not devoted the appropriate resources to monitoring the financial workings of its non-profit sector, according to the U.S. Department of State. In particular, the NGO Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation faces international accusations of aiding Syrian rebel forces, al-Qaeda, and Hamas.
- Turkish financial institutions, with support of Turkish officials, have aided in skirting U.S. sanctions against Iran.



Ankara, Turkey (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Overview

Longtime U.S. ally Turkey—a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS and NATO—has supported and harbored international terrorist organizations and individuals. The Turkish

government has lent support to the Muslim Brotherhood,¹ Hamas,² and Syrian rebel groups.³ Turkey continues to harbor members of the Muslim Brotherhood who sought refuge in the country after the 2015 fall of the Brotherhood government in Egypt.⁴

According to the U.S. Department of State, Turkey is host to terrorist organizations with links to narcotics trafficking. As such, the U.S. government has declared Turkey “vulnerable to money laundering and terrorist finance risks.”⁵ Further, the Turkish government has allowed terror-linked charities to operate within the country. Most prominently, the Turkish Humanitarian

¹ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, “Turkey’s relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood,” Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, “Turkey Nurtures Egypt’s ‘Terrorist’ Muslim Brothers,” Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; “Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life,” Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; “Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July,” Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

² Shlomi Eldar, “Turkey’s Hamas ‘bureau,’” Al-Monitor, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Hamas’ new headquarters?” Al-Monitor, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshal-kidnapping.html>; Alex Fishman, “Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey,” Ynetnews, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4630331.00.html>; Burak Bekdil, “Hamas in Turkey: ‘Humanitarian Activity,’” Gatestone Institute, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

³ Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” Deutsche Welle, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

⁴ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, “Turkey’s relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood,” Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, “Turkey Nurtures Egypt’s ‘Terrorist’ Muslim Brothers,” Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; “Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life,” Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; “Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July,” Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

⁵ “Countries/Jurisdictions of Primary Concern – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2015/vol2/239109.htm>.

Relief Foundation (IHH) has been linked to al-Qaeda,⁶ Hamas,⁷ Syrian rebel groups,⁸ and foreign fighters in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Afghanistan.⁹

Direct Funding and Government Support

The Turkish government has provided direct funding and support for various extremist organizations operating within the country. These groups include the Taliban, the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network,¹⁰ the Muslim Brotherhood,¹¹ and Hamas.¹² The Turkish government has allowed members of these groups to openly reside in the country, as well as address government officials and functions.



Taliban

⁶ “Turkish anti-terrorist police raid aid agency near Syrian border,” Reuters, January 14, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ngo/turkish-anti-terrorist-police-raid-aid-agency-near-syrian-border-idUSBREA0D0JI20140114?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>; Ariel Zirulnick, “Turkey cracks down on charity suspected of arming Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0114/Turkey-cracks-down-on-charity-suspected-of-arming-Al-Qaeda-affiliates-in-Syria>.

⁷ Jason Athanasiadis, “Targeted by Israeli raid: Who is the IHH?” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0601/Targeted-by-Israeli-raid-Who-is-the-IHH>; “Cardin, Bipartisan Group of 87 Senators Send Letter to President Obama in Support of Israel’s Right to Self-Defense,” Senator Ben Cardin, June 23, 2010, <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-bipartisan-group-of-87-senators-send-letter-to-president-obama-in-support-of-israels-right-to-self-defense>.

⁸ Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

⁹ Benjamin Weinthal, “German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

¹⁰ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, “Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” *Tolo News*, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

¹¹ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey,” *Hudson Institute*, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, “Turkey’s relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood,” *Al Arabiya*, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, “Turkey Nurtures Egypt’s ‘Terrorist’ Muslim Brothers,” *Daily Beast*, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; “Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; “Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July,” *Daily News Egypt*, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegyp.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

¹² Shlomi Eldar, “Turkey’s Hamas ‘bureau,’” *Al-Monitor*, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Hamas’ new headquarters?” *Al-Monitor*, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshaal-kidnapping.html>; Alex Fishman, “Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey,” *Ynetnews*, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0.7340.L-4630331.00.html>; Burak Bekdil, “Hamas in Turkey: ‘Humanitarian Activity,’” *Gatestone Institute*, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

The Taliban is an Afghanistan- and Pakistan-based jihadist insurgent group that has carried out numerous deadly terrorist attacks in the region, including the shooting of Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan's Swat Valley in October 2012, the December 2015 assault on Kandahar Air Field which left 50 dead, and the December 2014 massacre at the army-run school in Peshawar that killed 148 people, 132 of whom were schoolchildren. Taliban insurgents and ISIS militants in eastern Afghanistan have cooperated against the Afghan government since mid-2016. The Haqqani network is a militant branch of the Afghan Taliban operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, though it operates independently. Since the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the Haqqani network has been a lethal and sophisticated arm of the Afghan insurgency against the Western-backed government in Kabul.

Taliban designated by: Canada, EU, France, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Russia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Nations, United States

Haqqani network designated by: United Nations, United States

Turkish Support:

- Beginning in late 2017, members of the Taliban have met with Afghan officials in Turkey for peace talks. In January 2018, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated that the Taliban members meeting in Turkey do not represent the group. Mawlawi Abdul Rauf, leader of the Turkish delegation, said that his group represents all Taliban factions, including the Haqqani network.¹³
- In 2012, Turkey sought to host a Taliban office in the country. The Taliban instead opened its office in Qatar.¹⁴
- The Haqqani network has facilitated the travel of jihadist foreign fighters into and through Turkey since at least 2013, according to the U.S. government.¹⁵



Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood—founded in Egypt in 1928—is a transnational Islamist organization with branches worldwide. In the 1950s, Brotherhood theologian Sayyid Qutb legitimized the use of violent jihad—and the killing of secular Muslims—in order to implement sharia. Analysts argue that the Brotherhood's ideology has spawned groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS.

Designated By: Bahrain, Egypt, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates

¹³ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, "Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office," *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; "Turkey Delegation 'Represents All Taliban Factions,'" Tolo News, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

¹⁴ BBC News, June 20, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22957827>.

¹⁵ Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, "Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office," *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; "Turkey Delegation 'Represents All Taliban Factions,'" Tolo News, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%99>.

Turkish Support:

- Members of Turkey's leading Justice and Development Party (AKP)—including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan—have provided various forms of support to the Brotherhood, including granting asylum to wanted Brotherhood members and equipping them with satellite television and radio stations. Despite being charged in absentia by the Egyptian government, some Brotherhood fugitives have been allowed to openly congregate in Turkey and organize against the Egyptian government.¹⁶
- Turkey allows a handful of pro-Brotherhood media stations to operate within the country. Stations such as Rabia TV, al-Sharq, and al-Watan (formerly Misr Alaan)—run by exiled Egyptian Brotherhood members such as former Secretary-General Mahmoud Hussein and Brotherhood politician Basim al-Khafagy—often broadcast pro-Islamist messaging including glorified accounts of Brotherhood clashes with the Egyptian government and threats directed at Western-owned companies in Egypt to leave the country.¹⁷ In February 2015, these channels broadcasted threats against Egypt.¹⁸ This followed a January 29, 2015, broadcast on Rabia TV warning foreign nationals to leave Egypt or face violence.¹⁹ In March 2021, the Turkish government requested the Brotherhood channels decrease their criticism of Egypt as Turkey sought to repair its relationship with the country. The Brotherhood did not comment on the request.²⁰

¹⁶ Svante Cornell and M.K. Kaya, "The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey," Hudson Institute, September 3, 2015, <https://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>; Mohammad Abdel Kader, "Turkey's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood," Al Arabiya, October 14, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Umar Farooq, "Turkey Nurtures Egypt's 'Terrorist' Muslim Brothers," Daily Beast, April 15, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/15/turkey-nurtures-egypt-s-terrorist-muslim-brothers.html>; "Egyptian court sentences Muslim Brotherhood members to life," Deutsche Welle, July 5, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/egyptian-court-sentences-muslim-brotherhood-members-to-life/a-17760287>; "Pro-Brotherhood TV presenter to stand trial in absentia on 8 July," Daily News Egypt, June 29, 2015, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/06/29/pro-brotherhood-tv-presenter-to-stand-trial-in-absentia-on-8-july/>.

¹⁷ "Muslim Brotherhood Operatives in Turkey Call For Killing Egyptian Officials, Threaten Egypt; Turkish MP: Turkey Shelters 'Many MB and Hamas Members,'" MEMRI, February 6, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/reports/muslim-brotherhood-operatives-turkey-call-killing-egyptian-officials-threaten-egypt-turkish>; Mostafa Hashem, "The Great Brotherhood Divide," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 02, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=62942>; Mary Atkinson, "Egypt asks France to shut down pro-Brotherhood satellite channel," Middle East Eye, May 13, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypt-asks-france-shut-down-pro-brotherhood-satellite-channel-208107289>; Fehim Tastekin, "Turkey accused of escalating violence in Egypt," Al Monitor, February 6, 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/turkey-egypt-muslim-brotherhood-escalating-violence.html>.

¹⁸ "Muslim Brotherhood Operatives in Turkey Call For Killing Egyptian Officials, Threaten Egypt; Turkish MP: Turkey Shelters 'Many MB And Hamas Members,'" MEMRI, February 6, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/reports/muslim-brotherhood-operatives-turkey-call-killing-egyptian-officials-threaten-egypt-turkish>.

¹⁹ "ON MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD TV FROM TURKEY: THREATS OF TERROR ATTACKS AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONALS, INTERESTS OF EGYPT," MEMRI, January 29, 2015, <https://www.memri.org/tv/muslim-brotherhood-tv-turkey-threats-terror-attacks-against-foreign-nationals-interests-egypt>.

²⁰ Suzan Fraser and Samy Magdy, "Turkey asks Brotherhood TVs to dim criticism of Egypt," Associated Press, March 19, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-television-istanbul-egypt-cairo-d0324373f40449cbf488a0ac58c44605>.



Hamas

The ruling terror party of the Gaza Strip, Hamas openly seeks the destruction of Israel. The group uses suicide bombings, rocket and mortar attacks, shootings, and kidnappings in pursuit of its stated objectives.

Designated By: Australia, Canada, Egypt, EU, Israel, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States

Turkish Support:

- In 2012, Hamas's leadership fled Syria after the outbreak of that country's civil war. Hamas military leader Saleh Arouri first relocated to Turkey, where he was suspected of building a Hamas bureau in Istanbul. Arouri directed and financed Hamas military cells in the West Bank and Jordan, according to the U.S. Treasury, which accuses Arouri of facilitating the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars to Hamas's militant activities.²¹
- Prior to Khaled Meshaal's May 2017 retirement as Hamas's political bureau chief, the Turkish government regularly engaged with Meshaal.²² Meshaal reportedly met with Iranian officials and Turkish officials in the country.²³ In December 2014, he made a surprise appearance at the ruling Justice and Development Party's annual congress.²⁴ Meshaal stepped down as Hamas's political bureau chief in May 2017.²⁵
- Turkish authorities have reportedly overseen Hamas military training exercises in the country. Hamas operatives in Turkey have actively recruited Palestinians living in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and other Arab countries. The recruits are sent to the bureau in Istanbul, where they reportedly receive security clearances and begin training outside of the city, allegedly with the knowledge of Turkish officials. In addition, many of the weapons used by Hamas operatives in the West Bank were reportedly supplied by the group's Istanbul bureau.²⁶ In December 2015, the Turkish government expelled Arouri,

²¹ Smadar Perry and Itamar Eichner, "Hamas leader expelled from Turkey," YNet, December 22, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4742831,00.html>; "Treasury Sanctions Major Hamas Leaders, Financial Facilitators and a Front Company," U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 10, 2015, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl0159.aspx>.

²² "Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey," U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

²³ Harriet Sherwood, "Hamas and Iran Rebuild Ties Three Years after Falling out over Syria," *Guardian* (London), January 9, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/09/hamas-iran-rebuild-ties-falling-out-syria>; Pinar Tremblay, "Meshaal's visit to Turkey catches media off guard," Al-Monitor, December 28, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/turkey-gaza-top-hamas-officials-unannounced-visit.html>.

²⁴ "Hamas leader Mashaal endorses Turkish leaders in surprise speech," Hurriyet Daily News, December 27, 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hamas-leader-mashaal-endorses-turkish-leaders-in-surprise-speech-76166>.

²⁵ Khalid Meshal's speech during the inauguration of the new head of Hamas political bureau, Ismail Haniya (an excerpt), Hamas website, May 6, 2017, [http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-\(an-excerpt\)](http://hamas.ps/en/post/694/khalid-meshal-s-speech-during-the-inauguration-of-the-new-head-of-hamas-political-bureau-ismail-haniya-(an-excerpt)).

²⁶ Shlomi Eldar, "Turkey's Hamas 'bureau,'" Al-Monitor, December 1, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>; Pinar Tremblay, "Is Turkey Hamas' new headquarters?" Al-Monitor, August 25, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/saleh-al-arouri-khaled-meshaal-hamas-leadership-turkey-gaza.html>.

reportedly at Israel's request, as part of a reconciliation agreement between the two countries.²⁷

- Following the June 2016 reconciliation deal between Turkey and Israel, former Hamas official Ahmed Youssef told media that Turkey's willingness to discuss the agreement with Hamas demonstrated that "Hamas-Turkish ties are at their best."²⁸ Further, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu pledged that his government would continue to meet with Hamas leaders.²⁹
- In August 2017, Israel's Shin Bet security agency uncovered a Hamas money-laundering ring that transferred funds from Turkey to the West Bank. Turkey-based Hamas operative Haron Nasser al-Din allegedly transferred approximately \$200,000 to the West Bank between 2016 and 2017.³⁰
- In February 2017, Israeli authorities arrested Muhammad Murtaja, coordinator of the Gaza branch of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), as he was allegedly attempting to travel to Turkey at the behest of Hamas members there. According to the indictment against him, Murtaja was part of a Hamas plot to appropriate funds from TIKA. TIKA allegedly transferred funds to Hamas between 2012 and 2016 through official staff trips. In 2018, Murtaja was sentenced to nine years in prison.³¹
- The Turkish government condemned the U.S. government's January 2017 sanction-designation of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy called Hamas "an important reality of Palestinian political life."³²
- A Hamas official in Istanbul, Zacharia Najib, reportedly ordered failed assassination attempts on Israeli government officials in February 2019. Najib provided weapons, training, and funding to a Hamas member in Jerusalem who was arrested before he could carry out the plot. A Turkish diplomat at the time called Hamas a legitimate political party and denied it had any links to terrorism.³³

monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/08/turkey-palestine-israel-gaza-hamas-meshal-kidnapping.html; Alex Fishman, "Forced from Damascus, Hamas establishing itself in Turkey," Ynetnews, February 25, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4630331,00.html>; Burak Bekdil, "Hamas in Turkey: 'Humanitarian Activity,'" Gatestone Institute, March 6, 2015, <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/5324/hamas-turkey>.

²⁷ Smadar Perry and Itamar Eichner, "Hamas leader expelled from Turkey," YNet, December 22, 2015, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4742831,00.html>.

²⁸ Reuters, "Did Turkey abandon Hamas in Israel deal?" Al-Monitor, July 1, 2016, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/originals/2016/07/hamas-reaction-turkish-israeli-agreement-restore-ties.html>.

²⁹ "Turkey will continue to meet with Hamas, Turkish foreign minister says," Reuters, June 22, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-turkey-hamas/turkey-will-continue-to-meet-with-hamas-turkish-foreign-minister-says-idUSKCN0Z811K>.

³⁰ Judah Ari Gross, "Israel breaks up alleged Hamas Turkey-Hebron money laundering ring," Times of Israel, August 3, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-breaks-up-alleged-hamas-turkey-hebron-money-laundering-ring/>.

³¹ Avi Issacharoff, "Arrest of Gaza manager exposes Hamas's Turkish connection," Times of Israel, March 21, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arrest-exposes-hamas-turkish-connection/>; Ami Rojkes Dombe, "Report: Turkish government agency providing funds to Hamas," *Israel Defense* (Kfar Saba), February 10, 2021, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/48273>.

³² Agence France-Presse, "Turkey criticizes US terror designation for Hamas chief," *Hurriyet Daily News* (Istanbul), February 2, 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-criticizes-us-terror-designation-for-hamas-chief-126690>.

³³ Raf Sanchez, "Exclusive: Hamas plots attacks on Israel from Turkey as Erdogan turns blind eye," *Telegraph* (London), December 17, 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/12/17/hamas-plots-attacks-israel-turkey-erdogan-turns-blind-eye/>.

- In August 2020, Turkey reportedly began granting citizenship to a dozen high-ranking Hamas members in the country. According to the *Telegraph*, those receiving citizenship are “the most senior Hamas operatives outside of Gaza. [They] are actively raising funds and directing operatives to carry out attacks in the present day.” The Turkish government refused comment and called the accusations baseless.³⁴
- On January 26, 2021, Israeli authorities seized more than \$120,000 and goods worth hundreds of thousands of shekels that Hamas was allegedly transferring from Turkey to the West Bank. According to the Israeli Defense Ministry, Hamas used West Bank-based company Sense Sanitary Company and Turkish company Tikkno Plus Ic Ve Dis to transfer the money and goods to the West Bank. The companies are jointly owned by Hamas operatives Abdallah Fuqaha in Turkey and Ayman al-Massri in the West Bank.³⁵

Harboring Terrorist Leaders and Financiers

Leaders

Turkey harbors internationally designated and wanted extremist leaders.



[Amr Darrag](#)

Senior Muslim Brotherhood Member

- Founding member of the Egyptian Brotherhood’s outlawed Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) on whose platform Mohammed Morsi ran for president.³⁶
- Served as Egypt’s former minister of planning and international cooperation during the last two months of Morsi’s presidency.³⁷

³⁴ Tuvan Gumrukcu, “Turkey gave Hamas members passports, Israel says,” Reuters, August 26, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-israel-hamas/turkey-gave-hamas-members-passports-israel-says-idUSKBN25M1XW>; Cody Levine, “Turkey gave citizenship to Hamas members planning terror attacks – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, August 15, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/turkey-gave-citizenship-to-hamas-members-planning-terror-attacks-report-638731>.

³⁵ Judah Ari Gross, “Israel seizes money, goods it says Hamas was sending from Turkey to West Bank,” *Times of Israel*, February 15, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-seizes-money-goods-it-says-hamas-was-sending-from-turkey-to-west-bank/>; Ami Rojkes Dombé, “Once again, funds illegally transferred from Turkey to Hamas in Gaza,” *Israel Defense* (Kfar Saba), February 15, 2021, <https://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/48341>.

³⁶ Nancy Messieh, “Profiling Egypt’s New Ministers,” Atlantic Council, May 7, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/profiling-egypts-new-ministers>.

³⁷ Nancy Messieh, “Profiling Egypt’s New Ministers,” Atlantic Council, May 7, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/egyptsource/profiling-egypts-new-ministers>; Robert Fisk, “Amr Darrag: Ex-

- Claims he was warmly received in Turkey in September 2014.³⁸
- Heads the Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies in the Istanbul suburb of Yenibosna.³⁹
- Retired from political positions in the Brotherhood in 2016 but remains a member and supporter of the group.⁴⁰



Mahmoud Hussein

Former Secretary-General of the Muslim Brotherhood, former Member of the Shura Council

- Served as the group's secretary-general from 2010 until 2020, though the position is contested by members of the Brotherhood's revolutionary youth.⁴¹

Muslim Brotherhood minister in exile still believes Egypt's military regime can be replaced with 'moderate' Islamic rule," *Independent* (London), May 5, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/amr-darrag-exmuslim-brotherhood-minister-in-exile-still-believes-egypts-military-regime-can-be-replaced-with-moderate-islamic-rule-10227129.html>.

³⁸ Onur Ant and Ghaith Shennib, "Saudis Are After the Muslim Brotherhood, and Turkey's in the Way," Bloomberg News, July 3, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/saudis-are-after-the-muslim-brotherhood-and-turkey-s-in-the-way>.

³⁹ "Muslim Brotherhood leaders heading to Turkey," *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), September 17, 2014, http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_muslim-brotherhood-leaders-heading-to-turkey_359015.html; Onur Ant and Ghaith Shennib, "Saudis Are After the Muslim Brotherhood, and Turkey's in the Way," Bloomberg, July 3, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-03/saudis-are-after-the-muslim-brotherhood-and-turkey-s-in-the-way>.

⁴⁰ "Arabi 21 Talks with Amr Darrag After His Announcement of His Retirement from Public Work," Arabi21 (Cairo), December 26, 2016, <https://arabi21.com/story/973163/%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A21-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A5%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85>.

⁴¹ "Dr Mahmoud Hussein appointed Secretary General for the MB in Egypt," Ikhwanweb: The Muslim Brotherhood's Official English web site, January 21, 2010, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=22710>; Samuel Tadros, "The Brotherhood Divided," Hudson Institute, August 20, 2015, <http://www.hudson.org/research/11530-the-brotherhood-divided>; "Muslim Brotherhood suffers internal rifts, dismiss Secretary General Mahmoud Hussein," Egypt Today, September 16, 2020, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/91998/Muslim-Brotherhood-suffers-internal-rifts-dismiss-Secretary-General-Mahmoud-Hussein>.

- Served several prison terms in Egypt for involvement in the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴²
- Reportedly moved to Turkey in September 2014.⁴³



[Talaat Fahmi](#)

Spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood

- Appointed spokesman in December 2015.⁴⁴
- Reportedly based in Turkey since 2015.⁴⁵



[Ahmed Abdel Rahman](#)

Head of the Egyptian Brotherhood's Office for Egyptians Abroad

⁴² Eric Trager, Katie Kiraly, Cooper Klose, and Elliot Calhoun, "Who's Who in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 2012, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/whos-who-in-the-muslim-brotherhood#MahmoudHussein>.

⁴³ Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Turkey to Welcome Seven Muslim Brotherhood Exiles from Qatar," International Business Times, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/turkey-welcome-seven-muslim-brotherhood-exiles-qatar-1465700>.

⁴⁴ "Mohamed Montasser New Muslim Brotherhood Spokesman," Ikhwanweb: The Muslim Brotherhood's Official English web site, January 25, 2015, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=31980>; Khaled Dawoud, "The Brotherhood in the Shadow of the January 25, Anniversary," The Atlantic Council, January 14, 2016, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/component/content/article?id=28104:the-brotherhood-in-the-shadow-of-the-january-25-anniversary>.

⁴⁵ Mamoon Alabassi, "Rift widens in Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood after spokesman's sacking," Middle East Eye, December 17, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/egypts-muslim-brotherhood-split-after-row-over-spokesperson-sacking-966712164>.

- Rahman is a longtime member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. As head of the Office for Egyptians Abroad, Rahman manages the affairs of exiled Brotherhood members, as well as the activities of younger leaders on the ground in Egypt.⁴⁶
- Rahman is reportedly based in Istanbul.⁴⁷ In April 2015, a group of exiled, Istanbul-based Brotherhood members announced the establishment of the Office for Egyptians Abroad under Rahman's leadership.⁴⁸



[Gula Khan Hamidi](#)

Haqqani Network Member

- In January 2018, the U.S. government sanction-designated Hamidi for assisting in or providing financial, material, or technological support to the Haqqani network. The government accused Hamidi of facilitating the travel of Haqqani members from Pakistan to Turkey.⁴⁹
- Allegedly facilitated the travel of foreign fighters through Turkey. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Hamidi “facilitated the movement of two groups of foreign fighters to Turkey from Pakistan” in 2013 and also “coordinated the travel of al Qaeda and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan associates to Turkey” in October 2014.⁵⁰
- Allegedly operates in Istanbul, Turkey, as well as Afghanistan.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Georges Fahmi, “The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 14, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/13/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-60678>.

⁴⁷ “Sibling Rivalry,” *Economist*, June 16, 2016, <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21700673-egypts-main-islamist-movement-tearing-itself-apart-sibling-rivalry>.

⁴⁸ Georges Fahmi, “The Struggle for the Leadership of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, July 14, 2015, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/07/13/struggle-for-leadership-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-pub-60678>.

⁴⁹ “Treasury Sanctions Taliban and Haqqani Network Financiers and Facilitators,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0265>.

⁵⁰ “Treasury Sanctions Taliban and Haqqani Network Financiers and Facilitators,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm0265>.

⁵¹ “Counter Terrorism Designation,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, January 25, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20180125.aspx>.



[Abdul Rauf](#)

Purported Leader of the Taliban Delegation in Turkey

- Represented the Taliban in Turkey-based negotiations with the Afghan government since late 2017. Rauf has said that his group represents all Taliban factions—including the Haqqani Network—except “individuals who are not willing to opt for intra-Afghan peace talks and who want to talk through Americans.”⁵²
- Rauf previously served as a governor for the Taliban regime from 1996 to 2001.⁵³



[Zaher Jabarin](#)

Hamas financial manager, recruiter, senior military commander

- A convicted Hamas terrorist who was released from an Israeli prison in 2011 as part of a prisoner exchange deal for captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Following his release, Jabarin resettled in Turkey and rejoined Hamas as a senior leader.⁵⁴ The United States sanctioned Jabarin in September 2019.⁵⁵

⁵² Chad Garland and Zubair Babakarkhail, “Q&A: Afghan Taliban open Doha office,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 14, 2018, <https://www.stripes.com/sports/four-party-talks-with-taliban-in-turkey-could-pave-the-way-to-afghanistan-peace-deal-1.506737>; “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” Tolo News, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%9999>.

⁵³ Siyar Sirat, “Turkey Delegation ‘Represents All Taliban Factions,’” TOLONews, January 14, 2018, <http://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/turkey-delegation-%E2%80%98represents-all-taliban-factions%E2%80%9999>.

⁵⁴ Judah Ari Gross, “Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money,” *Times of Israel*, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>.

⁵⁵ “Treasury Targets Wide Range of Terrorists and Their Supporters Using Enhanced Counterterrorism Sanctions Authorities,” U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 10, 2019, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm772>.

- Recruited individuals to facilitate money laundering operations for Hamas in Turkey.⁵⁶ Two of these individuals, Turkish national Cemil Tekeli and Arab-Israeli citizen Durgham Jabarin (no relation), were arrested in Israel in January 2018.⁵⁷ Zaher Jabarin allegedly recruited Tekeli to help Hamas members set up businesses, acquire visas, and obtain commercial property in Turkey.⁵⁸

Government Support

The Turkish government has allowed terror-linked charities to operate within the country. The German, Israeli, and Russian governments have accused Turkish NGOs of providing material support to extremist groups.⁵⁹ Further, the United States has indicted Turkish financial institutions and citizens for evading U.S. sanctions on Iran.



Turkiye Halk Bankasi A.S.

Turkiye Halk Bankasi A.S., a.k.a. Halkbank, is a Turkish state-owned bank whose majority shareholder is the government of Turkey. In October 2019, the United States charged the bank with fraud, money laundering, and sanctions offenses related to the bank's participation in a multibillion-dollar scheme to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran. According to then-Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, Halkbank "allegedly conspired to undermine the United States Iran sanctions regime by illegally giving Iran access to billions of dollars' worth of funds, all while deceiving U.S. regulators about the scheme."⁶⁰ Defendant-turned-government-witness Reza Zarrab testified that he paid over \$50 million in bribes to Turkey's finance minister

⁵⁶ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money," Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>; Yoav Zitun, "Turkish law lecturer aided Hamas, deported from Israel," Ynet News, February 12, 2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5109465,00.html>.

⁵⁷ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money," Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>; Yoav Zitun, "Turkish law lecturer aided Hamas, deported from Israel," Ynet News, February 12, 2018, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5109465,00.html>; Anna Ahronheim, "Arab-Israeli, Turkish citizen arrested for aiding Hamas," *Jerusalem Post*, February 12, 2018, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Arab-Israeli-Turkish-citizen-arrested-for-aiding-Hamas-542411>.

⁵⁸ Judah Ari Gross, "Shin Bet accuses Turkey of allowing Hamas to raise, launder money," Times of Israel, February 12, 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-israeli-man-turkish-citizen-arrested-for-helping-to-fund-hamas/>.

⁵⁹ Chase Winter, "Russia claims Turkish NGOs are 'main supplier' of extremists in Syria," Deutsche Welle, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>; Benjamin Weinthal, "German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

⁶⁰ "Turkish Bank Charged in Manhattan Federal Court for Its Participation in a Multibillion-Dollar Iranian Sanctions Evasion Scheme," U.S. Department of Justice, October 15, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/turkish-bank-charged-manhattan-federal-court-its-participation-multibillion-dollar-iranian>.

as part of the scheme.⁶¹ Halkbank has pled not guilty to the charges. In October 2020, a U.S. federal judge dismissed a Halkbank claim that the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act protected it against prosecution.⁶² In February 2021, a group of 876 victims of Iran-sponsored terrorism filed a civil lawsuit in U.S. court against Halkbank, alleging the bank helped Iran avoid the financial consequences of its support for terrorism. A Manhattan federal court dismissed the case, arguing it could be settled in a Turkish court.⁶³

As part of the Halkbank investigation, U.S. authorities have charged Zarrab and eight other Turkish citizens for exporting gold in exchange for Iranian oil, in violation of U.S. sanctions, and using a series of front companies, false documentation, and bribes to make illegal transactions through U.S. banks.⁶⁴ In October 2017, Zarrab signed a plea deal with federal prosecutors to act as a government witness. U.S. authorities arrested Zarrab in March 2016 when he arrived in the United States for a family trip to Disney World with \$100,000 in cash.⁶⁵ In March 2017, U.S. authorities arrested Mehmet Hakan Atilla, the former deputy general manager of Halkbank, on charges of conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions law, defraud the United States, and commit money laundering and bank fraud, as well as a charge of bank fraud.⁶⁶ Atilla was convicted in January 2018.⁶⁷ Turkish authorities initially investigated the scheme in 2013, but dropped the case after pressure from Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who argued the investigation was part of a coup attempt against the government.⁶⁸ Erdoğan condemned Atilla's conviction as "scandalous," but the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan concluded in July 2020 Atilla had received a fair trial.⁶⁹ Atilla was sentenced to 32 months in prison but released in July 2019 and deported to Turkey. Despite his conviction, Atilla was named the head of Turkey's stock exchange in October 2019.⁷⁰

Links to Terrorism

⁶¹ Larry Neumeister, "US court upholds Turkish banker's conviction in Iran case," Associated Press, July 20, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/d99a19d3086aa4732cdb441ccf9e985e>.

⁶² Jonathan Stempel, "Turkey's Halkbank must face U.S. indictment over Iran sanctions violations, judge rules," Reuters, October 1, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-halkbank/turkeys-halkbank-must-face-u-s-indictment-over-iran-sanctions-violations-judge-rules-idUSKBN26M7O9>.

⁶³ "U.S. court dismisses case against Turkey's Halkbank by victims of Iran-linked attacks," Reuters, February 17, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-us-halkbank-idUSKBN2AH0FG>.

⁶⁴ Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

⁶⁵ Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

⁶⁶ "Turkish Banker Arrested For Conspiring To Evade U.S. Sanctions Against Iran And Other Offenses," U.S. Department of Justice, March 28, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/turkish-banker-arrested-conspiring-evade-us-sanctions-against-iran-and-other-offenses>.

⁶⁷ Nina Agrawal, "Banker in Iran sanctions trial found guilty," *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-iran-sanctions-zarrab-20180103-story.html>.

⁶⁸ Nina Agrawal, "Turkish gold trader Reza Zarrab makes plea deal in Iran sanctions case," *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/la-na-reza-zarrab-trial-20171128-story.html>.

⁶⁹ Larry Neumeister, "US court upholds Turkish banker's conviction in Iran case," Associated Press, July 20, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/d99a19d3086aa4732cdb441ccf9e985e>.

⁷⁰ "Turkish Banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla Sentenced To 32 Months For Conspiring To Violate U.S. Sanctions Against Iran And Other Offenses," U.S. Department of Justice, May 16, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/turkish-banker-mehmet-hakan-atilla-sentenced-32-months-conspiring-violate-us-sanctions>; Ayla Jean Yackley, "Turkey picks former jailed banker to head Istanbul stock exchange," *Financial Times*, October 21, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/31e25da8-f442-11e9-a79c-bc9acae3b654>.

- Halkbank is at the center of a conspiracy to export gold in exchange for Iranian oil, in violation of U.S. sanctions.⁷¹



Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation

The Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (“İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı,” or IHH) is a Turkey-based international charity established in 1992 to aid Bosnian Muslims. IHH is active in more than 100 countries.⁷² The charity stands accused of ties to al-Qaeda, Hamas, and foreign fighters in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.⁷³

Links to Terrorism

- A January 2020 U.S. lawsuit filed by American photojournalist Matthew Schrier under the Anti-Terrorism Act against Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) alleged that IHH and QIB formed a partnership to support Syrian jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham and the jihadist umbrella group Syrian Islamic Front.⁷⁴
- In April 2016, the Russian government accused Turkish NGOs Besar Foundation, the Iyilikder Foundation, and the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) of providing weapons and material support to Syrian rebel groups. Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin accused the three groups of being fronts for Turkey’s MIT intelligence agency to provide support to rebel forces in the Syrian civil war.⁷⁵
- In January 2014, Turkish police raided the IHH’s offices in the Turkish city of Kilis as part of a series of raids in six cities against individuals suspected of al-Qaeda links, according to the government. IHH denied the allegations.⁷⁶ Also that month, Turkish

⁷¹ “Turkish Bank Charged in Manhattan Federal Court for Its Participation in a Multibillion-Dollar Iranian Sanctions Evasion Scheme,” U.S. Department of Justice, October 15, 2019, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/turkish-bank-charged-manhattan-federal-court-its-participation-multibillion-dollar-iranian>.

⁷² “Profile: Free Gaza Movement,” BBC News, June 1, 2010, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10202678>; “Factbox: Turkish charity group behind Gaza-bound convoy,” Reuters, May 31, 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-palestinians-israel-turkey-group-fact/factbox-turkish-charity-group-behind-gaza-bound-convoy-idUSTRE64U4SO20100601>.

⁷³ Benjamin Weinthal, “German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties,” *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

⁷⁴ “US lawsuit against Qatar Islamic Bank reveals Turkish charity IHH’s links to terrorist groups,” *Nordic Monitor*, September 18, 2020, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2020/09/lawsuit-against-qatari-institutions-filed-by-american-photojournalist-in-the-us-reveals-ihhs-links-to-terrorist-groups/>.

⁷⁵ Chase Winter, “Russia claims Turkish NGOs are ‘main supplier’ of extremists in Syria,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 1, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-claims-turkish-ngos-are-main-supplier-of-extremists-in-syria/a-19159685>.

⁷⁶ “Turkish anti-terrorist police raid aid agency near Syrian border,” Reuters, January 14, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-ngo/turkish-anti-terrorist-police-raid-aid-agency-near-syrian-border>.

security forces stopped an IHH truck at the Syrian-Turkish border that was carrying weapons and ammunition into Syria. The drivers reportedly claimed they were transporting aid on behalf of the IHH. The IHH and Turkish Interior Minister Efkan Ala denied the accusations.⁷⁷

- Syrian rebels have linked the IHH to the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2012, Syrian rebels from the Free Syrian Army told the United Kingdom's *Times* that a ship carrying supplies from Libya had been designated for the FSA. But upon arrival, the rebels discovered that the ship had been registered to the IHH. An FSA member accused the Brotherhood of using its ties in Turkey and "seizing control of this ship and the cargo. This is what they do. They buy influence with their money and guns."⁷⁸
- Germany outlawed the IHH's German branch in 2010 because the Turkish group "fights against Israel's right to exist," according to then-Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere. IHH challenged the ruling, but a German federal administrative court upheld the decision in April 2012 because it found the IHH had made financial contributions to Hamas.⁷⁹
- Israel banned the IHH in 2008 as part of a larger ban of international charities belonging to the umbrella of the Hamas-linked Union of Good charity.⁸⁰ On May 31, 2010, the IHH organized an aid flotilla to the Gaza Strip, which sought to break an Israeli naval blockade of Gaza. Israeli forces boarded the lead ship, the Mavi Mamra, resulting in the deaths of nine activists who violently resisted.⁸¹ In June 2010, a bipartisan group of 87 U.S. senators called for the U.S. government to investigate designating the IHH as a foreign terror group.⁸²
- During the 1990s, IHH allegedly contributed money to foreign fighters in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.⁸³ Retired French investigating judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere investigated the IHH in the 1990s as head of the French judiciary's counterterrorism unit. IHH "were basically helping Al Qaeda when (Usama) bin Laden started to want to target U.S. soil," Bruguiere told the Associated Press. Members of the so-called Fateh Kamel

idUSBREA0D0JI20140114?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews; Ariel Zirulnick, "Turkey cracks down on charity suspected of arming Al Qaeda affiliates in Syria," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 14, 2014, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0114/Turkey-cracks-down-on-charity-suspected-of-arming-Al-Qaeda-affiliates-in-Syria>.

⁷⁷ Agence France-Presse, "Police raid Turkish charity in 'smear campaign,'" *Daily Star* (Beirut), January 14, 2014, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2014/Jan-14/243984-turkish-police-raid-charity-over-sending-arms-to-syria.ashx#ixzz2qNJzeuwp%20>.

⁷⁸ Sheera Frenkel, "Brotherhood 'buying influence with arms,'" *The Times* (London), September 14, 2012, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brotherhood-buying-influence-with-arms-lt9nc0qnkh3?shareToken=e9edb8204748ab74fc98c901f6757207>.

⁷⁹ Benjamin Weinthal, "German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

⁸⁰ "Defense Minister signs order banning Hamas-affiliated charitable organizations," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 7, 2008, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2008/pages/defense%20minister%20signs%20order%20banning%20hamas-affiliated%20charitable%20organizations%207-jul-2008.aspx>.

⁸¹ Jason Athanasiadis, "Targeted by Israeli raid: Who is the IHH?" *Christian Science Monitor*, June 1, 2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2010/0601/Targeted-by-Israeli-raid-Who-is-the-IHH>.

⁸² "Cardin, Bipartisan Group of 87 Senators Send Letter to President Obama in Support of Israel's Right to Self-Defense," Senator Ben Cardin, June 23, 2010, <https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/cardin-bipartisan-group-of-87-senators-send-letter-to-president-obama-in-support-of-israels-right-to-self-defense>.

⁸³ Benjamin Weinthal, "German Court Affirms Turkish IHH Ban Because of Hamas Ties," *Jerusalem Post*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/International/German-court-affirms-Turkish-IHH-ban-because-of-Hamas-ties>.

network worked at IHH as a cover while plotting Los Angeles International Airport on behalf of al-Qaeda. “It was too systematic and too widespread for the NGO (non-governmental organization) not to know,” according to Bruguere. IHH denied any links to terrorism.⁸⁴

Snapshot of Turkish Counterterrorism Legislation and Initiatives

Definition of Terrorism: Following the March 13, 2016, bombing in central Ankara, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan demanded that the definition of “terrorist” be expanded to include those who support terrorism. According to Erdoğan, such individuals might include activists, lawmakers, or journalists.⁸⁵ He said: “Their titles as an MP, an academic, an author, a journalist do not change the fact that they are actually terrorists. An act of terror is successful because of these supporters, these accomplices.”⁸⁶

Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Terrorism Finance (AML/CTF): Turkey is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Within Turkey’s Ministry of Finance is the Financial Intelligence Unit (MASAK), which cooperates with similar international agencies to support FATF and implement its recommendations.⁸⁷ According to the U.S. Department of State, the Turkish government does not regularly review its non-profit sector or provide “adequate anti-money laundering/CFT outreach or guidance.”⁸⁸ More than 5,500 foundations and 100,000 associations are licensed through the General Director of Foundations, but there are too few auditors to appropriately monitor compliance with AML/CFT regulations. The State Department further believes that Turkey has focused its CTF efforts primarily on the PKK and the Gullen movement.⁸⁹

Countering Violent Extremism: Turkey has several government programs to counter extremism. One is an outreach program administered by the Turkish National Police (TNP) that seeks to prevent radicalization through early contact with at-risk communities. This program aims to reach vulnerable populations before they are exposed to extremist propaganda and messages. The government’s Directorate of Religious Affairs, the Diyanet, oversees 85,000 mosques in the country while promoting a more moderate version of Islam and weakening radical Islamist messaging. The Diyanet tries to accomplish this aim by reinterpreting religious

⁸⁴ Associated Press, “Turkish Charity Behind Gaza Flotilla Had ‘Ties to Terrorism and Jihad,’” Fox News, June 2, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/06/02/french-judge-says-turkish-charity-gaza-flotilla-terror-ties.html>.

⁸⁵ “Ankara bombing: Erdogan seeks to widen terrorism definition,” BBC News, March 14, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35807987>.

⁸⁶ “Definition of ‘terrorists’ should be broadened to include ‘accomplices,’ says Erdoğan,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 15, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/definition-of-terrorists-should-be-broadened-to-include-accomplices-says-erdogan-96461>.

⁸⁷ “Turkey’s Contributions to International Community’s Efforts to Fight Terrorism,” Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed February 7, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-contributions-to-international-community_s-efforts-to-fight-terrorism.en.mfa; “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

⁸⁸ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

⁸⁹ “Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Turkey,” U.S. Department of State, July 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm#TURKEY>.

texts and teaching religious education under a more modern framework, and by staffing mosques with Diyanet officials.⁹⁰

Policy Prescriptions

In order to better combat terrorism and terrorist financing, Turkey will need to fully enforce its own counterterrorism policies and increase the resources devoted to monitoring and countering terrorism financing, in particular within the non-profit sector.

Specifically, the United States must incentivize Ankara to:

- Arrest or expel all wanted and internationally designated individuals inside its borders, including the seven people outlined by CEP's TURKEY-HARBORS campaign
- Expel or arrest all members of the Taliban, Haqqani network, Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas delegations currently residing or operating inside Turkey
- Halt all direct support—financial, material, and strategic—to internationally designated terrorist organizations
- Allocate appropriate resources to government oversight of the financial and non-profit sectors to prevent abuse by criminal and extremist elements
- Investigate and close non-government organizations, financial institutions, and charities with ties to international extremist movements

⁹⁰ "Country Report on Terrorism 2014 – Turkey," U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Turkey, June 1, 2015, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/country-report-terrorism-2014-turkey/>.