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Dominic Martin: Kerala Bomber Highlights Lone Actor Terrorism in India

Jacob Zenn

On October 30, a bomb blasted through a Jehovah's Witness event at Kalamassery's Zamra Convention Centre in Kerala, southern India. Coming two days after Hamas leader Khalid Mashal spoke via e-conference to the Mallapuram youth wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, initial speculation in India suggested that Islamists must have carried out the attack. They pointed to, for example, the "Uproot Hindutva" slogans chanted at the Jamaat-e-Islami rally as indications of Islamist and/or anti-Hindu motivations behind the attack. Nevertheless, this narrative was quickly complicated by the fact that it was a Jehovah's Witness event at the convention center which was targeted ([India Today](#), October 29). As it turns out, however, the bomber, Dominic Martin, had nothing to do with Hamas, Jamaat-e-Islami, or any other Islamist group. Martin, it seems, did not fit the much-speculated terrorist profile at all.

Martin was described as a "brilliant mind" after he turned himself in to police. The attacker had only returned to India from a

well-paying job in Dubai weeks before the attack ([India Times](#), November 2). Martin himself was also a Jehovah's Witness, but had come to believe the religious group's ideology was seditious and preached hatred toward other communities. Thus, rather than acting in the name of hating Jehovah's Witnesses, Martin was intending to "protect" other faiths. He had become so obsessed with the operation that he planned it for six months, even going so far as to post a video of himself explaining his reasoning for the attack on Facebook before it began. Among other claims, Martin stated that, "As I had no other option, I took this decision." By this, he is believed to refer to the Jehovah's Witness church not "correcting" its teachings, despite his exhortations ([Deccan Herald](#), October 31).

There were also personal reasons for Martin's attack. While Martin was frustrated with the church's teachings, his wife and children refused to leave the church. He apparently felt that they were choosing the church over him. Nonetheless, he was known to be a quiet and unassuming individual. Martin lived in a comfortable home in Kochi, which is near Kerala ([The Print](#) [India], October 31). Incidentally, Kochi was historically the center of India's

centuries-old Cochin Jewish community (now largely emigrated), leading some to suspect initially that the attack was inspired by Hamas.

Further, Martin was not known to discuss religion publicly. He was popular locally, because he had been an English teacher with many students around Kochi ([Hindustan Times](#), October 31). Regarding the attack itself, Martin raised little suspicion within his family, simply telling them that he was going to meet a friend on October 30. In reality, however, he had been researching bomb-making on the internet for several months and succeeded in designing and constructing a bomb by himself.

Ultimately, Martin turned himself in to the police after claiming the attack on Facebook. His case shows how self-radicalized—if not also delusional—lone actors are capable of developing their own bombs and carrying out highly lethal attacks. Moreover, while Islamists or other political extremists are often the prime suspects behind these kinds of bombings, individuals who appear to have little to no ideological motive may still decide to become terrorists on the basis of their own personal grievances.

Jacob Zenn is the Editor of Militant Leadership Monitor.

Mousa Abu Marzouk: Hamas's Top Spokesman, Diplomat, and Financier

Adam Roussele

Mousa Abu Marzouk is a founding member of Hamas, and is now one of its top diplomats and media personalities, though he was once a contender for the organization's highest political office ([Middle East Online](#), November 15, 2016; [Al Jazeera](#), November 22). He is also a billionaire and key financier of the group. Marzouk is based in Doha, Qatar, where he

is a senior member of Hamas's political bureau. Marzouk recently stated in an interview with *New Yorker* magazine that neither he nor any other member of Hamas's political wing had prior knowledge of the planned massacre that occurred on October 7 ([Times of Israel](#), October 14). This is plausible, given the amount of surveillance that surrounds top Hamas leaders in Doha, but also highlights the complex and secretive nature of Gaza's ruling party.

Early Years and Life in the United States

Born in Gaza's Rafah refugee camp in 1951 to parents who were forcibly relocated there by Israeli forces in 1948, Mousa Marzouk completed high school in Gaza before travelling to Egypt sometime in the mid-1960s. He reportedly joined the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1968 and completed a degree in engineering in Cairo in 1976 ([Ynet News](#), February 20, 2006). After graduation, Marzouk attempted to find work in the Gulf region before travelling to the United States, likely sometime in the late 1970s. While in the United States, he was actively involved in a group called the Islamic Organization for Palestine and received a master's degree in industrial sciences at Colorado State University. After this, Marzouk relocated his family to Ruston, Louisiana to begin doctoral studies at Louisiana Tech University. He and his family moved once again to Virginia sometime in the latter half of the 1980s ([Washington Post](#), August 8, 1995). Living in the United States at the time of Hamas's founding in 1987 and joining at or around its inception, Marzouk is credited with creating the group's international fundraising framework. This allowed Hamas to develop its initial infrastructure in Gaza, including several humanitarian and social programs run from 1989 to 1992 ([The Forward](#), April 20, 2012).

The lead up to the United States' eventual designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization in 1997 resulted in a series of

legal troubles for Marzouk, who was living in the United States with a green card at the time. On July 25, 1995, he was arrested at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on suspicion of terrorist activity ([New Yorker](#), August 11, 1996). Marzouk was held from then on at the Manhattan Correctional Center, eventually being released without charge in 1997 after a deal was reached that extradited him to Jordan ([New York Times](#), May 6, 1997). In 2004, a US court indicted him in absentia for coordinating and financing Hamas's activities ([US District Court Northern District Illinois Eastern Division](#), August 27, 2004).

Dealmaker-in-Exile

Marzouk lived in Jordan until 2001, staying for a period in Damascus and Cairo before settling in Doha, where he continues to reside ([Ynet News](#), January 17, 2012; [Times of Israel](#), October 14). Outwardly, Marzouk's current role in Hamas appears to be that of spokesman and top diplomat. In September, he attended a summit with his Fatah counterpart in Beirut to discuss ending clashes between Islamist factions and Fatah forces in southern Lebanon's Ein Al-Hilweh refugee camp ([Al Jazeera](#), September 13; see also [TM](#), December 1). Marzouk also travelled to Moscow on October 26, where he discussed the ongoing war in Gaza with Russian deputy foreign minister, Mikhail Bogdanov, and Iranian deputy foreign minister, Ali Bagheri Kani ([Times of Israel](#), October 26). During this meeting, Marzouk reportedly briefed Russian officials on the causes of the October 7 attack, discussed the release of hostages taken from Israel with Russian citizenship, and praised Russia's diplomatic response to the war ([Arshaq al-Aswat](#), October 28).

Since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, Marzouk has served as a media spokesperson for Hamas, giving interviews with various Middle Eastern, American, and European media outlets ([Anadolu](#), October 30; [CBS News](#), November 20; [BBC](#), November 7). He made headlines on

October 31 when, in a televised interview, he claimed that tunnels under Gaza were there to protect Hamas alone. The protection of civilians in Gaza, he suggested, was instead the responsibility of the United Nations and Israel ([Jerusalem Post](#), October 31). Marzouk has at times used his media prominence to criticize Hamas's allies, stating in an interview on Egyptian television that "the reaction of the axis of resistance is disappointing," appearing to refer to Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria's failure to directly join Hamas's war effort ([Jerusalem Post](#), October 19). It was also Marzouk who announced that Hamas would release at least 50 hostages and enter into a ceasefire agreement with Israel on October 23 ([Times of Israel](#), November 22). Marzouk has notably presented more nuanced views on behalf of Hamas, stating once in an interview that the group recognizes that Israel exists and acknowledges agreements made with it. Instead, he argued, Hamas specifically refuses to recognize the legitimacy of Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands ([Ynet](#), February 20, 2006).

In addition to diplomacy, Marzouk is reportedly an "amazing financier," overseeing a conglomerate of an estimated ten financial enterprises that engage in lending and investment ventures. In 2014, his personal net worth was estimated to be between \$2-3 billion ([Globes](#), July 24, 2014). The substantial wealth and financial acumen possessed by Marzouk suggests a much more important role than that of a mere diplomat or spokesman. The process by which Hamas's political wing channels funds provided by donors, charities, and foreign governments—such as Iran and Qatar—to the militant wing in Gaza remains opaque. Cryptocurrencies have offered one such way to circumvent international sanctions in the past ([Globes](#), October 29). Given Marzouk's talent for fundraising and finance, and the tremendous wealth he reportedly wields, it is likely that he also plays a substantial role in this process—and perhaps benefits from it personally.

Conclusion

Mousa Abu Marzouk is one of Hamas's most visible leaders and plays an important role as a key diplomat and spokesman for the group on the world stage. However, his talents for fundraising and business also suggest a role as one of the organization's most important financiers, possibly working behind the scenes to channel money to the group's militant wing in Gaza. Given the scale of the ongoing war, it is likely that Marzouk will remain a highly prominent media and diplomatic figure—and almost certainly a financial one as well, whether or not it is publicly visible.

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Tahawwur Hussain Rana: Nearer to Extradition to India and a Revival of the Mumbai Attacks Investigation

Animesh Roul

Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Canadian businessman originally from Pakistan, was convicted in a US court in 2011. Rana was charged with providing material support to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Pakistan and for conspiring to attack the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten's* offices in Copenhagen and Aarhus. This followed their publishing of controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammed in 2005. In 2013, Rana was sentenced to 14 years in a US prison. **[1]** Rana, however, was acquitted of a third charge, which had alleged his involvement in the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. The Mumbai attack had been orchestrated by LeT and rogue elements within Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Even though he was acquitted on this last point, the case

against Rana for the other charges remains. This is due to the fact that LeT operative and Pakistani-American David Headley (also known as Dawood Gilani)—who had pleaded guilty in 2010 to planning the Mumbai attacks—testified against Rana to avoid the death penalty and extradition to India ([Dawn](#), January 17, 2013; [DoJ Press Release](#), January 17, 2013).

Rana had laid the groundwork for the Mumbai attacks, using his immigration firm to provide logistical support to Headley. Headley was convicted by the US court and sentenced to 35 years in prison for his leading role in the string of shootings and bombings, which led to the death or injury of 450 people, 10 of which were LeT militants. Headley also detailed how the ISI supported LeT. Another notorious al-Qaeda commander, Ilyas Kashmiri, was indicted in the same case as Rana and Headley. Kashmiri, however, was killed in a drone strike in Pakistan in 2011 before he could be brought to trial ([CaseText](#), August 30, 2012).

This profile examines the involvement of Rana in the Mumbai attacks and his ties with LeT's David Headley and the ISI, which illustrates the complex web of global terror networks and state-level complicity. It also looks at how Rana's eventual extradition to India would reopen the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks conspiracy case, reflecting the nuanced nature of legal proceedings in cases of transnational terrorism.

Trial Background

The 62-year-old Rana, who is originally from Chichawatni in Pakistan's Punjab Province, attended Hasan Abdal Cadet School alongside Headley. However, despite being a former Pakistani Army Medical Corps captain, Rana faced a court-martial for misconduct, moved to Canada in 1997, and later settled in the United States. He ran First World Immigration Services in Chicago, which facilitated Headley's multiple trips to India before the Mumbai attacks. Headley reportedly

testified that Rana also aided his surveillance mission in Denmark against *Jyllands-Posten*. Rana assisted Headley in gaining access to the newspaper offices by allowing him to pose as a representative of First World Immigration Services ([US DOJ](#), January 17, 2013).

Rana's June 2011 acquittal in the Mumbai terror case within a Chicago court was a setback for the Indian government. Subsequently, a case was filed against Rana and Headley in an Indian court in 2011 ([PIB](#), June 10, 2011). Again, on June 10, 2020, India filed another complaint, seeking the provisional arrest of Rana with a view toward extradition from the United States to India. After three years of intense requests, in May a US court approved Rana's extradition ([India Today](#), May 18).

During the trial in 2011, Rana's defense attorney in the United States argued that prosecuting him based on Headley's testimony was like "using a whale to catch a minnow," portraying Rana as a minor player in the scheme ([ProPublica](#), June 13, 2011). However, the evidence suggests both Headley and Rana were actually the proverbial "whales" in LeT's transnational terrorist conspiracies and that they both actively colluded since 2005. While Headley executed terrorist acts on behalf of his handlers inside Pakistan's ISI and LeT, Rana helped facilitate those plans from US soil.

Findings of the Investigation

A cursory look at the investigation reports and court proceedings in the United States reveals that Rana was in direct contact with Headley's Pakistan-based handlers, LeT's Sajid Mir and the ISI's Major Iqbal, and coordinated Headley's reconnaissance missions in Mumbai and other Indian cities. Just before the Mumbai attacks, Rana also met with Abdur Rehman Pasha, who was a former Pakistani army officer-turned-ISI-affiliated militant in Dubai. They reportedly discussed attacking *Jyllands Posten* cartoonists Kurt Westergaard and Fleming

Rose in Denmark ([Deccan Herald](#), May 4, 2018).

Investigations have uncovered significant documentary evidence and statements which implicate Rana in the conspiracy and identify his intricate involvement alongside Headley. Rana's assisted Headley in obtaining an Indian tourist visa with fraudulent documents and provided logistical support to LeT for the execution of the Mumbai attacks. The Mumbai Police, who led the investigation, discovered email communications between Headley and Rana discussing their plans. In one such email concerning the Mumbai attacks, Headley inquired about the email account of Major Iqbal, who provided \$25,000 to Headley for conducting surveillance trips to identify potential targets in Mumbai. This correspondence further suggested the depth of Rana's involvement in the planning and execution of the attacks ([Times of India](#), February 12, 2016).

Both Headley and Rana befriended several people in Mumbai to get access to and infiltrate key installations. During that time, Rana even cultivated a plan to enter the Indian movie industry by promoting Rahul Bhatt, the son of film director Mahesh Bhatt and an aspiring actor, in a movie. However, according to Headley, the LeT leadership in Pakistan opposed the move and the plan was shelved ([Zee News](#), May 27, 2011). Another individual, Mahrukh Bharucha (secretary at Rana and Headley's immigration office in Mumbai), served as a pivotal witness for the prosecution by providing insights into Headley's professional and personal relationship with Rana. According to Bharucha, Rana frequently called the office landline to contact Headley and in March and April 2008, Rana was accompanied by his wife when he visited the Mumbai office. She also disclosed that Rana had contacted her after the attacks to suggest the office be closed temporarily ([Hindustan Times](#), January 18, 2018). Headley had used the office as a cover for frequent India trips and for conducting surveillance in various cities, including Mumbai, before the

attacks. Rana, too, visited India between November 11 and November 21 and left India a week before the attacks took place. After the Mumbai attacks, Rana also reportedly suggested to Headley that Pakistan should praise the “martyrs” who died during the Mumbai attacks. Meanwhile, Rana and Headley began focusing on the Denmark plot, starting with reconnaissance.

Path to Extradition

At the time of his conviction in 2011, Rana had a well-established set of businesses in Chicago, including a slaughterhouse, grocery shop, and an immigration office with branches in the United States and Canada. He began serving his sentence at a low-security federal correctional institution in San Pedro, California. Rana contracted COVID-19 in 2020 and was released from prison for health reasons and on compassionate grounds, having served almost nine years in prison. After the Indian authorities officially complained about his release under the 1997 US-India extradition treaty, Rana was re-arrested and jailed on June 10, 2020 ([Indian Embassy](#), June 25, 1997; [Times of India](#), June 20, 2020).

In mid-2021, the Biden administration urged a Los Angeles court to extradite Rana to India. Two years later, in May, the court approved Rana’s extradition ([Scroll](#), May 18). In August, the Los Angeles court rejected Rana’s *habeas corpus* petition. Notionally, this means that the road is almost clear for the United States to extradite Rana to India. Rana, however, has filed an appeal against the court's decision and requested a stay on his extradition until his appeal is heard in the Ninth Circuit Court. In early October, the Ninth Circuit Court agreed to his request for more time to file his motion. Rana's briefing was scheduled for November 9, and the US government's answer will be due on December 11 ([India Today](#), October 6). The extradition may ultimately be subject to the decision of the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken.

In late September 2023, the Mumbai Police filed a new charge sheet [2] against Rana, who remains detained at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Los Angeles. This latest charge sheet is over 400 pages long and is the fourth such sheet in the 15-year-old case. It was presented to a court with fresh evidence that led to additional charges under Section 39A of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act ([Ahmedabad Mirror](#), September 27). The new evidence and added charges against Rana—coupled with a declaration by Indian Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah in parliament that India remained committed to justice in this case—is certainly expected to increase pressure on the United States government to expedite Rana’s extradition.

Conclusion

Beyond the nuances of bilateral security and diplomacy, Rana's extradition to India is crucial for the revival of the Mumbai terror investigation. This is the case for two reasons: firstly, it may allow India to unravel further information regarding the planning and execution of the deadly attacks; and secondly, it is a step toward India’s goal of persecuting perpetrators of attacks who still roam freely in Pakistan and elsewhere. Rana's involvement in the attacks and his connections to LeT and the ISI highlight the intricate network of militant organizations operating in and beyond Pakistan. Bringing Rana to justice and uncovering valuable information about the planning, financing, and operations of the Mumbai attacks is crucial for Indian intelligence agencies. Rana’s extradition would allow them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the original attack—and potentially offer insights that could prevent future terror attacks emanating from abroad.

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Notes:

[1] "Tahawwur Rana Sentenced to 14 Years in Prison for Supporting Pakistani Terror Group and Terror Plot in Denmark", January 17, 2013, Press Release, Department of Justice (USA), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndil/pr/tahawwur-rana-sentenced-14-years-prison-supporting-pakistani-terror-group-and-terror>

[2] In Indian policing, a charge sheet is a full statement of charges with documents and evidence included.

Abu Ubaydah al-Qassam and His Peers: A Look at Palestinian Armed Groups' Military Spokesmen

Daniele Garofalo

On October 7, Hamas' military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, launched the "Al-Aqsa Flood" military operation. They did this in coordination with other Palestinian armed factions based in the Gaza Strip, which together belong to the "Palestinian Joint Operations Room (JOR)."

[1] It was a surprise attack against Israeli military positions and bases and kibbutzim. The attacks were simultaneous and coordinated, using different types of operations: thousands of rockets, air raids with ultralight aircraft, and maritime and direct assaults.

In response, the Israeli army launched a land attack on the Gaza Strip. Following the October 7 attacks and the Israeli response, the dissemination of propaganda **[2]** and audio or video messages by the military spokesmen of the various Palestinian armed groups also commenced. The most operational brigades, whose spokesmen's messages have been published, include the following:

1. The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades (military wing of Hamas);
2. The al-Quds Brigades (military wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad);

3. The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (military wing of al-Fatah); **[3]**
4. The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades (military wing of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or PFLP);
5. The Omar al-Qassim Martyr National Resistance Brigades (military wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or DFLP);
6. The Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades (military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees);
7. The Mujaheddin Brigades (military wing of the Palestinian Mujaheddin Movement);
8. The al-Ansar/al-Nasser Brigades (military wing of the al-Ahrar Movement); and
9. The Lions' Den Brigades.

The profiles of these spokesmen are often shadowy, and the information about them is obscure and difficult to track down. However, their profiles are increasingly important in the Palestinian militant context and their fame and support are growing with the ongoing conflict.

Abu Ubaydah al-Qassam (the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades' Military Spokesman)

There is more information and propaganda around the spokesman of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Abu Ubaydah, than the other groups' ([X/@g88daniele](https://twitter.com/X/g88daniele), November 26). His audio and video speeches are widespread on social networks and messaging apps and receive thousands of views and shares. His face is never seen, however, because he always wears a red Palestinian *keffiyeh* (a traditional Arab headdress). The war name "Abu Ubaidah" is also derived from the "Conqueror of Jerusalem," Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah, who lived during the reign of Caliph Omar bin Al-Khattab in the 7th century ([TRT Arabi](https://www.trt-arabi.com), October 13).

Some sources claim that Abu Ubaidah was born in the village of Na'aliya, which was

occupied by Israel in 1948. He then lived in Jabalia in northeast Gaza until 2014 ([TRT Arabi](#), October 13; [Aawsat](#), November 2; [Al Jazeera](#), November 2). Abu Ubaidah began appearing in the media in 2002 as one of the most senior activists and military officers of the Izz al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades ([Aawsat](#), November 2). After the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Abu Ubaidah was officially appointed the spokesman of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. He first appeared on the screen on June 25, 2006 to announce the news of the successful conclusion of the “Shattered Illusion” operation east of the city of Rafah, in which Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured ([Al Jazeera](#), November 2).

According to Israeli and Arab reports, Abu Ubaidah received a master’s degree in 2013 from the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion at the Islamic University of Gaza with the thesis, “The Holy Land between Judaism, Christianity and Islam” ([Elaph](#), July 25, 2014; [Aawsat](#), November 2). He has appeared frequently over the years to narrate the military developments of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, with speeches that contain many messages of condemnation toward the “Israeli occupation.” His fame increased considerably from June 2020 on for his very strong anti-Israel videos. The first was in June 2020, when Israel decided to annex the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, which Abu Ubaidah stated that was a decision from the Israeli government akin to “a declaration of war” ([Al-Watan News](#), May 21, 2021). Since October 7, he has appeared every day—except on truce days—to highlight the military achievements of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. The video clips in which Abu Ubaidah appears are always quite similar and end with the phrase, “And it is a jihad of victory or martyrdom,” a phrase of the martyr Izz al-Din al-Qassam. [4]

Other Military Spokesmen

While Abu Ubaidah is the best-known and most important among the military spokesmen of the Palestinian brigades,

others exist, though there is comparatively little information known about them. Nevertheless, they remain very active, and their speeches and statements are widespread.

The second most important spokesman is Abu Hamzah ([X/@g88daniele](#), November 26). He is the military spokesman of the al-Quds Brigades. Almost nothing is known about him, except that he was already a military spokesman in 2007 and was in no previous videos. It is also known that he is active in Gaza, not only as a spokesman but also in giving sermons in Gazan mosques ([Khaberni Media](#), October 31). Finally, he is among the Palestinian fighters on the “wanted lists” of the Israeli intelligence services ([Shabbek](#), November 11).

Abu Muhammad, on the other hand, is the military spokesman of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades ([X/@g88daniele](#), November, 26). All that is known about him is that before 2012 he was the spokesman of the Imad al-Amoudy Martyrs Battalion, which is affiliated to the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades operating in the West Bank. He became the main spokesman in May 2012, when he announced the unification under one umbrella of all al-Aqsa battalions operating in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank ([MEMC](#), May 25, 2012).

Even Abu Bilal, the military spokesman of the Mujaheddin Brigades, is poorly known ([X/@g88daniele](#), November 26). Once he became spokesman around 2011, he chose to live in secrecy and his statements have been only transcribed. In 2022, he stated that the Mujaheddin Brigades’ only strategy and military objective is “to liberate all of Palestine and purify it of the abomination of the Zionists” ([Quds Press](#), November 3, 2022).

Abu Khaled is the *nom de guerre* of the spokesman and military commander of the Martyr Omar al-Qassim National Resistance Brigades ([X/@g88daniele](#), November 26). Nothing is known about his identity or personal life. The few pieces of information are provided by the brigade’s

Telegram channel, which identifies him as a spokesman and commander. He has occupied this role since around 2012. In 2022, he resigned from his position due to the controversy over the DFLP's participation in the Palestinian Central Council, which has been cooperating with Israel since 2018. This cooperation comes in the form of security coordination in certain areas of the West Bank ([al-Araby](#), February 5, 2022; [Arabi48](#), February 5, 2022). His resignation, however, was withdrawn after only a few days.

Very little is known about the last three military spokesmen ([X/@g88daniele](#), November, 26). These include:

- Abu Jamal, the military commander and spokesperson of the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades since 2014;
- Abu Attayya, the spokesman of the al-Nasser Salahaddin Brigades since 2018, who is seen in several videos, photos, and audio recordings on the brigade's channel and website; and
- Mahdi al-Nablusi, who is the spokesman of the Lions' Den Brigades.

There are also other 20-25 year olds from the West Bank battalions of other Palestinian armed groups, such as the political movements of al-Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the PFLP, but their identities are also poorly known ([Al Jazeera](#), October 26, 2022).

Conclusion

Palestinian armed groups, and the population that supports them, place great importance on military spokesmen, whose roles have increased considerably since the beginning of the al-Aqsa Flood operation on October 7. The videos, audio recordings, and statements of the military spokesmen, who are sometimes particularly vivid and charismatic, may be seen daily. Moreover, these are the main artery of the psychological and media war waged by the Palestinian Joint Operations Room (JOR). The activities of the aforementioned

military spokesmen are heavily disseminated on messaging apps, social networks, and television stations in the Arab and Muslim world. They ultimately serve to garner even stronger support for the Palestinian cause.

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Notes:

[1] The Joint Operations Room (JOR) was established in 2018 and is composed of 12 Palestinian armed groups under the leadership of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. One military faction, the Lions' Den Brigades, which emerged in 2022 in the West Bank, is currently not integrated within the JOR, but the Lions' Den Brigades are in close contact and collaborate with the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and al-Quds Brigades. The JOR has military-operational characteristics that have brought a sense of clear unity and convergence to Palestinian resistance groups.

[2] For the October 7-31 propaganda of the Palestinian brigades, see ([Daniele Garofalo Monitoring](#), November 5).

[3] From a military and operational point of view, the group has showed a strong level of independence from its political component, so much so to hint at a possible split from al-Fatah. Nevertheless, within its Telegram channels and statements, it continues to present itself as the armed wing of al-Fatah.

[4] From monitoring of propaganda and videos by the author.