

THE POLITICS OF CLAIMING AND REPRESENTATION: THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL

The Islamic Movement inside the Green Line, referred to by its leaders as *al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya fī al-Dakhīl al-Filasṭīnī*, emerged in specific and complicated circumstances during the 1970s: its main ideology is that ‘Islam is the solution’.¹ Since its inception, the Movement has been considered as one of the main political trends amongst the Palestinian minority in Israel. Referring to the Palestinian minority in Israel, the Movement uses in its official media and publication the term ‘Palestinians of 1948’ or ‘the Palestinians in al-Dakhīl al-Filasṭīnī’. The Movement enjoys growing community support across Arab towns and villages from the north to the south, and as a result of its successes is gaining more power at both municipal and local government level. Despite its split into two factions in the 1990s,² and its ongoing controversial and unstable relationship with the Israeli authorities, the Movement has maintained its popularity, community bases, and influence, although as Saleh Lutfi argues, it is perceived as a ‘minority amongst the minority’.³

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¹ Interview with Yusuf Abu Jama’, Deputy Head of the Islamic Movement in the Naqab, Rahat, 28 April 2015.

² Issam Aburaiya, ‘The 1996 Split of the Islamic Movement in Israel: Between the Holy Text and Israeli–Palestinian Context’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 17 (2004): 439–55, at 439.

³ Saleh Lutfi, ‘al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya: taṭallu‘āt wa-taḥadiyyāt’ (The Islamic Movement: Aspirations), (Umm al-Fahim: The Center for Contemporary Studies, 1994), i. 49–73, at 70.

There is no consensus as to the principal reasons for the establishment of the Islamic Movement. The majority opinion is that it was established in the mid-1970s as a grassroots organization with the objective of preserving Palestinian and Muslim identity inside Israel. Scholars agree that in its first phase the Movement took the form of an underground militant organization called the 'Family of Jihad' (*Usrat al-Jihād*),⁴ which spoke about Palestine as both Islamic and Arab.⁵ The first clashes between the state and *Usrat al-Jihād* provoked the Israeli authorities to imprison its founder and main leader, Shaykh 'Abdullah Nimr Darwish, in 1981. After his release the Movement modified its negotiating style. Adopting a strategic view, Darwish shifted his ideology from 'jihad' to 'dialogue' so that, instead of clashing with the Israeli state, the Movement was able to survive and function within it.⁶

Shaykh 'Abdullah Nimr Darwish, originally from the village of Kufr Qassim (northern Israel), received his formal Islamic education in Hebron and Nablus during the early 1970s.⁷ According to Taysir Jabarah, he was central to the establishment of the Islamic Movement and spreading the message of Islam (*da'wa*).⁸ He played a leading part in the *da'wa* in Umm al-Fahim, Kafr Qassim, and several towns in the north. A number of students from northern Arab towns followed in his footsteps by going to study in Hebron University. These followers included Raed Salah, Hashim 'Abd al-Rahman, Shaykh Khalid Ahmad, and Muhammad Abu Shaqra.⁹ Interviewed on al-Jazeera about the origins of the Movement, Shaykh Darwish said: 'We are not part of any organization or any Islamic movement in the Arab and Islamic world'. He emphasized that the Movement was part of the general 'awakening' (*ṣaḥwa*) in the Islamic and Arab world, and traced its ideological origins to Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 1928.¹⁰

⁴ For more information on *Usrat al-Jihād*, see Nimrod Luz, 'The Islamic Movement and the Seduction of Sanctified Landscapes: Using Sacred Sites to Conduct the Struggle for Land' in Elie Rekhess and Arik Rudnitzky (eds.), *Muslim Minorities in non-Muslim Majority Countries: The Islamic Movement in Israel as a Test Case* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2011), 67–77.

⁵ Cf. Alisa Peled, 'Towards Autonomy? The Islamic Movement's Quest for Control of Islamic Institutions in Israel', *Middle East Journal*, 55 (2001): 378–98.

⁶ Interview with Saleh Lutfi, Umm al-Fahim, 15 January 2014.

⁷ Ilan Pappé, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinian Minority in Israel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 177.

⁸ Taysir Jabarah, *Dawr al-Ḥarakāt al-Islāmiyya fī al-Intifāda al-Filastīniyya al-mubāraka* (The Role of the Islamic Movement in the Palestinian Intifada) (Arabic) (Irbid, Jordan: Dār al-Furqān, 1992).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Interview with Shaykh Darwish, by Ahmad Mansour, *al-Jazeera*, 28 April 1999.

Although they do not clearly state its official affiliation, it is evident from statements by the Movement's leaders that it has a well-defined relationship to the Muslim Brotherhood in terms both of its ideology and of its narratives. The Movement's legacy from the Muslim Brotherhood has also been remarked by the current leader of its southern branch, Shaykh Hamad Abu Da'bis of the Naqab Bedouin community.¹¹ However, a different view is argued by, among others, Raed Salah, the influential present leader of the Movement's Northern branch today. He says that the Islamic Movement derives its legitimacy from three different circles: the Palestinian people, the Islamic *umma*, and from the Arab world.¹² Saleh Lutfi, a key figure in the Movement, notes that the rise of the Movement cannot be disconnected from changes and dynamics in the Middle East since 1967. He points out that the emergence of the Islamic Movement has been linked to wider changes in the Arab and the Islamic world.¹³ This view is also supported by scholars such as Lawrence Rubin, who argues that in its ideology, structure and operational mechanisms, the Islamic Movement shares similarities with other Islamic movements in the region.¹⁴ Living under military rule until 1967 created a dilemma amongst the Palestinians in Israel as to how to protect the abandoned *awqāf* (Muslim properties) in the destroyed Palestinian villages. During military rule, Palestinian religious authorities were under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Security Services.¹⁵ As pointed out by Sāmī Abū Shahāda, representative for Jaffa in the Tel Aviv municipality, one of the immediate outcomes of the Nakba (the catastrophe) was the destruction of Palestinian and Islamic institutions, which in fact contributed to the growing distance between the Palestinians and Islam.¹⁶ The Supreme Muslim Council disappeared, the religious leadership for the remnant Palestinians in Israel no longer existed, and

¹¹ Interview with Hamad Abu Daabas (Da'bis), the head of the Islamic Movement, the Northern Branch, Rahat, 15 August 2015.

¹² Qāsim Bakrī, 'al-Shaykh Rā'id Ṣalāh yuḥādhir min khuṭuwāt taṣ'idiyya fi l-Aqṣā' (Shaykh Raed Salah warns of escalation in al-Aqṣā), *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 4 November 2016.

¹³ Lutfi, 'The Islamic Movement', 55.

¹⁴ Lawrence Rubin, 'Islamic Political Activism in Israel', The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, Analysis Paper Number 32 (2014), 10.

¹⁵ For further discussion of the military rule, see Mansour Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins: A Century of Politics and Resistance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

¹⁶ Interview with Sami Abu Shahada, Member of Tel Aviv/Yafo Municipality, Jaffa, 18 February 2014.

the *awqāf* properties were left without anyone to take responsibility for them.¹⁷ Because of this religious vacuum, a form of organization to protect the *awqāf* and other abandoned Islamic properties was urgently needed by the Palestinians in Israel, and the Islamic Movement emerged as the strongest Islamic organization to address the concerns of the Muslim minority in Israel.

The paper begins by reviewing the emergence of the Movement and its history. It then sheds light on the Movement's welfare and humanitarian services provision, in response to the lack of services provided by the state, to Palestinians in Israel and East Jerusalem. The paper next looks at the Movement's criticism of the Oslo peace agreement, and its stance on campaigning for Palestinian rights, highlighting its reluctance to participate formally in Israeli politics. The fourth part of the paper examines the debate about the Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem between the different parties (Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA]), then moves to address the role of the Movement in the struggle over the Ḥaram al-Sharīf and its support to the Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The last section discusses the role of the Movement in the internationalization of the struggle over East Jerusalem. The paper concludes by addressing the conflicting narratives about outlawing the Islamic Movement. It argues that the political work of the Islamic Movement, and its humanitarian and socio-economic resistance to Israel's settler colonial policies in East Jerusalem and amongst the Palestinians in Israel, were the main prompt to its delegitimization.

THE POWER OF THE MOVEMENT: HUMANITARIAN SERVICES, AID, AND CIVIL SOCIETY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

One can argue that the Islamic Movement used the provision of humanitarian services to spread its impact and to gain support across the Palestinian towns and villages within Israel. Building local institutions and grassroots organizations has probably been the Movement's most successful strategy, as confirmed by the local Movement leader in an interview in Kufr Kana town: 'establishing tenets of civil society and Islamic NGOs and welfare institutions was the key strategy for serving

¹⁷ Elie Rekhess, 'Islamization of Arab Identity in Israel: The Islamic Movement 1972–1996' in Rekhess and Rudnitzky (eds.), *Muslim Minorities in non-Muslim Majority Countries*, 58–65.

the Palestinian communities within Israel'.¹⁸ The Movement indeed used this as a regional strategy to mobilize other Islamic communities. According to Kamal Khatib, the deputy head of the Movement, what leads the Islamic Movement to provide humanitarian aid is the Islamic community's belief in mutual relations around the globe.¹⁹

By supporting Palestinian communities, and mostly focusing on marginalized groups, the Movement built its power base and widened its circle of supporters. Expanding this circle was key to empowering the Movement and legitimizing its role. According to Msallam Mahamid, the slogan of the Islamic Movement was 'if the authorities do not like to help us, we will establish our own model for supporting our communities', as a key resistance and survival mechanism'.²⁰ This community support model was promoted by Raed Salah (the Northern branch leader), to develop a self-reliant community, *al-mujtama' al-'aysami*.²¹ Asad Ghanem and Muhanad Muşţafā, also argue that the Islamic Movement's institutions played a significant and influential role at various levels of the Palestinians' minority situation within Israel.²² In fact, the Movement's ongoing and significant growth is linked directly to the increased numbers of its institutions.²³ Its leaders acknowledge the structural limitations that Palestinians face with regard to creating an independent society. There are insufficient autonomous agricultural, industrial, and healthcare infrastructures, and not enough higher education institutions, upon which to build Islamic Palestinian independence. The Northern branch blames this gap on Israeli attempts to prevent the Palestinian community from organizing.²⁴

¹⁸ Interview with Islamic movement leader in Kufr Kana town, 28 April 2016. (Name withheld.)

¹⁹ 'Marahil Taṭawur al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya' (The Stages of development of the Islamic Movement), *Şawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 21 June 2013.

²⁰ Msallam Mahamid, 'Hālāt intiqāl qādat al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya' (The Stages of the Islamic Movement Development) in As'ad Ghanem and Muhanad Mustafa (eds.), *Dawla ḍidda muwāṭinihā* (A State against its Own Citizens) (Umm al-Fahim: The Center for Contemporary Studies, 2004), 94.

²¹ Cf. Muhanad Mustafa, 'Political Participation of the Islamic Movement in Israel' in Rekhess and Rudnitzky (eds.), *Muslim Minorities in non-Muslim Countries*, 95–114.

²² Ghanem and Mustafa, *Dawla ḍidda muwāṭinihā*, 113.

²³ Thomas Mayer [Tomas Me'ir], *Hit'orerut ha-Muslemim be-Yiśra'el* (Islamic Awakening in Israel) (Giv'at-Ḥaviva: ha-Makhon le-limudim 'Arviyim, 1988).

²⁴ Sobhi Rayan, "Diversity" in Arab Society in Israel: The Islamic Movement as an Example', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 32/1 (March 2012): 62–79, at 70.

Yūsuf Abū Jamma, deputy head of the Islamic Movement in the Naqab, argues that tens of thousands of individuals in various Arab towns, from Galilee to the unrecognized villages in the Naqab²⁵ in the south, and including East Jerusalem and the Old City, benefited from the services provided by the Islamic Movement.²⁶ It appears that Raed Salah's Islamic Movement has focused on developing the marginalized Palestinian Arab communities by delivering the humanitarian welfare and civil society services that the state is supposed to provide but does not. In this way, it also actively shapes its rhetoric of criticism of the dominant Jewish society for its neglect, thereby acting as 'a mode of ethnic mobilization, targeting the empowerment of an ethnic community'.²⁷ Politicizing the provision of social services draws attention to the inequalities facing Palestinian Arabs in Israel while also furthering the Islamist slogan that 'Islam is the answer'.²⁸ Reaching out to the most marginalized Palestinian communities has led some to interpret the actions of the Movement as being distinct from 'classical' civil society activities, and more typical of an 'ethnic civil society', in line with certain other Palestinian NGOs.²⁹

It can be said that since the split of the Movement in 1996, its Northern branch has been active at a voluntary level (*al-amal al-tatawwu'i*) to serve the Palestinian Arab community within Israel, engaging with it through various significant humanitarian organizations and associations,³⁰ such as *Mu'assasat al-Aqṣā* for the *awqāf* and the *Muqadasat*, *Iqrā* organizations (which provide advice for students to access higher education), the *zakāh* committees, the orphans' organization (*kifālat al-aytam*), *Ṣundūq ṭifl al-Aqṣā*, and *Mu'assasat Iqra* for

²⁵ The Naqab became the main focus of the movement of Raed Salah during the last decade, supporting and giving aid to the unrecognized Bedouin villages. While attending the 15th anniversary of Al-Naqab Association for Land and Human Beings in November 2014, Raed Salah and other key leaders of the Movement in the Naqab provided impressive coverage of the Movement's humanitarian aid in the Naqab, arguing that 35,000 of the Naqab population receive that aid—in the form of planting thousands of olive trees, support for poor families and university students, food aid, road and house building in the unrecognized villages, daily transportation to Jerusalem, water supplies, etc. (Speeches by Raed Salah, Osama al-Uqbi, Salih Abu Saad, Atiya al-Assam, Shaykh Raed Fathi, Rahat, 1 November 2014).

²⁶ Interview with Yusuf Abu Jama, Rahat, 28 April 2015.

²⁷ Oded Haklai, 'Palestinian NGOs in Israel: A Campaign for Civic Equality or "Ethnic Civil Society"?', *Israel Studies*, 9/3 (2004): 157–68, at 159.

²⁸ Peled, 'Towards Autonomy?', 383.

²⁹ Haklai, 'Palestinian NGOs in Israel', 157.

³⁰ Some of these are addressed in more detail later in the paper.

studying the Qur'ān.³¹ Through its various institutions, the Movement also creates jobs for its supporters. For example, women are employed locally in 'libraries, kindergartens, cultural centres and clinics, attended study and prayer sessions at the mosques. . .'.³² Such institutions give the Movement power and legitimacy to operate on the ground.

Among the Movement's initiatives, the *zakāh* committee (*lajnat al-zakāh*) was one of the first major projects to cement relations and empower the local Palestinian community.³³ The *zakāh* committees enabled the Movement to consolidate its role among Palestinians throughout Israel, and the services they provided included identifying different ways to assist poor families, setting up Islamic camps, opening educational and sports centres for young people, and supporting educational activities. Other important projects spread across the Palestinian Arab communities have included establishing clinics, kindergartens, mosques, educational facilities, media services, NGOs, and colleges, as well as providing aid for the protection of Islamic properties and mosques.³⁴ In addition, the Movement also grants scholarships to students for study abroad and in Israeli institutions.³⁵

The Islamic Movement also became popular as a result of its leading role in conflict-resolution (*iṣlāḥ*), which has become key to maintaining and strengthening its presence among the population.³⁶ Due to their influential religious role, the leaders of the Movement are involved in many cases of conflict resolution among the Palestinians in Israel.

In reinforcing its emerging role among the Palestinian Arab minority, a key strategy of the Movement was to attract Palestinians from inside the Green Line to participate in the activities of local mosques. There are also many funds that raise money for specific programmes; these include, for instance, the *Iqra* higher education funds, and larger pots for welfare funding, such as the One Thousand Charitable Fund for education, healthcare and refugee relief. In this, the Movement relies largely on

³¹ Mahmoud Aghbariya, *al-Mujtama' al-'arabī fī al-Dakbīl al-Filasṭīnī* (The Arab Community inside Palestine) (Umm al-Fahim: The Center for Contemporary Studies, 2006), 191–202.

³² Marion Boulby, 'Women and the "Islamic Movement" in Israel: Challenge to Patriarchy?', *Historical Reflections*, 30/3 ('Islam and modernity', 2004): 491–507, at 497.

³³ Aghbariya, *al-Mujtama' al-'arabī fī al-Dakbīl al-Filasṭīnī*, 191.

³⁴ Cf. Lutfi, 'The Islamic Movement', 63–5; interview with Saleh Lutfi Umm al-Fahim, May 2014.

³⁵ Reported in *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Hurriyya*, 29 January 2010.

³⁶ Interview in Jerusalem, 25 January 2016. (Name withheld.)

encouraging *zakāh* contributions, as well as aid received from foreign and Islamic organizations.³⁷

In sum, the dramatic expansion of the Islamic Movement's work has made it a key provider of services and support for the marginalized communities, including protecting the Islamic *awqāf* and running charitable aid organizations. Through its charities and NGOs, the Movement stepped into the vacuum and played a core role in protecting the Palestinian Arab communities within Israel.

BOYCOTTING ISRAELI POLITICS AND CRITICIZING THE OSLO ACCORDS

The speeches of Movement leaders, and media reports on their positions, show that the Movement has been very critical towards playing a formal role in Israeli politics. Participation in Israeli national politics was an issue for the Islamic Movement Northern branch since their main concern was to empower the Palestinian community from within by focusing on their civil society and independent community development. Playing a role in Israeli politics could not serve these aims and plans. The mainstream view is that the split in the Movement happened because of disagreement over participation in the Israeli national elections.³⁸ However, both branches of the Movement played a *de facto* role in local Israeli politics, mainly by standing in elections in the Arab towns and villages; going to the Knesset was not the only cause of the frictions during the 1990s.

Issam Abu Riya attributes the Movement's split to conflicting opinions among the leaders over issues such as their attitude toward the Intifada and the Oslo Accords. Internal rivalries between the Movement's leaders also contributed.³⁹ However, despite Abu Riya's convincing argument, and having spoken to the leaders of both the Southern and Northern branches, the split can be presented in a different light, mainly by focusing on the Oslo Accords. According to a prominent figure in the Movement whom I interviewed in Umm al-Fahim, there were three main

³⁷ Peled, 'Towards Autonomy?', 394.

³⁸ See Tilde Rosmer. 'Resisting "Israelization": The Islamic Movement in Israel and the Realization of Islamization, Palestinization and Arabization', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 23/3 (2012): 325–58, at 325.

³⁹ Issam Abu Riya, *Concrete Religious versus Abstract: the Case of a Split of the Islamic Movement in Israel* (Henrietta Szold Institute: The National Institute for Research in the Behavioural Sciences, 2005. Online: <http://www.szold.org.il/?CategoryID=208&ArticleID=390>. Accessed 21 January 2015.

reasons for the internal debate among the leaders that led to the split: political behaviour, social behaviour, and different lines of thinking. The interviewee explained that 1996 was a significant year for revealing the two divergent schools of thought amongst the Movement's leaders and supporters: some believed in integration into Israeli society while others campaigned to protect the Islamic identity of the Palestinians in Israel.⁴⁰

However, I found that the most significant factor in the split was their disagreement over Oslo and the Palestinian cause, and not only their differing views about participation in Israeli national elections. Criticizing the Oslo Accords, Shaykh Salah had argued that Oslo meant the end of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes. Therefore, the outcome of Oslo was a disaster for the Palestinians since it delayed resolution of the files on Jerusalem and the refugees, and at the same time granted Israel a free hand in Jerusalem, to continue its ongoing Judaization policies.⁴¹

According to leading figures in the Movement, the disaster of Oslo was that the PLO leadership decided that they no longer cared about the Palestinians in Israel and supported the view that the Palestinian Arab minority should take part in Israeli politics. The anger of the Islamic Movement's leaders reached its peak when Arafat signed the Oslo Accords, thereby widening the gap between the two schools of thought.⁴² The struggle for dignity and protecting refugees' rights remained significant political goals for the Movement.

It seems, from the Movement leaders' narratives, that Arafat played an important role in pushing the Palestinians in Israel to take part in Israeli politics, and thereby contributed to the split of the Islamic Movement. The PLO had thought that by taking part in Israeli politics, the Palestinians could put pressure on Israel from the inside. However, this approach was rejected by a number of the Movement's leaders, including Raed Salah, Kamal Khatib and Khalid Hamdan.⁴³

For Shaykh Salah and his supporters, providing humanitarian services to the minority through various Islamic organizations remained the right

⁴⁰ Interview in Umm al-Fahim, 23 April 2016. (Name withheld.)

⁴¹ L. Barkan, 'The Islamic Movement in Israel: Switching Focus from Jerusalem to the Palestinian Cause', MEMRI Inquiry and Analysis Series Report, 628 (31 July 2010) (Washington, DC: MEMRI, 2010). Online: <https://www.memri.org/reports/islamic-movement-israel-switching-focus-jerusalem-palestinian-cause>. Accessed 5 January 2017.

⁴² Interview with Islamic Movement activist, Rahat, 10 May 2015. (Name withheld.)

⁴³ Ibid.

approach for the Movement.⁴⁴ The leaders of the Southern branch also admitted that participating in the Israeli national elections was not the main reason for the split.⁴⁵

The formal split in the Movement happened in 1996 after the Movement's decision to take part in the 14th Knesset elections as part of the Unified List.⁴⁶ Members of the Southern faction were keen to participate in the Knesset elections, while members of the Northern faction were not: this, of course, contributed to the fragmentation of the Arab votes.

Local Palestinian scholars have suggested that by boycotting national elections as a protest against the treatment of Arab parties, a change occurred over time in the way Palestinians inside Israel protested against the Knesset—there was a shift from voting for anti-Zionist parties to boycotting the vote altogether. This change would not have been possible without the effect of the Northern faction's stance.⁴⁷ From an ideological perspective, these members of the Islamic Movement have also rejected participation in the Knesset as it clashes with their principles and beliefs. Some even go so far as to argue that the Shari'a specifically prohibits a Muslim minority from being ruled by a non-Muslim majority.⁴⁸ The ideological boycott counted for 10 percent of the boycotted vote between 1997 and 2007.⁴⁹ Criticizing the Knesset as an avenue for the Palestinian Arab minority, Shaykh Salah argued that, as a minority, they should instead focus on empowering and building the capacities of their community, since participating in elections would weaken their status.⁵⁰

On the other hand Shaykh Darwish, founder of the Islamic Movement and its most influential leader, regarded the role of the Arab political parties as crucial, arguing that by supporting participation in the national elections, the Arab MKs could play a significant role in

⁴⁴ Mohanad Mustafa, 'Political Participation of the Islamic Movement in Israel', 95–113.

⁴⁵ Interview with the Islamic Movement MK, Talab Abu 'Arar, Jerusalem, 14 February 2014.

⁴⁶ Issam Abu Riya, 'The 1996 Split of the Islamic Movement: Between Holy Text and Israeli Palestinian Context', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 17/3 (2004): 439–55.

⁴⁷ As'ad A. Ghanem and Muhannad Mustafa, 'The Palestinians in Israel and the 2006 Knesset Elections: Political and Ideological Implications of Election Boycott', *Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6/1 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007): 51–73, at 69.

⁴⁸ Rekhess, 'The Islamic Movement in Israel', 3.

⁴⁹ Ghanem and Mustafa, 'The Palestinians In Israel and the 2006 Knesset Elections', 59.

⁵⁰ Ghanem and Mustafa, 'A State against Its Own Citizens', 122.

addressing important issues facing the Palestinian minority and seek equality at a variety of levels. Darwish perceived participation in the Knesset as a means of improving the situation of the Arab municipalities, especially by obtaining equal budgets.⁵¹ He argued further that the interests of the Palestinian community in Israel would be best served through mixed levels of engagement and national representation.⁵² Darwish also pointed out that since the Palestinian Arab minority had begun to participate in the Knesset, the Arab votes no longer went to Zionist parties, with the result that the Arab parties had freed Arab votes from Zionism.⁵³ Darwish's view is still supported today by Talab Abu 'Arar, the Movement's MK, who maintains that

... as a movement we see that there are many positive outcomes for being in the parliament. The Knesset is an important venue for presenting our cause and daily problems. Through the Knesset we seek to obtain more of our rights by also sending our message to the world about the discriminatory Israeli policies towards us.⁵⁴

Supporters of Shaykh Darwish retaliated by claiming that the leaders of the Northern branch were also power-hungry and had planned the split of the Movement long before the official decision to take part in the Knesset elections. A Movement activist in Jerusalem argued that 'one of the main reasons for the split was the struggle over leadership, between Salah and Darwish supporters, mainly over who would be the leader of the Movement'.⁵⁵

As a result of its non-participation in the elections, Raed Salah's branch of the Movement has not been well-accepted among Israeli mainstream politicians. *Haaretz* maintains that the Northern faction of the Islamic Movement is not a political party and does not participate in Israeli politics; rather, it is a religious ideological movement, most of whose principles are repulsive to many Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs alike.⁵⁶

According to Raed Salah, Netanyahu's criticism of the Islamic Movement is related to the fact that it does not play a part in Israeli

⁵¹ Interview with Shaykh Darwish, by Ahmad Mansour, *al-Jazeera*, 28 April 1999.

⁵² Cf. Rubin, 'Islamic Political Activism in Israel'.

⁵³ Interview with Shaykh Darwish, by Ahmad Mansour, *al-Jazeera*, 28 April 1999.

⁵⁴ Interview with Talab Abu 'Arar, Jerusalem, 15 February 2014.

⁵⁵ Interview with Islamic Movement activist, al-Qasasi, Jerusalem, 10 July 2015. (Name withheld.)

⁵⁶ Editorial, 'Don't ban the Islamic Movement', *Haaretz*, 27 May 2014. Available at <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.595475>. Accessed 27 May 2014.

politics and does not participate in the Knesset elections. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Salah has repeatedly called for Arab MKs to leave the Knesset and create a separate Arab parliament.⁵⁷ However, Shaykh Darwish is critical of the boycott by the opposing faction. He argues that a lack of participation would lead to a ‘catastrophe’, and maintains that a separatist and isolationist state would be ‘tantamount to objecting to the state’,⁵⁸ as it would throw the Northern faction into a difficult position *vis à vis* their continued existence as a legal organization in Israel. Laws such as the Nakba Law of 2011 give the Finance Minister the ability to impose harsh fines on government-funded bodies that deny the existence of Israel by, for example, considering the memorialization of the Nakba. That said, both branches acknowledge a sense of pragmatism and moderation in their aims, in that they do not go as far as calling for the implementation of Shari‘a, although they agree with its implementation in Islamic countries. They recognize the Jewish majority in Israel and how unrealistic it would be to suggest such a policy.⁵⁹

The pre-Oslo phase of the Movement was mainly focused on its development, building its institutions and widening its circles of supporters. The post-Oslo phase shifted to campaigning for Palestinian rights and criticizing the Accords. Since Oslo, the Northern branch of the Movement has also continued to criticize playing any role in Israeli politics. Campaigning for the Palestinians’ right of return and the rights of internally displaced Palestinians’ rights contributed greatly to the rise of the Northern branch as a key player in the politics of the Palestinian Muslim minority in Israel.

EAST JERUSALEM AS A SITE OF CONFLICT: THE DEBATE ABOUT THE *AWQĀF*

One of the most contentious issues between Israel and the Palestinians in East Jerusalem is control of the Old City of Jerusalem, particularly its Muslim holy places, and especially the Ḥaram al-Sharīf. This has always been a flashpoint that has, in recent years, escalated due to the growing challenge to the status of the Ḥaram, as well as the role of Jordan in protecting it and the *waqf* in Jerusalem. Supervising the *awqāf* was one

⁵⁷ Gadi Hitman, ‘Israel’s Arab Leadership in the Decade attending the October 2000 Events’, *Israel Affairs*, 19/1 (2013): 121–38, at 131.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Rayan, ‘“Diversity” in Arab Society in Israel’, 71.

of the responsibilities of the Supreme Muslim Council.⁶⁰ In East Jerusalem, the *awqāf* are best known for managing and controlling the Muslim holy sites in the Old City.

It appears from both Israeli and Islamic Movement narratives, that East Jerusalem and the struggle over the *awqāf* were central in banning the Movement's activities. Although Jordan is supposed to be in charge of the *awqāf*, in the absence of its leadership, the Islamic Movement of Salah has become a significant player in the conflict over the Ḥaram al-Sharīf and in supporting the East Jerusalemites' struggle. Israel perceives the Movement as a security threat, given its activities in East Jerusalem; while the Movement sees itself as a legitimate body to protect the *awqāf* and the Palestinian struggle for dignity in occupied East Jerusalem.

The PLO (now the PA) is formally excluded from official representation in the *awqāf*. Despite being a signatory to the Oslo agreement, the PLO was not granted any significant role in running the Islamic institutions in East Jerusalem. In the 1994 Israel–Jordan peace treaty—the Wadi ‘Araba agreement—the PLO was also excluded from playing any official role in dealing with the *awqāf* in East Jerusalem. Even though Israel has tried to intervene in religious matters in the Old City, the *awqāf* have been able to remain independent, working directly with the Kingdom of Jordan but not with the PA. Jordan plays a crucial mediating role in the event of conflict erupting between the *awqāf* and the Israeli authorities.⁶¹ The effectiveness of the *awqāf* institutions is based on the fact that they report immediately to the King and to the Minister of Awqāf in Jordan. As a result of this official relationship with Jordan, the *awqāf* can use the diplomatic arena to deal with Israel's policies toward the Aqṣā mosque. In a world controlled by sovereign states, the involvement of Jordan gives the *awqāf* more influence.⁶² Jordan's continuing power is directly linked to the 1994 Wadi ‘Araba agreement and King Hussein's insistence on the role of Jordan taking precedence.⁶³

⁶⁰ Yitzhak Reiter, *Islamic Institutions in Jerusalem: Palestinian Muslim Organization under Jordanian and Israeli Rule* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International in association with the Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 1997).

⁶¹ Nazmi al-Jubeh, ‘Bab al-Magharibah: Joha's Nail in the Haram al-Sharif’, *Jerusalem Quarterly* (Institute for Palestine Studies), 18 (June 2003): 17–24.

⁶² Ma'an News Agency, ‘Wazīr al-awqāf al-Urdunnī: masjid al-Aqṣā faqaṭ al-muslimīn’ (The Jordanian Minister for Awqāf: al-Aqṣā mosque is for Muslims only): <http://www.maannews.net/arb/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=733007>. Accessed 17 October 2014.

⁶³ Yitzhak Reiter, *Ribonut ha-El ve'ha-adam: kedusha u-merkaziyut pòlitit be-ttar ha-Bayit* (Jerusalem: Mekhon Yerushalayim le-ḥeḳer Yiśra'el, 2001) (Sovereignty of God and Man: Sanctity and Political Centrality on the Temple Mount [Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 2001]).

Despite the deadlock in the peace process, Jordan's Foreign Minister, Nasser Judeh, declared that for Jordan, 'Jerusalem remains a red line', and that Jordan continually asks Israel to desist from any policies 'that would affect Eastern Jerusalem and its holy Islamic and Christian places'.⁶⁴ However, an escalation in activities by right wing settler organizations who demand the right for Jews to be able to pray in the Aqṣā compound (which they refer to as Temple Mount), and the increasing numbers of Jewish-Israeli Members of the Knesset (MKs) who support this demand, has fueled fears that Israel will attempt to change the status quo in the Old City. In response, the Jordanians have utilized a number of diplomatic mechanisms, including recalling their ambassador to Israel in 2016, and appealing to the international community, particularly the UN, for action to protect the status quo.⁶⁵ Violating Jordan's status as protector of the *awqāf* in Jerusalem could risk the peace agreement with Israel: because of the Jewish provocations at the Aqṣā Mosque, 47 Jordanian MPs urged the King and his government to cancel the peace agreement with Israel.⁶⁶

Rising concern over ongoing Israeli actions that challenge the status of and sovereignty over the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, even pushed US officials, including Secretary of State, John Kerry, to intervene to try to prevent a diplomatic crisis between Israel and Jordan.⁶⁷ In all of these cases, diplomatic efforts were made without official Palestinian representation—another sign of the marginal role of the PA in East Jerusalem, particularly the Old City, that has sparked anger and dissatisfaction.⁶⁸ Even in the current fragile situation and the ongoing debate around the

⁶⁴ Saydam al-Yehyia, 'Wazīr al-khārijīyya al-Urdunnī: al-Quds bi-l-nisba la-nā khaṭṭ aḥmar' (Jordanian Foreign Minister: al-Quds is for us a red line), *al-Quds al-'Arabī*: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=180940>. Accessed 16 June 2014.

⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, 'The Status of the Status Quo at Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade', *Middle East Report*, No. 159 (30 June 2015), 2.

⁶⁶ Lahav Harkov and Daniel Eisenbud, '47 Jordanian MPs call to cancel Israel peace treaty over Knesset Temple Mount debate', *Jerusalem Post* (26 February 2014). Online: <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/47-Jordanian-MPs-call-to-cancel-Israel-peace-treaty-over-Knesset-Temple-Mount-debate-343580>. Accessed 15 May 2016.

⁶⁷ 'Jūn Kīrī [John Kerry] yazūru al-Urdunn li-yabḥatha azmat al-Quds wa-l-ḥarb 'alā Dāish' (Kerry visits Jordan to discuss the Jerusalem crisis and the war against Isis), *al-Quds al-'Arabī*, 12 November 2014. Online: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=249207>. Accessed 12 November 2014.

⁶⁸ Fādī Abū Sa'dī, *Iraeli tuzzil kamīrrāt al-awqāf min al-masjid al-Aqṣā* (Israel removes the *awqāf* cameras from the Aqṣā mosque), *al-Quds al-'Arabī*, 26 October 2015. Online: <http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=424548>. Accessed 1 November 2015.

future of the *awqāf* and the Ḥaram al-Sharīf, the PA has been excluded by both Israel, the US and Jordan from any negotiations aimed at stabilizing the situation in East Jerusalem. The exclusion of the PA from any significant role in the Old City, and the vacuum of Palestinian leadership in East Jerusalem, has contributed to the emergence of the Islamic Movement as an actor in protecting the *awqāf* and supporting the East Jerusalemites' struggle.

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE OVER THE AWQĀF IN EAST JERUSALEM

Israel's and Jordan's policies of limiting the role of the PA/PLO in the *awqāf* have led to the emergence of new actors in the struggle over East Jerusalem, who seek to fill the political vacuum and support the Palestinians politically. The restrictions placed on the activities of the PLO/PA in East Jerusalem have contributed to elevating the importance of the Northern branch of the Islamic Movement in the city. The role of the PLO and Fatah, particularly in Jerusalem, became 'weak and disconnected' throughout the Oslo period, with 'almost ... no relationship and no trust with the people'.⁶⁹

Protecting Jerusalem and the Aqṣā mosque from Judaization has been central to the Islamic Movement's activities, with leadership provided mainly by Shaykh Raed Salah, head of the Northern branch and prominent leader of the Palestinians in Israel. According to International Crisis Group Reports, 'with the PA not permitted to operate in Jerusalem per the Oslo Accords, Salah, an Israeli citizen, moved to fill the Arab leadership vacuum in the city'.⁷⁰ Dumper and Larkin argue that Jerusalem, and more specifically the Aqṣā mosque, have been employed by the Movement as a 'symbol for political empowerment'.⁷¹

The 1990s, after the split and the Oslo accords, marked a substantial shift in the projects that the Islamic Movement had initiated in support

⁶⁹ Interview with Menachem Klein, Jerusalem, 20 January 2014.

⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Identity Crisis: Israel and its Arab Citizens', ICG Middle East Report no. 25 (Amman/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2004), 7. Online: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/25-identity-crisis-israel-and-its-arab-citizens.pdf>.

⁷¹ Michael Dumper and Craig Larkin, 'Political Islam in Contested Jerusalem: The Emerging Role of Islamists from within Israel', *Divided Cities/Contested State Working Paper*, no. 12, (2009): 1.

of al-Aqṣā. The first significant conference, ‘al-Quds First’, which was organized in Kafr Kana in 1994, highlighted the cause of al-Aqṣā and contributed to the growing role of the Movement in issues related to Jerusalem. This was followed by another significant conference in 1995 in Kafr Qassim, and the Movement’s role in addressing the Aqṣā situation became key to their agenda. Since 1996, ‘al-Aqṣā in Danger’ has become an annual conference organized by the Movement and attended by notable figures from the Islamic world.⁷² By holding this yearly event, the Movement has succeeded in internationalizing the issue both for Western countries and the Islamic world.⁷³

Through his role in mobilizing the Palestinian community under the political slogan ‘al-Aqṣā in Danger’, Shaykh Salah, is still regarded as one of the most influential personages in the struggle over al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf in Jerusalem, despite his imprisonment (based on an allegation of insulting a policeman in East Jerusalem) January 2017 by Israel.⁷⁴ More importantly, Salah managed to legitimize his role through administering a number of initiatives and projects in the Old City and Aqṣā mosque. His speeches and articles confirm that the main focus of his activities in Jerusalem has been, and remains, to protect al-Aqṣā and prevent the Judaization of East Jerusalem.⁷⁵ Through the al-Aqṣā Association, Salah has also managed to play a role in drawing attention to Israel’s plans for excavation under al-Aqṣā and in the Silwan neighbourhood.⁷⁶

In order to achieve its political and religious goals, the Islamic Movement uses holy sites, such as al-Aqṣā, as a leading strategy to widen its circles of support. The East Jerusalemites and the Palestinians in Israel undoubtedly regard Shaykh Salah as one of the most forceful leaders struggling to preserve the Islamic nature of al-Aqṣā and the Old City, and this view is also shared by Hamad Abu Daabas, leader of the Movement’s Southern branch, who has stated clearly that despite his faction’s long list of activities in Jerusalem, the Northern branch of Raed Salah dominates the field in Jerusalem and has the stronger presence there.⁷⁷

⁷² Nadev Shargai, ‘The “Al-Aksa Is in Danger” Libel: The History of a Lie’, *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* (2012): 1–162, at 34.

⁷³ Aghbariya, ‘The Arab Community in Palestine’, 169.

⁷⁴ Raef Zreik, ‘5 takes on the banning of Islamic Movement, by a concerned Palestinian citizen of Israel’, *Haaretz* (22 December 2015): <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.693102>. Accessed 20 May 2016).

⁷⁵ Najeh Bukeirat, ‘Tahwīd al-masjid al-Aqṣā’ (The Judaization of al-Aqṣā mosque), *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 6 June 2014.

⁷⁶ Report in *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 18 December 2009.

⁷⁷ Interview with Shaykh Hamad Abu Daabas, Rahat, 15 August 2015.

In common with other Islamic and Arab communities in the Middle East, the Movement perceives the Ḥaram al-Sharīf as an Islamic property which only the Muslims have the right to protect. In official statements by the Movement, Raed Salah has stated clearly that the Ḥaram al-Sharīf is an Islamic *waqf*, and must be controlled only by the Muslims.⁷⁸

Following this shift in power within the Movement, and the emergence of Salah's religious authority, Jerusalem became an important issue in the development of the Islamic Movement.⁷⁹ For using the political slogan 'al-Aqṣā in Danger', Shaykh Raed Salah came to be regarded as continuing the historic role of Palestinian religious figures, such as the Grand Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini, in Jerusalem. More importantly, Salah has also managed to legitimize his role by administering a number of initiatives and projects in the Old City and al-Aqṣā mosque.⁸⁰

The growing interest of the Islamic Movement in al-Aqṣā and the *awqāf* is linked to the process of its political development. Through its establishment of the al-Aqṣā Association for the Preservation of the Islamic *Awqāf*, the Movement cemented its role as a key protector of al-Aqṣā.⁸¹ By drawing international attention, both in the West and in the Islamic World, to Israel's plans to divide the mosque and open it up for Jewish prayers, the Islamic Movement succeeded in reaching the wider Islamic and Arab world.

The Islamic Movement coordinates and organizes joint events related to Jerusalem with a number of local Palestinian institutions and the Jerusalemite leadership. For example, it liaises with Ikrima Sabri (Head of the Supreme Islamic Council), Mohammed Hussein (the current mufti of Jerusalem), Adnan al-Hussaini (the PA's representative in Jerusalem), and other affiliated institutions within the Islamic Movement.⁸²

One of the key strategies used by the Movement under Salah was to strengthen the emerging role of the mosques by attracting Palestinians from 1948 to participate in their activities. For example, the Movement's annual Ṭifl al-Aqṣā conference attracts tens of thousands of children from among the 48 and East Jerusalem Palestinians every summer to the environs of the mosque where they are taught about al-Aqṣā and its

⁷⁸ Ma'an News Agency, 'al-Aqṣā fī wajh al-damār' (al-Aqṣā in danger) (2013): <http://www.maannews.net/Content.aspx?id=646317>. Accessed 11 November 2013.

⁷⁹ Barkan, 'The Islamic Movement in Israel', 3.

⁸⁰ 'Murābiṭāt min ajl al-Aqṣā' (Murābiṭāt serving al-Aqṣā); report in *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 6 June 2014.

⁸¹ Aghbariya, 'The Arab Community in Palestine', 168.

⁸² 'Masira min Bāb al-ʿĀmūd ilā al-Aqṣā' (Marching from the 'Āmūd Gate to al-Aqṣā), 6 June 2014: <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1182204>. Accessed 12 June 2014.

history. Women and university students also participate in the activities that take place in mosques, and attend lectures and educational sessions.⁸³ The programmes for university students (the *masātib al-ilm*) in the Aqṣā mosque are considered as among the Movement's most important activities, since students attending and staying in al-Aqṣā represent part of its agenda for protecting the mosque itself. Despite this, from time to time the Israeli authorities restrict the students' entry to the Aqṣā mosque or confiscate their IDs.⁸⁴

An extensive system has evolved of 'external support...which generated income for the upkeep of mosques and other communal services'.⁸⁵ The *waqf* administration has managed to re-establish some of its pre-eminence in Jerusalem and continued with its programmes of property restoration and religious education. The Oslo Accords allowed for a limited development of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and this presented an opportunity for the *waqf* to extend its jurisdiction.

The split in 1996 allowed Salah greater freedom to concentrate on the protection of religious sites in Israel, and the 'al-Aqṣā is in Danger' campaign was launched immediately, to draw attention to the mosque and to protest against the state's policies towards the Ḥaram al-Sharīf area. The campaign encouraged Muslim Palestinians in Israel to visit al-Aqṣā and to attend the mosque regularly for prayers, facilitated by transport subsidized by the Movement. From 2001 to 2006, there were two million such visits to the holy sites,⁸⁶ and this increase in footfall has had a positive impact on the economy of the Old City. The al-Aqṣā Association was created with the aim of protecting Islamic sites by mapping, documenting, and contesting Islamic monuments and holy places, as well as the area around the Old City. By reclaiming these places both physically and financially, Shaykh Salah, through his 're-Palestinization' of places in Israel and East Jerusalem, was drawing attention to Islamic and Palestinian cultural history that pre-dated the establishment of the state of Israel.⁸⁷

⁸³ Azmi al-Daraini, 'Inṭilāq al-fa'āliyāt al-sayfiyya min al-masjid al-Aqṣā'. Online: <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1182308>. Accessed 12 June 2014; Aghbariya, 'The Arab Community in Palestine', 171.

⁸⁴ Azmi al-Daraini, 'Inṭilāq al-fa'āliyāt al-sayfiyya fī al-Aqṣā' (Launching summer activities in al-Aqṣā) 10 June 2014: <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1182417>. Accessed 12 June 2014.

⁸⁵ Dumper and Larkin, 'Political Islam in Contested Jerusalem', 3.

⁸⁶ Craig Larkin and Michael Dumper, 'In Defense of Al-Aqsa: The Islamic Movement inside Israel and the Battle for Jerusalem', *The Middle East Journal*, 66/1 (2012): 30–51, at 40.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

The ‘al-Aqṣā is in Danger’ campaign was extended to encompass the larger geographic area of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf and then extended into the wider Jerusalem locality, thereby enlarging the area of sanctified space contested by the Movement.⁸⁸ Although initiated by the *waqf* administration, the renovation of the subterranean prayer halls known as *al-muṣallā al-Marwānī* was achieved by the mobilization of Islamic Movement funds and volunteers, a practical action that enhanced Shaykh Salah’s standing as an Islamic leader, domestically and globally, while also filling the PA vacuum. The expansion of ‘al-Aqṣā is in Danger’ to ‘al-Quds is in Danger’ encompassed the ‘war’ that Salah perceived over ‘each house, every shop and each piece of property’.⁸⁹ Working with the Islamic bodies in al-Aqṣā, the renovation of the Marwānī mosque was a significant endorsement of the direct relationship with the mosque. The Islamic Movement perceived the Marwānī project as a big success in protecting the *awqāf* and al-Aqṣā mosque.⁹⁰ The main political element behind this reasoning stemmed from the status of Jerusalem after the Oslo Accords. By leaving Jerusalem out of the agreement, the negotiators had set the scene for both sides to race to establish ‘facts on the ground’, in a competition to pre-empt ‘the final status negotiations’ over Jerusalem.⁹¹

The upsurge of campaigns and projects centred on protecting land and sites from an existential threat has escalated with the level of the perceived Jewish threat.⁹² Such threats are framed both religiously and politically. The ban against the Islamic Movement continues. However, at points of high political tension Jewish nationalist activists voiced challenges to which the Islamic Movement responded equally robustly. Challenges were made in 1996 during ‘the height of the struggle against the Oslo Accords’,⁹³ coinciding with the start of the ‘al-Aqṣā is in Danger’ campaign.

Unlike the *waqf* administration, the Islamic Movement has more power to challenge Israeli policies in East Jerusalem.⁹⁴ As an ‘Israeli Arab’ party it can work within the system and is not so easily co-opted

⁸⁸ Rayan, ‘“Diversity” in Arab Society in Israel’, 76.

⁸⁹ Raed Salah, ‘The Islamic Movement inside Israel’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 36 (2007): 66–76, at 71.

⁹⁰ Aghbariya, ‘The Arab Community in Palestine’, 170.

⁹¹ Interview with Menachem Klein, Jerusalem, August 15, 2014.

⁹² Larkin and Dumper, ‘In Defense of Al-Aqṣā’, 39.

⁹³ Sarina Chen, ‘Visiting the Temple Mount—Taboo or Mitzvah’, *Modern Judaism*, 34/1 (2014): 27–41, at 27.

⁹⁴ Interview with Shaykh Azzam al Khatib, head of the *awqāf* in Jerusalem, Old City of Jerusalem, November 2014.

by Jordan or Israel ‘through political pressure or economic reliance’.⁹⁵ Popular opinion in the media has stated that the role of the Jordanian *waqf* system ‘should be revolutionized’ in order to challenge Israel effectively over the protection of the holy sites,⁹⁶ while the restrictions placed on the activities of the PA in East Jerusalem, the electoral failure of secular parties during 2006, and the crackdown on urban cells of Hamas have all contributed to elevating the Islamic Movement’s position in East Jerusalem.⁹⁷

THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT’S ROLE IN INTERNATIONALIZING JERUSALEM AND AL-AQṢĀ

As well as his local campaigns to support Jerusalem and protect the *awqāf*, Shaykh Salah also appealed to Islamic and Arab communities through his various rallies and meetings abroad. He has been critical of the Arab and the Islamic world for ignoring and marginalizing al-Aqṣā and Jerusalem, often referring to their lack of economic assistance, and calling constantly for them to recognize the urgent need to support the *awqāf* in Jerusalem and protect the Old City from the Israeli Judaization policies.⁹⁸ In his speeches he sometimes connects the deteriorating situation of Jerusalem and the *awqāf* to the unstable situation in the Arab world.⁹⁹ Still, he points out, even if there is no clear Arab/Islamic political decision about al-Aqṣā and the *awqāf* in Jerusalem, they do donate money for small projects.¹⁰⁰ In addressing the Muslim and the Arab world in his speeches, Salah presents Jerusalem as the capital of the Islamic cultural heritage.¹⁰¹ He draws international attention to the situation of al-Aqṣā by highlighting Israeli archaeological and excavation projects underneath the mosque. Using the media, Salah has managed to attract the attention of regional Arab and Islamic governments, including

⁹⁵ Dumper and Larkin, ‘Political Islam in Contested Jerusalem’, 12.

⁹⁶ Ilene Prusher, ‘Jordan to safeguard Jerusalem’s Islamic holy sites—if they’re still standing’, *Haaretz*, 4 April 2013.

⁹⁷ Interview with Menachem Klein, Jerusalem, 15 August 2014.

⁹⁸ Juman Abu Arafah, ‘Interview with Shaykh Raed Salah’(11 June 2014): <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1182461>. Accessed 12 June 2014.

⁹⁹ Interview with Saleh Lutfi, Umm al-Fahem, 12 April 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Abbed al-Munam Fuad, ‘Wafd al-ḥaraka al-islāmiyya yusharik fi l-multaqā al-waṭanī al-thāmin fi l-Maghrib’, (Islamic Movement delegation participates in the 8th national meeting in Morocco), *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*, 18 December 2009.

¹⁰¹ Shargai, ‘The “Al-Aksa Is in Danger” Libel’, 82.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and successfully pushed a couple of them to visit Jerusalem and question the Israeli government about the nature of its activities. This in turn created a situation involving a war of narratives between the Israeli government and the al-Aqṣā Association about the excavations going on under the mosques.

That the Islamic world has become alert to the ongoing deteriorating situation in Jerusalem and the holy sites is a result of Salah's limited but successful local and international campaigns since the 1990s. Through the Movement's visits to Islamic and Arab countries, Salah succeeded in internationalizing the situation of Jerusalem. By using the powerful slogan 'al-Aqṣā is the Islamic *umma*'s main cause', or al-Aqṣā is the '*umma waqf*', he gained international support, along with acknowledgement of his role in Jerusalem. Hosting international and high-status diplomatic delegations from the Islamic world, and sending his representatives to visit Arab and Islamic countries, has also strengthened Salah's role. Through its participation in Islamic conferences the Islamic Movement was perceived internationally as the legitimate voice for Jerusalem.¹⁰² At the international level this effort established Jerusalem as a contested site. While admitting that this made the status of Jerusalem a concern for a wider Islamic audience, it has been argued that Salah's use of metaphysical language alienated Israel, and enabled it to then use this discourse 'legally and informatively...against the movement'.¹⁰³

In 2005, the Movement's leaders met the Egyptian ambassador to discuss the threats to al-Aqṣā and other holy sites.¹⁰⁴ In doing so, the Movement projected itself as an active alternative to other organizations and political parties while fulfilling its aim of protecting the holy sites in Israel. Salah's visits to Islamic countries, to secure funding through cooperation and joint projects to support the Islamic Movement's activities in Jerusalem, were also significant. Visiting Malaysia and meeting top officials in 2005, for example, Raed Salah provided comprehensive details of the situation in Jerusalem and al-Aqṣā, and highlighted the urgent need to support various projects related to protecting the mosque. He managed to establish strong economic cooperation between the *Ṣundūq al-Isrā* institution and Malaysia's Aman Palestin institution. He noted that such financial arrangements, 'strengthened the *ṣummūd* of Jerusalem and al-Aqṣā mosque'. During his Malaysian visit, Salah also delivered several talks at leading Islamic

¹⁰² Samir Abu al-Hijja, 'al-ʿIlān ʿan intilāq ṣundūq al-umma fi Istānbūl': <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1181499>. Accessed 12 June 2014.

¹⁰³ Rayan, "'Diversity" in Arab Society in Israel', 77.

¹⁰⁴ Hitman, 'Israel's Arab Leadership', 125.

institutions, explaining the situation in Jerusalem and the pressing need to support al-Aqṣā.¹⁰⁵ In Malaysia, Salah employed his strongest political slogan by declaring that ‘if al-Quds continues to be under occupation, every Muslim in the world is occupied’.¹⁰⁶

By internationalizing the situation of al-Quds, Salah was able to participate in the world’s leading Islamic conference. The invitation from Istanbul to participate in international Islamic conferences was a clear recognition both of Salah’s Islamic leadership and of aspects related to the Jerusalem file.¹⁰⁷ In the same vein, Kamal Khatib, at an international conference in Morocco, praised Morocco’s role in protecting and supporting al-Quds, and like Salah, claimed that “we are all united over the case of al-Quds and al-Aqṣā mosque”.¹⁰⁸ Islamic Movement delegations were also hosted by the Muslim Judicial Council of South Africa, where they spoke about Jerusalem and expressed their appreciation of the part played by South Africa in supporting different projects related to the mosque.¹⁰⁹

The Movement’s achievements can be observed on two levels: generating international economic support through donations and projects for East Jerusalem and al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf; and drawing attention to Israeli policies in Jerusalem. In terms of humanitarian assistance, for example, there have been Arab and Islamic donations in support of the East Jerusalemites, including food supplies for needy families, renovation of houses and schools, scholarships for students, and helping organizations for women and children.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the annual ‘al-Aqṣā is in Danger’ campaign rallies draw 50,000 people to Umm al-Fahim within Israel, but there are also support rallies held around the world, ‘from Lebanon to South Africa’.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Report in *Ṣawt al-Haqq wa-l-Hurriyya*, 21 September 2012. ‘Wafd al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya yatraḥ qaḍiyyat al-Quds fī Mālīziyā’ (The Islamic Movement delegation present the case of al-Quds in Malaysia), 21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 24 September 2012. ‘Wafd al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya yaltaqī ra’īs al-wuzarā’ Muḥammad Najīb wa-Maḥadir Muḥammad’ ((Islamic Movement delegations meets the current Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mohamad Najib, and the former, Mahatir Mohammad), 24.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 13 July 2012. Shaykh Raed Salah, ‘Iqtarab al-wa’ad al-ḥaqq’ (The day of justice is nearing), 24.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 31 August 2012. Maḥmūd Abū ‘Aṭā, ‘al-Itilā’a ‘alā maqbarat al-raḥma’ (Controlling al-Raḥma Cemetery), 24.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 29 October 2010: *Wafd al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya yaltaqī ‘ulama’ Junūb Ifriqiyyā* (The Islamic Movement delegation meets scholars in South Africa), 29.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Yusuf Abu Jama, Deputy Head of the Islamic Movement in the Naqab, Rahat, 28 April 2015.

¹¹¹ Larkin and Dumper, ‘In Defense of Al-Aqsa’, 40.

The different techniques used by Salah's Islamic Movement to draw international attention to Israeli policies in East Jerusalem and towards the *awqāf* have drawn significant support for the East Jerusalemites' struggle. By contributing to the old city's survival and resistance mechanisms, mainly through their appeal to the Arab and the Islamic and the Western worlds, and generating funding for projects in East Jerusalem, the Islamic Movement has become a key player in East Jerusalem.

THE ISRAELI NARRATIVES ON OUTLAWING THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT

The Islamic Movement's humanitarian and political efforts in East Jerusalem and among the marginalized Palestinian communities in Israel led the Israeli Cabinet to ban the Movement and its activities. Israeli policy-makers contend that the Islamic Movement plays a significant role in the struggle over Jerusalem and against the integration of the Palestinian minority into Israeli society. Moshe Arens, for example, stressed that the Islamic Movement is 'fighting tooth and nail against any move toward integration of Israel's Arab citizens into Israeli society'.¹¹² Despite the fact that the Islamic Movement under Salah contributes a great deal to the Palestinian Arab minority cause on various levels, there has been growing debate in the last twenty years among Israeli politicians and right-wing groups about outlawing and banning the Movement. Various efforts have been made by the Israeli authorities since the early 2000s to restrict the Islamic Movement and its activities, notably through tighter surveillance, imprisoning key leaders, and shutting down its institutions and media sources. Most recently, Israeli authorities accused the Islamic Movement of being one of the actors that sparked tensions in the Old City in 2016.

At a different level, the ongoing tension between operating legally within Israel and yet in line with the Movement's religious principles has also been seen as a 'dilemma between the local and the global'.¹¹³ The term 'global' refers to the Movement's place among other Islamist groups across the region and its sense of identification with them (for example, its links to the Muslim Brotherhood). The term 'local' refers not only to

¹¹² Moshe Arens, 'Israel's Islamic Movement: the Enemy Within.' *Haaretz*, 2 June 2014: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.596522>. Accessed 13 January 2015.

¹¹³ Rayan, '“Diversity” in Arab Society in Israel', 71.

the socio-political environment in Israel and the legal status of the Movement, but also the changing concept of self-identification that faces Palestinian Muslims inside Israel. Their position has been described as a ‘double periphery—located on the margins of both Israeli society and the Palestinian national movement’,¹¹⁴ meaning that they have not been particularly catered for by either mainstream Israeli or by Palestinian political organizations.

Since 2000, the Movement’s ideology and its position between the local and the global, have led to more determined Israeli efforts to ban Raed Salah’s branch of the Islamic Movement. The established mainstream Israeli policy of outlawing the Movement is a function of its invisible relationship with other Islamic movements in the Middle East, including the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Palestinian Hamas movement. Meetings with Islamic thinkers and leaders from all over the world shed some light on the nature of the relations between Salah’s movement and other Islamic movements in the Arab and Islamic world.¹¹⁵

The mainstream Israeli perspective is that Raed Salah’s Northern branch Movement is simply a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.¹¹⁶ Right-wing Israeli MKs argue that the Movement led by Salah is also linked to other Islamic movements in the Middle East, not just the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but also in Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE.¹¹⁷ Other commentators, such as Nadav Shargai, argue that the Movement leader, Raed Salah, has taken up the historic role of the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Husseini, in Jerusalem¹¹⁸. Moshe Arens, a top Israeli official, makes it clear that there is an obvious link between Raed Salah’s group and other Islamic groups in the Middle East such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, stating that ‘The northern branch of the Islamic movement makes no secret of its affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and its association with Hamas in Gaza’.¹¹⁹ Right-wing MKs have tried to promote the banning of the Islamic

¹¹⁴ International Crisis Group, *Identity Crisis: Israel and its Arab Citizens*, 20–1.

¹¹⁵ Abbed al-Munam Fuad, ‘Wafd al-ḥaraka al-islāmiyya’.

¹¹⁶ Shargai, ‘The “Al-Aksa Is in Danger” Libel’, 68.

¹¹⁷ Barak Ravid, ‘Netanyahu Wants to Outlaw the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement’, *Haaretz*, 25 May 2014: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.592685>. Accessed 11 June 2014. Editorial, ‘Don’t Ban the Islamic Movement’, *Haaretz*, 27 May 2014: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.595475>. Accessed 27 May 2014.

¹¹⁸ Shargai, ‘The “Al-Aksa Is in Danger” Libel’.

¹¹⁹ Moshe Arens, ‘Israel’s Islamic Movement’.

Movement by comparing it with the extreme right-wing Jewish movement (Kach) and attempting to declare it thus illegal.¹²⁰

Solidarity and support for the Muslim Brotherhood can be observed through the demonstrations that were organized by the Islamic Movement in support of the Egyptian President Morsi in 2015. Once Morsi had been pushed out by a military coup, the Islamic Movement organized rallies and campaigns to show their support for the ousted regime. Furthermore, the annual conference of the Islamic Movement held in Umm al-Fahim in 2015 had been dedicated by the Movement, in a firm message of support, to President Morsi.¹²¹ The Movement did not hide its support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its elected president. Kamal Khatib notes that: 'We condemn the maltreatment the Muslim Brotherhood has been receiving in Egypt and we will continue to stress that Morsi is the leader of Egypt who was chosen by his people in a democratic manner.'¹²²

Other Israeli approaches link the Islamic Movement to the Palestinian movement, Hamas.¹²³ They accuse the Movement of having links with Hamas, and Raed Salah himself of having secret channels to the Hamas leader, Khalid Mashal.¹²⁴ The Islamic Movement's solidarity with the Gazans and for Hamas is not only ideological, but also factual and political.¹²⁵ Salah recognizes that the Islamic Movement has a moral obligation to support the Palestinians in any form, and especially in Gaza. For example, millions of dollars and other humanitarian aid have been provided to Gaza by Palestinians in Israel who have no direct links to the Movement.¹²⁶ As a result of his support for Gaza's orphaned children, and families needing urgent humanitarian aid, the Israeli authorities have accused the Movement of building links with Hamas.

¹²⁰ Hassan Shaalan, 'Umm al-Fahm: 30000 people at Islamic movement annual rally', 20 September 2013: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4431666,00.html>. Accessed 17 June 2014.

¹²¹ Jonathan Cook, 'Behind the ban of the Islamic movement', *Middle East Report Online* (2016): <http://www.jonathan-cook.net/2016-01-12/behind-the-ban-on-the-islamic-movement-in-israel/>. Accessed 5 December 2016.

¹²² Hassan Shaalan, 'Umm al-Fahm: 30,000 people'.

¹²³ For a discussion on Palestinian organizations, see Larbi Sadiki, 'Reframing Resistance and Democracy: Narratives from Hamas and Hizbullah', *Democratization*, 17/2 (2010): 350–76.

¹²⁴ Jonathan Cook, 'Behind the ban'.

¹²⁵ Barkan, 'The Islamic Movement in Israel', 31 July 2010.

¹²⁶ *Bāqa al-Gharbiyya tajamma'a milyūn shāqil li-Gazza wa-atfālihā* (Baqā al-Gharbiya donates 1 million shekels for Gaza and its children) 31 July 2014: <http://www.arabs48.com/?mod=articles&ID=111853>. Accessed 31 August 2014.

A number of its leaders have been, predictably, imprisoned.¹²⁷ In fact, after any crisis, the entire Palestinian minority provides humanitarian aid to Gaza, and on that basis, it is hard for Israel to justify such accusations about the Movement. The Islamic Movement was also accused, even in Jerusalem, of cooperation with Hamas at the institutional level, which led to their offices in the Old City being closed.

Having highlighted the various suspicions and accusations against the Islamic Movement, mainly by linking the Movement to other Islamic groups in the region, the Israeli authorities took a number of reactionary steps to outlaw the Movement and restrict its activities. From early 2000, a number of significant efforts were proposed by right-wing MKs and Israeli Prime Ministers to achieve this aim. For example, Ariel Sharon in 2002 and Netanyahu in 2010 and 2016 attempted to outlaw the Movement, with the intention of weakening it and restricting its civil society activities among the Palestinians in Israel.¹²⁸ Netanyahu compared the Movement to the radical Kach movement, reportedly stating at a Sunday cabinet meeting: 'There was no problem outlawing Kach, so there ought to be no problem doing this in the case of the Islamic Movement.'¹²⁹ Similarly, Yisrael Katz, the transport minister, in 2016, also encouraged banning the Movement on the basis that, '[t]hey've been banned in all the countries in the region', a direct reference to the status of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. 'Only in Israel do they freely incite against the existence of the state. There has to be a stop to that.'¹³⁰

Kamal Khatib, deputy head of the Islamic Movement, reacted to the Israeli accusations and efforts to ban the Movement by denouncing Netanyahu and pointing out that his underlying motive was to deny the Movement its role in defending al-Aqṣā and resisting state hegemony. Moreover, as Khatib pointed out, it was unreasonable and unlawful to ban his Movement, since it 'functions according to clear legal regulations'.¹³¹

The government's efforts were challenged also by critical voices warning that such a step would risk shattering the fragile situation

¹²⁷ Interview with Lutfi, Umm al-Fahim, May 2014.

¹²⁸ Jonathan Cook, 'Behind the ban'.

¹²⁹ Editorial, 'Don't ban the Islamic Movement', *Haaretz*, 27 May 2014: <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.595475>. Accessed 27 May 2014.

¹³⁰ Ravid, 'Netanyahu Wants to Outlaw'.

¹³¹ Shaykh Kamal Khatib, 'Taṣriḥāt Natanyāhū bi-ḥadhar al-Ḥaraka al-Islāmiyya barnāmaj ḥizbī' ('Netanyahu's speeches against the Islamic Movement linked to his party political programme').: <http://www.pls48.net/?mod=articles&ID=1182427>. Accessed 11 June 2014.

between the Palestinian Arab minority and the Israeli state. Experts on the Movement argued that one of the outcomes of banning it would be to push it towards radicalization.¹³² For now, the Israeli authorities have stopped short of making the Islamic Movement illegal, but have initiated a number of significant restrictions, notably by arresting its key leaders and closing down its institutions. For example, the Movement's institutions in Jerusalem were closed following accusations of cooperating with Hamas in 2013,¹³³ and other institutions in the North were also closed down, including in Nazareth and Umm al-Fahim.¹³⁴

In the period since 2000, the Israeli authorities have failed to win massive support for outlawing the Islamic Movement. They have, however, managed to restrict its activities by shutting down its media sources (e.g. their newspaper, *Ṣawt al-Ḥaqq wa-l-Ḥurriyya*), closing its institutions in Jerusalem,¹³⁵ preventing its leaders from travelling abroad, and banning Shaykh Raed Salah from access to al-Aqṣā mosque. The most significant measure so far by the Israeli authorities has been to detain the Shaykh, who has been imprisoned a number of times.¹³⁶

After the internal Israeli debates about the Islamic Movement, in November 2015 the Israeli Prime Minister finally declared it illegal. The decision was taken despite the opposition and reservation of the Israeli General Security Services. Declaring it illegal raised many questions about the vacuum that was left behind it, mainly regarding who would run its hundreds of projects in Arab towns and villages, tens of thousands who normally receive services from the Islamic Movement, mostly the weak and marginalized communities. As of 2016, it is unclear how the Israeli authorities will enforce their declaration, given that the Islamic Movement is supported by tens of thousands of Palestinians in Israel. Most of its supporters are linked to scores of welfare associations and charities spread across Arab towns and East Jerusalem.

¹³² Editorial, 'Don't Ban the Islamic Movement', Dayan, *Haaretz*, 2 October 2002.

¹³³ Oz Rosenberg, 'Shin Bet closes East Jerusalem institutions suspected of being run by Hamas', *Haaretz*, 1 November 2011: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/shin-bet-closes-east-jerusalem-institutions-suspected-of-being-run-by-hamas-1.393174>. Accessed 11 June 2014.

¹³⁴ Gili Cohen, 'Security Forces Shut Two Jerusalem Charities, Linking Them to Hamas', *Haaretz*, 8 November 2013: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.556919>. Accessed 11 June 2014.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Jack Khoury, 'Islamic Movement Top Official in Israel Gets Eight Months in Prison', *Haaretz*, 4 March 2013: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/premium-1.577882>. Accessed 11 June 2014.

As reported by the Movement's media sources, on the same day that the Movement was banned, the police released orders to close 23 local services institutions affiliated with the Movement in Umm al-Fahim, Kufr Kana, and Rahat. A number of the Movement's leaders were interrogated and arrested. Banning the Movement included closing down and restricting the activities of student, welfare and humanitarian organizations. As a result, the Movement argues that around 23,000 orphans were left without protection and humanitarian support.¹³⁷

The local newspapers affiliated with the Movement (*Ṣawt al-Haqq* and *al-Madīna*) delivered weekly reports about the impact of banning the Movement on the most marginalized and fragile communities in Israel and in East Jerusalem. Many of the reports by the Movement's media resources linked the ban to the state rejection of its aid and humanitarian activities. In the Israeli media, however, most reports linked the ban to the Movement's activities and to the struggle around the *awqāf* in Jerusalem. In his speeches, Netanyahu said that the Movement 'denies [Israel's] right to exist and calls for the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in its place'. Netanyahu's office also stated that the Movement is linked to other Islamic organization such as Hamas.¹³⁸

As carefully analysed by Suhad Bishara, the Adalah expert, Gilad Erdan, the Israeli public security minister, argued that the Movement's activities and ideological platforms are behind banning the Movement. Erdan stated that the Movement's 'false campaign' on behalf al-Aqṣā is one of the reasons for banning it. Referring to its activities in Jerusalem and al-Aqṣā festivals, such as bringing worshippers, tourists and visitors to the mosque, Erdan presented the Movement as a security threat.¹³⁹

Despite massive demonstrations by the Palestinians in Israel, including strikes and marches, following the ban, the Israeli government has not changed its decision. As reported by the Middle East Monitor, Netanyahu stated clearly that 'I have lately heard voices rising from

¹³⁷ A special joint report by the Movement's Committee of Freedom and the Committee Against Banning the Islamic Movement (Umm al-Fahim) (February 2016), '100 days after banning the Islamic movement, we are stronger than your banning'.

¹³⁸ Jonathan Cook, 'Netanyahu outlaws al-Aqṣā protector, social charity, the Northern Islamic Movement', *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (January/February 2016) 24–5. <http://www.wrmea.org/2016-january-february/netanyahu-outlaws-al-Aqṣā-protector-social-charity-the-northern-islamic-movement.html>. Accessed 15 January 2016.

¹³⁹ Suhad Bishara, 'Returning to the days of military rule in Israel', *al-Jazeera*, 24 December 2015: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/12/returning-days-military-rule-israel-151223131305852.html>. Accessed 10 February 2016.

certain segments of the population against the decision, but it will not change the decision by a millimetre'.¹⁴⁰

The Movement reacted to the ban by increasing weekly activities including lectures and initiating more activities related to Jerusalem. It rallied against the ban in a variety of ways, including marching after the Friday prayers, writing weekly reports in their newspapers, making speeches in mosques and local media sources, organizing weekly lectures in the Umm al-Fahim tent and through raising slogans in Arab towns and villages. In the mosques, everywhere in the country, posters were used to highlight the impact of banning the Movement showing images of orphan children left without support. The weekly lectures organized in Umm al-Fahim, the centre of the Islamic Movement, drew speakers and crowds sympathetic to the Movement.¹⁴¹ But they could not change the government's decision. The protest activities were supported by the Arab Higher Committee and Arab MKs.¹⁴²

One of the most significant responses to the ban was declaring a new party in Nazareth called 'al-Wafā' wa-l-İşlāh' in April 2016, led by a number of the Islamic Movement activists.¹⁴³ Described as the most successful strategy, the Movement continues to function but in a more innovative and quieter format. The move of establishing a new party could save the Movement's activities and sustain its support for the most marginalized Palestinian communities in Israel.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the Islamic Movement contributed to the preservation of Islamic and Palestinian identity amongst the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel through its humanitarian and resistance activities. The lack of services provided by the state to the most marginalized groups in Israel contributed to empowering the Islamic Movement. Through its services, the Movement gained a lot of support and turned out to be a significant political player. By supervising the *awqāf* and the abandoned properties

¹⁴⁰ 'Netanyahu: ban on Islamic Movement will remain despite protests', *Middle East Monitor*, 30 November 2015: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20151130-netanyahu-ban-on-islamic-movement-will-remain-despite-protests/>. Accessed 30 December 2015.

¹⁴¹ Interview in Umm al-Fahim, 15 February 2016. (Name withheld.)

¹⁴² A special joint report, '100 days'.

¹⁴³ Editorial, *al-'Arabī al-jadīd*, 11 April 2016. Available at <https://www.alaraby.co.uk>. Accessed 11 December 2016.

inside Israel and building different grassroots institutions, the Movement became very popular among the Palestinians in Israel.

The Northern branch of the Movement boycotted Israeli politics. In preferring its model of building a self-reliant, independent community, the Movement rejected participation in Israeli politics as not worthwhile. This led the Movement to invest in the Palestinian community through its service provision and community-building process. Its refusal to participate in Israeli national politics challenged the state and put the Movement under threat of being banned.

In the case of East Jerusalem, the Islamic Movement's humanitarian and political activities and its emergence as an important player in the conflict over the Old City and its holy sites, put it in direct confrontation with the Israeli authorities. The PA leadership became inactive in East Jerusalem after the Oslo Accords. The Islamic Movement was able to move into the political space and function as a significant resistance movement dedicated to containing the Israeli settler colonial policies in East Jerusalem. Providing aid to various projects in the Old City and supporting the East Jerusalemites were central to the Movement's activities. In the absence of the PA and the struggle between Jordan and Israel over the *awqāf*, the Movement became central to the Palestinian resistance to dispossession in East Jerusalem. Through its local and international reach, the Movement managed to draw the attention of the Islamic and Western states to the Judaization policies in the city and their impact on the Arab population.

Despite being under direct Israeli threat since the 1990s, the Movement campaigned for Palestinian refugees' rights and refused to recognize the Oslo Accords. Despite Oslo and the split in 1996, the Islamic Movement continued to play an important role in the struggle to sustain Palestinian identity and campaign for the rights of Palestinian refugees. It did so using different strategies and kept many projects going over the two decades since Oslo.

From the Israeli viewpoint, banning the Movement was necessary to restrict its activities in East Jerusalem and to isolate it from its bases of community support. The involvement of the Movement in a variety of activities that supported the struggle of the East Jerusalemites and the Palestinians in Israel contributed to its being banned. Its resistance and campaign for dignity and rights were a major counter to Israeli discriminatory policies. The Movement has been understood as a new form of Palestinian resistance inside Israel, with Jerusalem as the focus and symbol of its mobilization. Despite having been banned, it continues to play an important role in the struggle over Jerusalem by organizing daily buses to the Old City but without making headlines. During the holy month of Ramaḍān in June 2016, thousands of buses reached

Jerusalem, mostly organized by Movement activists and other individuals. Restricting the Movement's activities by imprisoning Raed Salah and a number of other activists, by shutting down its newspapers and media resources, has not prevented the Movement from functioning as a strong expression of resistance.