

Is Hamas a *Religious* Terrorist Group?

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Research Question: Is Hamas a Religious terrorist group? If so, US policy should change it concerns them.

-This research was done by looking at the terrorist actions committed by Hamas before and after they were elected into the Palestinian government in 2006. These findings were then compared to the criteria of religious terrorist groups compiled by Bruce Hoffman. I found that Hamas aligned more with a secular terrorist group after it became a part of the government. The US government is currently dealing with Hamas and the Palestinian government as if they were religious terrorists and because of this are not able to correctly facilitate the situation between Palestine and Israel.

Hamas and Al Qaeda according to Hoffman's typology

	Violence	Audience	Perception	Goals
Al Qaeda	Spreading Sharia Law (Divine Duty)	Islamic followers (Religious Followers)	Against US (Outside System)	Implement Sharia Law globally
Hamas	Act of Guerilla Warfare (State Duty)	Global Community (Potential Supporters)	Seeking inclusion (Part of Flawed System)	Regain Homeland

Bruce Hoffman miscategorizes Hamas as a Religious Terrorist Group (RTG) in his article "Holy Terror".

Hoffman's criteria for **Religious Terrorist Groups**

- Violence is sacramental and a divine duty
 Gods will
- Audience is religious followers
- See themselves as outsiders to a system that needs to be changed or destroyed

Hoffman's criteria for **Secular Terrorist Groups**

- Indiscriminate violence is immoral and counter productive
 Tool for the state
- Audience is potential sympathizers and members of their community
- See themselves as part of a system that is flawed but basically good

Why US Policy should be changed to deal with Secular Terrorists

- Understand the type of terrorists is the only way to correctly deal with the group
- Secular Terrorists have demands that can be met

What US policy changes should entail

- US must recognize Palestine's situation
- US must recognize Palestine as a state
- US must recognize Hamas/Fatah government as legitimate
- US must influence Israel new peace talks with a two state solution as the goal