



Program
on Extremism

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CAIR—Why History is Important

LARA BURNS

BARRY JONAS

DAVID COLLINS

CAIR- Why History is Important

On October 27, 2025, it was reported in the media that CAIR-Ohio Director Khaled Tuurani participated in an online event that included Majed al-Zeer,¹ a Hamas official who was designated by the US government in 2024 as a Specially Designated Terrorist for his role in Hamas fundraising efforts.² Specifically, Al-Zaytouna Center in Beirut hosted the conference that involved at least two panels and whose title was, “Palestinians Abroad and Regional and International Strategic Transformations in the Light of Al-Aqsa Flood.” “Al-Aqsa Flood” is the name that Hamas branded its October 7, 2023 terrorist atrocities. Although Tuurani and al-Zeer appear to have sat on separate panels, they were part of the same event whose purpose was to plan strategy in light of the Hamas terror attacks. Tuurani’s reported appearance on a separate panel from Majeed al-Zeer, does not make their participation in the event irrelevant. Majeed al-Zeer has long been a part of the Hamas terror network and even though CAIR holds itself out as a legitimate civil rights group, it publicly shields its history and affiliation with that same terror network when dealing with the American public. And this is by design.

A Brief History

The Palestine Committee

In 1988, the International Muslim Brotherhood tasked its chapters, including the Muslim Brotherhood’s United States chapter, to support Hamas.³ At the time, the primary leader of the US-Muslim Brotherhood was Mousa Abu Marzook who was a student at a university in Louisiana. From the United States, Marzook oversaw the creation and operation of the first three US-based Hamas front organizations under the US-Muslim Brotherhood’s Palestine Committee as he rose to the senior-most leadership position within Hamas worldwide—the Chief of the Hamas Political Bureau.

Mousa Abu Marzook

Mousa Abu Marzook led the Hamas Political Bureau as its Chief in the early 1990s until his arrest by the US government in 1995. Marzook was arrested and placed into extradition proceedings to Israel, but was ultimately deported to Jordan in 1997 where he continued to lead the Hamas Political Bureau as its Deputy Chief. Marzook has continued to lead within the Hamas Political Bureau since that time.

¹ CAIR-Ohio Leader Moderated Event Featuring Designated Terrorist, Lahav Harkov, *Jewish Insider*, October 27, 2025 and CAIR-Ohio Director Moderate Event Featuring Treasury-Designated Hamas Official, October 26, 2025, *Jewish Onliner*.

² Treasury Targets Significant International Hamas Fundraising Network, October 7, 2024, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2632>

³ *United States v. El-Mezain*, 664 F.3d 467, 486 (5th Cir. 2011).

The Palestine Committee effectively became the US-based Hamas infrastructure. The three key front organizations were the Occupied Land Fund (soon to be renamed the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development and hereinafter referred to as the HLF), the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), and the United Association for Studies and Research (UASR).⁴ Each organization had a specific purpose, but they were to operate in conjunction with each other to achieve the goal of supporting Hamas with media, money and political support.

Figure 1: United States v. HLF, Exhibit Elbarasse Search 5: Identifies when Hamas was formed, the Muslim Brotherhood ordered the Creation of the “Palestine Committee” in the US to support it through three organizations, the HLF(OLF) IAP, and UASR.

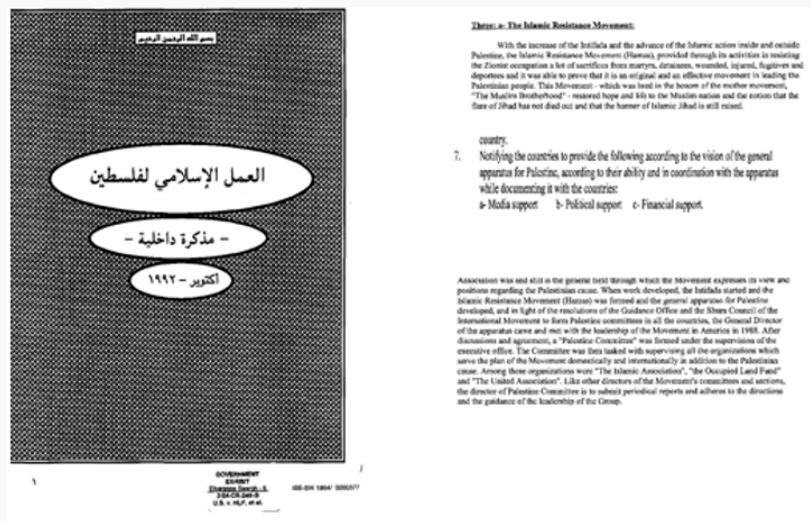


Figure 2: Logos of the HLF, UASR, and IAP



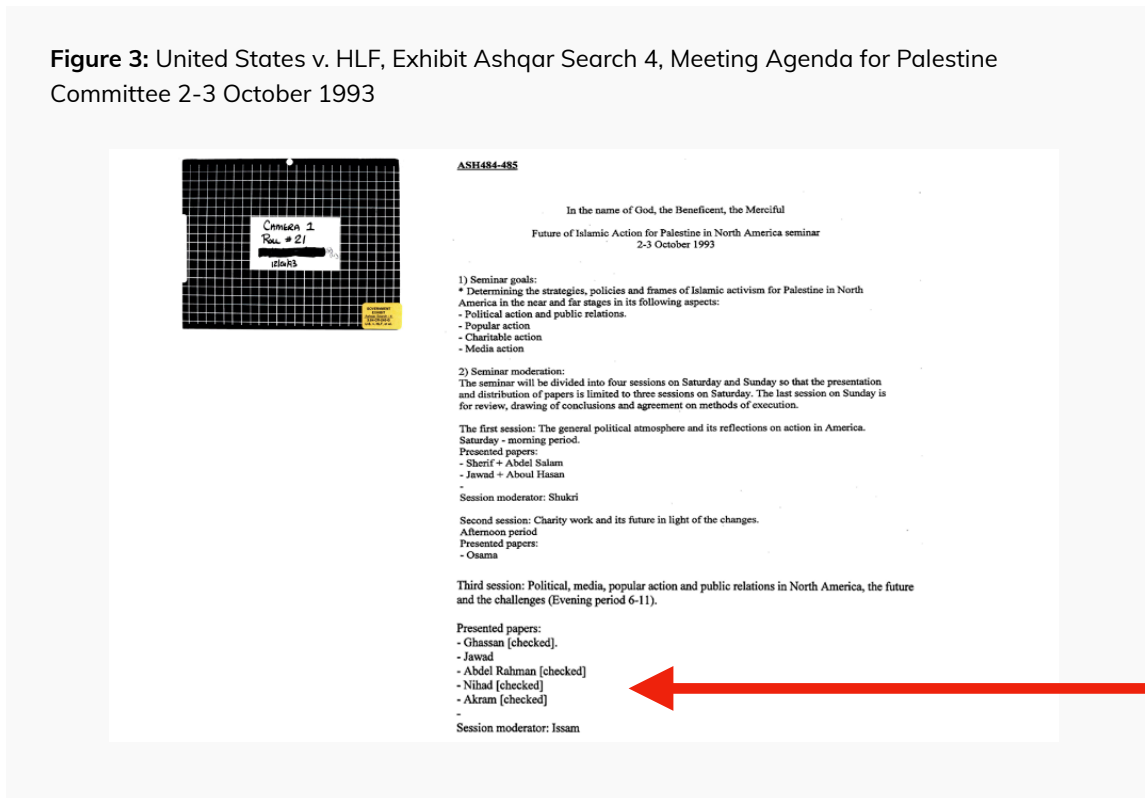
⁴ Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (2010).

Seeking to Bring the Goals of the Accords to Failure

In late 1993, the PLO and Israel entered into the Oslo Accords, which served as a road map for potential peace, a two-state solution, and Palestinian self-rule. Hamas condemned the Oslo Accords. The Palestine Committee reacted and planned a meeting among the US-based leaders to discuss how to proceed in light of the developments. This meeting was to be the corner-stone of an agenda Hamas would pursue over decades in the US.

The agenda for the meeting was located during a 1994 FBI covert search of the home of Abdelhaleem Ashqar, a top leader in the Palestine Committee who helped plan the meeting. One of the planned speakers at the meeting was Nihad Awad, then a leader in the IAP.⁵ Other speakers included Shukri Abu Baker and Ghassan Elashi, two of the founders of the HLF.

Figure 3: United States v. HLF, Exhibit Ashqar Search 4, Meeting Agenda for Palestine Committee 2-3 October 1993



The leaders held the meeting at a hotel in Philadelphia in October 1993. During the meeting, which was wire-tapped by the FBI, the congregants discussed how they would continue to support Hamas and seek to derail the peace accords, while they operated under cover to avoid law enforcement scrutiny. In the meeting, they had the foresight that Hamas would likely be designated as a terrorist organization by the US government. The leaders declared that “War is deception” and planned to deceive the American public about their motives, while remaining true to their ideologies when addressing the Palestinian and Arab populations.

⁵ United States v. Holy Land Foundation, No. 04-CR-240-G (“HLF”), Exhibit: Ashqar Search 4.

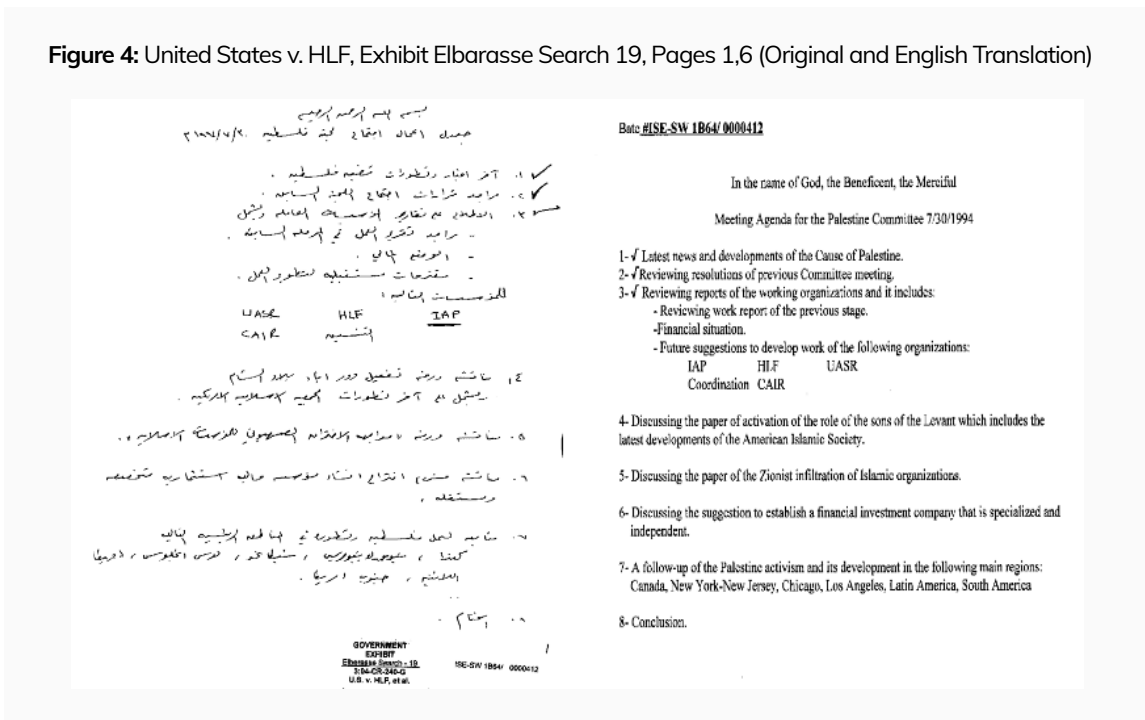
The leadership’s strategy developed in the meeting is consistent with the Hamas charter, specifically article 13, in which it describes initiatives and peaceful solutions are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). The leaders vowed to stealthily operate in alignment with Hamas principles. Additionally, they discussed their intent to infiltrate media outlets, and they also focused heavily on their need to infiltrate the US’s leading.⁶

The meeting attendees further plotted to create an organization in Washington, D.C. that would appear legitimate, that did not have the “Islamic hue,” but who would serve the purpose of defending the Hamas front organizations if they were scrutinized by the US government and media. Documents and testimony in the HLF trial revealed that the new organization was the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), which was founded by two senior Palestine Committee leaders, Nihad Awad and Omar Ahmad.⁷

CAIR is born

US Palestine Committee meeting minutes from July 1994, several months after the meeting in Philadelphia, seized from the home of Palestine Committee member Ismail Elbarasse, demonstrated that a fourth organization was now under their umbrella. In addition to the HLF, IAP and UASR, the meeting minutes reflected CAIR.⁸

Figure 4: United States v. HLF, Exhibit Elbarasse Search 19, Pages 1,6 (Original and English Translation)



⁶ United States v. Holy Land Foundation, No. 04-CR-240-G, Exhibits: Philly Meeting 1-8.

⁷ United States v. Holy Land Foundation, No. 04-cr-240-G (“HLF”), Testimony of Special Agent Lara Burns.

⁸ United States v. Holy Land Foundation, No. 04-cr-240-G (“HLF”), Elbarasse Search 19.

In those minutes, they discussed a variety of issues, noted their work was not a separate movement from the “Mother Group,” and discussed the on-going normalization of relations between Israel and Arab countries. They recognized the need to disrupt that normalization process, lest they be the only ones “who are ‘extremists.’”⁹ They then documented their strategy, the “Confrontation work plan,” on the final page, which included methods to fight the normalization.

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- There must be an awakening for us, we who own the cause of Palestine and Islam, so that this normalization process does not pass us by and we become the only ones who are “extremists” and radical and that it will be said that “the Palestinian Muslims” reject while others agree, and this is a formidable danger that does not serve the Islamic aspect of the Palestinian cause.

- Confrontation work plan:

- A. The activation of the role of (MAS) to educate the brothers in all work centers, mosques, and organizations on the necessity of stopping any contacts with the Zionist organizations and the rejection of any future contacts. And it may be appropriate that we do not reject contact in one time but link between the Bosnian cause and the Palestinian cause so that if the Jews wanted to hold a demonstration against the Serbs in Bosnia, then we ask to have a demonstration against Israel for what it is doing in Palestine at the same time.
- B. Holding meetings with the imams and administrators of Islamic centers in major cities so as to activate their role in confronting the infiltration of their organizations.
- C. An internal Brotherhood committee to fight the normalization of relations and monitor the brotherhood organizations and others, and giving advice to them in the best ways.
- D. Direct communication with the Islamic organizations in general to discuss the matter with them and to attempt to stop the normalization that is happening under any umbrella.
- E. Activating the role of the Association [IAP] and its publications to take up its media role in this area.

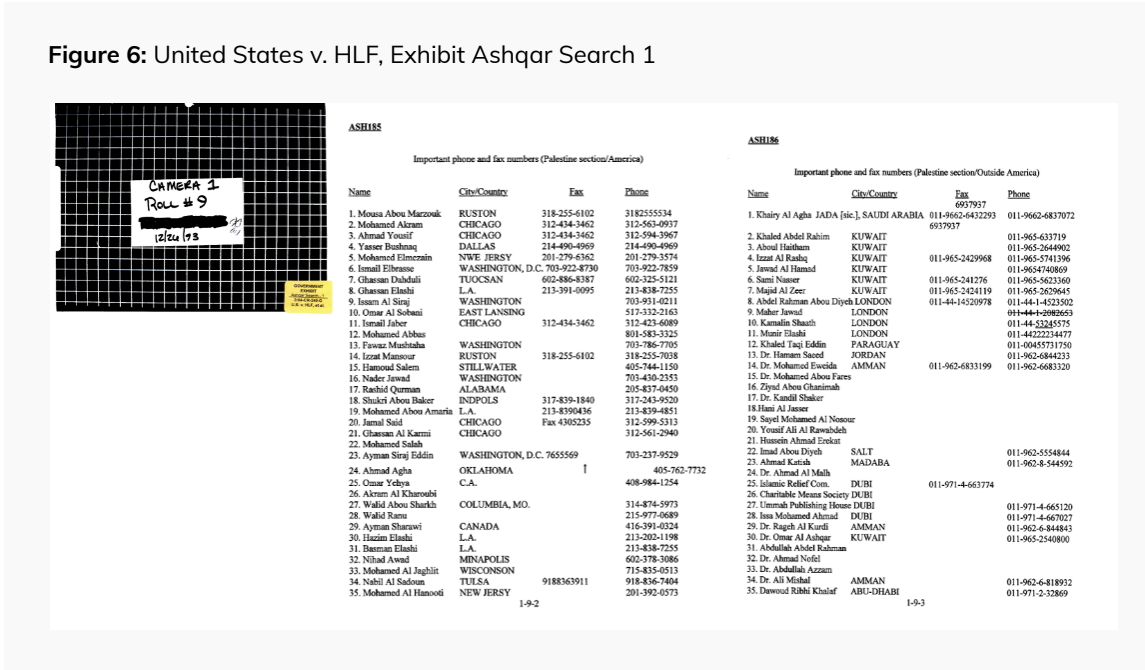
And success is from God 7/29/1994

Majid Al-Zeer and CAIR Founders are Part of the Palestine Committee

During the 1994 FBI search of Ashqar’s home, the FBI found a document that listed “Important phone and fax numbers (Palestine section/ Inside America) and page 2 was (Palestine section/Outside America). For the numbers inside America, Marzook was listed as #1, while leaders of the HLF, IAP and UASR also appeared scattered throughout the list of 35 people, including CAIR co-founders Omar Yehia (Ahmad) and Nihad Awad. On the important numbers outside America, Majid Al- Zeer was #7.

⁹ United States v. Holy Land Foundation, No. 04-cr-240-G (“HLF”), Elbarasse Search 19.

Figure 6: United States v. HLF, Exhibit Ashqar Search 1



Conclusion

CAIR recently submitted a letter to the Treasury Department stating, “CAIR is not and has never been an agent, affiliate, offshoot, subsidiary, supporter, partner, funder, representative, supporter, or pen pal of any militant group.”¹⁰ While that self-serving statement carries rhetorical appeal, history remains essential in discerning substance from appearance; when viewed through this lens, the past reveals a narrative sharply at odds with the one being presented. CAIR, working alongside a designated Hamas leader (Majeed al-Zeer) to develop strategies in light of Hamas' terror attacks on Israel, must be examined in the context of CAIR's creation, history, and the words and deeds of a founding father and current Executive Director, Nihad Awad.

¹⁰ Letter from Robert S. McCaw, Director of Government Affairs Department, Council on American-Islamic Relations to Hon. Scott Bessent, Secretary of the Treasury, Oct. 15, 2025.



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