



FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Statement of Secretary Paul O'Neill on the Blocking of Hamas Financiers' Assets

When the President declared war on terrorist financing in September, we made al Qaida our primary focus of attention, and have since blocked \$61 million worldwide in assets of the Taliban and al Qaida. In October, we broadened our pursuit of terrorist assets to include all Foreign Terrorist Organizations, including Hamas. We stated very clearly our intent to pursue the bankers who finance these terrorists. Today, we are advancing on those financiers of terror.

The Hamas terrorist organization has taken the lives of scores of individuals, including American citizens. They have proudly claimed credit for their acts of evil, including the horrific attacks this past Sunday. They raise money in the United States and around the world. Clearly, Hamas is a terrorist organization of global reach.

Today we are shutting down three Hamas-controlled organizations that finance terror. The Holy Land Foundation masquerades as a charity, while its primary purpose is to fund Hamas. This is not a case of one bad actor stealing from the petty cash drawer and giving those stolen monies to terrorists. This organization exists to raise money in the United States to promote terror.

Last year, Holy Land raised \$13 million. Government agents today shut down 4 offices of the Holy Land Foundation in the United States. Innocent donors who thought they were helping someone in need deserve protection from these scam artists who prey on their benevolence.

Similarly, the al Aqsa bank and the Beit al Mal bank aren't just banks that unknowingly administer accounts for terrorists. They are direct arms of Hamas, established and used to do Hamas business.

We will continue to name the financiers of terrorism to ensure that Hamas and other terrorist organizations have no ability to finance their acts of evil. We will work with every civilized nation around the globe to ensure there is no safe haven for terrorist money. Just as in a ground war, we will win by taking one hill at a time, advancing tirelessly every day, until terrorists and their money have nowhere to hide.