

Turkey and Hamas: Sanctuary, Money and U.S. Exposure

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In brief

Core point: Turkey hosts Hamas leaders and allows rallies praising Hamas while seeking a role in Gaza and new U.S. aircraft.¹

On the record: Treasury designated Musa Akkari, Hamas's representative in Turkey, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in June 2024.²

Follow the money: An FBI affidavit filed in March 2025 traced Qassam Brigades crypto donations to accounts held by Palestinians with Turkish identity documents.³

Corporate footprint: Trend GYO, designated by Treasury as 75 percent owned by Hamas, trades on the Borsa Istanbul.⁴

Contested: Some Washington analysts see Turkey as a stabilizing partner; MEF's Michael Rubin argues that "it is not possible to be both pro-Turkey and anti-Hamas."⁵

The hosting record

Akkari, a veteran of Hamas's Qassam Brigades, and nine other prisoners released in the 2011 Gilad Shalit exchange were flown to Ankara. He attended President Erdoğan's April 2024 meeting with Ismail Haniyeh and a Hamas meeting with the president in Ankara on January 29, 2025.⁶ Senior Hamas figure Marwan Abu Ras urged a rally in Diyarbakır on April 20, 2025, to support the Qassam Brigades "with your weapons," and spoke again in Istanbul on April 27.⁷ On September 5, 2026, Abdusselam Haniye, son of Ismail Haniyeh, addressed a congress of ÖNDER, the alumni association of Turkey's imam-hatip schools, which teach more than 1.2 million students.⁸

The money trail

The FBI affidavit, filed with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, traced Qassam Brigades donations totaling over \$1 million to exchanges including Istanbul-based BTCTurk. One Binance account held by a Palestinian with permanent residence in Turkey received 111,000 USDT in 14 transfers between January 23 and March 6, 2025. The agent wrote that he had not requested records from BTCTurk "due to concerns that the exchange may notify customers."⁹

1. Ohad Tal and Alon Schuster, "Why Turkey Is a Strategic Problem for the United States," *Middle East Forum Observer*, November 21, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-observer/why-turkey-is-a-strategic-problem-for-the-united-states>.

2. Abdullah Bozkurt, "U.S.-Designated Hamas Operative Reveals Erdoğan Personally Promised Protection, Sees Militants as His Family," *Middle East Forum Online*, June 4, 2026, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/u-s-designated-hamas-operative-reveals-erdogan-personally-promised-protection-sees-militants-as-his-family>.

3. Abdullah Bozkurt, "U.S. Crackdown on Hamas Virtual Currency Sheds Light on Turkey's Role in Terrorism Financing," *Middle East Forum Online*, April 3, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/u-s-crackdown-on-hamas-virtual-currency-sheds-light-on-turkeys-role-in-terrorism-financing>.

4. Amine Ayoub, "The 'Zombie' Caliphate," *Middle East Forum Online*, January 1, 2026, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/the-zombie-caliphate>.

5. Michael Rubin, "Is It Possible to Be Both Pro-Turkey and Anti-Hamas?" *Middle East Forum Online*, March 15, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/is-it-possible-to-be-both-pro-turkey-and-anti-hamas>.

6. Bozkurt, "U.S.-Designated Hamas Operative Reveals."

7. Abdullah Bozkurt, "Turkey Hosts Hamas Official Calling for Israel's Destruction, Arming of Qassam Brigades," *Middle East Forum Online*, April 30, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/turkey-hosts-hamas-official-calling-for-israels-destruction-arming-of-qassam-brigades>.

8. Abdullah Bozkurt, "Hamas Given Platform to Cultivate Jihadist Youth Among Millions of Turkish Students," *Middle East Forum Online*, September 15, 2026, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/hamas-given-platform-to-cultivate-jihadist-youth-among-millions-of-turkish-students>.

9. Bozkurt, "U.S. Crackdown on Hamas."

Akkari's LinkedIn profile identifies him as a manager of Kubbe Medya, a media company incorporated in Istanbul in March 2014, although his name does not appear in its registration documents.¹⁰ Turkey appears in other networks covered in this series: Hezbollah's commodity trade and Iran's oil sales.¹¹

Strategic stakes

Turkey bought the Russian S-400 air-defense system, seeks new F-16s, and has discussed a path back to the F-35. Recent plans for postwar Gaza give Turkey no security or governance role.¹² MEF's Michael Rubin wrote after Israel's September 2025 strike on Hamas in Qatar that Turkey had become the group's last refuge (analysis).¹³

In Congress, H.J.Res. 200, providing for congressional disapproval of a proposed foreign military sale to Turkey, was introduced on July 2, 2026.¹⁴

Questions for oversight

1. What has Treasury asked of Turkey regarding designated Hamas officials resident there, including Musa Akkari?
2. How do Turkish exchanges and banks respond to U.S. requests on accounts that received Qassam Brigades donations, given the FBI's stated concern about BTCTurk?
3. How are listed companies designated for Hamas ownership, such as Trend GYO, treated under U.S. secondary sanctions?
4. What technology-security reviews apply to pending arms transfers to Turkey while it operates the S-400?
5. What is the State Department's assessment of Hamas fundraising and recruitment at public events in Turkey?
6. How does Turkey's relationship with Hamas factor into U.S. planning for postwar Gaza?

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10. Bozkurt, "U.S.-Designated Hamas Operative Reveals."

11. Abdullah Bozkurt, "New U.S. Sanctions Expose Turkey's Role in Hezbollah's Cash Pipeline, Sanctions Evasion," *Middle East Forum Online*, February 19, 2026, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/new-u-s-sanctions-expose-turkeys-role-in-hezbollahs-cash-pipeline-sanctions-evasion>; Abdullah Bozkurt, "Turkish Company Linked to Covert Iranian Oil Smuggling Network Exposed in U.S. Court Filing," *Middle East Forum Online*, May 5, 2026, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/turkish-company-linked-to-covert-iranian-oil-smuggling-network-exposed-in-u-s-court-filing>.

12. Tal and Schuster, "Why Turkey."

13. Michael Rubin, "Israel Just Struck Hamas in Qatar: Turkey Could Be Next," *Middle East Forum Online*, September 9, 2025, <https://www.meforum.org/mef-online/israel-just-struck-hamas-in-qatar-turkey-could-be-next>.

14. Providing for congressional disapproval of the proposed foreign military sale to Turkey of certain defense articles and services, H.J.Res. 200, 119th Cong. (2026), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-joint-resolution/200>.