



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on November 9, 2012

Suit: China Bankrolls Hamas Terror

China's astronomic rise in economic, military, and diplomatic strength poses numerous challenges to American interests on both the domestic and international fronts. China's support of regimes and international actors hostile to American interests overseas (such as Sudanese leader Omar Hassan Al-Bashir and Syrian ruler Bashar Al-Assad) has been well-documented for several years; however, evidence has recently emerged pointing to growing ties between the People's Republic of China and Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist party classified as a terror group by the U.S. State Department and European Union.



[An investigation](#) recently undertaken by the Israel Law Center Shurat haDin yielded proof that the Bank of China (BOC), China's third largest lender by assets, bears direct responsibility for offering financial assistance to Hamas in the form of executing wire transfers of several millions of dollars since 2003. Based on this evidence, Shurat haDin filed a billion-dollar lawsuit on Tuesday, October 23 against the Bank of China for intentionally providing banking services to Hamas through their New York City branch.

"The banking giant knowingly assisted the Islamic group to carry out [a] Jerusalem attack with the full approval of the Chinese government," said Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, the group's chief counsel and director.

Hamas leaders regularly withdrew amounts of around \$100,000 in cash from the Bank of China, usually within one day of a deposit, over a period of years, the case alleges, and the Bank of China "was under an obligation to monitor, report, and refuse to execute such suspicious and irregular banking transactions," but did not, the complaint reads.

The lawsuit, brought to the New York State Supreme Court, is on behalf of five families who lost loved ones in a terror attack at [Jerusalem's Merkaz haRav Yeshiva](#), an institute of advanced Jewish learning in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood, on March 6, 2008. Eight students were killed in the attack, and 11 more were wounded at the hands of 26-year-old Hamas gunman Alaa Abu Dhein.

China's then-Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang publicly condemned the attack, saying in a press release that "China condemns this violent incident targeting at the civilians," and he called upon the relevant sides to practice restraint and avoid taking any action to deteriorate the [regional situation](#).

The suit, *Rot v. Bank of China*, seeks compensatory and punitive damages for the victims, and argues that the wire transfers issued by the Chinese state-owned bank were initiated by the Hamas leadership in Iran and Syria, processed through BOC branches in the United States and sent on to a BOC account in China operated by a senior terror operative. The funds were then transferred to Hamas and other terror groups in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.



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In April 2005, Israeli counterterrorism officers met with officials from China's Central Bank. Israel demanded that the Chinese officials take action to prevent the BOC from further wire transfers, but Chinese officials ignored the request. "Despite these warnings, the state-owned bank, with Beijing's approval, continued to wire funds for terrorism, all while declaring that they did not consider Hamas a terrorist group," stressed Darshan-Leitner.

Shurat haDin also found that most of the wire transfers were made to account #4750401-0188-150882-6 at a Bank of China branch in Guangzhou, China, in the name of "S.Z.R Al-Shurafa." The owner of the account, Said Al-Shurafa, is a senior officer and agent of both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a terror group with major backing from Iran, which views itself as an "insurance policy" in case Hamas abandons its "battle" altogether. Funds were subsequently transferred from Al-Shurafa's account to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank for the purpose of planning, preparing for, and executing terrorist attacks.

In response to the accusations, the bank argued the case should be dismissed because China, not the United States, was the more appropriate forum for the plaintiffs to voice their complaints as per the legal doctrine "forum non conveniens" (forum not agreeing), although the New York Supreme Court has allowed the case to continue and for the process of evidence discovery to advance.

A [similar lawsuit](#) was filed in Los Angeles on August 21, 2008 against the Bank of China, on behalf of hundreds of Israeli victims of terror, including the parents of 17-year-old Ayala Abuksis, who was injured while trying to shield her brother from a Kassam missile that exploded near their house in the town of Sderot.

In a statement on its website, the Bank of China [denied the allegations](#), saying the "Bank of China has always complied with United Nations' regulations against money laundering and financing for terrorism, as well as relevant regulations and oversight in China and other jurisdictions. It strictly prohibits any form of financial services for any terrorist organization."

Chinese Communism and Palestinian Terror

Unfortunately, China's record of support for international terror groups is well known, in spite of the claims made by the Bank of China. Professor Yitzchak Shichor, a scholar of Asian Studies at the University of Haifa and an expert on Sino-Israeli relations, writes extensively on the nature of relations between China and Hamas, in addition to other terror groups, and says that China's relations with Hamas "raise some doubts about Beijing's sincerity in fighting terrorism and religious extremism," in [China's Rise-Threat or Opportunity?](#)

Like the Soviet Union, China was supportive of Third World so-called national "liberation" movements in the Arab world, Latin America, and Africa, such as the African National Congress in South Africa. China did this under the guise of "self-determination," which is a central doctrine in both Leninist and Maoist ideology.

Even after the supposed Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, China continued to support many of the same Marxist terrorist organizations as the Soviet Union, and it also declared itself extremely supportive of the Palestinians. Since the 1950s, the People's Republic of China has taken an anti-Israel stance, eschewing bilateral communications with Israel, banning trade, and, after the Suez Canal Crisis, denouncing Israel as the "tool of imperialist policies."

Under Mao Tse-tung, China established ties with Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). After the



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Palestinians were admitted to the United Nations in 1971, China voted in favor of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, which equated Zionism with racism. Furthermore, under Deng Xiaoping, China endorsed the PLO Declaration of Independence and recognized a Palestinian state in November 1988.

After Hamas was elected to power in 2006, China refused to label it a terror group, and after the May 31, 2010 Gaza flotilla raid, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu strongly condemned Israel.

Relations between Hamas and China are normalized; in early June 2006, Mahmud Al-Zahar, Hamas's Foreign Minister, was invited to China for the second meeting of the Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum. Furthermore, when asked if China would offer aid to compensate for money withheld from Hamas by Israel, Liu Jiancho, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that if Hamas were to make such a request, China wouldn't reject it.

China continues to call for international recognition of an independent Palestinian state, and calls for "the restoration of the legal rights and interests of the Palestinian people," as well as for an end to "Israeli occupation" of Arab territories, in line with United Nations guidelines.

Shichor also references an episode in February 2009, in which a Hamas attempt to buy weapons directly from China, was exposed at the Jerusalem District Court just hours after China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi had left Israel. A Hamas agent from Gaza asked a Palestinian merchant who visited China in February 2009 to buy a variety of weapons, including telescopic rifle sights, gun clips, rifle magazines, communications equipment, and listening devices, which would be transported in a toy container through Egypt, and although the deal was aborted, it is damning that terrorists consider China a reliable source for weapons.

Chinese support for Hamas, Hezbollah, Sudan, Syria, Iran, the Taliban, and even al-Qaeda indicates the communist state's opposition to the interests of the United States and its allies and outright support for terrorism. The Shurat haDin's director says that its efforts to bring China to justice for its role in terror attacks in Israel are essential.

According to [Nitsana Darshan-Leitner](#), "The Chinese should not just be suspected of stealing intellectual property and patents, counterfeiting goods or hacking computers. They support terrorism and we expect the Beijing-controlled bank to now pay dearly."

Photo of Hamas: AP Images



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