



## Who are Hamas?

By BBC News Online's Kathryn Westcott - Thursday, 19 October, 2000

"Hamas, the main Islamist movement in the Palestinian territories, was born soon after the previous intifada erupted in 1987.

The organisation opposes the Oslo peace process and its short-term aim is a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories.

Hamas does not recognise the right of Israel to exist. Its long-term aim is to establish an Islamic state on land originally mandated as Palestine - most of which has been contained within Israel's borders since its creation in 1948.

The grass-roots organisation - with a political and a military wing - has an unknown number of hard-core members but tens of thousands of supporters and sympathisers. It has two main functions:

- It is involved in building schools and hospitals in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in helping the community in social and religious ways.
- The military wing of Hamas - known as the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades - has carried out a series of bloody attacks against Israeli targets.



The organisation has strong support in Gaza

In February and March 1996, Hamas carried out several bus bombings, killing nearly 60 Israelis. It was also blamed for attacks in 1997 in Jerusalem which killed 15 people, and brought the peace process grinding to a halt. (...)

Hamas is particularly strong in Gaza, where the economic conditions are worse than the West Bank [where Fatah is deeply rooted]".

### Questions.

1. Underline key information.
2. Sum up the main points\* to do an oral presentation.

\*foundation – ideology – territorial influence – role in the Arab-Israeli conflict/peace process. political allies/rivals – etc.