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 Immigration and
 Refugee Board of Canada

 Commission de l'immigration
 et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Palestinian Territory, Occupied: Forced recruitment by Hamas, Fatah or any other organization in the West Bank; in particular whether forced recruitment by these groups occurs in universities; the consequences for individuals who refuse to join these groups

The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG) is a "Palestinian, independent, non-governmental organization working to end human rights violations committed against Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, regardless of those responsible" (PHRMG 27 Jan. 2008). In response to questions concerning the practice of forced recruitment in West Bank universities by Hamas, Fatah or any other organization, the Executive Director of PHRMG wrote in 27 January 2008 correspondence that in Palestinian universities, political groups may "try to convince" students to join their specific movement. However, the Executive Director was not aware of anybody being forcefully recruited to any particular political movement (ibid.).

Other sources consulted by the Research Directorate do not make reference to "forced" recruitment by Hamas, Fatah or any other organization at West Bank universities; however, they do indicate that universities in Palestinian Occupied Territories, including the West Bank, are recruiting grounds for Hamas and other political organizations (*Time* 14 May 2007; US 15 Aug. 2005, III-6, IV-1; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 12 Feb. 2006, 19; Levitt 2006, 85, 127-134).

In his 2006 book entitled *Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad*, senior fellow and director of terrorism studies at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy Matthew Levitt states that "Hamas propaganda- pamphlets, posters, and myriad other printed collateral- literally litters Palestinian campuses" (ibid., 127). Levitt indicates that recruitment and "radicalization" of students generally takes place through student associations, such as the Hamas-affiliated *Kutla Islamiya* (also known as Islamic Bloc), which are found on university campuses throughout the West Bank (e.g., Al-Najah University and Bir Zeit University) (ibid., 129-132). Hamas has reportedly described al-Najah University as a "greenhouse for martyrs" (ibid., 130).

A 15 August 2005 United States (US) Army Training and Doctrine Command Handbook on suicide bombing in the Middle East and Central Asia indicates that "terrorist" organizations use a variety of methods to recruit their members, including using "recruiters" to find appropriate candidates for suicide missions (15 Aug. 2005, III-6). According to the report, Palestinian Islamic Jihad "especially looks for women in northern West Bank Universities" (US 15 Aug. 2005, III-6). The report further notes that in certain cases, recruits of Islamic "terrorist" organizations may be "blackmailed or pressured into conducting attacks" (ibid.; see also *Time* 14 May 2007).

Information on the consequences for individuals who refuse to join Hamas, Fatah or any other organization in the West Bank could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center. 12 February 2006. "Profile of the Hamas Movement." <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e0206.pdf> [Accessed 28 Jan. 2008]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The Director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy provided advice on materials to consult. Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organisation based in Ramallah, West Bank did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Al-Haq, Amnesty International (AI), B'Tselem, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (JCSS), Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor, Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) – Terrorism Knowledge Base (TKB), Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

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