

beyond the traditional European focus on sanctioning those directly involved in violence.

Some European governments, such as Germany and the Netherlands, have taken these responsibilities seriously and acted against Hamas funding networks within their borders. Many others have not. For example, Hamas has been [active for years](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/10/16/new-reports-show-growing-hamas-network-in-europe/) (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/10/16/new-reports-show-growing-hamas-network-in-europe/>) in Belgium and Italy, but the governments there have taken little action. In 2024, in response to a parliamentary inquiry, the Belgian justice minister [confirmed that Hamas](https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1707913390-hamas-operates-in-belgium-through-shell-companies-confirms-justice-minister) (<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/europe/1707913390-hamas-operates-in-belgium-through-shell-companies-confirms-justice-minister>) was continuing to operate in the country through shell companies, but more than a year later, the government has yet to crack down on these networks. And there are no indications Italy has taken steps to cut off Hamas's fundraising to follow up on the U.S. designations of Italy-based Hamas entities and individuals over the past year.

Other governments, such as the United Kingdom and France, have taken some limited action, but much more still needs to be done. For example, while the United Kingdom joined the United States in designating Hamas leaders outside the country, London has yet to [sanction or take action](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/turning-blind-eye-hamas-london) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/turning-blind-eye-hamas-london>) against Interpal, a U.K. entity that was designated by the United States for its Hamas ties more than 20 years ago and continues to operate. In 2024, France [froze the assets](https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-806125) (<https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-806125>) of a France-based nongovernmental organization, Humani'terre, after Israeli authorities seized material featuring the group's logo in Hamas tunnels in Gaza. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, Humani'terre is an alias for Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens, another charity designated by the United States 20 years ago for funding Hamas. The fact that such organizations were able to continue funding Hamas for two decades after being sanctioned by the United States underscores how far European countries have to go to uproot the Hamas financing networks established in Europe over many years.

The change needs to start at the EU level, taking advantage of authorities recently passed but used in a very limited fashion to target the financing of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The European Union has only sanctioned a handful of entities and individuals so far using the new proscription authorities it approved in January 2024, and only one—a [Spanish company](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02024D0385-20240628) (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02024D0385-20240628>) owned by a Sudanese Hamas financier—in Europe. In January 2025, the [European Council renewed](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/13/hamas-and-palestinian-islamic-jihad-council-extends-restrictive-measures-by-one-year/) (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/13/hamas-and-palestinian-islamic-jihad-council-extends-restrictive-measures-by-one-year/>) these authorities for another year, but it will have to be [renewed again](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/13/hamas-and-palestinian-islamic-jihad-council-extends-restrictive-measures-by-one-year/) (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/13/hamas-and-palestinian-islamic-jihad-council-extends-restrictive-measures-by-one-year/>) before Jan. 20, 2026, to remain on the books. The authorities should be renewed, but this time around they should be employed to go after Hamas financiers in Europe. Far more needs to be done to make a dent in Hamas's extensive European financial networks.

Hamas's financial hub in Turkey poses a particularly serious challenge—hardly a surprise given President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's well-known sympathies and ideological alignment with the group. In December 2023, less than two months after the Oct. 7 attacks, [Erdogan made his position](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/erdogan-i-cannot-accept-hamas-as-a-terror-group/) (https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/erdogan-i-cannot-accept-hamas-as-a-terror-group/) on Hamas clear, emphasizing that “No matter what anybody says, I cannot accept Hamas is a terror group.” The following year, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned [Hamid Abdullah Hussein al-Ahmar](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2720) (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2720>), a Yemeni national based in Turkey who allegedly helped oversee Hamas's once-secret \$500 million overseas investment portfolio. The following month, the Treasury Department sanctioned [multiple Turkey-based Hamas members](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2720) (<https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2720>) for their alleged involvement in financial facilitation. Erdogan's government has taken no visible actions against these sanctioned entities, despite the U.S. sanctions. To the contrary, Erdogan has [publicly insisted](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-says-hamas-is-not-terrorist-organisation-2023-10-25/) (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-says-hamas-is-not-terrorist-organisation-2023-10-25/>) that Hamas is not a terrorist organization, Oct. 7 notwithstanding.

Governments—in Europe and beyond—that hope for peace and stability in Gaza should be working vigorously to identify and disrupt Hamas's financial and support networks in their territories. The recent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas is a rare opportunity to move the region toward a more stable, peaceful future. Weakening Hamas's networks around the world can help ensure that Hamas cannot rearm itself and plunge the region back into chaos.

The authors, both graduates of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, dedicate this article in memory of Prof. Richard H. Shultz, director of the International Security Studies Program at the Fletcher School, who recently passed away after 42 years of teaching at the Fletcher School. Prof. Shultz leaves behind thousands of students impacted by his teaching and mentorship, including the authors.

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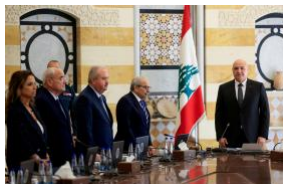
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