

Jerusalem issue brief



Vol. 10, No. 19 3 January 2011

Talking to Hamas? – Increasing Expressions of Genocidal Intent by Hamas Leaders Against the Jews

Jonathan D. Halevi

- Over the last few years there has been a steady drumbeat of calls from leading figures in the international community for Israel to open a dialogue with Hamas.
- Unfortunately, there is no evidence of a new pragmatism among the Hamas leadership, but only greater indications of a much harder line, which is expressed by its adoption of expressions of genocidal intent in its war against Israel and the Jewish people.
- In a December 2010 booklet marking the 23rd anniversary of the establishment of Hamas, Mohammed Def, head of the al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, wrote: "We say to our enemies: you are going on the path to extinction, and Palestine will remain ours....You have no right to even an inch of it."
- Ahmed al-Jaabari, the acting supreme commander of the al-Qassam Brigades, wrote: "Our eyes will...not be confined to the borders of Gaza. Our plan of struggle shall extend as always, sooner or later, to our entire plundered country....As long as the Zionists occupy our lands, only death or exile await them."
- Senior Hamas leader Khalil al-Haya told *al-Hayat* on November 11, 2010: "We retain our Islamic, Arab and Palestinian faith that Palestine will be returned to its inhabitants and Zionist existence will conclude....The Jews will have no right there, save for those who lived on Palestinian land prior to the First World War" (meaning that only Jews above the age of 96 will be permitted to live in Islamic Palestine).

Over the last few years there has been a steady drumbeat of calls from leading figures in the international community for Israel to open a dialogue with Hamas. Despite Hamas' call for Israel's elimination, Hamas representatives have obtained platforms in some of the most prestigious mainstream Western media. Thus, Ahmed Yousef, a senior political advisor to Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, appeared on the op-ed pages of both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* in 2007, where he presented the most minimal goals of "the end of occupation" and "freedom to be a nation."¹ In an article on PalestineChronicle.com on December 25, 2010, Yousef, who serves today as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, repeated the moderate message that: "Gaza will always extend a hand of friendship to the international community; and will always welcome any dialogue that will help achieve stability, security and growth in the region."²

In recent years, leading British parliamentarians have called for a dialogue with Hamas on the basis of the UK's experience with the IRA. Two former U.S. national security advisors, Brent Scowcroft and Zbigniew Brzezinski, have backed talking to Hamas as well.³ *Time* magazine columnist Joe Klein echoed the call for talks with Hamas, stating, "there will be no peace without Hamas as part of the process."⁴ It should be recalled that Hamas is defined as an international terrorist organization by both the U.S. government and the European Union, and has a long history of targeting Israeli civilians with suicide bombing attacks and rocket fire.

The important question that has not been systematically addressed is whether Hamas is demonstrating any signs of moderation in its attitudes toward Israel and Middle East peace. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of a new pragmatism among the Hamas leadership, but only greater indications of a much harder line, which is expressed by its adoption of expressions of genocidal intent in its war against Israel and the Jewish people. In fact, recently there was a new opportunity to investigate current trends in Hamas ideology. In December 2010, the Hamas movement marked the 23rd anniversary of its establishment with an official booklet entitled *The Path of Glory (Darb al-ezza)*, which includes statements by Hamas military leaders alongside statistical data on terror actions carried out against Israel.

Mohammed Def, head of the al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, wrote:

The al-Qassam Brigades...are better prepared to continue on our exclusive path to which there is no alternative, and that is the path of *jihad* and the fight against the enemies of the Muslim nation and mankind....We say to our enemies: you are going on the path to extinction (*zawal*), and Palestine will remain ours including Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Al-Aqsa (mosque), its towns and villages from the (Mediterranean) Sea to the (Jordan) River, from its North to its South. You have no right to even an inch of it.⁵

Ahmed al-Jaabari, the acting supreme commander of the al-Qassam Brigades, wrote:

Our eyes will always remain focused toward Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa and (their gaze) will not be confined to the borders of Gaza. Our plan of struggle shall extend as always, sooner or later, to our entire plundered country. The al-Qassam Brigades have never excluded and will not exclude from their considerations any possible option to activate resistance, liberate prisoners and subdue the criminal, thieving enemy, and as long as the Zionists occupy our lands, only death or exile await them.⁶

The message that emerges from these two senior al-Qassam Brigade commanders leaves no doubt regarding Hamas' intent for the future of the State of Israel and the fate of the Jews who live there. Israel must inexorably be exterminated as a political entity and the "Zionists" must be confronted with the option of either death, in the framework of the *jihad* campaign Hamas is waging to liberate Islamic Palestine, or leaving Palestine in advance of such a future. In practice, Def and Jaabari have in mind genocide to be perpetrated upon the Jews. By defining Zionists/Jews as the "enemies of the Muslim nation and mankind," they are laying the groundwork to legitimize the Jews' physical extermination.

This is not the first time that senior Hamas leaders have preached genocide. Dr. Yunis al-Astal, a Hamas Member of Parliament, noted on March 3, 2008, relying on citations from the Koran, that the Jews will be chastised by Allah with the punishment of burning in hell, due to their impudence toward him, their corruption, the murder of the prophets, and the shedding of the blood of Muslims. According to al-Astal, some of the religious sages believe that the tortures of burning will take place in this world prior to the next world. In other words, Muslims are commanded to burn the Jews alive until the total extermination of the entire Jewish people. He explains: "We are sure and certain that the burning and Holocaust (*mahraka*) will be the fate of the Jews, and one of its portents was the act of personal sacrifice on Allah's behalf in the military seminary" (a shooting attack at the Merkaz Harav yeshiva high school in Jerusalem on March 6, 2008, in which eight students were murdered).⁷

In an interview with the newspaper *al-Hayat* on November 11, 2010, Khalil al-Haya, a senior Hamas leader in Gaza, was asked whether Hamas was acting to establish an Islamic emirate in Gaza. He responded: "We view Gaza as part of historic Palestinian territory....We retain our Islamic, Arab and Palestinian faith that Palestine will be returned to its inhabitants and Zionist existence will conclude. The meaning of a Palestinian state is that there will be one unified Islamic Palestinian state, and not an Islamic emirate, from the sea to the river, that will unite the Palestinians. The Jews will have no right there, save for those who lived on Palestinian land prior to the First World War" (meaning that only Jews above the age of 96 will be permitted to live in Islamic Palestine).⁸

Sheikh Suleiman al-Fara, the director of the religious trusts in Khan Yunis and a senior Hamas leader, prophesied the extermination of the State of Israel in a sermon at the al-Katiba al-Khadra Mosque on March 23, 2010, referring to the "expulsion of the Jews and the destruction of state."⁹

Not only military and religious leaders have adopted these genocidal themes, but also the political echelon. Hamas political leader Mahmoud al-Zahar gave a strongly anti-Semitic speech on November 5, 2010, which Hamas broadcast on its Al-Aqsa Television channel. He explained that historically the Jews had been “sucking the blood” of the French and the British. He then tells the Jews that “the expulsion will come, Allah willing, from Palestine, from the entire territory of Palestine.” He closed by saying that the Jews “have no place among us...and no future among the nations.” Where are the Jews to go? Al-Zahar predicts: “You are about to disappear, and we are about to emerge victorious.”¹⁰

* * *

Notes

1. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/20/opinion/20yousef.html>
2. http://palestinechronicle.com/view_article_details.pho?id=16510
3. Bryan Bender and Farah Stockman, “Top Officials Urge Dialogue with Hamas,” *Boston Globe*, March 14, 2009.
4. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1903966,00.html>
5. <http://www.alqassam.ps/images/userfiles/image/books/darb-ezza.pdf>
6. *Ibid.*
7. <http://web.archive.org/web/20080422171833/www.rapeta.org/articledetails.asp?ID=75>
8. <http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/201402>
9. <http://www.alqassam.ps/arabic/news1.php?id=14973>
10. http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/jpc_e141htm, <http://www.aqsatv/ps/ar/?action=showdetail&seid=590>, <http://www.alarab.net/Article/0000340050>

* * *

Lt. Col. (ret.) Jonathan D. Halevi is a senior researcher of the Middle East and radical Islam at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He is a co-founder of the Orient Research Group Ltd. and is a former advisor to the Policy Planning Division of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This *Jerusalem Issue Brief* is available online at:

<http://www.jcpa.org>

Dore Gold, Publisher; Yaacov Amidror, ICA Chairman; Alan Baker, ICA Director; Mark Ami-El, Managing Editor. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (Registered Amuta), 13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, Israel; Tel. 972-2-561-9281, Fax. 972-2-561-9112, Email: jcpa@netvision.net.il. In U.S.A.: Center for Jewish Community Studies, 7 Church Lane, Suite 9, Baltimore, MD 21208; Tel. 410-653-7779; Fax 410-653-8889. Website: www.jcpa.org. © Copyright. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Fellows of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

**The Institute for Contemporary Affairs (ICA) is dedicated
to providing a forum for Israeli policy discussion and debate.**

To subscribe to the Jerusalem Issue Brief list, please go to link:

<http://www.list-jcpa.org/brief-sub.html>

To unsubscribe from the Jerusalem Issue Brief list, go to link:

<http://www.list-jcpa.org/mail-brief/forms/optoutform.asp>
