

Islamic Resistance Movement

Hammas

Studies of
Thought & Experience

Editor

Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Contributors

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. 'Adnan Abu 'Amer | Prof. Ahmad Sa'id Nofal | Mr. Belal M. Shobaki |
| Dr. Hafez al-Karmi | Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq Hossain | Mr. Isma'il Haniyyah |
| Mr. Khalid Mish'al | Dr. Mohsen Moh'd Saleh | Dr. Musa Abu Marzuq |
| Prof. Mustafa Abu Sway | Dr. Raid M. H. Nairat | Mr. Sameeh Hammoudeh |
| Mr. Sami N. Khater | Prof. Dr. Talal 'Atrissi | Mr. Usamah Hamdan |
| Mr. Yousef Abu Alsuood | Prof. Yusuf Rizqa | |



Chapter Fifteen

*Hamas's Vision for Managing the Conflict
with the "Zionist Enemy"*

Mr. Sami Khater

Hamas's Vision for Managing the Conflict with the "Zionist Enemy"

Introduction

It is natural to question, discuss, and evaluate the ideology and conduct of an organization involved in a certain conflict, especially when this conflict has overlapping local, regional and international interests. And especially when the organization carries out an active and effective role such as that of Hamas.

Hamas's ideology and conduct in managing its conflict with the "Zionist enemy" is facing systematic distortion by the "Zionist entity" supported by Western forces. Despite the fact that this plan is based on hostility and combat against Hamas by all available means, this chapter does not seek just to respond to the inaccuracies that dominate these efforts, as this would not change anything for the Israelis or the different parties supporting them for historical, temporal, or interest-based reasons.

Unfortunately, despite the in-depth dialogue held between Hamas and official and popular European parties, most Western countries still refuse to deal with Hamas. Their refusal does not stem from either the values or norms of international law, nor from Hamas's attitudes and policies characterized by methodology, rationality, and realism. In fact, it stems from the Western commitment to supporting the Zionist project in its injustice and aggression, and the Israeli standard of considering any resistance against it to be a terrorist movement.

It is hoped that the West will someday change its criteria for dealing with Palestine's occupation and the Arab-Israeli conflict, to act in accordance with the principles of international law, the values of freedom and justice, and for the sake of the future of international peace and stability.

Herein is not a presentation of academic research but rather a vision we have participated in formulating since Hamas's founding, to be readily accessible by policymakers, as well as researchers and those interested in this subject. We hope that this work will contribute to the understanding of Hamas in particular, and the Palestinian conflict with the "Zionist occupation," which is the core of international conflict in the Arab world or the "the Middle East" region, in general.

First: The Main Driving Forces in the Crystallization of Hamas's Vision

What we are discussing here are the main factors that shape Hamas's vision of its conflict with the "Zionist enemy," stances and policies. However, decisions concerning new developments are made by evaluating the situation at hand and determining the main interest, while keeping in mind the temporal strategy and objectives.

The following are the main parameters that shape our vision for managing the conflict with the "Zionist enemy," since Hamas's inception:

1. The Islamic Background

This generally means Islamic provisions or the Shari'ah law, specifically those related to the conflict with the "Zionist enemy." This is due to the fact that the majority of Palestinians are Muslims belonging to an Arab nation where Islam is the predominant religion. Thus, it is only normal that Islamic values and legal provisions be present in Hamas's stances and policies, and this is how it will remain.

For the Palestinians, Palestine is not only a land. It is also a Holy and blessed land; Muslims' first *Qiblah* [The direction Muslims face when performing their prayers]; as well as the land of *Isra'* [The Night Journey] and *Mi'raj* [The Night Ascension], where Prophet Muhammad (SAAWS) was carried from Mecca to Jerusalem, and then from there to the Heavens. It is also home to *al-Aqsa* Mosque, in the virtue and significance of which were reported a number of texts from the Qur'an as well as the Prophet (SAAWS).

As a result of these religious attributes, coupled with strategic position in the Arab and Islamic region, Palestine maintains good standing not only for Arabs and Muslims, but also for other monotheistic religions, especially for Christian Arabs, as it is the birthplace of the Christ (PBUH), the home to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the land of the ancestors.

Consequently, Hamas defends the land of Palestine not only because it is the Palestinians' homeland as well as that of their ancestors, or that it was overtaken by a cruel enemy, but because of the additional motive of this special position it holds among Muslims which distinguishes it from other Arab and Muslim lands.

Thus, Arabs and Muslims support the people of Palestine on a different scale compared to their support to other people under occupation or aggression.

Hamas believes that the failure of the pro-"Zionist entity" West to take all the aforementioned factors into account increases tension in the region regardless of the efforts that might be made to maintain stability.

2. Conditions of Hamas Inception

The founders of Hamas were affiliated to the MB movement, one of the mainstream Islamic movements with a comprehensive understanding of Islam. This affiliation resulted in changing Hamas's approach, instilling it with religious conviction tending towards the school of moderate Islamic thought to which Hamas ideologically still belongs. However, on the organizational level, Hamas is a national liberation movement that has its own decision-making and policy-design mechanisms, the cornerstone of their foreign relations being non-interference in the internal affairs of states, parties, and organizations.

For example, we refer here to the fact that the provisions of Islamic law oblige Muslims to fight the occupiers of their land. This is exactly what happened in Palestine, where the Zionist movement organized emigration campaigns for Jews from Europe to Palestine. The British occupation helped them to forcefully establish the "State of Israel" and to expel the people of Palestine into exile and Diaspora.

Another example is what has sometimes been referred to as "fighting the Jews" in Palestine. In fact, Palestinians fought those who occupied their land and assaulted them, and not for the fact that they were Jews. This goes in accordance with the Islamic rule that says that "there is no compulsion in religion."

3. The General Background on the Circumstances That Led to the Establishment of the "State of Israel" and the Role of the West

Hamas, like any other Palestinian, Arab, or Islamic political movement, has a deep understanding of how the "State of Israel" emerged. However, because we are talking here about a vision, we are not going to elaborate on the evident and detailed circumstances that led to the establishment of the "State of Israel" on the land of Palestine, its continued aggression, or Western support for it.

It has been clear to us in Hamas that, despite the fact that there have been religious and national motives and backgrounds behind the project of establishing

the “State of Israel,” especially for some Jewish communities in Europe, the European colonial powers, for geo-strategic reasons, played the primary role in the success of this project. Concomitantly, there was a desire to get rid of the so-called “Jewish question,” while the new entity would be employed as a tool to impose hegemony and control at the heart of the Arab and Muslim countries. Western powers wanted to prevent the development of these countries in order to keep the region’s wealth and resources under their control thus precluding it from becoming an autonomous active and influential force. Still, one should not neglect the fact that some leading Western powers had religious and cultural backgrounds supporting the so-called “return of the Jews” to Palestine.

Since its inception, Islamic history has witnessed tolerance for followers of other monotheistic religions, especially Jews who lived in the region peacefully from the Islamic state of Prophet Muhammad (SAAWS), during the caliphate and until modern times. We particularly refer here to the fact that fighting the Jews in al-Madinah and its environs only occurred after their aggression and conspiracy against the Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad (SAAWS), and their emerging state.

The Jews of Spain (Andalusia) took refuge in Muslim countries after the Inquisition tribunals. Additionally, throughout time, Palestinian history has recorded tolerance between Christians, Jews and Muslims, as no conflict had taken place between Muslims and Christians on one hand, and the Jews on the other until the Zionist gangs emerged in Palestine and began their brutal massacres against Palestinians. All of this came after the establishment of “Israel” and its racist policy that opposes everything Arab or Muslim.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian struggle, Christians participated alongside Muslims against the Zionist occupation. For example, one of most the prominent aides of Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Palestine’s leader during the British occupation, was Emil Ghouri—a Christian.

This historical background remains the interpretation for the Western support for and bias towards “Israel.” It is important to note here that there are sometimes competing interests among Western forces supporting “Israel.”

Based on this understanding, Hamas believes that the Zionist project is one that targets the present and future of the whole Arab and Muslim *Ummah*, regardless of its direct aim at seizing Palestinian land and displacing its people. Consequently,

the whole *Ummah* should be playing a role in the conflict with the "Zionist occupation," and not just the Palestinian people.

4. Lessons Learned by Hamas

Lessons have been learned from the extensive conflict with the "Zionist enemy," especially after the establishment of "Israel" in 1948, when it controlled nearly 77% of the Palestinian land; as well as after the 1967 war, which led to the occupation of the remaining part of Palestine.

For example, it is noted here that hijacking planes proved to be ineffective in resisting the occupation. Also, the imbalance of power in favor of the enemy on one hand and the Western bias for it on another, along with some countries in the region being affected by these facts, have all persuaded Hamas to limit its confrontation with the occupation to Palestine only. This is despite the fact that the "Zionist enemy" targets Palestinian people and assassinates their leaders in exile and in the Diaspora.

5. Observing the Rules of International Humanitarian Law

Human rights and international law meet Islamic values that call for the preference of peace and stability over war, which is considered necessary only in cases of self-defense. Consequently, Hamas has sought to take into account these aspects in its policies and stances, as it still calls on the West, in particular, to apply the rules of international law and not be biased towards the occupation.

According to international law, it is not permissible to seize other people's land by force, nor to impose facts or to undermine or eliminate their rights as "Israel" is doing in the 1948 and 1967 territories. In addition, resisting the occupation is a legitimate right under international law. However, the West does not recognize this right for the Palestinian people, but rather sides with the enemy in regarding it as a form of "terrorism."

Although "martyrdom operations," or what the West refers to as suicide bombings, have always come as reactions to crimes committed by the occupation's army and forces, there have been occasions when Hamas offered to stop those operations under the condition that the occupation forces would stop targeting Palestinian civilians, yet the occupation state refused. It is widely known that whenever Hamas would agree to a ceasefire, the occupation state would rush into violating its terms. This stresses Hamas's keenness to observe humanitarian values

and principles stipulated in international conventions in contrast to the occupation state's refusal to comply with the Geneva Convention or respect international resolutions. It is noted that these resolutions have tried, at least partially, to do justice to the Palestinian people in their bitter struggle with the occupation.

Second: Hamas's Vision of Managing the Conflict with the "Zionist Enemy"

In light of the above, Hamas's vision of managing the conflict with the "Zionist enemy" includes the following:

1. Hamas's Hostility Perspective

It took the West many decades of wars launched for economic, political or sectarian reasons to define hostility and aggression as any action carried out by a state against another, whether through military occupation or any form of attack, and whether it targeted the land, the armed forces, or the commercial fleets. Additionally, any consequences of such aggression are perceived as void regardless of the lapse of time. As for the concept of hostility, it has been defined in Islam, the intellectual reference of Hamas, and ever since the beginning of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAAWS). Islam embraced peace and rejected aggression against individuals and groups, regarding it as a forbidden crime unless launched against the aggressor.

Accordingly, neither Islam nor Hamas recognizes hostility against an individual, a group, or a state based on race, religion, or wealth. It is thus impermissible for Muslims to be hostile to Christians, Jews, or even polytheists, had the latter not started aggression in the first place against Muslims, their lands, their sacred places or their wealth. Therefore, Hamas's criteria for hostility and aggression is essentially a political one, rather than religious, racial, or sectarian. Yet, as mentioned earlier, based on the implicit religious meaning and value Palestine has for Arabs and Muslims, this takes on an added dimension in drive and motivation. Other differences concerning religious doctrines and legislations between Muslims, Christians and Jews, are only normal and have been present throughout humanity ever since the descent of Adam and Eve. Such differences are not, by any of the Islamic jurisprudence doctrines, regarded as an excuse

for hostility, as they are otherwise based on reasoning and fact-finding and are approached with tolerance and dialogue.

2. Hamas and the Jews

According to Muslim beliefs, Christians, Jews and all other human beings were created from one essence and all are brothers in humanity. They all share the right to live in freedom and dignity without exception or discrimination. Humans are, by creation, honored beings regardless of their religion, color, sex, or race.

In this regard, Hamas does not resist Israeli occupation based on its hostility to Jews. It rather perceives resistance as its right to self-defense and response to the aggression exercised by the "Zionist entity's" security forces and institutions against the land, holy sites, resources and people of Palestine.

As mentioned earlier, Palestine has been an exemplar of tolerance and coexistence between its Muslim, Christian, and Jewish residents. Conflict and fighting had never been present before the Zionist movement gangs' aggression towards the Palestinian people and their land, the approach of which became planned and sustained after the establishment of "Israel."

Based on this view, Hamas has nothing against those who embrace Judaism as a religion. This is evident in Hamas's policy to limit its confrontation with the enemy to the Palestinian territories only, although "Israel" targets Palestinian people and leaders of Palestinian resistance movements in exile and Diaspora.

Once Palestine is liberated and the "Zionist occupation" terminated, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Palestinians will live in tolerance, coexistence, peace, and security as they did before the beginning of the systematic migration campaigns of the world's Jews to Palestine that were organized by the Zionist movement. Notably, some Zionist researchers and their supporters deliberately shed light on parts of Hamas's Charter that could be understood as anti-Semitic, or seen as hostile to Jews merely for being Jews. It can be assured that this is an intended disinformation, as nothing of the like is mentioned in Hamas's Charter, and the concept of "anti-Semitism" is not even known to Muslims in the first place, but rather reflects the "Jewish question" that first emerged in Europe.

In fact, any loose terms in Hamas's Charter are due to the conditions of origination of the movement where this style dominated Arab and Islamic rhetoric in general and was not intended on religious, political or legal grounds. It remains to say that anyone

who looks into Hamas's track record and political performance since its inception realizes that the movement's stance regarding Jews has been clearly revealed.

3. Hamas and the Zionist Movement

Hamis differentiates between Judaism as a heavenly religion and Zionism as a political, racist, aggressive movement aiming at the occupation of Palestine and expelling its people, in addition to establishing a nationalist state for the Jews. Indeed, the Zionist movement has worked to achieve its goals through the use of brute force with the complicity of colonial forces, especially Britain during its mandate in Palestine from 1922 until the establishment of "Israel" in 1948.

While Hamas believes that any Jew is not its enemy because of his religious belief, it considers every Zionist an enemy, whether Jewish or not. This distinction includes those who embraced the principles of Zionism and participated in its aggressive projects before 1948, and those who become members of the occupation state after 1948, and participated in one way or another in its aggressive crimes. Nonetheless, Hamas does not target or resist such a person unless they are in Palestine.

4. Hamas and the "State of Israel"

Hamis considers "Israel" as an invalid entity, which is the outcome of a "Zionist aggression" on the land and people of Palestine. It usurped the whole Palestinian land after the 1967 aggression and performs all kinds of aggression against the land, people and holy sites as well as systematically Judaizing the land of Palestine, expelling its people while imposing a discriminatory system similar to that of South Africa during the apartheid years.

"Israel" confiscates lands, builds settlements, and treats Palestinians with all kinds of oppression, humiliation, imprisonment, detention and deprivation. Further, it works to establish a racist Jewish state, while calling on the world, and on the Palestinians, to recognize it as a Jewish state, thus seeking to legitimize all its practices and pave the way to expel the Palestinians from their land.

As the "Israeli entity" embraces this policy, Hamas believes that it is an enemy that should be fought and faced with all legal and legitimate means according to principles of Islamic jurisprudence and rules of international law, as well as the values of freedom and justice universally agreed upon. The calls in the West for the Palestinian people in general, and for Hamas in particular, to recognize "Israel" is a further oppression that accentuates the injustice the West committed

in supporting the establishment of the "Zionist entity." Ultimately, it is not part of Hamas's vision to legally recognize "the state of Israel," or in any way legitimize its occupation. For this would invalidate the right of the Palestinian people to its land and holy sites as well as their right to self-defense, liberation and self-determination, a natural right secured by international conventions.

5. Hamas's Resistance Tools

Based on Hamas's belief that "Israel" is an invalid entity and an occupation state, the movement's major tool for resistance is to fight it by all legitimate means and to bear the consequences until ending the occupation and liberating all Palestinian land. Resisting the occupation is perceived by Hamas as a right not only emanating from Islamic references, but also secured by international laws and covenants. Hamas is optimistic that the advocates of justice and freedom would back it in defending the rights of the Palestinian people and support their resilience and resistance until achieving victory and liberating the land and the holy sites.

Remarkably, the occupation cannot be faced except with resistance, with all its forms, especially armed resistance, whereas negotiations, though legitimate in Islamic jurisprudence and international relations, remain useless with repressive, aggressive occupation.

Indeed, since Madrid 1991 until this date, the peace process has been essentially used as a cover for all Judaization and repressive measures employed by "Israel" against the Palestinians, their land and holy sites. Hamas believes that Palestinians cannot benefit from negotiations unless they are recognized as a people with inalienable rights, and their state is established accordingly. Notably, in light of Hamas's concern about the unity of the Palestinian stance, the movement is ready to respect the results of a free and fair popular referendum regarding the outcome of negotiations that are held by a leadership fairly representing different political forces and factions, while Hamas would maintain its own perception regarding the occupation state.

6. Hamas and "Israel's" Supporters

Hamis believes that supporting "Israel's" aggression against the Palestinian people is tyranny that has no grounds in human and international law and customs. Hamas hopes that any supporter of "Israel" will stop in order to back Palestinian rights on one hand, and to honor international peace and security on the other hand.

Still, Hamas does not consider anyone who supports “Israel” an enemy who must be targeted, because it only targets those directly involved in the aggression against the Palestinian people. Consequently, Hamas did not target any individual, group or state except the occupation state. It also avoided targeting the occupation and its figures and institutions outside Palestine, a policy does not arise from fear as one might presume. In fact, it is out of legitimate and laudable wisdom as well as being part of well-considered principles and policies that aim at not antagonizing others, as well as keenness to promote security and peace among nations and peoples and serving the good of mankind.

7. Hamas and Targeting Civilians

Fighting, as it is legitimate in Islam, forbids the killing of women, children and the elderly or, put differently, it prevents the killing of non-combatants, an issue clear in jurisprudence of provisions of war in Islamic Shari‘ah law. In light of such rules, resistance pursued by Hamas is a legitimate right taken up to face the occupation, targeting military and aggressive forces and the infrastructure of the occupation state.

The Palestinian resistance has not conducted any operation that has caused major injuries among non-combatants, except in case of urgency and in retaliation against “Zionist” offensive on Palestinian civilians. Such exceptions arise when “Zionists” commit terrorist massacres against unarmed civilians, such as the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre in Hebron, on 25/2/1994, which targeted peaceful worshippers.

Hamas and other resistance factions have repeatedly presented an initiative that prevents targeting Israeli and Palestinian non-combatants. However, the occupation state has always refused and continued to target Palestinian civilians without any concern about human value, or respect for human rights or international covenants. And the question remains: Who is to blame more? The weak who is suffering under the occupation or the strong side represented in the occupation and which does not refrain from committing the ugliest crimes and harshest forms of aggression?

8. Hamas and Overall Management of the Conflict

Hamas has perceived the Zionist project as an aggressive occupation that seeks to replace the indigenous Palestinian population, a project connected to the hegemonic aspirations of Western countries targeting Arab and Muslim countries.

Thus, it is considered a unique conflict that cannot be resolved according to a "compromise," which would be based on maintaining the Zionist project on parts of Palestine while the Palestinian people do not see the restoration of all their rights. Any incomplete solution would lead to an extended conflict that would necessitate large sacrifices and incur negative implications for human culture, especially Western culture. Ultimately, it is necessary to resolve this conflict by giving the Palestinian people their inalienable rights, primarily their right to end the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Should occupation not be ended through "Israel's" compliance with the principles of international law and conventions, liberation must be achieved through Palestinian struggle supported by Arab, Islamic and humanitarian circles. It is a struggle that will not cease until it achieves its goals.

Hamas, which is inclined by nature to peace, given its Islamic background, will accept and cooperate with any international effort to resolve the conflict with the "Zionist enemy," based on ending the occupation on all Palestinian land and achieving the rights of the Palestinian people; especially the right to liberation, self-determination, establishing the fully-sovereign Palestinian state over all Palestinian land with Jerusalem as its capital, while implementing the right of return. Should the international community fail to meet its obligation, Hamas is confident that the strength of its lawful right will ultimately defeat its enemy, no matter how long that would take.

"With Allah is the Decision, in the past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice" Surat Al-Rum: 4 (The Romans)

This Book

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas is a prominent Palestinian resistance movement. It enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, broad popularity in the Palestinian arena. Hamas adopts Islam as a creed, way of life, and a code. It belongs to the school of Muslim Brothers movement.

Credit for the idea behind this book is owed to the late Prof. Ibrahim Abu Rabi'. 17 academicians, researchers and senior Hamas leaders participated in writing the chapters of this book.

This book is indeed one of the most specialized references regarding Hamas thought and experience, and it is an indispensable source for those interested in studying the Movement. It committed itself to the methodologies of academic research and all this entails in terms of accuracy, objectivity, and documentation. The contributions by several Hamas leaders shed additional and up-to-date light on a number of controversial issues surrounding Hamas and its experience.

Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh

Islamic Resistance Movement

Hamas

Studies of Thought & Experience



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

مركز الزيتونة للدراسات والاستشارات

P.O. Box: 14-5034, Beirut - Lebanon

Tel: +961 1 803 644 | Tel-Fax: +961 1 803 643

info@alzaytouna.net | www.alzaytouna.net



ISBN 978-9953-572-63-5



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations