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Hamas at 31: As Committed as Ever to Israel's Destruction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Hamas's 31st anniversary was marked with a string of terror attacks and an official statement by the organization's leader, Ismail Haniyeh, rejecting any recognition of the legitimacy of Jewish statehood. This provides further proof, if any were needed, of the impossibility of reaching a long-term arrangement with the organization.

In what has become standard practice, this month's celebration of Hamas's 31st anniversary was marked by a string of terror attacks and an official statement issued by the organization's leader, Ismail Haniyeh, vowing the continuation of the "resistance" until the goals of "freedom, liberation and return" have been achieved. The statement boasts that notwithstanding the massive attempts to break its will and steadfastness, Hamas has succeeded in rallying the Palestinians behind a national political plan to end the "Zionist occupation" and derail President Trump's "deal of the century," viewed by the organization as a Zionist-American conspiracy to undermine the Palestinian national struggle. Hence, "it is our legitimate right to cleanse our land from the occupation by using all means permitted by international law, and we have the right to Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Palestine."

Making no effort to disguise its ultimate goal of establishing a Palestinian state on Israel's ruins in the entirety of Mandatory Palestine, or its categorical rejection of the idea of Jewish statehood, Hamas draws comfort from the deafening aloofness of the international community to its genocidal vision and activities. Thus, for example, the glaring failure of the UN to condemn Hamas's countless war crimes over the years (be they firing missiles and rockets at Israeli civilian population centers or straightforward terror attacks) has reinforced the organization's belief that its terrorist actions are considered by the international community to be playing by the legitimate "rules of the game."

Hamas is keenly aware that the schism between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip complicates its ability to pursue its strategic goals, and Haniyeh's statement criticizes Fatah for undermining the attainment of national reconciliation that will enable Palestinians to resist the "Zionist occupation" and the "deal of the century." In its view, Zionist machinations against the Palestinians continue apace, including "the Judaization of Jerusalem and the West Bank, the killing of hundreds of Palestinians, the wounding of thousands, and the incarceration of still other thousands." By way of countering this "aggression," the statement boasts, Hamas has carried out numerous "acts of resistance," including "dozens of shooting operations as well as hundreds of stabbing, car ramming and Molotov cocktail attacks that killed and wounded the enemy. This is how we continue the resistance."

Haniyeh concludes his statement by reiterating the main precepts of Hamas's vision, notably the establishment of a Palestinian state with all of Jerusalem as its capital, the continuation of "armed resistance" against Israel, and the rejection of the Jewish right to statehood. On its 31st anniversary, Hamas thus remains as committed as ever to its genocidal worldview: "Jihad is jihad. Either we triumph or die as martyrs."

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